

When the Paladins are not engaged in military campaigns, they are usually brooding, studying, or holding council from their estates. But they are also often called away on strange missions and far travel out of the blue. They are known to gather suddenly and to depart just as quickly: from their various strongholds, they just up and away, by warhorse, ship, or foot.

BECOMING A PALADIN

Some join the Paladins first as squires, seeking to be dubbed knights after a time of learning and service. Others, by the serendipity of life, are gifted by the chance and destiny of a sudden calling, and they are, on occasion, welcomed immediately into the highest ranks of the Order. The path of training for the Paladins is unique: they are creatures of battle, yet they seem to dedicate little study to combat. Instead, their fighting prowess seems to be almost meta-physical and inspired — it just arises within them, like an emanation. When they are called upon by the Fates to show heart and bravery, it almost seems as if they fight with a guided hand.



PALADIN ESTATES

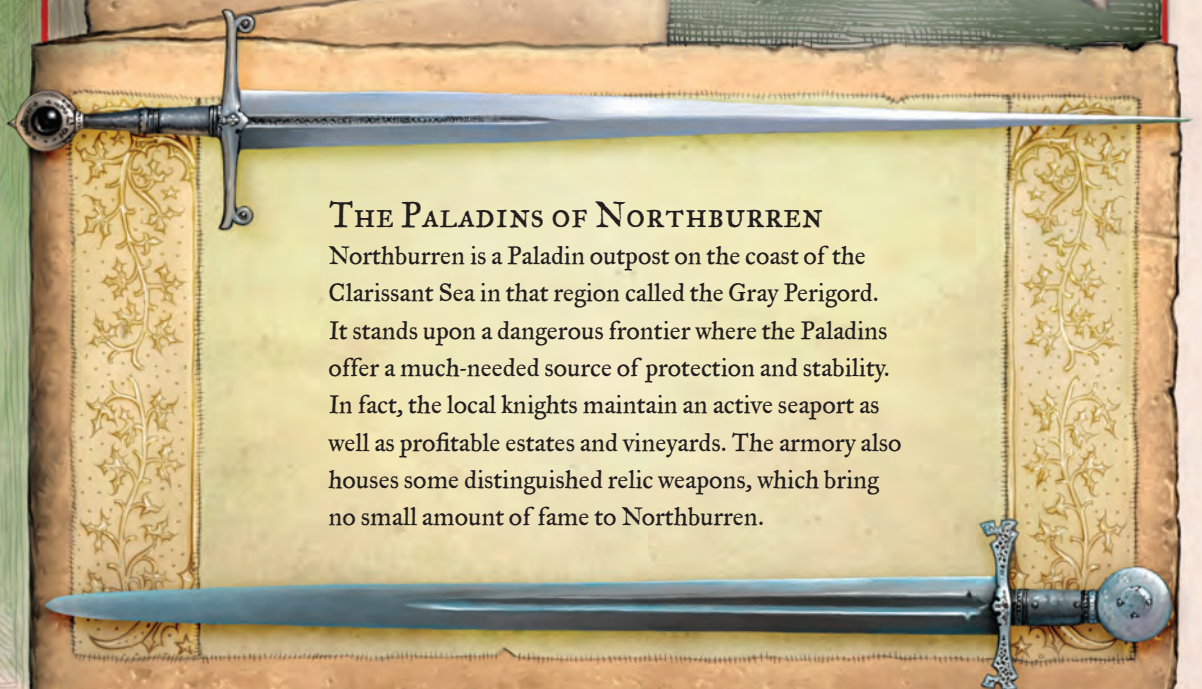
The Paladins share a portion of their bounty with a small army of craftsmen, builders, farmers, swordsmiths, and armorers who labor under the Paladin banner. Paladins are noted for keeping only the finest artisans, despite the high cost. They can afford this, since the war chests of the Order are always filled with the gifts of those who seek help against the privations caused by dragons, giants, vampires, demons, and such lot.

