



The Theocracy of Canceri



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The Theocracy of Canceri: Nation of the Damned

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They are nothing but filthy heretics and traitors. Everything wicked comes from Canceri. They are too far to matter much if it were not for their knowledge of death, of war and of blasphemy. The Canceri are the epitome of wickedness.

Few have reason to trust the Canceri. Fewer have reason to journey to the land of exile. None can tolerate their corruption, for Canceri is the blight of Onara. So foul are their actions, beliefs and practices, no right-thinking person could ever bring themselves to accept their dark ways. In Canceri, men worship fiends, exploit the physical remains of the dead for their own fell purposes, and even go so far as to dismiss the fundamental teachings of the Mother Church.

Canceri is a nation built on struggle and survival. Those people who first dwelled in these inhospitable lands faced famine, pestilence and war, facing extinction. Without their conversion and their early acceptance of dark occult practices, the people of this nation could never have survived. Their initial pragmatism evolved into something darker, something far worse than their founders could ever have envisioned. This landscape features vast domed necropolises, free roaming fiends, cannibals and worse.

Yet, Canceri is not without value, however. Other nations use the blighted landscape as a death sentence for their criminals, banishing those committing heinous crimes to bleak landscape in the shadow the smoking mountains of Nier's Spine, where they eke out their final days before succumbing to the endless horrors of death and madness found there. Those strong enough can survive and may even prosper, finding the atmosphere of the place to their liking. As a result, the nation of the damned winnows away the weak, pure or just. This nation is a den of blasphemous thieves, of evil unbound, and of inconceivable atrocities.

Reader Discretion

Canceri is an evil and awful place, filled with cannibals, necrophilia, devil worship and worse. To do this nation justice, we have taken an unflinching look, covering all the nasty details, rites and practices of these people. This subject matter may be offensive to some readers, so read at your discretion.

The Theocracy of Canceri

As a continuation of the Empire Books, *The Theocracy of Canceri* is designed to enhance and provide further detail for Onara, the World of Shattered Empires. Building on the rich details found in the *Codex Arcanis*, *Living Arcanis: City of Secrets: The Adventurer's Guide to Nishanpur*, the published adventures and all the events and adventures in *Living Arcanis*, *Theocracy of Canceri* provides full disclosure on this depraved nation. At the core of this sourcebook is a detailed exploration of the checkered history of this ancient region, uncovering every sin, every vice, and every corruption of the gods those of the Empire hold dear. More importantly, however, this sourcebook provides an entire volume of new rules to create or update your villains, and make them lasting abominations to be opposed by your players. On the other hand, if your players wish to experiment with evil characters, this sourcebook is the ultimate authority on the worst in Onara.

Overview

The Theocracy of Canceri consists of ten chapters and one appendix. Opening with the complete history of Canceri, Chapter One: Canceri's History compiles the historical development of this region into one place, describing the effects on the territory's development, its time under the rule of the Devil-Kings, its subsequent liberation, the rise of the Dark Church, the return of the Sword of the Heavens and the subsequent events after the Battle of Nishanpur. Chapter Two: Canceri Society explores the intricacies of the theocracy, the composition of social



castes and the impact of the church on the lives of those living here. The next chapter, Chapter Three: Canceri Geography provides a comprehensive overview of the regions, major population centers, and all the details needed run a campaign in this land. Chapter Four: The Living and the Dead presents details on how to play a dretch demon, while expanding on the social consequences of playing an undead character in the world of Arcanis. Chapter Five: Classes provides new holy champions of two of the gods of the Dark Triumvirate, revealing the secrets of the Nerothian Reaper and the Conflagration Knight. Furthermore, new prestige classes, like the Dark Consort and the Ventaka Razor add a whole new dimension of evil to your games. Chapter Six: Feats presents a host of terrible feats to arm your villains or to explore the depths of mortal sin, while Chapter Seven: Bazaar of the Damned expands the core rulebooks by presenting new drugs, rules for slavery, alchemical concoctions, and Canceri's economy. Chapter Eight : Magic provides a collection of evil spells and magic items. Finally, the book concludes with a survey of Canceri's inhabitants in Chapter Nine: Bestiary of Canceri, featuring a collection of nasty creatures, from the dreaded flesh swarm to the human hating warped template. Chapter Ten: Dramatis Personae explores the major characters found in the nation, and statistic blocks for common types of characters PCs are sure to encounter. By the conclusion of this sourcebook, you

should have all the tools needed to unleash horrors beyond mortal reason into your campaigns.

About the Author

Robert J. Schwalb is a staff designer and developer for Green Ronin Publishing, where he helms projects for *Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay* and various d20 supplements. In addition to his work with Green Ronin and Black Industries, Robert has freelanced for Wizards of the Coast, Fantasy Flight Games, Goodman Games, AEG, Paradigm Concepts, and Paizo Publishing. His credits include the *Players Handbook 2*, *Tome of Magic: Pact, Shadow, and Truename Magic*, *Fiendish Codex II: Tyrants of the Nine Hells*, *Tome of Corruption*, *Grimm*, *The Black Company Campaign Setting*, *The Book of Fiends*, and numerous other RPG sourcebooks. Robert lives in Tennessee with his patient wife and pride of cats.

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Chapter One

Cancer's History

City of Secrets: An Adventurer's Guide to Nishanpur presents a comprehensive history of Cancer, detailing the defining moments in Cancerese history developing the nation into its modern form. With the rise of the Sword of the Heavens, his subsequent fall, the life and death of the Prophet Becherek, and the founding of the Dark Triumvirate, all the necessary information is there. However, Cancer, for all of its influences in the modern world, with all of the evil, horrors, and blasphemous to bubble up out of the moral morass that is this nation, it is still home to a diverse assortment of cultures and beliefs, of moralities and outlooks unique on Onara. Through its people's commitment to their religions and mythologies, the Cancerese are more established theologically than are any other people in the world. This chapter expands the established history of these accursed lands, providing everything needed to play a campaign here.

Myth (Unknown)

In the times before the coming of humanity to the shores of Onara, ancient myths are still told by the most sage bards and historians about the tribes of man who were cast out of the Paradise created by the Gods. The reason why they were turned out is greatly debated; some say that mankind displeased the Gods, while others contend that it was as necessary as a mother weaning her child off of her natural milk.

Regardless of the reason, mankind soon found itself alone in a sometimes hostile world. Three tribes in particular, driven to the barren northern lands, suffered the most. In this harsh and broken landscape, it was a struggle just to eke out enough food and fresh water to survive and so they continued their march ever northward in the hope of finding some place to call home.

Of those condemned to die in this forlorn landscape, there were three warring tribes, each so consumed by their own arrogance and their disdain for the other tribes that they hoarded what few resources they could to avert the looming destruction facing them all, leaving their brethren to the mercy of the harsh landscape. Animosity flared as the resources grew sparse and tempers grew even shorter and so the tribes separated from each other.

Finally, the separate tribes found places that they could call their own and end their nomadic lives; a place where there was fresh water and wild herds a plenty, but this respite was short-lived. Within the year, they were assailed by horrible winged nightmares that flew down and plucked from their peoples as a farmer would pluck apples from his orchard. With each passing month, their numbers grew smaller, until it was feared that, as a people, they would not see the next winter.

It was then that it was discovered that though they were driven out of Paradise, they were not abandoned by their Gods. In each tribe a person of faith was found and given a sign. In one tribe, a man who had thrown himself into a small burrow to escape the predators was shocked to find a small worm with a human face staring at him as he hid. This man was told that this worm was a manifestation of Lord Neroth and that He had taken pity upon this man's tribe and wished to save them from extinction. Lord Neroth instructed the man that the very earth would provide protection from these creatures. He told him that his people should give up living upon the world for within its bosom was enough water and sustenance for them to thrive and blossom.

So it was that this man, graced by the divine power of Neroth, led his people to a series of underground caverns where they found a luminescent fungus for light, a large underground lake for fresh water, and herds of beasts and mushrooms for food.

West of this, a second tribe had also established a home within the hunting grounds of these foul winged beasts. Being stone masons of the highest caliber, this tribe had settled near a vast quarry where the finest grade stone could be found. Here, they built elegant homes, crafted statutes of great beauty and rejoiced that they had fashioned their own Paradise from the wilderness. This fallacy was revealed with the coming of the horrors. Having been denied the easy prey of the first tribe, they turned upon the second nearest one with a vengeance. Like the first tribe, the people were easy prey whose beautiful homes offered no protection.

After one particularly horrific attack, one woman stood outside screaming for her son who'd just been carried off. A drop fell upon her cheek and she thought that a fresh rainstorm was approaching, but upon wiping off the drop, she saw her hands stained red with blood. Before she could react, more drops fell until she was being bathed in a shower of blood. Transfixed by horrors conjured by her imagination, she discovered that a voice filled her head. *'Be not afraid'*, it said. *"I am the Lord Sarish, Sanguine Lord and I have not forsaken you."* *I have anointed you with my sacred blood. With it, you shall protect my people from these predations."*

Following the Lord Sarish's instructions, she gathered together the greatest artists in the tribe and bid them to create horrific statues of winged beasts with razor sharp claws. So great was the holy essence of Sarish upon her, that they did as bade and within the month had fashioned monstrous, winged gargoyles.

Just as the last one was completed, screams were heard outside, signaling the return of the horrors. Working quickly, the anointed woman slashed her palms and smeared the sacred blood upon each and every gargoyle statue. The blood seemed to be soaked up into the living stone as would a sponge and the gargoyles came to life. Shaking dust off their wings with a quick flex, the servants of Sarish flew out of the hovel in which they were created and attacked the predators. Their attack was so unexpected and vicious, that those winged creatures that survived the onslaught flew off to greener and safer pastures.

This flight led them to the last of the three tribes. These men and women had not found green pasturelands or placid lakesides to call their own. Instead they had found Hell for the north flashed with the eruptions of ancient volcanoes, belching clouds of black poisonous smoke and raining killing hot ash. The tribe learned they could go no farther, for the mountains seemed impassable. They could not return, for what meager food stores they had would not be enough to last the winter, fast approaching, let alone support a retreat back whence they came.

They soon found the rocky scree would grow little more than the stunted *kiejils*, a small wiry plant with edible fruit about the size of a small bean, but with a lot less flavor. Moreover, there were few animals, and the sheep and cattle they brought up from the south caught plague and soon died out. If they were to thrive in this unforgiving environment, then it would be through their tenacity and sheer stubbornness.

This tribe, unlike the others, had not felt that their Gods had abandoned them. They knew that only through adversity and struggle could they grow strong and powerful. Thus, their shamans still venerated their lords and were thankful for being led out of Paradise. It was because of their piousness that the Lord Nier came upon them in a vision shared by all. He warned of the coming creatures that wished to feed on their flesh and crack their bones to suck their marrow. He said that, unlike the other gods, He would not intervene to save them. If they were truly His people, they would fight and persevere or He would look elsewhere for those truly worthy of His patronage.

With a determined smile, the tribe of Nier rose from their slumber and began preparing for the attack. They fashioned armor and weapons from the sparse materials at hand. Every man, woman and child trained day and night, learning to think as one and fight as one. When the day finally came that the winged horrors thought they had found a new herd of prey to feed upon, they were met with sharpened spears, flights of arrows and the courage of a cornered animal. On that day, it was the winged horrors that became the prey and by morning, it was their cooked flesh that was filling the belly of the tribe of Nier.

The Founding of the Imperium (3640 A.C.)

During the time of the God War, the Gods once again embraced those tribes of Man that had not forsaken them during their trials away from Paradise. The chosen people were then gathered to make war upon the Other and those corrupted humans who worshiped It instead. The War devastated the land, making of it a wasteland. The Other and Its minions then fled to the west, to continent of Onara where Its foul corruption was finally extinguished.

An unfortunate series of events were necessary to bring about the Other's defeat, including the destruction of the Elorii Elemental Lords as well as the preemptive attack upon the Elorii to safeguard mankind from their assured retaliatory attack once the knowledge that their gods were destroyed became known.

Upon the lands that were once the Elorii empire of Belestor, mankind founded the First Imperium of Man and raised upon the ruins of the Elorii capital, the First City of Man. During this time, the Gods chose those people or families who had served them beyond all expectation. To these, each of the twelve Gods instructed certain Valinor to give a portion of their essence to be commingled with these select few. These then became the Vals and Uls that were tasked with the burden of leading humanity to a new Golden Age and safeguard it against all evils.

As the Imperium grew beyond the immediate area around the First City, parcels of lands were granted to the noble Val and Ul families by the Imperators that ruled over all. To the Uls were granted the right to explore and settle the lands of the north and west, while the Vals were conferred the right to colonize the lands to the south and the east.

Sibling Rivalry

When the God Nier was called upon to name and confer upon His champion the essence of one of His Valinor, He hesitated. His chosen had fallen in battle against the forces of the Other and rather than take him from his rightful place in the Paradise of the Gods, Lord Nier instead chose to anoint both of his children, Virdan and Emman, with His power as one was equally as worthy as the other. While both manifested power to control Lord Nier's holy flames, Virdan gifts augmented his unmatched prowess in battle while Emman's abilities complemented her grace and speed.

The Lady Emman was an untamed beauty, wild and passionate like the val'Sheem, but equally thoughtful and graceful as a val'Ishi, a worthy bride of Imperators -- or so the first lord of the val'Assanté felt. In order to woo her, the first Imperator gave the val'Emman family and all its subjects the fertile land to the south of the Corlathian Mountains, in the area now west of the Coryani Empire. This infuriated Lord Virdan, whose

people had originally discovered this territory and had thus claimed it as theirs. During one tempestuous night in court, Lord Virdan demanded the granting of those lands to his sister be rescinded and his own claim be recognized. The Emperor not only denied this request, but then ridiculed Lord Virdan as a brainless, uncouth barbarian in front of the entire court. Incensed, Lord Virdan cursed the Emperor and vowed that neither he nor his people would ever be part of the Imperium.

That night the entire val'Mehar clan as well as all its vassal families and subjects abandoned the fledgling Imperium and struck off to the East. Eventually, Lord Virdan led his people beyond the land of the val'Mordane, who had been told decades before that their very presence offered offense to the Emperor and were thus banished to the very periphery of the Imperium's territory. In that smoked choked and ash laden land, Lord Virdan founded his own small kingship in the lands stretching from what is now northern Canceri east to the city of Erduk in Hinterlands.

An Oath to Sarish Binds All

As well as being gifted with the power and might of the Gods, the Vals and Uls also inherited their pride and arrogance. No one bloodline believed that any other had the right to rule over the rest for long. Thus, at the Imperium's inception, it was agreed that every "divine" family would be able to rule. The accord was for each of the Vals and Uls to rule for a period described as a dynasty, which was defined as a series of five successive Emperors from the same bloodline. After the fifth ruler passed on, the Throne of Man would be passed to another of the families, to begin the cycle anew. To this, all the heads of the families swore an oath to Sarish to abide by this accord.

When the last of the Emperors of the first dynasty lay sick and dying after only a few months upon the throne, his son, a proud and powerful scion of the val'Assanté line sought to have the accord amended. He argued that since his father ruled for less than a year, he should be given the right to rule in his stead, even though it meant a sixth Emperor would be chosen from the same bloodline.

To this end, he entreated the val'Mehar and the ul'Tai, both of the bloodline of Sarish, to amend the oath spoken so many generations ago. To this, both families were in accord – an oath to Sarish binds everyone, from the lowest commoner to the high houses of the Emperors themselves. The length of the reign was immaterial in the eyes of Sarish. Five of the val'Assanté have ruled the Imperium and with the death of the current Emperor, their time to rule will come to an end, until the cycle begins anew.

So incensed was the son of the Emperor that he vowed that the val'Mehar and the ul'Tai would come to regret this decision and that their failure would haunt their descendants for generations to come.

Within days of this meeting, the sickly Emperor died. Yet his seneschal proclaimed that in his final moments, the Emperor had signed into effect his final proclamation. In it, the val'Mehar family and all their holdings were to remove themselves from the fertile lands just east of the Khitau Mountains and be banished beyond the edge of the Imperium's territory to the east. There they were to domesticate the land until such time as the Imperium had need for them and that realm.

The ul'Tai fared just as badly. The Emperor proclaimed them to be "corrupt and tainted due to their practice of breeding with and melding to their bodies parts of Infernals. Such an abhorrence would not be condoned within the confines of Imperium, but still they were kin and kindred to all of the 'blessed' and so mercy had to be shown. Henceforth, the ul'Tai and all their holdings were to remove themselves from the lands of the Imperium and make their home upon one of the Infernal planes, the better to safeguard against infiltration and invasion by these loathsome creatures".

It was said that the head of the val'Mehar family smiled at the proclamation. Though he and his family were now banished beyond the edge of the Imperium, it was a small price to pay. Well did he know that breaking an oath made in the presence of a god would garner a far worse penalty than any this val'Assanté could imagine.

As for the val'Assanté son of the Emperor, he was never seen again. It is whispered within some circles that the ul'Tai insisted that he be their guest in their new home; a place, which even to this day, echoes with his tortured screams.

The Hunger of the First Imperium

Though hardened by adversity, the three families would not remain free, for after a few centuries, the Imperium to the west grew to encompass most of the continent of Onara. The Emperor, hungry for new lands, spread his legions throughout the world, conquering the City-States with abandon. To seize the newly proclaimed northern province which he named Canceri, he sent the Legion of the Might of the Emperor, the Legion of Radiant Glory and the Legion of the Black Sun, who marched through the Nerothian cities of southern Canceri and the Cold Plains on its way to wage war with the Sarishans and the Nierites in the north.

Believing the Imperium too strong an enemy, the Sarishans met the approaching legions, welcoming the conquerors with friendship and fealty. Turning against their brethren to the north and south, they summoned and bound Infernals to assist Emperor's forces. They led the legions to the north to crush the Nierites. The Nierites descended from their mountain homes, abandoning their crusade against their implacable foes beneath the earth, to meet the armies from the south. Their skill at arms and rigid discipline

allowed them to hold the legions for a time, but their diminished numbers were not enough to defeat the combined might of the Imperium and the Sarishans.

The legions spared what Nierites they could, taking them as slaves for they saw value in their discipline and martial skill. The survivors and those escaping the chains of slavery allied themselves with the Nerothians of the south, who had evaded defeat by hiding in the domed cities. Using the undead servants of their southern cousins, the Nierites mounted a counter attack against the Imperium's extended forces. The Cancerese drove the legions back to the Cold Plains, animating the enemy dead to increase their numbers. However, each conflict, despite the successes, resulted in casualties among the priests and necromancers who could control the dead. As their numbers dwindled, they lost more of their legions, the magic escaping. Worse, the Imperium supplied the legions well, giving them enough food and equipment to mount a prolonged war against the insurgents, while the Nierites, never having much in the way of food and raw materials could not sustain such an effort for long.

The final battle between the weakening Cancerese and the legions of the Imperium met in the Cold Plains, pressing into Sarishan territory. Despite the weakening Nierites and Nerothians, the cost of Canceri's conquest would be too great for the Legionnaires, and so the Sarishans, once more, intervened. Under the auspices of being diplomats, a group of four Sarishan priests went to the camp of the opposing armies leaders. As a show of faith, they went unarmed.

Though most claim ignorance as to what unfolded inside the command tent, some historians hold the clerics of Sarish were in actuality assassins. However, records of this treachery recounts the bodies were never discovered. While it is clear the leaders of the Nierite and Nerothian forces died that night, there has been speculation infernal servants devoured them, or, perhaps, the clerics used dark magic to remove all trace of them. In any event, with the next dawn, the followers of the Nierite-Nerothian alliance learned their leaders were gone, and they dispersed, demoralized and defeated, as the undead servants collapsed on the battlefield, or turned against their former allies. As the Nierites and Nerothians either surrendered or fled, the legions of the Imperium destroyed the remaining undead, and made slaves of any Nierites they found.

Millennia of Growth

With Canceri a province of the Imperium, the generals erected a stronghold in the heart of the Plains of Blood called Fort Nihilaspera, which would later become Nishanpur, the City of Secrets. Still, the legions did not have any easy time after the final war, for pockets of resistance continued through the next two centuries. Lich lords emerged leading armies of terrible undead to slaughter entire garrisons at outposts

throughout the land. Nierites sabotaged road and construction crews working to modernize the barren landscape. Entire caravans fell to Nerothian bandits, who returned the drivers and guards to their families as twitching animated zombies. These were dark years for the occupying forces of Imperium. They faced an implacable enemy who wanted nothing more than freedom and their sovereignty.

Despite the dishonorable tactics employed by the rogue elements in the province, as a society, Canceri took its first few steps into the modern world. During the next eighteen centuries, all of the major Cancerese cities were born, but in accordance with the social views of the people living there. The Val families thrived, expanding their influence through the land, and garnering greater influence over the lives of its people. It was during this time the myths of the Cancerese origins emerged in the written form, and the tenets of their religions solidified. Worship of Nier took hold in the north and spread throughout the Imperium as Nierite slave warriors gained greater prominence among the southern city-states. Worship of Neroth, an unpopular religion beyond the borders of the province, survived through the efforts of undead masters who orchestrated the guerilla war against their captors. Finally, in the east, the Sarishans enjoyed a meteoric rise to power. Having established an alliance with the Imperium, the Emperor forgave past transgressions and gave the val'Mehan family total authority over the province. Thus, from their thrones in Nishanpur, the Sarishans commanded the people of Canceri.

As the centuries slipped past, Nishanpur emerged as the province's trading capital, eclipsing the former might of the already venerable Ventaka. Having some of the best architects in the Imperium, the city constructed a vast reservoir to hold drinking water for the entire city, overcoming the environmental dangers present in this region. After a thousand years, the old hatreds from the Imperium's conquest died, and the Cancerese embraced their masters. Peace would last for almost another millennium, until the decrepit Imperium fell to its own corruption.

Nierite Revolt & the Burning Times (1800 to 1700 A.C.)

As is wont to happen with ancient empires, the Imperium rotted from within in the excesses of its own decadence. For centuries, the Imperium had begun its decline. Its regional governors had little control over the outlying populations, and relied more and more on the Nierite slave-warriors to suppress recurrent uprisings. Though this brought glory and fame to the Nierites, they could not ignore the corruption in their masters. Officials stole tax revenues and lords let their peasants starve while they enjoyed the fruits of the commoners' labor. Assassination, bribery and coercion became the regular currency of political negotiations. In



addition, with each new offense from the ruling elite, resentment flourished in the warriors. Finally, when the indiscriminate culling of certain popular Nierite units were called for and executed by the val'Emman, the Nierites had enough.

The Nierites spread dissent among their people, fueled by the val'Virdan leaders who retained some influence over the soldiers who claimed Nier as their patron deity. The leadership decided to coup and take over the nation installing the Nierites on the throne. Through secret code, they passed the message to the Nierite garrisons throughout the Imperium, establishing a date and time for the soldiers to strike against their masters. Unfortunately, unknown spies and saboteurs undermined the efforts, warning garrisons of the impending attack, and so the Imperium's legions were ready. The Nierites attacked all across the nation, fighting in the streets to claim victory over the empire. However, the Imperium's legions were too strong, and, coupled with dissention and infiltration amongst the Nierites, the coup failed.

As soon as they quelled the rebellion, Emperor Orismandros IX of the val'Sheem family declared the val'Virdan family enemies of the Imperium and commanded the val'Emman and their followers to eradicate them from the face of Onara; a task which the blood cousins of the val'Virdan enacted with ruthless efficiency. The subsequent bloodshed was terrible, for the val'Emman used the order to kill at their whim, slaughtering any they suspected of being val'Virdan, whether they were or not. Death walked the streets as the numbers of dead mounted across the Imperium. However, many Nierites and val'Virdan escaped back to Canceri, returning to their ancestral homelands along the smoking slopes of Nier's Spine. The Nierites slew those foolish enough to seek them out there, mounting their tar-drenched skulls on pikes before the gates of their cities.

Hatred blossomed in the hearts of the Nierites. Leonydas val'Virdan, an influential leader and brilliant tactician, answered the injustices of foreign rule. Sickened by the wholesale slaughter of his people, he organized his followers in the north and marched south to Nishanpur, where he rallied the Nierites, and none too few Nerothians and Sarishans, to join him in the conquest of the Imperium. It is believed that after his first battle against the Imperium's forces, that



the young Leonydas gained the favor of Nier, for he radiated with His holy power, as fires shone behind his eyes and his skin became hot to the touch. Through his invocation, he amassed an enormous army in a matter of months, promising to cleanse the Imperium with the fires of Nier.

With his armies assembled, Leonydas' forces destroyed the Imperium's garrison in Nishanpur, burning the structure to the ground and immolating the soldiers and guards in service to the Emperor. With their screams and agonized cries lifted above the quiet mutterings so common in the city, the Cancereese felt the power of Nier in a tangible way, and hence more volunteers swelled the ranks of Leonydas' armies. From Nishanpur, Leonydas and his forces ousted the Imperium garrisons in Canceri, slaughtering the forces of the Emperor by fire and steel and erasing all trace of their stain in the land. In the course of his campaign, Leonydas garnered the title of Sword of the Heavens.

With Canceri cleansed, Leonydas, then called the Sword of the Heavens, and his legions of religious zealots sped south to conquer the First City. Word of Leonydas' victories, as well as the growing myth that his armies cannot be defeated as long as he led them into battle, spread before the legions, and many of the

Imperator's soldiers abandoned their posts, leaving the First City weakened and defenseless. The Nierites sacked the city and installed Leonydas as the new Imperator, though he was denied ever sitting upon the Throne of Man by the sealing of the throne room where the Throne sat. Thus Leonydas began his rule as the final Imperator of the First Imperium or, as future historians would call it, the beginning of the Theocracy of the Cleansing Flame.

Fanatical in his devotion to the gods, Leonydas restored the old ways of worship of the Pantheon of Man. No longer were loose interpretations, heretical views or idolatry allowed, for the Nierites burned ancient libraries, turning to ash invaluable repositories of knowledge he declared questionable. Of the heretics, the Theocracy allowed them to recant their views, but those refusing felt the cleansing fires of Nier along with all of their families on the pyres erected in the center of the cities. One group that garnered the special attention of the Sword of the Heavens was the val'Emman, who some say he had attempted to hunt into extinction, though rumors of subterfuge and changed identities persist.

Not all were content with Leonydas' rule. Throughout the cities, a subversive effort to retain something of the Imperium's culture began. As heretics, scholars and philosophers fled Leonydas' fiery sword, a prince in the south named Volthar val'Holryn arose, vowing to suffer no longer the Sword of the Heavens' depredations. He, and his small army of rebels, fought a campaign of terror, striking at unprotected holdings, attacking temples of Nier, assassinating the Nierite leadership, and generally employing the same tactics the Nierites used during the Imperium occupation of Canceri.

The revolt lasted for 7 years, but Vothar's luck evaporated as dew in the morning, when the Sword of the Heavens trapped the rebel prince on the banks of the Tares River. Swollen by the recent rains, the refugees who sought his banners for protection were unable to make the crossing. Forced to fight the awful majesty of Imperator Leonydas, his forces turned and met the relentless onslaught. The armies' clash resounded through the land, and though they gave as good as they received, there were too many for the rebel forces. The battle reached its climax when the Sword of the Heavens burned through the ranks of the rebel guards astride a flaming steed to cleave to Prince Volthar who stood ready for the Theocrat. They fought a vicious battle, but Volthar, a mortal, could not stand against Leonydas' might. The Sword of the Heavens impaled the young leader on the point of his spear, defeating his hated enemy at last.

Those subversives and loyalists to Prince Volthar found no mercy on the part of the Sword of the Heavens either. For nigh unto a century, innocent men, women and children suffered the fury of Leonydas, their wailing and weeping accompanying the landscape of impaled corpses.

These acts of brutality ignited the entire Imperium, fueling the fires of hatred burning in the hearts of commoner and noble alike. Provinces rebelled, throwing off the shackles of oppression, murdering Nierite and sympathizer alike. Even in Leonydas' homeland, the people rebelled. In Nishanpur, the city revolted, and even the Legions were incapable of suppressing the rebellion. Seeing no end to the difficulties presented by his former capital, Leonydas himself led his Legions to the City of Secrets to crush them.

With each battle, the Sword of the Heavens slaughtered more of their numbers, vanquishing rebels by the thousands. At the darkest hour, when all seemed lost, two figures emerged to give the rebels a faint glimmer of hope. One was a sickly boy whose power, which the Sarishans both marveled and cursed at, was the ability to break Oaths and their resultant effects. Though the piercing stare of his black eyes chilled all those caught in its gaze, the val'Sheem seer that attended the rebel leaders confirmed that the boy could indeed break the connection between Leonydas and Lord Nier. What many renditions of this tale leave out is that the seer later attempted to peel back the veil of the boy's past, trying to learn of the origin of his power. Many foolish things have the wise done, and like many before and since, the attempt left the once witty and bright woman nothing more than a drooling idiot with a borderline hysterical aversion to darkness.

The second figure to come to the aid of the rebels was a mysterious sorcerer named Amath, who claimed to hold the secret to Leonydas' destruction. He proposed to cast a powerful spell to entrap the Imperator in a stasis just after the boy deprived the Imperator of his God's power, but the spell itself would require the entire night to cast. Seeing Amath's plan as their one hope, the Council who led the rebel forces agreed. The greatest wizards in the land would form a protective circle around Amath as he weaved the magical threads to imprison the Sword of the Heavens for all time.

That night, before the gates of Nishanpur, the battle intensified, for Leonydas saw his enemies' doom at hand. Sending his elite soldiers, the Swords of Nier, to deal with the rabble, Leonydas turned to personally deal the gathered wizards and their defenders. The warriors fought desperately against the Sword of the Heavens, giving their lives to allow Amath to finish the ritual of binding. One by one, they were cut down ruthlessly by Leonydas, who became more enraged with every warrior who stood to bar his way. The stories only record the name of the last of these valiant warriors to fall before the Sword, a val'Tensen champion named Ulisay, who engaged Leonydas knowing that he was giving his life in the hopes of stalling him until Amath finished.

Through their sacrifice, Leonydas was held at bay until dawn, and just as the sun crested the horizon, the boy broke Nier's gift and Amath concluded his spell, speaking the final words of power. Within the



pillar of flame that constantly surrounded Leonydas when he battled, the Sword of the Heavens was frozen and the ground beneath him opened like a mouth and sucked the last Emperor into the bowels of the earth. With his fall, his followers fled east, believing the gods themselves had interceded on the rebels' behalf. The world seemed rid of Leonydas, but in his wake was a land shattered by warfare, cruelty, and ambition.

After the Fall (1700 A.C. to 35 A.C.)

Onara's people returned to what remained of their homelands. The surviving Nierites faded to their ancestral homes, knowing that all the destruction in the world was done in Nier's name. The val'Virdan suffered under the persecution of their brethren, and times were hard for all. Food was scarce and disease rampant, festering in the carnage of the battlefields. Cities became refuges for the poor and destitute, and the lands between them became wild and untamed, places where fell creatures and unholy beasts stalked the land and hungered for the flesh of man. A dark age began and much of the former civilization was lost.

The Cancerese struggled to rebuild their homes, cities, and ways of life. The domed cities of the Nerothians recovered, having no shortage of labor, as they used the dead to rebuild their settlements and lives. Yet in the northeast and in the communities of the far north, the people suffered.

The Sarishans of the northeast learned from their Infernal servants a prophecy of the coming of a terrible age, where the Lords of Hell, the Devil Kings, would come and rule the earth. As is customary for the Sarishans, they believed their survival lay with accepting these masters as their lords, just as they had done during the Imperium's conquest of Canceri. For two hundred years, they readied their lands to accept the Devil Kings, building fantastic palaces and citadels of dark stone and alien architecture learned from their extraplanar servants. In Nishanpur, the brooding structures instilled fear in the hearts of those living there, as the Nerothians and Nierites grew more and more suspicious of the grand edifices with no apparent purpose.

The Devil-Kings (35 to 0 I.C.)

Though the Cancerese have always embraced repulsive practices to serve their gods, until The Time of Terror and the Rule of the Devil Kings, the people of Onara regarded them with neutrality. However, the ease the Sarishans and the other Cancerese accepted the rule of the Devil Kings forever condemned these people to hatred and suspicion. No longer would people ever again regard the Cancerese with the same trust and respect as in times before, for being thralls in service to unfettered evil had stained them for all time.

The Myrastian Necromancers and the Sorcerer King of Ymandragore brought Hell to Onara, opening a

tear in the skies to birth a flood of creatures of absolute darkness and evil. From this rivalry, they destroyed the world, as the Devil Kings established themselves undisputed masters of mortals. When the legions of the Devil Kings swept across the lands, the Sarishans welcomed them and gave them palaces where they could rule, slaves to torture and a land to be their capital. The Sarishans, seeing this acceptance as the path for survival, attempted to convince the Nerothians and the Nierites to accept the reign of the Lords of Darkness as well. Though some converts did bend a knee to the Devil Kings, the majority bided their time and attempted to survive the horrors running rampant across the land.

Situated in Nishanpur, the Devil-Kings held sway over huge swaths of Onara, ruling their empire with a depraved autocracy. Sacrifice was common. They permitted acts so despicable as to stain Canceri for thousands of years. In all, the world became Hell and hope fled before their demonic might.

In the small city-state of Coryan, there arose a hero, who committed himself to ridding the world of the Infernals' taint. Gathering about him an army, he waged war against the unholy hordes, one city-state at a time. With each liberated city, his power swelled. Rich and poor, noble and commoner alike joined his banner. People flocked to his side, believing him to wield the holy sword of Illiir. This man, who would one day become the first emperor of the Coryani Empire, stood as the symbol of hope reborn in the face of absolute darkness.

The Emperor and his legions eventually marched into Canceri to take the war to Nishanpur, where the combined forces of light would meet the enemy at its blackest heart. The Devil-Kings responded by fielding their armies of thrall warriors, along with swarms of demons and devils to fight the Coryani invasion. However, as has been the case since man has given a name to all things wicked and depraved, Evil's greatest strength (putting yourself before others no matter what the cost) has always turned out to be its greatest weakness, and in turn, Good's salvation, even in the darkest of times. Thus the forces of the Emperor continued to gain ground and momentum in their war upon the forces of darkness. Amongst the Devil Kings, one of their number realized that the tide of fortune was turning irrevocably, and their reign was nearing its end. With longevity beyond mortal comprehension, combined with the passage of time that obliterates the collective memory of man, the Devil-King believed that his time would come again...if he could but survive the oncoming storm. Taking a page from the books of the Sarishans that had served his whims for centuries, he assumed a human form and insinuated himself among them, fomenting rebellion in their ranks. He gathered one-third of the Sarishans to his side, who subsequently convinced the Nerothians and Nierites to come to their aid, and the dissidents swore fealty to the Coryani Emperor.

The Emperor, as legend tells, confronted the Devil-King Uhxbractit on the field and battled him for eight days, fighting through the night, with neither gaining the advantage until a poisoned dart struck the Emperor, felling him. The two hosts surged forward, impelled on one side by righteous anger, and the other by depraved glee. By the onset of night, both withdrew, and the Emperor lay dying. No one is certain what happened, for the Cancerese and Coryani accounts differ, with the Coryani claiming the gods caused the earth to rise up and imprison the Infernal hosts, while the Cancerese claim it was their assistance winning them the day. In any event, the righteous host routed the remaining hordes far to north, breaking their rule for all time.

Intervening Years as the Outcast Province (0 AC to 760 I.C.)

After the Crusade of Light, as the Coryani call it, Onara saw the foundation of a new Imperium, the Coryani Empire. Canceri and all the liberated city-states swore allegiance to the Coryani crown. Though sworn to the empire, people always regarded the people of Canceri with suspicion, and the nation became a haven for exiles and outcasts. As life returned to normal, the Cancerese rebuilt Nishanpur, but left the ruins of the Devil-Kings' palaces to serve as a reminder of their culpability during the Time of Terror.

Four years after the fall of the Devil-Kings' rule, Vesiti val'Assanté called a Convocation of the Divine to establish a new church representing the entire pantheon and establish the proper tenets for each god. Twelve pyrmen determined the modes of acceptable worship in the Coryani Empire. Still nursing hatreds of the Sarishans, the Coryani pyrmen who represented Sarish, declared the proper recognition of Sarish requires one to bind and banish Infernals and to summon them and compel their service only in the most desperate times of need. Many Sarishans, who had long incorporated the service of Infernals in their culture, using them as servants, slaves, advisors and even lovers, refused to accept the new tenets imposed on them by the Mother Church. They broke from the faith, leading to a general purging of Cancerese Sarishans and forcing them to return to their holdings of their past.

The val'Mehan living in the Cancerese settlements viewed the returning brothers and sisters with scorn and derision, seeing them as a lesser people and traitors to their kind. Changing their name to val'Mehen, they created a schism in the family, which persists to the current day. Everywhere outside of the bleak province, Sarishan priests suffered terrible persecution and intolerance, driving most to Canceri.

The religious bigotry would continue for 370 years until the Legion of Searing Purity, an order of Nierite warriors who gained their fame and prominence when they fought alongside the first Coryani Emperor

against the Devil-Kings, attempted to assassinate Emperor Marellius val'Assanté, a noted opponent of the Nierite religion. Though the attempt failed, the assassins did kill the Patriarch of the Mother Church, Hulantin val'Assanté.

In response for the attempt, the emperor had the General of the Legion of Searing Purity, Erdul val'Virdan, arrested and executed. The new Patriarch disbanded the legion and banned the Nierite religion. The val'Virdan family was banished to Canceri where they once more settled in their homeland in the shadows of Nier's Spine. A few though sought refuge in Nishanpur, where the Sarishan and Nerothian religions were most prominent.

The Cancerese faiths received their final setback in 521 I.C., after a radical sect of Nerothians, called the Blight Bearers posited the true aspect of Neroth was as the God of Disease, and to honor him one must spread pestilence. The Blight Bearers actively practiced their faith, spreading contagion wherever they went, and the effects of their religious devotion wiped out entire communities. The Emperor saw this cult as a threat to the stability of the Empire. Thousands of refugees fled from the cities to escape the touch of the ravaging diseases, spreading it across the lands. While clerics of other religions moved to halt the spread, the Emperor reacted by banning the worship of Neroth throughout the empire. To avoid the intolerance and heightening violence against the priesthood, Nerothians fled en masse to Canceri, either settling in the necropolises in the south or in the now thriving city Nishanpur.

With Canceri's three faiths denigrated in the empire, even though the ban against Neroth was lifted after the crusade ended the Blight Bearer cult, the Cancerese felt alienated, condemned to their position as outcasts and exiles; second-class citizens in the Coryani Empire. Cancerese people could no longer travel through the southern lands. Many cities placed bans against open worship of Sarish, Neroth and Nier, keeping old grudges alive. With each new affront, resentment grew in Canceri, forming a social climate of frustration and anger needed for a prophet to emerge and lead the nation to freedom.

The Prophet Becherek

In Nishanpur in 744 I.C., Becherek was born. As he grew up in the quiet streets, amidst the hum of a city of whispers, he saw the squalor of his people, suffering under the oppressive rule of the tyrant emperor in Coryan. He saw the misery of a people forbidden to follow their hearts and minds, to worship whom they would, in the ways according to their beliefs. He watched as the emperor interfered with the succession of patriarchs in the Mother Church; he recognized the secular leaders influence as blasphemy. The Emperor banned the worship of the Cancerese deities in the Mother Church, and laws throughout the empire suppressed their worship even in the homes.

At 23, Becherek emerged as a vocal opponent of the Mother Church, and preached that the nobility had

failed the gods by allowing a secular head to determine the nature and composition of the deities in the Mother Church. Such betrayals would bring the vengeance of the gods onto mortals. To avert disaster, Becherek demanded the Mother Church reinstate the Neroth, Nier, and Sarish as members of the pantheon.

Becherek succeeded in Canceri, appealing to the simmering alienation in the hearts and minds of his people. Many people agreed with his central message, but more identified with the message of his self-proclaimed apostles, who warped Becherek's words, twisting them to suit their own purposes. Adding to his message, they demanded the three Cancere deities replace Illiir as the head of the pantheon, and to promote the lichlord of Nishanpur as the patriarch of the church, and this religious fervor in the north worried the rest of the empire. The Mother Church denounced Becherek and his followers as heretics, threatening to excommunicate them if they did not recant their blasphemous message and turn over the prophet.

The Emperor sent Longinus and a Century of the Legion of Radiant Glory to Nishanpur to arrest the priest. He and his soldiers arrested Becherek, who himself demanded a trial to clarify his position, but the mobs in Nishanpur, who saw Becherek as the voice of the gods incarnate blocked Longinus and his men from leaving the city. In response to the crowds, Longinus cut Becherek's head from his body, and tossed the remains to the gathered crowds, stating the most famous phrase spoken in Canceri, 'If you wish to keep your Prophet, then have him.' As many recount in other sources, the crowds erupted in frenzy and tore apart the Century with their bare hands, precipitating the start of Canceri's struggle for independence.

Word of the tragedy at Nishanpur spread throughout Canceri, and the Val families roused their armies to go to war with the Empire, attacking the Coryani garrisons in the province. In the south, val'Mordane unleashed an army of undead horrors to press southward. The val'Mehan used their Infernal servants to divine the Emperor's actions and evading his efforts to counter the Cancere forces, while the val'Virdan family descended from Nier's Spine to press the Coryani legions south, crushing them under the weight of the religious fervor. Coryan, already embroiled in a war against Khitani, was helpless to respond.

Having removed all trace of the Coryani from the newborn nation, the nobility gathered in the new capital of Nishanpur to take oaths to the service of their gods, whereby they founded a new religion, the Church of the Dark Triumvirate. From their numbers, they elected a replacement for the Coryani Patriarch to serve as the head of the new church. Called the Dark Apostate, he led his people south to destroy the Empire and install himself as the new head of the Mother Church.

The gathered hosts of the Cancere Church stalled their march in the Blight Mires, for the Province

of Milandir, fearing the disturbances on their border, withdrew their forces from the Khitani front, seceded from the empire, and moved to defend their borders from the Cancere invaders. The fighting claimed the life of the Dark Apostate Arthmoor, repelling the host and preserving the south.

The Church of the Dark Triumvirate descended into a power struggle, as the nobility sought to replace their deceased leader with a strong Dark Apostate. The Nihang of Sohbuk, a powerful lich named Hegrish val'Mordane, fearing another Sword of the Heavens, negotiated with the Sarishans to marginalize Nierites and keep them from attaining political power. This resulted in a succession of weak Sarishan Dark Apostates until Hegrish emerged to seize the position in 827 I.C.

Heretic Wars (984 to 1012 I.C.)

In the next century, Canceri rebuilt itself as an independent state, free to exult in the wickedness of their respective faiths, free from the oppression and restrictions of the Coryani throne. With this newfound freedom saw the return of an underground sect, the Blight Bearers. From Canceri came a vicious plague spreading along the Milandir trade routes into the nation's heart, killing thousands of infants and children. Dubbed "The Infants' Sleep" for its victims, it was clear the source of the plague originated in Canceri. Shortly after the onset of the plague, assassins slaughtered the Patriarch of the Mother Church, prompting the Mother Church to call for a crusade to cleanse Canceri, a task the Milandisians were duty-bound to undertake. The Milandisian host crossed into Canceri in the Spring of 984 I.C., marking the beginning of the Heretic Wars.

The first offensive, led by Duke Sigmund val'Holryn of Tralia crushed the Cancere forces, sacking Kielmun and mounting a new offensive to take Ventaka. However, ever did the Nerothians respond with treachery – poisoning their wells and infecting the living and dead with lethal plagues, thus eroding the will and strength of the occupying forces. The Milandisian forces fled back to their homeland abandoning the crusade for safer and certain ventures.

In the following years, Milandir mounted additional crusades, but each more expensive and embarrassing than the last. Lest the war fail, Milandir beseeched the Mother Church for financial assistance, to which the Patriarch agreed, funding their efforts, and with the Church's help, Milandir revitalized its armies. Rising to the forefront of the Milandisian host was Count Aeorin val'Holryn, youngest son of Duke Sigmund val'Holryn. With Aeorin at the head of the armies, the Milandisians enjoyed a quick succession of victories, using their heavy cavalry to great advantage. Aeorin crushed the Nerothians and Sarishans at Kielmun and Sohbuk, and pressed on to Nishanpur, which was defended by the Nierites. Unwilling to fight the invading armies, the Nierites prepared for a



siege, but Aeorin knew he could not sustain his troops through a siege against a well-defended city with other enemies haunting the lands. Thus, he moved on to Ventaka, where he believed he could acquire the supplies needed to mount a long siege against the City of Secrets. However, sometime in the night, Aeorin vanished and many people suspect Sarishan treachery, as Sarishans once used similar tactics against their own people when the Imperium first invaded Canceri thousands of years in the past. Perhaps, the last Devil-King had a hand in Aeorin's fate. Whatever happened, the truth has never surfaced. The following morning, the Nerothians, led by a vanguard of undead horrors swarmed out of Ventaka, and each Milandisian carcass strengthened the number of the undead host, rising to fight their Milandisian brethren. The Milandisian forces fled before the onslaught, and while the undead forces pursued for a time, they allowed their enemy to flee to their homeland so the forces there would recount the horrors found in Canceri and never return.

The Sword of the Heavens Reborn (1025 I.C.)

For the next fourteen years, things were quiet in Canceri. It seemed the people were content to stay away from the intrigues of their southern neighbors.

The Church of the Dark Triumvirate had made no further attempts on the Mother Church and relations between Coryan, Milandir, and Canceri achieved a peace. This changed in 1025 I.C., as Canceri underwent a series of events, signaling great change for the Cancerese people.

It began with the assassination of the Dark Apostate, the lich Hegrish val'Mordane. His death jeopardized the Church of the Dark Triumvirate, leaving them without a leader. The Order of the Spear, a group of adventures, uncovered a plot between the assassin and Palic val'Mehen, to bring an Ordainer from Ymandragore to help them complete the Ritual of Genesis.

When the Order of the Spear revealed the assassin to the ruling council, a violent uproar ensued, spreading through the city. The assassin, aware his identity was uncovered, fled into the vaults beneath the city. The Order of the Spear followed and discovered the Ordainer completing the Ritual of Genesis, using the magic from a mysterious magical font buried deep beneath the city. The font was a frozen pillar of fire, and from it, something, or someone had escaped. As was soon to be realized much to the chagrin of those on the surface, that someone was no less than Leonydas,

the Sword of the Heavens. Freed from millennia of imprisonment, the Sword of the Heavens strode into the Council of the Nihang and in a fury and with fiery wrath, achieved that which had eluded him so many centuries before – the conquest of Nishanpur.

While he marched through the streets of the City of Secrets, Leonydas created a fiery column stretching into the heavens as a signal for any followers who had awaited his return. From deep within the Hinterlands, ancient followers of the Sword of the Heavens emerged, seeing the column as a fulfillment of their ancient prophecies. The descendants of the Swords of Nier living in Erduk made the journey bringing with them the Sisters of Nier, a band of Larissan oracles who had followed them into exile. Of these sisters, the Mother of the Order, a foul and ancient hag, pledged her services as Leonydas' advisor and as a means by which those descendants of the val'Emman who hid as val'Virdan could be discovered and purged.

Within months, Leonydas solidified his control over Theocracy with the help of the Cancerese Nierites. To these fervent adherents of the Flame Lord, the return of the Sword of the Heavens was a miracle and a blessing. Since childhood, Nierite children were told stories of the incredible feats performed by Leonydas in



the dim past as well as his disappearance and prophesized return. Even the practical Eremis val'Virdan was struck by the magnitude of the event,, yet soon even he would begin to question whether Leonydas' miraculous rebirth was a blessing...or a curse.

The Sword of the Heavens quickly asserted his rule over the Nihang Council and abrogated the office of the Dark Apostate, declaring himself the ultimate ruler of Canceri. With the arrival of the Erdukeen, Leonydas quickly put them into positions of power, undoing generations of nepotism and stripping many of the val'Mehan and the val'Virdan of their titles and station. Those that were truly competent were required to work twice as hard to prove themselves in the eyes of the Sword of the Heavens. It is a testament to the ability and dedication of Eremis val'Virdan that he quickly regained his station and was granted a high rank within the armies of Leonydas.

Most troubling to all to the val'Virdan was the seemingly random manner in which Leonydas chose certain high level officials of the family to be stripped of their status and duties , reassigning them to some of the most menial and degrading work imaginable. Many, like the esteemed historian Khelimre' was plucked from his ancient library and forced to make bricks for the road along the Red March. Those that balked at their new stations were summarily executed, quickly eliminating any dissention.

What was unknown to any but the highest echelons of Leonydas' inner circle was that these randomly chosen val'Virdan were anything but. Using the divining powers of the Sisters of Nier, Leonydas was able to discover that the hated val'Emman had somehow survived the purges millennia ago and had flourished hidden within the very bosom of the family that they had for so long sought to humiliate and destroy. When he discovered that the val'Emman name was lost to history and that their descendants had no inkling of their heritage, Leonydas was highly amused at the irony. He vowed to first make these val'Emman suffer and then finish another unachieved objective – the complete extermination of the val'Emman family once and for all.

Leonydas demanded complete submission by the aristocratic families of Canceri; what was not received willingly was coerced by force. While the val'Virdan acquiesced to the Sword of the Heavens due to their religious beliefs and the val'Mehan did the same by reason of political expedience and self-preservation, the val'Mordane balked at the demand. The most ancient of the Nerothians had seen whole civilizations rise and fall to dust enough times to know that power was ephemeral. In their cold and logical eyes, Leonydas would burn brightly and leave an ugly scar upon Onara, but would eventually extinguish himself. Thus the val'Mordane reasoned that the best course of action was to seal their cities and await for the inevitable to occur. Try as he might to crack these domes of night, Leonydas had to eventually console

himself with the fact that while he could not control their undead armies, neither could they be of help to his opponents. He eventually decided to leave a modest force to contain the sealed cities of the Nerothians and begin preparations for his true objective – the retaking of the First City.

At the forefront of his assembled army, the Sword of the Heavens led over one hundred thousand Nierite warriors out of Canceri and towards the First City. Once again, Nier's blessing was upon Leonydas as none could hope to defeat any army which he led. On his way to the Blessed Lands, Leonydas devastated the small town of Ashvan, almost as an after thought. It was here that Leonydas faced the Knight Protector of Ashvan, the wielder of the mighty Spear of the Lohgin, and impaled him with the holy weapon, leaving him pinned to the chapel of Illiir for all to witness.

Eremis val'Virdan saw the blind cruelty with which Leonydas swept all those in his way. He had known this Knight Protector of Ashvan and had even faced him in combat once and knew him to be an honorable man. Leonydas destroyed him with all the thought that a child puts in plucking the wings from a trapped fly. Adding insult to this, Leonydas then ordered the systematic slaughter of every living thing in Ashvan, man, woman, child or beast, as an offering to Nier. Not able to offer such an unworthy sacrifice to the Lord of Battle, Eremis val'Virdan, the former Nihang of Nier, refused. The Sword of the Heavens interpreted this as a final sign of weakness from these perverse Cancere Nierites and dismissed Eremis and his followers from his armies. For his arrogance, Leonydas ordered Eremis taken to Nishanpur for public execution; he was to be crucified and his body denied the cremation given to pious Nierites. Ironically, this death sentence may have saved Eremis' life.

The Citadel of Silence (1027 I.C.)

Before launching his crusade to retake the First City, Leonydas had been warned by Basuhe, the head of the Sisters of Nier, that the Avatar of the Oath Breaker had once again taken human form. She warned him that, like it had done millennia before, this creature would once more prove his undoing should it not be dealt with, once and for all. After many sacrifices and burnt offerings performed in the old ways, Basuhe divined that this creature could only be killed within the holy inner chamber of the Citadel of Nier. There, when both he and the Avatar were present, the Dagger of Annihilation would appear. With it, the Avatar could be permanently destroyed. Satisfied, Leonydas turned to leave when Basuhe uttered one final utterance through her toothless maw, "Only one will emerge from the Citadel of Silence, Lord. The other shall suffer as few have in this life or the next."

For the first time in his life, Leonydas val'Virdan was given pause, for he knew that Basuhe spoke not with her own voice, but that of Nier Himself.

Undeterred, Leonydas led his army unerringly to the ancient Citadel of Nier in the Blessed Lands. Once he arrived, he had his army camp about the Citadel and with only his personal guard, entered the ruined fortress. What occurred therein is known only to those who entered. What is known is that the Sword of the Heavens and his entourage never emerged from the Citadel and that when the black moon loomed at its apex over Onara, the Nierite army was attacked from beneath the very ground by their ancient nemesis – the Voiceless Ones. Within hours, Leonydas' army was cut to less than half its number as the immense nest that had lain beneath the fortress unleashed its untold numbers. By dawn, the mighty army of the Sword of the Heavens was reduced to a paltry forty thousand warriors as it retreated in a half-panicked state back to Canceri. Though the Voiceless Ones did not pursue, the Nierites were about to be dealt a final, devastating blow at the Battle of the Four Armies.

The Battle of the Four Armies (1027 I.C.)

While the remaining army of the Swords of Nier retreated, the rest of the world was still rushing to respond to Leonydas' march to the First City. The mobilized army of Milandir marched west, to try and defend their ravaged countryside. Several legions from Coryan marched north, under orders from Emperor Calsestus val'Assante'. A final force, a mere one hundred men from Canceri itself, resistance fighters led by the rescued and now renegade Nierite general Eremis val'Virdan, headed south from Nishanpur. The Swords of Nier made for the northwest passage into Canceri, between the Vosewalden and the Sulfur Marshes. It was the only passage that they themselves had not burned clean of resources, as they never anticipated a retreat. At the town of Heliadaquae, near the Canceri border, these four armies collided.

The battle was bloody and long, but it was treachery that at last turned the tide. The Coryani troops, led by the Defender of the Empire, Menisis val'Tensen, were the last to join the order of battle. It appeared at first that he would join the Swords, as they were preparing for his arrival. But when the Legion of the Defiant Shield reached the center of the Sword formations, they turned and attacked their supposed allies. This unexpected betrayal broke the back of the Swords' units. Over half perished, and the rest beat a hasty and disorganized retreat.

Of the hundred Cancerean resistance fighters led by Eremis, a scant dozen survived the conflict, but they were judged to be equal to the worth of a legion. Most were awarded the Scarab, a high military honor of the old Theocracy of Canceri.

Canceri under the Swords (1027-1028 I.C.)

The disappearance of Leonydas and the rout of the Swords of Nier may have caused the rest of Onara to breathe a collective sigh of relief, but it did little to affect the affairs of Canceri. Before departing, Leonydas had left the Autocrat of the Swords of Nier, Quintus Attulus val'Virdan, in control of Nishanpur, and thus of Canceri, in name if not in fact. Quintus' rise to power had been prophesied, and tied to that of Leonydas, by the Sisters of Nier. Thus, even with Leonydas gone, he sought to continue what he saw as his holy duty. He ruthlessly sought to suppress the religious tenets of the Dark Triumvirate in his first year. He crucified thousands throughout the country, instituted martial law in Nishanpur, and even sent a group of spies to attempt to infiltrate Ventaka and collapse the great dome.

The fall of the Godswall turned the eyes of Onara northward again. When the Coryani Emperor and self-declared Patriarch of the Mother Church Calsestus val'Assante' later declared that the tenets of the Swords of Nier were to be considered the accepted and orthodox form of Nierite worship in the empire, and furthermore that Quintus was named the provincial governor of the Hinterlands, things became even more tense. The pacification of Canceri, and its re-absorption as a province of the Coryani Empire was not a publicly stated goal, but many feared it would become such. This view was reinforced when Inquisitors from the Mother Church and the ancient Mother Church ArchPrelate of Canceri, the lich Shaitan val'Mordane, came to Nishanpur. The city became a powder keg.

Throughout the year 1028, religious festivals in Nishanpur and beyond became magnets for violence. Followers of the Swords of Nier and the Mother Church sought to repress what they considered 'heretical' practices, while the Cancerean defended their traditional forms of worship. The Autocrat of the Swords of Nier himself was implicated in the poisoning of his predecessor, and the disbanded Council of the Nihangs began to once again meet in secret.

The Battle of Nishanpur (1028 I.C.)

Open violence finally erupted at the end of the year. Both the Autocrat, and native Cancerean forces under the nominal leadership of Eremis val'Virdan, had been quietly rallying support for some time, each to try and overthrow the other. Finally, the flashpoint was reached. The Autocrat sent his most loyal men, directed by the divinatory power of the Sisters of Nier, to arrest the members of the former Nihang Council during the night and all but three were captured. Eremis was reported killed and Palic val'Mehen and Porphal val'Mordane, the enigmatic Nihang of Neroth, could

not be found. The next morning the Autocrat, backed by not only his Swords, but also by Inquisitors of the Mother Church, declared the official dissolution of the Church of the Dark Triumvirate. The city that had been smoldering for years exploded.

Palic, with a newly restored Eremis at his side, stepped forward as the leader of the forces of the Dark Triumvirate. Having evaded capture, he rallied the Cancerese loyal to their faith behind him. To the surprise of many, though, it was neither Palic nor Eremis who directed the battle for the Dark Triumvirate forces. Eremis had other plans, and Palic turned over command of the troops to a newcomer, whom he admitted to be a tactically superior commander.

This newcomer was in fact, a powerful Marilith. It was rumored that she was in fact an unbound Infernal, come from north of the Godswall, although this was not proven. The Marilith general was assassinated early in the battle, by a crack squad comprised almost completely of holy champions of the Mother Church. These warriors of the Church infiltrated their way behind the lines of the Dark Triumvirate forces, reputedly with the aid of Spymaster Samiz and killed her using a strange magical device of unknown provenance.

The Swords of Nier, supported by many loyal followers of the Mother Church, sought to finally break the backbone of the Cancerese heretics. In recognition of this act of faith, Patriarch-Emperor Calceus even sent a gift north to the Autocrat; the Standard of the Legion of the Black Sun. But the gift never arrived, as the Inquisition force escorting the Standard was ambushed by Dark Triumvirate forces just inside the city walls. The Standard was claimed, and taken to Palic and Eremis.

Eremis, meanwhile, directed a group of adventurers to recover the Crown of Shadows, the black iron and jewel-studded crown of the Dark Apostate, from the tomb of Hegrish val'Mordane, where it had rested since the former Apostate's final death. These adventurers plumbed the darkness of Nishanpur's ancient catacombs, where they met the guardians of Hegrish's tomb. The guardians told them to wait, as the time was not yet right for the Crown's return. But these adventurers sought to name Eremis, whom they believed to be a righteous man, to the Apostasy and thus in their own eyes, redeem Canceri. When they emerged victorious, they presented the Crown to Eremis, but found themselves thwarted when Eremis refused to allow himself to be crowned. Eremis turned the Crown of Canceri over to Palic, who then crowned himself before a stunned crowd.

At sunset, both sides were surprised when the Legion of the Black Sun itself arrived. The undead army marched its way up to the Corpse Gate of Nishanpur and Palic ordered the gate open. As he

bore their standard, he expected the eternal forces to join the battle on his side. This was not the case. When the gate was opened, the legion marched against those that held their standard. Their only goal was to reclaim what was rightfully theirs. The standard was hastily disassembled, and the legion fought back from the gates, barely. The exact current location of the cursed standard is unknown, although it is known that the legion did not reclaim it.

Throughout the night, the city was turned into a charnel house. When Illiir's light graced the land again, Nishanpur's streets ran with blood and gargoyles feasted upon the corpses.

In the Wake of Battle (1028 I.C. to present)

Open warfare in Nishanpur was short-lived, but bloody and ultimately inconclusive. Canceri now exists as a divided state. Technically, the Swords of Nier still retain official control of the country. In practice, the Autocrat has been forced to lighten his control upon the people, as he no longer has sufficient resources to enforce authoritarian measures. The Dark Apostate in exile, Palic, issues orders to his faithful, while the temples in Nishanpur are officially venues of Mother Church worship. Nishanpur is ruled by the iron fist of the Autocrat, but the rest of the country is almost totally devoid of the Swords' influence.

Even the Nierites themselves have divided. The purging of those deemed 'unworthy' by the Sisters of Nier alienated many, who had no knowledge or memory of the ancient feud with the val'Emman. Further, even some of the traditional practices of sacrifice held by the val'Virdan of Nier's Spine were deemed heretical, and outlawed by the Inquisitors of the Mother Church. In order to soothe the rebellious factions within the Nierite faith, the Autocrat has recently announced amnesty to all those of 'tainted' blood, as well as to sentenced criminals, who agree to stand a term of service with the Swords, enforcing the Patriarch-Emperor's recently decreed border treaty with Milandir.

The vast carnage after the battle in Nishanpur, and those previous battles outside the city, has given rise to many rumors of plague and pestilence sweeping the countryside. The harsh winters of the past few years have only made matters worse. But by and large, life for the residents of the countryside of Canceri has changed little over the years and centuries. They are still oppressed, still deprived and still driven by desperation or desire to acts of utter depravity. The civil wars, betrayals, bloodshed and turmoil have only enhanced those natural traits in the population. What this means to the rest of the world in these dark times is yet to be seen.

Chapter Two

Canceri Society

To an outsider, Canceri appears to be a nation of corruption; a lawless place, unfettered by morality, ethics, or any reasonable restriction on one's actions and beliefs. It may seem that because the Cancerese adhere to blasphemous beliefs, and because they embrace the corrupted beliefs of the Dark Triumvirate, that all Cancerese are black hearted villains. In many ways, outsiders are correct; the people of Canceri are a depraved lot, but they seek redemption through darkness, for through evil, one finds purification, and ultimately, redemption.

Castes

Cancerese society consists of three feudal estates: the peasantry, the nobility and the Awilu—the clergy. Throughout its dark history, Canceri has bowed and scraped to the Sarishans, who ruled in the open or in the shadows of Imperium or Coryani governors. As they were beholden to these manipulative leaders, the rule of religion has always had a presence in the land, and came to dominate the region's political system under the oppressive rule of the Church of the Dark Triumvirate and the Dark Apostate. Eventually, the estate of nobles folded inside the clergy, and while distinct, they are close enough in role and function as to be inseparable. In each of the following three sections are details of the three estates, defining the lives of each based upon the families they either serve or are a part of and the gods they worship.

Wardu

The lowest level of Cancerese society is the wardu caste, the slaves. Comprised of captives from past wars, legal penalties, or accident of birth, they lack any rights, and suffer under the weight of their station. Slavery is legal in Canceri, and encouraged. It is a closed system, once a slave, always a slave, as are the slaves' children. Escape from this caste is rare, and only the canniest slaves can ever rise above their lots.

Wardu can leave their caste if they can earn enough money to purchase their bodies from their masters. However, few masters allow their slaves to earn money, and so this route is often closed. The last way to escape slavery is to be chosen by the gods. Any slave exhibiting divine power elevates to the Awilu, or priest, caste.

Male Canceri slaves may not wear beards, and most wear plain and nondescript robes. Slaves serve in any capacity needed, from courtesans to laborers. They have no choice over their fates, and must do whatever their masters' command, on pain of death.

This northern region features the greatest slave population in Canceri, though slavery is a part of life throughout the nation. Nierites use slaves to perform a variety of tasks, most in manufacturing, agriculture, and construction, but they also serve as



miners, working the dim tunnels to extract the ores hidden beneath the mountains. In fact, there are many more slaves than there are non-soldiering peasants. Though military service requires a single year, many remain soldiers for their whole lives. The peasant population not slaves or soldiers, fill the necessary gaps in Nierite society, becoming slavers, artisans, merchants, and the like.

Mushkenu

From the lowliest farmer to the most decadent of nobles, all levels in Cancere society feel the Church of the Dark Triumvirate's presence. Signs of it are everywhere. Religious icons depicting former Dark Apostates, imagery of significant holy events, such as when Neroth slew Illiir at the dawn of time, spawning night and the decapitation of Becherek are all present in art and architecture. Consequently, most people of Canceri see the Church as the means for their freedom from the drudgery of the life as a peasant, and seek the blessings of the church, performing whatever duties necessary to receive the sacred consecration.

Roles

The mushkenu, the peasantry, fulfils all the standard roles as peasants in other lands. Most are farmers, but a few are merchants, shopkeepers, bankers, tinkers, and hedge wizards. While they hold no political power, they are the spine of Cancere society. Through these poor souls condemned to live lives under the oppressive weight of religious propaganda and suffering the abuses of the higher estates, Canceri survives.

In the south, and wherever the priesthood of Neroth is the most influential, the artisans and torturers stand to make the best livings. With domed cities, vast necropolises, and intricate architecture, stonemasons and architects compete for the most difficult jobs, grasping at the opportunity to achieve greatness and immortality through their craft. As a result, val'Mordane cities feature the most breathtaking architecture in Onara, with haunting cityscapes, towering spires, with lifelike gargoyles, shadowy arches, and a myriad of narrow streets where one could get lost, permanently.

Priests of Neroth rarely execute criminals, finding prolonged punishment to be a better alternative, for death holds release and provides a second chance to the victim. In the case of virtuous criminals, such as foreign priests from Coryani, or heretical priests and followers of the dark faiths, they might find Paradise through a merciful death. Instead, they demand inventive torturers, who are experts in keeping their victims alive. A person skilled in the arts of pain can make a good living in Nerothian cities, for there is no shortage of subjects to be found.

In the east, where the val'Mehan family holds sway, merchants and wizards represent the elite of the mushkenu. As Nishanpur is the seat of power in the land, both politically and commercially, the higher estates allow greater latitude among the merchants, both foreign and domestic, for each transaction bolsters the nation's economy, allowing the Church of the Dark Triumvirate to retain its hold on the population. Nishanpur and other Sarishan enclaves feature trade consortiums, open-air marketplaces, reduced tariffs on visiting caravans and more.



Magi are also in high demand. Sarishans regard wizards as useful tools to acquire esoteric or forbidden knowledge; subjects sometimes unavailable to the demon binders and clerics. Universities specializing arcane studies have a place in all of the val'Mehan holdings, drawing students from all over. To retain interest in the occult arts, the Sarishans funded the construction and subsequent maintenance of the Great Library of Nishanpur, believed to be the largest repository of lore in all of Onara.

In the north, the land is dry and rocky, with little land suitable for agriculture. Most food comes through trade, or from the hardy goats and sheep grazing in the Komaal Hills or on the lower slopes of Nier's Spine. Soldiers enjoy the greatest freedoms among the peasantry caste. All citizens, male and female, must serve in the military for at least one year. Training for military service is brutal, claiming one of twenty citizens in the service. However, despite the severity of the instruction, this service is the best opportunity for peasants to escape a hard life in a deadly terrain. Those who excel and rise through the ranks, find their wants and needs met by the clergy.

The soldier's life is not an easy one. When not used in the interminable wars with raiding Milandisian nobles, they patrol the Wall of the Gods, fighting against goblins, troglodytes and others. The northern region faces attacks from monsters from these mountains, and the Nierites, along with some assistance from the dwarves of Tir Botaq, defend their lands.

Clothing

Beyond the city walls, Canceri is an inhospitable land full of dark and terrible creatures, free-willed undead, hungry for the taste of living flesh, human and animal predators, and things indescribable. In addition, there is little to subsist on in the wild. Little edible grows here. Hence, most people in Canceri cluster in the population centers, finding security in their numbers, and fearing what haunts the night. The dense populations results in a near obsession with cleanliness. Canceri culture demands people to bathe at least once every other day, and maintain their clothing. Perfumes, make-up, and scented oils are common, even among the lowest of the low. All men wear trimmed and curled beards. Unlike the Awilu, they do not cap their beards.

Peasants wear worn tunics and breeches. Browns, black, and grey are all preferred colors for they do not draw attention to their wearers. Most Canceri prefer ill-fitting garments to conceal the shape of their bodies to avoid the notice of a lascivious noble or priest who would use them, or give them as a gift to a terrible servant.

Customs by Region

In Canceri, one's service to the Church of the Dark Triumvirate determines the quality of life. The better one's standing in the eyes of the priesthood, the better the quality of foods, pleasures, and freedoms that are rewarded. Therefore, many peasants perform terrible acts in the name of their faith in the hopes of advancing to their standing. The Church inculcates an air of paranoia and suspicion in its populace by rewarding informants, and meting harsh punishments for what others might believe trivial crimes. Many times, children betray their parents to the priesthood, brainwashed by propaganda and pious devotion to the state-endorsed dark practices. Murder, rape, and thievery are common occurrences in Canceri. While not legal per se, they rarely result in punishment. Neighbors poison their neighbors, and as long as they have no witnesses, no one investigates. Only in the instances of the most famous or prominent people, is there state retribution, for some murders cause greater harm than acceptable.

