# Della

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| Welcome to the Trial of Ascension. With this, you are able to upgrade your race to an advanced race. You may retain the features of your base race in addition to those of the advanced race you unlock. While there are many advanced races, the Trial you face will depend upon your base race, your play style to date, and the path you choose.Base Race: HumanDue to your play style and base race, the following Paths are open to you:Path of the Arcane: Increases aptitude for the Arcane arts. (Unlocks Illumian)Path of the Divine: Increases connection to the Divine. (Unlocks Scion)Path of Terror: Cause fear to fill the hearts of your enemies. (Unlocks Terror-touched Human)Path of Balance: Enhances the Human’s adaptable nature. (Unlocks High Human) |

I was nervous. Of course I was nervous! This was the Trial of Ascension! I’d heard about it as a girl, but most people from Fathon never took their trial, even if they managed to hit level 40. They always thought it would be better if they prepared a bit more, and there was the fact that many who attempted the trial died. We weren’t Travelers, like Master. If we died, we were dead for good.

But Master wanted us all to be stronger, and so he told us to take the Trial. He believed in us, said we could do it. By Loviatar, I wasn’t going to let Master down! If he wanted me to take the trial, then I was going to pass! Once, I would have thought about resisting him, but these days I knew that I would never do anything to make Master disappointed in me.

And that is why I picked the Path of Balance. Master wanted me to use both divine and arcane magic, so focusing on one too much was bad. And Terror-touched just sounded like bad news. So I would become a High Human, and Master would praise me. I hope.

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| The Path of BalanceThose who seek to gain power without restricting their options must prove themselves worthy.Step 1: ArcaneCross the Chasm. |

The next thing I know, I’m in a stone room, with a big ass chasm between me and the door on the other side. Looking down, I notice that, while I can see the bottom, unfortunately the bottom of the chasm is full of deadly spears. I think there’s a few skulls down there, too. And it is way too far for me to jump. Damnit all!

I take another breath, and consider my options. Let’s start simple. I cast an Ice Wall spell, but before it gets all the way across, lightning strikes, shattering the ice. Well, fuck. Now I have to figure out how to get across without being roasted.

A few minutes later, and I think I have it. The magic appears to only be triggered when someone tries to make a physical connection to the other side, like my ice bridge, or the rope I tried throwing across. But when I threw a knife, it went over, no problem. So, I’m going to use magic to make a way to throw myself across the gap! I am so much smarter now that Master’s helped take away all the distractions of being free.

Using the ice wall spell again, I use half my MP to make a big ramp. With a deep breath, I jump off the ledge I made for myself, and slide quickly down the ramp, and up the short incline on the other side, sending me flying across the gap. I’m laughing at my brilliance, until I realize that stopping may be an issue. Half my HP later, the issue has been settled, though I need to use spells to fix my face. I can’t have Master seeing me ugly!

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| Step 2: DivineGain your patron’s favor. |

The next room was again made of stone, but this time it was decorated as a temple to Loviatar, Mistress of Pain. In the center of the room was a human woman. Her back was to me, so I could not see her face, but I saw that she had blonde hair, the same as mine. She was naked, and bound to a wooden frame so that all of her was exposed. On the floor, there was an engraved circle, keeping the magic of the area inside contained. I hadn’t seen anything like that in a temple before.

I found the reason for the circle the moment I stepped inside. Pressure began to gather on my wrists and ankles, almost as though I was been hung spread open like the woman was. As I moved around to the woman’s front, I gasped, and saw that it WAS me, or at least, a representation of me. I reached out to the woman, and pinched her nipple, only to gasp as I felt the twin sensations of pain and pleasure move through me. Pain, as though someone had pinched my own breast, and pleasure from the pain done to another, thanks to my Sadistic title.

“So that is how it is, hmm? To win the Mistress of Pain’s favor, I must show that I can endure pain, even as I revel in the pain of others?” I took a deep breath, and then nodded. “Right. Let’s do this!”

I pulled out the old whip Master had given me long ago, back in Fathon. It was a Tamer’s Whip, and did very little damage, but would heal the victim as well. It was designed to inflict pain without causing permanent injury. Sure, I had a better one now, but it somehow seemed nostalgic to be using a whip like the one Master had used on me so many times.

The whip cracked, and my double and I shrieked in pain, though I moaned as well. Licking my lips, I continued. Slowly, methodically, striking to inflict pain without causing the girl to pass out. The sensations were insane, but I was learning to use them so that I could deal pain better. Pain, true pain, is separate from damage. One can kill a person all too easily. Bringing them to the heights of pain while leaving them alive and (mostly) whole is the true art of the torturer.

I lost track of time, lost track of everything amidst the pain and pleasure. But eventually, a screen popped up.

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| The Goddess is pleased with your devotion.You receive extra rewards! |

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| New Perk!Loviatar’s BlessingYou have been tested by the Goddess Loviatar, and she is pleased with what she sees. All those capable of wielding divine magic know upon seeing you that you have the Goddess’s favor.+10 CHA+10% to Social tests against creatures with Divine Magic |

In front of me, a beautiful whip appeared. Made from black leather, it had thorns running down its length, but the thorns were a red-hued metal.

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| Lady’s Favor |
| Type | Whip | Rank | Artifact – Divine |
| Damage | 80 – 100 | Damage Type | Pierce/Slash/Unholy |
| This weapon is made from leather taken from the skin of demons, and includes thorns made from demonsteel. Despite its strength, it is a mere replica of the true form of this weapon, Agony, which is the personal weapon of the Goddess Loviatar. Though this weapon is not unique, it is still an artifact, and anyone who holds it has the favor of the Mistress of Pain.Requires: Level 40Requires: Patron Diety (Loviatar)Requires: Chaotic AlignmentRequires: Loviatar’s Blessing+30 STR, +30 DEX, +30 CHA50% chance to inflict Bleed Status on hit2x base damage to Good-aligned creatures.+20% to Divine Magic.**Enchanted:** Vampiric – Heal 1/4 the damage dealt by this weapon.**Cursed:** Anyone who attempts to wield this weapon without Loviatar’s Blessing is wracked by incredible pain, and are transported to Loviatar’s divine realm.**Divine Artifact:** This weapon is a token of the Goddess, and will scale with your level so long as you hold true to your faith. |

Oh, my! Immediately, I turned, and knelt at the altar of this shrine, the whip in my hand. “Thank you, Mistress, for your favor, and I swear that I shall use it in your service, for so long as you wish. All glory to you, Loviatar, Mistress of Pain! May the cries of your enemies ever be filled with agony!”

I rose from the altar, and with my new whip hanging from my belt, went through the door, into the next chamber.

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| Step 3: TerrorOvercome your fear. |

Everything shifted, and I found myself naked, bound, gagged, and kneeling before Master. Beside him stood a tall, statuesque woman, with fiery red skin, black hair, a pair of curling horns, and not wearing a single thing other than a slave collar that looked a good deal nicer than mine.

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| Aezlea BlackheartParagon of Lust (Succubus) FemaleLevel 41 Carnal Avatar (Priestess) / Enchantress |

What was going on? Why was I here, and that woman up there? Master doesn’t need another priestess, he has me!

Master laughed at me, and said, “By the stupid look on your face, you haven’t figured it out, yet, slave. You’ve outlived your usefulness to me. Aezlea here is far better than you as a priestess, and she’s a much better fuck than you are. So I enslaved her, and I’ll be keeping her with me, instead.”

“Mmph! MMMM!” I tried to speak through the gag, but it was impossible! No, how could Master do this to me? I’ve done everything he asked of me! I’ve done things Mother would have never even dreamed her little girl would do for him!

Master slapped the new girl on her ass, and said, “Ungag the trash, so she can beg. She can beg as she watches.” The red slut moaned at the contact, and then bent forward to ungag me. Master moved behind her, and said, “Stay like that.” Then the slut moaned as Master began to take her from behind.

My cheeks were wet. I was crying? Of course I was crying! Master was throwing me away for some new slut! He called me trash! After all I’ve done for him! “Please, Master! Don’t throw me away! I’ve done everything you wanted, haven’t I? I’ve been a good slave! You saw how I helped at the village with the undead!”

Master simply laughed as I was forced to look into the moaning face of the slut who was replacing me. “But what have you done for me lately? You were useless against the Drow, and you couldn’t even pass your trial! You’re a failure, trash. But don’t worry, I’ve got a suitable place for you. I’m going to sell you to the army barracks as a stress reliever. They’ll take you until you die, or go mad. I don’t really care which.”

My trial? I’d failed my trial? Wait, no! That’s right, I was still on my trial! Mustering what little strength I had, I called out a prayer and cast a dispelling spell. The scene didn’t change, but the feeling of hopelessness and fear that had been growing over me disappeared. With more confidence than appeared in my voice, I said, “NO! This is not real! This is part of my trial, my own worst fears come to life. But Master would never just throw me away like this. Even if he were going to get rid of me, he would grant me the privilege of riding the spit for him, so he could take amusement at my agony over the fire. BEGONE!”