QUESTS AND SECRECY

Why the Paladins sojourn in the wildest places and why they risk the perils of the oceans in their daring quests and explorations none can say. They keep such business strictly to themselves.

THE PALADINS OF NORTHBURREN

Northburren is a Paladin outpost on the coast of the Clarissant Sea in that region called the Gray Perigord. It stands upon a dangerous frontier where the Paladins offer a much-needed source of protection and stability. In fact, the local knights maintain an active seaport as well as profitable estates and vineyards. The armory also houses some distinguished relic weapons, which bring no small amount of fame to Northburren.

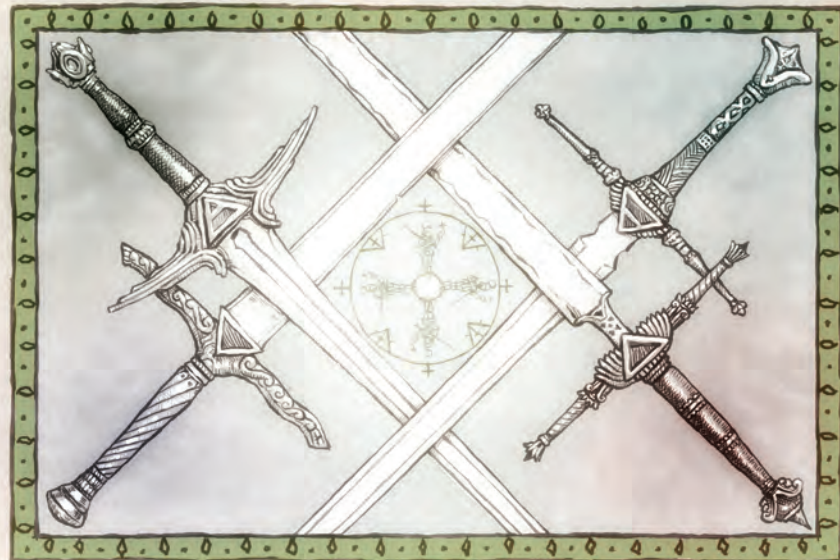


RELIC SWORDS

Relic swords are blessed by the holiest waters and the tears of sages. They are made with fragments taken from the most sacred and secret of reliquaries.

Ancient scrolls suggest that certain relic weapons were forged from parts of the swords of the Archangels themselves, who cast aside their broken blades after the ancient war of binding. If it is true that pieces of the four Elemental Blades were recovered and kept after all these countless millennia, then that would help explain the power behind some of these artifacts. Evil minions positively hate them, and even smaller devils go out of their way to avoid them.

This much is certain: if the remaining demons of the Lost Houses manage to reassemble a horde to march against the cities of humankind as they did of old, then the relic swords of the Paladins will be sorely needed.



SWORDS OF THE ARCHANGELS

When the Seraphim waged a war of banishment upon the Major Demons at the beginning of the age, they did so with wondrous and terrible weapons, including the Elemental Swords of the Archangels. Legend claims that these weapons were destroyed by a final clash with the demons, causing continents to sink and several stars to go dark in the sky as the swords shattered.

