

Planar Handbook Races in Faerun

There are a wide variety of species that exist in the various planes connected to Faerun. Some of these creatures are well known to sages, priests, and wizards, but others are less well known, especially to the casual scholar of planar lore. The following passages will detail several of the races detailed in the Planar Handbook and place them in the context of Faerun and the Great Tree cosmology.

Bariaurs: Bariaurs in the Great Tree cosmology are often times followers of Mielikki, and their planar home tends to be the House of Nature. As actual outsiders, they are native to this plane, and as such, often dwell within the territory of Mielikki and other nature deities. Bariaurs are restless creatures, and are of good nature, and as such, they often travel the planes in search of adventure and in order to give them the chance to oppose evil.

While bariaurs are most often inhabitants of the House of Nature, some have traveled to, and settled upon, the planes of Arvandor, The Gates of the Moon, and Warrior's Rest. Bariaurs, with their contentious nature, often times enjoy the rowdy battles of Warrior's Rest, though they are often put off by the less noble inhabitants of the plane.

Bariaurs sometimes travel the planes widely to track down evil that has caught their attention, and therefore from time to time they can be found in some of the other planes, those that are less goodly in nature. In rare instances, these hunts take a bariaur to Faerun itself. From time to time, a bariaur servant of Mielikki might be sent to aid a servant of the Lady of the Forest dwelling in Faerun.

Buomman: Buomman inhabit monasteries built on the bodies of dead deities floating in the Astral Plane. While some Faerunian scholars that have encountered them associate them as the long lost members of various fallen empires of Faerun, the lengthy history of the buomman tends to make most of these associations unlikely, and some other sages have posited the theory that buomman are not native to the Great Tree originally.

Buomman monasteries tend to fall along three lines. The more benevolent minded buomman monasteries are built on the bodies of deities that generally are regarded as "good" deities. The buomman that find these bodies set up their monasteries on the body of the god, hoping that the worship and meditation directed at the fallen gods of good will awaken them and bring their power back into the universe. These buomman will, from time to time, journey to Faerun to visit sties that were sacred to the fallen god they venerate, and to learn from any still living cultists to that fallen god. These buomman often take the Servant of the Fallen feat and have more divine casters than the other kinds of buomman monasteries.

These buomman tend to be of lawful good alignment. Many of the deities that they have come to built monasteries upon are the lost gods of the Mulhorandi and Untheric pantheons, which means that often times traveling buomman pilgrims will be found in the Old Empires regions.

A second group of buomman believe that the gods that have died and passed on, for the most part, stay dead. These buomman are fascinated by the potential information about the universe that they might be privy to by studying and meditating upon these dead gods. These buomman tend to be neutral in alignment, and are the least likely to have divine casters among them.

The final group of buomman are those that believe that the gods sleeping in the astral plane are those that have died due to divine “natural selection,” and that if they are to return to the universe alive, they pose a threat to the multiverse itself and must be kept “asleep” at all cost. The buomman perform their chants to keep them from awakening. While these buomman might seem to have a noble purpose, they seek to limit the power of the gods as they investigate ways of tapping divine power themselves, elevating themselves to a position of dominance across the planes. These buomman, from time to time, follow the path of the ur-priest.

These buomman can, from time to time, be found in the lower planes learning what secrets they can from fiendish masters, especially when it comes to ways of subverting the powers of the gods. Similarly, they will travel to the shrines of dead gods on Toril to learn how best to leech power from their rotting forms in the astral.

Mephlings: Mephling origins are fairly straightforward in the Great Tree. They are the strange, less powerful offspring of some mephits, although they often times form communities and breed true with one another.

On Toril, its not uncommon to find fire mephlings in Thay, serving as members of the Church of Kossuth. These creatures are never seen as viable “citizens” of Thay, but generally are regarded as the property of the priests of the temple they are servants off. Thayan wizards are often mistrustful of the fire mephlings due to their sorcerous inclinations, but a good number of them are also favored souls of Kossuth.

Given the competition between the Elemental Lords, the other gods of the elements have also sent mephling servants to various regions of Toril where their worship is strong, but Kossuth by far has the largest following.

Neraphim: Common theories on the Neraphim hold that they have some common roots with the Slaad, and they share the same plane in the Great Tree, the Supreme Throne. Some sages have theorized that the Slaad are the evolved form of one of the early creator races of the Days of Thunder, but still others have contended that the Neraphim might actually be the direct descendants of that lost race. It matters little, as the Neraphim are fairly simple beings, organized to promote the hunt.