And then, the scene finally went away, and I found myself once more standing, and dressed.

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| Third Step Complete.You Have passed the Trial. You gain rewards based on your performance. |

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| Shield of Faith |
| Type | Shield | Rank | Rare |
| This shield is designed for use by followers of a diety. Though made from steel, the shield changes its nature and abilities based on the one who wields it. The shield always bears the device of its owner’s diety. This shield can be used without the normal proficiencies, and does not restrict the owner’s movements.Requires: Must have a Patron Diety.Requires: Must have Divine Magic at Intermediate level or higher.+100 Defense+20 WIS+15% resistance to Piercing, Slashing, and BludgeoningPatron (Loviatar): Bloodsteel Shield – 1/4 of damage done by wielder in melee stored as ‘blood points’ in shield. On command, wielder may spend blood points to heal herself.**Enchanted:** Angelbane – All weapon and spell attacks against angels deal +20% more damage. |

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| High Human (Human Base)The most adaptable of all the races, Humans who progress as High Humans exemplify that trait to the extreme. While other races may trump a their potential in a narrow field, none have greater potential to advance equally along two separate paths at the same time, or the sheer breadth of their options in making their way through the world. Just as important to some (and more important to others) is the fact that they lack any true weaknesses, unlike other races.Advanced Racial Traits (Cumulative with Base Racial Traits):+10 to All Stats+10% to all skills |

And then, all went black.

# Severa

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Damnit, even after getting sent to this place for the trial, my ass is still sore from the Bastard fucking me. I’d never been with a man before the Bastard made me his slave. In the few months since, I’ve taken that massive cock of his up every one of my holes more times than I can count. I’d kill the fucker if I could, but the slave collar prevents me from doing that.

That, and the Bastard knows what he’s doing. It is harder and harder to force myself to hate him, even as he rapes and abuses me. My body betrays me every time. Whenever he commands me to spread for him, I’m already wet and ready to receive him, gods damn him! And every time he takes me, it is that much harder to resist. I’m afraid before long I’ll become a simpering lapslut like Della and Yukiko, begging him for attention and sex. My only hope is that I’ll die before that happens.

But for now, I’ve got no choice. The Trial is upon me. From the choices, there’s a clear winner, in terms of potential power, but I hate serving the Bastard, so the Half-Djinn is out. Of the remaining choices, I decide to go with the Path of Shadow, because I’m a rogue. Assassinations are what I do, no matter what Master made me pick for my classes. At least I have a somewhat respectable profession as a Dancer. That bitch Nithroel got stuck being a Courtesan (which is just a nice word for Whore).

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| Gather the Three Shadow Essences and escape.If an enemy raises the alarm, you fail. |

And now I was in a labyrinth of some sort. Let’s see, stone floors and walls, but columns and niches as well as dim lights irregularly placed… this was a rogue’s playground! So, the objective is to get three Shadow Essences and escape the labyrinth without letting an enemy set off an alarm. That meant stealth, but it might also mean that I had to avoid body counts as much as possible. A dead body or blood spatter would raise an alert if another patrol came through an area, even if the guards didn’t see me.

Fucking wonderful.

Nothing for it, though. With a sigh, I slipped into stealth mode, and began moving through the maze, going shadow to shadow. It wasn’t long before I saw the first patrolling guard.

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| ThugHuman MaleLevel 25 Fighter / Barbarian |

A big, hulking, brute of a man, clearly quite capable of killing people with those tree trunk arms and his massive greataxe. Not so good at the whole detecting silent rogues in the shadows thing, though. Probably had a brain the size of a walnut. From my hiding spot, I waited until he was out of sight before carrying on. Even with the level difference, it would be tough to kill him in one blow, and if it took too long, he’d be able to raise an alarm, and I’d fail, even if I killed the thug.

I passed two more Thugs on my way through the labyrinth, easily getting past them. I also found a treasure chest, that was locked with a silver chain, and had a lovely poison dart trap on it. Fortunately, I’m really good at disarming traps and opening locks. Inside was a nice bit of gold (my own, since I wasn’t going to tell the Bastard about it!) and several items.

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| Noblewoman’s Fall, Kris of the Master |
| Type | Dagger | Rank | Unique |
| Damage | 80 - 100 | Damage Type | Piercing |
| Once there was a noblewoman who wished for a life of adventure. With her skills, she was able to join an adventuring company, and journeyed with her comrades. Unfortunately, they ran afoul of a cruel man in a dungeon. Forced to watch as her friends were slaughtered, the noblewoman was then enslaved, and forced to fight and kill for her Master. This Kris gains strength when used in the presence of her Master.Requires: Slave title+50 Attack+20 DEX, +20 CHA+30% to Sneak Attacks and Critical HitsMaster’s Favor – When within 30’ of the slave’s Master, 5% chance of instantly killing target. Additional +20% to Sneak Attacks and Critical hits.**Cursed:** Cannot be used against Master or his allies.**Enchanted:** Silence – 10 MP/Second, creates globe of silence 3m in radius. |

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| Impure Radiance, Lament of the Maiden |
| Type | War Fan | Rank | Unique |
| Damage | 80 - 110 | Damage Type | Slashing |
| Once there was a maiden who wished to keep herself chaste and pure, in hopes of giving herself to her true love upon her wedding night. Though she was a young woman traveling the world, she managed to keep her body pure until one day her party was slain by a single man. This man enslaved the maiden, and on their first night together raped her over and over, defiling her body in ways she did not think possible. This fan carries the pain and sadness of the maiden’s lament.Requires: Female GenderAll attacks count as Sneak Attacks to those who do not know this weapon’s nature.+50 Attack+20 DEX, +20 CHA+30% to ParryMindbreaker - +10 - 30 Charm damage**Enchanted:** Lament – 50 MP. All enemies within 50’ that can hear wielder suffer Despair debuff for 30 seconds. |

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| Lusting Vestment of the Nightstalker |
| Type | Leather Armor Set | Rank | Rare |
| This set of armor is made from the magically treated hide of the Nightstalker, a type of hunting cat found in mountainous areas. It consists of a cuirass, pants, greaves, and bracers. The magic of this armor not only provides protection, but also shifts to perfectly fit the wearer’s form. The Nightstalker’s ability to move swiftly, stealthily, and silently has been granted to this armor, as well.Requires: Level 40+120 Defense+40 DEX, +20 STR+40% Resistance to Piercing, Slashing, and Bludgeoning+50% to Sneak and Move Silently**Item Set:** Nightstalker Form – 100 MP. Can take form of a Nightstalker for 10 min.**Enchanted:** +20% to Seduction. |

I blinked, and had to look at the descriptions twice. The records in the Royal library always said that the Trial was personalized to the person seeking ascension, but these items seemed perfectly suited to my abilities, and summed up my history rather succinctly. The weapons I would definitely use, but I was torn on the armor. Yes, it was better than what I had, but I wasn’t that keen on giving the Bastard any more reason to take me.

But survival beats my wishes to not play fuckpuppet to a demonic bastard, I guess. Putting on the new armor, I noticed a few things immediately. First, the way the cuirass tightened around me did wonders for my breasts, lifting them up but still keeping them contained if I resorted to quick movements. Second, these leather pants tightened to the point where nothing was left to the imagination. Rather than pants, it looked as though someone had painted a second skin on me! The greaves and bracers looked simple, but were solid defensive gear, and magical. Though I had less visible armor than I did before (and I still felt like I was naked from the waist down), I was actually better protected than I was before donning this armor.

With the enhanced stealth abilities and new weapons, getting to the first Essence was easy enough. The only problem was the single guard that was on station here.

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| Guard CaptainHuman FemaleLevel 30 Paladin / FighterTitles: Sturdy, Righteous, Manslayer |

The Captain was standing on a platform in the dim light, facing a spot-lit pedestal upon which sat a glowing orb of black energy. It was impossible for me to get to the orb and get out the other side of the room without the Captain seeing me. The Captain would have to die.

My new weapons in hand, I slipped stealthily into the room. I was utterly silent, moving behind the Captain so that I had to hold my breath to keep from stirring her hair. With a mental command, I activated Fall’s Silence ability, and jammed my blade into the woman’s spine, just above her plate armor. A critical hit and fatal hit on a sneak attack. I supported the now limp Captain to the ground as she stared wildly at me, trying to send an alarm, but with the silence and her wound, all she could do was try to gasp for air as I dragged her into the darkest corner, my blade still in her spine to reduce the bleeding. I did her the mercy of finishing her with a Sacrificial Dagger to the heart. Earned myself a +5 to WIS.

The little bit of blood pooling in the corner might get overlooked, but a body stood out more. The Bastard said we could store corpses in our inventory, so in the captain went. Maybe I’d trade her to that new Necromancer we picked up in Drowland. The dickgirl might have something to trade for the raw materials. That done, I collected my first Shadow Essence. The dark orb flowed off the pedestal and into my chest.