People throughout Canceri have varying customs depending on their gods and geographical location. For example, in Nishanpur, people never speak louder than a whisper, so communication occurs in proximity. To foreigners this is disconcerting as it is a clear violation of their personal space to have a stranger come close and whisper in their ears.

North

As mentioned above, all Nierites serve in the military for at least a year. Many do not survive the basic training, succumbing to the beatings of their sergeants, murder by their fellow soldiers, or through a ritual known as the Cleansing. In this violent tradition, once a month, a company votes for the weakest member of their unit. The company then beats the elect. If the victim survives, they must serve as before on pain of death.

Central

In Nerothian lands, the priesthood expects its citizens to flagellate themselves with a Reshaz, a small scourge with teeth tied to the ends of the lashes. The elders teach the young to suffer pain by helping them whip themselves with the device. So brutal are the beatings in some cases, they debilitate the faithful. Infections are common, and many succumb to disease, in accordance with Neroth's divine plan, or so say his priests.

In addition to their self-abuse, the Canceri of this region also practice *melioramentum*, a regular prayer to the undead masters who live in the darkness of the vast necropolises. Not all peasants practice this ceremony, but many do at least once a week. They gather before the entrance of their necropolis, and





prostrate themselves three times, begging “Bless us, lords,” and the third, “Lords pray to Neroth for this unworthy, that He deliver him from an evil death and lead him to a good end.” This act began when the Brothers of the Good Death, another sect of Neroth, suggested a distinction between deaths, whereby a good death is rewarded with sentence in unlife while an evil death, was a final plunge into oblivion.

East

The Infernals demand blood sacrifices in exchange for their service. To determine the sacrifice, the Sarishans of each community host a lottery from the peasant class. Each week, they draw a name. Sometimes they use the victim, other times they let the victim go, at their leisure. Those selected as sacrificial victims suffer, as sometimes they do not die, and become the playthings of the summoned fiends.

People in the east view marriage as an opportunity to forge alliances between families. All marriages here are arranged, but they are not bound by caste, though such matches are rare. The ceremony begins when with the groom and his parents bring gifts to the bride’s father. With the gifts given, both the groom and bride wear veils, and the presiding priest makes a small incision on each of their arms. From the blood drawn, both sign the contract of the marriage, and both remove their veils.

The Vals

When Illiir tasked the Valinor, the divine servants of the gods, to mate with the Chosen families, he created a race, born of the divine and human, to lead humanity into the Golden Age, serving as guardians and rulers of humanity, reflecting the will of the gods through mortal agency. However, though each of these great families carried the divine spark of the god whom they serve, it was the human elements that formed the capacity for error, freewill and evil. The Val families are not always exclusive to a particular nation, though they tend to live in cultures and social climates amenable to their patron deity. Canceri is home to three major Val families, each one favored by Nier, Neroth, and Sarish. Details on each family follow.

The Vals of Canceri are far less adaptable than the humans in their care, but managed to survive by virtue of the divine blood flowing through their veins. Vals have a number of special abilities and distinguishing characteristics separating them from the masses of humanity. Aside from their universal grey eyes, the val’Mehan have stocky frames and dark hair. The Cancereese val’Mordane are thin, emaciated, with a jaundiced appearance and a shaved head to keep lice and other underground vermin from nesting there. The val’Virdan, however, have bright red hair and a ruddy appearance. They have calloused hands from regular

training with weaponry, and athletic frames. Canceri Vals are unchanged from the statistics as presented in the *Player’s Guide to Arcanis*.

Roles

All nobles of Canceri, those descendants of the Val families vowing to guide and protect humanity, are part of one of the three congregations of the Church of the Dark Triumvirate, in accordance with the oaths sworn by their forefathers. As members of their respective faiths, they function as priest in names, though many are not clerics, capable of casting divine magic. In addition, nobles may hold any of the higher ranks in the Church, from the Nihang, a member of the council who elects the Dark Apostate, to the Dark Apostate himself.

The val’Mehan

The val’Mehan family live in or around Nishanpur, though they settled in the eastern reaches of Canceri, and they still claim Stanivel as well. Called the City of Sarish, the val’Mehan have always controlled the city, politically and theologically. Beginning with the Time of Terror, they asserted their influence by siding with the Devil-Kings and saving the Cancereese from obliteration by preparing the way for the Infernal masters. However, when the Coryani Emperor drove away the Devil-Kings during the first Crusade of Light, the val’Mehan family divided. Half joined the emperor, at the behest of a Devil-King in disguise, while the rest maintained their service to their Infernal masters. From this schism arose the modern division within the family.

Eventually, the southern val’Mehan returned to Canceri as the Coryani Empire took a hard stance against certain aspects in the worship of Sarish, but when some of them returned to their homeland, they found no welcome from their cousins, facing ostracism and prejudice, as many never forgot the betrayal during the Crusade of Light. In response to these ‘softer’ Sarishans, the val’Mehan of Canceri changed the spelling of their name to divorce themselves from their treasonous brethren.

Now the val’Mehan and the val’Mehen oppose one another. The val’Mehen family holds the highest positions in Canceri’s government, refusing to relinquish their hold on the nation’s power. The val’Mehen go to great lengths to distinguish themselves from the val’Mehan, refusing to marry them, and turning to relatives within their own family or Infernals instead. The val’Mehan wage a secret war against their former brethren, seeing them as weak deformed parodies of their family’s former might.

Regardless of whether val’Mehen or val’Mehan, they all traffic with powerful demons and devils from the Infernal Planes. Constant exposure to

these alien forces takes a toll on these priests, who supplement their powers with hallucinogens and narcotics, blood sacrifices, or other depraved, such as mating with bound Infernals, torturing slaves, or other depraved acts. Worse, among the val'Mehen, incestuous couplings are common, with sociopaths or idiots as the result.

The val'Mordane

The val'Mordane family in Canceri claims the ancient city Ventaka as home, though they have enclaves in Kielmun and the dead city Sohbuk. Long time advocates of Neroth, the val'Mordane suffered terrible persecution throughout their history. The aggression of the other families forced the val'Mordane family to overcome any disagreements and present a united face to outsiders.

Of all the families in Canceri, the val'Mordane are the most secretive and reserved, hiding their intentions behind porcelain masks they wear everywhere they go in public. Surrounded by the air of the macabre, either because they are themselves undead, or have trafficked in death so much, a miasma of evil clings to them, resulting in most people shunning them. It is customary for nobles of this family to seek undeath in life, preparing the way for their reanimation, hoping to ascend through their suffering to join their god Neroth in the Underworld.

Withdrawn and secretive, most never see the relationship within the family. When interacting with others, they appoint a "voice" who removes the mask when in council to represent their interests. This speaker is always young and beautiful, skilled in speech, and many times having training as a bard. In gatherings, the council of Nihangs always respects the voice, for he or she rarely speaks, and when so, it is always with considered words. The val'Mordane family, because of their self-imposed isolation has the least influence in the affairs of the nation.

The val'Virdan

Ruling the north uncontested, with holds in Lowach, Vrain, and Hunder, the val'Virdan are active participants in Canceri's politics. Marginalized by the other two families throughout Canceri's long history, they assert themselves now, realizing the necessity of politics among the corrupt Sarishans and the silent Nerothians in order to secure a place for the Nierites in the future. Most, though, are content to remain outside of the intrigues of the nation, stirring only when national matters would affect them.

Everything in life is to serve the church. Therefore, they meet outsiders, who do not uphold Nier as the greatest of the martial gods, with suspicion and prejudice. Towards other families, the val'Virdan family recognizes their importance, especially towards

the security of the Church, but most of the lesser members have as little to do with them as possible.

Since the Heretic Wars, members of the val'Virdan family have staked a claim to the political climate in Nishanpur. They form complex networks of informants and agents, organized in a similar fashion to a squad, whereby they can distribute information among their operatives in the hopes if one dies others may still act according to their plans. Many hold positions among the Knights of the Red Fist, as well as other prominent social positions like administering the Great Library.

The release of the Sword of the Heavens compromised all of their efforts to integrate into Canceri's government, especially with the return of the Swords of Nier. The val'Virdan governing Canceri fell, some to serve as peasants until cleansed of their heretical and blasphemous views. It remains to be seen what future the Nierites will have in Canceri. Since the destruction of the Sword of the Heaven's main force and the subsequent stalemate in the battle for the control over Canceri, the val'Virdan have mostly returned to their ancestral lands, jealously guarding it against further incursions by the Erdukeen Swords of Nier. For now, they are content to contain the Nierites of Erduk within Nishanpur and marshal their forces for the day that they can finally wipe these intruders from Canceri.

Clothing

Like the estate of peasantry, the noble estate is obsessed by cleanliness. Exotic colognes, perfumes, and scented oils are common purchases for the nation's elite. In addition, most nobles wear make-up to conceal the ravages of the harsh climate, accentuating their strong features, while concealing the blemishes.

Clothing varies with the family. The val'Mehan and val'Mehen prefer loose robes of a purple hue in honor of their deity. Depending on the individual, clothing can range from the sensual and revealing, thinly concealing the well-formed physique beneath, to sloppy haphazard attire, worn for comfort and utility over any sense of fashion. Unlike the val'Mordane below, members of this family wear all manner of styles, ranging from exotic form-fitting leathers to conservative breeches and ruffled silk shirts of the Milandisian style.

The val'Mordane, as described above, wear identical painted porcelain masks to conceal their features. No one ever knows what a val'Mordane looks like, unless encountering a voice, and then, the speaker may not be a good representation of the family's common appearance. Most val'Mordane wear the same nondescript brown robes common to their clergy.



All know the val'Virdan family for their penchant for wearing armor. It is uncommon for them to be without some form of protection. They prefer heavier armor, like full plate, rather than the softer clothing and decadence of the Sarishans. Nierite armor features flanges with fiery spurs and hooks protruding from all over their armor. Accented with a liberal use of chains, and religious symbols, they cut an imposing figure. In the uncommon instance when they wear regular clothing, they wear uniforms depicting their ranks, medals and clan badges.

Customs by Family

Just as the Church shapes the customs and values of the clergy, so too do the tenets of the Church of the Dark Triumvirate affect the outlooks of the noble estate. However, the customs of the particular families are magnifications of those practiced by the peasants, and far more depraved and evil. It is important to note the nobles also influence the Church as well, introducing their own outlooks and views on theology, forming the current theological ethos serving as the foundation for all Canceri.

val'Mehan Customs

Cancerese val'Mehen are the most decadent of all of Sarish's followers, sacrificing animals and humanoids in the shadowy halls of their churches. Summoning and binding fiends is commonplace. In fact, Infernal presence is so normal, they fulfill many of the functions slaves perform in other regions in Canceri, from mundane tasks like cleaning, sewing, and maintaining a home, to deviant acts such as partaking in human sacrifice or other dark acts. One foul custom upheld by the val'Mehen family involves intermarrying with their own family members. As val'Mehen refuse to mate with val'Mehan, they mate with their siblings. In some extreme cases, where there is issue of one gender, a parent may mate with a child. Though the leaders of the family frown upon such behavior, for the effects of these abhorrent couplings has produced terrible monsters garbed in the flesh of humanity – from drooling idiots, to psychopathic killers, to deformed horrors, so foul, the midwife blind themselves to remove such an image from their minds..

val'Mordane Customs

The val'Mordane truck with the dead, as everyone knows. In other lands, they serve as gifted healers, aware of the mortal coil or those which prepare the bodies for interment. Yet in Canceri, they practice terrible rites and rituals to plumb the depths of human depravity in the hopes of unraveling some mystery in death. Many val'Mordane eat the dead, their brains in particular, believing they capture some

spark of knowledge found at the point of death. Necrophilia is rampant among the val'Mordane, as vampires, liches, and zombies become the playthings for the decadent elite. Rituals involving blood and other humors of the body are all common, with such acts consecrated in the name of Neroth.

The val'Mordane view marriage and family as a means to an end, it forms the basis for property, allows the infrastructure for government, and offers stability to their lands. Corporeal val'Mordane undead wed the living, though nothing ever comes of the issue, and they use proxies, living members of the val'Mordane family who are as yet unworthy to become undead, to breed with their spouses, and to produce offspring. Marriage between the undead and living is permanent, and they may undertake the joining just once. When the living mate dies, they are interred with the undead mate.

val'Virdan Customs

The coming of age ceremony for the youth of the val'Virdan clan requires the boy or girl to enter the wilderness, naked and without any equipment, and survive for a month. This culls the weak from the family, ensuring the strength of future generations. The val'Virdan care nothing about the youth's physical disabilities, for if they survive the ordeal, they prove they have the intellectual resources to overcoming any weaknesses of the body.

The val'Virdan family has no regard for property or individual rights. Family units consist of a woman with several husbands, who are themselves often brothers. Second wives are not uncommon, especially when the first wife is barren. The women, though many are competent warriors, oversees the raising of the children, while the eldest brother administers the estate, while the younger ones serve in the military, pursue mercantile interests, or devote themselves to some other pursuit. Loyalty to the family unit is paramount, and while mistresses are common, bastards are never recognized.

As adults, val'Virdan have a somewhat restrained air, not indulging in the vices of their eastern and southern neighbors. However, beneath the disciplined exterior, there are many val'Virdan who engage in hideous behavior, so terrible it inspired the Mother Church to fund Heretic Wars. Some val'Virdan desecrate the corpses of their enemy to exult in the power they have over their foe. Others partake of a special ritual where they eat the living heart of their captives, ripping the still beating organ from the chest cavity.

Awilu

The Church of the Dark Triumvirate, the unquestioned authority of the Dark Apostate, and the rightness of their teachings form the spine of Cancerese culture.

The Church penetrates the lives of its entire people, so much so, the government and the church are indistinguishable. As a theocracy, the edicts from the church are law. There is no debate, no question, and no argument. The church's proclamations define reality for all Cancerese. Heading the church is the Dark Apostate, who commands even the powerful priests within the church.

The Church of the Dark Triumvirate emerged from the corrupted teachings of the prophet Becherek, who spoke against the Mother Church's ban and restrictions on worship of the three faiths, Nier, Neroth, and Sarish, upheld in Canceri. He believed the Mother Church a flawed vessel if it would not recognize a quarter of their pantheon. He called for the restoration of the Cancerese deities to the pantheon, and the full recognition of their followers as members of the Mother Church. Furthermore, he opposed the secular influence of the emperor and the politicization of the church to support his agenda.

However, Becherek's message was inflammatory, and provoked unscrupulous and ambitious priests to bid for complete power over the Mother Church, with the Cancerese deities replacing Illiir as the head of the pantheon, and with a Cancerese patriarch, none other than an undead priest, who embodied the antithesis of Imperial values upheld in Coryan, Milandir and most other lands. After Becherek's execution, the Apostles of Becherek, who claimed to understand the message of the Prophet, used the murder to press their agenda and form the Church of the Dark Triumvirate.

Ethos

There is truth to the saying "*Everything wicked comes from Canceri*" for the nation is one where its populace embraces evil and exults in the corruption others strive to overcome. It is a place where vices have outlets, where its people tolerate any crime, and where sin walks in the open. In Canceri, evil is the norm, and virtue is the aberration.

Most people of Canceri believe the gods made Good possible only without Evil. Good exists in the absence of evil, and so, if one is not pure, they are evil. As the material world contains aspects of evil, Onara must be evil. Mortals are born into Onara, and thus evil. Corruption stains the soul, and regardless of mortal action, a mortal remains evil.

The possibility of goodness resides in death, free from the corruption of the material world. With the spirit free, it may choose between the light of goodness, undergoing the purifying fires of sanctity to enter Paradise or chooses the suffering of mortality. As evil is seductive and mortal pleasures a powerful force, evil compels them to choose mortality and they are reborn into the world once more.

To overcome the allure of evil, mortals should indulge their vices, wallow in the depravity of darkness, doing all they can to satiate their evil impulses. With each act, the soul sickens of the darkness, growing weary of the pain, horror, and fear accompanying the forbidden pleasures. When the mortal dies, and if he has led a wicked life, the spirit overcomes the allure of evil and necessarily chooses purification.

Roles

The clergy, since Becherek's execution, has complete control over all aspects of Canceri society. The priesthood and its consecrated officials fill the ranks of Canceri's government, from the signing of contracts, to negotiating treaties and alliances with their neighbors, declaring war, managing resources, and even minting coins. Within the church, there is a complex hierarchy, where each member oversees a different aspect of society.

The Akali

There are 39 districts in Canceri, each with its own Akali, a high priest who oversees the city's gudwara, the central temple surrounded by the city square. Members of the nobility comprise the Akali of all cities. The Akali may pass on the title to a child. Akali are a powerful force in Canceri, ruling their districts absolutely. At their whim, they can execute anyone not serving a higher office in the church, though custom demands Akali announce and allow the criminal a week to appeal the execution to a higher office. Still, Akali have the fear and respect of the peasants and some nobles beneath them. In addition to serving as judges on the ecclesiastic courts, and administrator over their citizens, Akali also collect the tithes from their congregations to pass on to the state.

Nierites: In the Nierite lands, when one ascends to the Akali, he must purify his body. He does this by bathing in bull's blood, honey, and then ash, each one for three days. While cleansing his person, he must not touch water, and may only drink alcohol.

After purification, he loses all of his clothing and symbols of rank. The priests bind and blindfold the initiate, and take him before the high priest. Kneeling before the Nihang, he waits through the ritual prayers and blessings, and at the end of the ceremony, the high priest crowns him with a ceremonial crown made of adamantite and inset with obsidian stones. The Nihang then cuts the bindings with the sword. The newly anointed Akali then removes the crown, places it on his shoulder and announces to all, "Nier is my only crown."

Nihang

The Akali elect one of their numbers for each city-state, except in Nishanpur where there are four, to become a Nihang, a member of the council responsible for governing the country and electing the Dark Apostate. An elected Nihang appoints a new Akali to replace him. While the Nihang are all priests, not all must be clerics, and some may be warriors, sorcerers, or of any other walk of life. Nihangs, like Akali, hold their appointments for life until promoted or stripped of the rank.

The Nihang set the rates for tithing in the districts they control. They can veto actions and laws put forth by Akali, sparing criminals from execution, overturning an act, and even remove an Akali from his position, but only with the consent of the Dark Apostate. An Akali may appeal a veto to the Dark Apostate, but such acts create more enemies than overturning the negation is worth.

Overall, the Council of Nihangs manages the affairs of the nation, overseeing the minutia of the nation's religious and political institution. Even with the occupation by the Erdukeen Swords of Nier, the Nihangs continue their rule uncontested. Only the Dark Apostate can overturn their decisions, and with the current vacuum left by the destroyed Hegrish, the Council rules all of Canceri absolutely, with the exception of the city of Nishanpur itself.

Excisist

Even though the Nihang exerts great control over their Akali, they cannot watch them at all times. The high priests oversee the collection and distribution of tithes. Handling such large amounts of gold, and given how common theft is in Canceri, the Nihang employs a special agent, called an Excisist to monitor the Akali. The more powerful Akali can evade the Excisists, but these inquisitors do catch a few, and the Nihang's vengeance is swift and terrible.

Adjurer

Of the servants of the Church of the Dark Triumvirate, no priest is as feared as are the Adjurers, handpicked inquisitors of the Dark Apostate himself. These individuals represent the most powerful servants the church has, being not only clerics and holy champions, but fighters, sorcerers, psions, psychic warriors, and even a few wilders who serve in this capacity. Their



primary responsibility is to ensure the Council of Nihangs and the Akali carry out the will of the Dark Apostate. They work in trios, and act at the behest of the head of the church. Their word and deed are as if the Apostate himself carried out the orders. Since the fall of the church's head, the Adjurers have all but vanished, with even some dead at the hands of a former Nihang obsessed with revenge for disgrace; others lie in wait for the emergence of the next true priest-king of Canceri.

The Dark Apostate

The black throne of Nishanpur, a seat overlooking the Hall of the Nihang, is empty for the first time since the establishment of the Church of the Dark Triumvirate. Established as a counter to the Patriarch of the Mother Church, the clerics of the newly formed church intended to overthrow the oppressive tyranny of the Emperor and his crony priests, and place their own patriarch as the head of the church. Unfortunately, tragedy, greed, and ambition interfered.

The first Dark Apostate emerged after the convocation of the three faiths, following the death of Becherek the Prophet. The assembly elected the charismatic and influential Arthmoor val'Virdan as the head of both church and state, and with his

guidance, he rallied the nation to go to war with the infidels in the Coryani Empire. For all of his planning and zeal, he was unprepared for the resistance he met in Milandir, for that province had committed its forces to the Khitani front. Milandir, having learned of the growing force in the north, returned to their lands, seceded from the empire, and defended their homeland, repelling the invading legions from Canceri and claiming Arthmoor's life.

When the routed forces returned, the val'Mehen and the val'Mordane agreed they would never allow a val'Virdan to sit on the black throne again, for they feared another bloodthirsty tyrant who would plunge them into war on a whim. What followed was a series of Sarishan Dark Apostates, each succumbing to assassin's blades, poison, magic, and accident. For 24 years, no Dark Apostate held the throne for more than a year, until in the winter of 827 I.C., the lich, Hegrish val'Mordane, formed a coalition of supporters in the Council of Nihangs and seized the black throne for himself, ruling with an iron fist for 200 years, until his assassination in 1025 I.C.

At the current time, 1028 I.C., the Autocrat of the Swords of Nier, Attulus val'Virdan, rules over Nishanpur and the outlying areas. He has allowed the clerisy of the Church of the Dark Triumvirate to continue to operate on a bureaucratic level, as he does not wish to have his Swords become administrators. Having reestablished connections and garnered the readmittance of the clergy of Nier in the Mother Church, the Autocrat slowly gathers his forces for a push into the rest of Canceri, where he will either make the Nierites there see the light of joining him or find themselves perched upon a stake. Palic val'Mehen, the former Nihang of Sarish from Nishanpur, has declared himself Dark Apostate in exile, and is attempting to consolidate his power and oust the Swords of Nier.

Clothing

Most members of the Church of the Dark Triumvirate wear robes of colors depicting their particular god. Nerothians wear brown; Nierites wear orange-red; Sarishans wear purple. Station within the church also affects attire. The Akali wear robes of a solid color as appropriate to their faith. Around their neck, they wear a silver holy symbol of their god: Neroth, a silver Ankh; Nier a fire opal in a silver setting; Sarish, a silver disk inscribed with Sarish's sigil. Those awali with beards, cap them with gold.

Nihangs wear vestments similar to the Akali, except they add a black mantle and hood. The Excisists do away with the colors of their faiths, and wear white robes and cloak with a silver skull clasp. Adjurers, wear ornate robes and a singular, reflective mask which completely obscures their face, but allows them the ability to see out perfectly. In addition, all Adjurers bear a tattoo of an eye in the palms of their

hands. Finally, the Dark Apostate's robes of office are solid black. He wears a circlet adorned with precious stones of all the colors of the Pantheon, but those of the Dark Triumvirate are larger than the rest and set on the front of the crown. These stones consist of an amethyst of Sarish, a tiger-eye for Neroth, and a fire opal for Nier.

Birth & Death Customs by Religion

Death rituals in Canceri reflect the nature of the deities they worship, and their cosmological outlook on the interrelationship between the three pillars of life: Body, Intellect, and Soul. The Church of the Dark Triumvirate does not interfere with regional death customs, instead focusing on the lives of their congregations. Particular death customs follow.

Nerothians: The val'Mordane celebrate death rather than birth, for a newborn child is anathema to the social views of these people. An infant represents the worst life has to offer, trapped in living flesh, unable to care for itself, and reliant on the mercy of others. Parents have minimal contact with their infants, in the hopes the child will learn to overcome its desires.

Death is a time of great anxiety for the family members of the deceased. If he had been a pious man, observant and useful in Neroth's eyes, the Death Lord will gift that worthy with 'life beyond death' with the deceased's intellect intact. Should he have been unworthy of Neroth's Blessing, then the body will be naught but a husk, to be either buried in family crypts or cursed to be reanimated and serve as mindless labor for as long as the body can last.

Nierites: At the center of Nierite beliefs is the value of strength. They leave weak, deformed, or sick infants on the slopes of mountains to die from exposure or to feed the mountain wolves prowling the area. Those worthy of the Nierite family never receive love from their parents, and learn to fight for their needs, killing their siblings if need be.

The Nierites believe death holds the completion of mortal duty. To commemorate the passage of life to death, they build pyres of aromatic woods on cleared places in the mountains. They clean the corpse, bathing it in special scented oils. They then place the body onto the bier, and light the pyre. The family gathers around the flames, singing religious songs to honor their passing. When such elaborate funerals are not possible, such as when the body is away from the ancestral homeland in the north, the man or woman's fellows burn the body and function as the family.

Sarishans: Parents must bring the first child born of their marriage to the Temple of Sarish sixteen days after the birth and offer the infant to the god.





The priest wraps the child in purple cloth and anoints him with blood. The priest then reads the omens and states the proscription for the child, which can range from eating raw flesh once a month, the times for making offerings, dictating the child's diet, such as preventing the child from eating meat, or some other restriction showing the binding of the infant to Sarish. Sometimes, the priesthood claims the child, taking them from the parents to raise them in the church. Of those taken, some end up on the sacrificial altar.

Death represents the settling of all debts. Sarishans believe before they die, they must pay off all debts, whether monetarily or otherwise, lest they remain in the world as spirits until such debts are paid. At the funeral, the family reads their accounts, settling those left by the deceased. After the ceremony, they sell the body to the Nerothian priests.

Entertainment and Games

Among the lower class, entertainment is not much of a concern. Most peasants lack the free time needed for idle pursuits, survival is a far more important pursuit. When time allows, the peasants engage in many of the activities other Cancereuse embrace and value, seeking the exotic pleasures and pains to be found in brothels, opium dens, and taverns. There, they watch dancers, whose lithe movements speak more than the soft music. In the darker places, these dancers supplement their erotic entertainment by torturing a slave to death, blending pleasure with pain, cutting their flesh away with delicate knives, while engaging in activities to a titillated audience.

Cancereuse music matches the tones of speech, low and quiet. Instruments such as the Palhral, a wind instrument made from a human thighbone, issue soft disconcerting notes to form the background to the chanters. Subjects of these chants include history, legend, myth, lewd tales, and terrible accounts of human corruption.

As for games, the Cancereuse of the peasantry caste enjoy the spectacle of arena fighting, where foreign clerics do battle with summoned Infernals, terrible monsters harvested from the wastelands of the countryside, or horrific nightmare creatures spawned from the countless corpses of the dead.

Holy Days of Canceri

Throughout the year, the people of Canceri recognize a number of holy days and political holidays. Before the return of the Swords of Nier, many holidays represent the various sects and cults who practice the tenets of their religion as taught by the Dark Triumvirate in unique or unusual ways. In these days, work stops, and commoner and noble alike can enjoy the celebrations. The festivals described below reflect those recognized by a large population or all of Canceri.

Black Dawn

The festival of the Black Dawn began sometime around the 6th century after the emergence of the Blight Bearer sect. On this day, Nerothian priests gathered to celebrate the disease aspect of their deity. They gathered captive foreigners from other imperial provinces, infected them with a disease after a day of torture, used magic to erase their memories, and set them free the next dawn to spread their disease throughout the Milandir, Coryan, and even the rest of Canceri. After the empire eradicated the cult, the holiday continued, though somewhat modified from its original purpose, the priests infected slaves, escalating the effects of the contagion, until the bodies exploded with infection. Now, the people recognize the festival of Black Dawn at the beginning of autumn, but the southern cities alone, practice it.

Burning Man

In the darkest days of winter, when the snows are heaviest, the Nerothian priests celebrate Onara's first murder, when Neroth slew Illiir, and the resultant creation of night. Recognizing the absence of the sun as the harbinger of death, the Nerothian clerics celebrate in droves. In preparation for the event, they construct a huge wicker man, sometimes as tall as 20 feet. When the sun sets, they stuff sacrificial victims into the wicker man's abdomen and light the entire thing on fire. When consumed in flames, and when the victims' marrow pops their bones, the priests hurl snowballs at the wicker man to extinguish the light. The ritual continues throughout the night until the sun returns in the morning to the frozen remains of the construct and the dead inside.

Demavand

On the sixth day of Pallidus, Nerothians celebrate Demavand, a grand celebration of death. In the weeks leading up to the holiday, families repair and maintain the tombs of their ancestors. When the day arrives, the family gathers and decorates the tombs with flowers, make offerings, prayers, or perform the melioramentum. Occasionally, the ancestor emerges from the tomb to offer council, or maybe just to partake of the festivities.

Kindling Dawn

A festival practiced by the Nierites living in Nishanpur, it is a significant religious event of high honor. Preceding the holy day, candidates train for months in the hopes the Nierite priests select them. On the day of the festival, the priests select the candidate who exhibits the greatest strength and endurance, strip him down and command him to run barefoot from Nishanpur to Hunder, where they light the torch, where Nier's sacred flame always burns. Once lit, the



runner returns to the city bearing the magical fire to Nishanpur to consecrate the city to Nier for another year. After the droves of worshipers support him on his return, the runner takes the fires to the Nierite priests, who light the sacred brazier, thus ensuring Nier's protection for another year.

Martyrday

On the anniversary of Becherek's martyrdom, the people of Canceri discard their clothing in exchange for coarse burlap soaked in lye to burn the skin. They endure the pain of their garb, just as Becherek endured the pain of heresy in the world. All work stops on this day of reflection, and all fast until the evening, when they engage in a riotous festival. Those people unwilling to participate in the evening celebrations hide in their homes behind locked doors, lest they be taken and used to satiate the desires of the ravenous mobs.

Table 2-1: Cancere Currency

Currency	Cors	Asher	Mahk	Triumvirate	Bhat	Nishka
Cors (wp)	—	5	50	500	10	5000
Asher (cp)	1/5	—	10	100	2	1000
Mahk (bp)	1/10	1/2	—	2	20	200
Triumvirates (sp)	1/50	1/10	1/2	—	10	100
Bhat (gp)	1/500	1/100	1/20	1/10	—	10
Nishka (pp)	1/5000	1/1000	1/200	1/100	1/10	—

New Blood

Derived from the ancient sacrifices made to the gods to revitalize their lands for a new planting season is the Festival of New Blood. All of the towns and settlements send a champion to Nishanpur, where they strip down to their loincloths and fight bare fisted, kicking, scratching, gouging, and killing when possible. The dead or incapacitated remain where they fall, there is no surrender, just collapse, and even then, there is no guarantee of survival. When the participants can no longer fight, the watchers carry their champions, live or dead, back to their communities lauding them as heroes. The blood of those who die is used to fertilize the fields.

Coinage

Canceri uses coins of metals employed in Coryan, copper, silver, gold, and platinum, and adds bronze coins and a wooden token. The coin of the lowest denomination is the *Cors*, a small wooden or bone token measuring three-quarters by one-half inches, and burned with the intricate sigil of Sarish—in Nierite and Nerothian lands they do not accept this coin.

Five *cors* equal on *Asher*, a circular coin of hammered copper. The face of the coin features the image of a gudwara, a temple surrounded by an open square. Two serpents arranged in a circle where head swallows the other's tail are on the coin's back.

The next unit of currency is the *Mahk*, the standard unit of currency for the peasant class, and equal to five *asher*. Again, this is a circular coin, though it is cast from bronze, and flawed coins are common, having been shaved or cut by counterfeiters. Intact coins feature the profile of the Prophet Becherek, though time and a lack of reliable artwork of his appearance throws doubt on the accuracy of this depiction. The back of the coins features the Gates where Becherek became a martyr.

The *Triumvirates* come closest to universal distribution in Canceri. Silver coins used by the upper levels of the peasantry estate, lesser priests, and minor

Using Dialects

Using dialects in your campaign adds an interesting layer of realism accounting for regional distances and development of societies in remote regions of a nation-state. However, a fluent person should be able to understand the basics of a dialect, except in instances where the dialect has so far corrupted, it becomes a new language altogether. To reflect communication between speakers of dialects who share the root tongue, have both characters make Intelligence checks against the DCs listed below.

DC	Language Relationships	Example
10	Share common base language and within the same nation.	Cancerese and Lowachian
15	Share common base language.	Cancerese and Infernal
20	Share a common base language, but from different nationalities.	Cancerese and Low Coryani

Alternatively, a character could substitute a Sense Motive check for the Intelligence check, but the DCs increase by +5.

nobles, the triumvirates, equaling two *mahk* each, compete with the lesser coin for dominance. The *triumvirates* are distinguishable based on its depiction of the Cathedral of the Dark Apostate on one side and the profile of Hegrish on the opposite.

The **Bhat**, equivalent to one Imperial gold coin and ten *triumvirates*, is the coin of the elite. In fact, the law forbids members of the estate of the peasantry to handle these coins outside of the marketplaces. The *bhat* is an exquisite example of Cancerese craft, for it is solid gold, and the detail on the coin is unmatched in any of the other denominations. On the coin's face are the animal icons of the Dark Triumvirate, the Cat for Sarish, the Fire Drake for Nier, and the Scarab for Neroth. Arranged triangularly, the animal at the top informs the coin's owner of its origins. On the back is a panorama of Nishanpur.

The last and rarest coin is the **Nishka**, valued at ten *bhat*. Made from solid platinum, it has an unusual characteristic setting it apart from platinum coins of other lands. Regardless of the precautions made during the minting process, the purity of the ore, and origin of the ore, the final coins always feature a ribbon of red through the center. Thought to be the blessing of Sarish, minters do not adorn these coins, except to impress the Cancerese serpents on both sides of the coin.

Canceri accepts coins from other nations, though it is at a merchant's discretion, whether or not he takes the currency. Imperial coins, in general, have the same spending power as Cancerese coins. Older

coins, those dating back to the Imperium, are of a slightly greater value, and someone who knows the value of the coins can get a 10 to 20% discount on any nonmagical goods in the PHB and other sources

Language

Twice an imperial province, and with Nishanpur a powerful center of trade, Canceri has experienced an influx of tongues and dialects, that influenced the development of their common tongue, Cancerese. The language is a mixture of Ancient Imperial and Infernal, modernized by adopting vocabulary from Low and High Coryani. Cancerese is the root of three dialects spoken in the nation, and though they are distinct, most speakers of the regional dialects can communicate, albeit slowly, but with little difficulty.

Cancerese (Lowachian): Spoken in Canceri's northern region, this dialect is characterized by its purity and resistance to using Coryani words. It has a deep guttural voice, with many compound words. Its written form is identical to Cancerese.

Cancerese (Sohbukan): Noted for its Milandisian corruptions, this dialect emerged by the exchange of trade between the two provinces during the early years of the Coryani Empire. While understandable by other speakers of Cancerese, this dialect minimizes the Infernal influence on the language, substituting Coryani and Milandisian words for common Infernal words. Its written form is identical to Cancerese.

Cancerese (Stanivelian) or Cancerese: This is Canceri's common dialect. It has survived intact since the nation gained its independence.

Other Languages

Aside from the Cancerese dialects, there are many other tongues found in Canceri, some living, some dead. All of these languages have a written form.

Altharin or Ancient Imperial: This language is the root of all contemporary languages, and was the language of the First Imperium. Also known as the Tongue of Man, it survives as the language used to recite rituals sacred to the gods. In Canceri, priests are the only ones who use this language with fluency, though some learned scholars or oldest undead, also use this language. It is more common among the Erdukeen newcomers to Canceri, though their dialect tends to be corrupted with Yhing-hir words.

Low Coryani: If there were such a thing as a common tongue, Low Coryani would be it. Having spread throughout Onara after the First Crusade of Light and during the rule of the Coryani Empire, speakers of this language are everywhere. So influential, it shaped the Cancerese tongue into its modern form.

Infernal: This is the language spoken by evil outsiders from the Infernal planes (the most famous of these are known as the Blasted Plains and Hell). While rarely

spoken in public, Sarishan priests and demonologists use this tongue in everyday speech. The Infernal tongue, during the Time of Terror, became the state language, corrupting the Ancient Imperial spoken by the Canceri before the rise of the Devil-Kings. This language's influence is evident in the modern form of Cancereese.

Laws of Canceri

Although the Theocracy of Canceri expects its citizens to commit evil acts, it is not a lawless nation. The priesthood expects its citizens to follow their ordinances, and the penalty for failure is severe. At the root, the priesthood designed the laws to ensure the continued and unquestioned rule of the church. Some basic examples, extrapolated from the Nishanpur's legal system follow.

It is forbidden to carry arms aside from Sarishan Steel within Nishanpur. This unique law is upheld only within the capital city of Nishanpur. The occupying Swords of Nier hold all weapons and armors brought into the cities. Violating this law results at minimum to the loss of arms and as much as a public flogging and incarceration.

It is forbidden to abuse another, except in your own defense. Combat in urban centers is illegal. If a fight breaks out, and the combatants arrested, whoever has the greatest number of eyewitnesses supporting his claim is innocent. The instigator receives a flogging, or imprisonment if death or mortal injury results. In cases where there are no witnesses, they drop the case, and level a small fine against both combatants. In Nerothian lands, this law extends to undead. Destroying undead is a crime, and the penalty is always execution and animation as a zombie or skeleton to replace the lost resources.

It is forbidden to strike a priest of the Church of the Dark Triumvirate. The priesthood, including all Val nobles and the practicing clergy, is careful to set protections for their order. With the threat of death, or years of torture in Nerothian lands, most priests are safe in Canceri's cities. The ecclesiastical courts do not recognize self-defense as a reason for violence against the priesthood. Other possible punishments include slavery, entombment, and slow death.

It is forbidden to enter a temple without the consent of that temple's priest. The populace can enter the temple on holy days, when the priests throw the door open wide. All other times, the temple's doors stand shut.

It is forbidden to deprive a priest of his belongings. Thievery in Canceri's cities is a way of life. If one allows himself to be robbed, he deserves to suffer. However, as part of the ruling estate, the state affords priests and nobles special protections. A thief caught in the act of robbing a priest faces terrible punishments, like entombment or slow death.

It is forbidden to interfere between a slave and his master. Slavery is legal in Canceri; it is a way of life. Interference in slavery, including liberating slaves, carries a hefty penalty, including a 500 gp fine, and liberating a slave imposes a fine equal up to the three times the slave's replacement cost. The exact penalties vary from city to city, and some have laws forcing the interfering party to serve as slave until they meet the cost of the slave.

It is forbidden to approach a city's walls except to enter its gates. All cities prevent any entry into the city by any means other than the main gates by killing anyone within 100 feet of the walls. This prevents smugglers from moving untaxed goods into the city, slaves from escaping, and spies from sneaking inside.

A native Val is a priest in the eyes of the law. All native Vals – the val'Mordane, val'Mehen, val'Mehan, and val'Virdan – have rights under the law as priests, and crimes committed against them carry the same weight of punishment as if committed against the church. This customs stems from the oaths sworn by the noble houses to their respected gods, thereafter consecrating not just those swearing the oath, but the entire family line.

Erdukeens are not subject to the law. Since the return of the Swords and Sisters of Nier, the council of Nihangs passed a special law, at the behest of their conquerors, exempting the Erdukeen people from being subject to the law. They can kill priests and nobles without fear of reprisal. They take what they want, do as they want, for they or so they believe are the holiest of all people in Canceri. Since the defeat of the Swords of Nier throughout Canceri, this law is only in effect in Nishanpur, where the Swords still hold sway.

The law is binding to natives and foreigners alike; it applies to all. In Canceri, there is no such thing as extenuating circumstances. Ignorance does not grant mercy. Foreigners breaking a law face the same punishments as a native of Canceri.

Legal System

Those accused of breaking the law find Canceri's legal system as corrupt and violent as the rest of the nation. All are guilty until they can prove their innocence; many innocents suffer unconscionable penalties for crimes they did not commit. Bribing is a common tactic to escape what passes for justice here, and many Nihangs earn good livings arresting wealthy peasants on false charges only to receive a substantial payoff for their release. The ecclesiastic courts do not ignore certain crimes, and no amount of bribery lets a person escape punishment.

A criminal first has to survive his arrest. In Nishanpur, the Sarishans use Infernals to collect the criminals, and many times the fiends devour or



otherwise kill their quarry. In Nierite cities, soldiers serve as a police force, and many use the opportunity and arrest presents to practice their martial skills. If the captive survives, the constabulary takes him to the dungeons where they await trial in the ecclesiastical courts.

The dungeons, tombs in themselves, are an even graver danger than the arrest itself. Jailors arrange criminals according to the crime committed. There is no distinction of gender or age among criminals, so thieving murderers may occupy the same cell as a wide-eyed and terrified street urchin. Death and other types of abuse are all common events in Canceri's dungeons.

When the time comes to present their case, the court plaintiff and defendant submit affidavits to judges, wherein they swear an oath to the god of their region as to the truth of the circumstances as they see it. The judge reads over the reports, listen to the witness accounts, and statements made by legal advisors for parties wealthy enough to afford their services. Only the judge asks questions.

From the evidence, the judge draws his conclusions and verdicts. If the evidence is inconclusive, the defendant, but only if a free peasant, may endure a Trial by Ordeal. These are terrible tortures, including, but not restricted to immersion in boiling water, hot irons to the palms or soles, time on the rack, or other creative ways to get to the truth of the matter. If both parties are noble, they can engage in a Trial by Combat, whereby the plaintiff and the defendant face each other in mortal combat. Slaves have no legal rights at all, and suffer at the mercy of the court, resulting in brutal tortures until the slaves admit guilt.

Punishments

Once the judge determines the innocence or guilt of the defendant, he states the punishment. Instead of some sense of rehabilitation, Canceri justice exists to ensure the payment of reparations. Fines are the most common punishment for minor crimes, up to three times the cost of the item, or the blood price (called *wergild*) of the murdered victim, or the enslavement of the transgressor. Other punishments can include slow death, such as exposure to disease, crucifixion, exposure, impalement—a common practice in the north, entombment—a popular punishment in the south, dismemberment, emasculation, drawing and quartering, and an assortment of other wicked ways of dying. Recall, in Nerothian lands, they prefer torturing a criminal rather than execution. In cases where execution is necessary, they torture the victim for a long time, sometimes as much as a year before burying them alive.

Factions and Secret Societies

Beneath the monolithic rule of the Church of the Dark Triumvirate, Canceri is home to several secret organizations, each grasping for the shreds of power sloughed off the corpse of the theocracy as it grapples with the civil war and the Swords of Nier. These subversive groups represent heretical viewpoints, engage in acts so depraved they make the priesthood shudder, or have secular motives, like organizing crime in Canceri's cities. Many of these secret societies and organizations have existed for a long time, some far before the Dark Apostate and his theocratic government seized the nation in its iron grip. Of those organizations described below, see **Chapter Six: Dramatis Personae** for details on their leaders.

Blight Bearers

Headquarters: In a secret vault below Kielmun.

Leader: Cordiel val'Mordane.

Religion: Neroth.

Alignment: Any evil, though most are chaotic evil.

Symbol: A putrescent green scarab above a human skull.

A little over 500 years ago, a sect of Nerothian priests emerged proclaiming the true aspect of Neroth was as a harbinger of plague, as disease represented the corruption of the body and mind, two significant components of the Neroth's portfolio. The teachings began as small meetings in private sanctuaries and spread throughout the priesthood, drawing radical priests from all over Canceri to learn the "true" message of their god. As their numbers swelled, the fear of the non-believers grew, and the priests of this cult gained the moniker, Blight Bearer.

As this cult preached death and suffering at the hands of plague, it drew the most despicable people in Canceri to its membership. Soon, these perverse clerics left their enclave in the south and moved throughout the Coryani Empire to dispense the truth to the benighted. This truth, if ignored or discounted developed into terrible boils, cancerous tumors, and worse. As a result, disease swept the empire. With each success, they grew more arrogant, disdaining the canon of Neroth in exchange for their own version of truth.

The Blight Bearers grew out of control, descending into chaos and spreading so much plague; they challenged the clerics of other faiths, who couldn't keep up with the dead, let alone cure people of the killing blight spreading through the empire. The Coryani mounted a crusade to eradicate the cult, and the church of Neroth purged all canonical records of their existence, except for one small entry stating they existed, but saying nothing of their purpose or outlooks.

Though the church of Neroth endorsed the empire's efforts to eradicate the infestation, the empire's stance against the Nerothian priesthood, who did not always distinguish between Blight Bearers and the moderate priests, fueled a resentment forming the foundation for the rise of the Church of the Dark Triumvirate.

Some suspect there has been a resurgence of their cult in small congregations in southern Canceri. Though rumored, there is truth to the suspicions. An overlooked tome containing the central ethos of the Blight Bearer sect resurfaced in Kielmun. While small and practicing in secret, the Blight Bearers attract new members, and plan to reveal themselves soon, amidst the chaos of generated by ongoing civil war.

The Infernal Coven

Headquarters: Various noble houses in Stanivel.

Leader: Alieda val'Mehen.

Religion: Sarish.

Alignment: Chaotic Evil.

Symbol: A malevolent profile in silhouette

There are those among the val'Mehen families so evil, their kin ostracizes them. The Sarishan faith, while repellent to those who follow other gods, expects its congregation to traffic with fiends, use them as servants or to destroy them, depending the faith's denomination and inclinations. No Sarishan teaching suggests the eradication of humanity through careful breeding with Infernals, to herald a return of the Devil-Kings, and to conquer the world. Such is the belief of the Infernal Coven, a collection of decadent heretics, outlawed by the Church of the Dark Triumvirate, and hunted by the Swords of Nier.

The Infernal Coven believes the Sarishan people were at their apex of power during the reign of the Devil-Kings. They have no interest in restoring power to those same fiends, but instead want to take the power held by those outsiders for themselves. To achieve this, they mate with Infernals, summoning them to the Mortal Plane. They work to prepare the way for their half-Infernal children to conquer the world, creating a glorious new empire, ruled by the val'Mehen family.

Considering the animosity directed at them by their peers, the Infernal Coven operates in secret. They hide their association with the cult as best they can, to avoid notice from the Swords of Nier. Using powerful magic, they conceal their activities from the scrying eyes of the Sisters of Nier, who regard the Infernal Coven as the worst of the blasphemers. When a member becomes pregnant, she hides her condition as long as she can, before secluding herself until she births the child. Slave midwives then raise the half-Infernal until the child is old enough to fend for itself. Thus far, none of their demon spawn has reached adulthood yet.

Oathspeakers

Headquarters: The Greater Academy of Nishanpur.

Leader: Dominiq val'Borda.

Religion: Sarish

Alignment: Any non-Chaotic.

Symbol: A black and purple checkered mask.

Culture forbids loud forms of entertainment, such as singing, operas, or large instrumental concerts. Many foreign bards have a hard time finding an audience in this country, for they cannot retain an audience, and most flee the din of their art. Instead, most performance art comes from intricate dancing, soft wind instruments and string instruments. The masters of these forms are the Oathspeakers, skilled chanters, dancers, and musicians.

Beyond mere performance, however, the Oathspeakers are also followers of Sarish, the Oathbinder. These bards serve as living archives of the oaths of past of present, able to recite the ties that bind men and the gods flawlessly from memory. Outside of performance, they are often approached to find or enforce binding oaths, or to find loopholes that would allow oathbound individuals to escape difficult choices.

Becoming an oathspeaker requires total commitment. When entering the Great Academy of Nishanpur, the candidate must abandon their identities and accept a new name, and cloister themselves inside the school for at least a year. Through intensive study, oathspeakers learn advanced bardic training, including musical instruction, dancing, calligraphy, poisons, and murder.

Oathspeakers are common in Nishanpur, for there is Great Academy where all learn the art, though oathspeakers are found anywhere in the nation. Easy to identify, they appear androgynous, wearing loose purple and black clothing, white face paint with black shadowing, all to conceal their identities. See *City of Secrets: the Adventurer's Guide to Nishanpur* for details on playing the Oathspeaker prestige class.

The Order of the Hidden Flame

Headquarters: Nishanpur, but cells exist throughout Canceri and Coryan.

Leader: Ayrus Dhat.

Religion: Nier.

Alignment: Usually lawful neutral.

Symbol: A cracked gemstone, commonly a fire opal. Not everyone was happy with Canceri's independence. Coryan was unwilling to let the province escape, but after so many failed conquests, it surrendered and accepted defeat. However, Cancere's independence isolated the moderate Nierites in Coryani, leaving them cut off from the holy and historical sites of their homeland. Furthermore, most Nierites of the northern nation gave into evil and darkness, staining

the name of the Nierites in the empire. With each new offense, the shame grew. In response, the Nierites of the Coryani Empire, along with their allies in Canceri, founded the Order of the Hidden Flame to promote a reconciliation of the two nations, to eradicate the rampant evil, and restore the Mother Church to its full prominence.

The Order of the Hidden Flame operates freely in Coryan, but must maintain secrecy in Canceri, for the Church of the Dark Triumvirate is opposed to reunification. They operate in isolated cells, with each group committed to a single purpose. Each cell has one contact, part of a higher-ranking cell and reports to another individual, who in turn is part of another cell, and so on. The Candles, as they are known within the organization, operate with care and with calculated precision, all in the effort to topple the Apostasy.

The Candles never reveal themselves as members of this secret society in public, as doing so means their deaths. Instead, they pose as regular members of Cancere society, filling the ranks of the priesthood, nobles, and even a few peasants. They leave messages for one another through a secret code, employing an innocuous pebble left discretely in an alleyway, or along a wall. The stones arrangement carries the information, such as warnings, critical news, or anything else useful to the cause.

With the recent turn of events, when the emperor and Patriarch of the Mother Church, Calsestus val'Assanté once more reconsecrated the worship of Nier within the empire, the members of the Order have been heartened. There is still danger is announcing their intent within Canceri but they may have an ally in the Swords of Nier who now bend their knee to the new patriarch. Whether an alliance between the two factions can succeed in redeeming the Nierites of Canceri remains to be seen.

The Order of the Incandescent Flame

Headquarters: Near the opening of a volcanic vent of Nier's Spine in Canceri.

Leader: The Abbott Menoc val'Virdan.

Religion: Nier.

Alignment: Any lawful.

Symbol: Any number of the esoteric tattoos denoting membership in this monastic order.

Not so much a secret society as a faction in the Church of the Dark Triumvirate's priesthood, the monks of the Order of the Incandescent Path view Nier as the ultimate warrior, a force unstoppable by mortal means. However, the true reflection of Nier's power comes not from the mastery of arms, but of the mastery of the body and mind. Through rigorous emotional control, physical training and conditionings, and a single-minded pursuit of physical perfection, they embody the violence of the god, gaining notoriety for their deadliness in combat.

The Order's sole monastery straddles a lava vent high in the mountain range known as Nier's Spine. Founded to preserve the Fires of the *Irlagul*, an ancient Altharin word meaning the First Wound, where they claim Nier showered Keleos, the god of fire, with the fiery rock of the earth, and where Keleos struck Nier with a blade of fire, cutting the god whose blood ignited the rift of the mountain range. All Nierites regard the fires the monks protect as sacred, for they contain one of the five known pillars of flame in Onara.

Red or orange colored robes, shaven heads, extensive tattoos, and scent of smoke always surrounding them, allow other to identify Monks of this order.

.See *The Player's Guide to Arcanis* for details on playing members of this Monk Order.

The Seekers of the Hidden Masters

Headquarters: Nishanpur

Leader: Huxt'xfe'tnal

Religion: None

Alignment: Any evil.

Symbol: A pentagram.

A rival organization to the Infernal Coven, the Seekers of the Hidden Masters exist for one purpose: to restore the reign of the Devil-Kings. Formed after the fall of the Infernals by disgruntled Sarishan priests who did not want to relinquish their authority to the Coryani imperials, preferring instead the power they held under the rule of the fiends. Traitors in their midst forced the group to operate underground. Even now, constables uncover small groups of Infernal worshippers from time to time, killing all of their members. Even with the upheavals, the Canceri Seekers have colleagues in other lands in addition to Canceri, with agents working towards the Infernal restoration.

The Seekers prowls the Corpse Quarter by night, searching for any hidden clues lurking beneath the rubble. Specifically, the search for the names of the Devil-Kings in the hope they can draw them back to the mortal world once more. In addition, they call fiends from the Infernal Plane, and release them into the city. Hence, the Seekers are some of the most powerful individuals in the nation. Yet, they are not powerful enough to operate in the open. They conceal their identities even from each other, so when they hold meetings, they wear demonic masks and voluminous robes. Magic protections are also common, such as those concealing alignment, protecting from scrying, and other magic capable of revealing their intentions.

The Sisters of Nier

Headquarters: Nishanpur.

Leader: Basuhe val'Virdan.

Religion: Larissa and Nier.

Alignment: Any

Symbol: An eye with a red-orange pupil.

When the armies of Leonydas val'Virdan met defeat at the hands of rebels against his rule, they fled to the farthest reaches of the world to await the sign of the Sword of the Heavens' return. Among those fleeing were some Larissan Oracles, women seers who adopted the ascetic life of the Erdukeen Nierites, abandoning the hedonism of the former lives. They now commit themselves to the art of divination, embracing Larissa's aspect as the seer.

Working with the Swords of Nier, they use their skill at divination to locate those opposed to their agenda. They scry on the officers, prominent leaders, and Nihangs to ensure their continued loyalty. In addition, they commune with the gods and their servants to gain military and social advice, such as determining the most auspicious times for an attack. The Sisters of Nier have an alien insight into the workings of the world, making most uneasy when they are around them.

Most Sisters of Nier join this organization later in life, past their childbearing years to avoid distractions of family. The majority of the sisters are female, though men have served as sisters in the past. Regardless of gender, Sisters wear tattered robes or rags, their long knotted hair is filthy, and they seem to have little regard for their appearance.

The Swords of Nier

Headquarters: Nishanpur

Leader: Autocrat Quintus Attulus val'Virdan

Religion: Nier

Alignment: Any

Symbol: Three crossed fiery swords

After Amath trapped Leonydas val'Virdan in what seemed at the time eternal stasis, the Sword of the Heaven's armies fled before the wrath of the forces gathered against them. Those not struck down, fled to the east, into the trackless wastes of the Hinterlands, where they founded the city of Erduk. They believed Leonydas would return, and duty to their faith and their esteemed imperator demanded they be vigilant in their readiness.

For almost 3,000 years, they waited in their mountain homes, adhering to the principles of their faith, but losing their former civilization. Then, in 1025 I.C., a column of fire lanced from the earth into the sky, searing the heavens, and the Swords of Nier knew their time was at hand. The poured over the She'Haulk Mountains and entered the land of Canceri once more, spreading through the theocracy like a plague. The Cancere Nierites saw advantage in the return of their kin, believing they could elevate the Nierite faith to prominence once more. However, it became clear from the Swords uncivilized and arrogant manner that there would be no alliance.

The Swords seized political offices, barred the appointment of a new Dark Apostate, demoted what they believed were weak Nierites, and exposed those val'Emman, many who did not know that they belonged to that lineage condemning them to menial positions or slavery, and seized total control of the capital. Leaving the Knights of the Red Fist, Nishanpur's fiend riding militia, temporarily intact, they appointed their own commanders to ensure their continued obedience to Leonydas. Though they took over the government, they left the bureaucracy to the Sarishans and the Church of the Dark Triumvirate to rule.

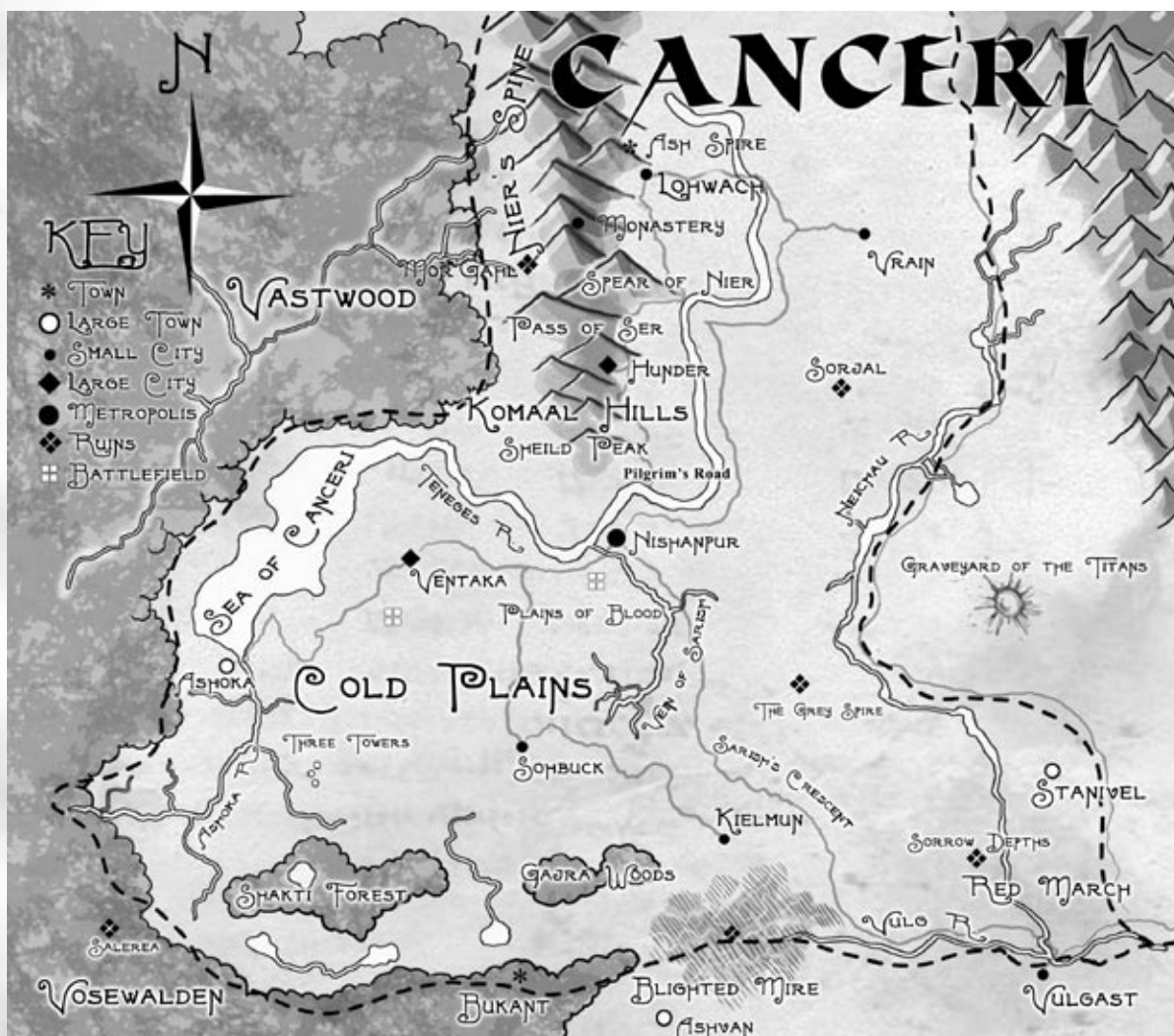
Following the disastrous events at the Citadel of Silence and the Battle of the Four Armies, the surviving Swords re-entered Canceri and attempted to solidify their rule there. Bitter civil war was the result of this act and finally resulted in a stalemate with the Swords controlling the capital and its surrounding area while leaving the Cancere the rest of their nation.

In a nation of secretive people, dark intrigues, and foul corruptions, it is easy to spot a Sword of Nier. They are bold, arrogant, and brutish, watching and judging. Their discipline is inhuman, for they patrol through the worst weather, even if sick or injured. They hold all other priests in disdain, seeing them as weak. Though they accept Canceri's Nierite priesthood, it is clear the Swords see themselves as their betters. All others, including those following Sarish and Neroth, are contemptible.



Chapter Three

Canceri Geography



As soon as the first people crossed the Blight Mire in southern Canceri, they formed communities. Between the harsh landscape, savage predators, and inclement weather, by banding together, the people stood a better chance at survival. Much of Canceri remains unexplored, even after 5,000 years of human inhabitation. There are places in the Blight Mire so foul, and so deadly, none dare enter. The peaks and warrens beneath Nier's Spine shelter all sorts of awful creatures, hungry for human flesh. In fact, there are few places in Canceri not housing some terror inimical to life.

Overview

The Theocracy of Canceri claims an area 80,000 square miles, extending north some three hundred miles from the Vulg River, about 300 miles across for the southern two-thirds of the nation, tapering to about 150 miles across in the northern third. To the north towers the Wall of the

Gods, dominating the northern horizon and dwarfing the volcanic spur of those same mountains, Nier's Spine. To the east lies the Hinterlands, and an arm of the Wall, the She'Haulk Mountains, forms a natural barrier. The remainder of the eastern boundary follows the Neichau River as it wends its way south to drain into the Gulf of Yarris. The Blighted Mire and the northern edge of the Vosewalden mark the southern border, shared with Milandir, and the Vastwood marks the western border.

Canceri's weather is cold and wet through much of the year. Storms spinning off from the Pale Sea cross the southern Hinterlands to stall over Canceri, flooding much of the land, and swelling the major rivers almost year round. In the winter, the precipitation turns to freezing rain sometimes as early as the first day of autumn, blanketing the Cold Plains with deep snows by mid-winter. Along Nier's Spine, it is warm throughout the winter, as the volcanoes

provide constant heat, from the various fissures and vents marking the slopes. In the summer, the heat is unbearable, lethal to those unaccustomed.

For the rest of the nation in summer, the ground is a clinging mud, thanks to the heavy clay deposits in the soil and constant rain. By summer's peak, Canceri dries out and the mud hardens into a cracked and blistered plain, and temperatures soar to uncomfortable levels, worsened by the constant humidity. When rains do come, they turn everything into a grey, soupy, and unpleasant mess.

Major Geographic Features

From the fiery peaks of Nier's Spine, to the dense forests of the Vosewalden, Canceri is home to a diverse assortment of geographical features, offering many interesting locations to explore. In addition, evidence of former invasions mar the landscapes, with exposed and bleached bones of the dead, left unburied where the fell on the innumerable battlefields of the south. Narrow roads offer some modicum of safety for travel, but the horrors lurking in the places between cities make traveling even the best roads a risky proposition.

Blighted Mire

Staining Canceri's southern border is a vast swamp called the Blighted Mire. Once part of Milandir, a great evil emerged in its heart, corrupting the land all around and pulling the ground into the earth, perhaps to draw away from the wickedness there. Now, centuries after its creation, it collects the drainage from the Cold Plain, forming a large swamp, harboring some of the foulest creatures in the land. Travel across the Blighted Mire is possible, for a narrow cobbled road, called the Cold Road, navigates through the swamp and out on its other side to the city Kielmun. Locals advise travelers to stay on the road and avoid exploring the depths of the swamp, for foul demons haunt the shadows, and disease clings to the heavy ever-present mists.

Ancient trees with vines descending from their branches to find purchase in the silt is just about the only trees in the Blighted Mire and even these are warped, featuring unusual whorls and patterns, sometimes with almost humanlike features, in the bark. Ferns, algae, molds, and lichens are common, collecting on fallen logs, the occasional broken statue harkening to an ancient time, to stare from their toppled positions. Mosquitoes, during the summer months when the Mire is at the hottest, emerge from the still waters to suck dry birds settling in the trees. The Blighted Mire may appear the ideal climate and environment for large reptilian predators like crocodiles and large snakes, but these creatures are absent. Instead, plague is the dominant predator,

infecting everyone and everything with its ravaging effects. Although a dangerous place, what lives in the Mire tends to stay there. The nearby Cancere people make sacrifices to the spirits of swamp, killing a fatted calf if available, or an attractive youth if meat is too scarce to throw away to the grey mists.

The few villages and hamlets in the area feature raised structures, to avoiding flooding and predators. These buildings are wooden with thatch roofs, with a single portal in the floor to allow entry to the central living quarters. Communities are circular with a central building housing the priest or community's leader.

Table 3–1: Blighted Mire Contagions

Disease	Infection	DC	Incubation	Damage
Blood Piss	Ingested	14	1d4 days	1d8 Con
Corpse Bloom	Contact	15	1d3 days	1d3 Str*, 1d4 Con, 1d6 Cha*
Grey Cramps	Ingested**	18	1d2 days	1d3 Dex, 1d3 Con, 1d3 Cha
Mire Blight	Inhaled	9	1 day	1 Con, 1 Str, 1 Dex, and 1 Cha
Mouth Sickness	Ingested	12	1 day	1d2 Con, 1d4 Int, 1d4 Cha

*Drain instead of damage

**Contact with a victim's feces spreads the disease as well.

Blood Piss: This swamp mold spreads through the waters of the swamp. There is a 20% chance for any water in the swamp to be infected with this disease. During incubation, the spores root in the walls of the bladder, turning it brittle as they feed. As the tissue hardens, the victim experiences excruciating pain, and urinates blood. The victim dies as the spores produce toxins spreading through the victim until he dies.

Corpse Bloom: Victims of this terrible disease develop weird fleshy spurs on their faces and arms. The disease eats away at muscle and tendon, weakening the victim. As the disease progresses, they assume more and more of a corpse-like appearance.

Grey Cramps: This terrible plague infects the meat of animals in the Blighted Mire. After incubation, the victim turns a pale shade of grey as their organs liquefies. Victims of this disease excrete uncontrollably for as long as they are infected.

Mire Blight: The most common ailment of the Blighted Mire is the disease named after it. Affecting all who breathe in the mists, it weakens its victims, killing them over the course of a couple of weeks. Unlike other diseases, a victim need succeed one saving throw to overcome it.

Mouth Sickness: This terrible disease infests the Blighted Mire's waters. There is a 30% chance for any water found in the swamp to carry this plague. Rapid and deadly, it infects the gums and rots a victim's teeth, gums, and tongue. Once the disease deals 6 or more points of Charisma damage, the victim loses the ability to speak. Once the disease deals 12 or more points of Charisma damage, the victim's jaw rots away, preventing the victim from eating. Thereafter, if the disease does not kill the victim, starvation will.

Black Hold of the Lohgin

In the center of the Blighted Mire is a ruin of an ancient community, the antecedent of Milandir's Ashvan. After several centuries of neglect, the swamp has reclaimed much of this ruined town, drawing the building into its cold murky waters. In the center of the town is a once great black keep, its towers long since toppled, and leaning as the whole community sinks. Where humans once lived, reavers, see **Chapter Six: Bestiary** for details, now claim for their own, avoiding the undead lurking within the keep, and preying upon the unwary traveler, bandit, or adventurer as the case may be.

A few years ago, a band of adventurers explored this site after Omar Kant, a brigand in the service to the priest Porphal, sacked the Church of Illiir in Ashvan and stole the haft of Valinor's Spear. Omar, thinking to sell the artifact in the black market for a better profit, fled into the Blighted Mire, and found himself lost in the ruins of this ancient village. The adventures tracked the thief to the stronghold of the Lohgin, where they faced Omar, and the ancient evil lurking in its prison, manipulating events to secure its freedom. For more information on these events, consult the adventure, *The Spear of Lohgin*.

Cold Plains

The Cold Plains cover half of Canceri, being a bleak stretch of empty land littered with unusual towers of soft rock comprised of sandstone and clay. Replete with columns, arches, weird spurs and spikes, the formations lend an alien atmosphere to the land. Natives use the soft rock to build homes in the rare settlements dotting the Plain. They chisel away at the earth, mix it with water and form bricks. Once formed, they sun bake them during the summer, or bake them in kilns throughout the rest of the year.

Puddles of stagnant water stand on the oversaturated ground, and remnants of those who would conquer the lands lie undisturbed beneath the waters. Unusual founts of rusty water bubble out of the rare hill, adding to the fetid stench of rot permeating this environment.

The Cold Plains served the site of almost all of Canceri's battles, and so bones of fallen warriors

litter the landscape, sunken in the wet soil. Shattered remains of war machines, skeletons of horses, broken helmets, shields, weaponry, and even a few standards speckle the countryside. Empty, or sometimes occupied, crucifixes are common throughout this area, as Nishanpur and the other cities, when they do punish criminals, discover new and interesting ways of disposing with undesirables.

Jackals, ghouls, ghosts, and other uncontrolled undead prowl these lands. When the Cancere se nails a new victim to a crucifix to languish on the Cold Plains, packs of these horrors devour the victim and his screams echo across the plain. At night, the Sheodul emerge. They are great winged hunters, burrowing beneath the soft silt and waters throughout the day. But when the sun sets, they shrug off the clay and water to take wing and soar through the upper currents in search of the exposed and unprotected. These monsters learned to avoid settlements after several thousand years of hunting.

Grey Spire

This crumbling tower once served as a prison for Canceri's most notorious criminals. Inside the structure, the guilty and the innocent alike faced tortures unimaginable. The blood of countless victims stains the rocks, and land all around it. When the Coryani legions invaded, they sacked the tower, destroying the depraved guards within. After they left, the spirits of the torturers rose from the ashes of the corpses as allips, coming out only at night to sup on the minds of travelers. Rumor holds that somewhere beneath the tower is a vast dungeon, where Sarishan priests stored their most powerful artifacts. Whether true or not, no one has found an entrance, or survived to tell about it.

