

Chapter Four: Faithrings

Rings, gems, and jewels forged, cut, and crafted for the glory of the gods, faithrings are filled with divine power. Clerics, druids, and sometimes paladins benefit most from wielding them, and find it easiest to do so. But with the suitable reverence and proper indoctrination in the ways of divine magic, any class can use faithrings.

The Diablatorio

As cold as a devil's heart, this gift from the lords of the Nine Hells extracts a heavy toll from those who seek to master its infernal powers.

Even Hell Has Its Heroes

The malignant kingdom of Shar'dul has many minions, each a zealous servant of that nation's despotic king. The most terrible of these creatures was Pharin, a servant of the Nine Hells. Pharin was King Khalir's chief spiritual advisor for many years, and in this time he rose high within the ranks of the Black Church. None dared refute his claims to the church's highest position, that of the Black Pontiff. At the time, he was perhaps the youngest man in the church's history to aspire to the position.

While deep in his evening prayers, Pharin was contacted by one of the dukes of Hell, a loathsome being named Terromendes. "Serve me," Terromendes demanded of Pharin. "I will grant unto you a terrible gift, and even your king will stand in awe of your power when all is as I wish it." Pharin, ever hungry for power, agreed to this diabolic bargain. In return, he was gifted with a serpentine ring of blackened adamantite that seemed to writhe and twist of its own accord whenever he wore it.

Check Required: Knowledge (history) DC 30.

Pharin served two masters now: Khalir, the usurper of Shar'dul's throne, and Terromendes, a duke of the Nether Hells. Pharin knew that exposure of his divided loyalty would mean his inevitable death, and he was careful to keep his pact with Terromendes hidden. In time, Khalir sent his nation to war against the neighboring kingdom of Ealon. He demanded that Pharin accompany Shar'dul's fleet, and, using the power granted to him by the Black Church, secure a quick and brutal victory over Ealon's defenders.

Despite Pharin's fervent prayers and terrible magic on the eve of the invasion, the armies of Shar'dul were repelled by the Ealonese forces. Failure had never been an option for any of Khalir's servants, and Pharin was no exception. Fearing that his return home would result in his own excruciating execution, he abandoned his countrymen and vowed that he would serve Terromendes alone. Khalir, enraged at Pharin's treason, was not so easily dissuaded from seeking revenge against his former servant.

Check Required: Knowledge (history) DC 25.

In the years that followed, many assassins and bounty hunters were sent to retrieve Pharin.

Often times, Pharin used his ring to summon infernal beings in his own defense. Men sent to capture him would find themselves facing terrible creatures of boundless evil. Pharin's conjured devils violently dispatched those hunters who did not flee in terror. The price on Pharin's head steadily increased, as did his infamy. Though powerful, he would never find rest so long as Khalir insisted on hunting him. The bounty on Pharin's head soon grew to such ridiculous proportions that entire companies of mercenaries endeavored to track him down. One such company, composed of nearly three dozen

blooded veterans, finally cornered the priest in a simple cottage far from the borders of Shar'dul. The mercenary captain called for Pharin's surrender, but his demands were answered with Pharin's spiteful laughter. "Hell will take you!" Pharin yelled to the assembly before disappearing into the cottage. Almost immediately, the haunting sounds of a summoning ritual could be heard within the small house.

The mercenaries steeled themselves for whatever horror Pharin would send against them. The chanting ceased, but instead of an attack from within, there came shouts and blood-curdling screams. When the noise had ceased, the mercenaries approached and broke down the cottage door. Instead of Pharin, the soldiers found what little remained of him. Scraps of clothing, bits of bone and flesh, and fresh blood were spread over the cottage's interior. Though Pharin's personal items and accoutrements remained



The *Diablatorio*

behind, his ring was never found. The mercenary captain rightly supposed that Pharin had called on his dark masters once too often.

Check Required: Knowledge (history) DC 25.

Made as a mockery to the holy rings worn by members of many benevolent churches and temples, the *Diablatorio* is made from a band of adamantine that has been carved to resemble a coiled serpent. The snake has gleaming emerald eyes, and bears two sharp ivory fangs. The ring is always chill to the touch, and the finger upon which it is worn often becomes numb with cold.

Requirements

To wear the *Diablatorio* as its faith scion, a character must fulfill the following criteria.

Gender: Male.

Alignment: Lawful Evil.

Skills: Knowledge (religion) 10 ranks, Knowledge (the planes) 10 ranks, Speak Language (Infernal).

Spells: Able to cast divine spells.

Domain[s]: Evil.

Patron: Any lawful evil deity or devil.