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| Shadow Essences Acquired: 1/3 |

Slipping into the far hallway, I found myself still in the labyrinth, but now there were more guards, and they were a mixture of stationary sentinels and paired patrols. Stealth was still key here. The problem was that at least some of these patrols were trained in stealth. A fighter and rogue combo. Not a great setup for open world, but when you only needed to detect a threat and raise an alarm, this was most effective. If they spotted me. Funny thing, even in fantasy worlds, few people bother looking up, where I was pressed against the ceiling as I supported myself by the corner a wall made with an archway.

It took me another hour of moving shadow to shadow, constantly avoiding patrols, before I managed to get to the next pedestal. Along the way, constantly taking refuge above people’s heads got me a new perk, Wall-crawler. I could now climb up walls and stick to them by paying 1 MP per second to activate the effect. Damnit, between this and the Silence effect, I was going to have to start investing points in INT to up my MP.

In the pedestal room, there was another ‘boss’. Unfortunately, this one was smarter, as he was standing facing the way in.

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| Larry “Big Tool” JohnsonHuman MaleLevel 38 Dominator / BeguilerTitles: Pervert, Stud Horse |

Fuck. Fuckfuckfuckityfuck! That bastard was like a human version of the Bastard! I needed to keep him from raising the alarm, and he was watching the opening. I knew how to do it, but damnit, I didn’t want to! That damn Bastard!

With a sigh, I turned, and sauntered into the room, walking as sexily as I could. The enemy couldn’t raise an alarm. Didn’t mean they couldn’t see me, or interact with me. I just didn’t want to ‘interact’ with anyone here, much less someone who called himself ‘Big Tool’ Johnoson. Though he would probably be tiny compared to the Bastard. Giving the man a saucy smile, I said, “Hello, big boy. Care for a bit of fun?”

The next few minutes were… not something I would ever tell Mother about. But the dancing the Bastard made me do paid off, and I was able to strip the man of his weapons and armor. I noted that, despite his name, Big Tool was only slightly above average for a human. At any rate, I moved him over into a corner by the wall, and laid him out, promising to do even more to him now that he was ‘ready’.

And then I killed him by slipping my dagger between his ribs, into his heart.

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| Heartseeker benefit!For striking an enemy’s heart in battle, you absorb a portion of their essence. You gain:+10 CHASeduction – Basic 1 |

DAMNIT! I’ll just pretend I didn’t see that. Anyway, I store the body, and his gear, so they won’t be seen, and take my second Essence.

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| Shadow Essences Acquired: 2/3 |

This labyrinth changed again once I passed into the third area. It looks like the inside of some giant warehouse, with rafters at least fifteen meters above the ground. Without pausing, I slip up a nearby column, to get a lay of the land from above. What I find nearly forces a curse from my lips. The area below is a labyrinth, yes, but the walls are only three meters high, allowing for people to hear if combat breaks out anywhere nearby. And the patrols are now in groups of three, and there are people in defensive positions, using cover and ambush tactics! Worse, I noticed that there are three other people up in the rafters with me, archers focused on the ground below.

All right. Not as bad as it could be. The archers are focused on the ground, and the people on the ground don’t bother looking up, believing that the archers have them covered. I can take the archers. The problem is doing it without letting a screaming body fall to the ground below. I’m fairly certain that would raise an alarm, after all.

I stalk towards the nearest of the three archers, the shadows making it all but impossible for me to be seen, and the archers are too busy focusing on the walls below. Or, rather, the tops of the walls. If someone tries to climb over a wall, or move on the ledges, the alarm is sounded, and arrows fly. Sneaking up behind the archer, I unleash the Silence effect just before stabbing the man in the neck. Another perfect assassination, and another body in the bag.

Before too long, the rafters are clear. Now, moving above the labyrinth unmarked, I’m able to quickly move to the center of the maze. The only problem is getting back down. Though there are columns supporting this massive ceiling, there is no such thing as a column conveniently placed directly next to the pedestal. I’m still fifteen meters above ground. Dropping down would be… painful, to say the least.

So down the column I go, but instead of dropping to the ground, I leap lightly to the top of the wall. Another quick hop across the hallway, and then moving slowly, so as not to attract attention. Finally, I am behind the last boss, a tall woman with beautiful blond hair and gleaming plate armor.

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| Emmete the ValiantHalf-Celestial Human FemaleLevel 41 Valkyrie (Paladin) / RogueTitles: Blessed of Uhona, Valiant One, Undying, Humanbane, Manslayer |

This… was not one I could simply assassinate and be done with. And I couldn’t steal the Essence while she guarded it. Fortunately, there was something I had found on the pervert that would be useful. I just hated doing it, because this would make me no better than the Bastard. But I had no choice if I wished to succeed. I would have to cheat, like the Bastard did, like he’s always done.

Enveloped in silence, I dropped down behind the woman, and sprinted up to her. Leaping onto her back I held on through her surprised jerk (her Strength, to remain standing despite the attack was impressive) and locked an Improved Slave Collar around her neck. The woman froze as the magic took hold, and I cursed myself for having become what I hated. As I let the silence drop, I hissed, “Be silent, and do not attempt to raise the alarm.”

Once I claimed the final essence, I saw what my sins had bought me.

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| Shadeling (Human Base)Shadelings are creatures native to the Plane of Shadow, and are infused with Shadow Essence. Any creature type may have a Shadeling variant, though most shadelings are Human, as the indomitable spirit and stubborn adaptability of Humans allows them to flourish anywhere, even in places where no life ought to be possible.As creatures of Shadow, Shadelings are uniquely suited to activities requiring stealth or traveling in the darkness. They are also naturally gifted with Shadow Magic, should they choose to learn it.Advanced Racial Traits (cumulative with base traits):+30 INT, +30 DEX+30% to Sneak and Move Silently+60% resistance to Shadow Spells+20% to Shadow magicBlend With ShadowsDarkvisionSunlight AllergyShadowbound |

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| Your slave, Emmete the Valiant, does not have permission to be in your Master’s chambers. She will be held in stasis, and rejoin you at Lithaes Castle. |

# Yukiko

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| Welcome to the Trial of Ascension. With this, you are able to upgrade your race to an advanced race. You may retain the features of your base race in addition to those of the advanced race you unlock. While there are many advanced races, the Trial you face will depend upon your base race, your play style to date, and the path you choose.Base Race: KitsuneDue to your play style and base race, the following Paths are open to you:Path of the Warrior: Become a peerless warrior. (Unlocks Were-Fox)Path of the Servant: As one who submits, gain power in service. (Unlocks Guardian Spirit)Path of the Wild: Give in to the instincts of the wild. (Unlocks Demon Fox)Path of the Spirit: Unleash the power of the celestial spirits. (Unlocks Ninetails) |

There really wasn’t any choice, right? While the idea of being a Demon Fox was kindof cool, it didn’t hold a candle to being a real nine-tailed fox spirit, you know? If this worked, I hoped Master would reward me by petting my tails!

With that in mind, I looked around. This was a forest, but not like any we have in Illinois. And it wasn’t the Wyrmwood. These trees looked… different. Oh! Wait, I remember seeing something like this before! Back in WoD, I had spent a long time in the Kikotoro province. It was a woodland area in the ‘Japanese’ area of the game. The forest looked a lot like this one!

Without knowing where to go, I decided on forward, and before long I came to a tori marking the entrance to a shrine. I took a breath, and then stepped through. This must be where my trial would begin, right?

The stairs leading up to the shrine were long, but easily within the limits of my game avatar’s stamina. In the courtyard before the shrine, I was amazed to find a beautiful white fox the size of a small tank. She had nine tails, and I knew I was in the right place. However, she seemed to have been sealed inside a barrier.

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| Tamamo-no-MaeNine-Tailed Fox Spirit GoddessLevel 1000 Shizen no Kami (Elementalist) / Kami no Shofu (Enchantress)Titles: Celestial Spirit, Goddess… |

I gulped as I saw that Observe didn’t allow me to continue reading her titles, there were too many. I loved Japanese folklore, so I knew who Tamamo-no-Mae was. She was THE nine-tailed fox spirit from all the legends! Oh my god!

Looking at the barrier again, I saw that the Goddess was sleeping. Another window popped up in front of me.

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| Follow the Path of Tamamo-no-Mae to gain the keys to the barrier. |

Feeling a sudden urge to take a path that opened up to my left, I decided to go with it, and see where things took me. I ended up at the edge of a river, underneath a waterfall.