Plains of Blood

About three miles south of Nishanpur, on the slope of a low hill descending towards the Vein of Sarish is a stretch of blasted landscape stained red-brown. Called the Plain of Blood, this was the site of the final battle between the legions of the First Imperium and the partisan forces of Nierites and Nerothians. The numbers of those who died that day were so many that they stained the soil red. Prospectors excavate this site, digging for artifacts dating back to the First Imperium to sell in markets throughout Onara.

Sarish's Crescent

At the farthest eastern reaches of the Cold Plains is an unusual formation of rock, forming a crescent of sorts. The raised earth rises about twenty feet and encircles a depression. While most view this area as a strange curiosity, there is a noticeable pall; the temperature is about 10 degrees cooler, and one's breath always

appears regardless of heat. Locals claim this was the footprint of the Devil-Kings' greatest servants, a mammoth demon standing over 500 feet tall and could devour entire armies with a single swallow.

Sorjal

The dungeon of Sorjal, which lies in the northern reaches of the Cold Plains, just south of Vrain, is an ancient necropolis built by Nerothian exiles. Cast out by their people because of their heretical views on Neroth, involving the sacrifice of undead servants. Persecuted, they fled north and founded a new necropolis in the barren lands. However, before they could erect the dome, Nierite raiders sacked the settlement, burning the living and the dead with the purifying fires of their torches. Now, a shattered ruin is all that remains.

It is still inhabited though. Desperate to preserve their religion, the Nerothians sealed their children in the caves beneath the settlement. The Nierite raiders never found the secret tunnels and left the children buried alive. The survivors soon ran out of food and turned on each other to survive. Feasting on the living and the dead, the descendants of these children haunt the catacombs beneath the ruin to this day. They share their caves with Infernals, and other nasty creatures, emerging into the sunlight to snatch the unwary traveler.

Three Towers

In the west, just north of the Vosewalden is a short hill with three pillars of basalt emerging from its top. The pillars are solid, smooth, and black. Each pillar reaches the same height. Animals refuse to approach this area, shying away, and panicking when forced to approach. Undead within 30-feet of any one of the three pillars gain a +4 turn resistance, and +6 hit points per hit die for as long as they remain in the area. Nerothian priests are not certain of the towers' purpose, but they deem it a holy place. Initiate priests make pilgrimages to the Three Towers from Ventaka, but half of their numbers never return. Eyewitness accounts of what occurs there varies, but some claimed something within the pillars drew the priests inside.

Gajra Woods

The Gajra Woods were once part of the Vastwood, like the Shakti Forest, but when the Vosewalden withdrew, it left this wood in its wake. Maples, oaks, birch and a few pines dominate the woodland. As for fauna, the Gajra Woods are home to foxes, wolves, owls, a small deer population, and a variety birds. Undead are uncommon here, but small tribes of humanoids have claimed sections of the wood, keeping away from the affairs of Men.

Sheizahl the Green

On the southern edge of the forest lives one of Canceri's rare druids, Sheizahl the Green. He tends to the forest, maintaining its borders, and cares for the animals living there. Sheizahl has no use for humanity, killing any trespassers entering his domain. His cruelty equals, sometimes surpassing, the priesthood of the Dark Triumvirate, and he has been known to tie up his victims and command legions of fire ants to strip the flesh from the bones.

Komaal Hills

Extending south from Nier's Spine is a range of low-lying hills overlooking the rest of Canceri. Short brown grass cover these hills and shepherds and their flocks roam the countryside here. In the heart of these hills stands the fortified city of Hunder (see below), where the val'Virdan hold their war councils. Aside from the city, there are no settlements in this land aside from a few isolated farmsteads and hamlets with populations more inbred than the most decadent of the val'Mehen families.

Pass of Ser

The Pass of Ser is a trail at the bottom of the valley situated between the sharp peaks of Nier's Spine and the rolling Komaal Hills. At points, the path narrows so a person has to creep sideways to get through. The elves of the Vastwood lead raids into the Canceri through this area, but the Nierites patrol the pass vigilantly, and there has been discussion about diverting a lava flow to fill the valley, forever cutting it off.

Shield Peak

At the farthest point in the south is a flat tor in the shape of a shield. Hunder stations a garrison of 30 fighters in a fortress carved out of the rock to watch for invaders, armies and other threats. If they see approaching armies, they light a signal fire to alert the fortress city.

Neichau River

This flowing river carries waters draining out of the She'Haulk Mountains, traveling south and building speed as waters from the Cold Plain join the river until it meets the rapids at the Vulg River, before traveling eastward towards the Gulf of Yarris. The waters of this river are clean until it travels south of the Graveyard of the Titans. There, the waters gain sulfurous taste, and while safe to drink in small quantities, large consumption can make an individual sick.



Nier's Spine

Thrusting outward from the Wall of the Gods is an impressive range of volcanic mountains known as Nier's Spine. With the regular eruptions, many times it is hotter here than on the plains, but when the mountains are quiet, it is cold, because of the constant ash falling from the plumes of smoke blocks the sun.

The lands all around these mountains are dry and rocky, covered in a thin layer of ash. The soil is unsuited to agriculture, filled with sharp rocks, and poisons in the soil preventing much from growing here. Still, farms do exist, with commoners struggling against nature to produce some crop.

Unlike other areas in Canceri, many people live in the mountains, living in settlements as old as the First Imperium. All settlements, including the cities, incorporate the natural defenses of the mountains, with many protected by lava flows, gas vents, or scree. Most people live inside the mountain, excavating the tunnels for homes.

With all of their external defenses, these settlements have an equal amount of internal defenses, erected after years of fighting with the creatures lurking beneath the mountains. As a result, for military concerns, no nation, not even the Imperium, has ever dislodged the Nierites living here. Moreover, their impregnable defenses can hold against any attack, provided that food and potable water are available, commodities the Nierites have always lacked.

Mor'Gahl

This ruin stands on the western slopes of Nier's Spine. Once a thriving Nierite community, it is said that it fell to Elorii raiders 700 years ago, and they put its entire population to the sword. Now all that remains are the crumbling ruins of the old fortress. The Nihang of Hunder has sent a few forays to explore the old ruin, but none of the explorers ever returned. Many believe the site is haunted.

Monastery of the Order of the Incandescent Flame

Straddling a lava vent near one of the central peaks is a massive fortress housing the Monks of the Order of the Incandescent Flame, an order of warrior-priests who devote themselves to mastery of the body and



mind, to hone themselves as perfect living weapons. The stronghold has four stories, but no walls, for the monks disdain ranged weaponry. Despite its proximity to the magma, the Monastery has never suffered structural damage, as if shielded by Nier himself.

Spear of Nier

A sharp spur of rock rises out from the range overlooking the Komaal Hills. Shaped like a spear point, locales believe it to be the spearhead Nier used against the Elemental Lords, left here to mark the gods' power. While its origins are steeped in myth, there does not appear to be any divine power, though Nierite priests do come here to pray, and the view of the mountains it offers is stunning.

Red March

The land beyond the Cold Plains and north of the Blighted Mire is dry and sandy, and named for the long east to west road offering an overland route to the Pale Sea. The building of this road has claimed the lives of countless slaves during its construction. The Red March travels south from Nishanpur where workers continue to labor on the road's construction, maintaining sections with slave labor.

Somewhat elevated than the rest of Canceri, the rolling hills dominate the landscape. The borders at the extreme east are in perpetual flux, for the Sarishans there pit the Hinterland nomad against one another, allowing the priests to claim more and more eastern territory. However, the nomads force them back when not fighting each other.

Many settlements here are mobile tent cities, like Stanivel for example. This allows people the ability to pick up and move as needed. The rains are far less common in the Red Marches than further west, as the Sybilenean Draft blows further south, away from the She'Haulk Mountains. Still, it is rarely warm except at the height of summer when the heat is unbearable.

Sea of Canceri

When the sun crests the eastern horizon and shines upon the Sea of Canceri's cerulean beauty, reflecting the austere beauty of the Vastwood, it is easy to forget one is in Canceri. Despite its serene appearance, it is as dangerous as any place in the nation, for beneath the inland sea, fed by the water draining from Nier's Spine, the northern hills, and the Ashoka River, is an ancient rift in the earth. Far below in this deep sea lurk horrors to make many of those terrors prowling the land pale in comparison.

Even with the monsters below the waves, fishermen toil on the waters, hauling in their catch to feed the small settlements clustered on the shores. There is a greater presence of militia here than in other lands, as the people must be vigilant against the aquatic monsters from the depths.

Sorrow's Depths

Centuries ago, the Nierite priesthood enforced strict social laws regarding unwed pregnant mothers. Seeing them as a disgrace to their culture, they condemned them to slavery and sold them to Sarishan slavers. One slaver, in particular, was foul and insane, and believed drinking the amniotic fluid would preserve him. Hence, he purchased as many pregnant slaves as he could, and with each birth, he would savor birthing fluids, believing he halted time's cruel touch. Being a coward at heart, he sealed the mothers and their children in a dungeon dubbed Sorrow's Depths. Hundreds of women and children met their doom in the shadowy labyrinthine halls, where they faced countless terrors. Eventually, someone murdered the Sarishan, and the dungeon passed into myth. Sages believe the dungeon still stands in southern Canceri near the Red March. Evidence of the dungeon's existence surfaces from time to time, as workers who maintain the road in this region go missing all too often.

Shakti Forest

The Shakti Forest is a dense stand of trees 100 miles wide. Notorious for the weird creatures stalking in the shadows of the great deciduous trees, most people avoid exploring the forest too deeply. Legend tells of Milandisian soldiers fleeing the unleashed legions of undead attempting to find some protection in the forest. However, inside, they found large carnivorous lizard creatures waiting for them. Survivors claim the lizard creatures claimed as many soldiers as the undead.

Teneges River

This icy river drains northern Canceri into the Sea of Canceri, traveling alongside Nier's Spine, before turning west towards the Vast Wood. Two miles across in some parts, the Teneges River is the primary source of fish for the nation, especially Nishanpur. Furthermore, though the waters are treacherous, many merchants use the waterway to transport goods to Nishanpur and points further south.

Vein of Sarish

The Cold Plain drains into the Teneges River via the Vein of Sarish, a filthy river meandering past Nishanpur to join the waterway. Poisonous, little creatures live on the river's banks and dead animals litter its shores. In fact, the only thing able to survive is eh'la, a plant notorious for its hallucinogenic properties,

Vosewalden

Stretching out from the larger Vastwood is the Vosewalden, the purported site of an ancient Elorii kingdom. Legend holds the Elorii there opted not to follow the Prophetess into the Vastwood and stood against the encroaching legions of the First Imperium. Led by the fearless Elorii champion, Elthoras, the Elorii thwarted the Imperium's designs on expanding northward, facing armies three times their number. In time, even Elthoras could not stop the tides of ambitious Imperium soldiers, and through treachery, no doubt val'Mehen design, the Imperium seized their city.

The carnage there was terrible. The Nierite soldiers impaled others for sport, as is the Nierite custom. The screams of the dying and tortured created such a din, Elthoras heard though he was miles away. With the tatters of his army, he returned to the city, but the Nierites were ready for him, and slaughtered his men. Elthoras himself fell, but not before killing a thousand Nierite soldiers, and with his dying breathe he cursed them.

His dying damnation of the Nierites changed the forest, sickening the trees, animals, even the people living there. The surviving nature spirits grew mad, corrupting all with their hatred, seeking



to destroy anything they can. Elorii still roam these woods, but they blame its troubles on humanity, killing any intelligent being that enters the forest.

Bukant

Officially, the Coryani Empire eliminated the Blight Bearer menace, purging the land of their taint forever. Several crusades eradicated entire villages, burning them to the ground, destroying all evidence of their existence. Even the Nerothian priesthood struck all record of the sect except for one sentence, “And there arose a sect of heretics, named the Blight Bearers, but their false beliefs led to ruin in Bukant.” Scholars believe Bukant to be the last enclave of these priests, but no such place exists, or so they believe.

Bukant is the last surviving enclave of Blight Bearer priests. Concealed in the Vosewalden, they are free from the persecution by moderate Nerothians. However, they must contend with the Elorii rangers who patrol the woods, and to avoid attracting their notice, the Blight Bearers surround their small community with powerful wards hiding it from site, and providing a myriad of defenses to hedge out unwanted visitors.

Salerea

The ruins of Salerea are the remains of the Elorii city conquered by the First Imperium. The graceful architecture, the incorporation of the natural world, and the statues devoted to the elemental lords all lie shattered and in ruins. Intact structures house the few survivors of the community, warped humanoids and broken Elorii, maddened by the tragedy of their lives. Corrupted treants prowl the streets lamenting the loss, and searching for signs of human passage. Hostile to human and Val life, the ruins of Salerea remains a symbol of the human capacity for evil.

Vulg River

The Vulg River helps to drain the overflow from the Blighted Mire, but fallen logs and other detritus clog it, flooding the lands all around. The Vulg flows nearest the Mire, but picks up speed as it travels downhill to where it meets the crashing rapids of the Neichau River before traveling across the Hinterlands to join the waters of the Gulf of Yarris. The water of the Vulg carries the same toxins as the Blighted Mire, but for about two miles the contagions vanish and the waters become clean.

Cities and Sites

Canceri features several cities and populations throughout its lands, and though one nation, the architecture varies depending on the region. For example, in the north, the Nierites carve their homes out of the mountains, while in the Cold Plains the val'Mordane families conceal their cities beneath

magnificent domes, within which mausoleums and tombs line the narrow streets. Nishanpur, however, is an ancient city reflecting the countless architectural styles of the region's history, from the gothic cathedrals of the Devil-Kings, to the baroque structures of the modern era.

This section provides an overview of the major population centers in Canceri, providing statistic blocks for each city, the major industries, and a general description for each, with the intention of providing the necessary details to explore their mysteries. However, space restricts the level of detail afforded to each, especially in the largest cities like Nishanpur. For more information on the capital, see *City of Secrets: the Adventurer's Guide to Nishanpur*.

Ashoka

Feeding western Canceri with the fish they take from the inland Sea, Ashoka is an important center for commerce, despite its isolation. Foreign merchants come to Ashoka to gain passage to Nishanpur, and do a brisk business trading their goods here, in a place safe and free of undead. Ruled by an Akali, Ashoka is too small to have its own Nihang, who reports to the Nihang of the larger necropolis, Ventaka. The people of this town are freer than most of the nation. However, their freedom comes at a price, for the Sea of Canceri is no safe place to sail. Aquatic denizens make fishing dangerous, and at times, things come out of the waters to drag a peasant back into its cold lair.

Ashoka stands on the southern shores of the Sea of Canceri and along the Ashoka River. Nearly all of its trade comes from the river and from the Red March to Nishanpur. A low-lying wall surrounds the city, made of dark granite. Because Ashoka has stood

Ashoka

Type: Large Town.

Population: 3,473 (living populace and sentient undead).

76% Canceri human/Val, 22% other human/Val, 1% dark-kin, 1% other.

GP Limit: 3,000.

Assets: 519,000 gp.

Power Centers:

Conventional: Nerothian priesthood.

Akali Mikhas val'Mordane (LE male Val Clr of Neroth 7).

Nonstandard: The Lampreys.

Guildmaster of the Lampreys Thieves' Guild, Richin Selthrik (NE male human Rog 8).

Military: *Militia:* 134.

Captain of the Guard: Captain Meyal Sedgen (LN male human War 6)

Industries: Lumber, fish, trade, boats, and agriculture.

outside traditional Canceri political engine, and has always been friendly towards foreign merchants, it has a larger population of non-Canceri humans and Val.

Aside from the grumbling of its populace, Ashoka suffers raids from the sea. People lock their doors at night and shutter their windows to keep out the things below the waters. To appease the horrors below the waves, the Ashokans make blood sacrifices to the waters, cutting a criminal's throat and letting the blood drain into the Sea before tossing the corpse, weighted with rocks, into the depths. In addition, fishmongers give the tripe of their catches back to the Sea, tossing fish guts to their aquatic nemeses.

Ash Spire

Just above the city of Lowach is a nearby mountain, called Ash Spire, which is riddled with volcanic caves. In these caverns heated by live lava flows, the Ashen Hide Egg Clutch has made the home. Renegades that recently split from the Black Talon Egg Clutch, the Matriarch Mother of this group, one Cres'spis, discovered an ancient lie perpetuated by the High Matriarch Mother of the Black Talon Egg Clutch and resolved to break away. Cres'spis had a vision, purportedly from Nier, that a new home and allies awaited them to the north, so she led her small group and eventually met with the Nihang of Lowach who agreed that in exchange for the right to settle in the caverns of Ash Spire, the group would act as allies to the Nierites as the Black Talons are to the Milandisians and follow the tenets of Nier.

In the core of the mountain, on the edge of the blast cone itself, Cres'spis erected an altar to Nier, in His form as the Fire Dragon. In a massive chamber overlooking the bubbling lava far below, the new High Matriarch Mother of the renegades gives her sermons to the assembled masses. The displaced Ss'ressen clung to this new religion, the first steady spiritual direction they had received since their departure from their old homeland. Perhaps it was the worship of Nier or perhaps the atmosphere they now lived in, but the first generation of Ss'ressen hatched

at Ash spire were markedly different in form than their parents. They were gray of hide and thicker in build and as they grew and multiplied, the appearance of the clutch slowly changed. Nearly a century later, with the population numbering close to one thousand, the renegades have taken up a new name, Terdiss, the Ashen Hide Egg Clutch.

The Ashen Hide remain allies to the Nierites of Lohwatch and have participated in the military excursions of that city. They still cling to the rigid military system they practiced under the Black Talons, but their system is starting to break down due to constant contact with the Nierites of the region. The younger generations are especially susceptible to the prattle of the humans and often leave the clutch as inquisitors to scour the region and convert lost souls to the proper worship of the mighty Nier.

Even more terrifying is the emergence of Ashen Hide berserkers, which have appeared among the population. Considered a deadly and uncontrollable military unit by the Nierites, the humans of the region tread lightly around these huge reptiles. Today the Ashen Hide are firmly entrenched in Nier's Spine and are even looking for another volcano for colonize. They pursue their dream of throwing off the heretical worship the Black Talons practice and bring them to the worship of Nier.

Cres'spis still rules over the clutch, her body now decrepit and ancient beyond compare, yet the heat of her passion for Nier has tempered her soul and she shows no signs of her advanced age. It is said that as long as Cres'spis lives the Ashen Hide are invincible.

Hunder

Shining like a beacon over all of the Komaal Hills is the ancient fortress Hunder, a city in its own right, once conquered and expanded by the Coryani during their occupation of Canceri. A holy place, Hunder

Ash Spire

Type: Large Town.

Population: 4,581

100% Ashen Hide Ss'ressen

GP Limit: 2,000.

Assets: 104,000 gp.

Power Centers:

Conventional: Matriarch Mother

Cres'spis (LN female Ss'ressen Clr of Nier 19).

Military: *Militia:* 1,638

Warlord of the Ashen Hide: Selisk (LN male Ss'ressen Sentinel of the Blazing Wyrms 16)

Industries: Rare gems

Hunder

Type: Large City.

Population: 13,942.

96% Canceri human/Val, 2% other human/Val, 1% dark-kin, 1% other.

GP Limit: 40,000.

Assets: 27,800,000 gp.

Power Centers:

Conventional: Nierite priesthood.

Nihang of Hunder Maxentius val'Virdan, Holy Warder of the Sacred Flame, and leader of the Assembly of Akali (LN male Val Clr of Nier 13).

Military: *Soldiers:* 500; *Militia:* 139.

Captain of the Guard: Captain Elize Shadul (NE female human Ftr 9)

Industries: Pilgrims, sheep, horses.



is the site of one of the five holy pillars of Nier's Blood, a column of immolating fire burning in the heart of the stronghold.

Hunder, at a glance, looks like a massive Coryani fortress, surrounded by a twenty-foot tall wall with a concrete foundation covered by fitted stone blocks. Turrets stand at each of the four corners of this fortified city, with two more flanking the massive iron bound wooden gate. Atop of each tower is a platform for Canceri mages to use magic in the city's defense. Banners bearing the val'Virdan house symbols hang from poles set into the walls and snap with the cutting winds.

Leading up to the city is a road choked with travelers called the Pilgrim's Road, a partly cobbled road winding through the hills before fording the Bridge of Sorrows where it continues to Nishanpur. Penitents, religious fanatics, pilgrims, and merchants fill the road throughout the year, and as the road climbs closer to the city, there is a community of wooden and thatch shops, inns, brothels and a few homes to either side, catering to travelers needs. Even with the ruinous signs of the occupation apparent in the streets and buildings, pilgrims continue to come to Hunder to catch sight of Nier's Blood.

Just inside the gate is a massive marketplace, filled with people from all over Onara. Fixed stalls are expensive; many merchants move along the narrow pathways hawking their wares to whoever listens. Legitimate goods of all types, from bleating sheep, to fine warhorses, to bolts of cloth, and even finished goods like cutlery, brooms, tables and a wide assortment of other goods found here. As with most communities in Canceri, commoners are forbidden from carrying more than a dagger or tool, so weaponsmiths and armorers are absent. Ensuring order and minimizing thievery are grimfaced Nierite trainees who watch the crowds, exuding an aura of menace.

A central massive fortress shadows the rest of the city. Standing 40 feet tall, it has hundreds of open windows through which one can see the roiling flames of the blood of Nier. Attached to this tower are all of the government offices, meeting halls holding the val'Virdan clans who gather to make plans for war



and the Church of the Dark Triumvirate.

Though each of these lesser structures is impressive, they pale before the architectural genius of the tower itself. Inside, beyond a maze of corridors is the central vault, the source of the pillar of fire. Here, the floor is raw and natural, worn smooth by the steps of countless pilgrims who come here to pray and receive the blessing of the holy warder. The walls are smooth stone, though constructed by human hands no seams are visible. Touching the pillar of flame spells instant death, unless one is worthy of the flame—an individual must meet all the prerequisites of the Warrior of the Eternal Flame prestige class as presented in the *Player's Guide to Arcanis*.

The rest of the city is an overcrowded den of thieves and murderers, desperate men and women clustering together out of the eyes of the Nierite soldiers, who came to the city in the hope of starting a new life, only to find a place as forlorn as their own lives. The city is so crowded, that the homes press against the outer walls, and the narrow cobbled streets loop and double back on themselves, with no pattern or reason. The Nierites encourage such haphazard construction as it allows them an advantage when

fighting invaders who breached the outer walls. The condition of the side streets lets the guard close off large sections of the city to contain riots should they occur. These pathways are dangerous, and ruthless killers, thugs, and other desperate types lurk in the shadows waylaying the outsider with callous and brutal efficiency.

Kielmun

Of all the cities in Canceri, Kielmun has perhaps suffered the worst. Situated near the Blighted Mire, invaders from the south always strike here first, before moving on to mount a longer campaign against Ventaka and Nishanpur. Even with the devastating attacks, first from the Imperium, then the Coryani, and then all too frequent invasions of the Heretic Wars, Kielmun survived. However, the city died when the Swords of Nier swept through, overrunning its meager defenses, slaughtering the undead housed in the massive necropolises, and enslaving the populace. Now, the ruin is home to those few citizens who evaded the Swords' tender mercies, scavengers, those who look for treasures, and those who feast on the bloated corpses of the dead.

Unlike the Ventaka and Sohbuk, Kielmun never had a dome for protection, relying on its city walls instead for protection. Standing at the edge of the Blighted Mire, it served as an attractive site for sieges, allowing invading armies to occupy the city,

Kielmun

Type: Small City (by size and not the remaining population).

Population: Unknown, estimated at about 1,000 living and about 120 sentient undead.

GP Limit: 100.

Assets: None.

Power Centers:

Conventional: None. Formerly Nerothian priesthood.

Nonstandard: Squatters.

Paluos val'Mordane (NE mal Val vampire Nec 11) leads the surviving people of Kielmun and sentient undead in the warrens beneath the city.

Kajal Keirig (CE male human Rgr 3/Rog 6) proclaims himself King of the Kielmun leading his mob of scavengers.

Military: *Soldiers:* 0; *Militia:* 53 men and women serving Kajal, undetermined numbers of able-bodied men, women, and undead in the catacombs.

Captain of the Guard: Ulid the lover (NE male human Bbn 3/Ftr 3/Rog 4) serves Kajal as his right-hand man. He gains his nickname for his penchant for seducing his victims before he kills them.

Industries: Formerly agriculture, horses, poisons, and drugs, but now nothing.

and establish their supply lines before moving further into the nation. However, no conquering army ever remained for long, for its populace would poison their wells, kill their guards, and strike from hidden tunnels in the catacombs. After so many conquests, the Nihangs decided it was not worth the cost to maintain a garrison in the city, and in case the community fell to invaders, the populace proved it could defend itself.

Before Nishanpur fell, the Council of Nihang felt this to be the case when the Swords of Nier invaded Canceri, but they underestimated the thoroughness of the Sword of the Heavens. When the Swords struck the city, they poured over the walls, destroying any undead they encountered, and then sealed the catacombs by collapsing buildings on top of entrances pointed out by the Sisters of Nier. Even Kielmun's famous spy network of assassins could do little, for the Larissan Seers serving Leonydas, identified the agents, and the Swords killed them all with relish. The occupying force gathered the populace, impaling citizens on pikes along the streets, town square, and in the fields. When they ran out of spikes, they burned the rest of the people on pyres, along with the undead. Some say the cries even stirred the silent gods.

Now, because the Red March passes through the city, Canceri citizens and merchants heading east to the coastal trading centers must pass through the community, witnessing the dead, suffering the stink, serving as a reminder of the Swords of Nier's power and authority. It is a place to people should avoid, for aside from the jackals, buzzards, and the rampant plagues, there are squatters who claim the city, fancying themselves as kings.

Lohwach

Lying in a valley on the eastern slopes of Nier's Spine is the huge fortress and city, Lohwach. Fearsome and daunting, it joins both sides of the Valley, with two tall towers reminiscent of horns. Constructed of basalt, it is believed impregnable. The city itself lies within the mountain, extending for thousands of feet, heated by the geothermal vents of steam released through vents the structure.

A testament to Nierite war craft, the massive fortress of Lohwach has never fallen to invaders. Its towers reach 100 feet high, with walls exceeding 70 feet tall; the scaling ladders of their enemies cannot hope to reach the top. Furthermore, the fortress is constructed of solid basalt blocks, impervious to siege weaponry, if even such equipment could be brought into the mountains. As much of the fortress lies inside the mountains themselves, there is little chance for sappers to tunnel beneath the walls to get inside for they would have to travel through solid rock. Suffice it to say, Lohwach is impregnable.

Lohwach**Type:** Small City**Population:** 9,870.

96% Canceri human/Val, 1% dwarf, 1% Dark-kin, 2% other.

GP Limit: 15,000.**Assets:** 7,402,500 gp.**Power Centers:****Conventional:** Nierite priesthood.

Nihang of Lohwach: Reizahn val'Virdan (LE male Val Clr of Nier 12).

Military: *Soldiers:* 200; *Militia:* 100 guards of the Church of the Dark Trumvirate who serve Reizahn.**Captain of the Guard:** Captain Teyal Daelrin (LN male human War 12)**Industries:** Horses, iron, gold, sheep.

The people of this city enjoy excellent trade relations with the Yhing-hir horsemen of the hinterlands, sending warhorses, mutton, gold and iron to their allies across the She'Haulk Mountains, in exchange for grains, cloth and other staple products for survival. On the other hand, they despise the val'Mehan, and they oppose them in the capital whenever they can.

Nishanpur

The City of Secrets, the jewel of Canceri, the heart of evil, the city of devils, regardless of its names, it is the most important, and by far the largest city in Canceri. Originally founded by Emperor Ixion III as a fortress for Imperium soldiers to govern the province, it evolved into a hub for trade eclipsing the province's former capital, Ventaka. Nishanpur was the seat of the Devil-Kings' tyranny, it served as the capital of the province during the Coryani occupation, while also the site of Leonydas' fall, and most recently his resurrection. Nishanpur, for all its corruption, sprawling size, and dominance by the Sarishan priests, it stands as the most modern of all the cities, drawing people from all over Onara to sample the pleasures to be had, and to taste its many pains.

Nishanpur is a city of danger and treachery, attractive to any who would gain in status and power. The streets, choked with drug addicted, mad, or crippled souls are a testament to the dangers inherent in the city as well. Nishanpur is also a city of contrasts. What morality there is to be found in Canceri is most likely found here, but alongside one of the greatest sinkholes of evil ever to exist in the world.

As the capital of Canceri, all decisions regarding the nation's foreign and domestic politics originate here. Before the Swords occupation, the head of the government and state religion centered here. Though the Swords hold the city in an iron grip,

Nishanpur**Type:** Metropolis**Population:** 279,438 (living and sentient undead).

78% Canceri human/Val, 15% other human/Val, 3% Dark-kin, 4% other.

GP Limit: 100,000.**Assets:** 1,397,200,000 gp.**Power Centers:****Conventional:** Church of the Dark Trumvirate (underground)

Dark Apostate: Palic val'Mehen (LE male Val Prt of Sarish 19/Pat 5)

Nonstandard: Swords of Nier (occupying force)

Priesthood of Sarish

Various underworld factions

Autocrat of the Swords of Nier: Quintus Attulus val'Virdan, (LE male Val Holy Judge 12/WoEF 5)**Military:** *Swords of Nier:* 12,670; *Militia:* 4,800.**Industries:** Trade, Sarishan Steel armor and weaponry, slaves, drugs, poisons, assassins.

and though the Dark Apostate's seat remains empty, Nishanpur continues as it always has, as one of the central economic powers in northern Onara.

Nishanpur is a stunning city, mixing architecture from all eras, from the reign of the Devil-Kings, to the rise of the modern Church of the Dark Trumvirate. Most buildings in the city are in excellent repair, having flat tiled roofs and painted walls. Wide thoroughfares paved with smooth stone allow easy passage through the various sections of the city, however, branching off from the main roads are hundreds of shadowy side streets, leading to dark places, unfit for the sane, wholesome, or living. Temples and homes in the better districts feature bas-reliefs and bright tile mosaics, with grinning gargoyles leering from their perches atop of walls, built into the architecture, or peering down at passers-by from the rooftops.

A city as large as Nishanpur has several neighborhoods and communities within, though time and the potential for fortunes draws many not rich enough to enter. These people dwell in the Outer City, a large community serving travelers who would enter the city, but need to store illegal goods, such as weapons, before gaining entry into the metropolis. However, most of the people living here do so because they cannot find lodgings within Nishanpur itself due to overcrowding and the cost of housing. With the influx of refugees, the Outer City has grown as people come to the capital to find a place to live amidst the chaos of their homeland. In addition to the people living in the outer city, there are thousands of refugees who live in the Shanties, a collection of tents and huts, owned by the refugees, so poor and destitute they cannot find homes in the Outer City. The Swords of Nier make regular sweeps of these areas arresting

people for petty crimes, killing others outright, in an effort to control the population. Still, this is a sad place, where people starve to death, succumb to disease, or are brutally abused before creeping back their lean-tos before dying.

The city itself has four quarters: Barren Hills Quarter, Trade Quarter, Corpse Quarter, and Temple Quarter. The Barren Hills Quarter is a populated section with the Flame Gate standing as its sole exit from the city. Most of the city's Nierites live here, and it is also where the Knights of the Red Fist, the city's fiend riding militia, maintain their headquarters. This is a strict place of harsh laws, heavy patrols, and little tolerance for the riff-raff of other sections of the city.

The Trade Quarter is a busy section of the city, and the most populated. Plastered and painted buildings crowd over the streets, with the flat roofs forming balconies. Smooth stone covers the main streets in an effort to facilitate the movement of goods to the various markets. The Trade Quarter also houses the Grand Library. Visitors can access this part of the city from one of the three outer gates, notably the Trade Gate, though some take the Cold Gate and March Gate, leading to the Cold Road and the Red March respectively.

The most dangerous section of the city is the Corpse Quarter, where Palaces of the Devil-Kings stand in ruins. The poor and the wicked alike come to the Corpse Quarter to live, lacking the wherewithal to survive in other parts of the city. Many of the elderly come here to die, while necromancers and demonologists come to collect specimens of the dead, or to look for lost relics from the Time of Terror. The streets here are crooked, paved with rough cobbles, but most are muddy and neglected. Citizens can access the necropolis in this section of the city, as well as the Flesh Market, where slavers ply their wares. The docks intrude upon this section of the city, mixing with the ashes from the funeral pyres, creating an unwholesome miasma of grey mud. The Corpse Quarter has two Gates: the Corpse Gate and the Devil Gate, but those who find need of something here travel through the Docks.

The last part of Nishanpur is the Temple Quarter, where the old Mother Church now stands in ruins, and the Church of the Dark Triumvirate reigns supreme. Featuring the Nihang Council Building as its largest and grandest structure, it stands in the shadow of the now empty Cathedral of the Dark Apostate rising from the ridge in the center of the city. The Temple Quarter is the oldest section of the city, and so the government appropriated the structures here to serve the nation. Few people live here, keeping their distance from the masked Nerothians, violence inclined Nierites, and the treachery of the Sarishans.

Sohbuk

The dead city in the heart of the Cold Plains is Sohbuk. Long ago, the last of the living perished, and no one has come to this ancient domed city since. After a terrible attack claiming the lives of the entire ruling val'Mordane family here, they returned in unlife to rule their subjects. Soon, Sohbuk became a haven for the dead, and in time, there were so many, they either consumed or drove off the living. Now, Sohbuk is a place of fear and loathing for foreigners, filled with the rotting flesh of the animate.

Sohbuk gets its fame from Hegrish val'Mordane, the lich-Nihang who seized control over the Church of the Dark Triumvirate and held it for two centuries. Under his rule, Canceri stabilized and emerged as a powerful force in world politics. However, when Hegrish fell, and the Swords poured forth from the Hinterlands, the Nerothian dynasty ended. Nierites began to persecute their priests, while Sarishan clerics were all too eager to fill the vacuum left by the Dark Apostate. The Swords destroyed Kielmun, razing it and all the lands around, and sieged Sohbuk, doing what they can to penetrate the city's dome. The val'Mordane were unconcerned, for they have no need of food and water, and have no mortal subjects to care for either. At a stalemate, for most of their time as the occupiers of Canceri, the Swords maintained a token force around the city to contain the inhabitants. After the civil war, the Swords of Nier retreated to Nishanpur, leaving the inhabitants of Sohbuk to their own devices.

Inside the dome, Sohbuk appears to be one massive cemetery. As none of its inhabitants requires light, the city is pitch black, and the inhabitants move about regardless of the time of day. The Sohuku give visitors orbs generating on command a feeble blue light to allow them to move about the city. Most visitors find the place oppressive never staying long. With straight streets, towering mausoleums, and the monolithic structure housing the val'Mordane elite in the center it is enough to deter the living, even those comfortable in darkness from staying long.

Sohbuk

Type: Small City

Population: 6,542 (sentient undead, no living).
88% Undead Canceri human/Val, 10% other Undead human/Val, 2% other undead.

GP Limit: 15,000.

Assets: 4,905,000 gp.

Power Centers:

Conventional: Nerothian priesthood
Nihang of Sohbuk, Mala val'Mordane (NE female
Val lich Nec 5/Clr of Neroth 13)

Nonstandard: None

Military: 5,500 various undead

Industries: Slaves, undead servants, relics.



Stanivel

The tent city of Stanivel stands on the extreme eastern edge of Canceri's border. Indicative of Canceri's Sarishans, it moves about with the nation's eastern border as the people manipulate the Hinterland tribes to war with one another and give up more territory. Even with Stanivel's treachery, the nomads of the east never destroy the city, always lured back to complacency by the community's offerings of forbidden pleasures. Stanivel is a moral sinkhole. Every perversion, every craving, every desire finds satiation here. Prostitution, drugs, torture, murder, and almost any dark impulse is not just allowed, but celebrated. Stanivel use their commodities to distract the nomads from their manipulations, for they have addicted many of their leaders to the variety of narcotics available here.

Because of their control of the barbarians who are their best customers, they have little interest in the affairs of the nation content to live as they do in the cushioned life the city offers, though they resent their Nihang's aloofness concerning their development.

As mentioned above, Stanivel has no permanent structures. Originally, the Sarishans established the site to trade with the easterners, but found the influx of gold too appealing to leave. Comprised of tents surrounding an oasis, the people can pick up and be ready to move should the barbarians of the Hinterlands ever grow wise to their manipulations.

Stanivel

Type: Large Town

Population: 4,300.

84% Canceri human/Val, 10% other human/Val, 4% Dark-Kin, 2% other.

GP Limit: 3,000.

Assets: 645,000 gp.

Power Centers:

Conventional: Sarishan priesthood

Nihang of Stanivel, Larala val'Mehen (CE female Val Clr 3/Wiz 10)

Nonstandard: None

Military: *Soldiers:* 43 Dark-Kin Eunuchs; *Militia:* 215.

Industries: Prostitutes, drugs, slaves, bound fiends.

Ventaka

Type: Large City

Population: 22,208 (living and sentient undead).
94% Canceri human/Val, 2% other human/Val, 2% Dark-Kin, 2% other.

GP Limit: 40,000.

Assets: 44,420,000 gp.

Power Centers:

Conventional: Nerothian priesthood
Nihang of Ventaka, Maedric val'Mordane (NE male lich Val Clr 16)

Nonstandard: None

Military: *Soldiers:* 222; *Militia:* 1110.

Industries: Lore, magic items, some agriculture.

Ventaka

Before Coryan, before the Devil-Kings, before, even, the coming of the First Imperium, there was Ventaka, city of the dead. When legions of the First Imperium crossed into this land, they faced the howling hordes of undead in the service to the Nerothian priests. Though they conquered, the memories of the Nerothian wickedness remained until the Imperium's demise. Perhaps it was because of the Nerothian successes against the Imperium legion that urged Ixion III to found Nishanpur as the provincial capital instead of the ancient tomb. In any event, Ventaka still stands, though it undergoes extensive restoration to repair the dome covering the whole of the city by the Master Architect Sagrivan.

Historically, Ventaka has always been a city whose sovereignty remained uncontested. Ventaka has never fallen into foreign hands. Even the famous Sir Aeorin val'Holryn could find no entry into this place, and when he settled outside of the city, by morning he was gone, vanished into the ether, leading to the rout of his minions.

All around the ancient city are deep fissures and ravines, as if the ground fled from the city's evil. Perhaps the most telling feature of this ancient city is the dome itself. Unstable, fraught with fractures and cracks, and damaged beyond repair, the people of the city, who had long since overcome their enemies, resigned themselves to the doom of their collapsing dome, as the Swords waited beyond the dome. However, through the efforts of a few individuals, they brought Sagrivan the Master Architect to repair the dome, and ensured the continued resistance to the Swords of Nier.

The city's architecture is one of the wonders of the world, surviving thousands of years. As with all things though, the structures in the city are showing their age. Even with the scaffolding and the work crews attempting to forestall any other damage to the city, the evidence of a previous collapse from

the ancient dome overhead is evident in the crushed sections in the city. Worse, though work continues to repair the structural damages, food has become scarce, and no pets remain in the city, with people turning to cannibalism to survive.

Vrain

Natives claim a city lies east of Nier's Spine, though foreigners have yet to find it. The reason is because the city lies far below the earth, and the terrain above shows no sign of its existence. The city itself lies in the nexus of hundred of tunnels.

There is an old adage about Vrain, "One does not find Vrain; it finds you." There are three ways to enter Vrain. The first is through a Portal of Anshar. The second is by exploring the tunnels beneath Nier's Spine until the spelunker is lucky enough to stumble onto the correct tunnel leading to the city. The third is to slip through a magically concealed hole on the surface; though the city's militia guards these.

The origins of Vrain precede the Nierites living there now. The Nierites fought against a nest of Voiceless Ones when they first settled these lands, and eventually destroyed them. Realizing the strategic advantage of the place, they settled here, and have thrived ever since.

Vrain has several unusual features, like lights in old tunnels leading the lost back to the city, weird, almost organic, architecture, and statuary so alien and unsettling it hurts the eyes to look overlong at them.

Vrain

Type: Small City

Population: 4,300.

98% Canceri human/Val, 2% other.

GP Limit: 3,000.

Assets: 645,000 gp.

Power Centers:

Conventional: Nierite priesthood
Nihang of Vrain, Ibelle val'Virdan (NE female Val Clr 11).

Military: *Soldiers:* 43; *Militia:* 215.

Industries: Gems, gold, iron, tin.

Chapter Four

The Living and the Dead

Not all people of Canceri are human or even mortal. Over a third of Canceri's population is undead. Mindless animated corpses serve as laborers and servants, while the intelligent undead rule from their domed Nerothian cities. Fiends are also common in these lands, serving their mortal masters, plotting for the day of their returned mastery. Dark Kin living in Canceri are afforded a bit better life than they would find elsewhere, but even here there are those who are treated as the refuse of humanity or worse. However, at least in Canceri, the Dark Kin are not automatically reviled and some, especially those who enter the priesthood, can rise above the masses and live lives of comfort and power. This chapter expands the races covered in **Chapter Two: Culture and Politics**.

The Dark-Kin of Canceri

The reign of the Devil-Kings brought terror and woe to the people of Onara. They destroyed entire cities at whim, laying waste to millennia of culture and tradition. They took advantage of countless women and men, spreading their tainted seed throughout the world, eventually giving birth every few generations to a sub-race of beings known as the Dark-Kin. After the Coryani drove away and destroyed the Devil-Kings, many Dark-Kin perished in a terrible cleansing of the Infernal taint. The Coryani legions put thousands of the tainted offspring to the sword, and though they killed many, they did not get them all. Mothers hid their children from the inquisitors, some fled north or east to the Hinterlands, while others gave their spawn to the Sarishans. In any event, the Dark-Kin survived, and walk the lands of Onara.

Personality: Many foreign dark-kin struggle with their inner demons, grappling with the dark impulses inherited from their ancestors. These are tortured souls, fighting with themselves to adapt to a world of ethics and morality alien to their inclinations. Many of those living in Canceri, however, find the nation fitting for their desires, accepting of their inner evil. Most Cancerean dark-kin are wicked, giving into the evil impulses with abandon. They are treacherous, wicked and without a care for who and what they hurt.

Physical Description: The thing uniting dark-kin is the lack of unifying characteristics. Dark-kin have a wide assortment of physical characteristics, from unusual skin, hair, and eye coloration, to a vestigial tail, pointed ears, fangs, and a number of other fiendish characteristics. How pronounced these features varies from dark-kin to dark-kin, with some so hideous as to be attacked on sight, while others are exotic.

Relations: Most people scorn dark-kin, seeing the Time of Terrors in the features. In Canceri, the attitudes prevalent in other lands, persecution and bigotry for instance, are not as common for dark-kin fulfill many roles in Cancerean society from slave to guard to priest. For their part, dark-kin usually judge others on their merits, and in most cases, they simply want to get by without being bothered or lynched.

Alignment: Most Cancerean dark-kin are evil. They adapt to Canceri's decadent society and do what they can to contribute to the depravity of the place. Foreign dark-kin tend towards neutrality or a chaotic bent, but rarely good.

Dark-Kin Lands: The dark-kin have no lands of their own. They tend to live in large cities, seeking some protection from the bigots in smaller towns. They can be found in almost any nation.

Religion: The dark-kin do not have much use for the gods. Many feel the gods have cursed them, by allowing them to live as they do. Some turn to the Devil-Kings as their gods. Yet, there are a few with some kind of religious inclination, and they uphold the same gods as those worshipped in the lands they live. Hence, in Canceri, dark-kin embrace Nier, Neroth, and Sarish, though some have little use for human gods.

Language: Dark-kin speak the language of their homelands. Most also speak Infernal as the tongue comes easy to them.

Adventurers: Reviled by most, hunted by many, dark-kin take up the life of adventure to escape the prejudice of their homelands, in the effort to rise in the estimation of others through their deeds. Others, such as those in Canceri, seek adventure to facilitate the satiation of their infernal desires. With adventure comes treasure, and with treasure comes the good life. When they run out of coin to spend on drink and brothels, they take another job.

Infernal Characters

Some players, tempted to play an Infernal character in a Canceri home campaign. Allowing the players to run demonic and devilish characters could prove interesting, with characters working to oppose the Swords of Nier occupation or work to restore the Reign of the Devil-Kings. Or, perhaps, the characters hunt for the infamous Splymaster to punish him, beginning a game of cat and mouse on a backdrop of a war torn nation. In any event, characters where the players take the roles of the Infernals require careful adjudication on the part of the GM, assuring that their players' sensibilities and maturity is gauged and respected.

Having such races available for PCs is not for everyone and should be considered carefully. What follows is a list of viable demons and devils from the Core Rulebook III, with tips for using them as PCs, followed by an example of a fiendish race, ready for play.

Bearded Devil (ECL 12): The Sarishans use these devils as toughs and soldiers. Aside from the dretch, the bearded devil is the most accessible and viable of the lot. However, they have 6 HD plus their class level, and in a party of 13th-level characters, these characters are not likely to survive for long.

Chain Devil (ECL 14): Another difficult example, for the chain devil has many special abilities, but relies on chains for the bulk of its effective abilities. For the gains, waiting until 15th-level may seem like a poor trade.

Erinyes (ECL 16): Again, playing this character is out of reach for most games. Erinyes have 9 HD plus their class level, but compared to 17th-level characters, the erinyes has a small chance of survival against larger opponents. A decent spellcaster can replicate their ability to fly, minimizing the benefits of playing this race.

Hezrou (ECL 19): These demons are terrors in combat, with a large array of special abilities, terrible attacks, and solid resistances. They are terrible opponents on the battlefield. Alongside 20th-level characters, hezrou are not as dangerous, and in epic level play, hezrous must spend a lot of time catching up.

Succubus (ECL 12): Depending on the nature of the campaign, the succubus makes for an interesting adventuring companion. In intrigues, she can move unopposed through the upper levels of society, with little resistance. Seduction, pain, and energy drain are her tools and her spell-like abilities more than make up for her low hit points.

Vrock (ECL 18): Like the hezrou, playing a vrock is out of the reaches of most players. Requiring the average party level to be 19th level for entry, the vrock is not worth the effort. Still, in a party full of vocks, the possibilities for adventure are endless.

Dretch

Of the Infernals in service to the Sarishan demon-binders, perhaps the most innocuous is the dretch. These pathetic fiends are little better than Infernal currency, for the lack of respect they command. Occasionally, one escapes its binding to find itself trapped in the mortal world. These creatures, now alone in the Mortal Realm, have a world of possibilities, long denied them, now spread out before them. **NOTE:** In Living Arcanis, those wishing to play Dretch characters may only do so in Living Arcanis: Nishanpur designated adventures.

Personality: Reprehensible and repellent to mortals of morals, the dretch is a creature exulting in physical pleasure, feeding on the pain of others. Most dretch are lacking in cognitive ability, and many find

destruction at the hands of holy champions, or scrupulous Sarishan priests. Those surviving the hostilities of mortals have more cunning, than others of their kind.

Physical Description: Standing just under 4 feet tall, a dretch appears to be a small flabby human, with a hunched back, and long arms dragging on the ground when it walks. They have small red glowing deepset eyes, looking out over a pug-like nose and a mouth filled with brown and needle shaped teeth. Most dretch go without clothing, though some of the superior dretch manage to find clothing that fits them.

Relations: Dretch normally do not get along with anyone. Treacherous, mean, and evil, they never keep their word, break any promises they make, and serve alongside others out fear rather than commitment. In an adventuring party, a dretch first tries to establish a hierarchy, attempting to win a position of power as far up the chain as possible. As most mortals are more capable – and personable – than dretches, this position is not very high. However, it also values its life above all else, so if one of the companions proves stronger and tougher than the rest, the dretch will work to gain the dominant character's favor.

Alignment: Dretch are usually chaotic evil. Player Character dretches are Neutral.

Dretch Lands: Dretch originate from the Infernal Planes, along with the rest of the Infernal host. On the Mortal Realm, dretch are common north of the Wall of the Gods, and in lands where the worship of Sarish is dominant. Otherwise, humans and Vals destroy them when possible, forcing these demons to go into hiding.

Religion: Dretch have no regard for mortal gods. They do not worship and respect only those stronger than it is.

Language: All dretch speak Infernal. A few dretch can speak human tongues.

Adventurers: Some dretch take up adventuring to spread mayhem and sorrow, while others are filled with wonder at the sights and sounds of the Mortal Realm and just wish to experience what they can before their inevitable demise.

Dretch (Player Character) Racial Traits

- +2 Str, +4 Con, –4 Int: Dretch are strong and tough, but lack the wits necessary to employ their other qualities.
- Small: As a Small creature, a dretch gains a +1 size bonus to Armor Class, a +1 size bonus on attack rolls, and a +4 size bonus on Hide checks, but it uses smaller weapons than humans use, and its lifting and carrying limits are three-quarters of those of a Medium character.
- Dretch base land speed is 20 feet.
- Darkvision: Dretches can see in the dark up to 60 feet. Darkvision is black and white, but it is otherwise like normal sight, and dretches can function just fine with no light at all.



- **Racial Hit Dice:** A dretch starts with two levels of Infernal, providing it 2d8 Hit Dice, a base attack bonus of +2, and base saving throw bonuses of Fort +3, Ref +3, and Will +3.
- **Racial Skills:** A dretch's Infernal levels give it skill points equal to $5 \times (8 + \text{Int modifier})$. Its class skills are Hide, Listen, Move Silently, Spot, Search, and Survival.
- **Racial Feats:** A dretch's Infernal levels give it one feat.
- **+5 natural armor bonus.** Dretches have tough rubbery skin.
- **Spell-like Abilities:** 1/day—*stinking cloud*; Caster level 2nd; save DC 10 + dretch's Charisma modifier + spell level.
- **Damage reduction 5/cold iron or good.**
- **Immune to electricity and poison.**
- **Resistance to acid 10, cold 10, and fire 10.**
- **Infernal:** As an Infernal, dretches are proficient in all simple and martial weapons. In addition, they do not need to eat or sleep, though they must breathe. If slain, only *limited wish*, *wish*, or *true resurrection* spell can bring them back.
- **Extraplanar:** Dretches are native to the Infernal plane.
- **Automatic Languages:** Infernal. **Bonus Languages:** Any mortal tongue.
- **Favored Class:** Barbarian. A multiclass dretch's barbarian class does not count when determining whether it takes an experience point penalty for multiclassing.
- **Level Adjustment:** +2. A dretch has an effective character level (ECL) of 2 plus class levels, so a 1st-level dretch barbarian would have an ECL of 3.

Undead Characters

Adventurers in Canceri are certain to encounter all sorts of terrible things, from ancient lichs lurking in the bowels of a Nerothian necropolis, to the myriad of Infernals in service to Sarishan priests. Yet of all the nations upon Onara, only Canceri freely embraces those blessed (cursed?) with the state of being known as life beyond life. This mindset is ingrained in the common Cancerese from the teachings of the Nerothian Temple.

Each and every adherent of Nerothian is taught from a young age that the greatest gift Neroth gave unto mankind was the ability to transcend this mortal existence, plagued by physical as well as emotional pain, to one of true immortality. Unhampered by the chains of emotion, the intellect was free to pursue its true potential and it now had the all the time in the world to find ultimate enlightenment. All one has to do is be faithful to the tenets as laid down by the clerisy and, if He finds you worthy, death shall be but a short sleep from which one awakens infused with amazing energy and with a clarity of mind a venerable monk would envy. Given that their very existence is considered a 'divine' state, it is little wonder that the living populace, especially among those living in the southern portion of Canceri.

But not all undead are created equal. There is a clear distinction between mindless drones like zombies, husks and skeletons and the more intellectually gifted undead. The Nerothians believe that once a being dies and Neroth has deigned not to 'bless' him, then the body is nothing but a shell, to be done with what is most expedient. Obviously, those families with power and the wherewithal to afford a proper burial chamber have little fear of having their corpse reanimated, but many of the more destitute households have little choice but to sell the cadavers of their dearly departed to necromancers, who in turn reanimate them to perform hard of dangerous labors. What better worker than one which never tires, never thirsts or hungers or is ever in need of sleep?

Most undead soon discover that the most passionate of emotions have been purged from their being, though they still retain the ability to laugh or cry, feel exultant or enraged. As the undead being ages, they discover that certain emotions are more and more difficult to feel, especially those that most of humanity considers 'good' or 'human'. All they are able to feel is anger, jealousy, envy and hatred. Yet even these feelings eventually fade as the centuries do and with the turning of a millennia in this state, only the cold, hard logic of the intellect remains. Some undead use the talents of a Black Chanter to breathe life, even momentarily, upon the fading ember of their emotions.



Even within Canceri however, most of the intelligent undead do not walk the streets and interact with the masses as if they were still one of the living. Most keep to themselves, within ancient crypts or abandoned wings in a family manor. When they do need to interact with those outside their immediate family or followers, they do so swathed in layers of clothing or draped in thick robes. They are aware that the living has an instinctive reaction to the blessed; whether it be an unconscious detection of the necrotic energy which courses through the undead's body or some peculiar smell that can be detected on a basic, animal level.

This instinctive reaction to dealing with the living serves them well when the 'blessed' travel to other nations and interact with those not as enlightened to their state of being as the Nerothians of Canceri. Due to the inclusion of Neroth in the Pantheon of Man, anywhere that the institution of the Mother Church holds sway, undead are known to be the chosen of Neroth and thus are protected by ecclesiastic edict from harm without provocation. By the same token, undead that wantonly harm or feed upon a populace lose this protection and are subject to local laws as any other murderer. While this law is upheld by all the nations upon the Known Lands, in reality, undead that are detected by the living are often set upon and killed on sight. This is especially true in Milandir, who have suffered from the predations of undead monstrosities emerging from the lands of their northern neighbor. If called to task in the attacking of an undead citizen of Canceri, all one need do is accuse the fell being of having attacked first and most witnesses will nod in complete agreement. Milandir's vaunted equality appears to only extend to the living.

Intelligent undead fare better in the grand cities of the Coryani Empire as well as those of the Altherian Republic and the Western Lands. However, this cosmopolitan attitude exists only within the circles of the wealthy and powerful who work hard to cultivate their jaded attitude and unflappable demeanor. Outside the great cities, the 'blessed' must take as much care as they do in Milandisian lands. The unwashed masses are a fearful and superstitious lot that would just as soon burn an undead than let them pass unmolested.

Even greater care must be practiced in the enclaves of the dwarves and the lands of the Elorii. Though most of the dwarves do worship the gods of the human pantheon, none have a history of Nerothian worship. As such, only the most tolerant, such as the Solani or the Encali, will suffer an undead being within their sanctums. The elorii religious mindset does not include the possibility of life beyond life. Seeing this as solely a human abhorrence, Elorii see undead as a further degenerative state of humanity, below even the tainted dark kin and the accursed gnomes. From the elorii perspective, destroying an undead being is not a crime; on the contrary, it is merely setting the natural order right as Belisarda would want it.

Oddly enough it is in the untamed Hinterlands that undead are the safest away from Canceri. While the Yhing-hir have no issue in protecting their own from any threat, living or dead, they do have a healthy respect for the Cult of the Jackal. Many of these Ehtazara dress themselves in ragged and worn robes and hooded cloaks that they could easily be mistaken for undead anywhere else upon Onara. Thus due to a similarity in dressing habits, most undead are given a wide berth by the Horsemen of the Plains because of a simple case of mistaken identity.

Undead Characters in Home campaigns and the Living Arcanis campaign

In home campaigns, GMs will need to decide if and when a character will spontaneously become undead after their death and what form Neroth's Blessing with take. An eye towards game balance should be noted as allowing a PC to take on the characteristics of a lich might be fine in a high-level and high powered campaign, but disastrous in a low level one. Though Canceri is home to a host of undead, there are a few inappropriate for player use to maintain game balance. Consider the havoc your party would wreak with a PC playing a spectre or wraith, with games occurring at night, restricted by their natural aversions. What follows is a list of viable undead from the Core Rulebook III, with descriptions on how the major undead fit within Canceri society.

The Lich (LA +4): For most Nerothians in Canceri, the lich stands at the height of their potential. In order to become a lich, the spellcaster must create a magic phylactery in which the character stores its life force. Each lich must make its own phylactery, which requires the Craft Wondrous Item feat. The character must be able to cast spells and have a caster level of 11th or higher. The phylactery costs 120,000 gp and 4,800 XP to create and has a caster level equal to its creator's at the time of creation. In addition, the lich template in the Core Rulebook III carries a +4 level adjustment, requiring the character to earn enough experience points to earn four levels, before advancing again. In any event, liches occupy the highest tiers of Nerothian society.

The Vampire (LA +2): Vampirism is far easier to attain than lichdom. A character seeking to become a vampire must convince a sire, a vampire lord, to bestow the curse of vampirism on them. The process is sexual involving the exchange of blood or other fluids. If the vampire refuses to bestow the curse, he may kill the mortal outright, creating a vampire spawn, a creature in his thrall. Nerothians, the val'Mordane in particular, hold vampires in good regard, though not as much as liches, for liches need nothing to survive, and vampires require blood. Vampire spawn are little better than ghouls.



The Mummy: The mummy personifies Neroth in his disease aspect. As symbols of fear and death, steeped in religious mythology, the Nerothian priests venerate mummies for the symbolic connection with divinity, and their usefulness as guardians. Most mummies lose something of their mortal lives after reanimation, suffering grievous damage to their minds during the animation process, functioning as described in the Core Rulebook III. Some, however, overcome the foggiest of their realized state, hold onto their personalities, and continue their endeavors in unlife. Called greater mummies, these Cancerese are not as prominent as liches, but hold a far greater station than vampires.

In the Living Arcanis campaign, most players who opt to play undead characters do so because of a particular effect from a prestige class or due to specific effects as detailed in a *Living Arcanis* adventure. Unless otherwise noted, undead characters do not become specific undead, such as a vampire or lich but instead take on the undead template first presented in the Player's Guide to Arcanis. For completeness sake, this template is reprinted here.

Undead Template

"Undead" is a template that can be added to any corporeal humanoid that has a skeletal system (referred to hereafter as the "base creature").

Undead Template

Size and Type: The creature type changes from "Humanoid" to "Undead Humanoid" and the creature gains all the abilities and disadvantages associated with being undead. It uses all the base creature's statistics and special abilities except as noted here.

You are now an undead creature. You retain all of the features of your original classes and levels, except where those features are superseded by the effects of becoming undead. You do not recalculate your Base Attack Bonus or your base saving throw bonuses, but all of your current and future Hit Dice change to d12s. You also gain all of the following benefits and drawbacks:

- You have no Constitution score. You still accumulate Fortitude saving throw bonuses from your class levels, however. You use your Charisma modifier to determine your bonus or penalty on Fortitude saves.
- You gain Darkvision out to a range of 60 feet.
- You gain immunity to all mind-affecting effects (charms, compulsions, phantasms, patterns, and morale effects).
- You gain immunity to poison, sleep effects, paralysis, stunning, disease, and death effects.

- You are not subject to critical hits, nonlethal damage, ability drain, or energy drain. You are immune to damage to your physical ability scores (Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution), as well as to fatigue and exhaustion effects.

- You are damaged by positive energy (such as a cure spell) and healed by negative energy (such as an inflict spell). You can never benefit from any form of the regeneration special quality. The fast healing special quality works on you as normal.

- You are immune to any effect that requires a Fortitude save (unless the effect also works on objects, such as disintegrate, or is harmless).

- You use your Charisma modifier for Concentration checks and any other skill that would normally be modified by your Constitution modifier.

- You are not at risk of death from massive damage, but when reduced to 0 hit points or less, you are immediately destroyed (i.e. you do not have a -10 "buffer" as a living creature does.)

- You cannot be affected by raise dead and similar spells or abilities. Reenervate the Chosen can affect undead creatures. This basically means that you can only be brought back as an undead if the spell is cast at a Temple of Neroth or other location that the GM determines would have equivalent access to high-ranking undead members of the clergy of Neroth. In any case you still lose a level as normal when you are returned to life (or unlife). No Beltinian will ever assist in bringing you back in any way, shape, form, or fashion.

- You are considered to be powered by negative energy for all effects relating to undead. This means that you can be turned or destroyed by clerics who channel positive energy, and you can be rebuked or commanded by clerics who channel negative energy. Your total character level is your HD total for purposes of adjudicating turning attempts made against you. You do not gain any sort of Turn Resistance simply by virtue of becoming undead.

- Undead do not breathe, eat, or sleep.

Unless you disguise your undead state, you are very likely to suffer significant negative consequences when traveling in civilized areas. In certain cities, particularly those within the Theocracy of Canceri, your status as an undead will not be considered unusual or objectionable, but that is the exception rather than the rule. You must make the GM aware of your condition and any steps you are taking to conceal it at the beginning of every adventure.

Chapter Five

Classes

Canceri is an evil nation, a place of rampant human corruption, treachery, intrigues, and such debauchery as to stand as a blight on Onara. Many have come to quash the sins of this nation, though each have met with failure, repelled by undead legions, contagion, demonic servants, or the disciplined ranks of Nierite soldiers. Unchecked evil affects the people living here, altering lives, and warping souls. This chapter reveals Canceri's unholy champions, the evil version of the holy champion class as presented in the *Player's Guide to Arcanis*, providing all of the necessary mechanics to play these champions of evil. Finally, the chapter concludes with a selection of evil prestige classes, reflecting the various roles and individuals at work within Cancere society.

Holy and Unholy Champions

Whether a particular class is considered holy or unholy is strictly in the eye of the beholder. Most of the people of the Coryani Empire, Milandir, Altheria and the rest of the Known Lands, as well as the institution of the Mother Church view the "Holy Champions" patroned by the Church of the Dark Triumverate as the most unholy of beings, though obviously the Cancere do not view them as such. To them, these are the paragons of their cultural virtues and social mores, to be admired and emulated.

Ex-Holy Champions

Unholy champions who cease to be the requisite alignment, or who grossly violate the tenets of their faith lose all unholy champion spells and abilities (but not weapon, armor, and shield proficiencies). He may not progress any farther in levels as an unholy champion.

Multiclass Holy Champions

Like a member of any other class, an unholy champion may be a multiclass character, but multiclass unholy champions face a special restriction. An unholy champion who gains a level in any class other than unholy champion may never again raise his unholy champion level, though he retains all his unholy champion abilities. Exceptions may exist at the discretion of the GM. For obvious reasons, an unholy champion cannot have levels in multiple unholy champion classes, such as multiclassing the Nerothian Reaper with the Sarishan Knife.

Conflagration Knights

Serving the Nierite priesthood as elite champions of the Cancere church are the conflagration knights. Devoted to Nier's aspect as the Lord of Flaming Destruction, the conflagration knights exist to dominate the weak and destroy those opposed to their faith. They are so feared among the followers of Nier even the famous Warriors of the Eternal Flame give them a wide berth. The conflagration knights represent the pinnacle of faith and war, the union of piety and martial prowess.

Adventurers: Conflagration knights adventure to conquer. They strive to hone their skills, bettering themselves in the eyes of their peers and their aloof god. Gold and other treasure serves to reinforce their might. As they gain in reputation, they work towards attracting followers, establishing new squads of knights to honor the holy fire.

Characteristics: Controlled destruction defines the conflagration knight. They are as deadly as the greatswords they wield, causing the fires of the earth to spring forth from the ground and incinerate their enemies. As they grow in power, they dominate a nightmare to use as a steed, and little is more terrifying than seeing the living comet fly across the sky, preceding the legions of Nierites following in its wake.

Alignment: Conflagration knights must be lawful and non-good. They must maintain their rigid discipline at all costs.

Background: Like Nerothian reapers, conflagration knights exist only in Canceri. To become a conflagration knight, the candidate must undergo the ritual of fire. This ritual requires the candidate to endure seven days of scarring, where she subjects her naked body to hot brands. Some wicked priests use this opportunity to explore their own deviant desires, experimenting with molten metals on the flesh.

Races: Conflagration knights are nearly all dark-kin, human or Val. These races are the likeliest to devote themselves to the rigorous demands of this class. Rumor suggests some dwarves and a few elorii joined their ranks, but no one has ever seen any.

Other Classes: Nierite clerics are in good standing with conflagration knights. They even tolerate heretical Nierite clerics, who disdain the destructive aspect in favor of excellence of body, mind and spirit. These unholy champions also get along with fighters and monks, especially those of a similar mindset. Rangers, barbarians, and druid have potential, but many lack the requisite discipline to keep company with conflagration knights for long. Other characters are problematic at best.

Role: The conflagration knight is a deadly melee combatant. Her various spell-like abilities enhance the martial skills, allowing her to hedge out enemies with well-placed *walls of fire*, while focusing her attention on facing larger and nastier foes. However, she is closed-minded and prone to stubbornness, making her the least likely leader in the group, and a poor diplomat as well.

Game Rule Information

Conflagration knights have the following game statistics.

Abilities: Like other champions, Charisma is an important statistic, forming the foundation for their many abilities. Conflagration warriors need a high Strength score for combat. Finally, they need a 14 or higher Wisdom to cast the most powerful spells, and at least an 11 Wisdom to cast any spells at all.

Alignment: Any Lawful and non-good.

Hit Die: d10.

Starting Gold: 5d4 x 10 gp.

Class Skills

The conflagration knight's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Handle Animal (Cha), Heal (Wis), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (religion) (Int), Profession (Wis), Ride (Dex), Sense Motive (Wis), and Spellcraft (Int). See **Chapter 4: Skills** in the **PHB** for skill descriptions.

Skill Points at 1st Level: (2 + Int modifier) x 4.

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 2 + Int modifier.

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the conflagration knight.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Conflagration knights are proficient with all simple and martial weapons, with all types of armor (light, medium, and heavy), and with shields (including tower shields).

Aura of Faith (Ex): The power of a conflagration knight's divine aura is equal to her conflagration knight level plus any other class levels stacking with conflagration knight for this purpose (e.g. cleric).

Smite Infidel (Su): The Conflagration Knight gains the smite power, the supernatural ability to make a single melee attack with a bonus on attack rolls equal to his Charisma modifier (if positive) and a bonus on damage rolls equal to his Conflagration Knight



level if the attack hits. The knight must declare that he is smiting before making the attack. This ability is usable once per day (and only once per round if he gains multiple uses). This ability has no effect if the attack misses, or if used against a foe who serves a different religious faction (see the *Player's Guide to Arcanis* for complete details). The most common religious factions in Canceri are the Mother Church of Coryan and the Dark Triumvirate, although the Infernal Lords are also worshipped at times.

At 5th level, and at every five levels thereafter, the conflagration knight may smite infidel one additional time per day, as indicated on **Table 5-1: The Conflagration Knight**, to a maximum of five times per day at 20th level.

Nier's Wrath (Su): Beginning at 2nd-level, as a free action, the conflagration knight may take 2 points of Constitution damage in order to make his slashing weapon *flaming*, as the special property in *Core Rulebook II*, for a number of rounds equal to his Charisma modifier + 1 (minimum of 2 rounds). Constitution damage from this class ability heals normally. You must elect to use this ability before attack rolls are made in a round, unlike Nier's Strike (see below)



Ruinous Touch (Su): Starting at 2nd-level, the conflagration knight can inflict an amount of damage equal to her Charisma bonus times her conflagration knight level. She may choose to divide this damage among multiple recipients, and does not have to use it all at once. Ruinous touch counts as a touch attack. Alternatively, she can use this ability to cure damage on herself or to repair undead.

Aura of Despair (Su): Beginning at 3rd-level, the conflagration knight radiates a malign aura causing all enemies within 10 feet to take a -2 penalty on all saving throws.

Resistance to Fire (Ex): Conflagration knights of 3rd-level gain fire resistance 5. This resistance increases by 5 for every six levels (10 at 9th level, 15 at 15th level, and so on).

Rebuke Fire (Su): Starting at 4th level, the conflagration knight may rebuke, command, or bolster fire creatures as an evil cleric rebukes undead. She may use this ability a number of times per day equal to 3 + her Charisma modifier. She rebukes fire creatures as a cleric of two levels lower would.

Destroy Water (Su): When a conflagration knight reaches 4th level, she may destroy water creatures, as a good cleric turns undead. She may use this ability a number of times per day equal to 3 + her

Charisma modifier. She turns undead as a cleric of two levels lower would. A conflagration knight only affects a water creature if she will destroy it, otherwise this ability has no effect.

Spells: Beginning at 4th level, a conflagration knight gains the ability to cast a small number of divine spells, drawn from the conflagration knight spell list below. A conflagration knight must choose and prepare her spells in advance.

