



Character Themes: Heroes of the Moonshaes

By Matt James

Illustrations by Beth Trott and Jason Juta

Resplendent in their stark beauty, the rocky cluster of islands known as the Moonshaes pepper the Sea of Swords west of the Sword Coast. Each island has a story all its own—of eerie mists that transport a traveler far distances in a heartbeat or of deep forests in which fierce monsters guard legendary treasures. Three distinct cultures, only two of which are human, claim these lush and bountiful shores. The relatively peaceful Ffolk dwell mainly in the southern portions of the isles. Northlander warriors sail the seas of the north, raiding year after year. The fey of Sarifal form a fanatical collective sworn to protect the forests of Gwynneth from human intrusion.

Adventurers from a variety of professions call the Moonshae Isles home and perform various functions in the world.

CHARACTER THEMES

Your character's theme is a career, calling, or identity that describes who he or she is in the world. Just as race and class create basic definitions about who your character is, theme adds a third character component to help refine your story and identity. The themes presented here give you information your character knows within a Moonshaes campaign, and provide story hooks that you can use to roleplay. Each theme can encompass several stories within the same concept.

For information on using themes as part of character creation, and rules for how to gain and use theme powers and features, see "Heroes of Nature and Lore," *Dragon* 399.

NEW STORY, SAME THEME

The first three themes in this article aren't new themes per se. They are suggested ways of using themes from the *Neverwinter™ Campaign Setting*, each with a different story.

Knight of Synnoria

Iliyanbruen Guardian

You are a Llewyr elf (see page 6). Once the dominant race of elves on the Moonshae Isles, your folk now claim only a few small, remote locations. You are a crusader adept at protecting the hidden sanctuaries of your people, and the primal and fey wonders of the Moonshaes. Those who respect primal spirits and the fey are your allies, and when corruption threatens, you heed the call to defense alongside such friends.

Use the Iliyanbruen guardian theme (*Neverwinter Campaign Setting*, page 28) to represent this theme.

Northlander Reaver

Uthgardt Barbarian

With a war cry on your lips and battleaxe in hand, you live for the thrill of conquest. As a Northlander, you hold the sea in your heart and a yearning for plunder in your veins. Primal forces of storm and sea are your friends; the spirits of your ancestors beckon you to glory. Feared up and down the Sea of Swords, your people are renowned for their ferocious spirits. Warriors from your clan patrol the seas around the Moonshaes in longships that inspire terror in any who spot their rectangular sails.

Use the Uthgardt barbarian theme (*Neverwinter Campaign Setting*, page 30) to represent this theme. Your powers are tied to storms and respect for your clan ancestors, rather than the thunderbeast.

Consider replacing the 5th-level Uthgardt barbarian feature with a +2 bonus to Perception checks to spot and a +2 bonus to Acrobatics checks to balance.

Darkwalker Kin

Pack Outcast

Descended from the seed of Malar the Beastlord and the beast Kazgoroth, you carry within you the feral bloodline of the Darkwalker. Suspicious yet uncertain of your vile lineage, you remain aloof from society and favor the borderlands and wild places. Despite your inner turmoil, you are a fierce warrior with a good heart, desperate to bury your dark ancestry.

Use the pack outcast theme (*Neverwinter Campaign Setting*, page 32) to represent this theme.

BACKDROP: MOONSHAE ISLES

For maps and additional information about the Moonshae Isles, see the “Backdrop: Moonshae Isles” article in *Dungeon* 196. The Backdrop article is intended more for Dungeon Masters than players, providing guidance for running adventures set in the region, but players will find much of the Moonshae lore helpful in creating characters native to the islands.



SARIFAL FEYWARDEN

Baleful armies from the Feydark march, and the kingdom stands on the precipice of ruin. For the High Lady, I shall see these interlopers suffer the wrath of the feywardens!

To become a feywarden, you must suppress the innate capriciousness of your kind. Threats to the kingdom are manifold, and the High Lady demands much of her champions. Only when it is time for Sarifal to retreat once more beyond the twilight veil can a feywarden relax his vigil. Heed the principles of your noble eladrin matriarch, and you might earn the High Lady's appreciation.

You are never completely at ease beyond the wilderness. Most feywardens run in a loosely organized party with the eldest serving as the leader. Rare individuals, such as yourself, are sent beyond the verdant confines of Sarifal to gather intelligence on the kingdom's enemies.