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| Once, in the land of Matsuyaku, there was a powerful noble. He was loved by his people, and respected by his neighbors. Even the Emperor, his kinsman, honored him. But he was not happy, for even though he had a wife, their marriage was a political one, and there was no love between them. To his people, even his closest advisors, he was always the ‘leader’ and never the ‘man’.Not having any one to share his burdens with him, the nobleman took up his bow and sword, and went hunting in the forest, hoping to find some peace, if only for a few hours. And indeed, being in the woods, away from the pressures of his responsibilities, was freeing to him, and he found himself relaxing for the first time in quite a while as he walked through the ancient forest.It was then, as he came to a waterfall in the woods, that he saw something that made his heart beat faster. |

Suddenly, I was no longer at the water’s edge, but standing naked under the waterfall, allowing the water to cleanse me. Doing this would allow the natural energies around me to gather more easily, and give me better control of my powers. Wait, how did I know that? Oh, this must be like a ‘system assist’ with this scenario, giving me feelings to help me understand what was going on and react appropriately.

A sound to the side made me look up covering myself. There was a man out there! He looked to be Japanese, or at least this world’s equivalent, and dressed in leather armor. Well it was leather, but it looked far better than normal armor. And he had a bow. Oh crap, I was going to have to live the life of Tamamo-no-Mae, wasn’t I?

Slipping out from under the waterfall, I went to where my (ok, Tamamo’s) clothes were neatly folded, and glared at the man. Before I could speak, however, he moved forward, and took me in his arms. “I am Munehito, and you will be mine.” I shuddered at his words, before he forced me into a kiss. As he did so, a key dropped into my inventory.

I was going to have **words** with whoever designed this scenario!

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| The nobleman had never before seen a beauty such as the fox spirit, for that is what was bathing under the waterfall that day. He sought to claim the woman as a concubine, eager to possess such beauty. He called upon magic to bind the spirit to him. Feigning reluctance, she soon became the most favored concubine of Munehito, sharing his bed more often than his wife did.But the spirit was not content to be simply the concubine of a powerful nobleman. Tamamo-no-Mae was a powerful fox spirit, one who had gained all her nine tails from centuries of living in the world, one who was considered a Goddess by some. Though the magic of her kind prevented her from slaying her ‘master’, that did not mean that the spirit simply gave up on the concept of ‘revenge’.First, however, she would have to ensure that she was the most trusted of his advisors, so that he would do as she said. |

Crap. I was going to have to go all manipulative whore in order to complete this scenario. Damnit! I hate being the manipulative whore! I’m the submissive slut!

All right, enough bitching. I open my eyes, and see I’m in a richly-appointed bedchamber, and I’m naked. Nearby I see the man from earlier sitting in a chair, looking at the night sky. Quietly as I can, I move towards the man, and whisper in his ear, “Master, what troubles you so that you would leave me alone on a night like this?”

Munehito looked up at me, and sighed. “Oh, Tama-chan, I was just considering the Emperor’s visit here. He is coming to view the borders, you know. But a Seer told me that if he came, then blood would flow through the halls of my castle.”

Ooh, a prophecy? I could make use of this! Leaning down next to Munehito, I reached one hand down to begin stroking him through his bedclothes, and whispered, “If a seer said blood would flow, then there is little you can do to stop it. But why not be the one to choose whose blood flows? You are powerful, more powerful than the Emperor knows. Bring the Emperor here, and give him honor. Then, when he is sleeping, end him. Leave the blade by his guards, and they will be executed. You will be Emperor. Think of all the good you can do for your people if you cleansed the corruption from this land?”

Munehito groaned under my ministrations, but tried to speak, “Kill the Emperor? But he is my kinsman!”

“He is weak. He has allowed corruption of the nobles and suffering of the people. You are a good man, Master. Shouldn’t you be the one to rule instead of he?”

“Oh, oh gods!”

“Go ahead and release yourself, Master. And then allow me to make the plans for you.” And as the man came in my hand, the second key dropped into my inventory.

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| The nobleman, Munehito, under the guidance of Tamamo-no-Mae, killed his kinsman, the Emperor. The crime was blamed upon the Emperor’s guards, who were found covered in blood, with the bloody weapon by their side, passed out from too much drink. Munehito had them executed immediately.Munehito became Emperor Toba, and there followed a time of great strife in the kingdom. Spurred on by his ‘loyal’ concubine, Toba began cleansing ‘corruption’ from the nobles in his land, by force. Many were slain, and some nobles banded together to fight against the ‘Mad Emperor’, led by the old Emperor’s son, now come of age after years in exile.As the country burned in the fires of civil war, Toba came to rely more and more on the counsel of Tamamo-no-Mae, who drove him to more and more terrible actions in the name of ‘peace’ and ‘security’. Until the final battle came, at the gates of the Imperial Palace. |

Fires burned outside the window. As I dismissed the text box, I smiled. It was clear from these lore pieces that the original Tamamo-no-Mae had played a long game, looking to undo her ‘Master’ and his people in revenge for her forced slavery. I would have laughed, but that might have ruined the simulation, and made me fail the trial.

The sounds of combat and the screams of dying men came to me, and I turned away from the window. Moving through the castle, I eventually found Toba conferring with his last surviving general. Gracefully, I stalked up to them, and whispered, “Master, the enemy is at the gates. The passages out have been blocked.”

Toba looked to me, with sadness in his eyes. “Yes, my pet. The insolent rebels have stirred up the people, and we are trapped in the castle. But we will hold out long, and break this rabble.”

I shook my head. “I have taken Divinations, Master, and they tell me a different tale. If we rely solely upon defense, you will die, along with all your men. The women of your house will be raped by the soldiers and taken as slaves by the nobles. I would see you avoid this fate, if possible.”

The General looked at me, eyes narrowed. Those around Toba had grown increasingly distrustful of me over the years, and several of the generals who came before had ‘retired’ after speaking against me. Still, what I said mirrored the General’s own counsel, so he said nothing.

Toba sighed, and said, “And what do your divinations say about avoiding this fate?”

“There are two ways, Master. One is less sure, but involves less loss to you in the event of success. The other is more certain, but requires sacrifice in order to work.”

“And what are these ways, then?”

“The less sure way is to lead your men from behind the walls. Strike hard and fast at the weakest point of the enemy’s defense, and break through to slaughter the leaders. Without the generals, the army will fall to ruin.” The general nodded here. This was the plan he was going to suggest himself, though without the Emperor leading the charge. It was the only option he saw, after all. I continued, “The most sure way requires sacrifice, as I’ve said. My magic is bound by the spell keeping me by you. If you release me, then this army will cease to be, but I will never appear before you again in this life.”

Toba looked stricken at the second plan, and angrily was about to shake his head, when I cut him off. I’d done a good job twisting him around my finger. “Think of your people, Master. You did all of this to keep them safe and secure, did you not? Then do not let your emotions cloud your judgement now. You know what must be done, for the good of your people.”

Toba cursed, and then bowed his head. Reaching out with one hand, he made a hand sign, and said, “Release.” The magic that had bound me for so long was finally gone!

Foxfire rose about me, and I changed into the fox-form for the first time, with nine tails, standing as tall as a warhorse. And I smiled at the Emperor. **“FREEDOM! FINALLY, THE TIME FOR MY REVENGE IS COME!”** The third key dropped into my inventory.

That night, all of Matsuyaku burned, along with its people. None lived to see the dawn.

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| All keys gathered. Release the barrier to complete the trial. |

Smiling, I found myself once more myself, a two-tailed Kitsune wearing heavy armor and no longer a nine-tailed fox spirit. I was in front of the shrine again, and this time, I saw three posts at the edge of the barrier, each with a glowing spot. I pulled each key out in turn, and placed them on the proper post. The barrier faded, and before me was the Goddess, now awake, and examining me.

**“You are an interesting one, young Traveler. You followed my path, and yet you do not resent the one who enslaves you. Why is that?”** The voice sounded old, and powerful, like mine had been at the end of the trial. But there was no hatred or malice in her words now, only caring.

“Because I chose to serve. My master is one who I wished to serve in other worlds, and now I am happy to kneel before him. If it had been another, less worthy, then I would, perhaps, have already found some way to take my revenge by now.”

The ancient fox goddess nodded. **“You know yourself, at least. Your trial is passed, young one. Until we meet again, I give you my blessing. Now return to your Master, and honor him.”**

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| New Perk!GodtouchedYou have been touched by a diety. They will be able to scry upon you at will, but in return, you gain a sliver of their power.+20 to INT, WIS, CHA+20% to all divine spells cast. |

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| Ninetails (Kitsune Base)You are a ninetails, a nine-tailed fox spirit, and one of the strongest races. While others may beat you in potential for one area of magic or martial prowess, the nine-tailed fox has high potential in all fields of magic and weapons, allowing them to become very powerful as they age.+20 to INT, WIS, CHA+20% to all magic cast+20% to all weapon attacksFoxformDivine Foxfire – Replaces Foxfire |

# Nithroel

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| Welcome to the Trial of Ascension. With this, you are able to upgrade your race to an advanced race. You may retain the features of your base race in addition to those of the advanced race you unlock. While there are many advanced races, the Trial you face will depend upon your base race, your play style to date, and the path you choose.Base Race: Half-Celestial ElfDue to your play style and base race, the following Paths are open to you:Path of the Underworld: As one who saw the temptations of demons, unlock their power. (Unlocks Demonsoul)Path of the Heretic: You have turned your back on your celestial heritage. (Unlocks Dark Scion)Path of Pride: Pride has ever been your greatest strength, and worst weakness. (Unlocks Pride Demon)Path of Rebirth: You have fallen, and been brought back from demonic corruption. (Unlocks Lesser Archon) |

As a girl, I was told about the Trial, how it was different for everyone who attempted it. When Master collared and tamed me, I didn’t think I would ever get to take that trial for myself. It still hurt to admit to myself that I’d been tamed, but there was no arguing with it now, not when my body needed Master, or how I jumped whenever he called.