Restrictions

The scion of the *Diablatorio* must never lose the favor of his evil patron. If this occurs, he loses all powers granted by the ring until he either

reconciles with his former master or manages to find a new devil to serve.

Attributes

The *Diablatorio* has the following attributes.

Method of Destruction: The *Diablatorio* can only be destroyed by a lawful good celestial that willingly sacrifices itself so that the ring might be shattered. The celestial in question must have the ring in its possession when it takes its own life.

Check Required: Knowledge (arcana) DC 25.

Value: To any character other than its faith scion, the *Diablatorio* appears to be a *ring of Wisdom* +2 (4,000 gp).

Special Abilities

The *Diablatorio* provides the following special abilities to its wielder, depending upon the character's level in the faith scion prestige class (see Table 4–1: Abilities Granted by the *Diablatorio*).

Initial Abilities: Anyone who wears the *Diablatorio* gains a +2 enhancement bonus to Wisdom.

Aura of Evil (Ex): The power of the *Diablatorio*'s scion's aura of evil (see the *detect evil* spell) is equal to his class level plus his cleric level, if any.

Protection From Good (Sp): At 1st level, the *Diablatorio* gives its scion the ability to cast *protection from good* at will. When this ability is used, the air around the scion becomes noticeably stale and cold.

Diabolic Pact (Su): Through the ring, the scion gains access to dark rituals which allow him to make pacts with devils and other servants of the Nine Hells. At 2nd level, the first of these pacts is made, gifting the scion with the diabolic ability to see perfectly in darkness of any kind, even that created by a *deeper darkness* spell.

Further pacts are made at every even level thereafter. When the scion reaches 4th level, he is able to communicate telepathically with other creatures within 100 feet. The pact presented to the scion at 6th level results in him gaining a devil's resistance to acid 10 and resistance to cold 10.

When the scion achieves 8th level, he is able to generate an aura of fear much like that manifested by his diabolic masters. This allows the scion to radiate a 5-foot radius fear aura as a free action. Affected creatures must succeed on a Will save or be affected as though by a *fear* spell. The DC of this save is equal to 10 + ½ the character's scion level + his Charisma modifier. A creature that successfully saves cannot be affected by the scion's fear aura for 24 hours, and all devils are immune to it.

Finally, at 10th level, the scion makes his final pact with the lords of the Nine Hells. In return for his soul, he gains complete immunity to fire and poisons.

Table 4–1: Abilities Granted by *Diablatorio*

Scion Level	Ability Gained	Caster Level
—	+2 Wisdom	6th
1st	Aura of evil	—
	<i>Protection from good</i>	1st
2nd	Diabolic pact (see in darkness)	—
	<i>Summon devil</i>	3rd
3rd	Corrupt ceremony	7th
	Smite good 1/day	—
4th	Diabolic pact (telepathy)	—
5th	Sword of hell	7th
	Summon devil	9th
6th	Diabolic pact (resistance to acid 10 and cold 10)	3rd
	Smite good 2/day	—
7th	Sacrament of sin	—
8th	Diabolic pact	—
	Summon devil	15th
9th	Smite good 3/day	—
10th	Diabolic pact (immunity to fire and poison)	—
	Hell to pay	—

Summon Devil (Sp): The *Diablatorio* allows its scion to summon a devil to aid him in times of need. Starting at 2nd level, the scion can summon an imp to serve him. At 5th level, the scion's summoning rituals improve, allowing him to call a bearded devil to aid him. Once he achieves 8th level, an erinyes will come to his call. Regardless of the type of devil summoned, the scion may only use this ability once per day.

Corrupt Ceremony (Su): At 3rd level, the *Diablatorio* opens up new doors to power for its scion. The twisted magic of the ring allows its scion to perform an hour-long ritual, wherein he must debase himself in the name of his evil patron. The ring's scion gains a +2 bonus to his effective caster level for 24 hours once the ceremony is completed. The ceremony can only be attempted once per week.

Smite Good (Su): Once per day, beginning at 3rd level, the ring's scion can attempt to smite good with one normal melee attack. He adds his Charisma modifier (if positive) to his attack roll, and deals 1 extra point of damage per class level. At 6th, and again at 9th level, the *Diablatorio*'s scion gains one additional use of the smite good ability per day.

Sword of Hell (Su): When he achieves 5th level, the *Diablatorio*'s scion can perform a ritual that will imbue any weapon that he carries with an unholy aura. This ritual takes thirty minutes to complete. Once finished, the scion's chosen weapon is considered to be unholy for the next 24 hours.

Sacrament of Sin (Su): Upon reaching 7th level, the scion can grant himself limited immunity to physical harm. By bathing himself in the blood of an innocent being and reciting blasphemous verses, the scion can imbue himself with damage reduction equal to DR 5/good. This damage reduction lasts for 12 hours.