Feywardens are guardians of Sarifal and all things that dwell there. Your principal enemies are denizens of the Feydark who seek to despoil the pristine lands under your protection. You distrust humankind, seeing their attempts to tame and clear the wilderness as wasteful. You have a deep reverence for the primal spirits that watch over the Moonshaes, the Earthmother in particular.

Outsiders regard feywardens as curiously introverted and evasive. Most feywardens are unaligned or good. Few fey realms are subject to the same sort of dagger-in-the-back power struggles that often erupt in human kingdoms, but agents of the Unseelie fey are ever watchful for opportunities to lure feywardens into temptation and ruin.

Building a Sarifal Feywarden

You are a champion of the Feywild and guardian of the fabled kingdom of Sarifal. You have recently crossed through the twilight veil and into the world on a mission of great importance to your people.

Class Prerequisite: None. Any class can benefit from this theme's features, although primal classes are most common.

Race Prerequisite: Any fey race but drow.

Wild elves and wood elves fit this theme well (see the optional rules for these variant races in the *Neverwinter Campaign Guide*, pages 51–52). Of the eladrin subraces, only the Llewyr are typically welcome in Sarifal.

SARIFAL FEYWARDEN BACKGROUND

The fey of Sarifal are uniquely attuned to the world around them. They have a Feywild connection that transcends the mortal world. Many fey hailing from Sarifal can traverse difficult terrain with surprising ease and swiftness.

Associated Skills: Acrobatics, Arcana, Athletics, Stealth.

Starting Feature

Feywardens of Sarifal are blessed with the eldritch, life-giving power of the Feywild. Calling on such power, you and nearby allies temporarily gain protection from harm.

Benefit: You gain the *Sarifal's blessing* power.

Sarifal's Blessing

Sarifal Feywarden Utility

You call for and receive a boon that shields you from harm and weakens your enemies.

Encounter ♦ Arcane, Aura, Primal

Minor Action Personal

Effect: Choose cold, fire, lightning, necrotic, or thunder.

You activate an aura 2 that lasts until the end of your next turn. While in the aura, you and your allies gain resist 5 to the chosen damage type. Any enemy in the aura has vulnerable 5 to your attacks that deal the chosen damage type.

Level 11: The resistance and vulnerability increase to 10.

Level 21: The resistance and vulnerability increase to 15.

Additional Features

Level 5 Feature

You have become a trusted feywarden. Having passed several tests of initiation, you are free to perform tasks without oversight from your mentors. Now you continue your work in hopes of becoming an exalted denizen of Sarifal. Others come to you for your knowledge and experience, and expect you to act in accordance with the decrees of the queen. By sharing your experience and knowledge with new pupils, you encourage others to walk a similar path and become enlightened about the workings of nature.

Benefit: You gain a +2 power bonus to Nature checks. In addition, you have mastered the Spirit Fetch ritual (*Dragon* 380). Once per day, you can use the ritual without expending components.

Level 10 Feature

You are the epitome of nature's defenders and a principal protector of Sarifal. You constantly work against the corruption of the sacred lands you have protected for so long. As a leader, you speak for Sarifal and advance your culture's interests. You ensure that future generations maintain the connection to nature to which you have devoted your life.

You have a reputation for action, not words, rallying those around you to protect not only the forests of Sarifal, but all of Toril. Because you continually promote living responsibly with nature, many powerful spirits have visited you. They encourage you to make sure that the connection between your worlds remains healthy and strong.

Your knowledge of and experience with primal forces enhance your body.

Benefit: You gain a +1 power bonus to Fortitude.

Optional Powers

As a defender of Sarifal and all it stands for, you trained for contingencies unique to your location. You know specialized powers that draw magic from the fey realms and nature. With nature on your side, you call upon powerful spirits to assist you.

Level 2 Utility Power

Your continued dedication to the protection of Sarifal makes you renowned in both the natural and supernatural realms. A special advisor comes forth from the Feywild to aid you.

Sarifal Advisor

Sarifal Feywarden Utility 2

A faint popping noise accompanies the appearance of the tiny fey you summon to aid you.

Daily ♦ Arcane, Summoning, Primal
Minor Action **Ranged 5**

Effect: You summon a Sarifal advisor in an unoccupied square within range. The creature is an ally to you and your allies.

The advisor lacks actions of its own. Instead, you spend actions to command it mentally, choosing from the actions in its description. You must have line of effect to the advisor to command it. When you command the advisor, the two of you share knowledge but not senses.

When the advisor makes a check, you make the roll using your game statistics, not including temporary bonuses or penalties.