SHADOW-CLEAVER

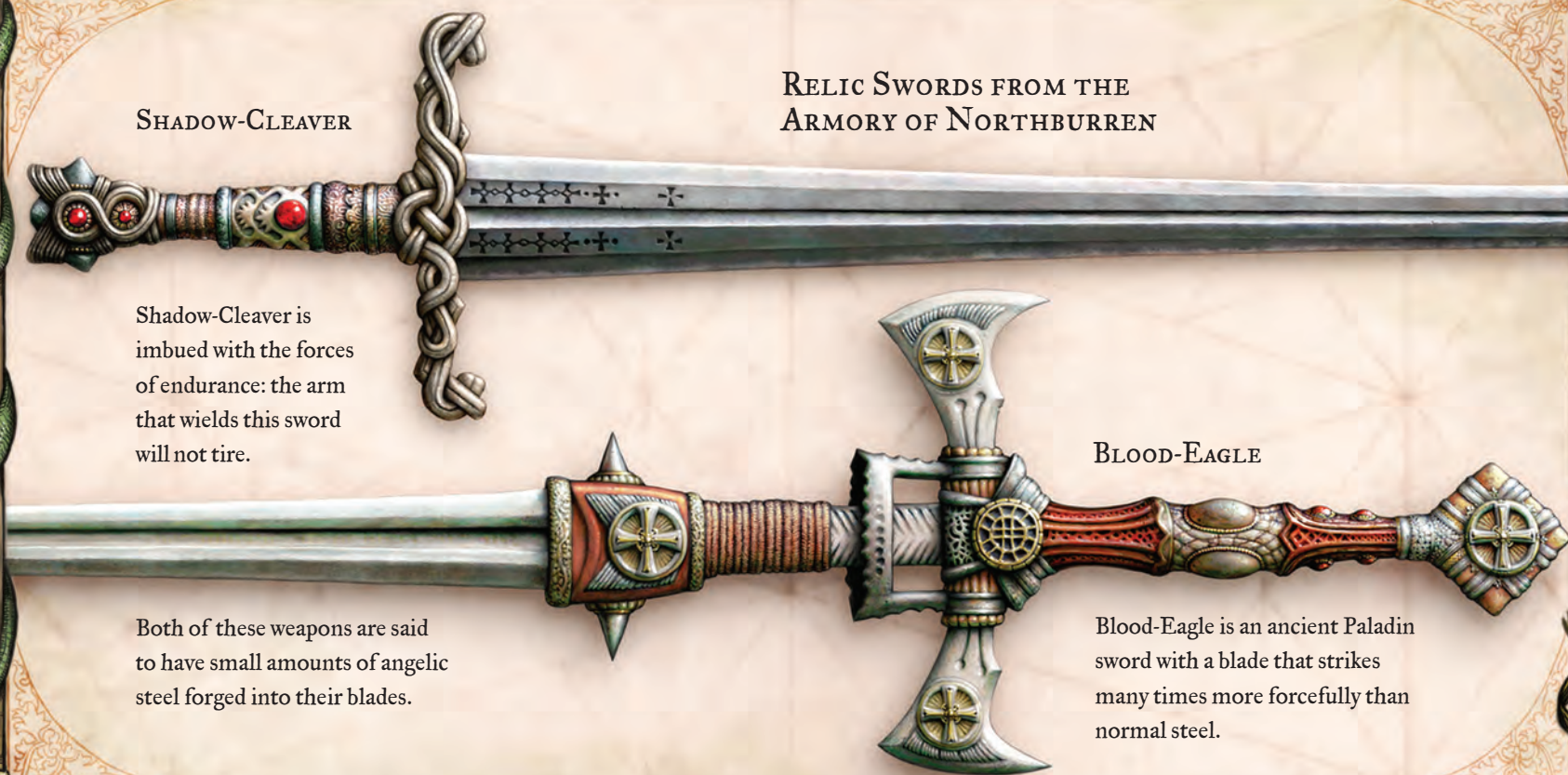
Shadow-Cleaver is imbued with the forces of endurance: the arm that wields this sword will not tire.

Both of these weapons are said to have small amounts of angelic steel forged into their blades.