To prepare or cast a spell, a conflagration knight must have a Wisdom score equal to at least 10 + the spell level. The Difficulty Class for a saving throw against a conflagration knight's spell is 10 + the spell level + the conflagration knight's Wisdom modifier.

Like other spellcasters, a conflagration knight can cast only a certain number of spells of each spell level per day. Her base daily spell allotment is given on **Table 5-1: The Conflagration Knight**. In addition, she receives bonus spells per day if she has a high Wisdom score. When **Table 5-1: The Conflagration Knight** indicates the conflagration knight gets 0 spells per day of a given spell level, she

gains only the bonus spells she would be entitled to based on her Wisdom score for that spell level. The conflagration knight does not have access to any domain spells or granted powers, as does a cleric.

A conflagration knight prepares and casts spells the way a cleric does, though she cannot lose a prepared spell to spontaneously cast an *inflict* spell in its place. A conflagration knight may prepare and cast any spell on the conflagration knight spell list, provided she can cast spells of that level, but she must choose which spells to prepare during her daily rituals.

Through 3rd level, a conflagration knight has no caster level. At 4th level and higher, her caster level is one-half her conflagration knight level.

Nier's Strike (Su): Beginning at 5th-level, as a free action, whenever the conflagration knight confirms a critical hit, she may expend 2 points of Constitution in order to deal an extra 1d10 points of fire damage. Constitution damage from this class ability heals normally. Alternatively, you may elect to expend 4 Constitution to activate both this effect, and Nier's Wrath at the same time, and in response to a critical hit. If you do so, Nier's Wrath lasts as detailed above.

Wall of Fire (Sp): At 6th level, a conflagration knight can produce a *wall of fire* effect, as the spell, once per week. She can use this ability one additional time per week for every three levels after 6th (twice per week at 9th, three times at 12th, and so forth). The caster level for this effect is your conflagration knight level, minimum 7th.

Nightmare Steed: At 8th-level, the conflagration knight gains the service of a nightmare (see the **Core Rulebook III** for details). Once per day, as a full-round action, a conflagration knight may magically call her mount from the Infernal planes where it resides. This ability is the equivalent of a spell of a level equal to one-third the conflagration knight's level. The mount appears adjacent to the conflagration knight and remains for 2 hours per conflagration knight level; it may be dismissed at any time as a free action. Each time the conflagration knight calls its mount, it appears in full health, regardless of any damage it may have taken previously. The mount also appears wearing or carrying any gear it had when it was last dismissed. Calling a mount is a conjuration (calling) effect.

Should the conflagration knight's mount die, it disappears, leaving behind any equipment it was carrying. The conflagration knight may not summon another mount for thirty days or until she gains a reaper level, whichever comes first, even if the mount is somehow returned from the dead. During this thirty-day period, the conflagration knight takes a –1 penalty on attack and weapon damage rolls.

Conflagration Knight Spell List

Conflagration knights choose their spells from the following list:

1st Level: *burning hands, cause fear, corrupt weapon, cure light wounds, doom, endure elements, inflict light wounds, magic weapon.*

2nd Level: *bull's strength, cure moderate wounds, daylight, death knell, bear's endurance, flaming sphere, inflict moderate wounds, produce flame.*

3rd Level: *continual flame, cure serious wounds, flame blade, inflict serious wounds, protection from elements, steam blast†, your fire is mine†.*

4th Level: *cure critical wounds, fireball, fire shield, inflict critical wounds, unholy blight.*

†*Player's Guide to Arcanis*

Epic Conflagration Knight

Hit Die: d10

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 2 + Int modifier

Ruinous Touch (Su): Each day an epic conflagration knight can deal a total number of hit points equal to his or her Charisma bonus (if any) times her class level, as normal

Smite Infidel (Su): The epic conflagration knight adds her class level to damage with any smite infidel attack, as normal. She can smite one additional time per day for every five levels higher than 20th.

Rebuke Fire (Su): The epic conflagration knight rebukes fire creatures as an evil cleric of two levels lower rebukes undead, as described above.

Destroy Water (Su): The epic conflagration knight destroys water as a good cleric of two levels lower turns undead, as described above.

Spells: The epic conflagration knight's caster level is equal to one-half her class level, as normal. The epic conflagration knight's number of spells per day does not increase after 20th level.

Special Mount (Su): The epic conflagration knight's nightmare continues to increase in power. Every five levels after 20th the nightmare gains +2 bonus Hit Dice, its natural armor increases by +2, and its Strength increases by +1. The mount's spell resistance equals the epic conflagration knight's class level + 5.

Wall of Fire (Sp): The epic conflagration knight can use *wall of fire* one additional time per week for every three levels higher than 18th. The caster level for this effect caps at 20.

Bonus Feats: The epic conflagration knight gains a bonus feat every three levels higher than 20th.

Table 5–3: The Epic Conflagration Knight

Conflagration Knight Level	Special
21st	<i>Wall of fire</i> 6/week
22nd	—
23rd	Bonus feat
24th	<i>Wall of fire</i> 7/week
25th	Smite infidel 6/day
26th	Bonus feat
27th	<i>Wall of fire</i> 8/week
28th	—
29th	Bonus feat
30th	Smite infidel 7/day, <i>wall of fire</i> 9/week



Table 5-1: The Conflagration Knight

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Spells per Day			
						1st	2nd	3rd	4th
1st	+1	+2	+0	+0	Aura of faith, smite infidel 1/day	—	—	—	—
2nd	+2	+3	+0	+0	Nier's wrath, ruinous touch	—	—	—	—
3rd	+3	+3	+1	+1	Aura of despair, resistance to fire	—	—	—	—
4th	+4	+4	+1	+1	Rebuke fire, destroy water	0	—	—	—
5th	+5	+4	+1	+1	Nier's strike, smite infidel 2/day	0	—	—	—
6th	+6/+1	+5	+2	+2	Wall of fire 1/week	1	—	—	—
7th	+7/+2	+5	+2	+2		1	—	—	—
8th	+8/+3	+6	+2	+2	Nightmare steed	1	0	—	—
9th	+9/+4	+6	+3	+3	Wall of fire 2/week	1	0	—	—
10th	+10/+5	+7	+3	+3	Smite infidel 3/day	1	1	—	—
11th	+11/+6/+1	+7	+3	+3		1	1	0	—
12th	+12/+7/+2	+8	+4	+4	Wall of fire 3/week	1	1	1	—
13th	+13/+8/+3	+8	+4	+4		1	1	1	—
14th	+14/+9/+4	+9	+4	+4		2	1	1	0
15th	+15/+10/+5	+9	+5	+5	Smite infidel 4/day, wall of fire 4/week	2	1	1	1
16th	+16/+11/+6/+1	+10	+5	+5		2	2	1	1
17th	+17/+12/+7/+2	+10	+5	+5		2	2	2	1
18th	+18/+13/+8/+3	+11	+6	+6	Wall of fire 5/week	3	2	2	1
19th	+19/+14/+9/+4	+11	+6	+6		3	3	3	2
20th	+20/+15/+10/+5	+12	+6	+6	Smite infidel 5/day	3	3	3	3

Table 5-2: Nightmare Improvement

Knight Level	Bonus HD	Natural Armor Adj.	Str Adj.	Special
8th-10th	+0	+0	+1	Improved Evasion
11th-14th	+2	+2	+2	Bonus feat
15th-17th	+4	+4	+3	Aura of corruption
18th-20th	+6	+6	+4	Spell resistance

Bonus HD: Extra eight-sided (d8) Hit Dice, each of which gains a Constitution modifier, as normal. Extra Hit Dice improve the mount's base attack and base save bonuses. The mount gains additional skill points or feats for bonus HD as normal for advancing a monster's Hit Dice.

Natural Armor Adj.: The number on the table is an improvement to the mount's existing natural armor bonus.

Str Adj.: Add this figure to the mount's Strength score.

Improved Evasion (Ex): When subjected to an attack allowing a Reflex saving throw for half damage, a mount takes no damage if it makes a successful saving throw and half damage if the saving throw fails.

Bonus Feat: The mount gains any bonus feat it qualifies for on the fighter's list of bonus feats. Other feats may be available at the GM's discretion.

Improved Speed (Ex): The mount's speed increases by 10 feet.

Aura of Corruption (Su): Mounts with this ability project an aura of foul energy, forcing all animals within 30 feet to make a DC 15 Will save or be *shaken* for as long as they are in the area of effect and for 1d4 rounds after they leave the area. The nightmare cannot again affect animals making or failing the save for 24 hours.

Spell Resistance (Ex): A mount's spell resistance equals its master's level + 5. To affect the mount with a spell, a spellcaster must get a result on a caster level check (1d20 + caster level) that equals or exceeds the mount's spell resistance.

Nerothian Reaper

In Canceri's Nerothian priesthood, the clerics create undead, while the Nerothian Reapers lead them on the battlefield. Grim servants of the god of undead, they are themselves many times revenants, shades of their former lives. Sometimes called death knights for their ability to raise the dead to keep fighting after their soul has departed the people of Coryan and Milandir fear them for their martial might and their command over their undying servants.

Adventurers: Nerothian reapers rarely undertake the typical causes impelling other adventurers to take to the open road, such as acquiring wealth and land, glory, but often do so to fight for some higher ideal. Reapers serve the Nerothian priesthood, who rely on these unholy champions to serve as the martial arm of the church, to lead the undead host into battle, and retain their prominence and might in Canceri. They are often seen in battle against the forces of the Erdukeen Nierites and raiding Milandisians.

Characteristics: The power over death defines the Nerothian reaper. She has the ability to animate fallen comrades, kill with a touch, and an aura of fear isolating her from smaller opponents so she can engage her enemies. Reapers can control undead almost as well as clerics, and replace them with others after they fall. Finally, though not as versatile as fighters, reapers can hold their own in combat.

Background: Nerothian reapers are exclusive to Canceri, and the process of becoming a martial servant of the god of death is arduous. Candidates must present themselves before their Nihang and endure the master's scrutiny and questioning about the tenets of the faith.

Races: Humans are the most likely of races to embrace the darkness of this class. Most Val seek other avenues to glorify Neroth. Few other races are as devoted to Neroth as Cancerese humans. Undead such as mummies and vampires, on the other hand, make excellent Nerothian reapers.

Other Classes: Of all the classes, the reaper holds clerics of Neroth and necromancers in the highest esteem. Their actions bring glory to the god. Anyone not dedicated to Neroth has limited use for the reaper.



Role: The Nerothian reaper is best as a melee combatant, but with various fear abilities, she finds her greatest strengths in breaking up knots of opponents, and opening a route to the enemies' leaders. Reapers lack the healing abilities of other champions, and so take a strong position as heavy hitters, leaving other roles to their versatile companions.

Game Rule Information

Nerothian reapers have the following game statistics.

Abilities: Like other champions, Charisma is an important statistic, forming the foundation for their many fear abilities. Strength and Constitution form the spine of any melee warrior's fighting abilities. A reaper needs a 14 or higher Wisdom to cast the most powerful spells, and at least an 11 Wisdom to cast any spells at all.

Alignment: Any non-good.

Hit Die: d10.

Starting Gold: 5d4 x 10 gp.

Class Skills

The Nerothian reaper's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Handle Animal (Cha), Heal (Wis), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (religion) (Int), Ride (Dex), Sense Motive (Wis) and Spellcraft (Int). See **Chapter 4: Skills** in the **PHB** for skill descriptions.

Skill Points at 1st Level: (2 + Int modifier) x 4.

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 2 + Int modifier.

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the Nerothian Reaper.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Nerothian reapers are proficient with all simple and martial weapons, with all types of armor (light, medium, and heavy), and with shields (except tower shields).

Aura of Faith (Su): The power of a Nerothian reaper's divine aura is equal to his Nerothian reaper level plus any other class levels that stack with Nerothian reaper for this purpose (e.g. cleric).

Death Touch (Su): A Nerothian reaper may make a special touch attack once per day. On a successful touch against living creature, the Nerothian reaper

rolls 1d6 per reaper level. If the total at least equals the creature's current hit points, it dies (no save). Every five levels thereafter, the reaper gains one additional use of this ability (2 at 5th, 3 at 10th and so on) per day.

If the Nerothian reaper also has cleric levels and the Death domain, these two class levels stack for using either ability.

Dread (Su): Once per day, a Nerothian reaper may make a special melee attack against a living opponent. She adds her Charisma bonus (if any) to her attack roll. On a successful hit, in addition to normal damage, the target must succeed a Will save (DC 10 + one-half her reaper levels + her Charisma modifier) or the subject is confused as per *confusion* for a number of rounds equal to the reaper's Charisma modifier (minimum of 1 round). At 5th level, and at every five levels thereafter, the reaper may make an additional dread attack per day.

Rebuke Undead (Su): Nerothian reapers have the supernatural ability to rebuke undead. They may use this ability a number of times per day equal to 3 + her Charisma modifier. Nerothian reapers have an effective level for rebuking corporeal undead that is two higher than normal, but an effective level for

Table 5-4: Ghoul Steed Improvement

Nerothian Reaper Level	Bonus HD	Natural Armor Adj.	Str Adj.	Int	Special
6th-7th	+2	+4	+1	6	Improved evasion
8th-10th	+4	+6	+2	7	Improved speed, bonus feat
11th-14th	+6	+8	+3	8	Aura of corruption
15th-20th	+8	+10	+4	9	Spell resistance

Bonus HD: These are extra twelve-sided (d12) Hit Dice, each of which improves the mount's base attack and base save bonuses as normal for an undead creature. As an undead creature, the mount has a base attack like that of a wizard of a level equal to its Hit Dice. Also, the mount has a good Will save, and bad Fortitude and Reflex saves (treat as a character whose level equals the mount's Hit Dice). The mount gains skill points and feats for bonus Hit Dice as normal for advancing an undead creature.

Natural Armor Adj.: The number on the table is an improvement to the mount's existing natural armor bonus.

Str Adj.: Add this figure to the mount's Strength score.

Int: The mount's Intelligence score.

Improved Evasion (Ex): When subjected to an attack normally allowing a Reflex saving throw for half damage, a mount takes no damage if it makes a successful saving throw and half damage if the saving throw fails.

Bonus Feat: The mount gains any bonus feat it qualifies for on the fighter's list of bonus feats. Other feats may be available at the GM's discretion.

Improved Speed (Ex): The mount's speed increases by 10 feet.

Aura of Corruption (Su): Mounts with this ability project an aura of foul energy, forcing all animals within 30 feet to make a DC 15 Will save or be *shaken* for as long as they are in the area of effect and for 1d4 rounds after they leave the area. The ghoulish steed cannot again affect animals making or failing the save for 24 hours.

Spell Resistance (Ex): A mount's spell resistance equals its master's level + 5. To affect the mount with a spell, a spellcaster must get a result on a caster level check (1d20 + caster level) that equals or exceeds the mount's spell resistance.

rebuking incorporeal undead that is two lower than normal. See **Turn or Rebuke Undead** in the PHB for more details on this ability.

Disturbing Presence (Ex): The Nerothian reaper, at 2nd-level, gains Persuasive and Skill Focus (Intimidate) as bonus feats.

Frightful Presence (Su): For a number of times equal to the Nerothian reaper's Charisma modifier (minimum once per day), on a charge attack, the reaper forces all opponents within 30-feet to succeed Will saves against a DC 10 + one-half her reaper levels + her Charisma modifier or become *frightened* for 1d6 rounds per four reaper levels (maximum 5d6 rounds at 20th level). An opponent succeeding on the saving throw is immune to reaper's frightful presence for 24 hours. This is a mind-affecting fear effect.

Bolster Undead (Su): By expending a use of rebuke undead, a 4th-level Nerothian reaper may add one-half her class levels as turn resistance to all corporeal undead within 100 feet. This effect lasts for a number of rounds equal to the reaper's Charisma modifier.

Spells: Beginning at 4th level, a Nerothian reaper gains the ability to cast a small number of divine spells, drawn from the Nerothian reaper spell list below. A reaper must choose and prepare her spells in advance.

Table 5-5: The Nerothian Reaper

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Spells per Day			
						1st	2nd	3rd	4th
1st	+1	+0	+0	+2	Aura of faith, death touch 1/day, dread 1/day, rebuke undead	—	—	—	—
2nd	+2	+0	+0	+3	Disturbing presence	—	—	—	—
3rd	+3	+1	+1	+3	Frightful appearance	—	—	—	—
4th	+4	+1	+1	+4	Bolster undead	0	—	—	—
5th	+5	+1	+1	+4	Ghoul steed, death touch 2/day, dread 2/day	0	—	—	—
6th	+6/+1	+2	+2	+5	<i>Animate dead</i> 1/week	1	—	—	—
7th	+7/+2	+2	+2	+5		1	—	—	—
8th	+8/+3	+2	+2	+6		1	0	—	—
9th	+9/+4	+3	+3	+6	<i>Animate dead</i> 2/week	1	0	—	—
10th	+10/+5	+3	+3	+7	Death touch 3/day, dread 3/day	1	1	—	—
11th	+11/+6/+1	+3	+3	+7		1	1	0	—
12th	+12/+7/+2	+4	+4	+8	<i>Animate dead</i> 3/week	1	1	1	—
13th	+13/+8/+3	+4	+4	+8		1	1	1	—
14th	+14/+9/+4	+4	+4	+9		2	1	1	0
15th	+15/+10/+5	+5	+5	+9	<i>Animate dead</i> 4/week, death touch 4/day, dread 4/day	2	1	1	1
16th	+16/+11/+6/+1	+5	+5	+10		2	2	1	1
17th	+17/+12/+7/+2	+5	+5	+10		2	2	2	1
18th	+18/+13/+8/+3	+6	+6	+11	<i>Animate dead</i> 5/week	3	2	2	1
19th	+19/+14/+9/+4	+6	+6	+11		3	3	3	2
20th	+20/+15/+10/+5	+6	+6	+12	Death touch 5/day, dread 5/day	3	3	3	3

To prepare or cast a spell, a reaper must have a Wisdom score equal to at least 10 + the spell level. The Difficulty Class for a saving throw against a reaper's spell is 10 + the spell level + the reaper's Wisdom modifier.

Like other spellcasters, a reaper can cast only a certain number of spells of each spell level per day. Her base daily spell allotment is given on **Table 5-5: The Nerothian Reaper**. In addition, she receives bonus spells per day if she has a high Wisdom score. When **Table 5-5: The Nerothian Reaper** indicates the reaper gets 0 spells per day of a given spell level, she gains only the bonus spells she would be entitled to based on her Wisdom score for that spell level. The reaper does not have access to any domain spells or granted powers, as does a cleric.

A reaper prepares and casts spells the way a cleric does, though she cannot lose a prepared spell to spontaneously cast an *inflict* spell in its place. A reaper may prepare and cast any spell on the reaper spell list, provided she can cast spells of that level, but she must choose which spells to prepare during her daily rituals.

Through 3rd level, a reaper has no caster level. At 4th level and higher, her caster level is one-half her reaper levels.

Ghoul Steed: At 5th-level, the reaper gains the service of a foul and terrible carnivorous mount, called a ghoulish steed. Once per day, as a full-round action, a reaper may magically call her mount from the Underworld where it resides. This ability is the equivalent of a spell of a level equal to one-third the reaper's level. The mount appears adjacent to the reaper and remains for 2 hours per reaper level; it may be dismissed at any time as a free action. Each time the reaper calls its mount, it appears in full health, regardless of any damage it may have taken previously. The mount also appears wearing or carrying any gear it had when it was last dismissed. Calling a mount is a conjuration (calling) effect.

Should the reaper's mount die, it disappears, leaving behind any equipment it was carrying. The reaper may not summon another mount for thirty days or until she gains a reaper level, whichever comes first, even if the mount is somehow returned from the dead. During this thirty-day period, the reaper takes a -1 penalty on attack and weapon damage rolls.

Ghoul Steed: CR 2; Large Undead; HD 5d12; hp 32; Init +3; Spd 50 ft.; AC 18, touch 12, flat-footed 15; Base Attack +2; Grp +11; Atk +6 melee (1d6+5, hoof); Full Atk +6 melee (1d6+5, 2 hooves) and +1 melee (1d4+2 plus paralysis, bite); Space/Reach 10 ft./5 ft.; SA paralysis; SQ darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent, turn resistance +2, undead traits; SV Fort +1, Ref +4, Will +7; Str 20, Dex 17, Con —, Int 4, Wis 17, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Listen +9, Spot +9; Alertness, Run. **Paralysis (Ex):** Those hit by a ghoulish steed's bite attack must succeed on a DC 11 Fortitude save or be paralyzed for 1d4+1 rounds. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Animate Dead (Sp): At 6th level, a Nerothian reaper can produce an *animate dead* effect, as the spell, once per week. She can use this ability one additional time per week for every three levels after 6th (twice per week at 9th, three times at 12th, and so forth). The caster level for this effect is your Nerothian reaper level.

Nerothian Reaper Spell List

Reapers choose their spells from the following list:

1st Level: *cause fear, chill touch, corrupt weapon, cure light wounds, doom, inflict light wounds, magic weapon, protection from good.*

2nd Level: *bull's strength, cure moderate wounds, darkness, death knell, desecrate, eagle's splendor, inflict moderate wounds, scare, your time to die†.*

3rd Level: *animate dead, contagion, cure serious wounds, deeper darkness, inflict serious wounds, magic circle against good, protection from elements, smell of death†, vampiric touch.*

Epic Nerothian Reaper

Hit Die: d10

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 2 + Int modifier

Death Touch (Su): The epic Nerothian reaper gains an additional use of death touch per day for every five levels attained beyond 20th.

Dread (Su): The epic Nerothian reaper gains an additional use of death touch per day for every five levels attained beyond 20th.

Rebuke Undead: The epic Nerothian reaper rebukes undead as detailed above.

Spells: The epic Nerothian reaper's caster level is equal to one-half his or her class level, as normal. The epic Nerothian reaper's number of spells per day does not increase after 20th level.

Special Mount: The epic Nerothian reaper's ghoulish steed continues to increase in power. Every five levels after 20th the ghoulish steed gains +2 bonus Hit Dice, its natural armor increases by +2, its Strength adjustment increases by +1, and its Intelligence increases by +1. The mount's spell resistance equals the epic Nerothian reaper's class level + 5.

Animate Dead (Sp): The epic Nerothian reaper can use *animate dead* one additional time per week for every three levels higher than 18th. The caster level for this effect caps at 20.

Bonus Feats: The epic Nerothian reaper gains a bonus feat every four levels higher than 20th.

Table 5–6: The Epic Nerothian Reaper

Nerothian Reaper Level	Special
21st	<i>Animate dead</i> 6/week
22nd	—
23rd	—
24th	<i>Animate dead</i> 7/week, Bonus feat
25th	Death touch 6/day, dread 6/day
26th	—
27th	<i>Animate dead</i> 8/week
28th	Bonus feat
29th	—
30th	<i>Animate dead</i> 9/week, death touch 6/day, dread 7/day

4th Level: *cure critical wounds, death ward, enervation, inflict critical wounds, Neroth's embrace†, poison, unholy blight.*

†*Player's Guide to Arcanis*

Sarishan Knife

There are several instances in Canceri's history where enemy leaders vanished. For example, the Nierite and Nerothian leaders vanished in the night when the Sarishans allied themselves with the legions of the First Imperium, or when Sir Aeorin val'Holryn vanished before the gates of Ventaka ending the last of the Heretic Wars. Scholars suggest treacherous magic or skilled killers. The truth is far uglier than the suppositions of a few dusty old sages would otherwise suggest.

Adventurers: Sarishan knives serve the Sarishan priesthood. Trained killers, they undertake dangerous missions to eliminate enemies of the faith. Many use adventuring as a cover for their actions, to hide their intent. Occasionally, they befriend the target, getting close to them before murdering them at the perfect time. Some even go so far as to engage in romantic relations, especially female Sarishan knives, to kill them in the heat of the moment.

Characteristics: Sarishan knives lack potency in melee and thus employ subterfuge and misdirection to defeat their opponents. At lower levels, they take to the shadows, springing out of the darkness to catch their target by surprise landing the killing blow before returning to a position of hiding. At higher levels, they employ spells and spell-like abilities to enhance their already lethal skills.

Alignment: Trained to betray and murder requires all Sarishan knives to be non-good. Few are lawful, as neutrality and chaos allow the Sarishan knife to betray his targets easily, after insinuating himself into their lives and gaining their trust. Lawful Sarishan knives employ direct actions, disdaining the inherent treachery of others of their kind and so dispense with the cozening others use.

Background: All Sarishan knives receive their training in Stanivel, where they can operate away from the prying eyes of rival faiths. The training itself is dangerous and humiliating, for the priests and demonologists summon babaus to serve as instructors. Students who do not learn quick enough suffer at the hands of the fiendish trainers, sometimes tortured or flogged, other times just killed outright. Punishment sometimes applies to the entire group of trainees, so if one of their number falls behind or performs inadequately, the babau may beat or torture and entire class. Consequently, the students generally take care of their weaker links.

Races: Dark-kin and humans are the most common Sarishan knives. Becoming a knife allows them to achieve equality with the Val or the upper



levels of the priesthood, for no one is safe from the knives. Other races lack the natural hatred of their fellow races, or lack a demonstrable presence in Canceri to advance in this class.

Other Classes: Sarishan knives, being killers at heart, prefer the company of like-minded individuals such as assassins, blackguards, and Sarishan clerics. They tolerate rogues and bards, who, with the right training, could rival their skills. Of the martially oriented classes, the Sarishan knives identify the closest with rangers, but find other warrior types too loud and cumbersome to be of much use. Above all, conjurers are perhaps their favored comrades as they are skilled at bringing extraplanar aid to serve as distractions or support.

Role: Sarishan knives fulfill many of the same roles as rogues, being adept at sneaking behind enemy lines to land a well-placed blow against a tough opponent. However, they are not skilled at identifying traps, and so most rely on other classes, or multiclass themselves, to resolve this problem. They make excellent supporting melee combatants; for they have good hit points, and a number of tricks to allow them to maneuver to advantageous positions on the battlefield.

Game Rule Information

Sarishan knives have the following game statistics.

Abilities: Dexterity is vital to the Sarishan knife, for it is the key ability for most of their class skills. Charisma is also important to these characters, for it serves as a foundational ability for many class features. Strength and Constitution are both important for their role as melee combatants. Finally, they need a 14 or higher Wisdom to cast the most powerful spells, and at least an 11 Wisdom to cast any spells at all.

Alignment: Any non-good.

Hit Die: d8.

Starting Gold: 5d4 x 10 gp.

Class Skills

The Sarishan knife's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Balance (Dex), Climb (Str), Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Disguise (Cha), Escape Artist (Dex), Gather Information (Cha), Hide (Dex), Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Str), Knowledge (religion) (Int), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Ride (Dex), Spellcraft (Int), and Tumble (Dex). See **Chapter 4: Skills** in the PHB for skill descriptions.

Skill Points at 1st Level: (6 + Int modifier) x 4.

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 6 + Int modifier.

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the Sarishan knife

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Sarishan knives are proficient with all simple and martial weapons, with light and medium armor, but not with shields.

Aura of Faith (Ex): The power of a Sarishan knife's divine aura is equal to her Sarishan knife level plus any other class levels that stack with Sarishan knife for this purpose (e.g. cleric).

Sneak Attack (Ex): If a Sarishan knife can catch an opponent when he is unable to defend himself from her attack, she can strike a vital spot for extra damage. The Sarishan knife's attack deals extra damage any time her target would be denied a Dexterity bonus to AC (whether the target has a Dexterity bonus or not), or when the Sarishan knife flanks her target. This extra damage is 1d6 at 1st level, and it increases by 1d6 every five Sarishan knife levels thereafter. Should the Sarishan knife score a critical hit with a sneak attack, this extra damage is not multiplied. Ranged attacks can count as sneak attacks if the target is within 30 feet.

With a sap (blackjack) or an unarmed strike, a Sarishan knife can make a sneak attack dealing nonlethal damage instead of lethal damage. She cannot use a weapon that deals lethal damage to deal nonlethal damage in a sneak attack, not even with the usual -4 penalty.

Table 5–7: The Sarishan Knife

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Spells per Day			
						1st	2nd	3rd	4th
1st	+0	+0	+2	+2	Aura of faith, sneak attack +1d6	—	—	—	—
2nd	+1	+0	+3	+3	Poison use, spell resistance	—	—	—	—
3rd	+2	+1	+3	+3	Hide in plain sight	—	—	—	—
4th	+3	+1	+4	+4	Darksight	0	—	—	—
5th	+3	+1	+4	+4	Sneak attack +2d6	0	—	—	—
6th	+4	+2	+5	+5	Invisibility 1/day	1	—	—	—
7th	+5	+2	+5	+5	Uncanny dodge	1	—	—	—
8th	+6/+1	+2	+6	+6		1	0	—	—
9th	+6/+1	+3	+6	+6	Greater Invisibility 2/day	1	0	—	—
10th	+7/+2	+3	+7	+7	Sneak attack +3d6	1	1	—	—
11th	+8/+3	+3	+7	+7	Improved uncanny dodge	1	1	0	—
12th	+9/+4	+4	+8	+8	Greater Invisibility 3/day	1	1	1	—
13th	+9/+4	+4	+8	+8	Death Attack	1	1	1	—
14th	+10/+5	+4	+9	+9		2	1	1	0
15th	+11/+6/+1	+5	+9	+9	Gr. Invis. 4/day, sneak attack +4d6	2	1	1	1
16th	+12/+7/+2	+5	+10	+10		2	2	1	1
17th	+12/+7/+2	+5	+10	+10		2	2	2	1
18th	+13/+8/+3	+6	+11	+11	Greater Invisibility 5/day	3	2	2	1
19th	+14/+9/+4	+6	+11	+11		3	3	3	2
20th	+15/+10/+5	+6	+12	+12	Sneak attack +5d6	3	3	3	3

A Sarishan knife can sneak attack only living creatures with discernible anatomies—undead, constructs, oozes, plants, and incorporeal creatures lack vital areas to attack. Any creature immune to critical hits is not vulnerable to sneak attacks. The Sarishan knife must be able to see the target well enough to pick out a vital spot and must be able to reach such a spot. A Sarishan knife cannot sneak attack while striking a creature with concealment or striking the limbs of a creature whose vitals are beyond reach.

This ability stacks with sneak attack from other sources (such as rogue or assassin levels).

Poison Use (Ex): Sarishan knives are skilled in the use of poison and never risk poisoning themselves when applying poison to a blade.

Spell Resistance (Su): Sarishan knives, beginning at 2nd-level, gain spell resistance equal to their levels in this class + 5. This resistance applies to just one school of magic selected when they gain this ability. Once they choose the school, they cannot change to another school.

Hide in Plain Sight (Su): A Sarishan knife can use the Hide skill even while being observed. As long as she is within 10 feet of some sort of shadow, a Sarishan knife can hide herself from view in the open without anything to hide behind. She cannot hide in her own shadow.

Darksight (Ex): At 4th level, the Sarishan knife's darkvision extends by 30 ft. If she does not already have darkvision, she gains darkvision 60 feet.

Spells: Beginning at 4th level, a Sarishan knife gains the ability to cast a small number of divine spells, drawn from the Sarishan knife spell list below. A Sarishan knife must choose and prepare her spells in advance.

To prepare or cast a spell, a Sarishan knife must have a Wisdom score equal to at least 10 + the spell level. The Difficulty Class for a saving throw against a Sarishan knife's spell is 10 + the spell level + the Sarishan knife's Wisdom modifier.

Like other spellcasters, a Sarishan knife can cast a certain number of spells of each spell level per day. Her base daily spell allotment is given on **Table 5-7: The Sarishan Knife**. In addition, she receives bonus spells per day if she has a high Wisdom score. When **Table 5-7: The Sarishan Knife** indicates the Sarishan knife gets 0 spells per day of a given spell level, she gains only the bonus spells she would be entitled to based on her Wisdom score for that spell level. The Sarishan knife does not have access to any domain spells or granted powers, as does a cleric.

A Sarishan knife prepares and casts spells the way a cleric does, though she cannot lose a prepared spell to spontaneously cast an *inflict* spell in its place. A Sarishan knife may prepare and cast any spell on the Sarishan knife spell list, provided she can cast spells of that level, but she must choose which spells to prepare during her daily rituals.

Through 3rd level, a Sarishan knife has no caster level. At 4th level and higher, her caster level is one-half her Sarishan knife level.

Invisibility (Sp): At 6th level, a Sarishan knife can produce an *invisibility* effect, as the spell, once per day. She can use this ability one additional time per day for every three levels after 6th (twice per day at 9th, three times at 12th, and so forth). Starting at 9th level, the effect is *Greater Invisibility*. The caster level for this ability is her Sarishan knife level.

Uncanny Dodge (Ex): Starting at 7th level, a Sarishan knife can react to danger before her senses would allow her to do so. She retains her Dexterity bonus to AC (if any) even if she is caught flat-footed or struck by an invisible attacker. However, she still loses her Dexterity bonus to AC if immobilized.

If she already has uncanny dodge from a different class she gains improved uncanny dodge (see below) instead.

Improved Uncanny Dodge (Ex): A Sarishan knife of 11th level or higher can no longer be flanked.

This defense denies another Sarishan knife, or another class with this ability, the ability to sneak attack the character by flanking her, unless the attacker has at least four more levels than the target does.

If a character already has improved uncanny dodge from a second class, add the levels from the classes that grant uncanny dodge to determine the minimum level required to flank the character.

Death Attack (Ex): If a Sarishan Knife studies his victim for 3 rounds and then makes a sneak attack with a melee weapon that successfully deals damage, the sneak attack has the additional effect of possibly either paralyzing or killing the target (the Sarishan Knife's choice). While studying the victim, the Sarishan Knife can undertake other actions so long as his attention stays focused on the target, and the target does not detect the assassin or recognize the assassin as an enemy. If the victim of such an attack fails a Fortitude save (DC 10 + half the Sarishan Knife's class level + the Sarishan Knife's Intelligence modifier) against the kill effect, she dies. If the saving throw fails against the paralysis effect, the victim is rendered helpless and unable to act for 1d6 rounds plus 1 round per level of the Sarishan Knife. If the victim's saving throw succeeds, the attack is just a normal sneak attack. Once the Sarishan Knife has completed the 3 rounds of study, he must make the death attack within the next 3 rounds.

If a death attack is attempted and fails (the victim makes her save) or if the Sarishan Knife does not launch the attack within 3 rounds of completing study, 3 new rounds of study are required before he can attempt another death attack.

Sarishan Knife Spell List

Sarishan Knives choose their spells from the following list:

1st Level: *disguise self, detect poison, feather fall, ghost sound, jump, obscuring mist, sleep, true strike.*

2nd Level: *alter self, bull's strength, cat's grace, darkness, expedite poison*, illusory script, invisibility, pass without trace, spider climb, undetectable alignment.*

3rd Level: *deep slumber, deeper darkness, false life, magic circle against good, misdirection, nondetection, not where you think†, shadow stride†.*

4th Level: *clairaudience/clairvoyance, dimension door, freedom of movement, glibness, greater invisibility, locate creature, modify memory, poison.*

† **Player's Guide to Arcanis**

* New spell, see **Chapter Eight: Magic**.

Epic Sarishan Knife

Hit Die: d8

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 6 + Int modifier

Sneak Attack (Ex): The epic Sarishan knife's sneak attack damage increases by +1d6 at every five levels above 20th.

Spell Resistance (Su): Sarishan knife's spell resistance is equal to their levels in this class + 5. This resistance applies to just one school of magic selected when they gain this ability, as normal.

Spells: The epic Sarishan knife's caster level is equal to one-half her class level, as normal. The epic Sarishan knife's number of spells per day does not increase after 20th level.

Invisibility (Sp): The epic Sarishan knife can use *invisibility* one additional time per week for every three levels higher than 18th. The caster level for this effect caps at 20.

Bonus Feats: The epic Sarishan knife gains a bonus feat every three levels higher than 20th.

Table 5–8: The Epic Sarishan Knife

Conflagration Knight Level	Special
21st	<i>Invisibility</i> 6/week
22nd	—
23rd	Bonus feat
24th	<i>Invisibility</i> 7/week
25th	Sneak attack +6d6
26th	Bonus feat
27th	<i>Invisibility</i> 8/week
28th	—
29th	Bonus feat
30th	<i>Invisibility</i> 9/week, sneak attack +7d6

Prestige Classes

Aside from the religious zealots and their servants, Canceri is home to an assortment of depraved individuals who pursue a myriad of wicked professions. From the red men, who prey on children to force them into slavery, to the Ventaka razor, an expert in dealing pain, there is no limit to the depths of evil Cancerese people embrace. This section introduces five new prestige classes for use campaigns set in Canceri.

The Blight Bearer

Five centuries ago, a small sect of worshippers of Neroth sought better ways to connect with their god. They began to use the power of disease their god granted them to cultivate and spread the corruption of Neroth to the world, thus enhancing his power. In a short time, these Blight Bearers, as the people called them, became demented maniacs bent on spreading every single kind of disease possible to every corner of the world; to create a world consumed by plague and disease became their main driving goal. In their zealotry, the Blight Bearers acknowledged no ties to their fellow Nerothians seeing themselves as the true Chosen of Neroth those who followed the true path; all others were imposters to be infected and brought into Neroth's blighted light.

What began as a small cult grew to staggering proportions, prompting the Church of Neroth to take action. A crusade was mounted against the Blight Bearers, now hiding in temples of corruption deep in the mountains. After almost five years of constant war, the Blight Bearers were defeated and put to the final death. All record of them was thought to be erased, save for one entry in the Church of Neroth in Coryan, so that future generations could remember the dangers of the fine line all Nerothians walk as followers of the god of Death and Disease.

In truth, one survivor of the cult escaped this purge, taking a holy text of the sect with him. Cordiel val'Mordane hid himself deep in the Vosewalden, and has now re-emerged, giving a twisted rebirth to this twisted sect from its ancient roots, like a fungus.

Hit Die: d8.

Requirements

To qualify to become a Blight Bearer, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Alignment: Any Evil

Religion: Neroth

Skills: Knowledge (nature: disease) 5 ranks, Knowledge (religion) 5 ranks

Feats: Great Fortitude, Spell Focus (necromancy)

Spellcasting: Able to cast 5th level divine spells and have access to the Disease domain

Special: Anyone wishing to become a member of this cult must seek, find, and receive an initiation from an existing member.

Class Skills

The Blight Bearer's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Heal (Wis), Knowledge (arcana) (Int), Knowledge (nature) (Int), Knowledge (religion) (Int), Profession (Int), and Spellcraft (Int).

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 2 + Int modifier.

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the Blight Bearer prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Blight Bearers are proficient in all simple weapons and the scythe. Blight Bearers gain no other weapon or armor proficiencies.

Spells per Day: When a new Blight Bearer level is gained, the character gains new spells per day as if he had also gained a level in a divine spellcasting class he belonged to before adding this prestige class. He does not, however, gain any other benefit a character of that class would have gained, except for an increased effective level of spellcasting. If a character had more than one spellcasting class before becoming a Blight Bearer, he must decide to which class he adds the new level for purposes of determining spells per day.

Diseased (Ex): At 1st level, a Blight Bearer gains Diseased as a bonus feat even if he doesn't normally meet the prerequisites.

Blighted Appearance (Ex): As the Blight Bearers spread Neroth's diseases, so too do these diseases leave their marks upon their hosts. At 1st level, the diseases they carry begin permanently marking a Blight Bearer. At first, this manifests as simple skin blotching and warts. However, as a Bearer's abilities increase, his body becomes even more disease ravaged. At mid levels, Blight Bearers often manifest seeping lesions, bloating, or maggot-infested wounds. At higher levels, full-blown leprosy and a corpse-like appearance are common.

Neroth's Mercy (Su): At 2nd level, a Blight Bearer gains the ability to augment the potency of the diseases he carries. The saving throw DC to resist a disease and the DC of Heal checks used to treat illnesses delivered by a Blight Bearer is increased to a base of 30 and increases by 2 for each additional Blight Bearer level. Only magical healing will completely heal a disease transmitted via this ability although a successful Heal check will forestall the effects of such a disease for 24 hours.

Living Contagion (Ex): At 3rd level, a Blight Bearer gains Living Contagion as a bonus feat even if he doesn't normally meet the prerequisites.

Black Kiss of Neroth (Su): At 4th level, a Blight Bearer gains the ability to transmit his diseases through the air as well as by touch. The Blight Bearer may cast any necromantic spell or transmit any disease he carries with a range of touch, by using a ranged touch attack instead. The range for this ability is Close (25ft + 5ft/lvl).

Blight Apostle: The highest level of the cult cannot be obtained without cost. It is believed that Neroth himself permits only three Apostles to exist at any one time. If there are already three in existence, then an aspirant may not advance until he destroys one of them.

Neroth's Will (Ex): A Blight Apostle gains the ability to ignore a target's immunity to diseases such as those enjoyed by paladins, some holy champions, and those with the Disease Domain. An Apostle may not use this ability to transmit a disease to a creature whose physical makeup would make that impossible such as undead and constructs. However, such creatures may become carriers of the disease at the GM's discretion. Additionally, a Blight Apostle may ignore a target's Spell Resistance when casting any necromantic spell.

Neroth's Gift (Ex): A Blight Apostle is the recipient of Neroth's ultimate gift. Negative and positive energy affects the Blight Apostle as if he were undead. Additionally, when the Blight Apostle does die, he may not be returned to life by any means. However, once in this state, he may fully embrace Neroth's Gift, arising anew with the Undead Template. Many an aspirant has discovered this little quirk as their shouts of triumph were squeezed from their maggot-ridden throats by ice-cold, lifeless hands.

Table 5–9: The Blight Bearer

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+0	+2	+0	+2	+1 caster level, Diseased, Blighted Appearance
2nd	+1	+3	+0	+3	+1 caster level, Neroth's Mercy
3rd	+2	+3	+1	+3	+1 caster level, Living Contagion
4th	+3	+4	+1	+4	+1 caster level, Black Kiss of Neroth
5th	+3	+4	+1	+4	+1 caster level, Blight Apostle, Neroth's Will, Neroth's Gift

Cortasu Tomb Raider

Given the val'Mordane obsession concerning their ancestral crypts and tombs, it is no wonder that their vassal families specialize in the design, construction and protection of these final resting places. While engineers and architects are lauded great acclaim and rewards, it's those few that master the art of guarding these sepulchers with a variety of traps that are greatest demand. The competition to win contracts to secure a newly designed mausoleum is fierce and deadly, with a selection either assuring a family's prominence for a generation or its fall from the val'Mordane's good graces.

Such was the fate of the Cortasu family. For centuries, the Cortasu family plied their trade with great pride and greater skill. It was Vasilie Cortasu who was entrusted with the "caring" of the crypt warren that housed the val'Mordane lineage of Hegrish, during the time that the Dark Apostate first took that position. And it was Katilin Cortasu who was awarded the contract to assure that kept the inner tombs of Ventaka remained inviolate from Khitani raiders during the Second Khitani-Coryani War.

Yet all the accolades that the Cortasu family amassed could not save them from the skilled manipulation of the Prodan and the Suci, rival families that conspired to topple the Cortasu family from their high perch, once and for all. So complete and precise was the Prodan – Suci smear campaign that even their greatest patron, the Dark Apostate Hegrish, forbade them from ever plying their trade within Canceri again.

Disgrace and ultimately, starvation awaited the family if not for the intercession of a high ranking member of the Emerald Society. This man spoke at length with the head of the Cortasu family and convinced him to turn against his former masters. If the val'Mordane would not allow them to secure their ancient crypts, then their riches would be plundered to provide for the family. Though this meant that they would need to make their home elsewhere, the Emerald Society would provide the Cortasu with a safe haven across the border in Milandir. There they would be assured steady work in teaching their skills to a few, select members of the Emerald Society and be within close proximity to the rich tombs of the Nerothian lands.

Hit Die: d6

Table 5-10: Cortasu Tomb Raider

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+1	+0	+2	+0	Lock Mastery+1, Trap Mastery +2, Trap Sense +1
2nd	+1	+1	+2	+1	Lock Mastery+2, Trap Mastery +4
3rd	+2	+1	+3	+1	Lock Mastery+3, Trap Mastery +6, Trap Sense +2, Improvised Traps
4th	+3	+2	+3	+2	Device Mastery (1), Lock Mastery+4, Trap Mastery +8
5th	+4	+2	+4	+2	Device Mastery (2), Lock Mastery+5, Sure Step, Trap Mastery +10, Trap Sense +3

Requirements

To qualify to become a Cortasu Tomb Raider, a character must fulfill all of the following criteria.

Feat: Any one of the following three: Skill Focus (Craft: trap making), Skill Focus (Disable Device), or Skill Focus (Search)

Skills: Decipher Script 10 ranks, Disable Device 10 ranks, Search 10 ranks

Special: Must possess the trapfinding class ability.

Class Skills

The Cortasu Tomb Raider's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Appraise (Int), Balance (Dex), Black Market (Wis), Bluff (Cha), Climb (Str), Craft (Int), Decipher Script (Int), Disable Device (Int), Disguise (Cha), Escape Artist (Dex), Forgery (Int), Gather Information (Cha), Hide (Dex), Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Str), Knowledge (arcana, architecture and engineering, geography, history, local, and nobility and royalty) (Int), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Open Lock (Dex), Profession (Wis), Research (Int), Search (Int), Sleight of Hand (Dex), Spot (Wis), Tumble (Dex), Use Magic Device (Cha), and Use Rope (Dex).

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 8 + Int modifier.

Class Features

All of the following are Class Features of the Cortasu Tomb Raider prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: A tomb raider gains no proficiency with any weapon or armor.

Lock Mastery (Ex): Starting at first level, the tomb raider gains a +1 bonus to all his Open Lock skill checks. This ability increases by 1 for each level he gains in the Cortasu Tomb Raider prestige class to a maximum bonus of +5 at 5th level.

Trap Mastery (Ex): Starting at first level, the tomb raider gains a +2 bonus to all his Craft (trap making), Disable Device, and Search skill checks. This ability increases by 2 for each level he gains in the Cortasu Tomb Raider prestige class to a maximum bonus of +10 at 5th level.

Trap Sense (Ex): At 1st level, the tomb raider gains an intuitive sense that alerts him to danger from traps, giving him a +1 bonus on Reflex saves made to avoid

traps and a +1 dodge bonus to his Armor Class against attacks made by traps. This bonus rises to +2 when the tomb raider reaches 3rd level and to +3 when he reaches 5th level. Trap sense bonuses gained from multiple classes stack.

Improvised Traps (Ex): Starting at 3rd level, the tomb raider may craft improvised mechanical traps. The tomb raider may never improvise a trap with a CR greater than twice his total character level. For any mechanical trap with alchemical or exotic components, the tomb raider must have the appropriate materials on hand when trying to craft that trap. For example, if the tomb raider wished to make an improvised poisoned needle trap, he would be required to have the actual poison already in his possession to make that attempt. Standard spikes, blades, etc. are not considered exotic materials for this purpose. To craft an improvised trap, the tomb raider must use the following steps.

Step 1: Decide which of the standard mechanical traps listed in *Core Rulebook II* he would like to attempt to improvise and inform the GM of his decision. **Note:** All improvised traps are crafted at the GM's discretion. Any PC attempting to create an improvised pit in a stone hallway or a falling block trap in the middle of an open field should simply be told "no" by his GM.

Step 2: Make a Craft (trap making) skill check and divide this number by three (round down). This number equals the highest CR of the trap he may improvise.

Step 3: The GM compares the result from step 2 with the CR chosen in step 1. If the result is equal to or greater than the CR listed for the chosen trap, then the tomb raider is successful in his attempt and must pay (CR x 100 gp) for materials and spend (CR x 10) minutes to craft the trap. If the result is lower than the chosen CR of the trap, then the tomb raider has failed in his attempt. However, the tomb raider must still pay the same cost in time and materials for his failure, as he would have for a success. **Note:** All improvised traps have their DCs for Search and Disable Device halved (round down) due to their hasty construction. All other entries for the improvised trap should function as normal.

Device Mastery (Ex): At 4th level, once per day, a tomb raider may treat a single Disable Device check as if he had rolled a natural 20 instead of using the bonus to his Disable Device skill check provided by the Trap Mastery special ability. At 5th level, he may use this ability twice per day.

Sure Step (Ex): At 5th level, the tomb raider has gained the uncanny ability to avoid most damage inflicted by traps even if he accidentally sets one off. *Regarding traps only*, this ability works like evasion except that while the tomb raider still takes no damage on a successful Reflex saving throw against trap attacks, henceforth he takes only half damage on a failed save. The tomb raider must be the one attempting to disable the trap to gain the benefits of this ability.

Dark Consort

Prostitutes are common enough in Onara, with women or men available to satiate the desires of those with enough gold to pay for their services. In Canceri, such business thrives, for the cravings of the body are many and varied, and there is always someone willing to help those in need. Cancere custom encourages one to embrace their evil impulses, to act on whim. With such a demand for sex, normal or deviant, there is a large market for young men and women to serve. Many are forced into service by cruel slavers, but a few enter this occupation freely, enjoying the job and working to gain power over others through intimacy. The most skilled learn to channel their sensual energies into power, to compel others to do as they wish, and achieve mastery over their human subjects. Through careful development of the mind and body, they can crush another's will, forcing them to comply with all of her wishes. Many know these men and women as dark consorts.

Only those with a predilection for arcane magic can advance in this class, thus it is only open to characters with levels in bard, sorcerer, or wizard. In addition, candidates require some skill at social interaction and subterfuge, areas rogues and assassins excel. Multiclassed martially oriented character can gain entry, but at a higher level.

Dark consort NPCs are those in the centers of underworld networks, where they command their followers to dispatch their enemies from the safety of obscurity. They make for deadly and unexpected opponents, for many see their role in society as lowly. Most dark consorts surround themselves with powerful guards to compensate for their weaker fighting abilities.

Hit Die: d6.

Requirements

To qualify to become a dark consort, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Alignment: Any evil.

Skills: Bluff 8 ranks, Disguise 4 ranks, Hide 4 ranks, Move Silently 4 ranks, Perform (intimate techniques) 8 ranks, Profession (prostitute) 4 ranks.

Feats: Dominating Presence[†], Seductive[†]

Class Features: Poison Use

Spells or Powers: Must have the ability to cast 2nd-level arcane spells.

[†]see **Chapter Six: Skills and Feats** for details.

Class Skills

The dark consort's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Bluff (Cha), Concentration (Con), Diplomacy (Cha), Disguise (Cha), Escape Artist (Dex), Gather Information (Cha), Hide (Dex), Intimidate (Cha), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Perform

(Cha), Profession (Wis), Sleight of Hand (Dex), Spellcraft (Int), and Spot (Wis). See **Chapter 4: Skills** in the PHB for skill descriptions.

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 4 + Int modifier.

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the dark consort prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Dark consorts gain no new proficiency in arms or armor.

Pillow Talk (Su): Starting at 1st-level, after an hour of intimate activity, her partner, or partners, must succeed a Will save against a DC 12 + the dark consort's Charisma modifier or be affected by *zone of truth* for as long as they remain within 5-feet of the dark consort up to a number of minutes equal to 1 + the dark consort's levels in this prestige class. At 4th-level, the save DC increases by +2, and at 7th-level, the save DC increases by +4.

Seduce (Ex): Starting at 1st-level, the dark consort may add her levels in this prestige class to all Bluff, Diplomacy, and Perform checks made to seduce an individual attracted to her gender.

Suggestion (Sp): A 1st-level or higher dark consort with 9 or more ranks in a Perform skill can make a *suggestion*, as the spell, to a Helpful creature attracted to her gender. If the dark consort has bard levels, making a *suggestion* does not count against her daily limit on bardic music performances. A successful Will save (DC 10 + one-half the dark consort's level + one-half the bard's level + her Cha modifier) negates the effect. This ability affects only a single creature. *Suggestion* is an enchantment (compulsion), mind-affecting, language dependent ability.

Spells: Beginning at 1st level, a dark consort gains the ability to cast a number of arcane spells. To cast a spell, a dark consort must have a Charisma score of at least 10 + the spell's level, so a dark consort with a Charisma of 10 or lower cannot cast these spells.

Table 5–11: The Dark Consort

Level	Base	Fort	Ref	Will	Special	Spells per Day			
	Attack Bonus	Save	Save	Save		1st	2nd	3rd	4th
1st	+0	+0	+0	+2	Pillow talk, seduce, <i>suggestion</i>	0	—	—	—
2nd	+1	+0	+0	+3	Aura of authority	1	—	—	—
3rd	+1	+1	+1	+3	<i>Dominate person</i> 1/day	2	0	—	—
4th	+2	+1	+1	+4	Sexual domination	3	1	—	—
5th	+2	+1	+1	+4	Mistress' Touch	3	2	0	—
6th	+3	+2	+2	+5	<i>Dominate person</i> 2/day	3	3	1	—
7th	+3	+2	+2	+5	Sadistic Mistress	3	3	2	0
8th	+4	+2	+2	+6	Break will	3	3	3	1
9th	+4	+3	+3	+6	<i>Dominate person</i> 3/day	3	3	3	2
10th	+5	+3	+3	+7	Suffering touch	3	3	3	3

Table 5–12: Dark Consort Spells Known

Level	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
1st	2 ¹	—	—	—
2nd	3	—	—	—
3rd	3	2 ¹	—	—
4th	4	3	—	—
5th	4	3	2 ¹	—
6th	4	4	3	—
7th	4	4	3	2 ¹
8th	4	4	4	3
9th	4	4	4	3
10th	4	4	4	4

Dark consort bonus spells are based on Charisma, and saving throws against these spells have a DC of 10 + spell level + the dark consort's Charisma bonus. When the dark consort gets 0 spells per day of a given spell level, she gains only the bonus spells she would be entitled to based on her Charisma score for that spell level.

The dark consort's spell list appears below. A dark consort casts spells just as a bard does. Upon reaching 6th level, at every even-numbered level after that (8th and 10th), a dark consort can choose to learn a new spell in place of one she already knows. The new spell's level must be the same as that of the spell exchanged, and it must be at least two levels lower than the highest-level dark consort spell the dark consort can cast. A dark consort may swap only a single spell at any given level, and must choose whether to swap the spell at the same time he gains new spells known for that level.

Aura of Authority (Ex): A 2nd-level or higher dark consort exudes an air of potency. She gains a +2 bonus on Intimidate checks and to Will saves. This bonus increases by +1 for every 3 levels attained in this class (+3 at 5th level, +4 at 8th level, and so on).

Dominate person (Sp): Starting at 3rd level, the dark consort can *dominate person* as the spell once per day.

A successful Will save (DC 14 + the dark consort's Cha modifier) negates this effect. The dark consort gains an additional use of this spell-like ability, every three levels above 3rd-level (2/day at 6th-level, 3/day at 9th-level, and so on).

Sexual domination (Ex): The dark consort hones her skills to gain command over her lovers. Any time she has a sexual encounter with a subject attracted to her gender, she may make a special Perform (intimate techniques) check against a target's modified level check (1d20 + character level or Hit Dice + target's Wisdom bonus [if any] + target's modifiers on saves against charm and compulsion). If the dark consort beats her target's check result, she may treat the target as Helpful (see Diplomacy skill in the PHB). In addition, the DC for all enchantment spells the dark consort casts against the subject increases by +2. The effect lasts as long as the target remains in the dark consort's presence and for 1d6 + her Charisma modifier days afterward. After this time, the target's attitude reverts to normal.

Mistress' Touch (Su): Beginning at 5th-level, the dark consort achieves mastery of touch, able to manipulate the muscles of her lovers to stimulate great pleasure, or torturous pain. In an intimate encounter, she may use this ability to gain her levels in dark consort as a competence bonus to her Diplomacy, Intimidate, and Perform checks. In combat, she may make a special attack against a humanoid or monstrous humanoid with one melee touch attack. She adds her Charisma bonus (if any) to her attack roll and deals 1d6 + her Charisma modifier in nonlethal damage.

Sadistic Mistress (Ex): At 7th-level, the dark consort may stimulate herself, whenever she uses the mistress' touch ability in combat. Whenever she deals nonlethal damage in combat, through either mistress' touch or other means, she gains an equal amount of temporary hit points. When the temporary hit points go away, the dark consort's hit points drop to her current hit point total. If her hit points are below her current hit point total at that time, all the temporary hit points have already been lost and the her hit point total does not drop further. These temporary hit points remain until lost or the end of the encounter, whichever occurs first.

Break Will (Ex): At 8th-level, the dark consort's raw sensuality weaken her target's resolve. Once per day, per point of her Charisma modifier, as a move action, she may make a special level check opposed by all targets (with Intelligence scores of 3 or greater) attracted to her gender within 30-feet Sense Motive check. Those targets who lost the opposed roll suffer a -4 morale penalty to all Will saves against spells and spell-like abilities cast by the dark consort for a number of minutes equal to the dark consort's level in this prestige class. Those opponents who won the opposed check cannot again be effect by Break Will for 24 hours.

Suffering touch (Su): At 10th level, a dark consort's mistress' touch ability now deals 2d6 + her Charisma modifier in nonlethal damage or lethal damage as she chooses. However, of the two dice she rolls, she gains the better result of the two in temporary hit points.

Dark Consort Spell List

Dark consorts choose their spells from the following list:

1st Level: *charm person, cure light wounds, disguise self, detect poison, hypnotism, lesser confusion, obscuring mist, sleep, true strike, vision of exquisite pleasure*†.

2nd Level: *alter self, daze monster, detect thoughts, disrobe*†, *eagle's splendor, enthrall, fox's cunning, invisibility, rage, suggestion, undetectable alignment, whispering wind*.

3rd Level: *charm monster, crushing despair, deep slumber, dispel magic, glibness, good hope, misdirection, nondetection, scrying, violent disrobe*†.

4th Level: *clairaudience/clairvoyance, detect scrying, dominate person, greater invisibility, irrational attraction* †, *locate creature, modify memory, poison, zone of silence*.

†New spell, see **Chapter Eight: Magic**.

The Master of the Incandescent Flame

Straddling a lava flow in the heights of Nier's Spine is a monastery where monks hone their martial skills and devote themselves to the glorification of Nier through their struggle for physical perfection. Most Monks of the Incandescent Flame, as people know them, train their entire lives to harden their bodies, master their fighting styles, and achieve mastery over the essential tenets of their belief. There are a few, however, who exceed the expectations of the school, moving beyond the capabilities of their peers and achieve true enlightenment. These rare individuals are the Masters of the Incandescent Flame.

The only path to this prestige class is through the monk class. Candidates must train at the monastery and then journey to the pillar of Nier in Hunder, where they take the test of fire to see if they are worthy. If they succeed the test, they become a master or mistress of the Incandescent Flame. If they fail, they become ash. There are rumors that persist of other sects of Nierite monks who perform similar training, although these remain unconfirmed and speculation at best.

NPC Masters spend most of their time training other students in their monastery, though they are not duty bound to remain there. The few who leave the temple journey through the world spreading word of Nier's might with a zealotry rivaling the Swords of Nier. They rarely keep company of others, especially not with those opposed to Nier's tenets.

Hit Die: d8.



Requirements

To qualify to become a master of the Incandescent Flame, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Alignment: Any Lawful

Religion: Nier

BAB: +7

Base Saving Throws: Two at +7

Skills: Knowledge (religion) 13 ranks

Feats: Improved Unarmed Strike, Toughness

Special: Candidates must touch the pillar of Nier and survive (For Living Arcanis, this means that they must successfully complete one of the Warrior of the Eternal Flame Test mini-adventures).

Class Skills

The master of the Incandescent Flame's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Balance (Dex), Climb (Str), Concentration (Con), Intimidate

(Cha), Jump (Str), Knowledge (religion) (Int), Sense Motive (Wis), Swim (Str), and Tumble (Dex). See **Chapter 4: Skills** in the PHB for skill descriptions.

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 2 + Int modifier.

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the master of the Incandescent Flame prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Masters of the Incandescent Flame are proficient in all Simple and Martial melee weapons but are prohibited from using ranged weapons of any sort. Additionally, they are also prohibited from wearing armor. A master who wields a prohibited weapon or wears prohibited armor loses the benefits of all supernatural and spell-like abilities of this class while doing so and for 24 hours thereafter.

Monk Training (Ex): A master of the incandescent flame add his levels in this class to any monk levels he may have to determine his bonuses to armor class, his unarmed damage, the flurry of blows ability and his unarmored speed bonus. If the master did not already have levels in monk before taking this class, then he gains those

benefits as if he were a monk of the same level as his master of the incandescent flame level.

Damage Reduction (Ex): At 1st level, and higher, the master of the incandescent flame becomes immured against physical blows, gaining damage reduction 1/-. This increases by 1 each level, reaching a maximum of 5/- at 5th level. Damage reduction can reduce damage to 0 but not below 0.

Immune to Fire (Su): At 2nd-level, the master is no longer takes damage from non-magical fire, and gains resistance to fire equal to twice his master of the incandescent flame level.

Burning Hands (Sp): At 3rd-level, the master may cast *burning hands* a number of times per day equal to his Wisdom modifier (minimum of once per day). The save DC equals 11 + the master's Wisdom modifier and the caster level for this effect is his master of the incandescent flame level.

Table 5–13: The Master of the Incandescent Flame

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+1	+2	+2	+2	Damage reduction, monk training
2nd	+2	+3	+3	+3	Immune to fire
3rd	+3	+3	+3	+3	Burning hands
4th	+4	+4	+4	+4	Fiery fists
5th	+5	+4	+4	+4	Nier's Gift

Fiery Fists (Su): A master of the incandescent flame who reaches 4th level, can summon forth the fires of Nier to sheath his hands. The unarmed attack of the master is now a *flaming burst* weapon. This does not grant any enhancement bonuses to attack or damage. The ability may be turned on and off by command, as a standard action. The command phrase is typically a benediction to Nier, chosen by the master upon gaining this power.

Nier's Gift (Su): At 5th-level, the master of the Incandescent Flame understands Nier's true nature. The master's type changes to Elemental (fire). He gains the following abilities: darkvision out to 60 feet, immunity to poison, sleep effects, paralysis, and stunning, no longer subject to critical hits or flanking. The master no longer needs to eat, sleep, or breathe. However, spells restoring souls to their bodies, such as *raise dead*, *reincarnate*, and *resurrection*, no longer work on the master, requiring a different magical effect, such as *limited wish*, *wish*, *miracle*, or *true resurrection*, to restore him to life. Finally, the master becomes vulnerable to cold attacks, taking +50% more damage regardless of saving throw.

The Ventaka Razor

Torture is the preferred method for dealing with undesirables in Nerothian lands. There, they believe true suffering is not in death, but in life. With death, the soul is free to escape into the underworld, evading justice. They mete justice through prolonged torture creating suffering unmatched.

Anyone can apply a hot poker to the flesh, shove splinters beneath a victim's fingernails, turn a thumbscrew or a jawbreaker to shatter a bone or jaw. But it takes a specially trained person, who knows pain intimately, to be able to capitalize on his subject's fear, to make him squirm without using a single tool, to make him shriek with a mere touch. The best torturers in Canceri are trained in Ventaka, in a special school dedicated to the exploration of pain and suffering. Nearly all of the training requires the student to experience the tortures themselves, giving them unerring insight as to

how to apply such techniques on their victims. Once they graduate from the school, they spread throughout Canceri, where the skills of an expert tormentor are needed. Regardless of where they live, they are known thereafter as Ventaka Razors.

Hardened individuals who do not shrink away from violence find this prestige class appealing. Fighters, barbarians, and rangers, who have the stamina to witness such atrocities, and the ability to survive the training are the most common characters to advance in this class. Rogues and bards sometime take this class because they have the cunning to learn the various techniques.

Ventaka razors do not confine themselves to their torture chambers. Many move about the world, going where they are needed. Some potential employers are hesitant to hire them because, as torturers, the Ventaka razors are privy to guarded information. Those employers thinking to double-cross the razor make their mistake just once, before they find themselves on the rack, at the mercy of their former servant.

Hit Die: d6.

Requirements

To qualify to become a Ventaka razor, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Alignment: Any non-Good.

Skills: Heal 6 ranks, Intimidate 6 ranks, Profession (torturer) 9 ranks.

Feats: Endurance, Iron Will, Toughness, Weapon Finesse.

Special: Candidate must survive torture at the hands of an expert torturer, or graduate from the Academy of the Nine Pains in Ventaka.

Class Skills

The Ventaka razor's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Bluff (Cha), Concentration (Con), Heal (Wis), Intimidate (Cha), Listen (Wis), Profession (torturer) (Wis), Sense Motive (Wis), and Survival (Wis). See **Chapter 4: Skills** in the **PHB** for skill descriptions.

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 2 + Int modifier.

Table 5–14: The Ventaka Razor

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+1	+2	+0	+2	Expert torturer
2nd	+2	+3	+0	+3	Sneak attack +1d6
3rd	+3	+3	+1	+3	Demoralizing strike
4th	+4	+4	+1	+4	Sneak Attack +2d6
5th	+5	+4	+1	+4	Crippling strike
6th	+6	+5	+2	+5	Sneak Attack +3d6
7th	+7	+5	+2	+5	Blinding strike
8th	+8	+6	+2	+6	Sneak Attack +4d6
9th	+9	+6	+3	+6	Violating strike
10th	+10	+7	+3	+7	Sneak Attack +5d6



Class Features

All of the following are class features of the Ventaka razor.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: The Ventaka razor is proficient in all simple weapons and light armor, but not shields.

Expert Torturer (Ex): At 1st-level, the Ventaka razor gains a +2 competence bonus to all Intimidate and Profession (Torturer) checks. In addition, if tortured himself, he may use his Intimidation ranks in place of his Wisdom modifier. Therefore, to resist an opponent's Intimidation check through either torture or demoralization, the Ventaka rolls 1d20 + his overall class level and or HD + his Wisdom modifier or his Intimidation skill ranks + any resistance bonus to fear effects.

At 5th-level, the Ventaka razor gains immunity to all fear and Intimidation effects.

Sneak Attack (Ex): If a Ventaka razor can catch an opponent when he is unable to defend himself effectively from his attack, he can strike a vital spot for extra damage. The razor's attack deals extra damage any time his target would be denied a Dexterity bonus to AC (whether the target has a Dexterity bonus or not), or when the razor flanks her target. This extra damage is 1d6 at 1st level, and it increases by 1d6 every two razor levels thereafter. Should the razor score a critical hit with a sneak attack, this extra damage is not multiplied.

Ranged attacks can count as sneak attacks if the target is within 30 feet. With a sap (blackjack) or an unarmed strike, a razor can make a sneak attack that deals nonlethal damage instead of lethal damage. She cannot use a weapon that deals lethal damage to deal nonlethal damage in a sneak attack, not even with the usual -4 penalty.

A razor can sneak attack only living creatures with discernible anatomies—undead, constructs, oozes, plants, and incorporeal creatures lack vital areas to attack. Any creature immune to critical hits is not vulnerable to sneak attacks. The razor must be able to see the target well enough to pick out a vital spot and must be able to reach such a spot. A razor cannot sneak attack while striking a creature with concealment or striking the limbs of a creature whose vitals are beyond reach.

The extra damage dealt increases by +1d6 every other level (4th, 6th, 8th, 10th, and so on). If a Ventaka razor gets a sneak attack bonus from another source, the bonuses on damage stack.

Demoralizing Strike (Ex): At 3rd-level, whenever the razor sneak attacks an opponent in melee he may attempt to demoralize his opponent as a free action. To do so, the razor makes an Intimidate check opposed by the target's modified level check (1d20 + character level or Hit Dice + target's Wisdom bonus [if any] + target's modifiers on saves against fear). If the razor wins, the target becomes shaken for 1 round. A shaken character takes a -2 penalty on attack rolls, ability checks, and saving throws.

Crippling Strike (Ex): A 5th-level or greater razor can sneak attack opponents with such precision his blows weaken and hamper them. Once per round, an opponent damaged by one of his sneak attacks also takes 2 points of Strength damage.

Blinding Strike (Ex): A 7th-level or higher razor can, once per hour, make a special sneak attack capable of blinding their opponents. An opponent damaged by a razor's sneak attacks must succeed a DC 10 + Ventaka Razor class level + Dexterity modifier Reflex save or be blinded for one round per sneak attack Die. For example, a razor having sneak attack +3d6 may blind opponents who fail their saving throws for 3 rounds.

Violating Strike (Ex): Once per day, a 9th-level razor may deal a grievous injury to their opponent with a successful Sneak Attack. In addition to the Sneak Attack damage, the razor also deals 1d4 points of Charisma damage. The razor then may also make an Intimidate check against the target, as a free action. If the target fails then he is sickened for one round, and shaken for one minute.