The advisor lasts until it drops to 0 hit points, at which point you lose a healing surge (or hit points equal to your healing surge value if you have no surges left). Otherwise, it lasts until you dismiss it as a minor action or until the end of the encounter.

Sarifal Advisor

Level 2 Summoned Creature

Tiny fey humanoid, pixie

HP your healing surge value; **Healing Surges** none, but you can spend a healing surge for the advisor if an effect allows it to spend one

Defenses your defenses, not including any temporary bonuses or penalties

Speed 4, fly 6 (altitude limit 1) **Low-light vision**

Advisor's Acumen

The advisor gains a +2 bonus to Arcana checks, Nature checks, and Stealth checks.

Speak with Beasts

The advisor can communicate with natural beasts and fey beasts.

Minor Action ♦ Encounter

Effect: Until the end of your next turn, you can sense the world through the advisor's senses. You gain neither line of sight nor line of effect for your powers from the advisor's space, but you can make Perception checks from it.

Minor Action ♦ At-Will (1/round)

Effect: The advisor crawls, flies, runs, stands up, shifts, squeezes, or walks.

Level 6 Utility Power

Feywardens embody the physical and spiritual qualities of the Feywild. When you call upon its power, you assume a glowing, shimmering form that leaches strength from your foes.

Light of Sarifal

Sarifal Feywarden Utility 6

Light emanates from you so intensely that your enemies cannot bear to ignore you.

Daily ♦ Arcane, Aura, Primal
Minor Action **Personal**

Effect: You activate an aura 3 that lasts until the end of your next turn. Enemies in the aura take a penalty to damage rolls against creatures other than you. The penalty equals your highest ability modifier.

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

Level 10 Utility Powers

Being among the feywardens has made you adept at fey trickery.

When you gain a 10th-level utility power, the following powers are among your options: the wizard powers *blur* and *mirror image* (*Player's Handbook*®), the shaman power *spirits of the shadowed moon* (*Player's Handbook 2*), and the warlock power *warlock's leap* (*Player's Handbook*). For the purpose of retraining, these powers follow the same rules as optional theme powers.

CALLIDYRR DRAGOON

Duty bids me to defend the realm of my ancestors. Honor demands that I act with temperance before valor. For the glory of the High King, this I swear.

Callidyr stands as a beacon of hope in a region overrun with malevolent fey, marauding giants, and bloodthirsty lycanthropes. As a Callidyr dragoon, you are a stalwart defender of the realm, a privileged member of the High King's elite guard. Dragoon is a special title awarded to individuals who have shown exceptional service to the crown.

Unlike knights of the realm, dragoons do not muster with the realm's army but instead receive assignments best handled alongside a small number of compatriots. As such, Callidyr dragoons receive specialized training in diplomacy and espionage. Dragoons have access to the Palace of the High King and can speak with royal authority throughout the realm. In exchange for these privileges, a dragoon must swear a binding oath of unwavering allegiance to the High King and the land. The Royal Hierophant administers this oath and seals it with a geas that binds the dragoon to the honored ancestors. If the dragoon ever forsakes the vows to king and country, the geas irrevocably wipes the fallen dragoon of his memories.

The rank of dragoon is relatively new, having been born of the nation's conflict with Amn at the dawn of the century. After repeated failed attempts to forcibly liberate the kingdom of Westphal from Amnian occupation, High Queen Alicia Kendrick founded the dragoons to work against the Amnian invaders clandestinely.

When the High Queen died unexpectedly in the Year of the Halls Unhaunted (1407 DR), the dragoons were instrumental in quelling insurgent uprisings throughout Callidyr. Common belief held

that agents of Lionel Carrathal, heir to the former royal dynasty of Callidyr who claimed to be the "true" High King of the Moonshaes, poisoned the beloved High Queen.

In the years since, the dragoons have thwarted countless assassins, driven off sahuagin incursions, and even brokered a tenuous peace with the fey of Sarifal. This proud legacy is what you inherit as a Callidyr dragoon. May you live up to its valorous ideal.

Building a Callidyr Dragoon

You are a champion of Alaron and a defender of the kingdom of Callidyr.

Class Prerequisite: None. A member of any class might be a Callidyr dragoon. However, the benefits of this theme heavily favor strong melee combatants and defenders. Fighters and wardens compose the majority of this elite unit, but paladins in service to nature deities are occasionally called to service.

