

THE WAR AGAINST MAGIC: THE UPHEAVAL

Concept, Design, Direction,
Editing, Subclass: The Griffon's Saddlebag
Writing, Editing: Ty Christensen & TheArenaGuy
Maps: Cze & Peku
Character Art: Fabian Saravia
Cover Art: Benjamin Sommeregger



THE UPHEAVAL

The Upheaval was a dark era of time that spanned the course of one hundred years and was marked by the violent persecution and suppression of spellcasting humanoids. Led by a faction of fear-mongering paladins called the Justicars, this war against the arcane was fueled by fervent slander and aggressively divisive propaganda designed to strike fear into the hearts of the nonmagical. Using this manufactured fear, the Justicars continued to expand and control vast swathes of territory by mobilizing groups of radicalized civilians. Inquisitions ran rampant and often led to the wrongful conviction and execution of innocent people, magical or otherwise. Powerful magic wielders themselves, the Justicars were both feared and respected for their firm grasp and discipline of their power, and despite their abilities, were considered the only acceptable purveyors of magic in the eyes of their followers.

To this day, the Justicars are universally reviled and held responsible for the deaths of thousands of innocent lives, as well as for the ushering in of one of the multiverse's darkest centuries. Though these zealots are far less in number and power today, their tyrannical actions have caused tremendous suffering for decades, even following the Upheaval, and still strive to accomplish their repressive goals. Based out of the fortress city of Kerulia, the remaining Justicars spread slander and violence wherever they can find a foothold as they strive to regain the might and power they once possessed.

AMBIENT MOOD

In towns and regions ravaged by the Upheaval or the Justicar's continued influence, a constant weight of oppression and careful observation take their toll. The civilians that were once stirred into frenzied mobs in order to oust neighboring mages now lead difficult lives filled with dread and mistrust. The Justicars thrive on the persecution of mages and flounder in their absence, forcing their organization to rely on a tight grip of martial law and propaganda to control the populace and perceive threats that may or may not exist. Even months after the Justicars pass through a region, some remaining elements of their presence can still be felt.

- Walking through the streets of a Justicar-occupied town clearly shows signs of desperation and struggle. The buildings still standing are elementally scarred, with blackened scorch marks as common as paint. Citizens go about their business in quiet fear, turning their eyes down in deference to avoid the notice of the shining armor and weaponry of the Justicars' militia.
- Large portions of the town reek of death and the remnants of arcane battles. Sometimes entire wards are left abandoned, unlivable thanks to the powerful corrosive acids, magical fires, and lethal poisons that still linger. Mass graves and rotting corpses are common in the wake of a struggle, often caused in equal measure by the apprehended mage and the Justicars themselves.
- While occupied, these towns quickly shift from raging mobs to terrified stillness, with moments of raucous violence turning into the broken sobs of widows and orphans.

- Travelers, in particular, are subjected to intense scrutiny by the Justicars, creating a tense sensation of being perpetually watched. Anyone suspected of spellcasting is tailed by dedicated agents that record their every movement.
- During a Justicar military occupation, a region's trade is often severely impacted. Heavy tariffs and taxes deter merchants, forcing civilians to struggle finding or creating their own forms of subsistence. Town-wide rationing and curfews are common, although higher-ranking Justicars never seem to lack leisure and other luxury goods.
- Perhaps most notably, areas occupied by the Justicars become impregnable almost overnight. Their militias use their sanctioned arcane skills to craft bunkers, walls, and moats in mere days using the materials at hand. These structures are strictly utilitarian, save for the personal quarters of the upper echelons which are decorated in fine silks and furniture.

SPLINTER SECT

Before the Upheaval, the Justicars belonged to a noble and well-regarded Order of paladins: the Spelldrinkers. Renowned for their evenhandedness, paladins who had taken the Oath of the Spelldrinker were preeminent mediators often employed by regional powers to facilitate peaceful negotiations, without the risk of magical detection or interference, as well as track down and remove liches and other evil mages that threatened their territory. When a number of these elite paladins grew drunk with the power they held over other spellcasters, conflict began to brew within their Order. When a resolution proved unattainable, the Spelldrinkers banished the offending members, and were, for a short time, forgotten.

In the months that followed, these sordid individuals banded together under the banner of the Justicars to wrest back the power they felt was their due. Using the connections they'd made from their time in the Order of Spelldrinkers, the Justicars proceeded to influence noble houses, governments, and other powerful organizations with infectious propaganda. Over time, these powerful connections began to support the Justicars, who claimed that their leadership would see to it that all people could lead lives free from the threat of dangerous magics, and deliver a world of equality to those unable to wield magic for themselves. With the financial backing of powerful noble houses and other organizations, the Justicars began campaigning for laws and regulations prohibiting the use of magic, declaring that failure to do so would serve as a testament to the subservience of the nonmagical. When their demands were unmet, the Justicars used their practiced charisma and fear-mongering tactics to whip impressionable citizens into a frenzy, rallying them against their magical neighbors and a perceived corrupted government. Using these two-pronged approaches to control the actions of both governing officials and the people that they led, so began the Justicars' crusade to rebalance the scales of power in their favor.