Hell to Pay: After the *Diablatorio*'s scion attains 10th level and makes his final pact with the legions of Hell, he can never be certain when his ultimate debt will finally come due. From this point forward, whenever he uses the ring's *summon devil* ability, there is a chance that a pit fiend will appear to take the scion back to Hell. The chance of this occurring is slight, but it hangs like a sword above the scion's head.

Each time the scion uses the ring's *summon devil* ability, the DM must determine if his time has come by secretly rolling 1d20. If the first result is a 20, the DM must confirm it by rolling 1d20 again. On a second result of 20, a pit fiend appears and demands that the scion return with him to

the Nine Hells. The scion can attempt to negotiate his contract with the fiend, but this requires a successful Diplomacy check, DC 35.

If the scion refuses to accompany the devil, the pit fiend will attempt to take him back by force. Whether or not he succeeds in avoiding this fate, outright refusal to return to Hell with the pit fiend will cause him to lose the powers that have been thus far granted by the ring, and he can be sure that his former masters will not easily forgive his insolence.

Eichenfols, the Oaken Clasp

Carved from the four-limbed Tree of Balance, this oaken cloak-clasp bestows upon its wearer a greater affinity for nature and the wild.

The Arch-Druid's Hobby

As the arch-druid Haman reached the end of his years, he spent less and less time seeing to the business of the Oak Stewards, and more and more time wandering through the Oaken Grove. The other members of his order began to fear that Haman had taken leave of his senses, but when they approached him, Haman always seemed perfectly lucid, and was happy to spend time chatting amiably with them, though he appeared to have lost interest in the affairs of the order. And during every conversation, Haman would always, sooner or later, begin whittling at little pieces of dead wood.

Many of the order's senior druids remarked among themselves about Haman's new obsession, but when they asked him about it, Haman only smiled. After several months of such behavior, the high druids of the Oak Stewards voted among themselves to replace Haman as arch-druid, and allow the old man to continue his path to insanity in the peace of retirement. Typically, when Haman heard of their decision, he smiled, yawned, and went back to his whittling.

Though Haman still dwelled in a small shelter deep in the Oaken Grove, and the druids saw him from time to time, they came to think of him as a befuddled old man, hardly worth their notice. When they spoke to him, they treated him as one might treat a child, acting as though he could not understand even the simplest concept. Haman, for his part, seemed amused by their attitude toward him, and sometimes, with an impish gleam in his eye, played to their opinion of him, alternately pretending to be deaf, or blind, or senile. Yet still, he continued his whittling.



Eichenfols

Eventually, Haman became more known for the intricacy of his wood carvings, and less for his eccentricity. Years of dedicated whittling had paid off, it seemed, and the druids marveled at the workmanship. In fact, they were so fascinated by his carvings that they failed to notice when Haman slipped quietly into the Clearing of the Tree of Balance, and returned with a small piece of the sacred wood.

Now the method behind Haman's apparent madness became clear. The former arch-druid, it seemed, had done all that he could in life to safeguard the wild places of the world, and had decided to create a more lasting legacy than years of devoted service would ever garner him. So, with a snippet of wood from the most sacred tree of the Oak Stewards, Haman secretly carved a beautifully intricate cloak clasp. When it was finished, Haman knew that he could never wear the clasp, for it would be instantly recognized and he would be punished for his crime. Rather than leave a legacy of sin, the old arch-druid instead chose to drink a cup of hemlock.

Check Required: Knowledge (religion) DC 25.

When the druids came to prepare Haman for burial, they laid his precious carvings in with him. But the cloak clasp was not among his carvings, because Haman had already sent it far away to a former pupil. This pupil was the first to learn the secrets of the clasp, and it was he who gave it the name *Eichenfols*.

Check Required: Knowledge (religion) DC 20.

Requirements

To qualify to wear *Eichenfols* as a faith scion, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Alignment: Neutral

Skills: Knowledge (nature) 5 ranks, Survival 5 ranks.

Feats: Track.

Spells: Able to cast divine spells, must include *pass without trace*.

Attributes

Eichenfols has the following attributes:

Method of Destruction: *Eichenfols* may be destroyed only by burying it at the exact center of the Salt Desert (where no plant life grows), and placing over it a stone plug made from a petrified oak.

Check Required: Knowledge (arcana) DC 25.

Value: To someone other than a faith scion, *Eichenfols* appears to be worth as much as a *clasp of endure elements* (1,000 gp).

Special Abilities

Eichenfols provides the following special abilities to its wielder, depending on the character's level

in the faith scion prestige class (see Table 4–2: Abilities Granted by *Eichenfols*).