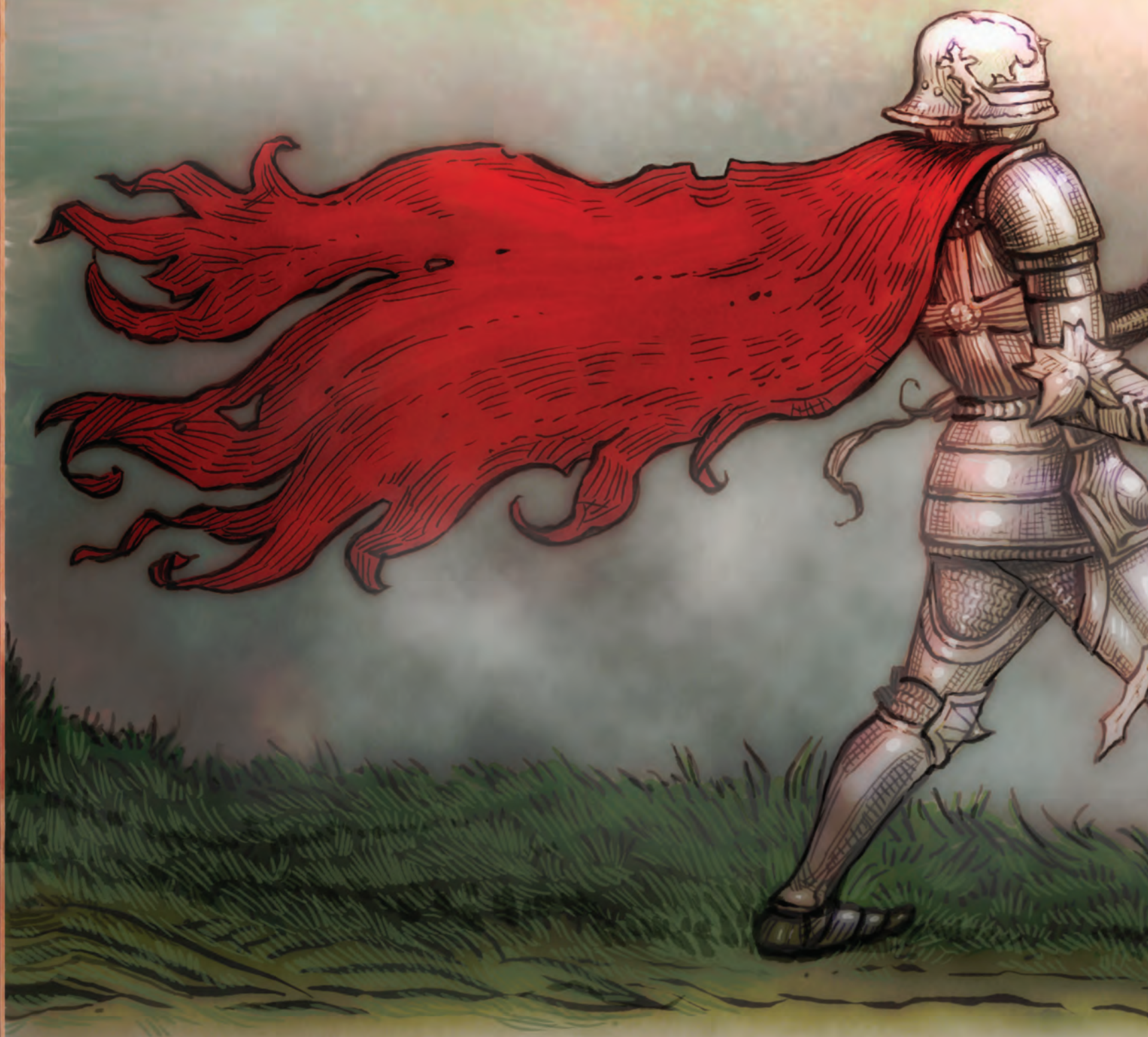
RELIC SWORDS FROM THE ARMORY OF NORTHBURREN

BLOOD-EAGLE

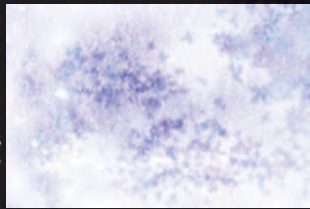
Blood-Eagle is an ancient Paladin sword with a blade that strikes many times more forcefully than normal steel.