THE UPHEAVAL

In the one hundred years of war and slaughter during the Upheaval, as the Justicars sought (often successfully) to seize control of cities and regions, several particularly notable battles were fought. As turning points in the Justicars' campaign, these events can help emphasize the brutality of the Justicars and the lasting effects of their tyranny. They can also serve as motivation for various Justicar sects throughout the multiverse as they wage war against the arcane.

INVASION OF RUBRIAM

When the expelled Spelldrinkers first sought to consolidate their power, they began with a sudden and secret invasion of the city of Rubriam. By leveraging their influence with the city's nobility, they turned the governor into a puppet and used them to institute their harsh legislature against spellcasters. As they began rounding up offenders and protesters, they lost control of the city mob and several powerful mages were brutally slaughtered. In response, the newly-named Justicars devised a solution: a prison within a secret demiplane with wards against spells. As such, a hallmark of Justicar occupation, the Mage Realm, was formed.

RAMPAGE OF KERULIA

Several years into the Upheaval, the Justicars began a taxing siege of the fortress city-state Kerulia. With the city's walls locked tight, considerable resources, and a spymaster within the Justicar ranks, the city began to tenuously hope for deliverance. But the besieging Mage-Arbiter Maxillian, a paranoid man, began an inquest into his ranks and discovered the spy. Without their crucial informant to warn of impending attacks, the Justicars breached the city and took it for their own. Maxillian went on to found the magebreakers, a group of Justicars dedicated solely to protecting the integrity and obedience of their forces, and established Kerulia as a bastion for the Justicars that remains to this day.

MAGEBREAKER ORVUS NIGHTBANE

After the taking of Kerulia, Maxillian sought volunteers for his new division of magebreakers. The cynical dwarf, Orvus Nightbane, took over the new inquisitorial force and began a thorough cleansing of the Justicars' rank and file. After exposing and imprisoning dozens of doubters, dissidents, and spies, Orvus began to preach. Taking up a mantle of fanatical dedication and fervor for the cause, Magebreaker Nightbane single-handedly shepherded the Justicars through the next fifty years of the Upheaval until his death.

FRUSTRATION WITH OROSTEAD

One of the very few realms to escape the rampage and slaughter of the century-long Upheaval was the floating city of Orostead. Thanks to the quick thinking and powerful magic of the wizard Aristaeus and his allies, the entire city was moved to the Ethereal Plane until it became safe to return once more. No matter how many times the Justicars tried to invade Orostead, its wizards proved to be too clever, making the city a point of intense frustration for all Justicars.

THE WAR OF THE CRUCIBLE

After ninety-five years of terror and persecution, and with the passing of Magebreaker Orvus, the remaining leadership of the Justicars grew comfortable and lazy in their vast holdings. As the various mage-arbiters turned inwards, they grew envious of each others' land and wealth. After the first death, a five-year-long civil war known as the War of the Crucible began. In the end, the elven Mage-Arbiter Elodie Scolian was left standing with a mere fraction of her original power, as rival nations and factions pushed the Justicars all the way back to Kerulia.

GRAND MAGE-ARBITER SCOLIAN

With the War of the Crucible over, the Justicar's expansion and the Upheaval came to an end, leaving Elodie Scolian to pick up the pieces. In the following years, she took stock of the Justicars' resources and consolidated their strength in Kerulia. With their influence severely reduced, she nevertheless strove to regain their former glory and height of power. Under her direction, the Justicars scattered to discover and influence new lands throughout the multiverse from Kerulia to find new opportunities and restore their vision of true power and equality.

THE MAGE REALM

Described to their followers as the natural home for all magic-wielders, the Mage Realm is perhaps the most famous and feared prison among arcanists on the Material Plane. This prison is in fact a twisting, maze-like demiplane whose entrances are closely-kept secrets of the Justicar elite. Spellcasters are locked within cells warded with antimagic protections that prevent their escape, and are left to slowly languish either on their own or in silenced chambers with other dissidents.

Access to the prison's entrances and exits is strictly monitored by arch-justices and mage-arbiters, and are accessible only by using the seemingly innocuous badges they carry as a symbol of their office. Further, planar travel in and out of the demiplane without such a badge is all but impossible due to the intense protective wards placed upon it. Those precious few that venture into the prison seldom have the mental fortitude to properly describe its horrors and mysteries—if they manage to return at all. Many of its unused halls and corridors have stopped following the traditional rules of physics and gravity, and after over a century of use as a dumping ground for magical dissidents and objects, raw and unstable magic can sometimes lash out to cause unpredictable chaos.

You can use the following table to help determine random encounters while your adventurers are traversing the treacherous corridors of the Mage Realm.