Chapter Six

New Feats

Table 6-1: New Feats

Feat	Prerequisites
General Feats	
Anatomist	Sneak attack class ability
Augment Animation	Spellcaster level 4th
Bone Breaker	Improved Grapple
Butcher	Cleave, evil alignment
Child of Neroth	Native of Canceri
Child of Nier	Native of Canceri
Child of Sarish	Native of Canceri
Dark Occultist	Int 13+, evil alignment
Dark Master	Dark Occultist
Dark Summons	Spell Focus (Conjuration), Spell Focus (Necromancy)
Deceptive	Native of Canceri
Diseased	Con 15+, evil alignment
Living Contagion	Diseased
Dominating Demeanor	Iron Will
Goad	Cha 13+
Inbred Val	Val
Masochistic Ecstasy	Great Fortitude
Multitalented	—
Painful Strike	Power Attack
Ranged Smite	Smite class ability
Sacrificial Casting	Any one metamagic feat, evil alignment
Improved Sacrificial Casting	Sacrificial Casting, Cha, Int, or Wis 17+
Sadistic Glee	BAB +3, evil alignment
Salerean Avenger	Elorii, evil alignment
Seductive	Cha 15+
Tolerance	Con 13+
Great Tolerance	Tolerance, Con 15+
Metamagic Feats	
Agonizing Spell	—
Blood Summoner	Augment Summoning, Empower Blood
Warp Spell	Character level 12 th , any two metamagic feats, evil alignment
Psionic Feats	
Psychic Cannibal	Manifester level 1 st , evil alignment
Spelltouched Feats	
Contaminated by Darkness	Exposure to <i>unholy blight</i> , evil alignment
Touched by Evil	Exposure to <i>unholy aura</i> , evil alignment



This chapter expands the selection of feats available to Canceri characters. Most of these feats reflect the depths of corruption at work in the heart of this dark nation, and so may not be appropriate to characters hailing from other lands. However, any character meeting the prerequisites of these feats may take them as normal.

Agonizing Spell [Metamagic]

Your damaging spells are unusually painful.

Benefit: When you apply this metamagic feat to a spell that deals hit point damage (the “base spell”), all creatures that suffer at least 1 point of damage from the base spell must immediately attempt an additional Will save against the base spell’s DC. (This extra save is always a Will save regardless of whether or not the original spell allowed a different type of save, or indeed whether or not the original spell allowed a save at all.) Any creatures that fail this extra saving throw suffer a –1 penalty on all attack rolls, saving throws, skill checks, and ability checks as pain courses through their bodies. Creatures that succeed on the extra Will save do not suffer any additional ill effects, but they still suffer all of the effects that they would have suffered from the base spell.

The extra saving throw and effects forced by this feat do not interact in any way with those of the base spell; it is possible to fail the saving throw against the base spell and succeed on the saving throw against this feat, or vice versa. The effects of this feat last

for the entire duration of the base spell, or for one full round (if the base spell has a duration of Instantaneous or a duration of less than one round).

An agonizing spell uses up a spell slot one level higher than the spell’s actual level. The effects of this feat are considered mind-affecting pain effects.

Anatomist [General]

You know where to strike to get the most damage.

Prerequisites: Sneak attack class ability.

Benefit: Once per day, when you roll weapon damage, you may reroll any and all of your damage dice (including any bonus dice of damage) that initially resulted in a natural 1. You must keep the result of the reroll and may not use any other ability to roll any damage die a third time.

Augment Animation [General]

Undead you create are more powerful than normal.

Prerequisites: Spellcaster level 4th.

Benefit: Undead you create, such as through *animate dead*, *create undead*, or *create greater undead* (but not summoned or called undead) gain a +2 enhancement bonus to Strength, Toughness as a bonus feat, and a +1 luck bonus to AC. These effects are permanent. The price of any costly material component needed for these spells is increased by 50%.

Blood Summoner [Metamagic]

You injure yourself to empower your summoned creatures.

Prerequisites: Augment Summoning, Empower Blood

Benefit: This feat allows you to apply the Empower Blood feat (from the *Player’s Guide to Arcanis*) when you cast summoning spells. Instead of choosing one of the options listed for Empower Blood in the *Player’s Guide*, you may instead apply the damage dealt to enhance a Conjuraton (Summoning) spell that you cast. For every 4 full points of damage you deal to yourself during the casting, all the creatures you summon with the affected spell gain a +2 enhancement bonus to their Constitution scores. Using this feat increases the casting time of the summoning spell by 1 full round. All the other rules pertaining to Empower Blood apply normally.

For example, if you deal 13 points of damage to yourself via the Empower Blood feat while casting a *summon monster* spell, the summoned creatures gain a +6 enhancement bonus to Constitution, but the spell takes 2 full rounds to cast.

If any or all of the creatures you are summoning have no Constitution score, then those creatures instead each gain a number of temporary hit points equal to the amount of damage you dealt to yourself.

Bone Breaker [Fighter, General]

You are adept at cracking bones and popping joints when you wrestle.

Prerequisites: Improved Grapple.

Benefit: When you achieve a pin in a grapple, you may make an additional opposed grapple check as a free action. If you win, you deal an injury to one of your opponent's limbs. This deals no hit point damage, but it causes the opponent to suffer either 2 points of Strength damage or 2 points of Dexterity damage (your choice) and reduces its base speed by 5 feet. (A creature whose base speed has been reduced to 0 can still crawl 5 feet as a full-round action that provokes attacks of opportunity.)

These penalties remain in effect until the target is healed back to its maximum normal hit point total including the removal of any reductions to its normal Constitution score (such as ability damage).

Special: A fighter may select this feat as one of his fighter bonus feats.

Butcher [General]

You exult in killing.

Prerequisites: Cleave, any evil alignment.

Benefit: If you deal a creature enough damage with a melee attack to make it drop (typically by reducing it to below 0 hit points or killing it), you may forego the extra attack that you would normally receive from the Cleave feat to instead gain 10 temporary hit points. These temporary hit points last for a maximum of 1 hour.

Child of Neroth [Background]

Neroth, the god of undeath, favors you.

Prerequisites: Native of Canceri.

Benefit: You gain a +2 bonus on Fortitude saves made to resist negative energy levels and you gain a +2 bonus to all Knowledge (religion) checks regarding undead.

Special: This feat may only be taken at first level.

Child of Nier [Background]

Nier, the god of fire and war, favors you.

Prerequisites: Native of Canceri.

Benefit: You gain fire resistance 5.

Special: This feat may only be taken at first level.

Child of Sarish [Background]

Sarish, the god of secrets, favors you.

Prerequisites: Native of Canceri.

Benefit: You gain a +1 bonus on all Charisma-based skill checks made when interacting with Infernals. You also gain a +1 bonus on all Bluff, Diplomacy, Intimidate, and Sleight of Hand checks.

Special: This feat may only be taken at first level.

Contaminated by Darkness [Spelltouched]

Evil pollutes your spells and spell-like abilities.

Prerequisites: Exposure to *unholy blight*, evil alignment.

Benefit: You take a –2 penalty on all Charisma checks and Charisma-based skill checks made when interacting with creatures of good alignment. When you cast a spell that deals hit point damage, you may choose to allow evil to taint the spell. This does not change the casting time or spell components, but it causes half of the spell's damage to be treated as unholy, which cannot be resisted by normal means. The spell also gains the [Evil] descriptor. However, allowing the taint into your magic has a price. You must succeed on a Fortitude save (DC 15 + spell level) upon completing the spell or become sickened for one round per spell level. (Failing the save does not cause you to lose the spell.)

Dark Master [General]

Your advanced studies in evil subjects have granted you mastery over evil magics.

Prerequisites: Dark Occultist.

Benefit: Add +1 to the Difficulty Class for all saving throws against Evil spells you cast. This stacks with the benefits of the Dark Occultist feat and any other relevant feats, such as Spell Focus.

Dark Occultist [General]

Your studies of evil subjects increase your mastery over evil magic.

Prerequisites: Int 13+, evil alignment.

Benefit: Add +1 to the Difficulty Class for all saving throws against Evil spells you cast. This benefit stacks with that provided by other feats, such as Spell Focus.

Dark Summons [General]

You may summon undead with *summon monster* spells.

Prerequisites: Spell Focus (Conjuration) and Spell Focus (Necromancy).

Benefit: You may choose from the undead creatures listed below in addition to the normal options for the various *summon monster* spells described in *Core Rulebook I*. Game statistics for all of these creatures are found in either *Core Rulebook III* or **Chapter 9** of this book.

Summon Monster I

Human Commoner Zombie
Human Warrior Skeleton
Kobold Zombie
Wolf Skeleton

Summon Monster II

Ghoul
Owlbear Skeleton
Troglydyte Zombie

Summon Monster III

Bugbear Zombie
Shadow
Troll Skeleton

Summon Monster IV

Allip
Chimera Skeleton
Fell Lord†
Flesh Swarm†
Ghast
Ogre Zombie
Wight

Summon Monster V

Ettin Skeleton
Minotaur Zombie
Vampire Spawn
Wyvern Zombie

Summon Monster VI

Grey Render Zombie
Mummy
Wraith

Summon Monster VII

Advanced Megaraptor Skeleton

Summon Monster VIII

Cloud Giant Skeleton
Spectre

Summon Monster IX

Bodak
Gourmand Horror†
Mohrg

†New creature found in this sourcebook. See **Chapter Nine: Bestiary** for details.

 Deceptive [General]

You are naturally treacherous and deceptive.

Prerequisites: Native of Cancri.

Benefit: You gain a +2 bonus on all Bluff checks. In addition, the DC to resist spells you cast with the Charm descriptor increases by +1. This bonus stacks with that provided by other feats, such as Spell Focus.

Diseased [General]

You can store a single disease and transmit it to another host.

Prerequisites: Con 15+, any evil alignment.

Benefit: Your body is able to store a single disease. Any time you are not currently carrying a disease and you are exposed to one, if you succeed on the saving throw to resist becoming infected, you may instead accept the disease and become a carrier. You suffer no ill effects from the disease that you are carrying and automatically succeed on any saving throws you might be required to make against that same disease for as long as you are a carrier. You do not, however, gain any other special resistance or immunity to other diseases.

The carried disease changes its method of infection to Contact. You may then transmit the disease to another creature with a successful melee touch attack (which provokes attacks of opportunity unless you have the Improved Unarmed Strike feat). If the attack hits, it deals no other damage, but you transmit the disease from your body to the creature struck. That creature must then immediately make the normal saving throw for the disease or it becomes infected. Regardless of whether the creature struck succeeds or fails on its save, this drains the disease from your body, leaving you free to become a carrier for another disease. If your touch attack misses, then you do not lose the disease and may attempt to use this feat again on a subsequent turn.

If you are the recipient of any spell or effect that would cure you of disease (such as *remove disease* or *heal*) then you also lose any disease that you are currently carrying. Most such effects do offer you the option of attempting a saving throw (for example, *remove disease* allows a Fortitude save if the target of the spell does not wish to be affected, while *heal* allows a Will save). If you wish to try and resist such an effect then you must resist it in its entirety; you cannot choose to be cured of some but not all of your diseases.

Special: Most diseases require a living host. Undead characters cannot make use of this feat unless they are also members of the Blight Bearer prestige class.

 Dominating Demeanor [General]

You can crush the spirits of those around you with but a single glare.

Prerequisite: Iron Will.

Benefit: You gain a +5 bonus on Intimidate checks.

Goad [General]

You can provoke a target to attack you.

Prerequisites: Charisma 13+.

Benefit: As a standard action you may attempt to goad a target into attacking you. This uses the same mechanics as feinting in combat (you make a Bluff check which is opposed by a special Sense Motive check where your target also gets to add its base attack bonus). The target must be able to both see and hear you and must be within 90 feet of you. If you win the opposed check, the target must attack you on its next turn. The target may not take any action that does not involve attacking you, but it does not have to be stupid about how it attacks you – it will use the best tactical option available (charging, making a melee attack, making a ranged attack, casting a spell that can deal damage to you, etc.)

This is a mind-affecting effect but it is not language-dependent. Targets that have the Still Mind class feature or an Intelligence score of 2 or lower are immune to this ability. This ability may only be used once per target per day, since a foe only succumbs to such tactics once.

Great Tolerance [General]

Your body is impervious to the side effects of drug use.

Prerequisites: Tolerance, Con 15+.

Benefit: You do not suffer any damage when you overdose.

Normal: If you take too much of a drug, you take additional damage.

Special: In order to gain any of the effects of drugs, you have to take double the normal dosage.

Improved Sacrificial Casting [General]

You are a master at drawing the life energy from the dying to fuel your spells.

Prerequisites: Sacrificial Casting and Charisma, Intelligence, or Wisdom 17+.

Benefit: When using the Sacrificial Casting feat, you may apply its effects to any spell you know, even if you would not normally be able to cast the resulting spell. The effective spell level may not exceed 9th, however, so you could not cast (for example) a *quicken firestorm* in this manner.

Inbred Val [Background*, General]

Your parents were very closely related, either as siblings, parent and child, or first cousins.

Prerequisites: Val.

Benefit: You gain a +1 racial bonus to your Blood Rank, but you permanently lose 2 points from both your Constitution and Wisdom scores.

Special: You must take this feat for the first time as part of character creation and it must be the first feat

you choose. Subsequently, you may take this feat as a General feat. Each additional time this feat is taken your Blood Rank increases by +1 and you lose another 2 points of Constitution and Wisdom. The ability-score reductions imposed by this feat can never be removed by any means.

Living Contagion [General]

Your body is a repository for a host of diseases.

Prerequisites: Diseased

Benefit: You gain the ability to store a number of different diseases within your body. You must be exposed to each disease you wish to store as explained by the Diseased feat. You may store one disease per point of Constitution bonus (minimum 2). When you attempt to infect other creatures with the diseases you carry, you may elect to retain your status as a carrier instead of releasing the disease. If you choose to release the disease as part of the attack, however, then the save DC for the target creature to avoid infection is increased by +2. You may infect a maximum of one creature per day with each disease that you carry, without needing to be reinfected yourself. You may still only deliver one infection per touch attack, but you may choose which disease you will attempt to spread each time you make an attack.

Masochistic Ecstasy [General]

Experiencing pain brings you pleasure.

Prerequisites: Great Fortitude.

Benefit: Whenever you take the maximum possible hit point damage from a single attack in combat (i.e. all the damage dice rolled as part of the attack come up with their maximum values), you gain a +2 morale bonus on all your attack rolls, saving throws, skill checks, and ability checks for one round per character level. These bonuses do not stack with each other; instead the duration is merely reset.

Multitalented [General]

You are exceptionally skilled in two disciplines.

Benefit: Choose any two skills that are class skills for you. At least one of these skills must be Craft, Knowledge, Perform, or Profession. You get a +2 bonus on all checks involving these two skills. You may not choose the same skill twice unless it is a different specialization. For example, you could choose both Knowledge (arcana) and Knowledge (religion), but you could not choose the same Knowledge subskill twice.

Painful Strike [General]

Your attacks are exceptionally painful.

Prerequisites: Power Attack.

Benefit: Whenever you deal the maximum possible damage with a melee attack (all of the damage dice



you roll come up with their maximum values), the target must succeed on a Fortitude save (DC 10 + damage dealt) or be sickened for 1 round. If you successfully land a critical hit that deals maximum damage and the target fails its Fortitude save, then the duration of this effect increases to 1 minute.

Psychic Cannibal [Psionic]

You can feed on another creature to steal some of its psionic energy.

Prerequisites: Manifester level 1st, evil alignment.

Benefit: You may use a special version of the coup de grace action to drain creatures of their psionic energy. As with a normal coup de grace, the target creature must be helpless and the use of this ability is a full-round action that provokes attacks of opportunity. Roll the damage as normal for an automatic critical hit, but instead of dealing that damage to the target, you gain a number of temporary power points equal to the amount of damage rolled. The victim loses a number of power points equal to the number of temporary power points you gain. The victim does not get a saving throw, does not lose any hit points, and is not at risk of dying. You cannot steal more than the total number of power points that the victim currently has available (any excess “damage” is wasted).

Except for the changes described here, this ability works like the *mindfeeder* weapon enhancement from the *Expanded Psionics Handbook*. Unlike a

mindfeeder weapon, this ability will work on undead creatures (if they have a power point reserve) and you may use it more than once per day, but you must make another coup de grace attack each time.

Temporary power points remain for a number of minutes equal to your manifest level. Like temporary hit points, you expend these points first, and temporary power points do not stack with each other; they overlap. Thus, if you use this ability while you still have some temporary power points remaining from a previous usage, you gain only the better of the two values: either your current number of temporary power points, or the new influx of temporary power points, whichever is higher.

☞ Ranged Smite [General]

You may use your smite ability with ranged attacks.

Prerequisite: Any class ability to make a smite attack.

Benefit: You can use your smite ability when attacking with a ranged weapon. If you have multiple attacks, only the first attack you make counts as a smite attack. If that first attack misses, then the ability is wasted. You may still only make one smite attack per round.

Normal: Smite attacks are only made with melee weapons.

Note: This feat originally appeared in *Magic of Arcanis*.

Sacrificial Casting [General]

If you sacrifice an intelligent being, you may use a metamagic feat you already know without adjusting the level of the spell.

Prerequisites: Any one metamagic feat, any evil alignment.

Benefit: When you successfully perform a coup de grace on a creature with an Intelligence score of 3 or greater, and the victim dies as a result, you gain a number of “spell levels” that you can use to power the use of metamagic feats. The amount of energy you gain is equal to one-half the victim’s total character level or Hit Dice (rounded down, minimum 1) plus any applicable special modifier (see the table). You expend these spell levels to pay for the cost of spontaneously applying metamagic feats you know to spells you cast without increasing the effective spell level. (If spontaneously using metamagic feats increases the casting time of your spells, then that does not change as a result of using this feat.) You cannot increase the effective level of any spell above the normal maximum spell level that you can normally cast. You may store these bonus spell levels for a maximum of one minute per character level.

Special Modifier	Bonus Levels
Good alignment	+2
Neutral alignment	+1
Evil alignment	+0
Child	+3
Young Adult	+2
Adult	+1
Middle Age	+0
Old	-1
Venerable	-2

Example: Suppose a 9th-level dark-kin sorcerer who has kidnapped a young woman is fleeing from his pursuers. Finding himself trapped in a dead-end alley, he yanks free a knife and turns to face the guards who cluster at the mouth of the alley. On his action, the sorcerer performs a coup de grace attack on his captive, killing the poor girl. She was a 1st-level Commoner with a lawful good alignment. The dark-kin therefore gains one free level for the one Hit Die, plus two more for her alignment, plus two more because she was a young adult, for a total of five effective spell levels. He can store these levels for up to nine minutes, and may use them to apply any metamagic feats he knows to any of his spells without increasing the effective spell level, up to a total of five effective level increases, as long as the total effective level of any modified spell does not exceed 4th level.

Sadistic Glee [General]

Causing pain brings you pleasure.

Prerequisites: Base attack bonus +3, any evil alignment.

Benefit: Whenever you deal the maximum possible hit point damage from a single attack in combat (i.e. all the damage dice rolled as part of the attack come up with their maximum values), you gain a +1 morale bonus on all your attack rolls, saving throws, skill checks, and ability checks for one round per character level. These bonuses do not stack with each other; instead the duration is merely reset.

Salerean Avenger [General]

You come from the razed Elorii city of Salerea.

Prerequisites: Elorii, any evil alignment.

Benefit: You gain a +2 bonus on Bluff, Listen, Sense Motive, Spot, and Survival checks when using these skills against humans or Val. You also get a +2 bonus on all weapon damage rolls against such creatures. These bonuses stack with those provided by the Favored Enemy ability of a Ranger and other similar abilities.

Seductive [General]

You are alluring and know how to use your sensuality to get what you want.

Prerequisite: Cha 15+.

Benefit: You get a +1 bonus on all Charisma-based social skill and ability checks against living creatures of a chosen gender. Only creatures whose Intelligence score is at least 5 are affected. This bonus does not apply to any skill or ability check made in combat.

Special: You may take this feat a second time and choose the other gender.

Tolerance [General]

Your body is accustomed to the effects of drug use.

Prerequisites: Con 13+.

Benefit: You ignore the damaging effects of drugs that you take, although you can still suffer the effects of overdosing.

Normal: You suffer ability damage from the initial and/or secondary effects of drugs.

Touched by Evil [Spelltouched]

The taint of evil protects you.

Prerequisites: Exposure to *unholy aura*, evil alignment.

Benefit: You gain a +1 deflection bonus to AC, a +1 resistance bonus on saving throws, and spell resistance equal to your total character level. These benefits only apply against spells with the [Good] descriptor that target you or include you in their area of effect.

Warp Spell [Metamagic]

You can cast spells using the raw stuff of the Infernal planes.

Prerequisites: Caster level 12th, any two metamagic feats, non-good alignment.

Benefit: A warped spell has all of its hit point damage changed to unholy, which bypasses all forms of energy resistance. Additionally, creatures with the Good subtype take half again as much (+50%) damage from a warped spell, regardless of whether or not the spell allows a saving throw or if the save is a success or failure. A warped spell uses up a spell slot two levels higher than the spell's actual level.

Chapter Seven

Bazaar of the Damned

With all the rules thus far presented, characters hailing from Canceri are uniquely depraved. However, a character is more than their race, class, and feat selection. These wicked characters should have the necessary equipment to aid them on their dark adventures, slaves to exploit, and drugs to help them ease their consciences. This chapter uncovers some of Canceri's worst features to the fullest.

Basic Equipment

Canceri has few resources of its own. To the north are iron, lead, and tin mines, some agriculture scattered throughout the nation, but little else. Canceri lacks in cattle, relying on goats and sheep instead, so leather goods are nearly all imported. Food, too, is scarce,

and most people diet on tubers for their hardiness and mutton for its availability. Wool replaces the lighter weighted linen and cotton, and silk reserved for the wealthiest citizens. In all, most of Canceri, except the elite in Nishanpur, is poor, and goods are more expensive here than in other lands. Apply the cost modifiers on **Table 7–2: Equipment Cost Modifiers** to goods found in the PHB.

Weapons and Armor

In nearly all of Canceri's urban centers, it is illegal for commoner to carry arms, or wear armor. For this reason, armorers and weaponsmiths have far smaller customer base than in other nations, catering only to the elite. Some craftsmen work directly for the Church

Table 7–1: Weapon and Armor Cost Modifiers

Type	Examples	Adjustment	Example	Cost
Weapons				
Simple	Dagger, sickle, club, sling	+10%	Sickle	6 gp, 6 sp
Simple*	Crossbows, maces, spears	+100%	Morningstar	16 gp
Martial	Handaxe, light pick, flail, bows	+15%	Flail	9 gp, 2 sp
Martial*	Battleaxe, composite bows, swords	+200%	Warhammer	36 gp
Exotic	Net, nunchaku, whip	+50%	Net	30 gp
Exotic*	Kama, sai, two-bladed sword	+300%	Bastard sword	140 gp
Armor & Shields				
Leather*	Leather, studded leather, hide	+120%	Leather	22 gp
All*	All other armors	+100%	Chain shirts	300 gp
Masterwork:	Apply this cost before adjustment	+300%	Mwk shortsword	930 gp
			Mwk Scale mail	400 gp

*Restricted

Table 7–2: Equipment Cost Modifiers

Type	Examples	Adjustment	Example	Cost
Clothing	Wool	—	Cold Weather	8 gp
Clothing	All others	+40%	Royal outfit	280 gp
Finished	Lantern, Manacles, Sewing needle	+10%	Lamp, Common	1 sp, 1 cp
Food/Drink	Ale, Bread, Meals	+10%	Chunk of Meat	3 sp, 3 cp
Glass	Bottle, magnifying glass, spyglass	+40%	Spyglass	1,400 gp
Leather	Backpack, saddle, saddlebags	+20%	Backpack	2 gp, 4 sp
Mounts	Horse, Warhorse, et al	+10%	Heavy Horse	220 gp
Skill Kits	Artisan tools, disguise kit, thieves' tools		+30%	39 gp
Trade	Candles, Rope, Soap	+5%*	Candles	1 cp
Transport	Carriage, Rowboat, Wagon	+50%	Wagon	52 gp, 5 sp
Wooden	Barrel, basket, torch	+10%	Barrel	2 gp, 2 sp

*Do not count fractional increases for cp.

of the Dark Triumvirate, or the Watch, or even the community's army. Legally purchased weapons and armor are far more expensive in Canceri, and those illegally purchased are prohibitively, even in the black market. Commoners, who want some measure of protection, arm themselves with weaponry doubling as a tool, such as a picks, pitchforks, daggers, and so on. Most wear padded armor when traveling as it is easy to conceal beneath the commonly worn Cancerean robes. Apply the cost modifiers on **Table 7-1: Weapon and Armor Cost Modifiers** to weapons and armor found in the PHB.

Special Substances and Items

Where Canceri is lacking in basic goods, unusual substances are in abundance. Nier's Spine is home to all manner of crystals and metals, the Blighted Mire features a host of strange herbs and other plant specimens, and even the Cold Plain has unusual materials, which in the hands of a talented alchemist, can be made useful and sometimes dangerous. There are three major categories of Special Equipment: alchemical goods, drugs, and poisons.

Alchemical Goods

These special substances are all unique to Canceri. Characters originating in Canceri with the appropriate skills can manufacture these items normally. Other characters must have 5 ranks in Craft (alchemy) and 5 ranks in Knowledge (local: Canceri) to manufacture these goods. For Craft (alchemy) DCs and market prices, consult **Table 7-3: Craft Alchemy Costs and DCs**.

Table 7-3: Craft Alchemy Costs and DCs

Item	Craft DC	Market Price
Breath of Neroth	25	20 gp
Cureall	25	50 gp
Delaying Agent	20	30 gp
Ear drops	20	5 gp
Flash Grenade	22	25 gp
Gravebane	25	50 gp
Stink Pellet	25	50 gp
Stomach Ease	20	10 gp
Thieves' Boon	30	80 gp

Breath of Neroth: You can throw this pellet as a ranged touch attack with a range increment of 10 feet. Alternatively, you can fire the pellet using a sling. A direct hit deals 1d6 points of cold damage. Every creature within 5 feet of the point where the pellet hits takes 1 point of cold damage as the pellet leeches heat from the air. Since you do not need to hit a specific target, you can simply aim at a particular square, treating it as having an AC 5.

Cureall: Cureall adds a +4 to Fortitude saves made to resist the effects of a nonmagical disease. Cureall remains in a subject's system for 8 hours.

Delaying Agent: Add this clear liquid to an ingested poison. The poison delays activation for 1d10 minutes. At the end of the delay, the poison functions normally.

Ear Drops: By dropping a single drop in both ears, the user gains a +1 bonus to Listen checks for one hour. However, while under the effects of these drops, the user takes a -2 penalty to saving throws to resist sonic spells and effects.

Fear Dust: You can throw this small packet as a ranged attack with a range increment of 10 feet. A direct hit fills the square with the sickening smoke. Creatures in the square must succeed a DC 10 Will save or be shaken for one round. Since you do not need to hit a specific target, you can simply aim at a particular square, treating it as having an AC 5.

Flash Grenade: You can throw this small packet as a ranged attack with a range increment of 10 feet. When it strikes a hard surface (or is struck hard), it creates a bright flash. Each creature within a 10-foot-radius spread must make a DC 10 Fortitude save or be dazzled for 1 round. A dazzled creature takes a -1 penalty on attack rolls, Search checks, and Spot checks. Since you do not need to hit a specific target, you can simply aim at a particular square, treating it as having an AC 5.

Gravebane: If you drink this viscous syrup, you gain a +2 alchemical bonus to Fortitude saves to resist the permanent effects of a negative level, such as caused by a spectre or wraith, for 1 hour.

Stink Pellets: Mined from a yellow powder found in Nier's Spine, alchemists mix it with other additives, so that when thrown to the ground, it creates a cloud of noxious smoke. You can throw a pellet as a ranged touch attack with a range increment of 10 feet. A direct hit fills the square with the sickening smoke. Creatures in the square must succeed a DC 10 Fortitude save or be sickened for one round. Since you do not need to hit a specific target, you can simply aim at a particular square, treating it as having an AC 5.

Stomach Ease: If you drink this thick green fluid, you gain a +2 alchemical bonus to Fortitude saves to resist the sickened or nauseated condition, such as created by a ghost's stench, for 1 hour.

Thieves' Boon: This dark oil has helped many thieves escape capture. Found only in the Cold Plains in pools, in its natural state, it is extremely volatile (treat as alchemist's fire), but with the right additives, darkening it, alchemists can stabilize it. When applied to the skin, it grants a +2 circumstance bonus to Escape Artist checks and Hide checks made when using shadows for concealment. It is useable like regular oil for oiling hinges, wheels or whatnot, and to fuel lamps and lanterns. The effects of this oil last for 1 minute.



Drugs

In a land as committed to debauchery and decadence as Canceri, it is no wonder drugs fill an important niche in this culture. Drugs are used for a number of different reasons, from recreational usage, to stimulants for spellcasting, serving as components for spells, or even to aid in a myriad of functions from combat to sexuality. Drugs are similar to both alchemical substances and poisons. Their manufacture requires a use of the Craft (alchemy) skill, but does not require a spellcaster unless specifically identified. As poisons, they have an initial effect and a secondary effect. A character only receives a saving throw if they took the drug unknowingly or unwillingly. If such is the case, they receive a saving throw against the effects of the drug in the same way as a poison. Finally, drugs have an addiction rating (described in the Drug Addictions sidebar) and an overdose entry. If a character uses a drug more than the allotted amount, the character suffers these effects.

Brute

This vibrant red fluid is warm to the touch and has a spicy taste. To gain the effects of this drug, the user mixes the fluid with alcohol and drinks it. Addicts always have a flushed appearance and their eyes are bloodshot.

Initial Effect: The user takes 1d4 points of Charisma damage.

Secondary Effect: The user gains a +2 alchemical bonus to their Constitution for 1d4 hours.

Side Effect: This is drug functions as a mild hallucinogenic, and imposes a –2 penalty to all saving throws against illusions.

Overdose: If the user takes more than one does in four hours, the drug deals 1d3 points of Intelligence damage and 1d2 points of Intelligence drain.

Infernal Seed

Using infernal seed requires the user to make a small incision on their body and apply the fluid to the injury. Harvested from bound fiends, this is a popular drug among the Sarishan fighting pits.

Table 7–4: Drugs

Name	Type	Price	Craft (alchemy) DC	Addiction Rating
Brute	Ingested	300 gp	25	Medium
Infernal Seed	Injury	1,000 gp	10	Low
Liquid Desire	Inhaled	300 gp	25	High
Palluster	Ingested	5,000 gp	25	Negligible
Red Fire	Inhaled	20 gp	15	Medium
Quickening Vapors	Inhaled	500 gp	20	Extreme
Salusean Parasites	Ingested	5 gp	n/a	Extreme
Seer's Eyes	Contact	100 gp	25	Low
Waking Powder	Inhaled	5 gp	25	High

Initial Effect: 1 point of damage and 1d6 points of Intelligence damage.

Secondary Effect: The user gains a +4 alchemical bonus to their Strength score for 1 hour.

Side Effect: The user exudes evil, and suffers a –2 penalty to all Charisma checks made when interacting with good characters.

Overdose: If the user takes two doses within eight hours, the seed takes hold in the victims system, requiring the character to succeed a DC 20 Fortitude save or suffer terrible wracking pains in the abdomen, making the victim sickened for 8 hours, taking a –2 penalty on all attack rolls, weapon damage rolls, saving throws, skill checks, and ability checks. If the user takes three doses within 8 hours, the seed deals 3d6 points of Constitution damage. If the victim dies, a lemure rips itself free from the corpse.

Liquid Desire

Favored by any who would win the affections of another, liquid desire consists of concentrated elorii pheromones, requiring the death of the elorii for their extraction. Thankfully, it only takes a small dose of liquid desire to achieve its effects.

Initial Effect: The user gains a +4 alchemical bonus to his Charisma score lasting for two hours.

Secondary Effect: The user takes 1d8 points of Wisdom damage.

Side Effect: While under the effects of this drug, all NPC reactions are improved by one degree.

Overdose: Taking more than one dose within four hours deals 1d6 points of Constitution damage.

Palluster

This drug is actually a psychedelic fungus found on corpses left to rot. It has a bright green cap with dark brown splotches. The gills are the same dark brown color, while the stem is a pale white.

Initial Effect: User takes 1d6 points of Dexterity and Constitution damage.

Secondary Effect: User gains a +4 alchemical bonus to his Wisdom for 1d4 days. In addition, he can ask a

number of questions of the corpse equal to his newly adjusted Wisdom modifier, just as if he cast *Speak with Dead*, except he may only speak with the corpse where the fungus grew.

Side Effect: While under the effects of this drug, the user is extremely susceptible to suggestion, and suffers a -4 alchemical penalty to saving throws against enchantment and illusion spells and effects.

Overdose: If the user takes palluster more than once per month, he suffers terrible visions of the spirit world. He takes a -4 penalty to all skill checks, and to cast a spell, he must succeed a DC 15 + the spell level Concentration check or lose the spell.

Quickening Vapors

A user applies this thick paste to his chest or face and inhales the vapors, smelling faintly of jasmine and orange. Quickening vapors consists of herbs found in the Blighted Mire. A user has unusually good reflexes and moves quicker than the eye can follow.

Initial Effect: The user takes 1d6 points of Wisdom damage.

Secondary Effect: The user gains a +10 alchemical bonus to their land speed and a +2 alchemical bonus to their Dexterity for 1d3 hours.

Side Effect: When the user sobers, they become exhausted for as long as they were affected.

Overdose: Taking more than four doses in a 24-hour period deals 1d6 points of Dexterity damage and 1d6 points of Strength damage. Furthermore, the victim suffers 1d10 points of Wisdom drain.

Red Fire*

To gain the effects of this drug, the user places a small dose of liquid on a cloth and inhales the fumes. Favored by lovers for the stimulating effects, but more so by Sorcerers, who use the drug to supplement their spellcasting ability.

Initial Effect: The drug deals 1d2 points of Intelligence and Wisdom damage.

Drug Addictions

Drug addictions function much like diseases as described in the **Core Rulebook II**. The characteristics of certain forms of addiction are summarized on the table below. Upon initial exposure (any time a character imbibes or applies a drug with an addiction rating), the character must succeed on a Fortitude save or become addicted. Instead of having an incubation period, as does a disease, a drug has a satiation period: the length of time a single dose remains effective in a character's system. Addiction, if not satisfied by further doses of the drug, proceeds like a disease—the character takes ability damage each day unless he succeeds on a Fortitude save.

Addiction Rating: Each drug is rated according to its addictive potential, from lowest (negligible) to highest (extreme). Sometimes, an individual's long-term addiction raises a drug's addiction rating for that individual. Drugs with a negligible rating are not subject to this change. Stronger drugs increase their addiction rating by one step for every two full months a character remains addicted to the drug. A character that recovers from an addiction and later becomes addicted again to the same drug does so at the addiction rating the drug had just prior to his earlier recovery.

Satiation: Each time a user takes a drug to which he is addicted, he is satiated and staves off withdrawal symptoms for the period indicated on the table. Whenever the satiation period expires before the user takes another dose, the DC of the Fortitude save to resist damage (see below) increases by 5. Use the dose causing a character to become addicted for tracking the satiation period.

Damage: An addicted user who is not satiated takes the indicated amount of ability damage each day unless the character succeeds on a Fortitude saving throw.

Recovery: If a character makes two successful saving throws in a row, he has fought off the addiction and recovered, and takes no more damage from withdrawal symptoms.

A *lesser restoration* or *restoration* spell might negate some or all of the ability damage caused by an addiction, but the next day the victim may take more ability damage if he continues to fail his Fortitude saves. *Remove disease* immediately causes a user to recover from an addiction, but does not heal ability damage. *Greater restoration* or *heal* causes recovery and restores all ability damage from the addiction.

Table 7–5: Addictions

Addiction Rating	Fort DC	Satiation Period	Damage
Negligible	4	1 day	1d3–2 Dex (can be 0)
Low	6	10 days	1d3 Dex
Medium	10	5 days	1d4 Dex, 1d4 Wis
High	14	1 day	1d6 Dex, 1d6 Wis, 1d6 Con
Extreme	25	1 day	1d8 Dex, 1d8 Wis, 1d6 Con, 1d6 Str



Secondary Effect: The user gains a +2 alchemical bonus to Charisma for 1d3 hours.

Side Effect: If swallowed, red fire acts as a poison. The imbiber must succeed a DC 13 Fortitude save or the poison deals 1d3 points of Strength damage.

Overdose: If the user takes two doses within four hours, the user becomes enraged, gaining the effects of *rage*, and attacking the nearest creature. The effects of overdose last for 1d6 x 10 minutes.

Salusean Parasites

These maggot-like creatures collect in the sewers of major cities such as Nishanpur. About an eighth of an inch long, pale yellow and brown in color with tiny hungry mouths, they are repulsive. Some spellcasters, however, have uses for these vermin. Swallowing a fistful of these creatures provides a powerful enhancement to the control of arcane magic.

Initial Effect: The parasites lodge within the spellcaster's digestive tract, and secrete a chemical enhancing the user's intellect. The caster gains 1d6 points of Intelligence for 8 hours.

Secondary Effect: The parasites feed on the user, dealing 1d8 points of Constitution damage.

Side Effect: The caster must consume three times his normal food intake or be fatigued for 8 hours when the drug's effects wear off.

Overdose: If the user takes two doses within twelve hours, the Constitution damage becomes drain.

Seer's Eyes

This clear liquid is famous for enhancing a user's vision. To gain its effects, the user rubs the dose into his eyes. Brewed from the herbal infused ocular fluid of a young child, one can always tell the communities where alchemists manufacture this drug, for they have an inordinately high number of blind children.

Initial Effect: User takes 1d6 points of Charisma damage.

Secondary Effect: User gains a +2 alchemical bonus to all Search and Spot checks for 1 hour. In addition, they gain the effects of low-light vision. If they already have low-light vision, they see three times as far instead.

Side Effect: While under the effects of seer's eyes, the user loses his sense of smell.

Overdose: n/a

Waking Powder

Consisting of ground Rezehz leaves, a plant found in the Blighted Mire, slave owners give it to their workers to stave off the effects of fatigue.

Initial Effect: Removes the Fatigued condition, or improves Exhausted to Fatigued for 1d6 hours.

Secondary Effect: 2 points of Wisdom damage.

Side Effect: Waking powder is a powerful stimulant. Users under its influence are skittish and shaky, taking a -2 penalty on attack rolls, saving throws, skill checks, and ability checks.

Overdose: If more than three doses are taken in a 24-hour period, the imbiber takes 1d6 points of Constitution damage.

Poisons

Just as Canceri is famous for its pleasures, so to is it famous for its pains. Poison is one of Canceri's leading exports. With the many toxins at hand, Canceri can produce a variety of custom poisons for assassins the world over. For the purposes of manufacturing poison, follow these steps.

1. Find the poison's price. Put the price in silver pieces (1 gp = 10 sp).

2. The DC equals the poison's save DC +5 if it is a manufactured poison.

3. If the poison is harvested, such as spider venom, the DC equals 10 + the special size modifier (Colossal +16, Gargantuan +12, Huge +8, Large +4, Medium +2, Small +4, Tiny +8, Diminutive +12, Sine +16).

4. Pay one-third of the item's price for the cost of raw materials.

5. Make an appropriate Craft check representing one week's work. If the check succeeds, multiply your check result by the DC. If the result $\times$ the DC equals the price of the item in sp, then you have completed the item. (If the result $\times$ the DC equals double or triple the price of the item in silver pieces, then you've completed the task in one-half or one-third of the time. Other multiples of the DC reduce the time in the same manner.) If the result $\times$ the DC does not equal the price, then it represents the progress you have made this week. Record the result and make a new Craft check for the next week. Each week, you make more progress until your total reaches the price of the item in silver pieces.

If you fail a check by 4 or less, you make no progress this week. If you fail by 5 or more, you ruin half the raw materials and have to pay half the original raw material cost again. You can make checks by the day instead of by the week. In this case, your progress (check result $\times$ DC) is in copper pieces instead of silver pieces.

Poison Descriptions

Apathy: This magical poison requires a spellcaster to create it. Formed from collected perspiration of drug-addicts, this poison is popular among thieves who wish to immobilize their foes rather than kill them. After 1 hour of complete rest, an exhausted character becomes fatigued.

Cuofal dust: The powdered remains of diseased corpses with ground cuofal root. Characters who fail the initial save are dazed for 1 round. The victim remains unconscious for 1d6 minutes.

Distraction dust: To use distraction dust, you must blow it into the face of an adjacent opponent. One dose spreads to fill the volume of a 5-foot cube. The creature within the area, or partly within the area, must make a saving throw. (Holding one's breath is ineffective against inhaled poisons; they affect the nasal membranes, tear ducts, and other parts of the body). On a failed save against the initial effects of the poison, the victim is confused as if under the effects of the *confusion* spell.

Eyethief: Eyethief is contained in eggshells. You can throw it as a ranged attack with a range increment of 10 feet. When it strikes a hard surface (or is struck hard), the container releases its poison. One dose spreads to fill the volume of a 10-foot cube. Each creature within the area must make a saving throw. (Holding one's breath is ineffective against inhaled poisons; they affect the nasal membranes, tear ducts, and other parts of the body.) Those who fail the initial save are blinded for 1d10 minutes.

Fiend musk: This fine red powder comes from a dried fiend's tongue. When placed inside of a fragile container, you can throw it as a ranged attack with a range increment 10 feet. When it strikes a hard surface (or is struck hard), the container releases its



poison. One dose spreads to fill the volume of a 10-foot cube. Each creature within the area must make a saving throw. (Holding one's breath is ineffective against inhaled poisons; they affect the nasal membranes, tear ducts, and other parts of the body). Those who fail the initial save are sickened until they attempt the saving throw against the poison's secondary effects.

Gorgilin: Named after the gorgilin, an unusual rodent whose droppings are toxic. Victims of this poison are nauseated until they suffer the secondary effects of the poison.

Table 7–6: New Poisons

Poison	Type	DC	Initial Damage	Secondary Damage	Price
Cuofal dust	Contact	12	Dazed	Unconscious	150 gp
Maegal paste	Contact	18	1d6 Dex	3d6 Dex	3,500gp
Selehn jelly	Contact	15	1d6 Con	2d6 Con	3,000 gp
Apathy	Ingested	16	Paralyzed	Exhausted	200 gp
Gorgilin	Ingested	20	Nauseated	1d6 Con, 1d6 Wis	1,200 gp
Priest-catcher	Ingested	24	1d6 Wis	2d6 Dex	2,600 gp
Distraction dust	Inhaled	18	Confused	1d6 Int, 1d6 Wis	1,000 gp
Eyethief	Inhaled	16	Blinded	1d6 Dex	750 gp
Fiend musk	Inhaled	20	Sickened	1d6 Cha	750 gp
Lacy's Ire	Injury	18	2d6 Str	1d6 Con	1,150 gp
Pustule Pudding	Injury	20	Affected per Neroth's Festering Breath	None	700 gp
Valbane	Injury	22	2d6 hit points	1d4 Int, 1d4 Wis, 1d4 Cha	3,000 gp
Warrior's Blessing	Injury	14	3d6 hit points	—	150 gp

Lacy's Ire: This poison is named for the accidental creator, a commoner named Lacy. Having suffered her husband's abuse long enough, she ground thirty different herbs into a paste, smeared it onto a kitchen knife, and when her drunkard spouse collapsed in his chair before the hearth, she stabbed him in the chest. The effects were impressive, sapping him of his strength. She tortured him for hours finally cutting his throat. The poison has since been refined, but has retained its name to this day.

Maegal paste: In the animation chambers in Ventaka and other Nerothian communities, they animate so many corpses the negative energies contaminate the fluids left by the animated dead. Alchemists collect the wastes and treat them with a nerve toxin. The resultant paste is a powerful paralytic, and used to protect tombs and secret places. This poison is named after the first alchemist first manufacturing it.

Priest-Catcher: Designed to neutralize clerics, or at least reduce their potency, priest-catcher is illegal in Canceri. Authorities in this nation execute any they find with priest-catcher in their possession.

Pustule Pudding: Exclusive to the clergy of Neroth, His priests and clerics often craft this versatile, spell-like poison by combining a secret alchemical concoction with the rancid ooze squeezed from the wounds of someone affected by *Neroth's festering breath*. The result is a poison that closely mimics the effects of its source spell.

Selehn jelly: This strange slime collects in the bottom of stagnant pools in the Blighted Mire. Alchemists must to treat the slime with special agents to unlock its toxins.

Valbane: Created with the intent of killing Val psions and psychic warriors, valbane affects the victim's mental functions. Like priest-catcher, valbane is illegal and carries the same consequences for carrying it.

Warrior's Blessing: A popular poison used by pit fighters and gladiators across Canceri, warrior's blessing is a dangerous acid affecting the flesh. A single dose lasts until the weapon inflicts damage. In the case of damage reduction, the poison still affects the victim, even if the damage reduction reduces the weapon's damage to 0.

Slaves

Slavery is a way of life in Canceri. The number of slaves owned is a reflection on the individual's wealth and status. Slaves, as mentioned earlier in this book, have no rights, little hope of escaping their low station, and are no better than property. Characters, evil ones especially, may wish to purchase slaves to use as lovers, henchmen, or laborers. Good characters may liberate them. The following rules present the basic guidelines for assessing a slave's value.

Cost Factors

There are many factors going into the value of a slave, such as age; younger slaves are more useful for they have energy and amenable to training in a variety of different occupations. Likewise, elderly slaves have little value for they are unlikely to survive. The base cost for any slave is 100 gp, modified by a number of factors described below.

Step 1, Age: A slave's age is perhaps one of the largest factors in a slave's price. Younger slaves bring a higher value, though if too young, they carry a commensurate cost for raising the child. Likewise, adult slaves are far less valuable as they get older. Apply the gold piece modifiers to slave base cost, as presented on **Table 7-7: Age Modifiers**.

Table 7-7: Age Modifiers

Age	Human Age	Factor	Age Modified Price
Child	Infant to 12	-30%	70 gp
Young Adult	13-16	+20%	120 gp
Adult	17-39	—	100 gp
Middle Age	40-59	-10%	90 gp
Old	60-79	-50%	50 gp
Venerable	80+	-70%	30 gp

Step 2, Ability Scores: Another important factor in assessing a slave's worth are their physical and mental characteristics. A strong slave is more valuable than is an average slave. A strong, smart slave is more valuable still. To find out the Ability Score Factor, sum the slave's ability score modifiers. Multiply this total by 10%. Add or subtract this value from the Age Modified Price. For example, a human child with the following abilities, modified using **Table 7-8: Ability Score Modifiers Based on Age**, has Str 7, Dex 10, Con 7, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 10. His total modifiers are as follows: -2, 0, -2, 0, -1, 0, for a total modifier of -5, which when multiplied by 10%, results in -50%. Subtracting this percentage from the Age Modified Price found on **Table 7-7: Age Modifiers**, the child is now worth 35 gp (half of 70 gp).

Table 7-8: Ability Score Modifiers Based on Age

Age Category	Adjustments
Child	-3 Str, -1 Dex, -3 Con, -1 Int, -1 Wis, -1 Cha
Young Adult	—
Adult	—
Middle Age	-1 Str, -1 Dex, -1 Con, +1 Int, +1 Wis, +1 Cha
Old	-2 Str, -2 Dex, -2 Con, +1 Int, +1 Wis, +1 Cha
Venerable	-3 Str, -3 Dex, -3 Con, +1 Int, +1 Wis, +1 Cha

Step 3, Race: Most people of Canceri care little for the slaves' former nationality, and so only in the most vengeful cases, does nationality affect a slave's value. Race, on the other hand, is critical. Apply the appropriate modifier to the slave's current value: Human (+0%), Dwarf (−30%), Gnome (+10%), Elorii (+10%), Dark-kin (+20%), Half-Orc (+20%), Ss'ressen (+20%). Dwarves take a penalty because they are not able to survive more than ten years away from the light of their Enclave's Heart Stone gem. Known Vals cannot be slaves, though some have their eyes and tongues taken, making them look like any other human. Other humanoid races may be appropriate, such as goblins and hobgoblins, but they have no modifier. Thus, if our child is actually a dark-kin, so she is now worth 42 gp.

Step 4, Class: Skilled slaves are more valuable than are unskilled slaves. Slaves with levels in PC classes are even more valuable, unless they are spellcasters. Known spellcasters are never slaves in Canceri culture. Some slavers cut out the tongues of spellcasters, and remove several fingers to prevent spellcasting, but such action is unprofitable and reduces the overall worth of the slave. Apply the following modifiers to the slave as appropriate: Commoner (−5%), Expert

(+20%), Warrior (+10%), Aristocrat (+5%), PC Class (including multiclass PC and NPC characters): +15%. Bards, holy and unholy champions, rangers, and other classes with minor spellcasting ability do not count as spellcasting classes. Psions and psychic warriors, classes exclusive to Vals, cannot be made slaves. Our dark-kin child is a commoner, so we subtract 5% from 42 gp, and her current worth is 39 gp and 9 sp.

Step 5, Level: Level reflects a slave's skill. For NPC classes, level is less important, while level is far more important for PC classes. To calculate the level modifier, halve the class level of the NPC class (round down, 0 is possible) and multiply the result by 5%. In the case of PC classes, multiply the level by 5%. Add this result to the current slave's value. In the case of our dark-kin child, she is a 1st-level commoner, halved brings it to +0%, so her final price is 39 gp, 9 sp. For ease, common slave prices follow on **Table 7–9: Common Slaves**. For NPC classes, they use the average statistics, for PCs, the non-elite array.

Table 7–9: Common Slaves

Ability Scores										
Age	Str	Dex	Con	Int	Wis	Cha	Race	Class	Level	Price
Child (−30%)	7	10	7	10	9	10 (−50%)	Human (+0)	Com (−5%)	1 (+0)	33 gp, 2 sp, 5cp
Young Adult (+20%)	10	11	10	11	10	11 (+0%)	Human (+0)	Com (−5%)	1 (+0)	114 gp
Adult (—)	10	11	10	11	10	11 (+0%)	Human (+0)	Com (−5%)	1 (+0)	95 gp
Middle Age (−10%)	9	10	9	12	11	12 (+0%)	Human (+0)	Com (−5%)	1 (+0)	85 gp, 5 sp
Old (−50%)	7	8	7	13	12	13 (−20%)	Human (+0)	Com (−5%)	1 (+0)	38 gp
Venerable (−70%)	4	5	4	14	13	14 (−30%)	Human (+0)	Com (−5%)	1 (+0)	19 gp, 9 sp, 5 cp
Young Adult (+20%)	10	11	10	11	10	11 (+0%)	Human (+0)	Exp (+20%)	1 (+0)	144 gp
Adult (—)	10	11	10	11	10	11 (+0%)	Human (+0)	Exp (+20%)	1 (+0)	120 gp
Middle Age (−10%)	9	10	9	12	11	12 (+0%)	Human (+0)	Exp (+20%)	1 (+0)	108 gp
Old (−50%)	7	8	7	13	12	13 (−20%)	Human (+0)	Exp (+20%)	1 (+0)	60 gp
Venerable (−70%)	4	5	4	14	13	14 (−30%)	Human (+0)	Exp (+20%)	1 (+0)	36 gp
Young Adult (+20%)	10	11	10	11	10	11 (+0%)	Human (+0)	War (+10%)	1 (+0)	132 gp
Adult (—)	10	11	10	11	10	11 (+0%)	Human (+0)	War (+10%)	1 (+0)	120 gp
Middle Age (−10%)	9	10	9	12	11	12 (+0%)	Human (+0)	War (+10%)	1 (+0)	108 gp
Old (−50%)	7	8	7	13	12	13 (−20%)	Human (+0)	War (+10%)	1 (+0)	60 gp
Venerable (−70%)	4	5	4	14	13	14 (−30%)	Human (+0)	War (+10%)	1 (+0)	36 gp
Young Adult (+20%)	10	11	10	11	10	11 (+0%)	Human (+0)	Ari (+5%)	1 (+0)	126 gp
Adult (—)	10	11	10	11	10	11 (+0%)	Human (+0)	Ari (+5%)	1 (+0)	105 gp
Middle Age (−10%)	9	10	9	12	11	12 (+0%)	Human (+0)	Ari (+5%)	1 (+0)	94 gp, 5 sp
Old (−50%)	7	8	7	13	12	13 (−20%)	Human (+0)	Ari (+5%)	1 (+0)	52 gp, 5 sp
Venerable (−70%)	4	5	4	14	13	14 (−30%)	Human (+0)	Ari (+5%)	1 (+0)	31 gp, 5 sp
Adult (—)	15	12	11	8	9	6 (−5%)	½ Orc (+20%)	Bbn (+15%)	1 (+5%)	137 gp, 6 sp, 6 cp
Adult (—)	6	12	13	10	9	13 (+0%)	Gnome (+10%)	Brd (+15%)	1 (+5%)	132 gp, 8 sp, 3 cp
Adult (—)	13	12	11	10	9	8 (+0%)	Human (+0)	Ftr (+15%)	1 (+5%)	120 gp, 7 sp, 5 cp
Adult (—)	9	14	9	10	15	10 (+20%)	Elorii (+10%)	Mnk (+15%)	1 (+5%)	159 gp, 3 sp, 9 cp
Adult (—)	13	12	11	10	9	8 (+0%)	Human (+0)	Pal (+15%)	1 (+5%)	120 gp, 7 sp, 5 cp
Adult (—)	13	14	12	10	9	6 (+10%)	Dark-kin (+20)	Rgr (+15%)	1 (+5%)	159 gp, 3 sp, 9 cp
Adult (—)	13	12	11	10	9	8 (+0%)	Human (+0)	Rog (+15%)	1 (+5%)	120 gp, 7 sp, 5 cp

Chapter Eight

Magic

Canceri is a theocracy, so magic is an important component in the daily lives of its people. Nerothian priests are masters of the necromantic arts; Sarishan clerics and warlocks are powerful conjurers; and Nierites excel in the magical aspects of warfare. This chapter explores new spells and magic items unique to Canceri.

Spell Lists

An ^M or ^F appearing at the end of a spell's name in the spell lists denotes a spell with a costly material or focus component (something not normally included in a spell component pouch). An ^X denotes a spell with an XP component paid by the caster. A ^B denotes a spell with a blood rank requirement. The letters ^C, ^D, and ^E denote conditional, damage, and environmental components respectively.

New Assassin Spells

1st-Level Assassin Spells

Expedite Poison: The secondary effects of a poison occur 1d6 rounds sooner.

3rd-Level Assassin Spells

Tendrils of Darkness ^C: 60-ft.-radius of supernatural darkness.

New Bard Spells

0-Level Bard Spells

Blasphemous Barrage: 20-ft.-radius burst, subjects shaken.

1st-Level Bard Spells

Vision of Exquisite Pleasure: Stuns one living creature; 1 round/level.

2nd-Level Bard Spells

Echoing Screech: Deals 1d8 sonic damage; one round later, spell deals 2d8 sonic damage.

3rd-Level Bard Spells

Idiot's Cunning: Subject suffers a -4 penalty to Int for 1 min. /level.

Leprous Visage: Subject suffers a -4 penalty to Cha for 1 min. /level.

Rhino's Grace ^M: Subject suffers a -4 penalty to Dex for 1 min. /level.

4th-Level Bard Spells

Agony: Subject takes +50% nonlethal damage from all attacks for 1 round/level.

Wail of Infinite Sorrow ^E: Subjects are caught in a web of despair for the spell's duration.

Tendrils of Darkness ^C: 60-ft.-radius of supernatural darkness.

New Components

Steeped in ancient traditions, many Cancerese spellcasters use exotic sources to power their spells. Where southern wizards employ the tried and true methods of verbal, somatic, material, and focuses, and sometimes XP, Cancerese spellcasters draw upon their bloodlines, their physical condition, sometimes even using the land around them for fuel. Several of the new spells presented in this chapter incorporate these new components.

Bloodrank (B): A bloodrank component reflects the potency of the Valinor blood running through the caster's veins. Where bloodrank is indicated, there is a number, such as bloodrank 1. To cast this spell, the caster must be a Val with an unenhanced bloodrank meeting or exceeding the required bloodrank. You cannot make use of spells that boost bloodrank to qualify to cast these spells.

Conditional (C): A conditional component is the indicated condition of the caster, such as dazzled, sickened, shaken, confused and so on. Conditional components may also require the cast to be under the effects of a disease, drug, or poison.

Damage (D): A damage component requires the caster to take a self-inflicted injury during the casting. In some instances, the spell deals damage to the caster, in the form of a backlash. This damage may not be prevented, but it may be healed.

Environment (E): Environmental spells require the caster to be a particular place for the spell to be cast, such as underground, in a graveyard, within 30-feet of a crucified victim, and so on. Casting spells outside of these conditions is possible, but they require a spell slot two levels higher than normal, just as if the caster applied a metamagic feat to the spell. This spell level increase cannot be negated or paid for except by increasing the spell level.

New Blackguard Spells

2nd-Level Blackguard Spells

Expedite Poison: The secondary effects of a poison occur 1d6 rounds sooner.

4th-Level Blackguard Spells

Agony: Subject takes +50% nonlethal damage from all attacks for 1 round/level.

Bone Shard: Applies -10 ft. enhancement penalty to target's base land speed.

Tendrils of Darkness ^C: 60-ft.-radius of supernatural darkness.

New Cleric Spells

0-Level Cleric Spells

Blasphemous Barrage: 20-ft.-radius burst, subjects shaken.

2nd-Level Cleric Spells

Divulge: Unearth subject's secrets.

Fire Speak^E: Speech, limited sight and hearing at a distance, bound by fire sources, 1 min. /level.

NerOTH's Festering Breath: Causes wounds that hamper healing spells.

3rd-Level Cleric Spells

Agony: Subject takes +50% nonlethal damage from all attacks for 1 round/level.

Ancient's Virility^M: Subject suffers a -4 penalty to Con for 1 min. /level.

Child's Weakness^M: Subject suffers a -4 penalty to Str for 1 min. /level.

Echoing Screech: Deals 1d8 sonic damage; one round later, spell deals 2d8 sonic damage.

Fool's Folly: Subject suffers a -4 penalty to Wis for 1 min. /level.

Leprous Visage: Subject suffers a -4 penalty to Cha for 1 min. /level.

Mark of Thralldom^M: When subject dies, they rise as an undead.

Rhino's Grace^M: Subject suffers a -4 penalty to Dex for 1 min. /level.

4th-Level Cleric Spells

Fire Step: Instantly transports you through one fire source to another up to 100 miles/level.

Lance of Fire: Fire deals 1d8/2 levels damage.

Tendrils of Darkness^C: 60-ft.-radius of supernatural darkness.

Undead Levies: Undead creatures in range obey your commands.

Wail of Infinite Sorrow^E: Subjects are caught in a web of despair for the spell's duration.

5th-Level Cleric Spells

Bone Shield: Destroy skeletons, gain deflection bonus.

Death Ascendant^{M, C, D}: You gain the undead subtype.

Greater Agony: Several subjects take +50% nonlethal damage from all attacks for 1 round/level.

Reenergize the Chosen^M: Restore unlife to a sentient undead creature.

6th-Level Cleric Spells

Enervating Embrace^C: Grappled foe suffers 2d4 negative levels.

7th-Level Cleric Spells

Epidemic: As *contagion*, but 20-ft. radius burst.

Mass Burial^E: Subjects in a 30 ft. spread are pulled into the ground.

8th-Level Cleric Spells

Discard the Corporeal Form^C: You gain the incorporeal subtype.

9th-Level Cleric Spells

Death Throes^M: Upon death, you explode, dealing 1d6 damage per level.

Grave Bound^E: The ground swallows target creature alive.

New Druid Spells

1st-Level Druid Spells

Expedite Poison: The secondary effects of a poison occur 1d6 rounds sooner.

2nd-Level Druid Spells

Barbed Defense: Thorns deal 1d6 points of damage +1 per caster level for one round.

3rd-Level Druid Spells

Ancient's Virility^M: Subject suffers a -4 penalty to Con for 1 min. /level.

Bone Shard: Applies -10 ft. enhancement penalty to target's base land speed.

Child's Weakness^M: Subject suffers a -4 penalty to Str for 1 min. /level.

Fool's Folly: Subject suffers a -4 penalty to Wis for 1 min. /level.

Rhino's Grace: Subject suffers a -4 penalty to Dex for 1 min. /level.

4th-Level Druid Spells

Irrational Attraction: Subject becomes enamored with any type of creature.

6th-Level Druid Spells

Mass Burial^E: Subjects in a 20 ft. spread are pulled into the ground.

7th-Level Druid Spells

Epidemic: As *contagion*, but 20-ft. radius burst.

8th-Level Druid Spells

Grave Bound^E: The ground swallows target creature alive.

New Ranger Spells

1st-Level Ranger Spells

Expedite Poison: The secondary effects of a poison occur 1d6 rounds sooner.

3rd-Level Ranger Spells

Ancient's Virility^M: Subject suffers a -4 penalty to Con for 1 min. /level.

Child's Weakness^M: Subject suffers a -4 penalty to Str for 1 min. /level.

Fool's Folly: Subject suffers a -4 penalty to Wis for 1 min. /level.

Rhino's Grace^M: Subject suffers a -4 penalty to Dex for 1 min. /level.

4th-Level Ranger Spells

Irrational Attraction: Subject becomes enamored with any type of creature.

New Sorcerer/Wizard Spells

0-Level Sorcerer and Wizard Spells

Conj **Blasphemous Barrage**: 20-ft.-radius burst, subjects shaken.

2nd-Level Sorcerer and Wizard Spells

Div **Fire Speak**^E: Speech, limited sight and hearing at a distance, bound by fire sources, 1 min. level.

Evoc **Echoing Screech**: Deals 1d8 sonic damage; one round later, spell deals 2d8 sonic damage.

Necro **Bone Shard**: Applies -10 ft. enhancement penalty to target's base land speed.

Trans **Barbed Defense**^C: Thorns deal 1d6 points of damage +1 per caster level for one round.

Disrobe: Subject's nonmagical clothing falls off.

3rd-Level Sorcerer and Wizard Spells

Evoc **Tendrils of Darkness**^C: 60-ft.-radius of supernatural darkness.

Necro **Mark of Thralldom**^M: When subject dies, they rise as an undead.

Trans **Ancient's Virility**^M: Subject suffers a -4 penalty to Con for 1 min. /level.

Child's Weakness^M: Subject suffers a -4 penalty to Str for 1 min. /level.

Fool's Folly: Subject suffers a -4 penalty to Wis for 1 min. /level.

Idiot's Cunning: Subject suffers a -4 penalty to Int for 1 min. /level.

Leprous Visage: Subject suffers a -4 penalty to Cha for 1 min. /level.

Rhino's Grace^M: Subject suffers a -4 penalty to Dex for 1 min. /level.

Violent Disrobe: Subject's nonmagical clothing tears away, injuring the subject in the process.

4th-Level Sorcerer and Wizard Spells

Conj **Phantom Assassin**^C: Magic assailant appears for 1 round/level or until it damages foe.

Necro **Bone Shield**: Destroy skeletons, gain deflection bonus.

Ray of Necrosis^M: Ray deals 1d8 points of Con damage.

Trans **Agony**: Subject takes +50% nonlethal damage from all attacks for 1 round/level.

5th-Level Sorcerer and Wizard Spells

Conj **Burning Strands**^M: Fills 20-ft.-radius spread with sticky spider webs; deals 1d6 points of acid damage +1 per caster level.

Ench **Wail of Infinite Sorrow**^E: Subjects are caught in a web of despair for the spell's duration.

Evoc **Vile Spew**^M: Deals 1d6/level acid damage and sickens creatures.

Necro **Death Ascendant**^{M, C, D}: You gain the undead subtype.

Enervating Embrace^C: Grappled foe suffers 2d4 negative levels.

Undead Levies: Undead creatures in range obey your commands.

Trans **Scion of the Infernal**^{M, B}: Transform into an Infernal for 1 min. /level.

6th-Level Sorcerer and Wizard Spells

Necro **Lifstrike**^F: Ray deals 1d6/level negative energy damage.

Reenervate the Chosen^M: Restore unlife to a sentient undead creature.

Trans **Greater Agony**: Several subjects take +50% nonlethal damage from all attacks for 1 round/level.

Mass Burial^E: Subjects in a 30 ft. spread are pulled into the ground.

Necrotic Polymorph^C: Gives one willing subject a corporeal undead form.

7th-Level Sorcerer and Wizard Spells

Evoc **Death Throes**^{M, C}: Upon death, you explode, dealing 1d6 damage per level.

Infernal Rays: Three ranged touch attacks each deal 5d6 energy damage, and 1 ranged touch attack petrifies.

Necro **Siphon Life**: Touch attack deals 1d6+1/ level damage; caster gains 5 hp per point of Con.

8th-Level Sorcerer and Wizard Spells

Necro **Epidemic**: As *contagion*, but 20-ft. radius burst.

9th-Level Sorcerer and Wizard Spells

Trans **Grave Bound**^E: The ground swallows target creature alive.

Discard the Corporeal Form^C: You gain the incorporeal subtype.

Spells

The spells described below are in alphabetical order. In instances where the spells have a Greater, Lesser, or Mass version, the base spell's name comes first, such as *confusion*, *lesser*.

Agony

Transmutation [Evil]

Level: Brd 4, Blk 4, Clr 3, Sor/Wiz 4

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft. /2 levels)

Target: One living creature within range

Duration: 1 round/level

Saving Throw: Fortitude negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

Agony heightens the subject's senses so that any injury feels worse than it actually is. If the targeted creature fails a Fortitude save, each time it suffers hit point damage during the spell's duration, it suffers an additional +20% in nonlethal damage in addition to the attack's normal damage. For example, a fireball dealing 40 points of damage would also deal an additional 8 points of nonlethal damage to a creature under the effects of *agony*.

The amount of extra nonlethal damage dealt by this spell rises to 30% at caster level 10, to 40% at caster level 15, and to 50% at caster level 20.

Agony, Greater

Transmutation [Evil]

Level: Clr 5, Sor/Wiz 6

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft. /2 levels)

Target: All living creatures in a 30-ft.-radius burst

Duration: 1 round/level

Greater agony functions as *agony*, except it affects multiple targets.

Ancient's Virility

Transmutation

Level: Clr 3, Drd 3, Rgr 3, Sor/Wiz 3

Components: V, S, M/DF

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Touch

Target: Creature touched

Duration: 1 min. /level

Saving Throw: Will negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

The affected creature loses vitality and stamina. The spell imposes a -4 enhancement penalty to the subject's Constitution score, reducing hit points, Fortitude saves, Constitution checks, and so forth. Hit points return at the end of the spell's duration. This spell cannot reduce a creature's Constitution score below 1.

Material Components: The flesh of an undead humanoid, which must be consumed upon casting. This component is never found in a spell component pouch, and must be acquired and adequately preserved.

Barbed Defense

Transmutation

Level: Drd 2, Rgr 2, Sor/Wiz 2

Components: V, C

Casting Time: 1 immediate action

Range: Personal

Target: You

Duration: 1 round

Saving Throw: Will negates (harmless)

Spell Resistance: No

This spell causes your body to sprout sharp barbs. Creatures making grapple checks against you take 1d6 points of damage +1 point per caster level (maximum +10). The barbs last 1 round before they retract into your skin.

You can cast this spell with an instant utterance. Casting this spell is an immediate action. Using an immediate action is like casting a quickened spell, except that you can perform an immediate action even when it is not your turn. This spell counts toward the normal limit of one swift or immediate action per round.

Conditional Component: You must be grappled.



Blasphemous Barrage

Conjuration (Creation) [Fear, Mind-Affecting, Sonic]

Level: Brd 0, Clr 0, Sor/Wiz 0

Components: V

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: 20 ft.

Area: 20-ft.-radius burst

Duration: 1 round

Saving Throw: Will negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

You release a stream of highly offensive and blasphemous words, so foul others fear the Gods' reprisal. Affected creatures suffer a -1 penalty on attack rolls and a -1 penalty on saving throws against fear effects for one full round.

Bone Shard

Necromancy

Level: Blk 4, Drd 3, Sor/Wiz 2

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft. /2 levels)

Target: One living creature

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: Fortitude negates

Spell Resistance: Yes



Bone shard applies a –10 ft. enhancement penalty to the subject's base land speed, base climb speed (if any), and base swim speed (if any). This penalty remains until the target is the recipient of a *cure serious wounds*, *heal*, or *regeneration* spell. Multiple castings of this spell stack. A creature whose base land speed is reduced to 0 cannot walk, but may crawl 5 feet as a full-round action that provokes attacks of opportunity. A creature whose base climb speed is reduced to 0 cannot move by climbing, but it can cling to whatever surface it currently occupies. A creature whose base swim speed is reduced to 0 can only move by "crawling" 5 feet as a full-round action that provokes attacks of opportunity. (If the creature has some other form of movement, such as flying, then those modes of locomotion are not affected by this spell and may be used normally.)