Race Prerequisite: Human or halfling. These two races are most representative of the kingdom of Callidyr (the DM might allow other races under special circumstances, but characters of strong fey heritage are unwelcome throughout much of Callidyr).

CALLIDYRR DRAGOON BACKGROUND

A dragoon's rigorous daily training is a marvel of physical discipline. These learned defenders of the realm are equally ardent in mastering the art of nonviolent conflict resolution.

Associated Skills: Athletics, Diplomacy, Insight.

Starting Feature

All dragoons start out as knights of Callidyr. They excel at mounted combat and close-quarters fighting.

Benefit: You gain the Mounted Combat feat (*Player's Handbook*). In addition, you gain proficiency with one martial melee weapon of your choice.

Additional Features

Level 5 Feature

Your words have the authority of the High King and the power of noble folk ancestors behind them. Any declaration you make is a spiritually infused guarantee of action. You are able to act in good faith on behalf of Caer Callidyr, and you command respect from friend and foe.

Benefit: You gain a +2 power bonus to Diplomacy checks and Intimidate checks.

Level 10 Feature

After extensive training and experience, your superiors promote you to higher ranks within the organization. Because you are a respected member of the Callidyr dragoons, your assurances have the power to bring comfort to your allies.

Benefit: You can use the Diplomacy skill as if it were the Heal skill to grant either a saving throw or a use of second wind. The subject of your check can be up to 5 squares away from you.

Optional Powers

Level 2 Utility Power

Callidyr dragoons are renowned for their tactical acumen, ancestral ties, and self-sacrificing defense of others. A true champion, you risk everything to shield your allies from harm.

Dragoon Warding Callidyr Dragoon Utility 2

You vow to protect an ally, creating a spiritual tie between you and shielding the ally from the worst of any assault.

Encounter ♦ Martial, Primal
Minor Action **Melee 1**
Target: One ally

Effect: The target gains a +2 power bonus to AC and Fortitude. Whenever the target is adjacent to you and takes damage from a melee or ranged attack, you can take half the damage, halving the damage the target takes. Nothing can reduce the damage you take. These effects last until the end of your next turn.

Level 6 Utility Power

So versed are you in combat stratagems that you have an uncanny knack for reading your enemies' movements and countering their attacks.

Dragoon Parry Callidyr Dragoon Utility 6

Subtle changes in the enemy's bearing reveal its intentions, allowing you to parry and throw the foe off balance.

Encounter ♦ Martial, Primal
Immediate Interrupt **Personal**

Trigger: An adjacent enemy hits you with a melee attack while you are wielding a melee weapon.

Effect: You gain a +2 power bonus to AC and Reflex against the triggering attack. In addition, you gain combat advantage against the triggering enemy until the end of your next turn.

Level 10 Utility Power

You are a true knight of the land, and that status brings with it ancient and tested power. By focusing your will and giving a traditional battle cry, you stir the ancestors to action.

Dragoon Summons Callidyr Dragoon Utility 10

You howl the ancient battle cry of Efolk warriors and the wind gains a sudden chill, followed by the ghostly arrival of an ancestral defender.

Daily ♦ Primal, Summoning
Minor Action **Ranged 5**

Effect: You summon an ancestral defender in an unoccupied square within range. The creature is an ally to you and your allies.

The defender lacks actions of its own. Instead, you spend actions to command it mentally, choosing from the actions in its description. You must have line of effect to the defender to command it. When you command the defender, the two of you share knowledge but not senses.

When the defender makes a check, you make the roll using your game statistics, not including temporary bonuses or penalties.

The defender lasts until it drops to 0 hit points, at which point you lose a healing surge (or hit points equal to your healing surge value if you have no surges left). Otherwise, it lasts until you dismiss it as a minor action or until the end of the encounter.

Ancestral Defender Level 10 Summoned Creature Medium natural animate

HP your bloodied value; **Healing Surges** none, but you can spend a healing surge for the defender if an effect allows it to spend one

Defenses your defenses, with a +2 bonus to AC and not including any temporary bonuses or penalties

Speed 0, fly 6 (hover; altitude limit 1)

☼ **Battle Blessing ♦ Aura 1**

You and your allies gain a +2 power bonus to damage rolls while in the aura.

Minor Action ♦ At-Will

Effect: The defender administers first aid to an adjacent ally. It uses your Heal skill with a +2 power bonus to the check.

Minor Action ♦ At-Will (1/round)

Effect: The defender crawls, flies, runs, stands up, shifts, squeezes, or walks.

