

Races of Destiny In the Forgotten Realms

Many of the races detailed in the *Races of the Wild* sourcebook are races that are already found and have an established place in the Forgotten Realms. Half-elves, half-orcs, and half-ogres, and beings such as tieflings and aasimar have already been detailed in the setting for years, and don't particularly need any mention here.

The sea kin mentioned in the book don't really have a parallel in the setting, and the sharakim, as a race of orcs with a benevolent slant, are already represented in the Realms with the Ondonti race of the Moonsea.

Thus the main focus of this article is to incorporate the new race known as the illumians into a Forgotten Realms campaign.

Illumians in the Realms

Unlike raptorans, whose history in the Realms go back to the days of the Creator Races, and the goliaths, whose history goes back at least to the giant empire of Ostoria, the illumians are a relatively recent addition to the world of Toril, and they do not originate from Toril at all.

Illumians hail from a prime material world other than Toril, where they were originally humans that participated in the rituals that made them the living representation of an arcane language. Eventually the illumians developed two separate settlements on planes beyond their original world, one in the Astral plane (the Library of the Sublime, which was destroyed), and one in the Plane of Shadows.

The illumians have begun to pay close attention to Toril due to their clashes with two separate races in establishing the shadow city of Elirhondas. Not long after the city was established, strange shapeshifting beings began to infiltrate Elirhondas, and eventually the illumians found out that these beings were the Malaugrym.

Not long after the discovery of the Malaugrym spies, Elirhondas was beset with a patrol of strange creatures who were partially born of creatures of the Plane of Shadows, led by a shade on a strange flying beast. Eventually the illumians found that these creatures were the krinith, and they were led by one of the Shadovar from the city of Thultanthar, before it returned to Toril.

Thankfully Elirhondas remained relatively low on the priorities of Thultanthar, but the encounter put the illumians on edge, especially after the experience of the illumians with the githyanki and their raiding of the Library of the Sublime. The illumians managed to find out that both the Malaugrym and the Shadovar hailed from the prime material world of Toril.

Illumian Cabals In Relation To Toril

There are several cabals that have established themselves in Toril, but these cabals are small. Each of them have a portal within them that connect to their cabal's portal on the Boulevard of Doors. These cabals are small, and the illumians often suppress their sigils in order to pass for human within Faerun, though many of them feel naked and exposed without them.

The Brightmist Cabal: This is a small, well hidden cabal that has established itself on the island of Nimbral. While the inhabitants of Nimbral are very careful about outsiders, and are skilled at seeing through illusions and lies, thus far the members of the Brightmist cabal have managed to mingle among the Nimbralese without arousing suspicions.

The Brightmist cabal is a chain cabal, and their spy network is seeking to spread out beyond Nimbral and into Samarach and Halruaa, as one of their main concerns is to find out as much as possible about the ancient Netherese. The Brightmist cabal initially tried to establish itself in Halruaa, but after a few incautious inquiries, they removed themselves to the wilderness of the northernmost mountains of the Seahaven, to the north of Vindal.

The Shadowlance Cabal: The Shadowlance cabal was one of the first established after the illumians took an interest in Toril. The Shadowlance cabal established itself in late 1372 DR, and many illumians from Elirhondas affiliated themselves with this cabal (though it is still only a little larger than the Brightmist cabal). The Shadowlance cabal is a gauntlet cabal.

The Shadowlance cabal is hidden in the Thunder Peaks just south of the ruins of Tilverton, and their agents have been active in gathering information on the Shadovar as well as keeping the nobles of Cormyr rallied against the shades of Thultanthar. Members of this cabal have also been emphasizing the danger of Shar and her clergy, and are actively keeping local priesthoods searching for hidden enclaves of the Lady of Loss.

The Shadowlance cabal has been sending agents into Sembia, and they may establish another gauntlet cabal there if they can create a viable spy network larger than the rudimentary one that they have established so far. Given the sway that gold has on the Sembians, the illumians don't think it will take long to establish their influence network, though Sembians seem harder to move to action than Cormyreans.

The Wordbreaker Cabal: The Wordbreaker cabal is a rather new cabal, and they have established themselves in a remote holding in the Evermoors. Many members of this cabal travel to the Vault of Sages in Silverymoon, and a good number of the Wordbreaker cabal have begun to worship the Fearunian deity Deneir.

The Wordbreaker cabal is a gibber cabal, one that is invested in researching new words in the illumian language. Many members of this cabal are interested in learning about the Metatext, and even the hidden text of Leira's that Deneir discovered. Since these are not secrets that the church of Deneir easily part with, many illumians have joined the church, and most of them wholeheartedly.

The Lightdrinker Cabal: The Lightdrinker cabal is a cabal that is not actually located in Toril, but that has its interests firmly grounded there. The Lightdrinker cabal is a gravewhisper cabal, a cabal interested in necromancy, immortality, and dark secrets, and it is located in the Plane of Shadows.

The Lightdrinker cabal has fallen deeply into the worship of Shar. Initially a group of illumians seeking to find out more about the Shadovar and their culture, these illumians became obsessed with the Lady of Loss and learning the secrets that have been gathered and kept by her. The Lightdrinker cabal has sent many agents into Toril, having agents in various major cultures in the Realms. They have traveling agents and static agents in places like Thay and Halruaa.

The Lightdrinker cabal has also managed to slip agents into the Cult of the Dragon, and the church of Velsharoon, though they remain faithful servants of Shar. They also have been gathering information about the cult of Orcus that once held Vaasa in thrall.

Between studying the Netherese and various traditions of necromancy, some of the members of the cabal are becoming increasingly interested in finding out more concerning the legend of the “fallen” Netherese enclave leader Larloch.

Illumian Religion

The illumians are not a numerous race in Toril, having only established a few relatively small cabals across the continent, as well as having a few agents operating directly from the city of Elirhondas. All of the illumian pantheon are demigods, and since the illumians do not seek to spread the worship of the illumian gods beyond their own numbers, the illumian deities have not come under Ao's influence at this point in time.

Illumians are still fairly quick to pick up other deities, and Deneir and Shar have been popular choices from among the Faerunian pantheon. While they are not widely worshiped, the religious texts of Leira, Velsharoon, and Orcus have all come under scrutiny as well (and there may have been a few quiet converts to some of these gods or entities).