Creatures that do not have bones (such as plants and oozes) are unaffected by this spell. Although undead creatures are normally immune to spells that require a Fortitude save, they can be affected by *bone shard*.

Bone Shield

Necromancy

Level: Clr (Neroth) 5, Sor/Wiz 4

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft. /2 levels)

Targets: All skeletons within range

Duration: 1 round/level

Saving Throw: Will negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

Bone shield destroys all skeletons within the range of the spell that fail their saving throws. (For purposes of this spell, "skeleton" only means creatures that have the Skeleton template from *Core Rulebook III*. Other creatures whose forms are wholly or partially skeletal, such as mohrgs, are not affected by this spell.) For each skeleton destroyed, you gain a +1 deflection bonus to your AC, to a maximum of 2 + 1 per six caster levels (capping at +6 as an 18th level caster), as the bones from the destroyed skeletons swirl and spin around your body for the duration of the spell.

Burning Strands

Conjuration (Creation) [Acid]

Level: Sor/Wiz 5

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft. /level)

Effect: Acid webs in a 20-ft.-radius spread

Duration: 1 round/level (D)

Saving Throw: Reflex negates (see text)

Spell Resistance: No

Burning strands functions similarly to *web*, except the strands deal acid damage in addition to the entangling effect, thus creating a many-layered mass of strong, sticky strands. These masses must be anchored to two or more solid and diametrically opposed points or else the webbing collapses and disappears. Anyone in the area of effect when the spell is cast must make a Reflex save. If this save succeeds, the creature is entangled, but not prevented from moving, though moving is more difficult than normal for being entangled (see below). If the save fails, the creature is stuck and cannot move from its space, but can break loose by spending 1 round and making a DC 20 Strength check or a DC 25 Escape Artist check. In addition, all creatures in the webbed squares also take 1d3 points of acid damage +1 per two caster levels each round at the beginning of their turns.

Once loose (either by making the initial Reflex save or a later Strength check or Escape Artist check), a creature remains entangled, but may move through the *burning strands* very slowly. Each round devoted to moving allows the creature to make a new Strength check or Escape Artist check. The creature moves 5 feet for each full 5 points by which the check result exceeds 10.

If you have at least 5 feet of webbing between you and an opponent, it provides cover. If you have at least 20 feet of webbing between you, it provides total cover. Attacking a creature in a web will not cause you to become entangled.

Unlike the *web* spell, the strands created by this spell are not flammable, and are not subject to burning. In addition, this spell cannot be made permanent.

Material Component: A live spider dropped in a vial of acid (10 gp).

Child's Weakness

Transmutation

Level: Clr 3, Drd 3, Rgr 3, Sor/Wiz 3

Components: V, S, M/DF

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Touch

Target: Creature touched

Duration: 1 min. /level

Saving Throw: Will negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

The affected creature weakens. The spell imposes a –4 enhancement penalty to the subject's Strength score, penalizing melee attack rolls, melee damage rolls, and so forth. This spell cannot reduce a creature's Strength below 1.

Material Component: The tears of a child, imbibed during the casting of the spell. This component is never found in a spell component pouch, and must be acquired and adequately preserved.

Death Ascendant

Necromancy [Evil]

Level: Clr 5 (Neroth), Sor/Wiz 5 (val'Mordane)**Components:** M, C, D**Casting Time:** 1 minute**Range:** Personal**Target:** You**Duration:** 1 hour/level**Saving Throw:** None**Spell Resistance:** No

You undergo a powerful physical transformation, simulating undeath for a brief time. While under the effects of this spell, you temporarily lose your Constitution score. You gain the following features: darkvision out to 60 feet, immunity to all mind-affecting effects (charms, compulsions, phantasms, patterns, and morale effects), immunity to poison, sleep effects, paralysis, stunning, disease, and death effects. In addition, you are no longer subject to critical hits, nonlethal damage, ability drain, or energy drain. You are immune to damage to your physical ability scores (Strength and Dexterity), as well as to fatigue and exhaustion effects, though you are subject to this spell's sickening effect. You are immune to any effect requiring a Fortitude save (unless the effect also works on objects or is harmless). Use your Charisma modifier for Concentration checks. Finally, you do not breathe, eat, or sleep while under the effects of this spell. In effect, you become undead for the duration of the spell.

Death ascendant makes you vulnerable to other attack forms. You cannot heal damage on your own, though negative energy (such as an *inflict* spell) can repair damage. *Cure* spells, such as *cure light wounds*, deal damage to you instead of repairing it. Though you are not at risk of death from massive damage, when reduced to 0 hit points or less you are immediately destroyed. Finally, you are subject to turning, though you cannot be destroyed by a turning check even if the cleric turning you is more than twice your level or uses a greater turning attempt.

Material Components: During the casting of the spell, you must eat the rotting brains of a zombie. This component is never found within a spell component pouch and must be acquired and preserved through play.

Conditional Components: Eating the rotting brains makes you sickened for 1d20 rounds after casting the spell.

Damage Component: At the end of the spell's duration, the shock of returning back to a normal, living state causes 2d6 points of Constitution damage. You take this damage even if the spell is dispelled or otherwise prematurely ended.

Death Throes

Evocation [Fire]

Level: Clr 9 (Nier), Sor/Wiz 7 (Nier)**Components:** V, S, M**Casting Time:** 1 standard action**Range:** Personal**Target:** You**Duration:** One day/level (D) or until discharged**Saving Throw:** Reflex half; see text**Spell Resistance:** Yes

While under the effects of this spell, if you take lethal damage reducing your hit points to -10 or below, you instantly explode in a blinding flash of light. The detonation extends 5 feet per caster level. All creatures in the area of the explosion take 1d6 points of damage per caster level, with a Reflex save for half damage. Half this damage is considered fire damage and half is considered holy damage. This explosion obliterates your body and any equipment you were carrying. There are no traces of your body left to serve as components for a *raise dead* or *resurrection* spell. You may only be returned to life by *true resurrection*, or by a *wish* or *miracle* (to reconstitute a piece of your body) followed by *resurrection*.

Material Components: A lit tindertwig (1 gp).

Discard the Corporeal Form

Transmutation

Level: Clr 8 (Beltine), Sor/Wiz 9**Components:** V, S**Casting Time:** 1 standard action**Range:** Personal**Target:** You**Duration:** 1 min./level**Saving Throw:** None**Spell Resistance:** No

After the fall of the First Imperium, the friendly coexistence between the different temples collapsed and strife consumed the pious. Though all of the temples had some sort of conflict with the others, none were as vicious and deadly as the battles between the Temples of Neroth and Beltine. Having dominion over the spirit and the afterlife, the Beltinians had an advantage, at first, using spells such as this one to not only reconnoiter, but to engage in quick and decisive attacks, really no more than elegant assassinations, against the leaders of the Nerothian clerisy. In time, the Nerothians were able to learn some of the vulnerabilities of their Beltinian foes and devised special formulations of holy water that could take advantage of those vulnerabilities.

This spell grants you the incorporeal subtype for its duration. All of your equipment changes with you (as if each item had the *ghost touch* property). While incorporeal, you have no physical body, and can be harmed only by other incorporeal creatures, magic

weapons or creatures that strike as magic weapons, spells, spell-like abilities, or supernatural abilities. You are immune to all nonmagical attack forms. Even when hit by spells or magic weapons, you have a 50% chance to ignore any damage from a corporeal source (except for positive energy, negative energy, force effects such as *magic missile*, or attacks made with *ghost touch* weapons). Although it is not a magical attack, holy water can affect you, dealing 2d4 points of damage on a successful ranged touch attack. Holy water created by a Nerothian does not suffer the 50% miss chance when it strikes you and always deals the maximum damage (8 points per vial).

In this form, you lose your natural armor bonus (if any) but gain a deflection bonus equal to your Charisma bonus (always at least +1, even if your Charisma score does not normally provide a bonus). You can enter or pass through solid objects, but must remain adjacent to the object's exterior, and so cannot pass entirely through an object whose space is larger than your own. You can sense the presence of creatures or objects within a square adjacent to your current location, but enemies have total concealment (50% miss chance) from an incorporeal creature inside an object. In order to see farther from the object it is in and attack normally, you must emerge. While inside an object you have total cover, but when you attack a creature outside the object, you only have cover, so a creature outside with a readied action could strike at you as you attack. You cannot pass through a force effect.

Your attacks pass through (ignore) natural armor, armor, and shields, though deflection bonuses and force effects (such as *mage armor*) work normally against you. You pass through and operate in water as easily as you do in air. You cannot fall or take falling damage. You cannot make trip or grapple attacks, nor can you be tripped or grappled. In fact, you cannot take any physical action to move or manipulate an opponent or its equipment, nor are you subject to such actions. While in this form, you have no weight and do not set off traps triggered by weight.

You always move silently and cannot be heard with Listen checks if you do not wish to be. You lose your Strength score, so your Dexterity modifier applies to both your melee attacks and ranged attacks. Non-visual senses, such as scent and blindsight, are either ineffective or only partly effective against you. You have an innate sense of direction and can move at full speed even when you cannot see.

Disrobe

Transmutation

Level: Sor/Wiz 2

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft. /2 levels)

Target: One living creature wearing clothing, armor, or adornments

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: Will negates (see text)

Spell Resistance: No

This spell forces a target's clothing, including undergarments, belts, and footwear, to loosen and fall off, leaving the target unclad. Nonmagical jewelry, including rings, earrings, and necklaces also fall. All the items land on the ground in the target's square. The target does not lose its grasp on any held objects, and any worn magical items are unaffected by this spell. A suit of armor (even nonmagical armor) is too large and bulky to be affected by this spell, but any garments underneath it will be pulled loose through the gaps in the armor. A suit of normal clothing requires a full-round action to put back on.

Divulge

Divination

Level: Clr 2 (Sarish)

Components: V

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft. /2 levels)

Target: One creature

Duration: Concentration, up to 6 rounds

Saving Throw: Will negates

Spell Resistance: No

You can sense all there is to know about the target creature, merely by concentrating. The amount of information revealed depends on how long you study a particular subject. This information is cumulative, so by the sixth round you are learning all there is to know.

1st Round: You learn which skill the subject is most proficient in (the skill with the greatest total modifier).

2nd Round: You learn where the subject's overall power lies in relation to your own (whether they have higher, equal, or lower total HD/levels compared to you).

3rd Round: You learn if subject is infected with any diseases or under the influence of any drug or poison. If so, you learn the name or type of each.

4th Round: You learn if subject is currently affected by any mind-affecting effects, and if so you learn the nature (charm, compulsion, etc.) and strength (caster level) of each effect.

5th Round: You learn where the subject's talents lie, giving you an indication of all character classes and levels in each class.

6th Round: You are able to accurately assess the subject's physical condition (you learn the subject's normal maximum hit points and its current hit point total).

🔮 Echoing Screech

Evocation [Sonic]

Level: Brd 2, Clr 3, Sor/Wiz 2**Components:** V**Casting Time:** 1 standard action**Range:** Close (25 ft. + 5 ft. /2 levels)**Area:** 10-ft.-radius spread**Duration:** 2 rounds**Saving Throw:** Fortitude partially negates (see text)**Spell Resistance:** Yes

You blast an area with a tremendous burst of sound. All creatures in the area of effect take 1d8 points of sonic damage. There is no save against this initial damage. One round later, regardless of whether the creatures remain in the original area, they must attempt a Fortitude save to avoid taking an additional 2d8 points of sonic damage. A successful save negates all of the secondary damage.

Enervating Embrace

Necromancy

Level: Clr 6, Sor/Wiz 5**Components:** V, C**Casting Time:** 1 swift action**Range:** Touch**Target:** Creature touched**Duration:** Instantaneous**Saving Throw:** None**Spell Resistance:** Yes

This spell can only be cast while you are in a grapple. With a single word of power, you inflict 2d4 negative levels on the creature you are grappling with. You do not need to make a melee touch attack or a successful grapple check to deliver this spell; it is assumed that during a grapple you are always touching the other creature in some fashion.

The negative levels from this spell function like those inflicted by *enervation*. The negative levels do not last long enough to become permanent, and after one hour per caster level (maximum 15), they fade away.

Casting this spell is a swift action (like casting a quickened spell). It counts against your limit of one swift action or quickened spell per turn.

Conditional Component: You must be grappling.

🔮 Epidemic

Necromancy [Evil]

Level: Clr (Neroth) 7, Drd 7, Sor/Wiz 8**Components:** V, S**Casting Time:** 1 standard action**Range:** 20 ft.**Area:** 20-ft.-radius burst**Duration:** Instantaneous**Saving Throw:** Fortitude negates**Spell Resistance:** Yes

All subjects within the area of the spell contract a disease selected from the table below, striking immediately (no incubation period). The DC noted is for the subsequent saves (use *epidemic*'s normal save DC for the initial saving throw).

Disease	DC	Damage
Blinking sickness	16	1d4 Str ¹
Blood Piss ²	15	1d8 Con
Cackle fever	16	1d6 Wis
Filth fever	12	1d3 Dex and 1d3 Con
Mindfire	12	1d4 Int
Mire Blight ²	9	1 Str, 1 Dex, 1 Con, and 1 Cha
Mouth Sickness ²	12	1d2 Con, 1d4 Int, 1d4 Cha
Red ache	15	1d6 Str
Shakes	13	1d8 Dex
Slimy doom	14	1d4 Con

¹ Each time a victim takes 2 or more points of Strength damage from blinking sickness, he or she must make another Fortitude save (using the disease's save DC) or be permanently blinded.

²New Disease, see **Chapter Three: Canceri Geography** for details.

Expedite Poison

Necromancy

Level: Asn 1, Blk 2, Drd 1, Rgr 1

Components: V, S, DF

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Touch

Target: Creature touched

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: Yes

This spell speeds up a poison's effect in the subject creature's system, reducing the number of rounds before the secondary effects manifest by 1d6 rounds. The amount of time may be reduced to 0 (but not below 0), whereupon the target must make a saving throw against the poison's secondary effects. If the subject has more than one dose of poison currently in its system, then all of them are accelerated by the same amount.

Fire Speak

Divination (Scrying) [Fire, Language-Dependent]

Level: Clr 2 (Nier), HC 2 (Nier), Sor/Wiz 2 (val'Emman or val'Virdan)

Components: V, S, E

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: 1 mile/level

Target: One fire with range.

Duration: 1 minute/level (D)

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

When standing before a flame occupying a space equal to or greater than your own, you may transmit your image to any other fire of similar or larger size within range of the spell. Hence, as a Medium-size caster, you must have a fire filling at least a single 5-foot square to cast the spell, and of a similar size on the opposite side. You control to what degree your image appears, such as completeness (your entire body), or your disembodied head, or just your mouth. You may communicate freely through the fire as though you were present on the other side, though you can only hear and see into the fire's adjacent squares. You must know of the other fire's location prior to casting this spell, such as by casting a *scrying* or *clairaudience/clairvoyance* spell. If either fire shrinks below the minimum size, the spell instantly ends.

Environmental Component: To cast this spell, you must be in a square adjacent to a source of fire as defined by the spell's description.

Fire Step

Conjuration (Teleportation) [Fire]

Level: Clr 4 (Nier)

Components: V, E

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Personal

Target: You

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: Will negates (harmless)

Spell Resistance: No

Fire step is identical to *teleport* except you must step into a source of fire occupying at least a 10-foot square (or a square of at least your size, if you are size Huge or larger) whereby you transfer yourself from your current location to any other fire of the same size or larger (up to 100 miles per caster level). You must know the location of the destination fire, through such means as *clairaudience/clairvoyance* or *scrying*. You do not suffer any damage from the fire you step into or the fire you step out of. There is no chance of error. You simply step into one fire, and step out the other.

You cannot carry blast powder with you when using this spell. It does not matter if the blast powder is held somewhere on your body or in an extradimensional space. Any blast powder in your possession instantly explodes when you step into the fire, dealing 1d6 points of damage per shot carried and destroying whatever container it was held in.

Environmental Component: To cast this spell, you must be in a square adjacent to a source of fire as defined by the spell's description.

Fool's Folly

Transmutation

Level: Clr 3, Drd 3, Rgr 3, Sor/Wiz 3

Components: V, S, M/DF

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Touch

Target: Creature touched

Duration: 1 min. /level

Saving Throw: Will negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

The affected creature becomes foolish. The subject suffers a -4 enhancement penalty to Wisdom, penalizing Will saves Wisdom-related skill and ability checks, and so forth. Spellcasters whose key ability score is Wisdom who suffer *fool's folly* do not lose any bonus spells because of the decreased Wisdom, but the save DCs for their spells decrease accordingly. This spell cannot reduce a creature's Wisdom score below 1.

Material Component: A wisp of the ectoplasm left behind after the destruction of an allip.

Grave Bound

Transmutation

Level: Clr 9 (Neroth), Drd 8, Sor/Wiz 9

Components: V, S, E

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Touch

Target: One creature touched

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: Reflex negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

Grave bound temporarily turns the target ethereal and causes them to sink instantly to a depth of 1 foot per caster level beneath the earth. When they reach the appropriate depth they become material once more and the crushing ground deals 1d6 points of damage per foot descended. In addition, they are buried as if under an avalanche. Buried characters take 1d6 points of nonlethal damage per minute. If a buried character falls unconscious, he or she must pass a DC 15 Constitution check or take 1d6 points of lethal damage each minute thereafter until freed or dead.

Subjects that are incapable of dimensional travel, such as those under the effects of a *dimensional anchor* spell, are immune to this effect.

Environmental Component: The target must be standing on firm ground.

Idiot's Cunning

Transmutation

Level: Brd 3, Sor/Wiz 3

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Touch

Target: Creature touched

Duration: 1 min. /level

Saving Throw: Will negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

The affected creature loses intellect. The victim suffers a -4 enhancement penalty to its Intelligence score, penalizing Intelligence-based skill and ability checks and other uses of the Intelligence modifier. Spellcasters who rely on Intelligence that are affected by this spell do not lose any bonus spells for the decreased Intelligence, but the save DCs for spells they cast while under this spell's effect do decrease.

Material Component: A bit of drool from an idiot.

Infernal Rays

Evocation [Cold, Electricity, Fire]

Level: Sor/Wiz 7

Components: V, S, F

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft. /level)

Effect: 4 rays

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: Fortitude partial (see text)

Spell Resistance: Yes

Four subcutaneous eyes appear in the palms of your hands as you speak the final words of this spell. Each eye launches a ray, and each ray requires a successful ranged touch attack to hit. (You may target the same creature with multiple rays or you may divide them among different targets.) You must fire all four rays on the same turn you cast the spell; you cannot hold the charge on any of these effects.



One ray deals 5d6 points of cold damage, the next deals 5d6 points of electricity damage, and the third deals 5d6 points of fire damage. No save is allowed against any of the elemental rays. The fourth ray requires the target to succeed a Fortitude save against this spell's DC or turn to stone (exactly as if affected by *flesh to stone*).

Arcane Focus: Four small stones: granite, ruby (500 gp), sapphire (500 gp), and emerald (500 gp). These stones sink into the caster's palms when the spell is cast, and resurface at the end of the round, after the rays have been fired.

Irrational Attraction

Enchantment (Compulsion) [Mind-Affecting]

Level: Drd 4, Rgr 4

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft. /2 levels)

Target: Living creature touched

Duration: 1 round/level (D)

Saving Throw: Will negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

This spell causes the target living creature to become consumed with an irrational attraction to another being (within sight of the target) as chosen by the caster. This attraction occurs regardless of race, type, or gender, though the object of the subject's attraction must be another living creature. Throughout the duration of this spell, the target can not willingly attack the object of attraction, and, in fact, takes no other action other than extolling the virtues and beauty of the object of



its newfound affections. Targets affected by this spell may defend themselves normally, and will attack any creature that attacks the object of their attraction.

Lance of Fire

Evocation [Fire]

Level: Clr 4 (Nier), HC 4 (Nier), Warrior of the Eternal Flame 4

Components: V, S, DF

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: 120 ft.

Area: 120-ft. line

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: Reflex half

Spell Resistance: Yes

You launch a powerful lance of fire from your hand, dealing 1d8 points of fire damage per two caster levels (maximum 5d8) to each creature along the affected line. The *lance of fire* sets fire to combustibles and damages objects in its path. It melts metals with a low melting point, such as lead, gold, copper, silver, or bronze. If the damage caused to an interposing barrier shatters or breaks through it, the bolt continues beyond the barrier if the spell's range permits; otherwise, it stops at the barrier just as any other spell effect does.

Leprous Visage

Transmutation

Level: Brd 3, Clr 3, Sor/Wiz 3

Components: V, S, M/DF

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Touch

Target: Creature touched

Duration: 1 min. /level

Saving Throw: Will negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

The affected creature becomes awkward, withdrawn, and ashamed of their appearance. The spell imposes a -4 enhancement penalty to Charisma, affecting Charisma-based skill checks and other uses of the Charisma modifier. Spellcasters who rely on Charisma affected by this spell do not lose any bonus spells for the decreased Charisma, but the save DCs for spells they cast while under this spell's effect do decrease.

Material Component: A piece of diseased flesh.

Lifestrike

Necromancy

Level: Sor/Wiz 6

Components: S, F

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft. / 2 levels)

Effect: Ray

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: Fortitude half

Spell Resistance: Yes

A beam of darkness springs forth from the palm of your hand and lances towards a target. You must succeed on a ranged touch attack with the ray to deal damage to a target. The ray deals 1d6 points of negative energy damage per caster level (maximum 20d6).

Arcane Focus: A bone amulet inset with onyx gemstones worth 1000 gp.

Mark of Thralldom

Necromancy (Creation)

Level: Clr 3 (Neroth), Sor/Wiz 3 (val'Mordane)

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Touch

Target: One living creature

Duration: One year and one day

Saving Throw: Will negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

By casting this spell on a single living creature, you ensure that when that creature dies, it will animate as an undead within 1d3 rounds. The subject will become either a zombie or a skeleton depending on how intact the body is at the time of death. At the moment of casting, you may issue one simple command that the newly-created undead creature will obey to the best of its ability when it returns. Examples include "seek me out for further orders" or "kill any Elorii you see."

Once the spell is cast, the *mark of thralldom* lasts for one year and one day. It is very difficult to remove. First, the victim must receive a *remove curse* spell that is cast at a higher caster level than the *mark of thralldom*. This suppresses the effects of the mark for 24 hours. During that 24-hour window of opportunity, the victim must have an *erase* spell cast to remove the physical mark. Finally, a *heal* spell must be cast in order to remove the remaining effects. Once this final step has been taken, the red dye seeps out of the subject's skin and flakes away.

Due to the nature of this spell, it may not be delivered through a *spectral hand*.

Material Component: A red dye worth 100 gold pieces that is smeared on the subject.

Note: This spell originally appeared in the *Player's Guide to Arcanis*.

Mass Burial

Transmutation

Level: Clr 7 (Neroth), Drd 6, Sor/Wiz 6

Components: V, S, E

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft. / 2 levels)

Area: 20 ft. radius spread

Duration: 1 round/level (D)

Saving Throw: Reflex negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

This spell causes all creatures in the area of effect that fail a Reflex save to sink to their waists into the ground, whereupon the earth begins grinding their bodies to dust. Each round at the start of its turn, an affected creature suffers 1d6 points of damage + 1 point per two caster levels (maximum +10). In addition, the affected creatures are considered prone, cannot move, lose their Dexterity bonus to AC, and may only extricate themselves by spending a full round and succeeding on a DC 25 Strength check or a DC 30 Escape Artist check. Allies may assist the trapped creatures with their checks by using the Aid Another action. An unburied creature may also try to dig a victim out; this requires a full-round action that provokes attacks of opportunity, and the digger must succeed on a DC 25 Strength check to pull the victim free. Regardless, any surviving victims are freed at the end of the spell's duration.

Environmental Component: This spell may only be cast in burial grounds, such as cemeteries, mausoleums, or on top of mass graves.

Necrotic Polymorph

Transmutation [Evil]

Level: Sor/Wiz 6

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Touch

Target: Willing living creature touched

Duration: 1 min. / level

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

This spell functions like *alter self*, except you change a willing subject into any form of corporeal undead, such as a zombie, wight, or vampire. The new form must be within one size category of the subject's normal size. The maximum HD of an assumed form is equal to your caster level, to a maximum of 20 HD at 20th level.

The subject retains its class and level, hit die types, hit points, alignment, base attack bonus, and base save bonuses. The subject retains all supernatural and spell-like special attacks and qualities of its normal form, except for those requiring a body part that the new form does not have (such as a mouth for a breath weapon or eyes for a gaze attack).

The subject keeps all extraordinary special attacks and qualities derived from class levels, but loses any such abilities from its normal form that are not derived from class levels.

If the new form is capable of speech, then the subject can communicate normally. It retains any spellcasting ability it had in its original form, but the new form must be able to speak intelligibly (that is, speak a language) to use verbal components and must have limbs capable of fine manipulation to use somatic or material components.

The subject acquires the physical qualities of the new form (including Strength and Dexterity

scores, along with the lack of a Constitution score) while retaining its own mind (and its own Charisma, Intelligence, and Wisdom scores). Physical qualities include natural size, mundane movement capabilities (such as burrowing, climbing, walking, swimming, and flight with wings, to a maximum speed of 120 feet for flying or 60 feet for nonflying movement), natural armor bonus, natural weapons (such as claws, bite, and so on) and corresponding attack routines, racial skill bonuses, racial bonus feats, and any gross physical qualities (presence or absence of wings, number of extremities, and so forth). A body with extra limbs does not allow the subject to make more attacks with manufactured weapons (or more advantageous two-weapon attacks) than normal.

The subject does not gain any of the new form's extraordinary special attacks or special qualities other than the physical qualities and those included as part of the Undead type, such as low-light vision, blindsense, blindsight, fast healing, regeneration, scent, and so forth.

The subject does not gain any supernatural special attacks, special qualities, or spell-like abilities of the new form. Its creature type changes to Undead, but it retains its own alignment subtypes (if any). The subject gains the following traits of the Undead type and loses the corresponding traits of its normal type.

- No Constitution score.
- Darkvision out to 60 feet.
- Immunity to all mind-affecting effects (charms, compulsions, phantasms, patterns, and morale effects).
- Immunity to poison, sleep effects, paralysis, stunning, disease, and death effects.
- Not subject to critical hits, nonlethal damage, ability drain, or energy drain. Immune to damage to its physical ability scores (Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution), as well as to fatigue and exhaustion effects.
- Negative energy (such as an *inflict* spell) can heal undead creatures. Positive energy (such as a *cure* spell) can damage them. The fast healing special quality works regardless.
- Immunity to any effect that requires a Fortitude save (unless the effect also works on objects or is harmless).
- Uses its Charisma modifier for Concentration checks.
- Not at risk of death from massive damage, but when reduced to 0 hit points or less, this spell ends, the subject immediately reverts to its original form, and its hit point total is set to -10 (meaning that it is dead but may be brought back normally by a *raise dead* spell).

You can freely designate the new form's minor physical qualities (such as hair color, hair texture, and skin color) within the normal ranges for a creature of that kind. The new form's significant physical qualities (such as height, weight, and gender) are also under your control, but they must fall within the norms for the new form's kind. The subject detects as an undead creature, does not detect as a living creature, and is effectively disguised as an average undead of the chosen type (+10 bonus on Disguise checks).

When the change occurs, the subject's equipment, if any, either remains worn or held by the new form (if it is capable of wearing or holding the item), or melds into the new form and becomes nonfunctional. When the subject reverts to its true form, any objects previously melded into the new form reappear in the same location on its body they previously occupied and are once again functional. Any new items the subject wore in the assumed form and can't wear in its normal form fall off and land at its feet; any that it could wear in either form or carry in a body part common to both forms at the time of reversion are still held in the same way. Any part of the body or piece of equipment that is separated from the whole reverts to its true form.

Material Component: A cocoon holding a dead worm.

Neroth's Festering Breath

Necromancy

Level: Clr 2 (Neroth)

Components: V, S, DF

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft. /2 levels)

Target: One living creature

Duration: 10 min. / level

Saving Throw: Will negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

Neroth's festering breath causes greenish, festering pustules to cover a victim's body, which hampers his ability to heal from wounds. For the duration of this spell, the victim may not regain any hit point damage from natural healing, regeneration, or fast healing.

Additionally, *cure* spells have a negligible or reduced effect on the victim. *Cure minor wounds*, *cure light wounds*, and *mass cure light wounds* do not affect the victim at all (although the *inflict* versions of these spells would still work normally). All other *cure wounds* spells function at a reduced level of effectiveness, as if they were the next-less-powerful spell of the same type. For example, a *cure moderate wounds* would affect the victim exactly as if it were a *cure light wounds* (it would heal 1d8+1 hit points per caster level with a maximum of +5) while a *mass cure moderate wounds* would affect the victim as if it were a *mass cure light wounds* (it would heal 1d8+1 hit points per caster level with a maximum of +25).

Note: This spell only affects the classes of spells listed above. Other spells that can remove conditions or restore hit points, such as *remove disease*, *heal*, *positive energy missile*, *restoration*, *stabilize*, etc. would function normally.

Lesser restoration counters and dispels *Neroth's festering breath*.

Phantom Assassin

Conjuration (Creation)

Level: Sor/Wiz 4

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 round

Range: Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft. /level)

Effect: One invisible, quasi-real humanoid-like creature

Duration: 1 round/level (D) or special

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

You conjure an invisible, quasi-real, humanoid-like creature to attack a single opponent as you direct it. The *phantom assassin* occupies a square of your choosing adjacent to the indicated target for the duration of the spell. It strikes once per round, on your turn, at an attack bonus equal to your caster level, and deals 1d8 points of force damage +1 point per caster level, plus 1d6 points of sneak attack damage per 2 caster levels (maximum +10d6). The *phantom assassin* does not need to have a creature giving it a flank in order to gain its sneak attack damage, nor does it need the target to be denied its Dexterity bonus to Armor Class. Likewise, the phantom cannot provide a flank for other creatures. Creatures that are immune to sneak attacks are immune to the bonus sneak attack damage of this spell but not the base damage. The spell ends once the *phantom assassin* scores a hit, or at the end of the spell's duration.

Other creatures (including the spell's target) cannot attack the phantom, nor can the phantom be affected by spells, spell-like abilities, psionics, or psi-like abilities, except *dispel magic*, *dispel psionics*, *greater dispel magic*, *limited wish*, *wish*, or *miracle*. Any of the listed spells targeted directly on the phantom (and only on the phantom; an area dispel ignores it) will immediately dispel the phantom with no caster level check required. The *phantom assassin* follows the target anywhere it goes within the spell's range and can share another creature's space without penalizing either itself or the other creature. The *phantom assassin* cannot move through force effects, but is not otherwise hindered by terrain, changes in elevation, high winds, and so on.

Ray of Necrosis

Necromancy [Evil]

Level: Sor/Wiz 4

Components: V, M

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft. /level)

Effect: Ray

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: Fortitude negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

This spell causes an ochre beam to spring from your fingertip. You must succeed on a ranged touch attack with the ray to strike the target. If the subject fails a Fortitude save, the spell deals 1d8 points of Constitution damage, as the target's flesh dies where struck.

Material Component: Caster must consume a pound of rotting flesh. The eating of the material component forces the caster to succeed on a DC 15 Fortitude save or be sickened for 1d6 rounds.

Reenervate the Chosen

Necromancy

Level: Clr 5 (Neroth), Pst 5 (Neroth), Sor/Wiz 6

Components: V, S, M / DF

Casting Time: 1 minute

Range: Touch

Target: Destroyed intelligent undead creature touched

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: None; see text

Spell Resistance: Yes (harmless)

Once Neroth has blessed his Chosen, and claimed the souls of those he has blessed, the normal rules governing the disposition of souls no longer apply to those entities.

With the casting of this spell, you restore unlife to a destroyed intelligent undead creature. You can restore a creature that has been inanimate for any length of time, provided the creature has sufficient energy to power its return to unlife. However, the subject's intellect must be free and willing to return, or the spell does not work; therefore the spell requires no saving throw. This spell has no effect on living creatures, on the dead bodies of living creatures that have not been transformed into undead, or on the destroyed remains of non-intelligent undead creatures (such as skeletons and zombies).

It does not matter whether the undead was destroyed by being reduced to 0 hit points or by some other effect that resulted in its instant destruction. The condition of the remains is not a factor. So as some small portion of the creature's body exists, it can be reanimated, but the portion receiving the spell must have been part of the creature's body at the time of its destruction. (The remains of a creature hit by a *disintegrate* spell count as a small portion of its body.)

Reanimation is an ordeal. The subject of this spell loses one character level (or Hit Die). This level loss cannot be repaired by any means. An undead with only a single level or Hit Die at the time of its destruction can be reanimated by this spell, but it comes back as a mindless skeleton or zombie, exactly as if the *animate dead* spell had been used instead of this spell.

The reanimated creature has a number of hit points equal to its current Hit Dice. Any ability scores (other than Constitution) damaged to 0 are raised to 1. Magical curses and other lingering ill effects are not undone. None of the creature's equipment or possessions are affected in any way by this spell. An undead that was destroyed with spells prepared has a 50% chance of losing any given spell upon being reanimated, in addition to losing spells for losing a level. A spellcasting undead that doesn't prepare its spells (such as a sorcerer) has a 50% chance of losing any given unused spell slot

as if it had been used to cast a spell, in addition to losing spell slots for losing a level.

The subject of this spell is reenervated using whichever type of energy powered its original undead transformation (usually negative, but in Arcanis it is also possible to have positive-energy undead).

Material Components: Ground onyx powder worth at least 5,000 gp.

Rhino's Grace

Transmutation

Level: Brd 3, Drd 3, Rgr 3, Sor/Wiz 3

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Touch

Target: Creature touched

Duration: 1 min. /level

Saving Throw: Will negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

The subject becomes clumsy, rigid, and awkward. The spell imposes a -4 enhancement penalty to Dexterity, reducing the subject's Armor Class, Reflex saves, Dexterity-based skill and ability checks, and so forth. This spell cannot reduce a creature's Dexterity score below 1.

Material Components: A pinch of ground rhino horn (50 gp).

Scion of the Infernal

Transmutation [Evil]

Level: Sor/Wiz 5 (val'Mehan / val'Mehen)

Components: M, B3

Casting Time: 1 round

Range: Personal

Target: You

Duration: 1 min. /level (D)

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: Yes

This spell allows you to change your aspect into that of an obviously Infernal version of yourself. To all appearances you look like a fiendish creature whose ancestry is obviously descended from that of any full-blooded Infernal (demon or devil) of your choosing. You retain all of your own ability scores and all of your own abilities and you do not gain any of the traits, abilities, or characteristics of the chosen Infernal other than taking on aspects of its appearance. (Treat this as a more powerful version of the *disguise self* spell but your physical form actually does change, making this a Transmutation effect instead of an Illusion effect.)

"While under the effects of this spell, you gain the Evil and Tainted subtypes (but retain your own type and any other subtypes you normally possess). You gain darkvision to a range of 60 feet. In addition, you also gain immunity to poison, along with resistance to acid 10, cold 10, electricity 10, and fire 10. In addition, you gain damage reduction 5/

good, and all of your attacks with natural and manufactured weapons count as both magical and evil-aligned for purposes of overcoming other creatures' damage reduction.

Material Components: The caster must consume the tongue of an Infernal (100 gp).

Blood rank: The caster must be of the val'Mehan/val'Mehen bloodline and have a blood rank of 3 or higher to cast this spell.

Siphon Life

Necromancy [Evil]

Level: Sor/Wiz 7

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Touch

Target: Living creature touched

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: Fortitude negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

Your touch deals 1d6 points of Constitution damage +1 point per two caster levels (maximum +10). For each point of Constitution damage you deal, you gain 5 temporary hit points. If the creature you touch dies as an immediate result of the Constitution damage dealt by this spell, then you instead gain 10 temporary hit points per point of Constitution damage dealt. The temporary hit points disappear 1 hour later.

Tendrils of Darkness

Evocation [Darkness]

Level: Asn 3, Blk 4, Brd 4, Clr 4, Sor/Wiz 3

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: 60 ft.

Area: 60-ft.-radius emanation centered on you

Duration: 1 round/level

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

This spell creates inky tendrils of darkness that seem to emerge from your body and whip about the area for the duration of the spell. Though you can see normally, you gain concealment (20% miss chance) from all other creatures in the area of effect. Even creatures that are normally capable of seeing in darkened conditions (such as with darkvision or low-light vision) suffer the miss chance in an area affected by *tendrils of darkness*. Creatures that can see through magical darkness can also see through this spell.

Normal lights (torches, candles, lanterns, and so forth) are incapable of brightening the area, as are light spells of lower level. Higher-level light spells are not affected by *tendrils of darkness*.

Tendrils of darkness counters or dispels any light spell of equal or lower spell level.

Undead Levies

Necromancy [Language-Dependent]

Level: Clr (Neroth) 4, Sor/Wiz 5

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: 30 ft.

Area: All undead within range of this spell.

Duration: One day/level

Saving Throw: Will negates; see text

Spell Resistance: Yes

This spell allows you some degree of control over all undead creatures within range of the spell. Those intelligent undead subjects failing their saving throw perceive your words and actions in the most favorable way (treat its attitude as friendly as if affected by the equivalent of *charm monster*). Such creatures do not attack you while the spell lasts. You can attempt to give these subjects orders, but you must win an opposed Charisma check against each intelligent undead creature in the area to convince that undead to do anything that it would not ordinarily do. An intelligent undead never obeys suicidal or obviously harmful orders, but may be convinced that something dangerous is worth doing.

Non-intelligent undead creatures receive no saving throw against this spell. When you control a mindless being, you can communicate only basic commands, such as "come here," "go there," "fight," "stand still," and so on. Non-intelligent undead will not resist suicidal or obviously harmful orders.

Any act by you or your apparent allies threatening any commanded undead creature (regardless of its Intelligence) breaks this spell for all of the affected creatures.

Your commands are not telepathic. The undead must be able to hear you in order for you to command them.

Material Component: A shred of raw meat and a splinter of bone.

Vile Spew

Evocation [Acid]

Level: Sor/Wiz 5

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: 40 ft.

Area: Cone-shaped burst

Duration: Instantaneous and 1 round / level (see text)

Saving Throw: Reflex half, Fortitude negates (see text)

Spell Resistance: Yes

You vomit a cone of foul acidic fluid. The acid deals 1d6 points of acid damage per caster level (maximum 15d6). In addition to the spell's damage, all those who fail their Reflex save must then succeed on a Fortitude save (against the same DC) or be sickened for 1 round.



per caster level. Sickened characters take a –2 penalty on all attack rolls, weapon damage rolls, saving throws, skill checks, and ability checks.

Violent Disrobe

Transmutation

Level: Sor/Wiz 3

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft. /2 levels)

Target: One living creature wearing clothing, armor, or adornments

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: Will negates

Spell Resistance: No

This spell functions exactly as the *disrobe* spell, except the clothing and other worn items come away from the target violently and painfully. Nonmagical objects removed from the victim by this spell are destroyed. In addition to leaving the subject naked, the spell also deals 1d6 points of damage + 1 point per caster level (maximum +15).

Vision of Exquisite Pleasure

Enchantment (Charm) [Mind-Affecting]

Level: Brd 1

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft. /level)

Target: One living creature

Duration: 1 round

Saving Throw: Will negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

Images of tantalizing and overwhelming pleasure consume the subject of this spell, stunning it for 1 round if it fails its Will save..

Wail of Infinite Sorrow

Enchantment (Compulsion) [Mind-Affecting]

Level: Brd 4, Clr 4 (Cadic), Sor/Wiz 5

Components: V, E

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: 60 ft.

Area: Cone-shaped burst

Duration: 1 minute / level

Saving Throw: Will negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

An invisible cone of sorrow causes despair in all subjects within the area of the spell. Each affected creature takes a –2 penalty on attack rolls, saving throws, ability checks, skill checks, and weapon damage rolls.

Wail of infinite sorrow counters and dispels *heroism*, *greater heroism*, and *good hope*.

Environmental Component: Caster must stand within 30 feet of a wounded or dying person, such as an impaled victim.

New Magic Items

This section expands the *Core Rulebook II* by adding a small selection of magic items particular to Canceri.

A armor

A suit of armor or a shield may be made of an unusual material. Roll d%: 01–95 indicates the item is of a standard sort, and 96–100 indicates it is made of a special material. As with all magical armor, these are created so even if the type of armor comes with boots or gauntlets, these pieces can be switched for other magic boots or gauntlets.

Magic Armor and Shield

Special Ability Descriptions

Most magic armor and shields only have enhancement bonuses. Such items can also have one or more of the special abilities detailed below. Armor or a shield with a special ability must have at least a +1 enhancement bonus.

Corpse: A suit of armor with this property features embosses of corpses in various states of decay. On command, this armor allows the wearer to *hide from undead* as the spell. The character can remain so hidden for as long as desired, but once he ends the effect, he cannot use this ability again for that day.

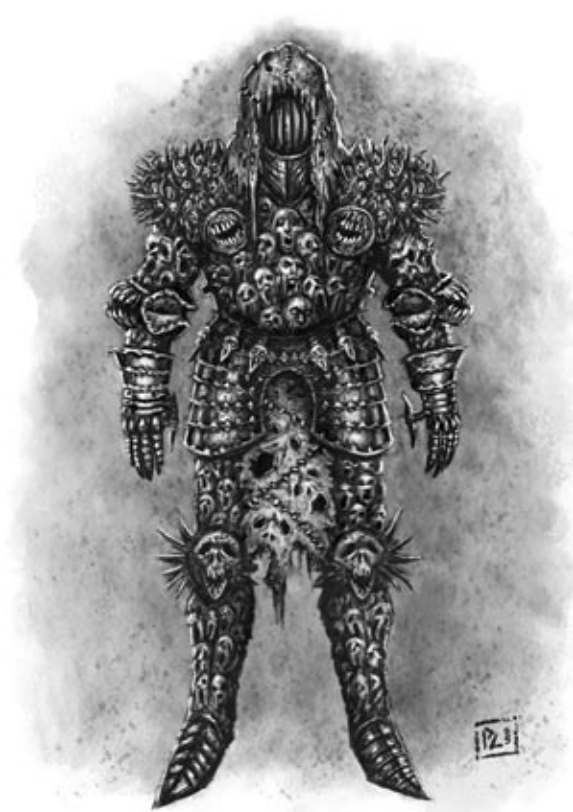
Faint abjuration; Prerequisites: CL 3rd, Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *hide from undead*; Price +2 bonus

Fiery: A suit of armor with this property is warm to the touch and is always fashioned from metal; hence, this property functions only on metal armors. Three times per day, on command, the character may use *fire shield* as the spell. The wearer may only use the warm shield effect.

Moderate evocation; Prerequisites: CL 7th, Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *fire shield*; Price +30,240 gp.

Flanged: Sharp spurs and barbs cover a metal suit of armor or a shield with this property. Whenever a creature grapples a character wearing this armor or shield, the spurs and barbs lengthen, dealing 1d6+5 points of damage to the grappler, each time the grappler makes a successful grapple check. This damage is in addition to damage dealt by the armor or shield's spikes, should the armor also have that enhancement.

Faint transmutation; Prerequisites: CL 5th, Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *barbed defense*; Price +80,000 gp.



Immolated: An immolated suit of armor is sheathed in a continuous blanket of roiling flames. The wearer of this armor is protected by a continuous *fire shield* effect, using the warm effect.

Moderate evocation; CL 7th; Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *fire shield*; Price +224,000 gp.

Scabrous: A suit of armor or a shield with this property is always covered in a thin sheen of blood. On command, three times per day, the blood on the armor coalesces and seals a wound, acting as *cure light wounds*.

Faint conjuration; Prerequisites: CL 3rd, Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *cure light wounds*; Price +3,240 gp.

Specific Armors

The following specific weapons are constructed with the qualities described here.

Blood Leather: This red brown suit of +2 *scabrous leather armor* has a coppery smell. Once per week, the armor allows its wearer to transform into a large sanguine elemental for 1 minute, see **Chapter Nine: Bestiary** for details. The wearer retains his Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma scores, but his creature type changes to elemental, gains a +10 enhancement bonus to Strength, a +4 enhancement bonus to Dexterity, and a +8 enhancement bonus to Constitution. In addition, the wearer's natural armor bonus increases by +4. The wearer gains all the special attacks and special qualities of the creature.

Strong Transmutation [evil]; Prerequisites: CL 18th, Craft Magic Arms and Armor, caster must be evil, *cure light wounds*, *shapechange*; Price 25,915 gp; Cost 13038 gp + 1,030 XP.

Full Plate of Screams: This black +2 *full plate armor* is decorated in a pain and suffering motif, with images of suffering humanoids embossed on the plates. This armor allows the wearer to use *wail of infinite sorrow* as a spell-like ability once per day, ignoring the environmental requirements of the spell.

Moderate enchantment; Prerequisites: CL 9th, Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *wail of infinite sorrow*; Price 21,850 gp; Cost 11,750 + 808 XP.

Ghost Plate: This suit of +1 *half plate of etherealness* constantly gives off a faint mist evaporating a few inches from the armor. In addition to its ethereal properties, the armor confers damage reduction 5/magic and once per day on command, it allows its wearer to surround himself in a mist, granting its wearer concealment (20% miss chance) for 3 minutes. Strong transmutation and abjuration; Prerequisites: CL 18th, Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *ethereal jaunt*, *stoneskin*, *wish*, *blur*; Price 67,910 gp; Cost 34,330 gp + 2,686 XP.

Scale Mail of a Thousand Plagues: This +1 *scale mail* is fashioned from interlocking ochre and serpentine scales. Once per day, the armor allows its wearer to use the *epidemic* spell, except the spell centers on the wearer. Wearing the armor also confers immunity to diseases.

Moderate necromancy [evil]; Prerequisites: CL 9th, Craft Magic Arms and Armor, caster must be evil, *epidemic*, *remove disease*; Price 49,200 gp; Cost 24,700 gp + 1,960 XP.

Studded Leather of the Mistress: This suit of +2 *studded leather armor* favored by the disciples of Larissa looks more appropriate to bedchambers rather than being suited to combat. Still, the armor offers some modicum of protection. In addition, the armor provides a +4 competence bonus to all Diplomacy and Intimidate checks, while worn.

Moderate transmutation; Prerequisites: CL 6th, Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *eagle's splendor*; Market Price 7,360 gp; Cost 3,760 + 288 XP.

Hide of Maggots: This wriggling suit of +2 *hide armor* is alive with Salusean Parasites (see **Chapter Seven: Bazaar of the Damned**). This suit of armor generates a new dose of the drug each day.

Moderate conjuration [evil]; Prerequisites: CL 9th, Craft Magic Arms and Armor, caster must have Salusean Parasites, caster must be evil, *major creation*; Price 22,170 gp; Cost 11,170 gp + 880 XP.



Full Plate of Decadence: The inside of this hermetically sealed suit of +3 *adamantine full plate armor* is filled with an array of vials, tubes, and needles. The wearer of the armor may store up to 6 doses of any drugs or poison of any type. When worn, the wearer can use on himself any drug stored in the armor as a free action. Finally, because this armor is adamantine, it confers damage reduction 3/–.

Moderate transmutation [evil]; Prerequisites: CL 12th, Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Craft (armorsmithing) 9 ranks, caster must be evil; Price 30,650 gp; Cost 21,150 gp + 360 XP.

Weapons

A weapon or a kind of ammunition may be made of an unusual material. Roll d%: 01–95 indicates the item is of a standard sort, and 96–100 indicates it is made of a special material. Consult the Core Rulebook II and the end of section for more details on special armor materials.

Magic Weapon

Special Ability Descriptions

In addition to enhancement bonuses, weapons can have one or more of the special abilities detailed below. A weapon with a special ability must have at least a +1 enhancement bonus.

Addicting: An addicting weapon is an exceptionally attractive weapon of its kind. Each addicting weapon is keyed to a particular drug, and the more potent the drug, the more expensive this enchantment. A target first struck by this weapon must attempt a Fortitude against the addiction DC of the drug. If the target succeeds, they suffer no additional effect. On a failed save, they become addicted to the drug and are subject to its effects as described in Chapter 7.

Moderate necromancy; Prerequisites: CL 9th, Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *poison*; Price +1 bonus and the cost of the drug x10.

Agonizing: An agonizing weapon is sinister in appearance. Whenever this weapon scores a confirmed critical hit, in addition to the extra damage from the critical, the subject must succeed a DC 16 Fortitude save or be affected by agony for 8 rounds.

Moderate transmutation [evil]; Prerequisites: CL 8th, Craft Magic Arms and Armor, caster must be evil, *agony*; Price +2 bonus.

Diseased: Upon command, three times per day, a diseased weapon erupts into greasy yellow smoke. The smoke itself has no effect, but when the weapon successfully hits a target, the target must succeed a DC 16 Fortitude save or be affected as per the *contagion* spell.

Moderate necromancy [evil]; Prerequisites: CL 7th, Craft Magic Arms and Armor, caster must be evil, *contagion*; Price +30,240 gp.

Stinking: Whenever a stinking weapon scores a confirmed critical hit, the target's wound bubbles and festers, filling a 10-foot-radius spread with a disgusting carrion stench, causing all living creatures (except you) in the area to become sickened (DC 13 Fortitude save negates). The cloud dissipates after 1 round.

Faint necromancy; Prerequisites: CL 3rd, Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *ghoul touch*; Price +1 bonus.

Specific Weapons

The following specific weapons are constructed with the qualities described here. For details on flintlocks, consult the *Player's Guide to Arcanis*.

Flintlock Pistol of Rapid Reload: Loading this +1 *Altherian flintlock* is a standard action instead of a full round action. In addition, if the wielder is attacked while reloading, the wielder may take 10 on his Concentration check.

Moderate transmutation; Prerequisites: CL 6th, Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *haste*; Price 18,700 gp; Cost 9,350 gp + 720 XP.

Flintlock Pistol of Improved Rapid Reload: Loading this +2 *Altherian flintlock* is a move action instead of a full round action. In addition, if the wielder is attacked while reloading, the wielder may take 10 on his Concentration check.

Moderate transmutation; Prerequisites: CL 12th, Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *haste*; Price 72,700 gp; Cost 36,350 gp + 2,880 XP.

Flintlock Rifle of Nier's Breath: This +1 *flaming burst flintlock rifle* features a second false barrel slung below the primary armament. Once per day on command, a wielder can launch a 10d6 *fireball* to a range of 200 feet from this second barrel.

Moderate evocation; Prerequisites: CL 10th, Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *fireball*; Price 40,400 gp; Cost 20,200 gp + 1,584 XP.

Rings

Rings common to Canceri are described below.

Ring of the val'Mehan: This silver ring is warm to the touch. When worn by a val'Mehan, it confers a +1 insight bonus to AC and spell resistance 13. The ring has no effect if worn by anyone other than a member of the val'Mehan family.

Moderate transmutation; CL 18th; Forge Ring, *wish*, creator must be a val'Mehan; Price 25,000 gp; Cost 12,500 gp + 1,000 XP.

Ring of the val'Mordane: This iron ring is slightly rusty. When worn by a val'Mordane, the ring grants the wearer cold resistance 10, and all spells with the death descriptor are cast at +1 caster level. The ring has no effect if worn by anyone other than a member of the val'Mordane family.

Moderate transmutation; Prerequisites: CL 18th, Forge Ring, *resist energy*, *wish*, creator must be a val'Mordane; Price 25,000 gp; Cost 12,500 gp + 1,000 XP.

Ring of the val'Virdan: This golden ring has a slight redness. When worn by a val'Virdan, it confers a +1 insight bonus to all attack rolls and resistance to fire 20. The ring has no effect if worn by anyone other than a member of the val'Virdan family.

Moderate transmutation; Prerequisites: CL 18th, Forge Ring, *resist energy*, *wish*, creator must be a val'Virdan; Price 25,000 gp; Cost 12,500 gp + 1,000 XP.

Rods

Rods unique to Canceri follow.

Bone Rod: This strange rod is fashioned from a human spine with 33 vertebrae (seven cervical, twelve dorsal, five lumbar, five sacral, and four caudal). As a full round action, the wielder can remove one of the vertebrae and plant it into the ground. Depending on the type of vertebrae, a different undead rises from the ground on the following round (see below). The undead is fully under the control of the wielder and respond to command to the best of their abilities. Each vertebrae has just one use and the created undead creature lasts until destroyed.

Vertebrae	Undead summoned
Cervical	Wolf zombie
Dorsal	Ogre skeleton
Lumbar	Vampire Spawn
Sacral	Wight
Caudal	Morhg

Strong necromancy; Prerequisites: CL 18th; Craft Rod, *create greater undead*; Price 37,000 gp; Cost 18,500 gp + 1,480 XP.

Rod of the Master: This rod is two-feet long, black, and has a silver cap at either end. The wielder can command the obedience and fealty of all undead creatures within 120 feet when she activates the device (a standard action). Intelligent undead creatures with an Intelligence score of 3 or higher receive a DC 20 Will save to negate the effect. Ruled creatures obey the wielder as if she were their absolute sovereign. Still, if

the wielder gives a command contrary to the nature of the creatures commanded, the magic is broken.

Strong necromancy [evil]; Prerequisites: CL 20th, Craft Rod, Heighten Spell, Widen Spell, caster must be evil, *undead levies*; Price 80,000 gp; Cost 40,000 gp + 3,200 XP.

Scepter of the Dark Apostate: The symbol of status for the dark apostate, this rod is a magical fusion of bone and iron surrounding flame from the pillar of Nier from Hunder. Besides serving as a +3 *unholy adamantine light mace*, the rod grants additional powers to its wielder. While grasped, the wielder casts all divine spells as +2 caster level, and all save DCs for spells cast by the wielder are at +2. This bonus stacks with Spell Focus and Greater Spell Focus. Finally, on command (a standard action) the wielder can transport to any temple dedicated to Neroth, Nier, or Sarish in Canceri, as if under the effects of *greater teleport*. Strong Conjunction; CL 20th.

Sky Blighter: This thick rod functions as a +3 *heavy mace*. When planted in the ground, it blocks out all light within a 300-foot radius, plunging the area into *deeper darkness*. In addition, the entire area is *desecrated*, as the spell. The rod functions continuously while planted in the ground, only ending the effect when removed.

Strong necromancy [evil]; Prerequisites: CL 18th, Craft Rod, extend spell, widen spell, caster must be evil, *deeper darkness*, *desecrate*; Price 230,000 gp; Cost 115,000 gp + 9,200 XP.

Staffs

Staffs commonly found in Canceri. All newly created staff's are made with 50 charges.

Staff of Seduction: This short staff is carved from rosewood, and allows use of the following spells:

- *Alter Self* (1 charge)
- *Charm Person* (1 charge)
- *Disrobe* (1 charge)
- *Eagle's Splendor* (1 charge)
- *Fool's Folly* (2 charges)

Moderate transmutation; Prerequisites: CL 8th, Craft Staff, *alter self*, *charm person*, *disrobe*, *eagle's splendor*, *fool's folly*; Price 15,000 gp; Cost 7,500 gp + 600 XP.

Staff of the Conflagration: This long slender staff is carved from the petrified trees found in Canceri's extreme north. It allows the use of the following spells:

- *Fireball* (1 charge)
- *Lance of Fire* (2 charges)
- *Meteor Swarm* (5 charges)

Strong evocation; Prerequisites: CL 18th, Craft Staff, *fireball*, *lance of fire*, *meteor swarm*; Price 32,400 gp; Cost 16,200 gp + 1,296 XP.

Staff of the Infernal: This seven-foot-tall staff is black and adorned with fiery red runes. It allows the following spells:

- *Dimension Door* (1 charge)
- *Planar Binding* (2 charges)
- *Summon Monster VII* (3 charges)

Strong evocation; Prerequisites: CL 13th, Craft Staff, *dimension door*, *planar binding*, *summon monster VII*; Price 32,100 gp; Cost 16,050 gp + 1,284 XP.

Staff of Plagues: This staff is made from rotting wood, and it has a greasy texture. It allows the following spells:

- *Lesion* (1 charge)
- *Contagion* (2 charges)
- *Blight* (2 charges)
- *Epidemic* (2 charges)

Strong necromancy [evil]; Prerequisites: CL 15th, Craft Staff, *caster must be evil*, *blight*, *contagion*, *epidemic*, *lesion*; Price 47,150 gp; Cost 23,575 gp + 1,886 XP.

Wondrous Items

Wondrous items unique to Canceri follow.

Amulet of the Skull: This amulet is an adamantine skull hanging from a thick iron chain. When first worn, the skulls sockets flash red. The amulet grants the blackguard ability, dark blessing, allowing the wearer to add his Charisma bonus (if any) to all of his saving throws. If the wearer already has dark blessing, he may add twice his Charisma bonus to his saving throws instead.

This item radiates evil, and grants negative levels to non-evil wearers. Neutral wearers receive one negative level, while good wearers receive two. This negative level(s) remains as long as the amulet is worn, and disappears when the amulet is removed. Negative levels from this source never result in actual level loss, and cannot be overcome in any way (including *restoration* spells) while worn.

Strong abjuration [evil]; Prerequisites: CL 10th, Craft Wondrous Item, dark blessing class ability; Price 25,000 gp.

Bag of Bones: This old leather sack measures about 1 foot by 3 feet in size, and feels empty. When one reaches into the bag, they feel small fragments of bone inside. If any of the bones are removed and tossed up to 20 feet away, the pieces of bone turn into an undead creature. The undead creature serves the character drawing it from the bag for 10 minutes (or until destroyed or ordered back into the bag), before disappearing. It can follow simple commands such as attack, stay, guard and so on.

There are three types of bag of bones, and each

produces a different set of undead creatures. Use the following table to determine what undead creature can be drawn out of each. Undead drawn from the bag are always random, and only one undead creature can be drawn at a time. Up to ten undead creatures can be drawn each week.

Moderate necromancy; Prerequisites: CL 3rd (white), 5th (red), 9th (black); Craft Wondrous Item, Dark Summons, *summon monster II* (white), *summon monster III* (red), *summon monster V* (black); Price 900 gp (white); 3,000 gp (red); 6,300 gp (black).

—White—

d%	Undead
01–30	Human Warrior Skeleton
31–60	Dog Skeleton
61–75	Weasel Skeleton
76–90	Dire Rat Skeleton
91–100	Badger Skeleton

—Red—

d%	Undead
01–30	Wolverine Skeleton
31–60	Wolf Skeleton
61–80	Boar Skeleton
86–100	Black Bear Skeleton

—Black—

d%	Undead
01–30	Brown bear Skeleton
31–60	Lion Skeleton
61–85	Owlbear Skeleton
81–90	Tiger Skeleton
91–100	Rhinoceros Skeleton

Apply Skeleton Template in the Core Rulebook III to respective animals to gain statistics.

Barb of Confession: This set of ten small barbs, each about the size of a fishhook, is useful in extracting confessions. When placed under the skin, dealing 1 point of damage, the victim cannot add his Wisdom bonus to his opposed roll against your Intimidation check. Placing the barbs takes 1 minute (one per round), dealing damage when the last one is installed.

Faint necromancy [evil]; Prerequisites: CL 5th, Craft Wondrous Item, *bestow curse*, *inflict minor wounds*; Price 5,000 gp.

Bracers of Corruption: These bronze bracers feature blasphemous symbols. When the pair is worn, the wearers unarmed attacks count as evil for the purposes of overcoming damage reduction.

Faint necromancy; Prerequisites: CL 3rd, Craft Wondrous Item, *align weapon*; Price 24,000 gp



Cauldron of Potency: This round black bowl features scenes of human suffering, treachery, and murder. A poisoner's boon, poisons created using the cauldron of potency increase their save DCs by +2.

Moderate necromancy; Prerequisites: CL 7th, Craft Wondrous Item, *poison*; Price 6,000 gp.

Choker of Submission: This thin band of black lace fits snugly over a wearer's neck, with a small pendant showing the profile of the choker's owner. When first donned, the wearer receives a DC 17 Will save, or they are under the effects of a *dominate person* spell. These effects last while the choker is worn, and the wearer must obey the commands of the choker's owner. The owner must still spend 1 round each day maintaining their control, or the wearer receives another save.

Moderate enchantment; Prerequisites: CL 9th, Craft Wondrous Item, *dominate person*; Price 45,000 gp.

Dark Lantern: This small hooded lantern is tarnished silver. When the shutters are thrown open, the lantern spills *darkness*, as per the spell, in a 20-ft.-radius. Opening or closing the shutter is a move-equivalent action.

Faint evocation; Prerequisites: CL 3rd, Craft Wondrous Item, *darkness*; Price 18,000 gp.

Incense of Desecration: When this small cone of incense is burned in a censer and swung three times, the smoke creates a *desecration* effect, as per the spell, centered on the censer, thus the censer, and the resultant effect move with the wielder. The incense burns for 8 hours.

Faint evocation [evil]; Prerequisites: CL 4th, Craft Wondrous Item, *desecrate*, 5 pounds of silver dust; Price 425 gp; Cost 225 gp + 17 XP.

Kythran's Applicator: This small bottle has a screw cap. Through the center of the cap is a brush. The bottle is normally empty, though 5% contains a random injury poison. When filled with poison, and the brush is used to apply the poison to a piercing or slashing weapon, the user has no chance of poisoning himself, just as if he had poison use. If the character already has poison use, he can apply the poison as a free action.

Faint abjuration; Prerequisites: CL 3rd, Craft Wondrous Item, caster must have poison use class ability, *resistance*; Price 1,000 gp.

Mind Screw: These sharp screws measure three inches long and are fashioned from adamantite. The creator enchants each screw to augment a particular skill by providing a +10 competence bonus to all checks made with the skill. However, as they require drilling into the skull to unlock their magical properties, the user suffers some side effects. When installed, the screw deals 1d4 points of damage to an ability score. Strength based skills damage Intelligence, Dexterity based skills damage Wisdom, Constitution based skills damage Charisma, Intelligence based skills damage Constitution, Wisdom based skills damage Dexterity, and Charisma based skills damage Wisdom. For example, a *mind screw of Spellcraft* deals 1d4 points of damage to Constitution. This damage cannot be healed until the screw is removed and the subject is the target of a *heal* or *restoration* spell. There is no limit to the number of screws one character can install.

Faint transmutation; Prerequisites: CL 3rd, Craft Wondrous Item, caster must have 10 ranks in the appropriate skill; Price 20,000 gp.

Plague Candies: These small chocolate candies are individually wrapped in bright and inviting colors. When unwrapped and eaten, they force the target to succeed a DC 16 Fortitude save or suffer the effects of the contagion spell, but only with ingested or contract disease effects, such as blinding sickness or shakes. These candies come in a small box, with typically 1d4+2 candies inside.

Moderate necromancy [evil]; Prerequisites: CL 7th, Craft Wondrous Item, *contagion*; Price 1,400 gp each.



Robe of the Infernal: These long thin purple robes feature arcane and divine runes in gold on the hem and cuffs and are favored by Sarishan priests for protection properties. When worn the robe can, once per day on command, transform the user into an Infernal, as if under the effects of the *scion of the infernal* spell, for 10 minutes. In addition, the wearer gains a +2 deflection bonus to AC, and a +2 resistance bonus to all saving throws.

Moderate transmutation [evil]; Prerequisites: CL 10th, Craft Wondrous Item, *mage armor*, *resistance*, *scion of the infernal*; Price 58,000 gp.

Stake of Impalement: These stakes accommodate Small and Medium creatures. The victim's death triggers the latent necromantic magic inside, animating the victim into a random undead creature: 01–50 zombie, 51–75 ghoul, 76–90 ghastr, or 91–00 mohrg. This undead is free-willed, but can be controlled through a successful rebuke undead attempt, or *control undead* spell. The stake can only produce this effect once per day.

Moderate necromancy [evil]; Prerequisites: CL 18th, Craft Wondrous Item, *create undead*; Price 113,200 gp; Cost 91,600 gp + 1,728 XP.

Impalement

When a victim is impaled, they are mounted onto a pike, whereby their internal organs are forced upwards against their heart and lungs. A victim who is impaled takes 3d6 of lethal damage immediately and 1d6 points of lethal damage each hour.

Cursed Items

Amulet of Ancient's Virility: This amulet appears to be a standard sort, worn on a chain, though it commonly is made of gold, bearing the image of a lion, dragon, or some other powerful creature, and worn on a thick chain. These amulets always appear old, though an *identify* spell or spell detects this amulet as an *amulet of health* +4, only revealing its true properties 5% of the time, or with powerful magic such as an *analyze dweomer* spell. The amulet grants the wearer a –4 enhancement penalty to his Constitution score. Once donned, it can only be removed by a *remove curse* spell.

Faint transmutation; Prerequisites: CL 5th, Craft Wondrous Item, *ancient's virility*; Price 8,000 gp.

Belt of Child's Weakness: This belt is of exquisite craftsmanship, with images of children at play all along its length. When targeted by an *identify* spell or similar magic, it detects as a *belt of giant strength* +4, only revealing its true properties 5% of the time, or through powerful magic such as an *analyze dweomer*

spell. The belt grants the wearer a –4 enhancement penalty to his Strength score. Once donned, it can only be removed by a *remove curse* spell.

Faint transmutation; Prerequisites: CL 5th, Craft Wondrous Item, *child's weakness*; Price 8,000 gp.

Cloak of Leprous Visage: This beautiful saffron cloak feels silky to the touch. When targeted by an *identify* spell or similar magic, it detects as a *cloak of Charisma* +4, only revealing its true properties 5% of the time, or through powerful magic such as an *analyze dweomer* spell. The belt grants the wearer a –4 enhancement penalty to his Charisma score. Once donned, it can only be removed by a *remove curse* spell.

Faint transmutation; Prerequisites: CL 5th, Craft Wondrous Item, *leprous visage*; Price 8,000 gp.

Gloves of Rhino's Grace: These fine grey gloves are soft to the touch. However when donned, they transform into stiff leather. When targeted by an *identify* spell or similar magic, it detects as a *gloves of Dexterity* +4, only revealing its true properties 5% of the time, or through powerful magic such as an *analyze dweomer* spell. The belt grants the wearer a –4 enhancement penalty to his Dexterity score. Once donned, it can only be removed by a *remove curse* spell.

Faint transmutation; Prerequisites: CL 5th, Craft Wondrous Item, *rhino's grace*; Price 8,000 gp.

Headband of Idiot's Cunning: This simple headband is attractive and fine. When targeted by an *identify* spell or similar magic, it detects as a *headband of intellect* +4, only revealing its true properties 5% of the time, or through powerful magic such as an *analyze dweomer* spell. The belt grants the wearer a –4 enhancement penalty to his Intelligence score. Once donned, it can only be removed by a *remove curse* spell.

Faint transmutation; Prerequisites: CL 5th, Craft Wondrous Item, *idiot's cunning*; Price 8,000 gp.

Periapt of Fool's Folly: This small blue gem is bright and enticing. When targeted by an *identify* spell or similar magic, it detects as a *periapt of Wisdom* +4, only revealing its true properties 5% of the time, or through powerful magic such as an *analyze dweomer* spell. The belt grants the wearer a –4 enhancement penalty to his Wisdom score. Once donned, it can only be removed by a *remove curse* spell.

Faint transmutation; Prerequisites: CL 5th, Craft Wondrous Item, *fool's folly*; Price 8,000 gp.

Chapter Nine

Bestiary of Canceri

Aside from the corruption manifesting in the nation's people, there is no shortage of monstrous horrors haunting the lands, from the bleak and empty stretches of the Cold Plains, to the shifting sands of eastern Canceri, to the volcanic peaks of Nier's Spine. Some of the monsters are remnants from the brief reign of the Devil-Kings, others are rogue elements created from unscrupulous uses of necromancy, while others have existed before the first human stepped foot upon these accursed lands. This chapter supplements the monsters in the Core Rulebook III by presenting a selection of monsters unique to Canceri, with CRs ranging the gamut. Creatures presented in this chapter advancing by class use the non-elite array: 13, 12, 11, 10, 9, 8. For details on building monsters, consult **Making Monsters** in the Core Rulebook III.

Arborine

Medium Outsider (Evil, Native)

Hit Dice: 4d8 (18 hp)

Initiative: +8

Speed: 30 ft. (6 squares)

Armor Class: 18 (+4 Dex, +4 natural), touch 14, flat-footed 14

Base Attack/Grapple: +4/+5

Attack: Claw +5 melee (1d4+1 and weakness)

Full Attack: 2 claws +5 melee (1d4+1 and weakness)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. /5 ft.