Neraphim are great hunters, and while they usually are using this skill to aid their Houses, from time to time wanderlust sets in, or the desire to test their hunting ability against even more dangerous prey, and they might travel to the Abyss, across the Blood Rift, and into any number of other planes, including forays onto Toril itself.

Most Neraphim revere the Slaad Lords as deities, though occasionally a Neraph will be seduced by the madness of Cyric and follow the Dark Sun, often becoming a tracker and assassin to further the goals of the faith. Eventually Neraphim that fit this description might be sent to Cyricists on Toril to serve as trackers, assassins, or bodyguards.

Shadowswyfts: The plane of Shadows in Toril's cosmology is a dangerous place, and the Shadowswyfts have had to use stealth and cunning to avoid open conflicts with the Shadovar, the

Maulaugrym, and a host of other insidious threats. They are by nature adventurous and chaotic by nature, so from time to time they forget their survival instincts and push their limits by trying to learn about the secrets of their various neighbors.

Shadowswyfts often times hold Mask as patron, as he is a native deity to the Plane of Shadows and because he encourages their stealthy nature and their adventurous spirit. Shadowswyfts rarely venerate Shar, as she tends to be the patron of most of their enemies in the Plane of Shadows.

Shadowswyfts can end up in Toril fairly easily, as their adventurous nature instills them with wanderlust, and they may even pursue various enemies into the Prime Material Plane in order to learn more about them and their secrets. Shadowswyfts are not above selling such secrets to the highest bidder, though they often leave out enough information to give them more leverage later on.

Spikers: These beings are generally considered native to the Barrens of Doom and Despair, though no one is quite sure of their origins, beyond the fact that they are related to bladelings. Spikers within the Barrens of Doom and Despair often venerate the powers native to that plane, but at the same time, most of these powers ban them from entering “holy ground.” This means that the spikers are not allowed to venture into the literal domains of most of these deities, and are not allowed to associate with their petitioners.

In some spikers, this creates a degree of fanaticism, and they end up serving various roles in the faiths of the gods they seek to appease. Of the gods in the Barrens of Doom and Despair, most spikers are servants of Bane or Loviatar. These spikers will do nearly anything to prove their loyalty to the servants of their gods and to prove worthy of entrance to the divine domains on the plane.

Among the less fanatical spikers, many can be found as wandering mercenaries. Some few with more nerve than wit hire on as mercenaries in the Blood War, and can be found in the Blood Rift, usually on the Baatezu side of the conflict. They also travel to Clangor and Nishrek from time to time, as some goblin and orc petitioners will seek to gain favor with their god by wining one of the ultimately fruitless battles on those planes. From time to time spikers will travel to Warrior's Rest to challenge renowned warriors and test their own mettle.

Spiker fanatics are sometimes sent by servants of Bane or Loviatar to aid their churches, usually as shock troops and body guards, although Loviatar is fond of spikers that learn how to best use their talents to inflict pain and suffering on those around them, and as such, some temples of Loviatar have a particularly twisted, yet gifted, torturer on staff that is a spiker.

Wildren: Some sages have postulated that the wildren are the product of dwarven planar travelers and their relationships with the intelligent animal petitioners of the House of Nature. Any dwarf that is familiar with wildren and is then introduced to this theory is inclined to dissuade a scholar spreading this theory from their mistaken notion by battering such thoughts from his head.

There is a legend among the dwarves that a clan of dwarves that were bereft of home or kin set about traveling the planes. Eventually they reached the plane of their patron, Marthammor Duin, but Marthammor couldn't condone his mortal followers to dwell in Dwarfhome while they yet lived, and he encouraged them to continue traveling the planes to experience their wonder.

After having many adventures among the planes, the dwarves came to the House of Nature, and fell in love with the plane. They were greatly torn, as they still followed Marthammor Duin, but did not wish to leave the House of Nature for Dwarfhome, even upon their deaths. Marthammor saw his followers plight, and he changed their forms to better match the House of Nature, and bid them to stay where their hearts had lead them.

While many wildren hold the guardinal paragons as their patrons now, some still hold Marthammor Duin as their patron as well. Although for the most part the wildren still love their home in the House of Nature, a few, especially those that worship Marthammor, are driven to travel the planes, and especially to see the wonders that dwarves have built on Toril.

Wildren are fairly well regarded by most dwarves on Toril that have a working knowledge of the creatures and their origins and planar nature. However, in regions where groundlings have been utilized by the Zhentarim, dwarves sometimes misunderstand the nature of wildren and in such circumstances, the wildren have a difficult time reconciling with dwarves that have been harmed by groundlings or that have lost kin to the Zhentarim experiments.