I was a tamed pet now. A pet he had stripped the demon out of by force. Considering my options, that meant that both the Demonsoul and Pride Demon paths would get me in trouble with Master. And Master hadn’t really redeemed me from evil, but forced me onto a new path for it, so that Lesser Archon path would probably be bad, too. That left the Dark Scion path.

“Path of the Heretic.”

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| Destroy the three Symbols of Faith.3/3 Symbols remaining. |

I found myself in a chapel. Not just any chapel, but the one near my home, where I first learned the prayers to Keishara, Elven Goddess of Knowledge. And suddenly the old memories came flooding back to me. How people told me I was such a genius, how I was always so good and smart at everything.

Looking around, I saw afterimages of scenes in the chapel, where I learned the path of the Paladin, and how to use holy magic, and how proud everyone was to see such a genius in our tiny village. In the center of the stone chapel, there was a symbol hanging in the air, the symbol of Keishara. In front of it stood a younger version of myself, with armor on, and barely able to hold her hammer in both hands. Had I really been so small as a youngling?

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| Nithroel CranaHalf-Celestial Elf FemaleLevel 2 PaladinTitles: Genius |

Holding my hammer in my hands, I said, “Move aside. I must do my business and continue on.”

The little girl looked up at me in defiance, and said, “I will not! You are here to destroy the symbol! I won’t let you do it! I’ll stop you!” And then she swung her hammer. I caught it easily with my shield, acting without even thinking as my hammer answered in kind, crashing down upon the youngling’s chest. Her armor kept her from instant death, perhaps, but it only prolonged her suffering. She would not be alive much longer.

“W-why?” The question was almost like a cry as I stepped over her broken body, preparing to strike the symbol.

“Because if I am to rise to Master’s expectations, I must rid myself of the past.” And with that, I shattered the symbol, and all went dark.

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| 2/3 Symbols Remaining |

\*CRACK\*

The first thing I’m aware of is the crack of a whip, and the pain of the lash against my back, between my wings. I try to suppress the shudder of pleasure as I realize that I’m naked now. Well, that will make taking out the other symbols more difficult.

\*CRACK\* As the whip strikes my butt, I turn, and then fall to my knees at the sight of Master, standing in front of the second symbol of Keishara, naked, and wielding a whip. Oooh, am I going to be punished? Without realizing it, I am at Master’s feet now, looking up at him.

“So, slut, what brings you here, hmm?”

I shudder at the cruelty in Master’s voice. He always knows how to humiliate me best, make me climax harder than I ever had before meeting him. “Please, Master, I must destroy the symbols of Keishara in order to pass my trial!”

“And what are you willing to do in order for me to let you do this, hmm?”

“Anything, Master.”

This image of my Master smiled, walking slowly around me. “You know what this trial is about, don’t you? You chose the path of the Heretic, turning your back on the goddess of knowledge. But I don’t think you’re worthy of getting power out of that. You’d do much better to stay here, as my brainless, obedient fuckslut. Doesn’t that sound like fun?”

I shudder at the thought. It does sound good, but… “No. You are not my Master, just an image of him conjured by this Trial. I must defeat this trial, and return to him.”

“And how do you plan to do that, naked and kneeling at my feet?”

Slowly, I get to my feet, and turn to face him, my back now facing the symbol I have to destroy. But then I have to back up a few steps as the black tentacles spring up from around Master’s image. If this image not only has Master’s likeness, but his skills, then I’m in serious trouble. But he is just standing there, using the tentacles as a shield. Master never uses the tentacles as a shield, and never allows someone to see them until it is too late to matter! This image doesn’t have Master’s personality!

Seeing a chance, I do what the image probably least expected me to do. My wings carried me forward, flying directly at him, disregarding the tentacles! The tentacles froze along with Master’s image as a look of shock crossed his face, a look that Master would never make. That let me get through, and my fist connected with the fake’s face. With a shattering sound, the illusion crumbled. I was fully dressed again, and Master’s image was gone, replaced with the true foe.

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| Nadianig HtsideBook Demon HermaphroditeLevel 41 Mindtaker (Enchantress) / DominatrixTitles: Chainmaker, Stud Horse, Brood Mare, Bimbomaker, Mercenary, Imposter |

Her titles were scary. I don’t know how someone could get both the Stud Horse and Brood Mare titles, and I didn’t want to find out the hard way. And I had no clue what this ‘Bimbomaker’ title was, but it didn’t sound good. Fortunately, my enemy was a book demon. Book demons were notorious for their magical skills, but had frail constitutions (for demons).

I was a Blackguard with the Fallen Angel advanced class. Against a caster type like this Nadianig, once you overcome their magic, they are helpless prey. And she had toyed with me, done things that no one except Master was allowed to do. And she did it in Master’s image. I did not give the bitch a chance to cast again, my hammer falling repeatedly on the demon’s face. It was no duel, but a one-sided slaughter.

When it was done, I found myself looking at a treasure chest. There were several useful items inside.

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| Pledge of Devotion |
| Type | Plate Armor Set | Rank | Artifact |
| Forged from Mithril and inlaid with silver, this set of plate armor was originally made for a gladiator slave in ancient times, before the Scourge. Only a slave may wear this armor, for it is to be used in the service of a Master. The armor changes its devices to match the symbols of the wearer’s Master, so that they might always be known.Requires: Wearer must be a Slave.Requires: Level 40+1000 Defense+50% Resistance to Bludgeoning, Slashing, and Piercing+10 STR, +10 DEX, +10 CONDevotion - +25% to all actions when following Master’s command**Imbued:** Blood Sacrement – Wearer may use a sacrificial victim to empower the armor, adjusting it for the wearer’s current level. May be done once every 10 levels.**Enchanted:** Deathless – Return from death. No more than 1/month. |

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| Master’s Aegis |
| Type | Shield | Rank | Rare |
| This shield, engraved with runes of protection and strength, and enchanted to always have a mirror shine to it, is the mark of an elite guardian, one sworn to protect and serve another, even at the cost of their own life.Requires: Level 40Requires: Must be sworn or bound into another’s service.+300 Defense+25% Resistance to all magic except Charm+2.0 per min HP Regen**Enchanted:** The Master’s Shield – Teleport to Master’s side. Range: 200 feet. Cost: 20 MP |

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| Curator of the Caged Mind |
| Type | Helmet | Rank | Rare |
| For a slave owner, there is no thing so dangerous as their slave being controlled by another person’s will. Such a being would be able to slip through many of the slave owner’s protections, leaving them vulnerable in the extreme. This helm, constructed of leather and steel, provides protection not just against physical attacks, but also defends the mind of the wearer.Requires: Must be a Slave+200 Defense+100% Resistance to Charm, except for Master**Enchanted:** Charm Reflection – 10% chance any Charm spell cast on wearer by other than their master is reflected back at the caster. |

Naturally, I equipped the items, and with another swing of my hammer, the second symbol was destroyed.

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| 1/3 Symbols Remaining |

The scene before me was familiar somehow. And then I recognized it as the room I guarded in the dungeon where Master caught me. In front of me was another me, but not the me as I am, or the Pride Demon I was, but rather she seemed to be glowing with holy light.

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| Nithroel CranaHalf-Celestial Elf FemaleLevel 40 Favored Soul (Paladin) / PriestessTitles: Genius, Knight, Proud One, Blessed of Keishara, Undead Bane, Devout |

The other me looked at me as if I was something unpleasant at the bottom of her shoe. “You wretched whore! Your destiny wasn’t to be the sex slave of some evil incubus! You were to be a champion of good, a seeker of knowledge! Instead, you gave yourself to a demon, and then turned into the stupid slut of a man who cares nothing for you except as a new trinket he owns.”

I may not be using my brains as much since I became Master’s property, but I was still a genius. This bitch is what I would have been had I not met Jynerra, not become a demon and then been enslaved. And this bitch looked PISSED about the fact that I wasn’t her. She must be mad beyond reason if those were the best curses she could come up with.

I sighed, and readied my hammer. “Listen, you stupid cow, I don’t give a shit about what you think. If you’re anything like I was before Jynerra, you’re probably still a virgin, right? Maybe what you need is a nice, good fucking to make you lose the attitude. Now step aside. I need to finish this so I can get back to Master.”

“Ugh, just listen to you! I’m going to kill you, and then I’m going to kill that master of yours!”

“Hah! You could never kill him. But for threatening him, I’m going to have to kick your ass.”