Special Attack: Improved grab, spell-like abilities, tree apotheosis, weakness

Special Qualities: Damage reduction 5/magic, fire vulnerability, immunity to cold, spell resistance 18

Saves: Fort +4, Ref +8, Will +7

Abilities: Str 12, Dex 19, Con 10, Int 13, Wis 16, Cha 19

Skills: Bluff +11, Diplomacy +13, Disguise +4 (+6 acting), Escape Artist +11, Hide* +11, Knowledge (nature) +8, Listen +10, Move Silently +11, Spot +10, Survival +10 (+12 aboveground natural environments), Use Rope +4 (+6 bindings)

Feats: Alertness, Improved Initiative

Environment: Vosewalden

Organization: Solitary, Stand (2–4), Grove (4–6)

Challenge Rating: 5



Treasure: Standard

Alignment: Usually chaotic evil

Advancement: 5–12 HD (Medium)

Level Adjustment: —

Peering out from behind a tree is a seductive girl. Nude, she hides her breasts behind long auburn hair. She has bright green eyes that flash with mischief. She beckons you to come to her, something you find hard to resist.

The arborine traces its origins to the reign of the Devil-Kings. When the Infernals came through to the Mortal Plane, they spread throughout the lands. A few settled in the Vosewalden, drawn by the psychic residue of misery found there. The sundered elorii who lost their city to human invaders had called upon the mad spirits residing there, so they mistook these demons as nature spirits drawn to their cause, when in fact, these Infernals just enjoyed the opportunity to spread misfortune and woe. Years later, just as many elorii have fallen victim to the embrace of an arbor demon as have humans.

Tremendously attractive beings, these fiends draw male travelers to their doom with the promise of ardent pleasure. Once their victim comes within arms reach, the arbor demons enfold them in their arms, caressing and kissing them, all the while feeding on their strength. When their lovers lose all ability to move, the arbor fiend transforms them into a tree, forever replenishing the forest with new victims. Arbor demons speak Infernal and Ancient Imperial.

Combat

The arborine, while a capable combatant in her own right, prefers seduction and subsequent destruction to a direct confrontation. Should she have to resort to violence, she supplements her melee attacks with her potent spell-like abilities to spread confusion and distrust among her enemies. For the purposes of overcoming damage reduction, the arborine's natural attacks count as magical.

Improved grab (Ex): To use this ability, the arborine must hit with both claw attacks. She can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If she wins the grapple check, she establishes a hold and automatically deal claw and weakness damage on the next round.

Spell-like abilities: At will—*charm monster* (DC 18), *command plants* (DC 18), *entangle* (DC 15), *poison* (DC 17), *tree shape*, and *tree stride*. Caster level 9th. The save DCs are Charisma-based, except *poison*, which is calculated as specified by the spell description.

Tree apotheosis (Su): When an arborine fully drains a victim to 0 Strength through weakness, the victim must succeed a DC 16 Fortitude or be forever transformed into a tree of a species appropriate to the region. While in tree form, the victim gains all the benefits of the *tree shape* spell, except the duration never ends. A victim can regain his form through a *polymorph*, *remove curse* or *restoration* spell. The save DC is Charisma based.

Weakness (Ex): A arborine's touch saps an opponent's strength. Anyone hit by her claw attack must succeed on a DC 16 Fortitude save or take 2d8 points of Strength damage. The save DC is Charisma-based.

***Skills:** In wooded environments, arborines gain a +6 racial bonus to Hide checks.

Cancere Reaver

Small Monstrous Humanoid

Hit Dice: 3d8+6 (19 hp)

Initiative: +8

Speed: 30 ft. (6 squares)

Armor Class: 15 (+4 Dex, +1 size), touch 14, flat-footed 11

Base Attack/Grapple: +3/+0

Attack: Claw +6 melee (1d3+1 and poison)

Full Attack: 2 claws +6 melee (1d3+1 and poison), bite +3 melee (1d4 and poison)

Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.

Special Attack: Poison

Special Qualities: Scent

Saves: Fort +5, Ref +7, Will -1

Abilities: Str 13, Dex 19, Con 14, Int 6, Wis 5, Cha 2

Skills: Climb +4, Hide +8*, Listen +2, Spot +2, Swim +4

Feats: Improved Initiative, Multiattack^B, Weapon Focus (claw)

Environment: The Blighted Mire

Organization: Solitary, Pair, Gang (3–10), Swarm (11–20)

Challenge Rating: 2

Treasure: Standard

Alignment: Usually chaotic evil

Advancement: By character class

Level Adjustment: +2

This small and muscled hairless humanoid has blotchy green and black skin marred by red welts. Its wide milky-white eyes, set high on its amphibian features, search the area, while its hideous blue tongue leaps, serpent-like, from its mouth, perhaps tasting the air. Long arms end in slender fingers with filthy black nails.

Cancere reavers, or just reavers, infest the Blighted Mire. Believed to be corruptions of the people once living in the swamp, the reavers now prey upon any creature foolish enough to come close to their lairs. Thoroughly wicked, they enjoy inflicting pain, and consume their food living.

A reaver's biggest strength lies in the toxins in his saliva. They lick their fingers spreading the venom over their claws and extending their range of combat capabilities. They do not see well, but their scent ability compensates for their weaker eyesight. Reavers prefer to inhabit ruins, building nests of bones inside sinking buildings, or amidst fallen columns. Many of these dwellings are submerged, but reavers are comfortable in the water as they are out of it. They gather small trinkets and baubles, amassing small hordes in some perverted mimicry of human greed. In all, they prefer intelligent prey, and sometimes engage them in conversation between meals.

Standing about three feet tall, they are disproportionately muscular for their size. Hairless, and with wide searching eyes, they more resemble frogs than humanoids. Their arms terminate in delicate hands with thick black talons. Webbing fills the gaps between their fingers and toes. All have an odor of rotting wood, dung, and fish, though not severe enough to be debilitating to others.

Reavers speak a pidgin version of Cancere.

Combat

These creatures rarely fight alone, unless they clearly outmatch their opponent. When faced with larger numbers, they rally together and concentrate their attacks on one opponent until they succumb to paralysis, before turning on the next. In even larger battles, the reavers separate into smaller squads, whereby each squad gangs up on one opponent. Reavers never fight to the death, and retreat if over half their numbers fall.

Poison (Ex): From special glands in their mouths, reavers produce a powerful paralytic poison. In addition, as all are prone to licking their fingers, they coat their claws with the same venom. Subjects of a reaver's claw and bite attacks must succeed a DC 13 Fortitude save or take 1d6 points of Dexterity damage. Ten rounds later, they must succeed another Fortitude save against the same DC or be paralyzed for 1d4 rounds. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Skills: Cancerese reavers have a +2 racial bonus to Climb, Listen, Spot, and Swim checks. *Reavers in marsh or swamp environments have a +4 racial bonus to Hide checks.

Reavers as Characters

Most exceptional reavers are barbarians or rogues. Cancerese reavers have the following racial traits.

- Str +2, Dex +6, Con +2, Int -4, Wis -4, Cha -6.
- Small size: +1 bonus to Armor Class, +1 bonus on attack rolls, +4 bonus on Hide checks, -4 penalty on grapple checks, lifting and carrying limits $\frac{3}{4}$ those of Medium creatures.
- A reaver's base land speed is 30 feet.
- Reavers do not have darkvision. They have Scent instead.
- Racial Hit Dice: A reaver begins with three levels of monstrous humanoid, which provides 3d8 Hit Dice, a base attack bonus of +3, and base saving throw bonuses of Fort +3, Ref +3, Will +1.
- Racial Skills: A reaver's monstrous humanoid levels give it skill points equal to $6 \times (2 + \text{Int modifier, minimum } 1)$. Its class skills are Climb, Hide, Jump, Listen, Spot, and Swim.
- Racial Feats: A reaver's monstrous humanoid levels give it two feats.
- Weapon and Armor Proficiency: A reaver is proficient with simple weapons, but no armor or shields.
- Bonus Feat: Reavers begin play with Multiattack as a bonus feat.
- Reavers get a +2 racial bonus to Climb, Listen, Spot, and Swim checks; +4 to Hide checks in swamp environments.
- Automatic Languages: Cancerese. Bonus Languages: Any non-secret languages.
- Favored Class: Rogue.
- Level Adjustment: +2. A reaver's ECL is +5.

Fell Lord**Medium Undead**

Hit Dice: 4d12+3 (29 hp)

Initiative: +0

Speed: 20 ft. (4 squares) in breastplate; base speed 30 ft.

Armor Class: 22 (+1 Dex, +3 natural, +5 breastplate, +3 heavy steel shield), touch 13, flat-footed 21

Base Attack/Grapple: +2/+4

Attack: Masterwork longsword +5 melee (1d8+4/19-20)

Full Attack: Masterwork longsword +5 melee (1d8+4/19-20)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. /5 ft.

Special Attack: Aura of animation, create spawn

Special Qualities: Damage reduction 5/slashing, darkvision 60 ft., undead traits

Saves: Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +5

Abilities: Str 15, Dex 12, Con -, Int 12, Wis 13, Cha 16

Skills: Climb +3, Intimidate +10, Ride +8

Feats: Toughness, Weapon Focus (longsword), Weapon Specialization (longsword)^B

Environment: Any Canceri land or underground

Organization: Solitary, Squad (1 fell lord and 3d4 zombie warriors), Company (4 squads), Battalion (4 companies), Army (4 battalions)

Challenge Rating: 3

Treasure: Standard

Alignment: Always lawful evil

Advancement: 5–12 HD (Medium)

Level Adjustment: —

As the warrior approaches, it becomes clear he is no longer living. Dust and filth cover his armor, his skin broken and peeling, and vermin crawl all over him. Yet this is no zombie, for when he speaks, the ground stirs as the dead claw their way to the lands of the living once more.

Nerothian necromancers created the fell lords to sow confusion amongst the ranks of their enemies while expanding their own numbers from the fallen. Valued for their ability to raise the dead, the leadership places a fell lord in the center of units of living troops so when one of the living soldiers succumbs to his injuries, he can rise up and keep fighting.

In recent years, with the hostilities presented by the Swords of Nier against Ventaka, the clerics of Neroth created fell lords in record numbers. Establishing these undead in the cities gives the leaders an additional layer of protection with these elite undead soldiers who need not eat nor sleep.

Fell lords speak Cancerese and Low Coryani.

Combat

Fell lords use their minions in combat, ordering their squad of greater zombies to tear their foes apart. Though they are defensive minded, they can hold their own against comparable foes, and are devastating against common levies.

Aura of Animation (Su): The fell lord generates an aura of necrotic energy capable of animating the dead. Once per round, as a standard action, the fell lord can pulse his aura as a 30-foot burst, animating dead whose total Hit Dice do not exceed his own. Therefore, a 4 HD fell lord could animate two human commoner zombies (each having 2 HD) or four human warrior skeletons (each having 1 HD). Regardless of the number of HD of undead the fell lord can create, it can never create undead more powerful than that created by the *animate dead* spell. There is no limit to the number of undead the fell lord can create. All zombies and skeletons created by the aura are under the command of their creator and remain enslaved until its death.

Create Spawn (Su): Any humanoid slain by a fell lord becomes a fell lord in 1d4 rounds. Spawn are under the command of the fell lord creating them and remain enslaved until its death. They do not possess any of the abilities they had in life.

Flesh Swarm

Tiny Undead (Swarm)

Hit Dice: 4d12 (26 hp)

Initiative: +3

Speed: 10 ft. (2 squares), climb 10 ft.

Armor Class: 15 (+2 size, +3 Dex), touch 15, flat-footed 12

Base Attack/Grapple: +2/—

Attack: Swarm (1d6 plus *confusion*)

Full Attack: Swarm (1d6 plus *confusion*)

Space/Reach: 10 ft. /0 ft.

Special Attack: *Confusion*, distraction, stench

Special Qualities: Half damage from slashing & piercing, low-light vision, undead traits, scent, swarm traits

Saves: Fort +1, Ref +4, Will +5

Abilities: Str 2, Dex 17, Con —, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 2

Skills: Climb +11, Hide +7, Listen +6, Move Silently +7, Spot +7, Swim +11

Feats: Alertness^B, Dodge, Mobility

Environment: Any land or underground (Cancer)

Organization: Solitary, pack (2–4 swarms), plague (7–12 swarms)

Challenge Rating: 3

Treasure: None

Alignment: Always chaotic evil

Advancement: None

Level Adjustment: —



A squirming mass of bloody fetus' creeps across the floor leaving a stinking smear.

A flesh swarm is a mass of undead fetuses, animated by the most despicable of necromancers. An undead fetus, by itself is powerless, but when grouped in a pack, they are capable of slaughtering a human with their clawing.

Flesh swarms exist only in Canceri, and Nerothians use them to eliminate rivals, enemies, or other threats, but sparingly and when assured of their enemies' total destruction. The mere existence of such a creature would infuriate foreigners more than any other creature in Canceri.

Undead Fetuses

Though a terrible blasphemy, when a fetus is infused with necromantic energy, it offers a necromancer great power. The fetus serves as a form of battery, offering a direct link to the negative energy plane. When carried in a small metal box, taking the space of an amulet, the necromancer can recall one spell of any level he may cast with the death or evil descriptor, regaining the spell as if he had not cast it. An undead fetus may serve as a conduit for 1 week before rotting into uselessness. A *gentle repose* spell preserves the corpse for the duration of the spell.

These swarms do not speak any language, though they recognize tones, such as anger or fear.

Combat

A flesh swarm surrounds and attacks any warm-blooded creature it finds. As a swarm, when it occupies a space held by another creature, the swarm deals 1d6 points of damage.

Confusion (Su): Living creatures taking damage from a flesh swarm must succeed a DC 13 Will save or become confused, as the *confusion* spell, for 1 round. The save DC is Wisdom based.

Distraction (Ex): Any living creature beginning its turn with a swarm in its square must succeed on a DC 15 Fortitude save or be nauseated for 1 round. The save DC is Dexterity-based.

Skills: A flesh swarm has a +4 racial bonus on Hide and Move Silently checks, and a +8 racial bonus on Balance, Climb, and Swim checks. A flesh swarm can always choose to take 10 on all Climb checks, even if rushed or threatened. A flesh swarm uses its Dexterity modifier instead of its Strength modifier for Climb and Swim checks. A flesh swarm has a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check to perform some special action or avoid a hazard. It can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check, even if distracted or endangered. It can use the run action while swimming, provided it swims in a straight line.

Gourmand Horror

Large Undead

Hit Dice: 12d12 (78 hp)

Initiative: +3

Speed: 40 ft. (8 squares)

Armor Class: 20 (–1 Dex, –1 size, +12 natural), touch 8, flat-footed 20

Base Attack/Grapple: +6/+16

Attack: Bite +11 melee (2d8+9/19-20 plus energy drain)

Full Attack: Bite +11 melee (2d8+9/19-20 plus energy drain)

Space/Reach: 10 ft. /10 ft.

Special Attack: Energy drain, horrific appearance, improved grab, spew, stench, swallow whole

Special Qualities: Damage reduction 5/magic, darkvision 60 ft., scent, undead traits

Saves: Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +9

Abilities: Str 23, Dex 8, Con –, Int 8, Wis 13, Cha 18

Skills: Listen +11, Spot +10

Feats: Alertness, Cleave, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack

Environment: Any land or underground

Organization: Solitary or Harem (1 Gourmand horror plus 1d4 sycophants)

Challenge Rating: 8

Treasure: Standard

Alignment: Always chaotic evil

Advancement: 13–24 HD (Large), 25+ HD (Huge)

Level Adjustment: —

This great hulking woman has huge rolls of vein-riddled fat. From her gaping maw thick strings of fetid drool dangle to eventually latch onto her rank flesh. The stench is unbearable as every motion disgorges a ball of maggots that were caught beneath her layers of skin.

The gourmand horrors are foul undead terrors bent on consumption. Created by powerful necromantic energies, Nerothian priests use these creatures to clean the sewers beneath the necropolises. Occasionally, one breaks free to feast upon the city's livestock, citizens, and their children. When this occurs, it requires a great expenditure of manpower to capture them.

A few of these monsters escape to flee into the wild and spread discord and mayhem wherever they go. A few of the more intelligent gourmand horrors establish themselves in other cities, where they indulge themselves in pleasures from the former lives. However, when people go missing or entire landscapes destroyed by her insatiable hunger, officials work to erase the presence of these terrors.

Gourmand horrors stand about eight feet tall and weigh a ton. They may be created by a 14th level or higher caster through the *create greater undead* spell. They speak Cancerese, or the native tongue of their homeland.

Combat

The gourmand horror's appetite manifests in combat. She leads with her bite attack, and tries to swallow her opponents whole when possible. If faced with powerful opponents, she opens with a spew attack, disgorging the acidic contents of her stomach in a vile spray.

Energy Drain (Su): Living creatures hit by a gourmand horror's bite attack gain one negative energy level. The DC is 20 for the Fortitude save to remove a negative level. The save DC is Charisma-based. For each such negative level bestowed, the gourmand horror gains 5 temporary hit points.

Horrific appearance (Su): So terrible is the gourmand horror's appearance, all living creatures within 60 feet viewing her appearance, must succeed on a DC 20 Fortitude save or take 1d4 points of Strength damage, 1d4 points of Dexterity damage, and 1d4 points of Constitution damage. A creature saving against this effect cannot be affected by the same gourmand horror's horrific appearance for 24-hours. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, a gourmand horror must hit an opponent up to one size smaller with its bite attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple, it establishes a hold and can try to swallow the foe the following round.

Spew (Ex): 30-foot cone, once every 1d4 rounds (but no more than 3 times per hour), 12d4 points of acid



damage, Reflex DC 20 for half. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Stench (Ex): A foul miasma surrounds the gourmand horror. Living creatures within 10 feet must succeed a DC 20 Fortitude save or be sickened for 1d4+4 minutes. A creature saving cannot be affected again by the same gourmand horror's stench for 24 hours. A *delay poison* or *neutralize poison* spell removes the effect from a sickened creature. Creatures with immunity to poison are unaffected, and creatures resistant to poison receive their normal bonus on their saving throws. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Swallow Whole (Ex): A gourmand horror can try to swallow a grabbed opponent of up to two sizes smaller by making a successful grapple check. The swallowed creature takes 1d8+4 points of bludgeoning damage and 8 points of acid damage per round from the digestive juices inside the monster. A swallowed creature can cut its way out by using a light slashing or piercing weapon to deal 25 points of damage to the gizzard (AC 16). Once the creature exits, reflexive action closes the hole; any other swallowed opponent must cut its own way out. A gourmand horror's gizzard can hold 2 Medium, 4 Small, 8 Tiny, or 16 Diminutive or smaller opponents.

Infernals

In the world of Arcanis, all fiends hail from a set of planes, sometimes called collectively Hell, but known as the Infernal Planes by most. Pure evil, and malevolent towards all life, they struggle to restore their rule in the Mortal Plane. There are many races of Infernals, each with their own special qualities. Thus, the Infernal Plane house all demons and devils found in the *Core Rulebook III* and those described below. For more information about Infernals in Arcanis, refer to *Legacy of Damnation*. If you are using *Legacy of Damnation*, then all the infernals presented below should instead have the Infernal type, and the Tainted sub-type (in addition to their other subtypes).

Othanti

Small Outsider (Evil, Extraplanar, Lawful)

Hit Dice: 2d8 (9 hp)

Initiative: +5

Speed: 30 ft. (6 squares), fly 60 ft.

Armor Class: 17 (+5 Dex, +1 size, +1 natural), touch 16, flat-footed 12

Base Attack/Grapple: +2/-2

Attack: Claw +3 melee (1d4)



Full Attack: 2 claws +3 melee (1d4)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. /5 ft.

Special Attack: Summon Infernal

Special Qualities: Artisan, damage reduction 5/magic, immunity to fire and poison, resistance to acid 10 and cold 10, see in darkness, spell resistance 7, telepathy 60 ft.

Saves: Fort +3, Ref +8, Will +5

Abilities: Str 10, Dex 20, Con 11, Int 20, Wis 15, Cha 16

Skills: Craft (any five) +20, Disable Device +10, Escape Artist +10, Hide +14, Knowledge (any two) +10, Move Silently +10, Spellcraft +10, Use Magic Device + (+10 with scrolls), Use Rope +5 (+7 Bindings)

Feats: Skill Focus (Craft: any), Craft Wondrous Item^B

Environment: Infernal Plane

Organization: Solitary, Pair, Team (3–6)

Challenge Rating: 1

Treasure: One minor wondrous item

Alignment: Always lawful evil

Advancement: 3–6 HD (small)

Level Adjustment: —

This small creature has pale white skin, a thin frame, and a face with wide features, and small vestigial

horns on its brow beneath long black oily locks. It has small bat wings of the same color as its skin, sprouting out from its back through its laborers garb. Its intelligent eyes betray something sinister behind the façade of a fastidious craftsman, something dark.

The othanti are strange devilish craftsmen hailing from the Infernal planes. Used by Sarishan priests to acquire common magic items, these creatures grudgingly assent to their wishes. However, when bound, they corrupt their items to sabotage their master's efforts. Only when controlled are their goods safe to use in any instance.

Like most fiends, othanti are loath to summon assistance from other devils, for to do so binds them to the summoned assistance. However, if faced with a life and death situation, they do not hesitate to call in reinforcements. Othanti are content to work in isolation, corrupting mortals by instilling greed and envy in their hearts.

Othanti are two feet tall and weigh about 40 pounds. Othanti speak Cancereese, Infernal, Low Coryani, Elorii, and Ancient Imperial.

Combat

Othanti prefer to avoid confrontation rather than facing it head on. Hence, when attacked, they flee. Most othanti are equipped with one of their various creations, and so, if pressed, resort to using the device they crafted. For the purposes of overcoming damage reduction, the othanti's attacks count as magical and evil-aligned.

Summon Infernal (Sp): Once per day an othanti can attempt to summon 1 imp, 1d2 xavinots (see below), or 1d4 othanti with a 40% chance of success. This ability is the equivalent of a 4th-level spell.

Artisan (Su): Othanti can craft any minor wondrous item in the Core Rulebook II or any wondrous item in this book valued at 3,000 gp or less by making an untrained Craft check. They do not have to meet any of the spell or XP requirements to make these items, but must meet other requirements. Obviously, they may not manufacture good wondrous items. All items created by these devils are cursed. See *Core Rulebook II* and *Forged in Magic: Revised and Expanded* for details on cursed items.

Skills: As an expert craftsman, an othanti gains a +10 racial bonus to all Craft checks, even those made untrained.

Susux

Medium Outsider (Chaotic, Evil, Extraplanar, Shapeshifter)

Hit Dice: 3d8+3 (16 hp)

Initiative: +4

Speed: 30 ft. (6 squares)

Armor Class: 16 (+4 Dex, +2 natural), touch 14, flat-footed 12

Base Attack/Grapple: +3/+3

Attack: Touch +7 melee (1d6 Wisdom drain)

Full Attack: Touch +7 melee (1d6 Wisdom drain)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. /5 ft.

Special Attack: Change form, sexual predator, spell-like abilities, true form, Wisdom drain

Special Qualities: Damage reduction 5/cold iron or good, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to electricity and poison, resistance to acid 5, cold 5, and fire 5, spell resistance 15, telepathy 100 ft., tongues.

Saves: Fort +4, Ref +7, Will +5

Abilities: Str 10, Dex 19, Con 12, Int 15, Wis 14, Cha 21

Skills: Bluff +13, Concentration +7, Diplomacy +13, Disguise +11 (+13 acting), Escape Artist +10, Intimidate +13, Listen +8, Move Silently +10, Profession (Prostitute) +8, Spot +8, Use Rope +4 (+6 bindings)

Feats: Persuasive, Weapon Finesse

Environment: Infernal Planes

Organization: Solitary, Pair, Brothel (4–10)

Challenge Rating: 6

Treasure: Standard

Alignment: Always chaotic evil

Advancement: 4–6 HD (Medium)

Level Adjustment: —

This creature defines mortal beauty. All of your desires manifest in her movements. Her body conforms to your desires; her hair and eyes reflect your own standards of perfection. The swell of her breast, the curve of her thigh - she is everything you have ever wanted.

The susux is a demon who feeds upon mortal lust. Unlike her cousin the succubus, she has no other motive than to engage in pleasurable contact with a mortal. Such encounters allow her to sap her lovers' Wisdom, and ultimately his soul.

While she appears stunning and beautiful to mortals, the susux in its true form is something profoundly worse. This demon is bipedal, but emaciated. Its arms are boney, and its breasts are flaccid and lie flat on her maggot-white flesh. She has spindly legs, and her nether region is a nest of tentacles, each ending in needle sharp barbs, dripping rose-colored venom. Dried blood stains the insides of her legs. The worst feature, however, is its face. Oblong and distorted, its mouth is ringed with black lips, filled with sharp teeth and licked by a long black tongue with an eye at the end.

Sarishan priests employ these demons to pleasure their guests, for legend holds the susux as the best lovers in the world. The allure of these fiends is so great that Stanivel has escaped razing despite their constant betrayals of the people of the Hinterlands. Naturally, the Sarishan masters have never revealed the demon's true form.



Combat

Susux do not fight. They love. If attacked, they flee. Otherwise, these fiends live to engage in pleasurable contact with a mortal.

Change Shape (Su): A susux can assume the shape of any Small or Medium humanoid, changing its appearance to suit its current lover. A susux can remain in its humanoid form until it chooses to assume a new one. A change in form cannot be dispelled, but it reverts to its natural form when killed. A *true seeing* spell or ability reveals its natural form.

Sexual Predator (Su): Susux know the right things to do and say to convince an individual to have sex. When interacting with an individual attracted to the female gender, the susux enjoys a +10 racial bonus to all Bluff, Diplomacy, and Intimidate checks made to convince them to engage in an intimate encounter. Against individuals not attracted to the female gender, the bonus is +5.

Spell-like abilities: At will—*charm person* (DC 16), *confusion* (DC 17), *disrobe* (DC 17); *suggestion* (DC 18); 1/day—*enervating embrace*. Caster level 9th. The save DCs are Charisma-based.

True Form (Ex): If a former lover ever sees a susux as it truly is, the subject must succeed a DC 16 Will save or be driven insane as per the *insanity* spell. Even on a successful save, the subject behaves under the effects of a *confusion* effect for 5 rounds.

Wisdom Drain (Su): A susux causes 1d6 points of Wisdom drain each time it touches a target with a successful touch attack.

Tongues (Su): A susux has a permanent tongues ability (as the spell, caster level 12th). Susux use verbal communication with mortals

Amapudor

A twin race to the susux is the amapudor, a fiend, statistically identical to the susux, who preys on women. In its true form, it is obese, bald, and drooling.

Venalin

Large Outsider (Devil, Evil, Extraplanar, Lawful)

Hit Dice: 10d8+30 (75 hp)

Initiative: +11

Speed: 50 ft. (10 squares)

Armor Class: 24 (+7 Dex, -1 size, +8 natural), touch 16, flat-footed 17

Base Attack/Grapple: +10/+16

Attack: Claw +11 melee (1d6+2 plus paralysis)

Full Attack: 4 claws +11 melee (1d6+2 plus paralysis)

Space/Reach: 10 ft. /5 ft.

Special Attack: Improved grab, paralysis, spell-like abilities, summon Infernal

Special Qualities: Damage reduction 10/cold iron or good, immunity to fire and poison, resistance to acid 10 and cold 10, sacs, see in darkness, spell resistance 22, telepathy 100 ft.

Saves: Fort +10, Ref +14, Will +9

Abilities: Str 14, Dex 25, Con 16, Int 11, Wis 14, Cha 17

Skills: Appraise +13, Bluff +16, Listen +17, Move Silently +20, Open Locks +20, Search +13, Spot +17, Survival +15 (+17 when following tracks)

Feats: Ability Focus (paralysis), Alertness, Improved Initiative, Track

Environment: Infernal Planes or any land or underground

Organization: Solitary

Challenge Rating: 11

Treasure: Standard

Alignment: Always lawful evil

Advancement: 11–20 HD (large), 21–30 HD (huge)

Level Adjustment: —

This spider-like creature scuttles on thirteen legs. Its black carapace has tufts of thick red fur sprouting from the joints. Its head is terrible, with a long nose and toothy maw dominating its arachnid features. On its back, it has several clear tumors filled with yellow fluid. Inside several, you see the comatose forms of children suspended in the liquid.

Youths are the most valuable of slaves, for they are young enough to be healthy, adaptable, and some even cater to the more perverse tastes of Canceri's elite. Instead of relying on normal slavery channels, innovative Sarishan demonologists called a special type of devil to harvest slaves in the countryside. Called venalin, these are terrible creatures, plucking children from their beds and stuffing their paralyzed forms into the stasis sacs on their backs. Nierites, especially the Swords of Nier, destroy these things on sight, for too many of their children have wound up in the brothels of Nishanpur because of these terrible fiends.

Venalin are about eight feet in diameter and weigh 500 pounds.

They speak Infernal, Cancerese, and Low Coryani.

Combat

While venalin have a myriad of weapons at their disposal, they work to acquire living prey, not kill them. They attack to subdue, using their paralytic effects to render their foes impotent. If faced with a dangerous opponent, the venalin withdraws to a position of safety and uses its spell-like abilities to destroy its foes. For the purposes of overcoming damage reduction, a venalin's claw attacks count as magical and evil.



Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, the venalin must hit with a claw attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and automatically deals claw damage on the next round. If the victim is paralyzed, the venalin can insert the subject into a sac as a move action.

Paralysis (Ex): Those hit by a venalin's claw attack must succeed on a DC 20 Fortitude save or be paralyzed for 1d4+1 rounds. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Spell-like abilities: At will—*ancient's virility* (DC 16), *calm emotions* (DC 15), *charm person* (DC 14), *protection from good*, *unholy blight* (DC 17); 1/day—*blasphemy* (DC 20). Caster level 12th. The save DCs are Charisma-based.

Summon Infernal (Sp): Once per day, a venalin can attempt to summon 2d10 lemures, 1d3 chain devils, or another venalin with a 50% chance of success. This ability is the equivalent of a 7th-level spell.

Sacs (Ex): Mounted on the venalin's back are 1d4+4 clear membranes filled with fluid. A venalin can insert a Medium-sized or smaller paralyzed creature through the membrane and into the fluid as a move-action. Subjects placed in the sac stay in a coma, unconscious until freed. While in the sac, they do not need to breathe or eat, as the fluid takes care of these basic needs. Freeing a creature from a membrane is simple. The rescuer need only inflict 10 points of damage with a slashing weapon, thereby destroying the membrane and birthing the captive. However, the venalin's natural defense system turns the nourishing fluid into a terrible toxin if the membrane is damaged. The captive must succeed a DC 18 Fortitude save or take 3d6 points of Constitution damage. This poison may not be harvested.

Xavinot

Large Outsider (Evil, Extraplanar, Lawful)

Hit Dice: 3d8+9 (22 hp)

Initiative: +1

Speed: 30 ft. (6 squares)

Armor Class: 13 (–1 size, +1 Dex, +3 natural), touch 10, flat-footed 12

Base Attack/Grapple: +3/+12

Attack: Claw +7 melee (1d4+5)

Full Attack: 2 claws +7 melee (1d4+5), bite +5 melee (1d6+2), tail +5 melee (1d6+2)

Space/Reach: 10 ft. /10 ft.

Special Attack: Aura of fear, pounce, rake 2d4+7, summon Infernal

Special Qualities: Damage reduction 5/magic, immunity to fire and poison, resistance to acid 10 and cold 10, see in darkness, spell resistance 16, telepathy 60 ft., *tongues*

Saves: Fort +6, Ref +4, Will +4

Abilities: Str 20, Dex 13, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 10

Skills: Climb +11, Intimidate +6, Jump +11, Knowledge (any one) +6, Listen +7, Search +6, Sense Motive +7, Spot +7

Feats: Multiattack, Power Attack

Environment: Infernal Planes

Organization: Solitary, Pair, Gang (2–4)

Challenge Rating: 3

Treasure: None

Alignment: Always lawful evil

Advancement: 4–9 HD (large)

Level Adjustment: —

This massive creature has soft green warty skin, big black eyes and a long tail with a club-like protrusion at the end. Its arms and legs end in six digit hands and feet, each sporting horrible black claws.

The xavinot is a minor fiend from the Infernal planes. Sarishans employ them as laborers, guards, and any other work requiring some muscle. More than anything, xavinots serve as guardians for the othanti. Some demonologists recognize these fiends' capacity for understanding and translating languages, and so many of these outsiders serve as translators.

A xavinot is about 9 feet tall and weighs about 600 pounds.

Thanks to their *tongues* ability, xavinots can communicate with any creature with a language.

Combat

Xavinots enjoy combat, launching into attacks whenever they can. They pounce on the first round using rake attacks to soften their opponents. On the following rounds, they concentrate their attacks against one opponent. For the purposes of overcoming damage reduction, a xavinot's attacks count as, lawful-aligned and evil-aligned.

Aura of Fear (Su): A foul aura surrounds xavinots. Any hostile creature within a 20-foot radius of a xavinot must succeed on a DC 14 Will save or become panicked. The save DC is Wisdom-based and includes a +2 racial bonus.

Pounce (Ex): If a xavinot charges, it can make a full attack, including two rake attacks.

Rake (Ex): Attack bonus +5, damage 2d4+3

Summon Infernal (Sp): Once per day a xavinot can attempt to summon 1d2 xavinots or 1d6 othanti with a 30% chance of success. This ability is the equivalent of a 4th-level spell.

Tongues (Sp): This spell is always active for the xavinot, as the spell (5th level caster). This spell can be dispelled, but the xavinot can reactivate it as a free action.

Lifebright Golem

Large Construct

Hit Dice: 14d10+30 (107 hp)

Initiative: -1

Speed: 20 ft. (4 squares)

Armor Class: 27 (-1 Dex, -1 Size, +19 natural), touch 8, flat-footed 27

Base Attack/Grapple: +10/+23

Attack: Slam +18 melee (2d10+9 and disease and wound)

Full Attack: 2 slams +18 melee (2d10+9 and disease and wound)

Space/Reach: 10 ft. /10 ft.

Special Attack: Despair, mummy rot

Special Qualities: Construct traits, damage reduction 10/adamantine, darkvision 60 ft., fire vulnerability, immunity to magic, low-light vision,

Saves: Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +4

Abilities: Str 29, Dex 8, Con -, Int -, Wis 11, Cha 1

Skills: —

Feats: —

Environment: Any land or underground

Organization: Solitary

Challenge Rating: 14

Treasure: Standard

Alignment: Always neutral

Advancement: 14–21 HD (Large), 22+ HD (Huge)

Level Adjustment: —

Shuffling forward and casting about mindlessly is a fearsome composite of writhing undead creatures all bound to one another through straps, chains, and rope. Bodies form its arms, legs, and trunk. Even its face is a collection of mummified heads. The undead mouth their suffering, driven mad by their sorry state.

A lifebright golem is fashioned from several mummies, bound through powerful necromantic magic to function as one composite being. Once constructed by the Blight Bearers, it was thought these creatures were things of history. However, with the recent resurgence of interest in the contagion cult, lifebright golems reappeared throughout southern Canceri and in northern Milandir.

These golems stand about 12 feet tall and weigh nearly 2,000 pounds, with most of the weight coming from the complex harnesses holding the golem together. They speak no language, but they moan, as if in pain.

Combat

Lifebright golems are terrors in combat, blending the defensive capabilities of a construct with the potential for destruction of the undead. They fight simply in combat, direct their attacks at any living foes within reach. When paired with a necromancer or Nerothian death priest, who can fuel this monster with negative energy, the lifebright golem becomes unstoppable.

Despair (Su): Any living creature seeing the lifebright golem must succeed on a DC 16 Will save or be paralyzed with fear for 1d4 rounds. Whether or not the save is successful, that creature cannot again be affected by the same lifebright golem's despair ability for 24 hours. The save DC is Charisma-based and includes a +4 racial bonus.

Mummy Rot (Su): Supernatural disease—delivered by slam attack, Fortitude DC 16, incubation period 1 minute; damage 1d6 Con and 1d6 Cha. The save DC is Charisma-based and includes a +4 racial bonus. Unlike normal diseases, mummy rot continues until the victim reaches Constitution 0 (and dies) or is cured as described below. An afflicted creature dying of mummy rot shrivels away into sand and dust, blowing away into nothing at the first wind.

Mummy rot is a powerful curse, not a natural disease. A character attempting to cast any conjuration (healing) spell on a creature afflicted with mummy rot must succeed on a DC 20 caster level check, or the spell has no effect on the afflicted character. To eliminate mummy rot, the curse must first be broken with *break enchantment* or *remove curse* (requiring a DC 20 caster level check for either spell), after which a caster level check is no longer necessary to cast healing spells on the victim, and the mummy rot can be magically cured as any normal disease.

Immunity to Magic (Ex): A lifebright golem is immune to any spell or spell-like ability that allows spell resistance. In addition, certain spells and effects function differently against the creature. Using a rebuke or command undead attempt against the lifebright golem *hastes* it, as per the *haste* spell. Injury spells, such as *inflict light wounds*, repair an equal amount of damage to the lifebright golem. A *contagion* spell doubles its current hit points (but cannot increase its hit points above its normal amount). A *remove curse* spell slows the golem (as per the *slow* spell) for 3 rounds with no saving throw.

Construction

A lifebright golem's body consists of several mummies assembled into a man-shaped form. Like the flesh golem, the assembly of the lifebright golem requires a minimum of six different medium-sized bodies, one for each limb, the torso, and the brain. Depending on the initial success or failure of the creator (and sizes larger than the norm), more bodies may be necessary.

Assembling the body requires a DC 15 Craft (leatherworking) check and a DC 15 Use Rope check.

Prerequisites: CL 16th, Craft Construct, *epidemic*, *geas/quest*, *limited wish*, *polymorph any object*; Price 100,000 gp; Cost 51,500 gp + 4,000 XP.



Necromantic Sludge

Gargantuan Undead

Hit Dice: 20d12+30 (160 hp)

Initiative: -5

Speed: 20 ft. (4 squares), climb 20 ft.

Armor Class: 16 (-5 Dex, -4 size, +15 natural), touch 1, flat-footed 16

Base Attack/Grapple: +10/+43 **Attack:** Slam +27 melee (3d6+31 and 1d6 Con and 1d6 acid)

Full Attack: Slam +27 melee (3d6+31 and 1d6 Con and 1d6 acid)

Space/Reach: 20 ft. /20 ft.

Special Attack: Acid, engulf, separate, stench

Special Qualities: Blightsight 60 ft., immune to all acid, cold, electricity, and sonic, vulnerability to sunlight, undead traits, DR 10/good and magic, SR 30

Saves: Fort +6, Ref +1, Will +1

Abilities: Str 52, Dex 1, Con —, Int —, Wis 1, Cha 1

Skills: —

Feats: Toughness x10^B

Environment: Any land or underground

Organization: Solitary, Pair, Colony (3–6)

Challenge Rating: 19

Treasure: None

Alignment: Always neutral evil

Advancement: 21–40 HD
(Gargantuan), 41+ HD (Colossal)

Level Adjustment: —

Spreading across the land like an inky black smear is a great wet nightmare given life. Bits of rotting human tissue float across the fluid, suspended in the murk. It moves without concern, spilling through cracks, and spreading its terror as if impelled by some dark force.

When necromancers animate such numbers of dead as they do in Ventaka, the loose necrotic energy effects the residue left by the stacked and rotting corpses. If allowed to collect unchecked, the slime grows and gains some semblance of unlife, including some modicum of locomotive ability. The Nerothian priests do what they can to destroy these side effects of their art, but some unscrupulous types harvest necromantic sludge to loose on their enemies to the south.

Necromantic sludge is mindless and driven by its instinctual need to consume. It is mildly acidic, and so burns the land in its wake. Measuring about 20 to 30 feet in diameter, it weighs 20 tons.

Combat

Though capable of smashing its opponents with its powerful pseudopodia, it rolls overtop of its opponents, adding their liquids to its own.

Acid (Ex): Necromantic sludge is acidic, but does not harm metal or stone.

Engulf (Ex): As a standard action, necromantic sludge can engulf a Gargantuan or smaller sized opponent. It just has to move over opponents, affecting as many creatures as it can cover. Opponents can make attacks of opportunity against the sludge, but if they do, they are not entitled to a saving throw. Those who do not attempt attacks of opportunity must succeed on a DC 41 Reflex save or be engulfed; on a success, they are pushed back or aside (opponent's choice) as the sludge moves forward. Engulfed creatures are subject to the sludge's acid and Constitution damage, and are considered to be grappled and trapped within its body. The save DC is Strength-based.

Separate (Ex): As a move action, necromantic sludge can divide its form into smaller sludge, each with half of the original's current hit points (round down). A necromantic sludge with 10 hit points or less cannot separate. It can reform with any adjacent necromantic sludge as a free action.

Stench (Ex): The stench of corruption surrounding these creatures is overwhelming. Living creatures within 100 feet must succeed on a DC 20 Fortitude save or be sickened for 1d6+4 minutes. A creature successfully saving cannot be affected again by the same necromantic sludge's stench for 24 hours. A *delay poison* or *neutralize poison* spell removes

the effect from a sickened creature. Creatures with immunity to poison are unaffected, and creatures resistant to poison receive their normal bonus on their saving throws. The save DC is Charisma-based, but has a +5 racial bonus.

Vulnerability to Sunlight (Ex): A necromantic sludge takes 10 points of permanent damage for every hour exposed to sunlight.

Nierite Wargolem

Gargantuan Construct

Hit Dice: 38d10+60 (269 hp)

Initiative: -1

Speed: 20 ft. (4 squares)

Armor Class: 32 (-1 Dex, -4 size, +27 natural), touch, flat-footed

Base Attack/Grapple: +28/+55 **Attack:** Slam +39 melee (4d6+23 plus 2d6 fire)

Full Attack: 2 slams +39 melee (4d6+23 plus 2d6 fire)

Space/Reach: 20 ft. /20 ft.

Special Attack: Burn, death throes, *lance of fire*

Special Qualities: Construct traits, damage reduction 15/adamantine, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to magic, low-light vision

Saves: Fort +12, Ref +11, Will +12

Abilities: Str 40, Dex 9, Con -, Int -, Wis 11, Cha 1

Skills: —

Feats: —

Environment: Nier's Spine, Erduk

Organization: Solitary, Solitary and squad (11–20 Nierite Ftr levels 1d4, 1 squad leader Ftr level 1d4+4)

Challenge Rating: 19

Treasure: None

Alignment: Always neutral

Advancement: 39+ HD (Gargantuan)

Level Adjustment: —

At the center of the inferno is an enormous machine. Exposed tubes crisscross its body, carrying liquid fire from the monster's core. A great triangular head sits atop its metal torso, and from a central eye burns a line of hellish fire, incinerating all it touches.

The Nierite wargolem is a recent innovation of the Nierite priests. Each golem undergoes a painstaking process, whereby they bind an elder fire elemental in its core, and lace the entirety with powerful evocation magic. Vaguely humanoid in shape, its mechanical aspects and its fiery aura erase all doubt about its construct nature.

A Nierite wargolem stands 60 feet tall and weighs 2500 tons.

These golems cannot speak and do not make any vocal noise.

Combat

A Nierite wargolem is one of the most destructive forces found in Canceri and in Erduk, the home of the Swords of Nier. When not hammering their foes with their flaming fists, they unleash the raw destructive capabilities of the infernos raging within them. Moreover, things capable of ruining their bodies must get past its fiery barrage.

Burn (Ex): A Nierite wargolem's slam attack deals bludgeoning damage plus fire damage. Those hit by its slam attack also must succeed on a DC 24 Reflex save or catch on fire. The flame burns for 1d6 rounds. A burning creature can take a move action to put out the flame. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Creatures hitting a Nierite wargolem with natural weapons or unarmed attacks take fire damage as though hit by its slam attack, and catch on fire unless they succeed on a Reflex save.

Death throes (Ex): When destroyed, a Nierite wargolem explodes in a blinding flash of light dealing 10d6 points of fire damage to anything within 100 feet (Reflex DC 44 half), as the elder fire elemental housed within escapes. The fire elemental, enraged at its imprisonment, attacks all creatures, and fights to the death. The save DC is Strength-based.

Lance of fire (Sp): Once every 1d4 rounds as a free action, the Nierite wargolem fires a *maximized lance of fire*, as the spell, dealing 40 points of damage to all in the area of effect, DC 17 Reflex save for half.

Immunity to magic (Ex): A Nierite wargolem is immune to any spell or spell-like ability that allows spell resistance. In addition, certain spells and effects function differently against the creature, as noted below.

A magical attack dealing cold damage negates the wargolem's burn ability for 3 rounds. Fire and electricity attacks negate the effects of a cold-based attack and *hastes* the wargolem for 3 rounds. Exposure to water of any kind does not extinguish the flames, but creates clouds of scalding steam dealing 2d6 points of fire damage to all adjacent characters.

A Nierite wargolem is subject to rust attacks, such as a rust monster's attacks, or a *rusting grasp* spell.

Construction

A Nierite wargolem's body is sculpted from 2500 tons of pure iron, smelted with rare tinctures and admixtures costing at least 100,000 gp. Assembling the body requires a DC 30 Craft (armorsmithing) check or a DC 30 Craft (weaponsmithing) check. Finally, the construct requires the service of an elder fire elemental, bound through *greater planar binding*. Prerequisites: CL 30th, Craft Construct, *greater planar binding*, *geas/quest*, *lance of fire*, *polymorph any object*, *wish*; Price 1,150,000 gp; Cost 675,000 gp + 4,600 XP.

Sanguine Elemental

Environment: Infernal Plane: The Court of Weeping of Wounds

Organization: Solitary

Challenge Rating: Small 2, Medium 4, Large 6, Huge 8, Greater 11, Elder 13

Treasure: None

Alignment: Always neutral evil

Advancement: —

Level Adjustment: —

Rising up from the pool is an opaque creature comprised entirely of blood and bones, though bits of flesh and other solids are visible in the mass.

Native the Infernal Plane called the Court of Weeping Wounds, the terrible sanguine elemental is a creature comprised of mortal fluids. Some falsely believe this creature to be yet another manifestation of the Nerothian necromantic arts, but it is actually a water elemental corrupted by blood sacrifices to the Infernal lords by Sarishan priests. Called from the Court through powerful magic, when brought to the Mortal Plane, they are beings of raw destructive power.

Combat

Sanguine elementals lack many of the abilities of water elementals, namely the ability to create a vortex in water. However, they are quicker than are their water-bound kin, propelled by the spirits of the dead swirling inside them, and grow far larger than other elementals.

Drench (Ex): The elemental's touch puts out torches, campfires, exposed lanterns, and other open flames of nonmagical origin if these are of Large size or smaller. The creature can dispel magical fire it touches as *dispel magic* (caster level equals elemental's HD).

Engulf (Ex): Engulf functions similarly to improved grab, except when the elemental successfully grapples an opponent, the creature is pulled inside and begins to drown (see **Drowning** in *Core Rulebook II* for details). A character inside the elemental takes slam damage each round as they are buffeted by the currents inside it. To escape from being engulfed, the character must succeed an opposed grapple check or escape artist check.

Split (Su): If the sanguine elemental drowns an opponent, the sanguine elemental converts the Hit Dice of the creature into additional elementals. Only the Hit Dice capable of forming at least a small sanguine elemental count towards splitting. For example, a Medium sanguine elemental drowns a 5th-level fighter. It may create two Small sanguine elementals or one Medium sanguine elemental, in either case, the extra HD is lost. Split sanguine elementals appear in appropriately sized spaces adjacent their source.

Skills: A sanguine elemental has a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check to perform some special action or avoid a hazard. It can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check, even if distracted or endangered. It can use the run action while swimming, provided it swims in a straight line.

	Sanguine Elemental, Small Small Elemental (Evil, Extraplanar)	Sanguine Elemental, Medium Medium Elemental (Evil, Extraplanar)
Hit Dice:	2d8+2 (11 hp)	4d8+8 (26 hp)
Initiative:	+5	+3
Speed:	20 ft. (4 squares), swim 90 ft.	20 ft. (4 squares), swim 90 ft.
Armor Class:	22 (+1 size, +5 Dex, +6 natural), touch 16, flat-footed 17	21 (+3 Dex, +8 natural), touch 13, flat-footed 18
Base Attack/Grapple:	+1/−4	+3/+6
Attack:	Slam +3 melee (1d3+1)	Slam +6 melee (1d4+4)
Full Attack:	2 slams +3 melee (1d3+1)	2 slams +6 melee (1d4+4)
Space/Reach:	5 ft. /5 ft.	5 ft. /5 ft.
Special Attack:	Drench, engulf	Drench, engulf
Special Qualities:	Darkvision 60 ft., elemental traits, split	Darkvision 60 ft., elemental traits, split
Saves:	Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +	Fort +6, Ref +4, Will +2
Abilities:	Str 13, Dex 20, Con 12, Int 6, Wis 11, Cha 11	Str 16, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 13, Cha 11
Skills:	Listen +3, Spot +4	Listen +4, Spot +5
Feats:	Power Attack	Cleave, Power Attack

	Sanguine Elemental, Large Large Elemental (Evil, Extraplanar)	Sanguine Elemental, Huge Huge Elemental (Evil, Extraplanar)
Hit Dice:	8d8+32 (68 hp)	16d8+96 (168 hp)
Initiative:	+2	+1
Speed:	20 ft. (4 squares), swim 90 ft.	30 ft. (6 squares), swim 120 ft.
Armor Class:	20 (–1 size, +2 Dex, +9 natural), touch 9, flatfooted 20	21 (–2 size, +1 Dex, +12 natural), touch 11, flatfooted 11
Base Attack/ Grapple:	+6/+15	+12/+29
Attack:	Slam +10 melee (1d6+7)	Slam +15 melee (1d8+13)
Full Attack:	2 slams +10 melee (1d6+7)	2 slams +15 melee (1d8+13)
Space/Reach:	10 ft. /10 ft.	15 ft. /15 ft.
Special Attack:	Drench, engulf	Drench, engulf
Special Qualities:	Damage reduction 5/–, darkvision 60 ft., elemental traits	Damage reduction 5/–, darkvision 60 ft., elemental traits
Saves:	Fort +10, Ref +4, Will +3	Fort +16, Ref +6, Will +8
Abilities:	Str 20, Dex 14, Con 18, Int 8, Wis 13, Cha 11	Str 28, Dex 12, Con 22, Int 8, Wis 13, Cha 11
Skills:	Listen + 6, Spot +7	Listen +12, Spot +13
Feats:	Cleave, Great Cleave, Power Attack	Alertness, Cleave, Great Cleave, Improved Bull Rush, Iron Will, Power Attack

	Sanguine Elemental, Greater Gargantuan Elemental (Evil, Extraplanar)	Sanguine Elemental, Elder Colossal Elemental (Evil, Extraplanar)
Hit Dice:	21d8+168 (262 hp)	30d8+300 (435 hp)
Initiative:	+1	+1
Speed:	30 ft. (6 squares), swim 120 ft.	40 ft. (6 squares), swim 160 ft.
Armor Class:	23 (–4 size, +1 Dex, +16 natural), touch 7, flat-footed 22	24 (–8 size, +1 Dex, +21 natural), touch 3, flat-footed 23
Base Attack/ Grapple:	+15/+40	+22/+55
Attack:	Slam +24 melee (2d6+19)	Slam +31 melee (3d8+25)
Full Attack:	2 slams +24 melee (2d6+19)	2 slams +31 melee (3d8+25)
Space/Reach:	20 ft. /20 ft.	40 ft. /40 ft.
Special Attack:	Drench, engulf	Drench, engulf
Special Qualities:	Damage reduction 10/–, darkvision 60 ft., elemental traits	Damage reduction 10/–, darkvision 60 ft., elemental traits
Saves:	Fort +20, Ref +8, Will +8	Fort +27, Ref +11, Will +11
Abilities:	Str 36, Dex 12, Con 26, Int 8, Wis 13, Cha 11	Str 44, Dex 12, Con 30, Int 8, Wis 13, Cha 11
Skills:	Listen +13, Spot +13	Listen +17, Spot +18
Feats:	Alertness, Cleave, Great Cleave, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Sunder, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack	Alertness, Awesome Blow, Cleave, Great Cleave, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical (Slam), Improved Natural Attack (Slam), Improved Sunder, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack

Sanguine Elemental Sizes			Sanguine Elemental Sizes		
Elemental	Height	Weight	Elemental	Height	Weight
Small	4 ft.	34 lb.	Huge	32 ft.	18,000 lb.
Medium	8 ft.	280 lb.	Greater	36 ft.	21,000 lb.
Large	16 ft.	2,250 lb.	Elder	40 ft.	24,000 lb.

Sea Spawn

Medium Monstrous Humanoid

(Aquatic, Shapeshifter)

Hit Dice: 8d8+16 (52 hp)

Initiative: +2

Speed: 40 ft. (squares)

Armor Class: 19 (+2 Dex, +7 natural), touch 12, flat-footed 17

Base Attack/Grapple: +8/+11 **Attack:** Bone longsword* +11 melee (1d8+3/19-20)

Full Attack: Bone longsword* +11/+6 melee (1d8+3/19-20) and bite +6 melee (1d6+1)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. /5 ft.

Special Attack: Keening

Special Qualities: Alternate form, amphibious, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to charm, cold, and sleep

Saves: Fort +4, Ref +8, Will +7

Abilities: Str 16, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 17

Skills: Disguise +17, Sense Motive +12, Swim +22

Feats: Dodge, Skill Focus (Disguise), Weapon Focus (longsword)

Environment: The Sea of Canceri

Organization: Solitary, Pair, Squad (4–16)

Challenge Rating: 6

Treasure: Standard

Alignment: Always neutral evil

Advancement: By character class

Level Adjustment: +2

*See **Bone Weaponry** sidebar.

Rising out of the water is a hideous creature from the depths. Man-shaped, it has grey-white mottled skin, and its tongue thick and black slips past soft lips, disgorging a slippery white fluid.

The sea spawn have long lived beneath the Sea of Canceri, content to worship their idols in peace. There, beneath the cerulean waves, and amidst the ruins of ancient civilizations, these creatures gather in the cold waters to plot against those who cast shadows from above, stealing their food and disturbing their profane peace. Motivated by a sinister urge for the warm blood of the surface dwellers, these shapeshifters emerge from the depths to take the shapes of those they hate,

Bone Weaponry

Any metal weapon in the *Core Rulebook I* can be fashioned from bone. Bone weapons suffer a –1 penalty to attack and damage rolls. On a natural one, the wielder must succeed a DC 15 Reflex save or the weapon shatters. Bone weaponry can also be made masterwork, in which case it loses the penalty on attack rolls, or greater masterwork, in which case it loses both the penalty on attack rolls and the penalty on damage rolls. In either case, the chance for breakage remains. A magically enchanted bone weapon is not at risk from breakage like other bone weapons. Finally, bone weapons cost half the listed value.

in some cruel act of irony, to bring them screaming to drown in the chill currents of the deep.

As the sea spawn are shapeshifters, no one knows when one is present. They come to the surface to watch and learn, to identify the strong and isolate the weak for their brethren. Some believe the sea spawn plot to take over the fishing communities

Sea spawn know the languages of the coastal communities, being fluent in Cancere and Low Coryani.

Combat

By changing forms, the sea spawn scout a potential battlefield prior to an attack. Though they are not as skilled at insinuating themselves in another culture as are other shapeshifters, their assumed form is good enough to convince the average man. Once they identify the major routes through a city, places of strategic value, and any other necessary information, they return to their waters to await the night, before returning in numbers to steal children, the elderly, or anyone else they perceived as weak.

Keening (Su): When in their true form, sea spawn can release a frightening howl once per round as a free action. All living creatures within 30-feet must succeed a DC 17 Will save or become frightened for 1d8 rounds. Once a creature has succeeded or failed a saving throw against a sea spawn's keening, they are immune to the effect for 24-hours. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Alternate Form (Su): A sea spawn can assume any form of Large size or smaller as a standard action. This ability functions as a *polymorph* spell cast on itself (caster level 10th). Whenever the sea spawn assumes a new form, it regains hit points as if it had been resting. If slain, it reverts to its natural form. Sea spawn can hold a new form for up to one hour before they need to change to a new form, or their original form.

Amphibious (Ex): Sea spawn can function indefinitely on land or under water.

Skills: A sea spawn has a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check to perform some special action or avoid a hazard. It can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check, even if distracted or endangered. It can use the run action while swimming, provided it swims in a straight line.

Sea Spawn Characters

Most exceptional sea spawn are rangers or assassins. Sea spawn characters have the following racial traits.

— Str +6, Dex +4, Con +4, Int +2, Wis +2, Cha +6.

— Medium size.

— A sea spawn's base land speed is 30 feet.

— Darkvision out to 60 feet.

— Racial Hit Dice: A sea spawn begins with eight levels of monstrous humanoid, which provides 8d8 Hit Dice, a base attack bonus of +8, and base saving throw bonuses of Fort +2, Ref +6, Will +6.



— Racial Skills: A sea spawn's monstrous humanoid levels give it skill points equal to $11 \times (2 + \text{Int modifier, minimum } 1)$. Its class skills are Disguise, Sense Motive, and Swim.

— Racial Feats: A sea spawn's monstrous humanoid levels give it three feats.

— Weapon and Armor Proficiency: A sea spawn is proficient with all simple and martial weapons, and light armor, and shields.

— Sea spawn have a +8 bonus to Swim checks, as described above.

— Automatic Languages: Cancerese. Bonus Languages: Any non-secret languages.

— Favored Class: Ranger.

— Level Adjustment: +2. A sea spawn's ECL is +10.

Sheodul

Large Magical Beast (Reptilian)

Hit Dice: 10d10+50 (105 hp)

Initiative: +3

Speed: 20 ft. (4 squares), fly 120 ft., burrow 20 ft.

Armor Class: 22 (+3 Dex, -1 size, +10 natural), touch 12, flat-footed

Base Attack/Grapple: +10/+21

Attack: Bite +16 melee (2d8+10 and poison, 19-20/x2)

Full Attack: Bite +16 melee (2d8+10 and poison, 19-20/x2) and tail +11 (1d8+7)

Space/Reach: 10 ft. /5 ft.

Special Attack: Poison, roar

Special Qualities: Damage reduction 5/—, darkvision 240 ft., regeneration 5, vulnerability to sunlight.

Saves: Fort +12, Ref +10, Will +4

Abilities: Str 24, Dex 17, Con 20, Int 7, Wis 12, Cha 11

Skills: Hide +11, Listen +6, Move Silently +6, Spot +6

Feats: Alertness, Flyby Attack, Hover, Improved Critical (bite)^B, Wingover

Environment: The Cold Plains

Organization: Solitary, Pair, Wing (4-16)

Challenge Rating: 9

Treasure: None

Alignment: Always chaotic evil

Advancement: 11-20 HD (Large), 21+ HD (Huge)

Level Adjustment: —

As the sun sinks beneath the horizon, the Cold Plains come to life. Tearing themselves free from the muddy earth are great reptilian horrors, their heads featuring twisted parodies of human faces distorted in agony, and with long hanging jaws swinging with their efforts to pull free. With mud still dripping from their scaled wings, they shriek and take to the air.

The sheodul, winged death in Cancerese, cannot abide the light, and must burrow in the mud before dawn.



Evidence of these monsters not escaping the sun's rays litter the Cold Plains. Great black skeletons are regular sights. At night, they pry themselves out of the wet soil, and take to the air, searching for flesh.

A sheodul measures 14 feet long from face to the end of its whip like tail. It has a 20-foot wingspan and weighs about 4,000 pounds.

Sheodul speak their own language, a complex series of clicks and whistles incomprehensible to human linguists.

Combat

Sheodul attack at night. They fly through the skies, scanning the ground for prey. When they spot a creature, they swoop down to attack it mid-flight with its razor sharp teeth. They repeat their flyby attacks until the target is too weak to move. They then land and tear their foe to pieces. Once they have a taste blood, they are implacable enemies and always fight to the death.

Poison (Ex): The rotting morsels caught in their teeth create a virulent toxin. When injected into a subject's system, such as through a bite attack, the poison attacks the subject's nervous system. Victims of the sheodul's bite attack must succeed a DC 20 Fortitude save or take 2d6 points of Dexterity damage. Ten rounds later, they must succeed another saving throw or take 1d6 points of Constitution damage. This poison cannot be harvested. The save DC is Constitution-based.



Roar (Su): A sheodul can unleash an awful roar once every 1d4 rounds. All creatures except the sheodul within 360-feet must succeed a DC 15 Will save or become shaken. Those within 120-feet become frightened, and those within 60-feet become panicked. This effect lasts for 1d4 rounds. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Regeneration (Ex): Fire deals normal damage to a sheodul. If the sheodul loses a limb, including its head, the lost portion regrows in 3d6 minutes.

Vulnerability to Sunlight (Ex): A sheodul takes 2 points of Constitution damage for every hour it is exposed to sunlight, and it dies if its Constitution score falls to 0. Lost Constitution points recover at the rate of 1 per every 12-hour period spend underground, buried, or otherwise sheltered from the sun.

Skills: Sheodul have a +8 bonus on Hide checks, and a +16 bonus on Hide checks when buried under mud.

Carrying Capacity: A light load for a sheodul is up to 700 pounds; a medium load, 701–1,400 pounds; a heavy load, 1,401–2,100 pounds.

Templates

Corpse Spawn Template

There are individuals in the history of Canceri who have taken to love those who hover at Neroth's Gate. While usually these unions produce no offspring, there are occasions that children have been born from such an unholy union. These children, the corpse spawn, are changed in many ways by their unique ancestry.

Corpse spawn characters do not appear much different from others. They are living beings, though somewhat pale. They can pursue any number of professions and integrate into Cancere society. In fact, many of the greatest priests in Ventaka history were Corpse Spawn.

However, being a corpse spawn gives the individual unusual insights into the world. They can see into the ethereal plane, producing unsettling visions. They recognize undead for what they are, and many inherit some degree of the ability to manipulate necrotic energy from their ancestor. This unusual heritage can have some unexpected side effects, such as madness, deviance, or deformities.

Creating a Corpse Spawn

Corpse spawn is an inherited template that can be added to any humanoid, giant, or monstrous humanoid (referred to hereafter as the base creature). The creature's type remains unchanged. Corpse spawn creatures use all the base creature's statistics and special abilities except as noted here.

Armor Class: The base creature gains a +1 insight bonus to its armor class. This bonus stems from the corpse spawn's ability to see death as it manifests in the Ethereal Plane.

Special Attack: A corpse spawn retains all the special attacks of the base creature and gains the following special attacks.

Spell-like Abilities: A corpse spawn creature with a Charisma score of 8 or higher (after the ability score adjustments noted below) gains spell-like abilities, using its Hit Dice as its caster level. The table below lists the abilities available. These abilities are cumulative. The save DC is Charisma-based.

HD	Ability
1–2	<i>Cause fear</i> 3/day
3–4	<i>Bone shards</i> 1/day
5–6	<i>Command undead</i> at will
7–8	<i>Death knell</i> at will
9–10	<i>Animate dead</i> 1/day
11–12	<i>Vampiric touch</i> 1/day
13–14	<i>Death ward</i> at will
15–16	<i>Ray of necrosis</i> 1/day
17–18	<i>Eyebite</i> 1/day
19–20	<i>Siphon life</i> 1/day
21+	<i>Waves of exhaustion</i>

Special Qualities: A corpse spawn has all the special qualities of the base creatures, plus the following special qualities.

— Darkvision out to 60 feet.

— +2 racial bonus to all saving throws made to resist spells and spell-like abilities of the mind-affecting descriptor.

— +2 racial bonus to all saving throws made to resist poison, sleep effects, paralysis, stunning, disease, and death effects.

— Resistance to cold 5.

Abilities: Increase from the base creature as follows: Str +2, Cha +2

Challenge Rating: +2

Alignment: Usually evil (any).

Level Adjustment: +2

Corpse Spawn Characters

Corpse Spawn humanoids always have a character class, favoring martially oriented characters or bards and sorcerers. Corpse Spawn bards pursue the assassin and similar prestige classes, while the fighters and the occasional cleric advance in the blackguards. Above all, however, corpse spawn are drawn to the Nerothian reaper base class Corpse spawn always serve Neroth in his undeath aspect.

Sample Corpse Spawn

This knight has drawn features, pale skin and wispy hair, as though death rides with him.

This example is based on a 7th-level human Nerothian reaper with the following ability scores: Str 15, Dex 8, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 14.

Corpse Spawn 7th-Level Human Nerothian Reaper**Medium Humanoid (Augmented Humanoid)**

Hit Dice: 7d10+14 (52 hp)

Initiative: -1

Speed: 20 ft. (4 squares); base speed 30 ft.

Armor Class: 19 (-1 Dex, +9 *full plate*, +1 insight), touch 10, flat-footed 19

Base Attack/Grapple: +7/+10 **Attack:** +1 *scythe* +11 melee (2d4+4/x4)

Full Attack: +1 *scythe* +11/+6 melee (2d4+4/x4)

Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.

Special Attack: *Animate dead*, aura of fear, bolster undead, death touch, disturbing presence, dread, frightful presence, ghoul steed, rebuke undead, spell-like abilities, spells

Special Qualities: Aura of faith, corpse spawn traits, darkvision 60 ft., resistance to cold 5

Saves: Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +7

Abilities: Str 17, Dex 8, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 16

Skills: Bluff +5, Hide -1, Intimidate +16, Knowledge (religion) +2, Ride +9

Feats: Butcher, Cleave, Improved Sunder, Persuasive^B, Power Attack, Skill Focus (Intimidate)^B

Environment: Any land or underground (Canceri)

Organization: Solitary

Challenge Rating: 9

Treasure: Standard

Alignment: Usually lawful evil

Advancement: By character class

Level Adjustment: +2

Combat

Corpse spawn Nerothian reapers surround themselves with undead, when possible. They use their bolster undead ability to enhance their combat prowess, allowing the reaper to focus his attacks on his opponents' leaders.

Animate Dead (Sp): This Nerothian reaper can *animate dead*, as the spell, once per week.

Death touch (Su): This Nerothian reaper can use the death touch ability, as per a 7th-level Cleric with access to the Death domain, twice per day.

Disturbing Presence (Ex): This Nerothian reaper is immune to fear, and gains Persuasive and Skill Focus (Intimidate) as bonus feats.

Dread (Su): Twice per day, this Nerothian reaper may make a special melee attack against a living opponent,



at +3 to his attack roll, and require the target to succeed a DC 16 Will save or be confused for 3 rounds.

Ghoul Steed (Su): This Nerothian reaper employs a ghoul steed with the following statistics.

Ghoul Steed: CR 2; Large Undead; HD 7d12; hp 45; Init +3; Spd 50 ft.; AC 22, touch 12, flat-footed 15; Base Attack +3; Grp +12; Atk +7 melee (1d6+5, hoof); Full Atk +7 melee (1d6+5, 2 hooves) and +2 melee (1d4+2 plus paralysis, bite); Space/Reach 10 ft./5 ft.; SA paralysis; SQ darkvision 60 ft., improved evasion, low-light vision, scent, turn resistance +2, undead traits; SV Fort +1, Ref +4, Will +7; Str 21, Dex 17, Con —, Int 6, Wis 17, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Listen +10, Spot +10; Ability Focus (paralysis), Alertness, Run.

Paralysis (Ex): Those hit by a ghoul steed's bite attack must succeed on a DC 14 Fortitude save or be paralyzed for 1d4+1 rounds. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Rebuke Undead (Su): This Nerothian reaper may turn undead six times per day.

Spell-like Abilities: At will—*command undead* (DC 15), *death knell* (DC 15); 3/day—*cause fear* (DC 14); 1/day—*bone shards* (DC 15). Caster Level 7th. The save DC's are Charisma-based.

Typical Nerothian Reaper Spells Prepared (2; DC 11 + spell level): 1st—*corrupt weapon*, *doom*.

Possessions: +1 *full plate*, +1 *scythe*, *cloak of resistance* +1.

Husk

With the profusion of vermin found in Canceri, cunning Nerothian priests turned to the insect life to supplement their undead armies, creating legions of spider, centipedes, and even wasps to destroy their foes. Using the same principle as creating zombies and skeletons, they focused their art on the animation of insect life, first scooping out its innards, and then applying necromantic energies. Husks can be created by the *create undead* spell.

Creating a Husk

“Husk” is an acquired template that can be added to any creature of the Vermin type (referred to hereafter as the base creature).