EXAMPLE MAGE REALM RANDOM ENCOUNTER TABLE

3d4	Result
3	A <i>glyph of warding</i> (explosive runes; save DC 15) that deals acid (20%), cold (20%), fire (20%), lightning (20%), or thunder (20%) damage
4	A rug of smothering and 1d4 animated armors
5	A swarm of scorned familiars (60%), gorgon (20%), or 1d3 lamia (20%)
6–7	2d4 peacekeepers (guards) and 1 captain (knight)
8	1d4 ghosts of hostile dead mages (30%) or neutral innocents (70%)
9	Wild arcane energy lashes out from the walls like arced lightning—1d4 creatures must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or take 6d6 force damage
10	A flesh golem and its fleshcrafter creator
11	A dead mage with their spellbook (70%) or without their spellbook (30%)
12	1 (75%) or 2 (25%) magebreakers

THE JUSTICARS TODAY

Despite their steep and tumultuous history, the modern-day Justicars firmly believe in the stern regulation of arcane spellcasting. Especially in their Kerulian base, they proudly wear their emblem of a sword with balancing scales and fervently spread their beliefs to their radicalized population.

The Justicars operate within a hierarchy based upon both their abilities and the practical achievements of its members. Initiates are given the rank of peacekeeper, dealing mostly in daily operations, trade of information, and recruitment. Captains are typically individuals who have had some measure of success in tracking a dangerous mage and operate primarily as administrators of peacekeeper activities.

The rank of justice is granted to those who have apprehended and imprisoned numerous dissident arcane practitioners of value, and are responsible for handling most magical conflicts and limited administrative duties. Arch-justices direct the activities of all lower-ranking members and are able to travel at their leisure in pursuit of the Justicars' agenda.

A mage-arbiter is the ultimate station within the Justicars, and are few and far between. These powerful warriors are given the control to govern an entire city at their discretion, and can easily handle multiple hostile mages in combat simultaneously. Currently, very few mage-arbiters operate within the Justicars, all reporting to the preeminent Grand Mage-Arbitrator Elodie Scolian. Outside of this command structure, the magebreakers serve as an interrogational check and balance of the faction, rooting out corruption and ensuring perfect loyalty among their members.

To be initiated into the Justicars requires a thorough check of past usage and potential abuse of the individual's skills, strengths, and abilities. They require complete obedience and swear a number of tenets and oaths for their members to follow. Some rumors claim that the upper echelons of the faction are granted considerable power and knowledge as a reward for their dedication and service.

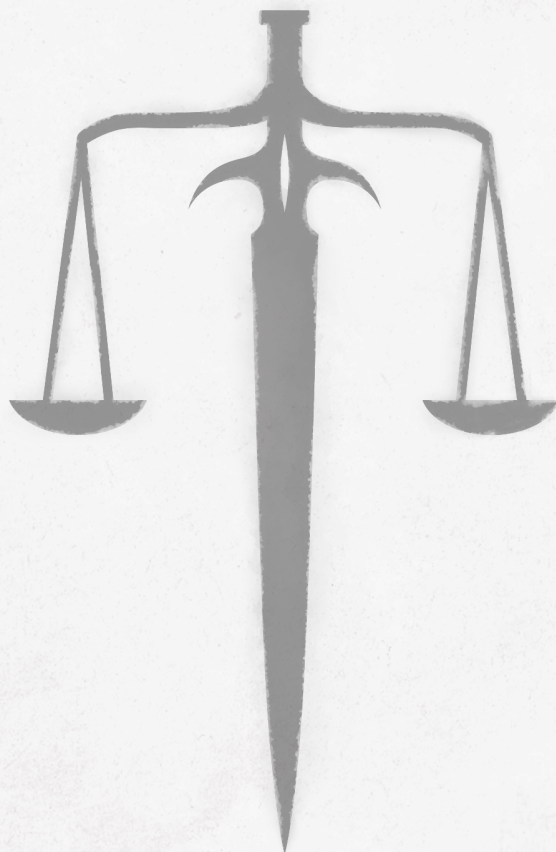
Known first and foremost across the land for their perceived superiority and brutal tactics, most cities and nations are reluctant to allow Justicars into their midst, fearing a return to their previous reign of oppressive terror. To that end, many cities will not hesitate to imprison individuals that ascribe to or carry iconography of the Justicars, which has forced them to take great precautions in order to avoid detection.

As a whole, the Justicars are a Lawful Evil organization, although a select few of their lower-ranking members trend toward Neutral and Good—a case of honest people being misled by the Justicar's propaganda. They strive to accumulate power and punish the use of any unsanctioned magic, pursuing these goals by whatever means they deem necessary, although they rigidly adhere to the regulations handed down by their superiors.

As potent arcanists and practiced warriors, most Justicars are quite clever with their use of magic, misdirection, persuasion, and physical force. They are most skilled when fighting other spellcasters due to their intense training and specialized skill set.

Support from the Justicars can come in the following ways:

- Use of their secure and divination-resistant communication network
- Access to the Mage Realm and its contents
- A one-time-use favor to help combat a spellcaster that presents a threat
- Various other arcane and mundane resources like the Kerulian garrison and library, etc.