A PALADIN FIGHTING A DEMON



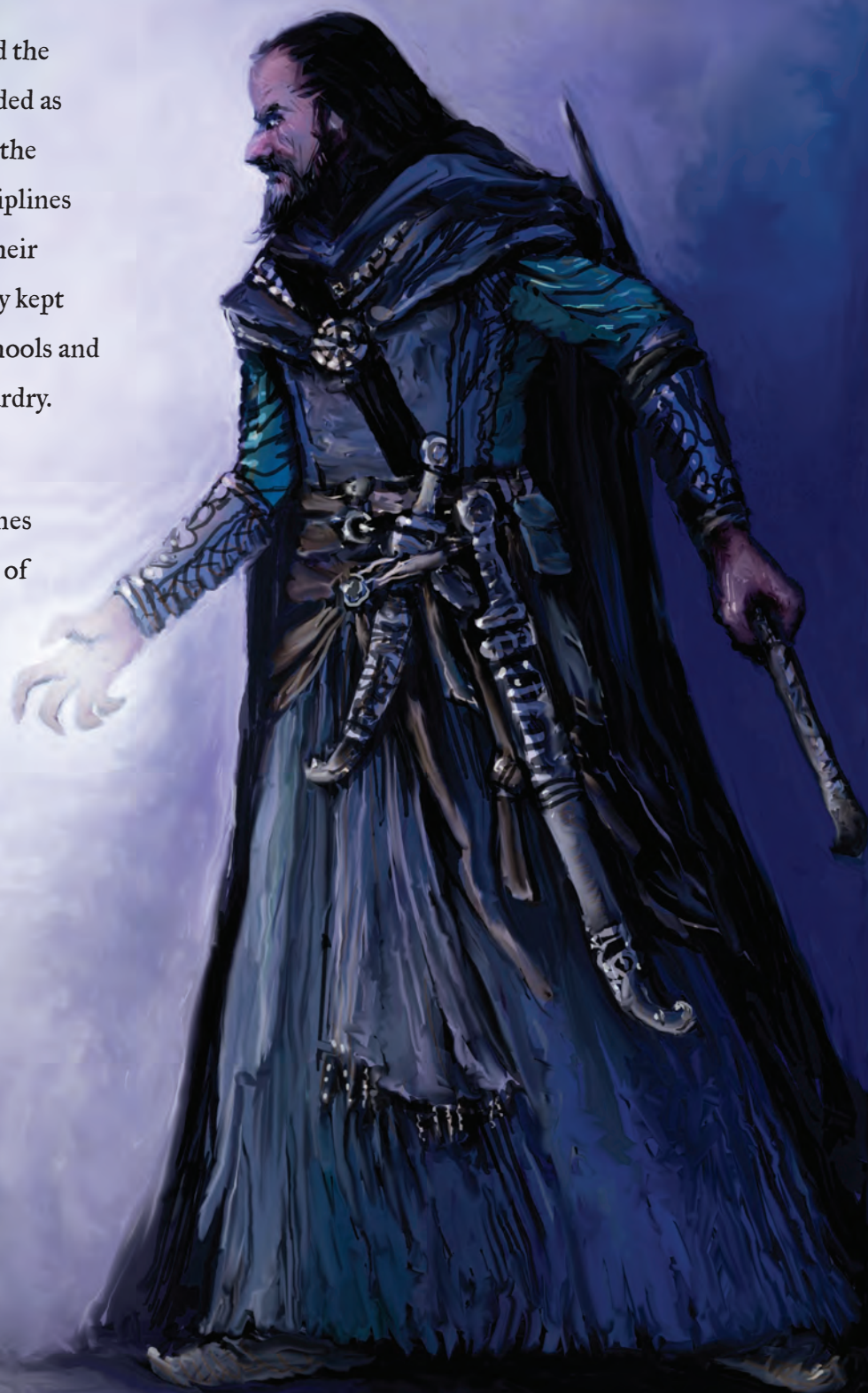




MAGES & ADEPTS

The mind that can comprehend the vastness of eternity can be wielded as a weapon. Mages and sorcerers the world over have used strict disciplines of learning to focus and train their minds. This learning is carefully kept and passed on in the various schools and academies of learning and wizardry.