A husk uses all the base creature’s statistics and special abilities except as noted here.

Size and Type: The creature’s type changes to undead. It retains any subtypes except alignment subtypes (such as good). It does not gain the augmented subtype. Size is unchanged.

Hit Dice: Add one Hit Die and change all Hit Dice to d12s.

Speed: If the base creature can fly, its maneuverability rating drops to clumsy. If the husk does not already have a climb speed, it gains one equal to one-half their base land speed.

Armor Class: Natural armor bonus increases by a number based on the husk’s size:

Base Attack: A husk has a base attack bonus equal to one-half its Hit Dice.

Attacks: A husk retains all the natural attacks of the base creature.

Special Attack: A husk retains none of the base creature’s special attacks, but gains the following.

Deadly Poison (Ex): If the base creature had a poison attack, they gain this ability. Convert all ability damage to Con damage instead.

Special Qualities: A husk loses most special qualities of the base creature. It retains any extraordinary special qualities that improve its melee or ranged attacks. A husk gains the following special qualities.

Immunity to cold (Ex): Husks are not affected by cold.

Damage Reduction (Ex): 5/Bludgeoning.

Abilities: A husk’s Dexterity score increases by +4. It has no Constitution or Intelligence score, its Wisdom changes to 10, and its Charisma changes to 1.

Saves: Recalculate base saves with the husk having only a good Will save.

Skills: Husks have no skills.

Feats: Husks retain any feats of the base creature, and gain Improved Initiative as a bonus feat.

Environment: Any, often the same as the base creature.

Organization: Any

Challenge Rating: Varies based on Hit Dice, as follows:

Treasure: None

Alignment: Always neutral

Advancement: As base creature

Level Adjustment: —

Sample Husk

This example uses a huge monstrous centipede as the base creature.

Huge Monstrous Centipede Husk

Huge Undead

Hit Dice: 7d12 (45 hp)

Initiative: +8

Speed: 40 ft. (8 squares), climb 40 ft.

Armor Class: 22 (–2 size, +4 Dex, +10 natural), touch 12, flat-footed 18

Base Attack/Grapple: +3/+14

Attack: Bite +4 melee (2d6+3 plus poison)

Full Attack: Bite +4 melee (2d6+3 plus poison)

Space/Reach: 15 ft. /10 ft.

Special Attack: Deadly poison

Special Qualities: Damage reduction 5/bludgeoning, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to cold, undead traits

Saves: Fort +2, Ref +6, Will +5

Abilities: Str 17, Dex 19, Con –, Int –, Wis 10, Cha 1

Skills: —

Feats: Improved Initiative^B

Environment: Underground

Organization: Solitary or colony (2–5)

Challenge Rating: 3

Treasure: None

Alignment: Always neutral

Advancement: 8–12 HD (Huge)

Level Adjustment: —

Combat

Deadly Poison (Ex): Injury, Fortitude DC 16, initial and secondary damage 1d6 Con. The save DC is Strength-based.

Mummy, Greater

“Greater mummy” is an acquired template that can be added to any humanoid or monstrous humanoid creature (referred to hereafter as the base creature).

A mummy uses all the base creature’s statistics and special abilities except as noted here.

Size and Type: The creature’s type changes to undead (augmented humanoid or monstrous humanoid). Do not recalculate base attack bonus, saves, or skill points. Size is unchanged.

Hit Dice: Increase all current Hit Dice to d12s.

Speed: Reduce base speed to 20 feet. The base creature loses any other forms of movement.

Armor Class: The base creature’s natural armor bonus improves by +10.

Attack: A mummy retains all the attacks of the base creature and gains a slam attack if it did not already

have one. If the base creature can use weapons, the mummy retains this ability. A creature with natural weapons retains those natural weapons. A mummy fighting without weapons uses either its slam attack or its primary natural weapon (if it has any). A mummy armed with a weapon uses its slam or a weapon, as it desires.

Full Attack: A mummy fighting without weapons uses either its slam attack (see above) or its natural weapons (if it has any). If armed with a weapon, it uses the weapon as its primary attack along with a slam or other natural weapon as a natural secondary attack.

Damage: Mummies have slam attacks. If the base creature does not have this attack form, use the appropriate damage value from the table below according to the mummy's size. Creatures having other kinds of natural weapons retain their old damage values or use the appropriate value from the table below, whichever is better.

Size	Damage
Fine	1
Diminutive	1d2
Tiny	1d3
Small	1d4
Medium	1d6
Large	1d8
Huge	2d6
Gargantuan	2d8
Colossal	4d6

Special Attacks: A mummy retains all the special attacks of the base creature and gains those described below.

Despair (Su): At the mere sight of a mummy, the viewer must succeed on a Will save against a DC 10 + one-half the mummy's HD + the mummy's Cha modifier or be paralyzed with fear for 1d4 rounds. Whether or not the save is successful, that creature cannot be affected again by the same mummy's despair ability for 24 hours.

Mummy Rot (Su): Supernatural disease—slam, Fortitude DC 10 + one-half the mummy's HD + mummy's Cha modifier, incubation period 1 minute; damage 1d6 Con and 1d6 Cha. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Unlike normal diseases, mummy rot continues until the victim reaches Constitution 0 (and dies) or is cured as described below. Mummy rot is a powerful curse, not a natural disease. A character attempting to cast any conjuration (healing) spell on a creature afflicted with mummy rot must succeed on a DC 20 caster level check, or the spell has no effect on the afflicted character. To eliminate mummy rot, the curse must first be broken with *break enchantment* or *remove curse* (requiring a DC 20 caster level check for either spell), after which a caster level check is no longer necessary to cast healing spells on



the victim, and the mummy rot can be magically cured as any normal disease. An afflicted creature dying of mummy rot shrivels away into sand and dust that blow away into nothing at the first wind.

Special Qualities: A mummy retains all the special qualities of the base creature and gains those described below.

Damage Reduction (Su): A mummy has damage reduction 5/—.

Darkvision (Ex): Mummies have 60-foot darkvision.

Fire Vulnerability (Ex): Mummies take half again as much (+50%) damage as normal from fire, regardless of whether a saving throw is allowed, or if the save is a success or failure.

Abilities: Increase from the base creature as follows: Str +14, Int -4, Wis +4, Cha +4. As an undead creature, a mummy has no Constitution score.

Skills: Same as the base creature.

Feats: Same as the base creature.

Environment: Any, usually same as base creature.

Organization: Solitary, guard (greater mummy and 6–10 mummies).

Challenge Rating: Same as the base creature +4.

Treasure: Standard.

Alignment: Usually lawful evil.

Advancement: By character class.

Level Adjustment: Same as the base creature +8.

Warped

When the Coryani legions destroyed the elorii settlements in the Vosewalden, slaughtering almost of its inhabitants, the elves there leveled a powerful curse upon the forest and all of its inhabitants. The hatred and rage elicited by the deaths of their people at the hands of the human soldiers spread throughout the lands, corrupting animal, plant, and humanoid with a violent intolerance for humans.

Centuries later, the creatures of the Vosewalden present a serious threat to those who would explore the ruins of the old cities, or uncover the mysteries hidden beneath the malevolent boughs of the living forest. Warped elorii roam the land, in search of human victims to vent their ire. No one is exempt from their hatred, and it is as if the entire forest is alive with a hunger for destruction.

Creating a Warped Creature

Warped is an inherited template that can be added to any animal, giant, humanoid, magical beast, monstrous humanoid, ooze, plant, or vermin.

A warped creature uses all the base creature's statistics and special abilities except as noted here. Do not recalculate the creature's Hit Dice, base attack bonus, saves, or skill points if its type changes.

Size and Type: Animals or vermin with this template become magical beasts, plants become aberrations, but otherwise the creature type is unchanged. Size is unchanged. All creatures gain the Augmented subtype.

Speed: The base creature's land speed increases by +10 ft.

Armor Class: The base creature's natural armor bonus increases by +1 (this stacks with any natural armor bonus of the base creature).

Attack: A warped creature has two claw attacks and a bite attack, with the claws as its primary natural weapon. If the base creature can use weapons, the warped creature retains this ability. A warped creature fighting without weapons uses a claw when making an attack action. When it has a weapon, it uses the weapon instead.

Full Attack: A warped creature fighting without weapons uses both claws and its bite when making a full attack. If armed with a weapon, it uses the weapon as its primary attack and its bite as a natural secondary attack. If it has a hand free, it uses a claw as an additional natural secondary attack.

Damage: Warped creatures have bite and claw attacks. If the base creature does not have these attack forms, use the damage values in the table below. Otherwise, use the values below or the base creature's damage values, whichever are greater.

Special Attacks: A warped creature retains all the special attacks of the base creature and gains the following special attacks.

Rage (Ex): Once per day, whenever the warped creature takes any damage, it must attempt a Will save against a DC 10 + damage dealt. On a failed save, it enters a violent rage. While in this state, it temporarily gains a

+4 bonus to Strength, a +4 bonus to Constitution, and a +2 morale bonus on Will saves, but takes a –2 penalty to Armor Class. The increase in Constitution increases its hit points by 2 points per level, but these hit points go away at the end of the rage when its Constitution score drops back to normal. (These extra hit points are not lost first the way temporary hit points are.) While raging, a warped creature cannot use any Charisma-, Dexterity-, or Intelligence-based skills (except for Balance, Escape Artist, Intimidate, and Ride), the Concentration skill, or any abilities requiring patience or concentration, nor can it cast spells, use spell-like abilities, or activate magic items requiring a command word, a spell trigger (such as a wand), or spell completion (such as a scroll) to function. It can use any feat it has except Combat Expertise, item creation feats, and metamagic feats. A fit of rage lasts for a number of rounds equal to 3 + its (newly improved) Constitution modifier. A warped creature may not prematurely end its rage.

At the end of the rage, the warped creature loses the rage modifiers and restrictions and becomes fatigued (–2 penalty to Strength, –2 penalty to Dexterity, cannot charge or run) for the duration of the current encounter. The warped creature's rage ability is in addition to any rages gained from class features.

Warping Field (Su): While in a rage, warped creatures generate a field of raw hatred and violence. All creatures within 30-feet of the warped creature, must succeed a Will save against a DC 10 + one-half the warped creature's HD and levels + the warped creature's Charisma modifier, or enter a rage themselves. They gain all the benefits and drawbacks of the barbarian's rage, except they attack the nearest living creature, regardless of their being a friend or foe. This effect lasts a number of rounds equal to 3 + the subject's newly improved Constitution modifier, and at the end of the rage, the subject is fatigued, as above.

Animal Companions: If the base creature has an animal companion, it gains the warped template as well.

Special Qualities: A warped creature retains all the special qualities of the base creature, plus the following special qualities.

— Darkvision out to 60 feet.

— Damage reduction: 2/– (if HD 11 or less) or 4/– (if HD 12 or more).

— Immunity to poison and spells with the chaos descriptor.

Abilities: Increase and decrease from the base creatures as follows: Str +2, Dex +2, Con +2, Int –4 (minimum 2), Cha +4.

Environment: Warped creatures are exclusive to the Vosewalden.

Challenge Rating: HD 4 or less, as the base creature +1; HD 5 to 10, as the base creature +2; HD 11 or more, as the base creature +3.

Alignment: Always chaotic evil

Level Adjustment: +4



Sample Warped Creature

This elorii has features twisted with rage. Its eyes glow yellow and it shakes with hatred.

This example uses a 7th-level elorii ranger as the base creature.

Warped 7th-Level Ardakene Elorii Ranger**Medium Humanoid (Augmented Humanoid)**

Hit Dice: 7d8+14 (45 hp)

Initiative: +4

Speed: 40 ft. (8 squares)

Armor Class: 19 (+4 Dex, +4 studded leather armor, +1 natural), touch 14, flat-footed 15

Base Attack/Grapple: +7/+9

Attack: +1 *human bane longsword* +10 melee (1d8+3/19-20)

Full Attack: +1 *human bane longsword* +8/3 melee (1d8+3/19-20), claw +7/2 melee (1d4+1), bite +2 melee (1d6+1)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. /5 ft.

Special Attack: Animal companion, combat style, favored enemy (humans +4, vals +2), improved combat style, rage, spells, warping field

Special Qualities: Damage reduction 2/–, darkvision 60 ft., immortal, immune to chaos and sleep spells and effects, non-magical disease, and poison, low-light vision, *speak with animals* (1/day), wild empathy, woodland stride

Saves: Fort +7, Ref +9, Will +5

Abilities: Str 15, Dex 18, Con 14, Int 6, Wis 13, Cha 16

Skills: Heal +3, Hide +14, Knowledge (nature) +8, Move Silently +14, Survival +13 (+15 aboveground natural environments)

Feats: Butcher, Cleave, Endurance^B, Improved Two-weapon Fighting^B, Power Attack, Track^B, Two-weapon Fighting^B

Environment: Vosewalden

Organization: Solitary and warped wolf

Challenge Rating: 7

Treasure: Standard

Alignment: Chaotic Evil

Advancement: By character class

Level Adjustment: +4.

Combat

Warped elorii are aggressive combatants, using their warping field to sow chaos in their enemies. Hating humans and Vals, they attack these foes on sight, fighting to the death with no regard for their own safety. They sometimes keep the company of other warped creatures like warped treants or warped wolves.

Rage (Ex): Once per day, use the following statistics in the place of those above. HD 7d8+28; 59 hp; AC 17; Grapple +11; Atk +1 *human bane longsword* +12 melee (1d8+5/19-20); Full Atk +1 *human bane longsword* +10/5 melee (1d8+5/19-20), claw +9/4 melee (1d4+2), bite +4 melee (1d6+2); Fort +9, Will +7; Str 19, Con 18.

Warping field (Su): This warped elorii ranger's warping field requires a DC 16 to save.

Typical Ranger Spells Prepared (2; save DC 11+spell level): 1st—*longstrider*, *magic fang*.

Possessions: +1 studded leather armor, +1 *human bane longsword*

Zombie, Greater

Nerotherian death priests realized after the Time of Troubles the inefficiency of zombie units. Slow, stupid, and unreliable, the cost of maintaining these undead in exchange for their meager benefits proved to be inadequate for protecting their domed cities. Five years after the Coryani Legions ousted the Devil-Kings from their palaces in Nishanpur, a cleric of Neroth named Rajal Atban, devised a new formula for creating potent versions of zombies. These undead soldiers kept a spark of intelligence, allowing them to retain something of their training. However, in place of the mindlessness of the other zombies, they were overwhelmed by an insatiable hunger for human flesh. So great was this hunger that when they felled a foe, they would set upon their opponent and devour him before moving on to the rest of the battle. Worse, these zombies could create spawn from those they had bitten, creating more, albeit standard zombies, from the fallen.

Rajal Atban fielded these new forces in a skirmish against a remote Milandir settlement. The battle grew out of hand, and soon, zombies overtook the entire town, and spread outwards to other communities. Not wanting to invite war so soon after the Reign of the Devil-Kings, Rajal destroyed every one and hid the arcane formula for creating them, seeing a greater threat from these things than their derived benefits. Now, centuries later, the formula has resurfaced, and vanguard leaders in Ventaka work to build an army of these ravenous horrors, without regard for the damage and danger posed to the world.

Greater zombies may be created through the *create undead* spell cast by an 11th level or higher caster.

Creating a Greater Zombie

Greater Zombie is an acquired template that can be added to any Humanoid or Monstrous Humanoid creature. A greater zombie uses all the base creature's statistics and special abilities except as noted here.

Size and Type: The creature's type changes to undead. It retains any subtypes except alignment subtypes and subtypes that indicate kind. It gains the augmented subtype.

Hit Dice: Halve the base creature's Hit Dice and raise them to d12s.

Speed: The base creature gains a +5 ft. enhancement bonus to its land speed. If the base creature had a fly speed, reduce its maneuverability to average or its existing maneuverability, whichever is worse.

Armor Class: The base creature's natural armor bonus increases based on its size:

Attack: A greater zombie has a base attack bonus equal to one-half its Hit Dice. It gains a bite attack. If the base creature can use weapons, the greater zombie retains this ability. When it has a weapon, it uses the weapon instead of the bite.

Full Attack: A greater zombie fighting without weapons uses its bite when making a full attack. If armed with a weapon, it uses the weapon as its primary attack, and its bite as a natural secondary attack.

Damage: Greater zombies have a bite attack. If the base creature does not already have this attack form, use the damage values in the table below. Otherwise, use the values below or the base creature's damage values, whichever is greater.

Special Attack: A greater zombie retains all the special attacks of the base creature and gains the following special attacks.

Create Spawn (Su): Any humanoid or monstrous humanoid slain by a greater zombie becomes a regular zombie in 1d4 rounds. Spawn are not under the command of the greater zombie. They do not possess any of the abilities they had in life.

Curse of Neroth (Su): Those bitten by a zombie must succeed a Fortitude save against a DC 10 + one-half the greater zombie's Hit Dice + the greater zombie's Charisma modifier. On a failed save, the victim takes 1d6 points of Constitution drain. Thereafter, the victim must attempt an additional save each day to avoid taking more Constitution drain. Unlike other diseases, the curse of Neroth is magical, and successful saves do not allow the character to recover. Only magical healing can save the character.

Feed (Ex): Whenever the greater zombie reduces a living target to 0 hit points or less, it must succeed a Will save against a DC 15 + the target's Charisma modifier. On a failed save, it starts eating the target, performing coup-de-gras attacks each round with its bite attack for 1d6 minutes. If attacked by another attacker, the greater zombie may function normally.

Special Qualities: A greater zombie retains all the special qualities of the base creature and gains those described below.

- Darkvision out to 60 feet.
- Damage Reduction 5/slashing.
- Undead traits.

Abilities: Increase or decrease from the base creature as follows: Str +4, Int -6, Cha -6 (minimum of 1). As an undead creature, the greater zombie has no Constitution score. If the reduction to Intelligence reduces the base creature's Intelligence to 0, the base creature cannot be made into a greater zombie, and instead becomes a regular zombie as described in the *Core Rulebook III*.

Saves: Refigure base saves. Base save bonuses are Fort +1/3 HD, Ref +1/3 HD, and Will +1/2 HD +2.

Skills: The greater zombie loses all skills of the base creature, and gains new skill points equal to (4 + Int modifier) X (HD+3). It has class skills as follows: Climb, Listen, and Spot.

Feats: The greater zombie retains all the feats of the base creature, and gains Toughness as a bonus feat.

Environment: Any, the same as the base creature.

Organization: Any

Challenge Rating: As base creature +2.

Treasure: None.

Alignment: Always neutral evil.

Advancement: As base creature, but double Hit Dice (maximum 20), or — if the base creature advances by character class.

Level Adjustment: —.

Sample Greater Zombie

This tattered goblin is dead, but he moves quicker than any zombie you have ever seen.

This example uses a goblin as the base creature.

Greater Zombie 1st-Level Goblin Warrior

Small Undead (Augmented humanoid)

Hit Dice: 1d12+3 (9 hp)

Initiative: +1

Speed: 30 ft. (6 squares)

Armor Class: 16 (+1 size, +1 Dex, +1 natural, +2 leather armor, +1 light wooden shield), touch 12, flat-footed 15

Base Attack/Grapple: +0/-2

Attack: Small morningstar +3 melee (1d6+2)

Full Attack: Small morningstar +3 melee (1d6+2), bite -2 melee (1d4+1 and curse of Neroth)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. /5 ft.

Special Attack: Create spawn, curse of Neroth, feed

Special Qualities: Damage reduction 5/slashing, darkvision 60 ft., undead traits

Saves: Fort +0, Ref +1, Will +1

Abilities: Str 15, Dex 13, Con —, Int 4, Wis 9, Cha 1

Skills: Listen +3, Spot +3

Feats: Alertness, Toughness^B

Environment: Temperate plains

Organization: Gang (2-5), Horde (4-9 plus 2d12 zombies)

Challenge Rating: 2

Treasure: Standard

Alignment: Always neutral evil

Advancement: —

Level Adjustment: —

This greater zombie is based on a 1st-level goblin warrior with the following ability scores: Str 11, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 6.

Combat

This greater zombie uses full attack actions where possible. More intelligent than regular zombies, it hides among regular zombies, waiting for the perfect moment to spring on an enemy spellcaster or other weak looking opponent.

Curse of Neroth (Su): DC 5, 1d6 Con drain. The save DC is Charisma-based.



Chapter Ten

Dramatis Personae

Just as Canceri is home to a variety of terrible monsters, insidious drugs, and an uncaring monolithic church, like any nation, Canceri is a nation of people. Non-player characters are vital to a campaign, as they are the common windows through which characters see the nation. Thus, this final chapter serves two purposes. First, it presents a number of generic NPCs, characters for you to use in your Canceri campaigns, covering the major facets of Cancerese life. Secondly, it details some of the most powerful people that call Canceri home.

Common Characters

The following NPCs reflect the generic members of Cancerese culture. All mechanical considerations are accounted for, though they only take characters as high as 10th-level. Characters above 10th-level should be powerful figures, and likely ongoing characters deserving of full details as you would any character. Like those ready-made NPCs in the *Core Rulebook II*, you need to fill in the important details such as the character's name, character traits, and other general equipment. All NPCs in this section are considered human. Spells marked with an “†” are detailed in **Chapter Eight: Magic**.

NPC Adjurer

The inquisitors of Canceri are the most feared villains in the land. Serving at the whim of the Dark Apostate, they work in groups of three to ensure the Nihangs and Akali carry out theocrat's will. They are dauntless in their work, deadly in their skills, and honeyed in their social ability to wrest the truth out of their subjects.

Starting Ability Scores: Str 8, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 15, Wis 14, Cha 12

Increased Ability Scores: 4th, Int 16; 8th, Wis 15.

Sample 5th-level NPC Adjurer: Human Clr 3/Wiz 2; CR 5; Medium; HD 3d8 plus 2d4; hp 24; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 12, touch 11, flat-footed 11; Base Atk +3; Grp +2; Atk +3 melee (1d6, +1 *light mace*) or +5 ranged (1d8/19-20, masterwork light crossbow); Full Atk +3 melee (1d6, +1 *light mace*) or +5 ranged (1d8/19-20, masterwork light crossbow); SA rebuke undead, spells; AL any evil; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +5; Str 8, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 16, Wis 14, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +8, Diplomacy +6, Gather Information +5, Intimidate +2, Knowledge (arcana) +6, Knowledge (geography) +6, Knowledge (religion) +8, Spellcraft +11; Combat Casting, Dodge, Mobility, Scribe Scroll.

Typical Cleric Spells Prepared (4/3/2; save DC 12 + spell level): 0—*blasphemous barrage*†, *detect magic*, *read magic*, *resistance*; 1st—*bane*, *command*, *summon monster I*; 2nd—*augury*, *divulge*†.

Typical Wizard Spells Prepared (4/3; save DC 13 + spell level): 0—*acid splash*, *daze*, *message*, *touch of fatigue*; 1st—*lesion*†, *mage armor*, *magic missile*.

Domains (1/1): Select two from Neroth, Nier, or Sarish.

Possessions: Set of marked sticks (worth 25 gp), spellbook (contains all cantrips, plus four additional 1st level spells), *bracers of armor +1*, +1 *light mace*, masterwork light crossbow, 10 bolts.

NPC Akali

There is one Akali for every one of the 39 districts in Canceri. Charged with the overseeing the church government at the local level, they hold an enormous amount of power, and naturally, with power, comes temptation. Most Akali are thoroughly corrupt, living for the satiation of their perversities. It is from the Akali that the Nihangs are elected.

Starting Ability Scores: Str 10, Dex 12, Con 8, Int 13, Wis 15, Cha 14.

Increased Ability Scores: 4th, Wis 16; 8th, Int 14; 10th, Wis 18.

Sample 5th-level NPC Akali: Human Clr 3/Ari 2; CR 4; Medium humanoid; HD 3d8–3 plus 2d8–2; hp 21; Init +1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 21, touch 11, flat-footed 20; Base Atk +3; Grp +3; Atk +4 melee (1d8/19-20, masterwork longsword) or +4 ranged (1d8/19-20, light crossbow); Full Atk +4 melee (1d8/19-20, masterwork longsword) or +4 ranged (1d8/19-20, light crossbow); SA rebuke undead, spells; AL any evil; SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +9; Str 10, Dex 12, Con 8, Int 13, Wis 16, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Appraise +3, Bluff +7, Concentration +5, Diplomacy +9, Intimidate +7, Knowledge (arcana) +2, Knowledge (religion) +7, Listen +4, Sense Motive +4, Speak Language (one additional language), Spellcraft +6, Spot +4; Combat Casting, Combat Expertise, Persuasive.

Typical Cleric Spells Prepared (4/3/2; save DC 13 + spell level): 0—*blasphemous barrage*†, *detect poison*, *guidance*, *read magic*; 1st—*divine favor*, *endure elements*, *sanctuary*; 2nd—*calm emotions*, *enthrall*.

Domains (1/1): Select two from Neroth, Nier, or Sarish.

Possessions: Full plate, heavy steel shield, masterwork longsword, light crossbow with 10 bolts, 2,500 gp.

NPC Cancerese Merchant Prince

Commerce is critical to Canceri's existence, lacking many of the common resources other nations take for granted. Hence, trade continues regardless of the national condition of the country. Even when occupied by a hostile force, such as the Swords of Nier, the marketplaces remain open. Working in these centers of free-flowing coin are the merchant princes, great men of seemingly endless riches.

Starting Ability Scores: Str 8, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 14, Wis 13, Cha 15.

Increased Ability Scores: 4th, Cha 16; 8th, Wis 14.

Sample 5th-level NPC Merchant Prince:

Human Exp 3/Rog 2; CR 4; Medium humanoid; HD 3d6 plus 2d6; hp 20; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14, touch 11, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +3; Grp +2; Atk +3 melee (1d6-1, masterwork club) or +5 ranged (1d8/19-20, masterwork light crossbow); Full Atk +3 melee (1d6-1, masterwork club) or +5 ranged (1d8/19-20, masterwork light crossbow); SA sneak attack +1d6; SQ evasion, trapfinding; AL any; SV Fort +1, Ref +5, Will +4; Str 8, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 14, Wis 13, Cha 16.

Skills and Feats: Appraise +10, Bluff +13, Concentration +4, Diplomacy +11, Disable Device +4, Disguise +3 (+5 acting), Forgery +10, Gather Information +9, Hide +3, Intimidate +15, Knowledge (local) +8, Listen +7, Move Silently +3, Search +4, Sense Motive +3, Sleight of Hand +5, Spot +7, Survival +1 (+3 following tracks); Combat Reflexes, Persuasive, Run.

Possessions: +1 padded armor, masterwork buckler, masterwork club, masterwork light crossbow with 10 bolts.

NPC Excisist

The Nihangs employ a special order of spies who monitor the Akali serving them. Called Excisists, their primary responsibility is to ensure Akali collect and distribute tax revenues to the specifications of their Nihang. Most Excisists operate in secret, watching the Akali's movements, his body language, and his contacts. Akali are crafty, and some launder great quantities of gold, but if caught, the Excisist's response is swift and brutal.

Starting Ability Scores: Str 8, Dex 14, Con 10, Int 13, Wis 15, Cha 12

Increased Ability Scores: 4th, Wis 16; 8th, Wis 17.

Sample 5th-level NPC Excisist:

Human Clr 3/Rog 2; CR 5; Medium humanoid; HD 3d8 plus 2d6; hp 24; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +3; Grp +2; Atk +3 melee (1d6-1/19-20, masterwork short sword) or +6 ranged (1d4/19-20, masterwork hand crossbow); Full Atk +3 melee (1d6-1/19-20, masterwork short sword) or +6 ranged (1d4/19-20, masterwork hand crossbow); SA rebuke undead, sneak attack +1d6; SQ evasion, trapfinding;

AL Always lawful evil; SV Fort +3, Ref +6, Will +6; Str 8, Dex 14, Con 10, Int 13, Wis 16, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +3, Concentration +6, Decipher Script +2, Disable Device +3, Gather Information +3, Hide +4, Intimidate +6, Knowledge (religion) +7, Listen +5, Move Silently +4, Open Lock +3, Search +2, Sense Motive +5, Spellcraft +7, Spot +5; Dark Occultist, Dodge, Stealthy.

Typical Cleric Spells Prepared (4/3/2; save DC 13 + spell level; Evil spells cast at +1 caster level): 0—*blasphemous barrage*†, *detect magic*, *guidance*, *read magic*; 1st—*cure light wounds*, *doom*, *protection from good*; 2nd—*align weapon*, *death knell*.

Domains (1/1): Select two from Neroth, Nier, or Sarish.

Possessions: Masterwork studded leather, light steel shield, masterwork shortsword, masterwork hand crossbow, 2,700 gp.

NPC Nerothian Necromancer

In the Nerothian held lands, necromancers are a common sight. Undead are an important part of society as are those who can create more of these mindless laborers. Some of the most powerful necromancers enjoy great status. On the other hand, necromancers are so common in Canceri that most of them live cursed with anonymity.

Starting Ability Scores: Str 8, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 15, Wis 14, Cha 10.

Increased Ability Scores: 4th, Int 16; 8th, Con 14.

Sample 5th-level NPC Nerothian

Necromancer: Human Nec 3/Clr 2; CR 5; Medium humanoid; HD 3d4+3 plus 2d8+2; hp 23; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 12, touch 11, flat-footed 11; Base Atk +2; Grp +1; Atk +1 melee (1d6-1, quarterstaff) or +4 ranged (1d8/19-20, masterwork light crossbow); Full Atk +1 melee (1d6-1, quarterstaff) or +4 ranged (1d8/19-20, masterwork light crossbow); SA rebuke undead, spells; AL Any evil; SV Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +8; Str 8, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 16, Wis 14, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +9, Craft (alchemy) +10, Diplomacy +3, Knowledge (arcana) +11, Knowledge (religion) +11, Spellcraft +13; Dark Summoning, Scribe Scroll, Spell Focus (conjuration), Spell Focus (necromancy).

Typical Cleric Spells Prepared (4/3; save DC 12 + spell level; Conjuration and Necromancy spells save DC 13 + spell level): 0—*cure minor wounds*, *detect magic*, *read magic*, *resistance*; 1st—*detect undead*, *sanctuary*, *shield of faith*.

Typical Wizard Spells Prepared (5/4/3; save DC 13 + spell level; Conjuration and Necromancy spells save DC 14 + spell level; Barred Schools Illusion and Transmutation): 0—*acid splash*, *arcane mark*, *daze*, *ray of frost*, *touch of fatigue*; 1st—*chill touch*, *magic missile*, *ray of enfeeblement*, *summon monster I*; 2nd—*command undead*, *spectral hand*, *summon monster II*.



Domains (1): Select two from Neroth.

Possessions: *Bracers of armor +1*, quarterstaff, masterwork light crossbow, 10 bolts, 2,000 gp.

NPC Nierite Scout, Erdukeen

In the occupied city of Nishanpur, the Erdukeen Nierite scouts watch for threats coming from all directions. Though the Swords were recently expelled from the majority of Canceri, many operate in the heights of Nier's Spine, or in the Cold Plains to the south. Notorious for their wrath and devastating attacks, Erdukeen scouts are nearly as famous as are the regular soldiers for combat prowess.

Starting Ability Scores: Str 15, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8

Increased Ability Scores: 4th, Str 16; 8th, Dex 14; 10th, Dex 16.

Sample 5th-level NPC Nierite Scout: Human Rog 2/Rgr 2/Bbn 1; CR 5; Medium humanoid; HD 2d6+4 plus 2d8+4 plus 1d12+2; hp 35; Init +1; Spd 40 ft.; AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +4; Grp +5; Atk +8 melee (1d12+4/x3, masterwork greataxe) or +6 ranged (1d8+3/x3, masterwork composite [+3] longbow); Full Atk +8 melee (1d12+4/x3, masterwork greataxe) or +6 ranged (1d8+3/x3, masterwork composite [+3] longbow); SA combat style (Rapid Shot), favored enemy (humans +2), rage (1/day), sneak attack +1d6; SQ evasion, fast movement, trapfinding, wild empathy (+1); AL Usually neutral evil; SV Fort +7, Ref +7, Will +1; Str 16, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Balance +8, Climb +4, Hide +8, Intimidate +5, Jump +11, Knowledge (geography) +2, Knowledge (nature) +2, Listen +7, Move Silently +8, Ride +2, Search +7, Spot +6, Survival +5 (+7 avoid getting lost or hazards, +7 aboveground natural environments), Tumble +8; Cleave, Great Cleave, Power Attack, Rapid Shot^B, Track^B.

Rage: Use the following statistics for when the Nierite scout rages (lasts for 7 rounds). Hp 45; AC 13, touch 9, flat-footed 12; Atk +10 melee (1d12+7/x3, masterwork greataxe) or +6 ranged (1d8+3/x3, masterwork composite [+3] longbow); Full Atk +10 melee (1d12+7/x3, masterwork greataxe) or +6 ranged (1d8+3/x3, masterwork composite [+3] longbow); SV Fort +9, Will +3; Str 20, Con 18.

Skills: Climb +6, Jump +13.

Possessions: +1 studded leather armor, masterwork greataxe, masterwork composite [+3] longbow, 2,500 gp

NPC Nishanpur Assassin

In an immoral land, assassination is common. Most operate in the larger population centers, and as Nishanpur is the largest, it has the largest number of trained killers. Many assassins in Canceri are bards, trained in Nishanpur. Others are little more than thugs,

who, if they survive, they learn the trade through life experiences.

Starting Ability Scores: Str 14, Dex 15, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 12.

Increased Ability Scores: 4th, Dex 16; 8th, Con 14; 10th, Dex 18.

Sample 5th-level NPC Nishanpur Assassin: Human Rog 3/Ftr 2; CR 5; Medium humanoid; HD 3d6+3 plus 2d10+2; hp 29; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +4; Grp +6; Atk +8 melee (1d8+3/19-20, masterwork longsword) or +8 ranged (1d8+3/x3, masterwork composite [+3] longbow); Full Atk +8 melee (1d8+3/19-20, masterwork longsword) or +8 ranged (1d8+3/x3, masterwork composite [+3] longbow); SA sneak attack +2d6; SQ evasion, trapfinding, trap sense +1; AL Usually chaotic evil; SV Fort +5, Ref +6, Will +2; Str 14, Dex 16, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Balance +11, Climb +4, Disguise +5, Gather Information +5, Hide +9, Jump +12, Listen +5, Move Silently +9, Spot +5, Swim +4, Tumble +11; Deviant, Dodge, Iron Will, Sadistic Glee, Weapon Focus (longsword).

Possessions: +1 studded leather armor, masterwork longsword, masterwork composite [+3] longbow, 2,500 gp

NPC Sarishan Demonologist

Like the Nerothian necromancers, the Sarishan Demonologists fill an important niche in Cancere culture. Mastery of conjuration magic allows these spellcasters to summon Infernals to perform a number of tasks such as cleaning, construction, and other maintenance. Demonologists bring fiends into the Mortal Plane on a more permanent basis, and integrate them fully into Cancere society. Through these characters' actions, fiends of all types exist in Canceri though calling powerful Infernal lords is not permitted.

Starting Ability Scores: Str 8, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 15, Cha 14.

Increased Ability Scores: 4th, Wis 16; 8th, Wis 17; 10th, Wis 19.

Sample 5th-level NPC Sarishan Demonologist: Human Clr 5; CR 5; Medium humanoid; HD 5d8+5; hp 31; Init +1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 20, touch 11, flat-footed 19; Base Atk +3; Grp +2; Atk +3 melee (1d8-1, masterwork heavy mace) or +4 ranged (1d8/19-20, light crossbow); Full Atk +3 melee (1d8-1, masterwork heavy mace) or +4 ranged (1d8/19-20, light crossbow); SA rebuke undead, spells; AL Any evil; SV Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +7; Str 8, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 16, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +3, Concentration +9, Diplomacy +3, Intimidate +3, Knowledge (the planes) +8, Spellcraft +8; Augment Summoning, Child of Sarish, Spell Focus (conjuration).

Typical Cleric Spells Prepared (5/4/3/2; save DC 13 + spell level; Conjunction spells DC 14 + spell level): 0—*detect magic, detect poison, guidance, read magic, resistance*; 1st—*bane, entropic shield, protection from good, summon monster I*; 2nd—*aid, resist energy, summon monster II*; 3rd—*dispel magic, summon monster III*.

Domains (1/1/1): Select two from Sarish.

Possessions: Full plate, heavy steel shield, masterwork heavy mace, light crossbow, 10 bolts, 2,500 gp

NPC Sister of Nier

Once wholly dedicated to Larissa, the Mistress of the Forbidden Pleasures, these women followed the exiled Swords of Nier into the Hinterlands, where they embraced the soldiers' ascetic lifestyle. After generations of isolation, most of the ways of the Divine Harlot passed into antiquity, and those of the once pure val'Sheem line passed with her. Now, the Sisters of Nier, employ their oracular sense on behalf of Swords, though some of the Larissan heritage remains to this day.

Starting Ability Scores: Str 8, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 15, Wis 14, Cha 13

Increased Ability Scores: 4th, Int 16, 8th, Cha 14

Sample 5th-level NPC Sister of Nier:

Human Div 5; CR 5; Medium humanoid; HD 5d4; hp 14; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 12, touch 11, flat-footed 11; Base Atk +2; Grp +1; Atk +1 melee (1d4–1/19–29, dagger) or +4 ranged (1d4–1/19–20, masterwork dagger); Full Atk +1 melee (1d4–1/19–29, dagger) or +4 ranged (1d4–1/19–20, masterwork dagger); SA spells; AL any evil; SV Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +6; Str 8, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 16, Wis 14, Cha 13.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +8, Craft (alchemy) +5, Knowledge (arcana) +14, Knowledge (religion) +11, Spellcraft +13, Use Magic Device +5; Craft Wondrous Item, Heighten Spell, Scribe Scroll, Silent Spell, Skill Focus (Knowledge: arcana).

Typical Diviner Spells Prepared (5/5/4/3; save DC 13 + spell level; Barred Necromancy): 0—*detect magic, detect poison, open/close, read magic, resistance*; 1st—*charm person, comprehend languages, disguise self, expeditious retreat, magic missile*; 2nd—*alter self, blur, detect thoughts, locate object*; 3rd—*arcane sight, invisibility sphere, tongues*.

Possessions: Spellbook (all cantrips, plus 13 spells of 1st- through 3rd-level), *Bracers of armor* +1, dagger, masterwork dagger, 2,000 gp.

NPC Sword of Nier

The Swords of Nier are the descendants of the first followers of Leonydas val'Virdan, who survived their master's downfall millennia ago. Fleeing into the wastes of the Hinterlands to the ancient city of Erduk,

Swords of Nier Ranks

Highly disciplined, the Swords of Nier have a rigid military hierarchy. A unit takes its name from a part of a sword. Possible names include: annulet, blade, back, cross, edge, guard, hilt, quillion, forte, foible, fuller, grip, pommel, tang and tip. Each unit has a grade, assessing their experience and value to the corps. The grades are, in ascending order, brass, bronze, copper, silver, gold, steel, mithral, and adamantine. The Swords of Nier described below, are always of silver grade or better. Swords of Nier described in City of Secrets, account for all others.

they nursed their grudge against the upstart empire and its people, awaiting the sign of the rightful monarch's return. The column of fire to the west, created by the Sword of the Heavens alerted these displaced people and one hundred thousand of the very best Nierite warriors left their holdings and entered Canceri to serve their lord. Though fully committed to Leonydas, time and the interbreeding with certain Yhing-hir tribes has slightly altered their culture. Instead of the precise military decorum that their forefathers prided themselves upon, the Erdukeens began to place greater emphasis on their unbridled passion for battle and for life itself, thus giving lesser importance to personal grooming and universal uniformity. Because of this, many of the professional warriors of the other empires and nations dismiss them as undisciplined rabble, no better than the barbaric hordes that ride throughout that region. After their first skirmish with the Erdukeen, those who survive quickly reaccess this errant assumption.

Starting Ability Scores: Str 15, Dex 8, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 13.

Increased Ability Scores: 4th, Str 16; 8th, Cha 14.

Sample 5th-level NPC Sword of Nier:

Human Ftr 4/Holy Judge of Nier 1; CR 5; Medium humanoid; HD 4d10+8 plus 1d10 +2; hp 42; Init –1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 19, touch 9, flat-footed 19; Base Atk +5; Grp +8; Atk +10 melee (1d8+5/19–20, masterwork longsword) or +5 ranged (1d8+3/x3, masterwork composite [+3] longbow); Full Atk +10 melee (1d8+5/19–20, masterwork longsword) or +5 ranged (1d8+3/x3, masterwork composite [+3] longbow); SA smite good (1/day); SQ aura of faith; AL LE; SV Fort +8, Ref +2, Will +2; Str 16, Dex 8, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 13.

Skills and Feats: Climb +3, Concentration +3, Jump +3, Knowledge (religion) +1, Ride +6, Spellcraft +1; Cleave, Great Cleave, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (longsword), Weapon Specialization (longsword).

Possessions: Full plate, masterwork heavy shield, masterwork longsword, masterwork composite [+3] longbow, 3,000 gp.

Notable Figures in Canceri

This final section describes and defines the key people in Canceri, expanding on those presented in *City of Secrets: the Adventurer's Guide to Nishanpur*, and offering game statistics to the most important characters throughout this dark nation.

Domin Talshin

Working throughout Canceri is a secret coalition of Nierites called the Order of the Hidden Flame who seek a religious reconciliation between the Church of the Dark Triumvirate and the Mother Church. Avoiding the hunting Swords of Nier and the Excisists who see their mission as antithetical to Canceri's goals, they operate in secret, divided into smaller cells, each with a particular function to the organization at large.

Though there are many Candles, regional leaders, none is as important as is Domin Talshin, the Candle of Hunder. Intensely focused on achieving the goals of the Order, he achieved his position over those half his age through his skills at recruitment and organization and his uncanny insight into the hearts and minds of others.

Domin is a grizzled old veteran of many wars and countless skirmishes. He wears his graying hair long and tied in a ponytail which he keeps tucked in under his collar. He wears clothing of the lower classes, nondescript dark robes, belted by a grey sash.

Domin Talshin: male Nierite Fighter 7/Clr 4 (Nier); CR 11

Huxt'xfe'tnal

There are those in Canceri who actively work to restore the Reign of the Devil-Kings. Called the Seekers of the Hidden Masters, nearly all oppose them, forcing its membership to work out of the public eye. Most members prowl the ruins of Nishanpur's Corpse Quarter, searching for relics of the Time of Terror, while their leadership struggles to open a gate to the Infernal Planes to call a Devil-King back to the Mortal Plane and restore the tyranny. They have succeeded, in part.

The previous leader of the Seekers managed to tear the fabric of reality and create a gate to the Infernal planes, releasing a Quara'te who, in turn, assimilated the foolish demonologist. Huxt'xfe'tnal, the demon, devoured the brains of the demonologist, learning all about the Seekers and their plans. He assimilated the organization in Nishanpur and spread his influence throughout the various cells all over Canceri, though he allows them freedom to do as they will, believing they can better serve him thusly.

Now, though many realize the leadership has changed, they do not know they are led by a powerful demon, for all members wear masks. He uses his first servant, the one who called him, to bring more citizens to him, so he can build a better body. Situated at a web

Quara'te Description from Secrets of Nishanpur

The Quara'te, or Sinew Demon, is a vastly malevolent being slowly corrupting all things around it. The demon itself is nothing but a huge mass of stringy tendrils of viscera and sinewy material, from whence it gets its name. These tendrils, however, could be more equated to huge nerves, in terms of their function. The Quara'te grows by insinuating itself into the flesh of other living organisms, and slowly corrupting and transmuting the flesh of these beings into its own essence.

By insinuating itself into intelligent beings, it can also control them. It often takes over several fierce or highly skilled beings, and forces them to use their abilities to protect the Quara'te, rather than immediately assimilating their flesh.

Sinew Demons have been known to bargain with beings they encounter, in order to increase their own influence or power. Once the conditions they ask for have been achieved, however, they cannot be trusted to hold up their end of the bargain unless forced into a Sarishan oath, something most cunningly avoid by any means available.

Their goals seem only to be to grow and to release others of their own kind into the Prime Mortal Plane. They cannot control or absorb undead or extra-planar beings, so they constantly seek to attract new mortal victims.

of corruption, Huxt'xfe'tnal plans to seize the nation, sacrifice thousands of people to his dark masters and bring the host of the Infernal planes through to Onara once more.

Huxt'xfe'tnal: Advanced Quara'te; CR 13; Huge Outsider (Chaotic, Infernal, Evil, Extraplanar)

Master Architect Nageel Sagrivan

The most famous architect and builder in Canceri is an unassuming man, who once specialized in building traps to defend the crypts of Kielmun. During one of the last Milandir crusades, Kielmun fell to the conquerors, and Sagrivan fled the city along with the rest of the populace. Nierite soldiers enlisted him for a counter-offensive to push back the southerners out of Canceri, and Sagrivan proved his knowledge of devices beyond anyone's expectations. In fact, many of the siege weaponry employed in Canceri today Sagrivan either invented or improved upon.

With Milandir repulsed, the architect thought to return to Kielmun. However, the Nierite officers, impressed by his intellect, passed the word unto their superiors, and the Nihang informed the Dark Apostate of his skills. So came Sagrivan to work for the Hegrish val'Mordane, overseeing the expansion of the Dark Cathedral, and the continued beautification of Nishanpur.

Though Sagrivan lamented his estrangement from his home, his isolation likely saved his life, for when the Sword of the Heavens returned and the Swords of Nier cut a swathe across the country, many settlements were casualties, and one of them was Kielmun. The Swords made Sagrivan a slave and condemned him to work on the Red March road crews, until liberated to repair the cracked dome of Ventaka. Sagrivan remains there to this day, working to save the city from age, a task he finds satisfying.

Sagrivan always wanted to rebuild Ventaka, but his stint in the capital, and later on the Red March, made his dream unattainable. However, with the political upheavals, and the fortuitous intervention of interested parties in saving Ventaka, he escaped the drudgery of his post. Now, his dreams have come true, but he fears he may be too late.

The Master Architect is an old man now. He has suffered terribly on the Red March, forced to perform hard labor at the behest of the Swords to maintain the road, and who make it their business to denigrate former officials. He has swarthy skin, though heavily wrinkled, wispy white hair, and a stooped posture. Scars crisscross his face and hands and all over his back.

Master Architect Sagrivan: male human Expert 8; CR 7; Medium humanoid

Spymaster Samiz

Though the leader of Palic val'Mehen's extensive spy network, Samiz is far more than a simple servant. He is, in fact, the last of the Devil-Kings. Realizing the end of the Time of Terrors was near, he convinced many Sarishans to side with the Coryani legions when they approached. He planned to reemerge once the wars were over, as the ultimate power in the world. Assuming a human form, he insinuated himself among their numbers. Unfortunately, the magic aiding the Coryani armies was enough to eradicate the Infernal generals and drive them from the Mortal Plane. Samiz remained in his human form ever since, concealing himself from other Infernals, lest his betrayal become known. Now he operates behind the scenes, subtly influencing leaders and prominent citizens, in the hopes of one day reclaiming his domination over humanity.

Above all else, Samiz wishes to remain hidden. Being Palic's spymaster facilitates his efforts, and lets him monitor events in Canceri and the outside world, such as the machinations of the Sorcerer-King and the Elorii Elders of Elonbe'. He also manipulates the val'Mehan family by controlling what they hear, guiding them to fulfill whatever designs he desires.

Samiz is protean and he changes his shape and appearance to suit his purposes. When in his spymaster role, he appears to be a Cancere of low station, with dark bronze skin, black hair, and dark eyes. He smiles a lot, and is friendly, making others let down their reservations, and opening themselves to his dark corruption.

Spymaster Samiz: male Infernal; CR 26; Large outsider (Evil, Extraplanar, Lawful)

Sheizahl the Green

Not all of Canceri's religious figures follow one of the three gods in the Dark Triumvirate. Some embrace other deities from foreign lands, while others still turn to the old ways, the path of the druids. Canceri, though it does harbor many such men and women in its remote corners, has one famous druid named Sheizahl the Green, who protects the Gajra Woods. There, he maintains the forest and its borders, cares for the fauna living under his protection, and essentially lives the quiet life of a hermit. However, Sheizahl is a xenophobe. He hates humanity and Val alike. When he gets a hold of a wandering, trespasser, or even the occasional caravan, he is legendary for his cruel tortures. He is so formidable and infamous, wise humans leave the forest and the surrounding lands alone.

No one is certain why Sheizahl remains in the Gajra Woods, though many suspect he was driven there by his fellows. The druid appears content with his isolation, and has no need of the amenities of a developing civilization. One thing is for certain, though, Sheizahl's hatred is not reserved for those of Canceri alone, for he regularly snares Milandir scouts, Coryani merchants, and anyone else who falls into his clutches.

Sheizahl is a middle-aged man with a full beard streaked with grey. His hair is long and tangled, and his teeth rot in his mouth. His hair conceals most of his face, but his inhuman green eyes remain visible. Legend holds he walks with a gnarled staff of rosewood.

Sheizahl the Green: male human Drd 14

Slahz: Dire Wolf; CR 3; Large animal

Alieda val'Mehan

Leading an organization bent on creating a master race of half-breed Infernals to conquer Canceri is Alieda val'Mehan, a woman of unsurpassed beauty and sensuality. Well known for her amorous ways, she is popular in Stanivel. Though powerful and influential, she is thoroughly mad with her desire to see the fruition of her plans. She is a slave to her lusts, a character flaw jeopardizing her larger designs.

Alieda was not always so corrupt. When she was 15, she encountered an Amapudor (see **Chapter Nine: Bestiary**). The demon seduced her, and brought her to heights of physical pleasure she was not able to understand. Nine months later, she birthed an abomination her father made her kill. She descended into madness soon after, devising a scheme to take over the nation.

In her mid-twenties, Alieda is a vision of beauty. She wears suggestive clothing, tight fitting, and with a low cut to reveal her ample bosom. She walks suggestively, and has little shame. She has many enemies among the ladies of Stanivel, but as skilled as she is, she enjoys the protection of their husbands.

Alieda val'Mehan: female val'Mehan Rog 6/Asn 6/Dark Consort 6

Bethalic val'Mehan

The Nihang of Sarish, Bethalic val'Mehan, is the quintessential Sarishan - sadistic, cruel, and touched by madness. A consummate user of drugs, he is a slave to physical pleasures, and allows nothing to interfere with his indulgences. Bethalic achieved his position through manipulation, blackmail, and treachery. His greatest rival is Palic val'Mehen, partly because the Nihang lives an ascetic lifestyle, but also because of the rift between the families. Their animosity is endless, and both employ assassins with regularity to eliminate the other.

Bethalic lives to indulge his excesses. His home in Nishanpur is devoted to his endless pursuit of decadence, filled with expensive furnishings designed for comfort, and standing in stark contrast to the hanging chains holding his most recent victim.

Middle-aged, Bethalic is portly, bald, and has large jowls. He perspires heavily, and constantly mops his glistening brow with a silk kerchief. He wears the robes of his office, purple for his god, but beneath his clothing, he enjoys the accoutrements of his perversity.

Bethalic val'Mehan: male val'Mehan Wiz 8/Clr of Sarish 8

Kuros val'Mehen

Kuros val'Mehen is the patriarch of the val'Mehen family, and father of the infamous Palic val'Mehen. He controls the family, despite his son's station, for Kuros fears his son's instability and capriciousness. Thus, despite his advanced age, he retains his station and control over the val'Mehen throughout Canceri.

Secretive and unwilling to share his power with his descendants, Kuros is a manipulative schemer. He controls all aspects of the family, arranging marriages, ordering assassinations, and managing the family's resources. His iron-fisted control has led to resentment, and Palic val'Mehen is feeling a growing pressure from his kin to commit patricide.

Kuros is a dried up husk of a man, thoroughly corrupted by his own dabbling with the Cult of the Seekers of the Hidden Master. His bleary eyes move quickly in his skull-like head, paranoid in their watchfulness for assassins. He knows he walks a thin line between pleasing the Swords of Nier and reigning in his family, but he is unwilling to give up his power, yet.

Kuros val'Mehen: male val'Mehan Conjurer 5/Patrician 13/val'Mehan Emissary 5

Familiar: Quasit; CR -; Tiny outsider (chaotic, extraplanar, evil)

Palic val'Mehen

The single most influential man in Canceri is Palic val'Mehen. He is the self-proclaimed Dark Apostate, and the closest thing Canceri has to royalty. From a privileged family, and at the center of power, he guides Nishanpur and Canceri into the future. Furthermore, as he resides

in the main temple of Sarish, in the Hall of Contracts, he is always surrounded by the workings of the nation's government.

Palic gained the position of Nihang of Sarish when his mother died, because his father was too old to serve, though Kuros still controls the family. When he took office, various factions within the family worked to control him, but he managed to stave off their advances by systematically destroying the servants of those factions. With each death, the conflict for his control escalated, until Palic ceded control over Canceri to them, while he retained complete authority over Sarishan interests in Nishanpur. This unspoken agreement led to the creation of Infant's Sleep plague with his co-conspirator, Tocman val'Mordane, a Nerothian cleric, which eventually led to the Heretic Wars, though Palic did well to conceal his involvement. The result of these wars eliminated many of his rivals and restored some power over Canceri to him.

When Palic's bid for power with the assassination of Hegrish val'Mordane led inadvertently to the return of the Sword of the Heavens, he found himself in a quandary. For the first time, the Apostasy lay before him, but the position had been dissolved by the powerful man he released. Not one to give up, Palic began secret negotiations with certain factions of the Mother Church of Coryan, in the hopes of forming an alliance to oust the Swords.

This bid for power failed as well, when Patriarch Felician val'Mehan was killed, and Emperor Calsestus placed himself in the position, forging an alliance with the Swords shortly thereafter. With help from the south blocked for him, Palic then determined that change must come from within. Rallying the Dark Triumvirate forces to himself during the Battle of Nishanpur, and with no one from the former Nihang Council to oppose him, he crowned himself the new Dark Apostate.

The Nihang of Nishanpur is in his mid-sixties, but carried himself, until recently, as if he were much younger. His great physique and health stemmed from his commitment to maintaining the perfection of his physical body. Recently, an unknown illness has been taxing Palic, and despite the attentions of his personal physician Dashkavar, he has been thus far unable to recover his previous well-being. Standing just over six feet tall, he weighs a lean 175 pounds. He shaves his head, and wears a short grey beard capped in gold.

Palic val'Mehen: male val'Mehan Priest of Sarish 19/Patrician 5

Porphal val'Mordane

Porphal val'Mordane can only be called an enigma. He was elevated to the position of Nihang in 1025 I.C., less than a year before the death of Hegrish val'Mordane. Before his elevation, he was a minor cleric of Neroth, and dabbler in the arts of necromancy. A schemer, his plots seemed to lack the subtle complexity needed to truly ensure his success. But that was before he died...

Porphal's death came at the failure of one of his schemes, when he found himself facing a group of adventurers later to be called the 'Order of the Spear'. Confronted by a piece of a holy artifact of Illiir, his control over his own undead minions was broken, and he was carried away and destroyed by the animated remains of the ancestral Lohgin family.

What happened to Porphal in that crypt is a mystery even to those that know the tale. He returned to Nishanpur months later, a completely changed being. He reappeared a lich, and by all accounts, he should not have been capable of such a transformation. It was clear he was touched by Neroth. No longer a seeker of power, Porphal travels Canceri at whim. What purpose his actions hold is often unknown, even to those who receive his aid. He rarely speaks, and when he does, his words are often cryptic. Some whisper that he may now be the Lord of Undeath's avatar upon Onara.

It was, ironically, when this deep change in him was noticed that he was given the position of power he so coveted in life. He barely recognized his own elevation, preferring to pursue his own mysterious agenda. When asked about his goals, he once responded, "to eat that which is eating us".

Porphal val'Mordane: male val'Mordane lich Nec 7/Clr of Neroth 18

Cordiel val'Mordane

Many believed the blight bearers to be myth, but Cordiel val'Mordane is living proof of their continued existence. The leader of the blight bearers is ancient, and survived the crusades to wipe out the sect. Originally, just another follower himself, he manages to avoid the fiery blades of the Nierites, and Coryani legionnaires, and hid in the Vosewalden where the living fear to tread. There, in the shattered ruins of an Elorii village, he rebuilt his cult from the ashes of old, drawing to him the desperate and mad. Over the centuries, the numbers have grown, and they are nearly powerful enough to reassert themselves in the world once more.

While many believe that the Blight Bearers are a group of insane cultists who lust for nothing more than to see the world die a slow, agonizing death, the reality is quite different. Though many would still argue about their state of sanity, the Blight Bearers believe that Neroth speaks to them through fevered utterances. Cordiel personally saw the truth of this when after infecting a small village just west of the Blighted Mire, two of his victims, gripped by a divine delirium foretold of the fate of the Prophet Becherek before dying of a fever. Convinced that Neroth speaks to his most ardent followers through such diseased induced states, Cordiel sees it as his pious duty to hear his Lord's words.

Cordiel is a greater mummy. Covered in funeral wrappings, his body cracks and leaves trails of dust in his wake. He wears the black robes of the blight bearers, and a large metal plague hanging from

a chain, pronouncing the sacred tenets of the blight bearer ethos.

Cordiel val'Mordane: male val'Mordane greater mummy Clr of Neroth 15/Blight bearer 5

Itakayt val'Mordane

Itakayt val'Mordane is the matriarch of the val'Mordane family, and nearly as ancient as the family itself. A lich of great power, she is an influential force in Nishanpur, and remains secure even though her people have isolated themselves within Ventaka. She lurks beneath Nishanpur in a special vault, where she dispenses her orders to her minions, gathers information, and guides her family through the troubling times.

Thoroughly vain, she dresses as one of the living, hiding her desiccated remains behind an elaborate death mask of gold and a long black wig of human hair. Scented oils and incense conceal the stench of corruption, and she wears exotic and revealing clothing showing far too much of her emaciated legs, and her hard yellow skin.

Itakayt val'Mordane: female val'Mordane lich Nec 10/Clr of Neroth 12

Familiar: Homunculus; CR –; Tiny construct

Vindarna val'Mordane

Vindarna's life is a tragic tale of wasted genius, his masterful skill and inventive ideas twisted and squandered by the corrupt self-aggrandizing nobility of Nishanpur. He is an adept wizard, a true polymath and a relentless thinker, be it for engineering, architecture, logic problems, politics, arcane works or grand artistic design. However, his stubborn sensibilities, reclusive temperament, and the plots of scheming rivals have left him in the shadow of lesser men. Vindarna believes in clemency, service and loyalty without complaint, and that one's works should speak for themselves over clamoring for personal recognition. He will not abide prejudice since he has suffered it all his life: as a young and brilliant Cancerian student in Grand Coryan, and in Nishanpur for use of foreign ideas and scruples. Vindarna has occasionally been warned by the Inquisition for being too outspoken and tampering with subjects better left alone, no matter how sublimely portrayed, yet his reputation and rivalry amongst his powerful patrons often shields him from harm, and he is wise enough to show moderation. Vindarna's talent and benefactors could make him a powerful man in Nishanpur, but he is not a schemer and remains apolitical to continue his pursuits undisturbed, instead using his sway to gain access to rare projects and materials. His name and works are strangely known more abroad than in his native Canceri, and attempts have been made to woo him into the service of foreign courts, but Vindarna's stoic pride keeps him in Nishanpur, another recognizably Coryani trait disdained by his jaded countrymen.



Vindarna has receding salt and pepper locks, a patriarchal but somewhat bedraggled beard, and sallow wrinkled skin. He bears the classic val'Mordane frame and features under common blue-gray robes, which are often stained with various unidentifiable substances and covered in a large apron with myriad tools, quills and brushes poking out of the pockets. His artist's hands and his keen mind seem to be the only things which still bear agility and strength.

Vindarna has long been intimate friends with Master Sagrivan, and the two share many similarities and sentiments. Neither of these great men travels from their work to visit the other, but they communicate often through written correspondence, and while Sagrivan was detained on the Red March, Vindarna acted as his personal agent through bribes and furtive contacts.

Vindarna is beginning to regret how he has spent his life, yet he feels that it's too late for him now. Of late, all of the repression Vindarna has suffered has caused a minor psychotic break, sometimes manifesting as an alter ego. When Vindarna slips into this psychotic fugue, he pours all of his hopes and dreams into grand secret projects – often with a spiteful and purposed intelligence. He can act as an anonymous benefactor to those he sees as worthy, or devise labyrinthine plots and smokescreens for sharp political statements and to ruin reputations. Yet other times the maestro creates sublime inventions and works of art, only to hide, dismantle, or destroy them utterly in volatile fits of rage. When he is lucid, Vindarna vaguely recalls these clever escapades and is strangely rejuvenated by them, and it remains to be seen whether he will cure himself, continue trudging on as he always has, or snap completely and emerge as a vengeful mad scientist.

Vindarna val'Mordane: male human wizard13

Basuhe val'Virdan

As the Revered Mother of the Sisters of Nier, Basuhe val'Virdan commands great respect from the other sisters and from the Swords themselves. Her gift for prophecy prepared the Swords for the return of the Sword of the Heavens, she predicted the death of the last autocrat, and is revered for her insight into the future. It was she who informed Leonydas that the Avatar of the Oath Breaker was again made flesh upon Onara as well as warning him that diverting to the Citadel of Nier to eliminate him would be a fatal mistake. Ultimately, Basuhe was proven correct, for the Sword of the Heavens never returned from his journey to the blackened citadel.

When the Swords invaded Canceri, Basuhe was able to use her powers of divination to ferret out those of the val'Emman bloodline from those of pure val'Virdan stock. The Sword of the Heavens saw that no matter how thorough he thought he had been in his attempts to extinguish the hated val'Emman line, some had escaped by pretending to be val'Virdan. He thought it delicious

irony that these descendants of those who escaped his wrath millennia before now suffered in ignorance, not even knowing of their true heritage. Basuhe doomed many of these hidden val'Emman who had risen in prominence in Canceri to demeaning and backbreaking jobs.

Despite her abilities, Basuhe is not above manufacturing 'visions' that suit her in order to advance her own political power. When she saw that Quintus Attulus had a bright future, she patroned him, arranging the timely death of his predecessor. To this day, though with increasing difficulty, she seeks to press her wishes on Quintus.

Basuhe is extremely old, a wizened crone nearing a century old. Toothless, and nearly blind, she walks only with the aid of an old wooden staff. She still wears the wispy robes common to most Larissan priestesses, a sight revolting to all but the most depraved.

Basuhe val'Virdan: female val'Sheem Diviner 14/Sister of Nier 10

Eremis val'Virdan

The former Nihang of Hunder, he lived in Nishanpur until recently, when the Swords of Nier dispersed many of the Nihangs to the different regions in Canceri. Because the leadership have declared his lineage pure, he commands a company of Swords. Though impressed into military service, he keeps channels open to his contacts in the capital to monitor the government and the other council members.

Eremis has had a long and colorful history. As a boy, he lived in the fortified city, Hunder, where he witnessed, and eventually learned a number of important fighting techniques and weaponry. Also, he traveled to the capital regularly, as his father was Nihang, and led a reformist faction within the government, to combat complacency and mismanagement of the state. They believed an alliance with the barbarians of the Hinterlands would allow Canceri to devote its full attention on crushing and annexing Milandir. Eremis' father, being the most vocal member and visible leader, attracted a lot of attention, and just before Eremis' 15th birthday, the Nihang of Hunder fell to assassins' knives.

The young man inherited the title, but soon found himself at odds with Hunder's Akali, who demanded vengeance for the Nihang's death. Eremis refused and awaited the moment to strike against his enemies, but only when it would not jeopardize the vision upheld by the reformist party. By 20, the conflict between Akali and Nihang grew too intolerable, and so Eremis left for the capital, where he advanced in prominence among the Nierites there. He was so powerful, even when Hunder's Akali appointed a new Nihang, the Nierites named Eremis val'Virdan Nihang of Nier for Nishanpur. He held this post until the Swords dissolved it, and named him a commander of the companies outside the capital, in a wise effort to remove the most influential politicians from positions of leadership.

But Eremis' leadership did not stop at the gates of Nishanpur. As a general in the army of the Swords of Nier, he dared to take a stand against Leonydas himself. Sentenced to public execution for refusing an order, Eremis was brought back to Nishanpur in chains. There he escaped with the help of a band of adventurers, and marched back south, gathering a force of one hundred potent warriors. He led this force against the Swords at the Battle of Four Armies.

Afterwards, Eremis returned to Nishanpur, and there dared to walk into the flames of Nier's Holy Blood itself, in an ancient ritual of faith. Though not one of the Warriors of the Eternal Flame, he nonetheless survived the ordeal, proving his worth before the assembled faithful of Nishanpur. His position as leader of the resistance against the Swords was thus assured. Less than a year later he was assassinated, by an agent sent from the Autocrat.

But death is not always final, and Eremis was returned to life by Palic val'Mehen. He then served at Palic's side during the Battle of Nishanpur, retrieving the Crown of Shadows for Palic to facilitate Palic's elevation to Dark Apostate. Currently Eremis continues to bide his time, marshalling the Dark Triumvirate forces for what he sees as their inevitable victory over the Swords of Nier.

Eremis val'Virdan has long red hair, grey eyes, large blocky features, and a muscular frame. He wears the flanged officer armor of a Conflagration Knight when among his men, but normally dons comfortable robes. Eremis' companies are stationed just north of the Plains of Blood.

Eremis val'Virdan: male val'Virdan
Conflagration Knight 14

Maradevi val'Virdan

As head of the val'Virdan family, Maradevi keeps a residence in Nishanpur despite hostilities to her family, and the tensions created by the presence of the Swords of Nier. What she did not anticipate was the level of corruption in the city, and the temptations presented on every corner. Thus, many who came to support her fell to ruin by the many insidious evils at home in the city.

Maradevi leads efficiently and competently, destroying any who oppose her. While a capable leader, most Nierites hold her in low esteem for she embraces the decadence of Sarishan culture, donning their clothing, perfumes, and her presumption of being a gifted military commander, when in fact, she served briefly with the Knights of the Red Fist, Nishanpur's military, until the birth of her first child. She refuses to give up her position as head of the family, despite the competent heirs she has personally groomed for the position, and she regularly pits her descendants against one another in an effort to divert their interest in acquiring her position.

Ancient and withered, Maradevi is a mere shadow of her former beauty. Behind the wrinkled façade is a woman with an iron core, who is unflinching from danger and committed to the survival of her family in the troubling times. She wears whatever is in fashion, changing her wardrobes to keep up with the fickle designers.

Maradevi val'Virdan: female val'Virdan Ftr
2/Ari 12

Quintus Attulus val'Virdan

Quintus Attulus val'Virdan is the Autocrat of the Swords of Nier making him, as most of the Erdukeen believe, divinely chosen by Nier to lead his most holy people. Quintus came from a distinguished family in the city of Erduk and served in its military with distinction against infernals penetrating the Godswall and Yhing-hir raiders. It was noted by the Sisters of Nier that Quintus, though young, showed promise and a special connection to the Master of Burning Ruin. Eventually Quintus came to the attention of the head of the Sisters of Nier, Basuhe val'Virdan, and she had let it be known to Quintus that he would defeat the previous Autocrat in trial by combat for he had been chosen by Lord Nier to lead his most holy people. When Quintus had defeated the previous Autocrat, a much stronger and experienced opponent than young Quintus, he felt he had been chosen by Nier to lead the Erdukeen into a new era. When the Sword of the Heavens returned Quintus felt assured in this conviction and lead his soldiers to assist their most holy leader in his crusade to cleanse Canceri of impurity.

Quintus remained behind to rule Canceri at the behest of the Sword of the Heavens to finish the purification of Canceri while the Nierite army continued its crusade outside of Canceri. Even though Quintus confidence has been shaken at times he remains resolved to hold onto Canceri and cleanse the land of the Church of the Dark Triumvirate as well as any hated Emman that can be found. Quintus also resolved to strengthen his position by allying with the Coryani Empire, reintegrating the Nierites back into the Mother Church of Coryan, and accepting the position of provincial governor of the Hinterlands.

Quintus has resisted attempts by the Cancereese to be expunged from the country as he and the Swords of Nier hold fast to Nishanpur and other small pockets within the country still under their control. Quintus is a young man compared to the other power players in Cancereese politics, still only in his early thirties. He has long flaming red hair braided in Yhing-hir fashion and a full beard with imposing grey eyes. The Autocrat is a tall man of muscular build with his red enameled full plate armor and bear skin cloak giving him a menacing presence to more civilized eyes.

Quintus Attulus val'Virdan: male val'Virdan
Holy Judge 12/Warrior of the Eternal Flame 5



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