THE JUSTICARS

OPERATIONS & TACTICS

Although the Justicars had the numbers and resources to mount entire war efforts during the Upheaval, they now rely on the original tactics that favor their smaller faction. They lean heavily into their rhetoric, rallies, and written propaganda to lobby for restrictions on arcane spellcasters, while also turning toward various guerilla tactics of stealth and ambush to silence opposing mages. The remaining sects of Justicars throughout the multiverse rely most heavily on spreading venomous slander to incite division between the magical and nonmagical citizenry within small towns and isolated regions. When capturing spellcasters, the Justicar tend to rely on disruptive weapons and poisons, such as the *focus breaker*, *runic ammunition*, and *magebane poison*.

Justicar influence can be felt in the hesitant breaths and averted eyes of a town's populace, a refusal to trade with openly magical individuals, and the widespread leaflets and parchments of arcane libel. Well-known community mages vanish suddenly, and the city guard experiences severe illness, leading to a number of new hires. Within a short time, the paranoia settles like a weight upon the town, for no one is outside of their reach.

UPHEAVAL ADVENTURE HOOKS

Consider including the following scenarios if you wish to incorporate the Upheaval and the Justicars into your campaign.

EXAMPLE ADVENTURE HOOK TABLE

1d8	Result
1	Sneak into the Mage Realm to recover a spellbook and/or rescue a mage trapped within.
2	As part of a fully-sanctioned investigation, travel into the Mage Realm to search for a missing magebreaker within.
3	Help the Order of Spelldrinkers hunt down and capture an evil mage working with the Justicars.
4	Expose or assist a Justicar attempting to cover up their most recent arrest and imprisonment of an innocent, nonmagical individual.
5	Liberate a small and peaceful town of simple farmers from Justicar occupation.
6	Help the Order of Spelldrinkers rescue a town being oppressed and enslaved by an evil mage warlord.
7	Recover a dangerous arcane item or spellbook that was stolen from the Spelldrinkers.
8	Help a group of wizards and clerics to counteract the Justicar disinformation campaign in the region to prove their innocence and dispel the slanderous propaganda.

MAKING CUSTOM JUSTICAR NPCs

When populating the Justicars' ranks with characters to interact with in your world, consider using the following tables to determine their personality.

STORY: KELRIN, THE SPELLDRINKER ARCHER

As the murderous mage held out his hand, Kelrin felt the air around her growing hot. As if in slow motion, she could see the tongues of flame begin to form and curl around her. Despite the inferno, she knew she'd been in worse situations than this.

Kelrin's hands danced along the bow she held before her and felt her blood and body turn cold. From the bow's string a single missile took shape: dark, twilit, and mysterious. She could feel its cold vacuum begging for release, eager to find magic worth consuming.

She released the string and watched as the arrow devoured the impending fireball, sinking deep into the mage's chest and tearing through the hateful magic that he wove.

PERSONALITY TRAITS

1d6	Result
1	I have a naturally manipulative personality—puppeteering the common folk comes easily to me.
2	I've come this far by strictly adhering to the rules of the Justicars: they're the only thing standing between me and the overwhelming temptation of arcane magic.
3	I've got the might of the Justicars behind me, not to mention my own capabilities—nothing can stand against me.
4	I'm constantly torn between my traumatic past life as a mage, and the bright smile I put forward to the Justicars and the world.
5	I am a devoted soldier of the Justicars—I trust the chain of command.
6	Being a member of the Justicars gives me an outlet for my violent urges.

IDEALS

1d6	Result
1	Order. Arcane magic is the temptation towards chaos, and only rigid adherence to society's laws can keep it in check. (Lawful)
2	Power. As a member of the Justicars, I can exercise my authority over the kind of mages that used to look down on me. (Evil)
3	Peace. Strict regulation of arcane magic is necessary for preventing widespread slaughter and warfare. (Good)
4	Freedom. By operating within the Justicars, I can accrue magical knowledge far easier than outside of it. (Chaotic)
5	Aspiration. I want my name to go down in history as a champion of the Justicars and a force to be reckoned with. (Any)
6	Wealth. My efforts now will ensure that one day, I can settle down to a life of utmost luxury. (Evil)

BONDS

- | 1d6 | Result |
|-----|--|
| 1 | All I care about is the feeling that comes from practicing arcane magic. Following the Justicars is the only way I can be myself and use this power. |
| 2 | I can do anything when supported by the cheering crowds. |
| 3 | I'm convinced that the Justicars are the most vital organization in the world. |
| 4 | I was trained to be a Justicar by a mentor. I owe them my life for keeping me safe from the dangers of arcane magic. |
| 5 | I'm dedicated to protecting the innocent from those who abuse their magical abilities. |
| 6 | I only serve the Justicars so I can provide for my family. |