But magic is not a path for the weak-willed, for with power comes responsibility — and the forces of balance will ever hound the careless magic user. Only a soul that can walk the razor's edge of learning and self-control is a true Adept.



THE STUDY & PERFECTION OF THE MYSTICAL ARTS

SCHOOLS OF MAGIC

The secrets of making and unmaking, which give the magic user his power, are the product of both intellect and intuition, which is to say that one's natural gifts can be honed by the rigors of study and discipline.

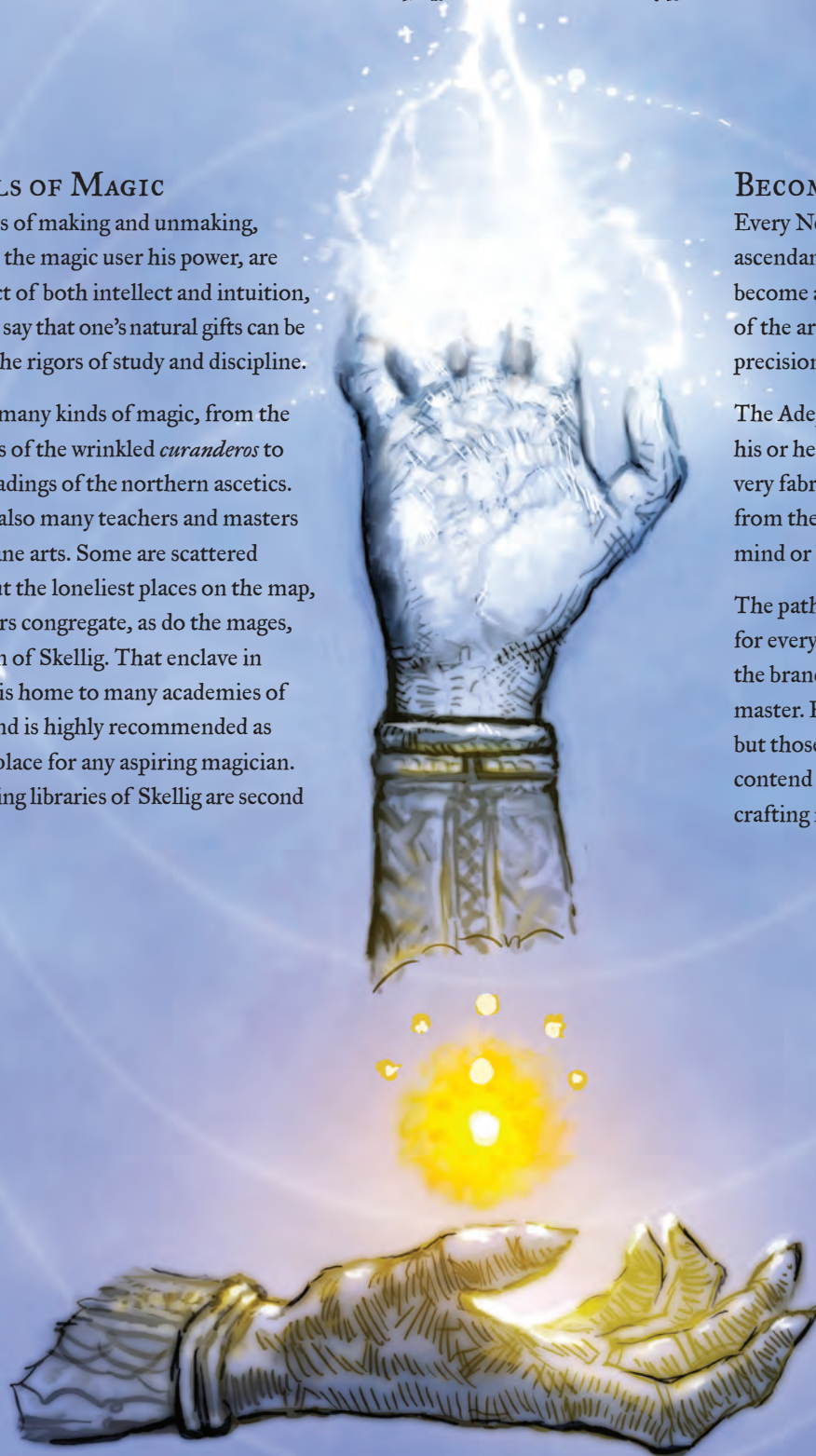
There are many kinds of magic, from the plant spells of the wrinkled *curanderos* to the star readings of the northern ascetics. There are also many teachers and masters of the arcane arts. Some are scattered throughout the loneliest places on the map, while others congregate, as do the mages, in the town of Skellig. That enclave in particular is home to many academies of learning and is highly recommended as a starting place for any aspiring magician. The towering libraries of Skellig are second to none.