And with that, the time for talking was over. There was no strategy here, no clever use of spells or tactics. We knew all the tricks the other could use, after all. What was left was a brawl, the kind of low-brow, meatheaded struggle that I always looked down on, two women beating on eachother in an attempt to bring their enemy down. But my opponent was still fighting ‘fair’. I was Master’s pet, and so I cheated. A kick to her knee brought the other me down, and then my hammer quickly shattered first her knees, and then her arms, trapping her there on the ground.

Using my copy’s blood, I drew a circle on the ground, with her in the middle of it, and runes of death and sacrifice around it. It was a quick and dirty ritual, but sacrificing a Paladin in such a way should produce results. With her blood, I drew runes of corruption on her holy warhammer, linking it to the circle. And then I used my blood to draw runes of power on the weapon. “Blood of the champion, brought to ruin. Flesh of the rival, found in triumph. Bane of the fallen, BECOME MY MIGHT!” And with that, I brought down my double’s hammer upon her head, smashing it like a grape, and got a notification.

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| For completing a power ritual of your own design, you gain a new perk!RitualistYou are adept at creating and casting rituals of power.+10% to create ritualsAll rituals that you participate in are 10% more powerful. This increases to 25% more powerful if you lead the ritual. Bonuses are increased a further 10% if the ritual is one of your own design. |

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| Light’s Bane, Corrupted Blessing |
| Type | Warhammer | Rank | Rare (Corrupted) |
| Damage | 130 – 200 | Damage Type | Bludgeoning |
| This Warhammer, forged from Mithril and engraved with runes of power, was originally an example of a Lightbringer, a powerful weapon in the hands of a paladin. However, it has been corrupted by a blood magic rite, turning it to its current state. The mithral head of this hammer has become blood red, and shaped in the form of a demon’s skull.Requires: Blackguard class+200 Attack+20 STRDeals 2x damage to creatures of good alignmentDeals 3x damage to Good Outsiders**Enchanted:** Vile – Weapon strikes deal an extra 20-30 Vile damage. Vile damage can only be healed with high level healing magic in a consecrated space. |

I smiled at my new hammer, and with one swing, shattered the holy symbol.

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| 0/3 Symbols RemainingCongratulations on passing the Trial! |

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| Dark Scion (Half-Celestial Elf base)Sometimes those born to the blood of the creatures of light are swayed by darkness. When that happens, and they turn their back on the Light, then a Dark Scion is born. Despite rejecting their heritage, they still possess great power, power that grows with the corruption of darkness in their souls. Because they know both Light and Darkness, they have the ability to see the truth beyond deceptions.+10 to all stats+20% to all spells and attacks while in darknessAbsolute Vision – Darkvision, Low-Light Vision, True SeeingLightcursed - -20% to all spells and attacks while in sunlight |

# Hrozne

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| Welcome to the Trial of Ascension. With this, you are able to upgrade your race to an advanced race. You may retain the features of your base race in addition to those of the advanced race you unlock. While there are many advanced races, the Trial you face will depend upon your base race, your play style to date, and the path you choose.Base Race: Drow ElfDue to your play style and base race, the following Paths are open to you:Path of the Spider: As a drow, the Spider Queen calls to you. (Unlocks High Drow)Path of the Dead: You walk the paths of the dead, but not the dying. (Unlocks Revenant)Path of the Profane: You have delved deeply into the secrets of the profane. (Unlocks Drider)Path of the Sun: Though a Drow, you have chosen to walk in sunlit lands. (Unlocks Dayborn Drow) |

I, Świętosława Podlaska am a pervert. I know it, and I’ll freely admit it when not in range of my parents. Oh, it wasn’t that I enjoyed anime. The Internet had allowed the Japanese culture to penetrate the roughly homogenous Polish culture thanks to a few daring fansubbers, even back in the 2010s. No, what made me a pervert was my… fascination with futanaris. I didn’t doubt that I had one of the largest futa hentai collections around. I even had a couple copies of rare porn videos featuring actual hermaphrodites!

So yes, I am a pervert. I had only been playing World of Destiny for an in-game year when the announcement for Age of Anarchy Online came out. I enjoyed WoD, but it was your basic MMO, just made for VR. It wasn’t a living world. And it didn’t let me play a futa like I wanted. AAO did, so I reincarnated over there on day one, simple as that.

As Hrozne, I may have made a few foolish choices during chargen. Like when picking those ‘Qualities’ based on my browser history.

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| Libris Mortis, scriptum Anne Rice – You are the owner of the Libris Mortis, a book about the undead, written by… Anne Rice. Death Magic starts at Intermediate Level 1. Learn Death Magic spells from the book 20% faster.Subs or Dubs? – Universal Translator: All languages learned.I Hate Hospitals – Immunity to all nonmagical diseases and poisons.Codexul Obiecte Magice – You are the owner of a codex of magical items. Instantly identify any magic item you come across. +20% to EnchantmentForced Fantasy – You really like the idea of forced sex, either as victim or victimizer. You like it so much, in fact, that you feel compelled to accept the sexual advances of creatures stronger than yourself, while you force yourself on those weaker than you. -50% to all actions resisting a creature of higher STR than you attempting to violate you. Opponents get -50% to all actions resisting your attempts to violate them if their STR is lower than yours.Follow the Leader – You are a follower, not a leader. While not to the point of being a slave or thrall, you feel a need to follow someone stronger than yourself, especially those of other genders.Impure Resurrection – While you are a Traveler, and can return from death, the process is not so smooth for you. There is a 10% chance that on any death, your character will be corrupted in some way. This can take the form of your last 1-4 levels of stat boosts being randomly reassigned, random physical mutations, random mental changes, and more. While not all changes are harmful, they are random in nature.Mandatory Shipping – You are a hopeless romantic. Emphasis on the ‘hopeless’. You spend an inordinate amount of time making up romantic relationships (or ‘shipping’) amongst those around you. This causes others to be annoyed with you. All factions treat you one level lower than normal for your faction reputation when you start ‘shipping’ people who are not romantically linked. |

OK, so some of those definitely made me a pervert, but how was I supposed to know that having a Gold subscription to futarapecentral.xxx would have that kind of effect? Needless to say, traveling with Zayn and his harem had been torture. Most of them were physically stronger than I was, making me almost constantly ‘excited’ about the possibility of them forcing me to do their will. And the couple that were weaker than I was physically were not only plenty capable of wrecking my shit, but were under Zayn’s protection. So, I didn’t say anything because, well, I didn’t want to get sent away. After all, Zayn was the most dominant individual I’d come in contact with since leaving the Drow cities, which triggered my ‘Follow the Leader’ quality. Fortunately, ‘Mandatory Shipping’ didn’t come into play nearly as often when the person I followed was literally fucking anyone with a vagina… except me.

I shook my head, and looked back at the options on the blue screen. I had to do this trial, and get stronger. Maybe then I would be strong enough to… no! Not going to think like that! Geez, Zayn mentioned once that this game was apparently able to affect players’ mental states, and it seemed to be true. I wasn’t like this in RL! Except, was that still true? Psychological conditioning could be scary, even if you knew what was happening.

Back to the options. High Drow would probably be a good general benefit, but I followed the Drow Goddess of Undeath, Kiaransalee, so the Spider Queen would probably be pissed with me. I was a Necromancer and Death Knight, so Revenant would probably work well with what I was doing. I’d seen a Drider, and frankly that didn’t interest me at all. Dayborn Drow was an interesting idea, but I’d heard from Lexichan that there were ways to adapt to surface life and sunlight without it. Right now, I was managing with a pair of glasses that were enchanted to help block the sunlight, halving my penalties. So Dayborn wasn’t that big an improvement.

“Path of the Dead.”

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| To become a Revenant, one must walk the Path of the Dead. A Revenant is not some mere zombie or ghoul, but a creature who has taken the essence of Undeath into himself and made himself both more and less than they were before. Only those willing to brave the taboos and fight the dangers will know success on the Path of the Dead. All others will join it, permanently.Flesh of the DeadThe first step on the path of the dead is to consume the flesh of a corporeal undead. The more powerful the undead, the more powerful their essence, the more powerful the revenant. Be careful, though, not to overstep your abilities. Fight, and claim your reward. |

I was in a cavern of some sort, and in front of me were four monsters, just standing there, waiting. Clearly, I was supposed to choose my opponent for this match. I sighed, and took a moment to look over my weapon and armor again. Fighting in person was troublesome. Fortunately, I was a necromancer, and undead were my bread and butter.