FLAWS

- | 1d6 | Result |
|-----|--|
| 1 | I'm completely inflexible in my beliefs about the evils of arcane magic. Anyone else with magic has the tendency to become evil. |
| 2 | I am overly zealous in my persecution of mages, punishing them regardless of age, health, or morals. |
| 3 | I'm so confident in my ability to hunt mages that I use only a fraction of my abilities to restrain them. |
| 4 | I've spent so much of my life lying and spreading anti-magic propaganda that I struggle to tell or even recognize the truth. |
| 5 | I'm no longer certain of the Justicars' beliefs, but if I leave, I'll be hunted down. |
| 6 | I'm being blackmailed into working for the Justicars under threat of imprisonment in the Mage Realm. |

EXAMPLE TREASURE

Adventurers dealing with the Upheaval or the Justicars can be rewarded with spellcasting-based items such as the *arcane mirror*, *arcanist gauntlets*, *focus breaker*, *magebane poison*, *mage-eater scythe*, *prying mace*, *runic arrows*, *spellfire bow*, and *spellsword*. Of course, any item with Spelldrinker in its name would be a perfect fit for adventurers dealing with Justicars, the Spelldrinkers, or any of the events caused by the Upheaval.

UPHEAVAL STAT BLOCKS

FLESHCRAFTER

Only the most reckless necromancers pursue the ancient, malevolent art of fleshcrafting. To them, the only perfection in life or undeath is that which they bestow. While they are immensely dangerous mages on their own, their power grows exponentially when acting in concert with their **flesh golem** creations.

JUSTICE

The main breadth and body of the Justicars are made up of justices. Having been thoroughly indoctrinated and proving loyal on all occasions, most fighting between mages and Justicars is carried out by its justices. For many, their first introduction to the faction is via its justices. Whether they are actively hunting a mage, or directing their fellow Justicars, a justice stands out from the crowd simply by their presence and comportment.

MAGE-ARBITER

Only the most skilled, dedicated, and power-hungry Justicars advance to the rank of mage-arbiter. Known far and wide as a mage's worst nightmare made real, a mage-arbiter can swiftly and easily negate the efforts of most arcane practitioners. When their full wrath and might are brought to bear, even archmages retreat.

MAGEBREAKER

Perhaps the only thing truly feared by rank and file Justicars, magebreakers are uniquely trained to combat the skills and abilities of mages, Justicars, and Spelldrinkers alike. Operating outside the main command structure and only reporting to mage-arbiters, mere rumor of a magebreaker visiting an outpost of Justicars inspires fear and strict observance of the Justicar rules and regulations.

SPELLDRINKER

In the wake of the Upheaval, the Spelldrinkers are a driving force combating the Justicars, despite being few in number. Having learned from their earlier mistakes, they now take a more active role in policing the abuse of their unique skills, and champion actual justice and protection of mages everywhere Justicars spread.

SWARM OF SCORND FAMILIARS

No one is quite certain why some familiars linger after the death of their bonded mages, but legend says it's because they were horribly mistreated. Regardless of previous reason, scorned familiars gather together and hunt mages, drawing strength from their ineffectual magic and increasing their numbers when they kill a mage and free a familiar from their bond.

FLESHCRAFTER

Medium humanoid (human), neutral evil

Armor Class 12 (15 with *mage armor*)

Hit Points 112 (15d8 + 45)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	14 (+2)	17 (+3)	18 (+4)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)

Skills Arcana +7, Intimidation +5, Investigation +7, Persuasion +5

Damage Resistances lightning, poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't adamantine

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11

Languages Common, Giant, Undercommon

Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Flesh Bond. As long as the fleshcrafter and its flesh golem are within 120 feet of each other, the fleshcrafter can communicate with it telepathically. In addition, whenever the fleshcrafter casts a spell with a range of touch while within 120 feet of the golem, the golem can use its reaction to deliver the spell as if it had cast the spell, using the fleshcrafter's spell attack modifier and save DC. Whenever the fleshcrafter takes lightning damage, the golem regains a number of hit points equal to the lightning damage dealt.

Frenzy Control. While the fleshcrafter is alive and conscious, its flesh golem can't go berserk. If the fleshcrafter dies, its flesh golem immediately goes berserk.

Spellcasting. The fleshcrafter is an 8th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). It has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *light*, *mage hand*, *mending*, *shocking grasp*

1st level (4 slots): *alarm*, *false life*, *floating disk*, *mage armor*

2nd level (3 slots): *alter self*, *enlarge/reduce*, *misty step*

3rd level (3 slots): *bestow curse*, *haste*, *lightning bolt*

4th level (2 slots): *polymorph*, *stoneskin*

ACTIONS

Dagger. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

JUSTICE

Medium humanoid (any race), lawful evil

Armor Class 18 (plate)

Hit Points 105 (14d8 + 42)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	12 (+1)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)

Skills Intimidation +5, Persuasion +5

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages Common plus one other language

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Spellcasting. The justice is a 3rd-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 13). It has the following paladin spells prepared:

1st level (3 slots): *command*, *detect magic*, *divine favor*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The justice makes two attacks.

Greatsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) slashing damage.

Longbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d8 + 1) piercing damage.



SWORD OF THE SPELLDRINKER

BOW OF THE SPELLDRINKER

MAGE-ARBITER

Medium humanoid (any race), lawful evil

Armor Class 20 (plate, shield)

Hit Points 187 (22d8 + 88)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	14 (+2)	19 (+4)	15 (+2)	17 (+3)	20 (+5)

Saves Int +7, Wis +8, Cha +10

Skills Arcana +7, Intimidation +10, Perception +8, Persuasion +10

Damage Resistances damage from spells

Senses passive Perception 18

Languages Common plus three other languages

Challenge 14 (11,500 XP)

Justicar's Smite. When the mage-arbiter hits with any attack, the target takes an extra 4 (1d8) radiant damage (included in the attack). If the target has any remaining spell slots, it instead takes an extra 9 (2d8) radiant damage.

Legendary Spell Resistance (2/day). If the mage-arbiter fails a saving throw against a spell, it can choose to succeed instead.

Magic Resistance. The mage-arbiter has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Spellcasting. The mage-arbiter is a 20th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 18). It has the following paladin spells prepared:

1st level (4 slots): *command, detect magic, protection from evil and good, shield of faith*

2nd level (3 slots): *hold person, spiritual weapon, zone of truth*

3rd level (3 slots): *dispel magic, fear, remove curse*

4th level (3 slots): *banishment, death ward, locate creature*

5th level (2 slots): *dominate person, geas*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The mage-arbiter makes three attacks.

Javelin. Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack: +10 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d6 + 5) piercing damage plus 4 (1d8) radiant damage, or 9 (2d8) radiant damage if the target has any remaining spell slots.

Longsword. Melee Weapon Attack: +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d8 + 5) slashing damage plus 4 (1d8) radiant damage, or 9 (2d8) radiant damage if the target has any remaining spell slots.

REACTIONS

Spellbreak. When a creature the mage-arbiter can see within 120 feet of it casts a spell, the mage-arbiter disrupts the spell if it is of 3rd level or lower, causing it to fail and have no effect. If the target is casting a spell of 4th level or higher, the mage-arbiter must first succeed on a Charisma check (DC 10 + the spell's level) in order to disrupt the spell. If the spell is successfully disrupted, the target takes 1d4 force damage per level of the spell that was being cast.

VARIANT: MAGE-ARBITER WITH THE SWORD OF THE SPELLDRINKER

The rank of mage-arbiter is known to be a notable mark of prestige, but only the most renowned of this rank carry the esteemed *sword of the spelldrinker*. Such a mage-arbiter uses the mage-arbiter stat block, with the following changes:

- It has a challenge rating of 16 (13,000 XP)
- It has 3 uses of its Legendary Spell Resistance trait, instead of 2.
- It has the Empowered Spellbreak and Nullify Atmosphere traits, as well as the Sword of the Spelldrinker action option (all described below).

Atmospheric Nullification. While the mage-arbiter is holding the *sword of the spelldrinker*, any magical light, darkness, or atmospheric effect within 30 feet of it is treated as nonmagical and breathable.

Empowered Spellbreak (2/Day). When the mage-arbiter uses its Spellbreak reaction, it can choose to automatically disrupt the spell if it is of 5th level or lower. If the spell is successfully disrupted, and it has a casting time of one action or one bonus action, the spell is absorbed into the *sword of the spelldrinker*. The mage-arbiter can release the absorbed spell as an action, using the slot level, spell save DC, spell attack bonus, and spellcasting ability of the original caster, but it is otherwise treated as if the mage-arbiter cast the spell. The sword can only have one spell absorbed at a time.

ACTIONS

Sword of the Spelldrinker. Melee Weapon Attack: +13 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (1d8 + 8) slashing damage plus 4 (1d8) radiant damage, or 9 (2d8) radiant damage if the target has any remaining spell slots.

MAGEBREAKER

Medium humanoid (any race), lawful evil

Armor Class 18 (plate)

Hit Points 135 (18d8 + 54)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	11 (+0)	17 (+3)	16 (+3)	18 (+4)	18 (+4)

Saves Int +7, Wis +8, Cha +8

Skills Insight +8, Intimidation +8, Investigation +11, Perception +8

Senses passive Perception 18

Languages Common plus two other languages

Challenge 10 (2,900 XP)

Justicar's Smite. When the magebreaker hits with any attack, the target takes an extra 4 (1d8) radiant damage (included in the attack). If the target has any remaining spell slots, it instead takes an extra 9 (2d8) radiant damage.

Magic Resistance. The magebreaker has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Spellcasting. The magebreaker is a 15th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 16). It has the following paladin spells prepared:

1st level (4 slots): *command*, *detect evil and good*, *detect magic*, *hunter's mark*

2nd level (3 slots): *branding smite*, *hold person*, *zone of truth*

3rd level (3 slots): *dispel magic*, *fear*

4th level (2 slots): *banishment*, *locate creature*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The magebreaker makes two attacks.