BECOMING AN ADEPT

Every Neophyte dreams of achieving the ascendant qualities of the Adept. To become an Adept is to become a master of the arts of magic — able to do with precision what a lesser mage would botch.

The Adept is a mage in total control of his or her mind. Such a one can weave the very fabric of becoming — like lightning from the fingertips — without destroying mind or body.

The path to becoming an Adept is unique for every mage and depends in part on the branch of magic that one attempts to master. Few will actually attain the title, but those who do are incredible forces to contend with, whether they be alchemists crafting magic items or true mages-of-war.



TELEKINESIS AND LEVITATION

Sages of the metaphysical arts tell us that all things are connected by a web of energy that most cannot see. By mentally engaging with this energy, or “ether,” a mage can move and levitate even heavy objects. This can be achieved because the space between objects is subject to alteration by the perception mechanics of a magic user.



An Enchantress levitates a heavy chest by manipulating the ethereal powers.

According to legend, the levitation magic of hundreds of mages was used in the construction of the great Minotaur labyrinths of the East as well as in the deep, deep catacombs under the Necropolis, in the Black Perigord.



COMMON SPELLS OF UTILITY AND DEFENSE

LEVITATE: Invokes an ethereal lifting force that is directed by the caster's mind.

MAGIC CIRCLE: Casts a circle of banishing for demons and evil spirits.

MAGIC GLOW: A simple spell that creates a floating orb of light.

DISTANT SIGHT: Gives the caster a glimpse of a remote location.

ETHER SHIELD: Conjures energy armor, which can block physical attacks.

COMMON SPELLS OF COMBAT

PARALYZE: This spell sends an immobilizing shock of ether force to an enemy.

FIRE ARROW: Shoots an arrowlike projectile of burning ether magic from the caster's hands.

FIRE WIND: Similar to Fire Arrow, but this spell sends entire sheets and gusts of flame.

ICE JAVELIN: A mental concentration of the ether that can be frozen and hurled like a spear of ice.

LIGHTNING BOLT: A destructive bolt of energy that arcs from the caster to the chosen target.

EXAMPLES OF MAGICAL TOOLS

These are used to focus, store, and discharge magic energy.

THE STAFF OF PERCEPTION: Improves the user's sight.

A scroll of ancient ice spells

WAND OF FIRE

Ignites and casts forth a blast of fire at the will of the user. It has lit without fail for twelve generations.

WAND OF LIGHT

Radiates an aura that repulses evil things within a certain radius from the caster.



AMULET OF PROTECTION

Prevents arrows from hitting the wearer.



POTIONS OF VITALITY

These regenerate ethereal energy.

TALISMAN OF THE WILD

Allows communication with animals.



GRIMOIRES AND MAGIC BOOKS

Are full of secret formulas of divination and powerful spells.



MAGIC DAGGERS

These can penetrate almost any armor.



CANDLES AND INCENSE

These are enchanted to help focus the mind.



Those who can gain competence in magic are always sought during wars. Magic can tip the scales toward victory as well as any siege weapon, and thus a mage-of-war will be paid handsomely.

THE TOOLS OF A MAGE