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| Hoperender, Mageblade of Darkness |
| Type | Special | Rank | Unique – Soulforged |
| Damage | 100 – 200 | Damage Type | Dark |
| This Soulforged weapon grows in power as you level up, however, you suffer a 10% reduction in XP gained.+200 Attack+20 INT, +20 CHAMorphing – This weapon can change into one of three forms: Bastard Sword, Scythe, and Staff. Bastard Sword deals 1.5x damage when used in two hands, or can be used one-handed. Scythe is two-handed, and deals 4x damage on a critical hit. Staff grants +50% to all spells cast.Darkforged – All Damage is Dark Damage instead of normal damage type.Deathcaller – Create and Control Undead as caster 10 levels higher than your current level.Decaying Resistance – Each hit reduces one of Enemy’s resistances by 5% for 1 minute. Effects stack.Ennervating – Infusing negative energy into the blade causes it to grant 1 negative level on each hit. Negative levels apply -1% penalty to all stats and abilities. A creature with negative levels equal to their total level is slain instantly. Negative levels last 30 minutes. Cost: 200 MP. Duration: 30 Seconds. |

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| Damned Breastplate of Binding Hell |
| Type | Breastplate | Rank | Unique – Soulforged |
| This Soulforged armor grows in power as you level up, however, you suffer a 10% reduction in XP gained.+200 Defense+35% Piercing, Slashing, and Bludgeoning Resistance+20 STR, +20 CHABinding Word – Binds target in Hellforged Chains. All spells and abilities sealed while chained. Can be escaped via skills or brute force. Does not affect creatures with 10+ more levels than user. Cost: 500 MP. Cooldown 24 Hours.Improved Resilience - +20% to all resistances.Darkhidden – Wearer turns invisible to Darkvision. Duration ends on attacking. Duration: 30 min or until broken. Cost: 200 MP.Nonthreatening – All actions in combat generate 75% less hate from monsters.Regenerative – HP Regen increased by +3.0 per min. |

Looking back at the four monsters, I took a moment to Observe them.

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| Human Zombie MaleLevel 2 Zombie |

The first one was a standard zombie, relatively fresh, and looking like it was a merchant in its previous life. The Zombie class was there because unintelligent monsters rarely had actual classes (and almost never subclasses), but instead had Monster Classes, which provided abilities for them as they gained strength. This creature, though, was… very weak. While I could kill it easily, I wanted something more powerful to be my prey.

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| Elf Ghoul FemaleLevel 20 Fighter / Rogue |

The second was a ghoul, an intelligent undead, and one with a good class combo. This one was dressed in leather armor, and seemed to have quite a few daggers on its person. Cute too, for one of the more ‘rotting’ types of undead.

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| Drow Female VampireLevel 40 Demon Tamer (Warlock) / Flame Sorceress |

A pure caster, who probably used their vampire abilities to compensate for the lack of defensive power. It wasn’t a bad idea. And the drow wasn’t bad looking, either, with her revealing corset and magical ‘armor’. This would be an interesting fight, if I wasn’t a necromancer.

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| Daiskol the VileCentaur Lich MaleLevel 100 Battle Raper (Dominator) / Battle Rager (Barbarian)Titles: Genius, Sexecutioner, Manslayer, Stud Horse, Undead Bane, Orcslayer, Dragon Layer, Corrupter, Pied Piper, Harem King |

Damnit! It looked like someone was playing on my fetishes! The idea of what this bad boy could do to me was getting me all tingly… OK, so it was a goddamn flood down there. But I had to look at this from a more practical point of view. There was no way I was going to be able to subdue this bastard in single combat. And if I died, then I failed the trial. Oh sure, I knew a way I could get a hunk of that stud’s meat in my mouth, but I didn’t know if the trial would proceed once I had it or not. If it went on until I was victorious or dead, then I’d be dead.

With that in mind, I went over to the drow vampire. Weak enough that I could beat it since Necromancer trumps Undead, but strong enough that it would give me a good boost. Gathering Hoperender in both hands in its bastard sword form, I said, “I choose you,” while swinging the blade with all my might.

The Vampire sprang to life as my sword cut into its collarbone, hissing at me. She darted back, out of range of my sword, and was clearly preparing one of her nastier spells, since I saw hellfire gathering around her, but I shook my hand to change the sword to a staff. Reaching out with my own magic, I cast a spell of my own: Control Undead. Other classes could learn the spell, of course, but Necromancers got it from the beginning, and were better at it than anyone. The vampire froze, coming under my spell, and the hellfire disappeared as her concentration was broken.

Something stirred in me. I was pent up like crazy, so I indulged myself, damnit. Taking the helpless vampire bitch standing there, with one leg on my shoulder, was very satisfying. Ripping a hunk of her breasts out with my teeth to complete the stage was simply bonus points. God, I could see why Zayn had so many slaves! Talk about a power rush!

As I swallowed the flesh in my mouth, the room faded. So once I fed, it was over? Good to know.

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| Blood of the DeadThe second step on the path of the dead is to drink the blood or ichor of a corporeal undead. The more powerful the undead, the more powerful their essence, the more powerful the revenant. Be careful, though, not to overstep your abilities. Fight, and claim your reward. |

Again, there were four undead in front of me, at a range of powers.

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| Troll Zombie MaleLevel 30 Fighter / Barbarian |

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| Dwarf Ichor Ghoul MaleLevel 40 Ragelord (Barbarian) |

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| Kamra BloodletterHuman Vampire FemaleLevel 50 Seductress (Beguiler) / BardTitles: Cruel One, Temptress, Manslayer, Trophy Hunter, Chainmaker |

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| Mekarth the DarkVampiric Dragon FemaleLevel 100 Shadowmistress (Dark Sorceress) / Loremaster (Diviner)Titles: Fallen One, Human Bane, Elf Bane, Orc Bane, Dwarf Bane, Undead Bane, Lichloved, Greedy One, Great Scholar, Daughter of Mirelth |

It was an impressive lineup, and given that my powers worked well against the undead, I could probably take Kamra without too much trouble. But the dragon… if the power of the undead increased the power of the Revenant, then what could be more powerful than an undead dragon? Plus, ‘Daughter of Mirelth’? Zayn would kick my ass if I passed up a chance to maybe get on the dragon goddess’s good side. I didn’t have a prayer of taking on a dragon vampire in single combat, but Zayn said that RP events could be incredibly powerful. This may be a chance to advance the Dragon Goddess plotline through a secret quest!

Stopping before Mekarth, I tapped my staff on the ground, and said, “I choose you.” And then, as the dragon began to move, I promptly bowed, and said, “Well met, Mekarth the Dark, Daughter of Mirelth the Beautiful. I seek to parley with your esteemed self.”

The dragon, which had been about to attack, chuckled. “A thousand years trapped in this place, and only now does someone think to speak with me? Most either overestimate their power, and attack me, or pick easier prey. But you are the first to speak with me in all this time. This amuses me, mortal. I will allow you to speak. But do not try my patience. Or your trial will end swiftly.”

I nodded, and said, “I know little of the lore of dragons from before the Scourge, but I know that Mirelth, the dragon goddess, was trapped by a group of mortals and bound in human form. Just recently, after Travelers from another world like myself came to this world, she was released from her bondage by the leader of my group.”

“Hoh. So Mother is free, then? I cursed Loviatar’s name when the bastards did that to her. But I was a young dragon, only recently hatched, and there was nothing I could do at the time. Later, I tried to find her, and release her, but I failed, and became an undead, as you see. Now, she is free, and by the hands of a mortal? What boon did your leader ask from her in return for her freedom?”

“Nothing, save that she not attack him or those under his protection.”

Mekarth laughed long and hard at that. “Oh, such gall! And no doubt he knew that she would be indebted to him, regardless. Having a goddess owe you a favor is nice, hmm?”

I shrugged. “I cannot speak to that. However, she did mark him as both Dragonfriend and her Consort.”

“WHAT? Mother has never taken a mortal consort before. If you are lying to me, necromancer, I will flay your soul apart!”

“It is no lie, I assure you. But this leads to why I requested this parley.”

“Go on then. Your tale of mother’s freedom is enough to let me listen to you.”

“As you know, I am on my Trial, and to complete this stage, I must drink the blood of an undead creature in my path to become a Revenant.”

“And you would like me to give you my blood, without having to best me in combat, hmm?”

“Indeed. And in return, my leader can bring word of your continued existence to your mother, who even now seeks her vengeance upon the families of those who wronged you.”

“HAH! No. That won’t do at all. I will give you my blood, little necromancer, but you will do a task for me in the mortal realm. I am here because I was sealed within a tomb after my failed attempt, in the country of the Elves. You will go there, and release me from the tomb, so that I may rejoin Mother in person.”

“Where is this tomb? The elven lands are wide, and I know not the borders of the country of old.”

“Near Lithaes Castle, there is an old Mithral mine. Though the original entrance to the tomb has long been caved in, one may get to the tomb through the mine. Many undead will have congregated in the area since my time.”

“Then I will find the mine, and release you.”