Halberd. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d10 + 4) slashing damage plus 4 (1d8) radiant damage, or 9 (2d8) radiant damage if the target has any remaining spell slots.

SWARM OF SCORNEFAMILIARS

Medium swarm of tiny undead, chaotic evil

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 78 (12d8 + 24)

Speed 0 ft., fly 50 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	18 (+4)	15 (+2)	11 (+0)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)

Skills Arcana +3, Perception +5

Damage Resistances damage from spells; bludgeoning, piercing, slashing

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained, stunned

Senses blindsight 30 ft., passive Perception 15

Languages telepathy 120 ft.

Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Limited Magic Immunity. The swarm can't be affected or detected by spells of 2nd level or lower unless it wishes to be. It has advantage on saving throws against all other spells and magical effects. In addition, if the swarm is subjected to a spell or other magical effect that allows it to make a saving throw to take only half damage, it instead takes no damage if it succeeds on the saving throw.

Scornful Reinforcement. When the swarm kills a creature that has a familiar, the familiar joins the swarm, causing the swarm's hit point maximum and current hit points to increase by 10.

Spell Detection. The swarm immediately knows when a spell of 3rd-level or higher has been cast within 1000 feet of it, and it can sense the direction to the spellcaster's location.

Swarm. The swarm can occupy another creature's space and vice versa, and the swarm can move through any opening large enough for a Tiny familiar.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The swarm makes two attacks.

Spitful Touch. *Melee Spell Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 0 ft., one target in the swarm's space. *Hit:* 14 (4d6) force damage plus 14 (4d6) necrotic damage, or 7 (2d6) force damage plus 7 (2d6) necrotic damage if the swarm has half of its hit points or fewer.

Drain Magic. The swarm attempts to siphon some magical power from a creature it can see within 10 feet of it. If the target has any remaining spell slots, it must make a DC 16 saving throw using its spellcasting ability. The target makes this saving throw with disadvantage if it has less than half of its spell slots remaining.

On a failed save, the target loses one spell slot. Roll a d6 to determine the level of the spell slot lost. If the target has no remaining spell slots of that level, it instead loses its highest remaining spell slot below that level. The swarm then regains 1d8 hit points per level of the spell slot lost.

REACTIONS

Arcane Barrier. The swarm adds 3 to its AC against one attack that would hit it, as it creates an instantaneous shield of force around itself.

SPELLDRINKER KNIGHT

Medium humanoid (any race), lawful good

Armor Class 20 (plate, shield)

Hit Points 135 (18d8 + 54)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	12 (+1)	17 (+3)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	18 (+4)

Saves Wis +5, Cha +7

Skills Arcana +4, Persuasion +7

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages Common plus two other languages

Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Absorb Magic. When the spelldrinker successfully interrupts or ends a spell by casting *counterspell* or *dispel magic*, it gains 5 temporary hit points per level of the spell that was interrupted or ended.

Armored Focus. The spelldrinker's concentration can't be broken as a result of taking damage.

Aura of Disruption. Whenever a hostile creature that is concentrating on a spell starts its turn within 10 feet of the spelldrinker, that creature must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or lose concentration on the spell.

Spellcasting. The spelldrinker is a 15th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 15). It has the following paladin spells prepared:

1st level (4 slots): *bane*, *bless*, *detect magic*, *heroism*

2nd level (3 slots): *arcana's magic aura*, *branding smite*, *lesser restoration*

3rd level (3 slots): *counterspell*, *dispel magic*

4th level (2 slots): *locate creature*, *resilient sphere*

Spelldrinker's Smite. When the spelldrinker hits with any attack, the target takes an extra 4 (1d8) radiant damage (included in the attack). If the target has any remaining spell slots, it instead takes an extra 9 (2d8) radiant damage.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The spelldrinker knight makes two attacks.

Javelin. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage plus 4 (1d8) radiant damage, or 9 (2d8) radiant damage if the target has any remaining spell slots.

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) slashing damage plus 4 (1d8) radiant damage, or 9 (2d8) radiant damage if the target has any remaining spell slots.

VARIANT: ARCH-JUSTICES

Arch-Justices oversee the day-to-day activities of lower-ranking members in the Justicars' ranks. An arch-justice uses the Spelldrinker Knight stat block, with the following changes:

- It loses the Absorb Magic trait.
- Its list of prepared spells is modified and it has the Spellstop reaction option (all described below).

Spellcasting. The arch-justice is a 15th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 15). It has the following paladin spells prepared:

1st level (4 slots): *bane*, *command*, *detect magic*, *divine favor*

2nd level (3 slots): *branding smite*, *find steed*, *hold person*

3rd level (3 slots): *dispel magic*, *fear*

4th level (2 slots): *banishment*, *stoneskin*

REACTIONS

Spellstop (2/Day). When a creature the arch-justice can see within 60 feet of it casts a spell, the arch-justice disrupts the spell if it is of 2nd level or lower, causing it to fail and have no effect. If the target is casting a spell of 3rd level or higher, the arch-justice must first succeed on a Charisma check (DC 10 + the spell's level) in order to disrupt the spell. If the spell is successfully disrupted, the target takes force damage equal to the level of the spell that was being cast.