Immediate Interrupt ♦ Encounter

Trigger: An ally adjacent to the defender is hit by a melee or a ranged attack.

Effect: The defender is hit by the attack instead.

Racial Variants

Elves in the FORGOTTEN REALMS setting are made up of distinct subraces. The Llewyr elves of the Moonshaes are one such variant. See the *Neverwinter Campaign Setting* for additional racial variants.

Llewyr Elf (Eladrin)

During the Crown Wars, the Llewyr were a community of moon elves and green elves dwelling in the verdant woodland known today as Neverwinter Wood. When Vyshaan armies swept through their lands, the Llewyr fled across the sea seeking the fabled isle of Evermeet.

A fierce squall forced the refugees to make landfall on the Moonshaes, where they were greeted by the enigmatic leShay, legendary progenitors of the fey. The leShay permitted the Llewyr to settle in isolation and safety among the mountains of the large central island. The Llewyr named their new

kingdom Synnoria, after the queen who led them to this island sanctuary.

Over the next eleven millennia, the Llewyr evolved into a unique subrace rarely seen outside the Moonshaes. Llewyr share many of the same societal attributes of their moon elf ancestors, including the building of grand cities and advanced mastery of arcane arts. Llewyr have fair skin, but unlike their moon elf cousins, the elves of Synnoria have golden hair. Llewyr born in the last century share the hauntingly opalescent eyes common to all eladrin, with the pupils of older generations colored in shades of green and brown, with gold flecks.

At the heart of Synnoria is the resplendent city of Chrysalis, resting upon a verdant tor rising from a crystal clear lake. The city is a dazzling display of soaring glassteel towers, crystalline gardens, and majestic silver-glyphed boulevards.

Today, much of the city is abandoned, for the Llewyr have paid a price for their long isolation. Birth rates are low, and centuries of attrition has dwindled their numbers dramatically. Males are uncommon, constituting less than a quarter of the population.

Roleplaying a Llewyr Elf

Sun elves were the aggressors who forced the Llewyr out of the Llewyrwood on the mainland, so you harbor a lingering animosity toward them. This distrust extends to other elf subraces as well. Having lived in isolation for so long, most Llewyr feel no kinship toward their elf cousins, and have no desire to be caught up in elven politics and intrigues. You swear fealty to the High Lady of Sarifal, not the crown of Evermeet.

You share a bond with the natural world and primal spirits of the land. Unlike many eladrin, the Llewyr do not worship Corellon Larethian or other divine entities of the Seldarine. Instead, the Llewyr venerate the “fey gods,” mighty primal spirits and archfey that have watched over the Moonshaes for millennia. Greatest among these primal manifestations are the Earthmother and her children.

Your people have survived for millennia by forming strong family and community bonds, and you honor these. An oath given by a Llewyr is a binding pledge. Though Llewyr are slow to trust, once a bond is formed, the friendship lasts a lifetime.

Llewyr Elf Benefits

When creating a Llewyr elf character, you can pick from the following benefits.

Historical Insight: Armed with a voracious appetite for studying the antiquity of humanoid culture, you have an uncanny ability to discern the intent of individuals based solely on the historical exploits of their kind.

Benefit: You gain a +2 bonus to Insight checks. This benefit replaces the normal eladrin skill bonus to Arcana.

Elf Weapon Proficiency: Elves and eladrin of all stripes take time to learn the traditional weapons of their people.

Benefit: You gain proficiency with the longbow and the shortbow. This benefit replaces Eladrin Weapon Proficiency.

LLEWYRR ELF BACKGROUND

Llewyr elves study the natural world and master arcane magic. A long-standing cooperation with the druid circles of the Moonshaes has given the Llewyr an understanding of their rare tongue. Many Llewyr are avid historians with a keen interest in the lineages of humanoid societies.

Associated Skills: Arcana, History, Insight, Nature.

About the Author

Matt James is a freelance game designer from the Washington DC area. His recent design credits include *Monster Vault™*, *Threats to the Nentir Vale™*, *D&D Lair Assault™: Attack of the Tyrantclaw™*, and *Into the Unknown: The Dungeon Survival Handbook™* (due to release in 2012). Matt is a disabled veteran, wounded during combat operations in Iraq during 2005. You can follow his gaming insights via @matt_james_rpg on Twitter and at Loremaster.org.

Developers

Chris Sims, Robert J. Schwalb

Editor

Miranda Horner

Managing Editors

Jeremy Crawford, Kim Mohan

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Christopher Perkins, Greg Bilsland, Stan!

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