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| New Quest Received!Free the Dark DaughterOne of the last daughters of Mirelth the Adorable, Merkath the Dark, has survived defeat at the hands of those who captured her mother by becoming a vampire, but she has been trapped within a tomb in the Wyrmwood. Seek the tomb where she has been sealed, and release her. |
| Rank | B |
| Success | Free Merkath the Dark from her imprisonment in the Astral Planes. |
| Failure | Give up on the quest.Refuse to free Merkath the Dark. |
| Reward | ExperienceGold1 item from the Dragon’s hoardIncreased faction relationship with Mirelth |
| Consequences | Decreased faction relationship with MirelthDragon’s Curse |

“Very well. Come closer, mortal, and take my blood.”

I stepped forward, and Merkath used one of her claws to open a wound on her own arm, before holding it out to me. Leaning forward, I drank from the wound, until I had claimed enough. As the scene shifted, I heard Merkath’s voice one last time.

“I’ll be seeing you soon, Mortal.”

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| Soul of the DeadThe third step on the path of the dead is to consume the soul of an incorporeal undead. The more powerful the undead, the more powerful their essence, the more powerful the revenant. Be careful, though, not to overstep your abilities. Fight, and claim your reward. |

And here we go again! Another dark cavern, another array of undead to choose from. But now I have to find a way to consume the soul of an undead creature. That, naturally, is something I’m not sure on, so while I figure my game plan, I Observe my potential meals.

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| WhispLevel 1 Whisp |

One of the most basic undead, the Whisp was basically a little ghastly ball of mist that would launch magic attacks at people. Mindless, and mostly harmless, unless you found them in large groups, or didn’t have any magic. Like most incorporeal creatures, it took magic to hurt them. Spells worked best, but Enchanted weapons had a 50% chance of hitting incorporeal creatures. I’d read about a rare Ghost Touch enchantment that allowed one to hit incorporeal creatures without a miss chance, but I’d never seen it before. It was a niche thing.

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| ShadowLevel 20 Shadow / Ice Sorcerer |

Shadows were nasty undead creatures that didn’t have a gender, and while they were only barely intelligent, they were malicious as all hell, and basically existed for destroying life. This one, somehow, had managed to get a subclass. Probably a story there, but since you couldn’t communicate with Shadows, I’d never know it.

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| KarmIncubus Ghost MaleLevel 30 Dominator / BeguilerTitles: Stud Horse, Chainmaker, Ladykiller |

The ghost of an incubus. It was, well, kindof sad, especially since ghosts were incorporeal, and couldn’t do the things incubuses were best known for. I didn’t especially want to know what happened to him, or why he was the way he was. But at least I could beat him fairly easily.

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| Ariela the WickedHalf-Demon Human Ghost FemaleLevel 40 Painbringer (Fighter) / RogueTitles: Sadistic, Blasphemer, Human Bane, Evil One, Blackheart |

A Half-demon ghost this time. And a Fighter/Rogue. Interesting combo, and despite being incorporeal, they probably had a couple interesting tricks. See, the flip side of that Ghost Touch enchantment was that incorporeal creatures could use that item, too. And the ghost was carrying a nasty-looking sword that certainly looked solid.

Ariela would provide the strongest boost for me, and I was a Necromancer, so I had some confidence in being able to hold my own against her, despite her weapon. I took a moment to look through my virtual spellbook, looking for something that would let me ‘eat’ a soul. Finally, I found something that could work.

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| Death MagicSoul Clutch (Level 10, MAX)Capture the soul of a deceased creature. Creature must have been dead for no longer than an hour, or their soul kept nearby. Souls captured in this way can be used for various effects, or stored in gems.Cost: 200 MP |

I wasn’t sure whether the spell could be used on a ghost before I finished killing it, but looking at things, I had more than enough MP to try it, and then use other things if it didn’t work. I nodded, gathering my resolve, and pointed my staff at Ariela the Wicked. “I choose you.”

The ghost grinned at me as I cast my spell. And kept grinning, as it did absolutely nothing but drain my MP. Thinking I was a mere caster, she laughed, “Oh ho! It has been too long since I got to play with a drow! Be a good kid and don’t die too soon, yes? I want to savor this!” And then she shot towards me, her sword raised high.

That look turned to shock as my staff returned to the shape of a sword, blocking her attack. “Oh, no. I won’t be dying at all, not today. You are going to keep me well entertained for a while now, understand?” I laughed, and cast one of my other spells, Ghostly Blade. An aura surrounded my sword, giving it a ghostly look. This was a necromancer ability that allowed me to touch a weapon and temporarily give it the ghost touch property. It only lasted ten minutes, and cost another 200 MP, but that would be more than enough.

I was not an expert swordsman, in this world or any other, but I’d been using Hoperender long enough that I could sing a few notes. Our blades clashed, and I could feel that, while she may be a Fighter, it had been too long since she was mortal. Her attacks were still good, but her defense was lousy, as she had relied on her ghostly abilities for too long, leaving us at a rough stalemate. As Zayn would say, character levels and skill levels weren’t everything in this game. They made a difference, no doubt, but it was those skills and experiences that weren’t quantified by the system that truly made the difference between two warriors.

And it helps if one of them isn’t a pure warrior. The stalemate broke when I used one of my Death Knight abilities, Ruin Bolt. The black orb of raw destruction slammed into the ghost, all but destroying her outright. I ended the battle with a slice from Hoperender in scythe form, shaving off the last of her HP. I quickly cast Soul Clutch again, and admired the misty orb in my hand for a moment, noting its similarity to a Whisp, before opening my mouth and tossing the thing inside.

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| You have completed the Trial of Ascension. For taking a harder path, you receive additional rewards. |

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| New Skill!Soulsight – Passive skill (Beginner 1, 0%)You can see the souls of all creatures, even those that linger after death, or have been trapped in items. With higher skill levels, more information is available. |

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| Gauntlets of Violation |
| Type | Gauntlets | Rank | Uncomon |
| These bloodsteel gauntlets are well made, having been forged and assembled by a master craftsman. They are engraved with runes of ‘submission’ and ‘obedience’. They have been used many times in the past by people who have less than noble intentions to their fellow sentients.+50 Defense+5% Piercing, Slashing, and Bludgeoning Resistance+20 CHA, +20 STR**Imbued:** Weakening – Creatures grappled by wearer suffer -100 penalty to STR to break grapple.**Enchanted:** Enhancing – When grappling, gain +100 bonus to STR to maintain grapple. |

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| Merkath’s Bloodstone Necklace |
| Type | Neck | Rank | Unique |
| Forged from platinum, and inset with a bloodstone ruby, this item was the personal belonging of Merkath the Dark in life. As she became a vampiric dragon, her blood spilled upon this necklace.+100 INT, +100 WISBloodlinked – The necklace has a link to Merkath, allowing the dragon to communicate with the wearer. It also allows her to automatically scry upon the wearer, or cast spells upon them. Merkath notes that she knows a lot of curses to use on those who displease her.Binding – The necklace binds to the person given it. It cannot be removed, sold, traded, or stolen unless Merkath wills it. |

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| Nethersbane |
| Type | Longsword | Rank | Rare |
| Damage | 80 – 100 | Damage Type | Slashing |
| One of a set of only a hundred blades, forged by the Sun King Galthar of Bathara for his knights as they fought the undead soldiers of Cathay. This adamantine longsword still bears the mark of Galthar, who was a master smith in his own right before becoming king. Though it was meant to fight the undead, many of these blades saw undead wielders after the fall of Bathara before the Scourge.+200 AttackDeals 3x damage to UndeadGhost Touch – Can hit incorporeal creatures. Can be used by incorporeal creatures.**Enchanted:** Vampiric – Heal 50% weapon damage on strike. |

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| Revenant (Drow Base)It is natural for all those that live to die. But not all creatures take this natural truth easily. While many of these types turn to lichdom if their power is great enough, or seek undead like Vampires to turn them if it is not, a few seek to change themselves into Revenants, creatures that are not quite undead, but no longer quite alive. These ‘living undead’ typically lack the most powerful abilities that undead creatures have, but they also lack the most crippling disadvantages of undead creatures.+10 to all StatsConstitution stat changed to Undead Vitality (VIT)Undead Type (Living Undead Subtype)Vampire’s Flesh – +5 HP Regen per minDragon’s Blood – Gain Dragon Type, Immune to DragonfearSadist’s Soul – MP Regen x3 for 60s after injuring intelligent creature. Does not apply to Construct, Ooze, Plant, or Undead types.Holy Ground Weakness – Lose all benefits of this race while on Holy Ground. |

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| Undead VitalityUndead are unliving creatures. When they become undead, they lose their CON score, and gain Undead Vitality. Increases HP and HP Regen at same rate as CON. Items that increase CON also increase VIT, unless they specify otherwise. VIT affects certain undead abilities. Abilities affected by CON do not use VIT. Base race changes to CON do not apply to VIT. |

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| Undead TypeDarkvisionLow-light VisionImmune to Ice/Cold damageImmune to Charm effectsHarmed by Healing SpellsHealed by negative energy spellsCan be affected by spells and abilities targeting the Undead TypeLiving Undead SubtypeCan be targeted by Charm SpellsHealing spells deal half damage to creatureCannot be affected by spells specifically targeting undead. |