OATH OF THE SPELLDRINKER

NEW CHARACTER OPTION: PALADIN

Paladins are zealous warriors given might by their cause. Some swear oaths to rid the world of certain creatures or to be a champion of peace, whereas others exist simply to restore a sense of balance in the world as they see fit. Most paladins are good, although some of the strongest and most feared have turned to work in support of evil instead. Regardless of their virtues, it is this unwavering conviction among paladins that serves as the source of their strength: a commitment to righteousness, or at least their version of it, that fuels their every decision.

There are countless paladins across the multiverse, many of whose views are at odds with the next one's. What creature or cause has wronged you, or is so important to you that it drives you headlong into the forces that oppose you? These beliefs will impact the oaths and paths you take to in order to uphold them.

OATH OF THE SPELLDRINKER

The Oath of the Spelldrinker is devoted to ridding the world of renegade mages, such as liches or the occult, in order to protect the helpless from the forces of evil magic. The paladins who swear this oath believe in maintaining the balance of power between the ordinary and the extraordinary, including themselves. These paladins are resourceful and quick to remember their own mortality and privilege, often choosing to pursue mundane solutions before magical ones. Despite their caution, these wardens of balance are exemplary arcanists who can feel the weave of magic in the world as keenly as some of the finest sorcerers.

TENETS OF THE SPELLDRINKER

The tenets of the Oath of the Spelldrinker were written and passed down by cautious guardians set to rid the world of evil mages. They emphasize balance within oneself through the following tenets:

Be the Sword. Be a stalwart champion of fairness and equality among all. The sword doesn't cheat fate: it dances with it.

Be the Shield. Defend the innocent against the forces of rampant magic. The shield is patient and unwavering in the face of the unknown.

Be the Spell. Use your power to provide balance and guidance. The spell can lead to prosperity as easily as it can to ruin: you must always choose the righteous path..

OATH SPELLS

You gain oath spells at the paladin levels listed.

OATH SPELLS

Paladin Level	Spells
3rd	<i>bane, detect magic</i>
5th	<i>arcanist's magic aura, hold person</i>
9th	<i>dispel magic, slow</i>
13th	<i>dimension door, resilient sphere</i>
17th	<i>dominate person, scrying</i>

CHANNEL DIVINITY

When you take this oath at 3rd level, you gain the following two Channel Divinity options.

Absorb Magic. You can refute certain spells and use them to nourish yourself. Using your Channel Divinity, you can interrupt a creature you can see within 30 feet of you casting a spell. You can use a reaction when you see a creature within range casting a spell to present your holy symbol and interrupt it. The spell fails and has no effect if it is of a level no higher than 1 + your paladin level divided by 3 (rounded up), to a maximum of 6th-level spells. When it does, you gain a number of temporary hit points equal to your Charisma modifier, plus 5 times the spell's level.

Expedient Command. You can use your Channel Divinity to issue a word of power and release a wave of invigorating energy from your holy symbol. As a bonus action, choose a number of creatures within 30 feet of you up to your Charis-

ma modifier (minimum one creature). Until the start of your next turn, the chosen creatures can use a bonus action to take either Dash or Disengage action. As part of using your Channel Divinity in this way, you can also take either the Dash or Disengage action.

BONUS PROFICIENCY

Starting at 3rd level, you gain proficiency in the Arcana skill.

AURA OF DISRUPTION

Beginning at 7th level, the arcane energy that hangs around you is volatile to enemy spellcasters. Whenever a hostile creature ends its turn within 10 feet of you while concentrating on a spell, it must succeed on a Constitution saving throw against your paladin spell save DC or lose concentration on the spell. In addition, you and friendly creatures within 10 feet of you can't be perceived through magical scrying sensors.

At 18th level, the range of this aura increases to 30 feet.

ARMORED FOCUS

Starting at 15th level, while you are concentrating on a paladin spell, your concentration can't be broken as a result of taking damage.

ARCANE CONDUIT

At 20th level, as an action, you can emanate a field of crackling magic in a 30-foot radius. For 1 minute, you gain the following benefits:

- You have resistance to damage from spells and have advantage on saving throws against spells.
- Whenever a creature hits you with a melee attack, that creature takes force damage equal to your Charisma modifier (minimum of 1) as magical energy lashes out at them.
- When you expend a spell slot of 1st level or higher, friendly creatures in the field regain a number of hit points equal to your Charisma modifier (minimum of 1), while hostile ones take force damage equal to the same amount instead.

Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a long rest.

UPHEAVAL MAPS

Maps are available for free, courtesy of Cze & Peku, at thegriffonsaddlebag.com/upheaval.