Initial Abilities: Anyone who uses *Eichenfols*, whether a faith scion or not, benefits from a continuous *endure elements* spell.

Nature's Best (Su): At 1st level, whenever the scion of *Eichenfols* casts *summon nature's ally*, the creature summoned always has full hit points for its Hit Dice.

Barkskin (Sp): When the scion of *Eichenfols* attains 2nd level, he may cast *barkskin* upon himself a number of times per day equal to his Wisdom bonus (minimum 1). Treat the character's scion level as his caster level for this ability.

Speak With Plants (Sp): At 3rd level, the scion of *Eichenfols* gains the ability to *speak with plants* at will.

Nature's Ward (Su): At 4th level, the scion of *Eichenfols* gains the ability to ward away hostile animals and animate plants. This ability functions like a cleric turning undead, except that the scion can choose to turn or rebuke his targets, and targets that would be destroyed are commanded, instead.

Nature's Wisdom (Sp): At 5th level, the scion of *Eichenfols* may, once per day, cast an improved version of *commune with nature*. The spell functions as normal, but the scion may learn a number of facts equal to 3 + his Wisdom bonus (see the spell description for more details). The scion may also prepare and cast *commune with nature* as normal.

Nature Walk (Sp): When the scion of *Eichenfols* reaches 6th level, he gains the ability to *tree stride*,

Adventure Hook

While visiting a small town, the heroes pass a druidic shrine just outside the city's front gate, where a lone druid is selling charms and potions. Though his wares are little more than trinkets, the druid tells the party that he has one item that he's been saving in case he met another druid: a cloak-clasp that grants the wearer immunity to extremes of temperature. When he shows it to the heroes, he remarks on its workmanship and says that it was crafted by a pupil of Haman, the arch-druid. He even jokes that the craftsman who made it clearly tried to copy the famous clasp *Eichenfols*, but had obviously never seen the genuine article.

Table 4–2: Abilities Granted by *Eichenfols*

Scion Level	Ability Gained	Caster Level
—	<i>Endure elements</i>	1st
1st	Nature's best	1st
2nd	<i>Barkskin</i>	3rd
3rd	<i>Speak with plants</i>	5th
4th	Nature's ward	—
5th	<i>Nature's wisdom</i>	9th
6th	<i>Nature walk</i>	9th
7th	Nature's wrath	13th
8th	Wooden form	—
9th	Nature's vigilance	17th
10th	Nature's rage	17th

as the spell, for a number of hours per day equal to his scion level. Unlike the spell, this ability allows the scion to break the journey up however he likes; the effect does not end when the scion exits a tree.

Nature's Wrath (Su): At 7th level, the scion of *Eichenfols* may call upon the plant life in the area to fight for him. The scion may animate up to four Large or smaller plants, or an equivalent number of larger plants. A Huge plant counts as two Large or smaller plants, a Gargantuan plant as four, and a Colossal plant as eight. The scion can change the designated target or targets as a move action, as if directing an active spell. Each animated plant immediately attacks whomever or whatever the scion designates as though it were an animated object of the appropriate size category. (Use the statistics for animated objects, except that plants smaller than Large usually don't have hardness.) This ability has no effect on plant creatures (such as treants or shambling mounds), nor does it affect nonliving vegetable material.

The scion may use this ability once per day. It lasts for 1 round per scion level.

Wooden Form (Su): At 8th level, the scion of *Eichenfols* gains the ability to transform into any Small, Medium, or Large plant creature once per day, and back again. The effect lasts for 1 hour per scion level, or until he changes back. Changing form is a standard action and doesn't provoke an attack of opportunity. The form chosen must be that of a plant creature the scion is familiar with.

The scion loses his ability to speak while in plant form (lacking proper vocal chords), but he can communicate normally with other plants of the same general grouping, provided they have a language.

At 10th level, the scion becomes able to assume the form of Huge plant creatures as well.

Nature's Vigilance (Ex): At 9th level, the scion's attunement to nature is so keen that he receives instantaneous warnings of impending danger when in a natural setting (such as in a forest, desert, or natural cavern, but not in a building or a worked underground area, such as a dungeon). The scion is never considered surprised or flat-footed in such settings, and always has a general idea of the best course of action to take to protect himself (duck, jump, close his eyes, and so forth). This grants the scion a +2 insight bonus to AC and Reflex saves in such situations, though he loses this bonus in situations when he would lose his Dexterity bonus to AC.

Nature's Rage (Su): When the scion of *Eichenfols* reaches 10th level, he becomes able to rouse the forces of nature against his enemies. The scion may designate a spot anywhere within 500 feet. Plants within a 40-foot radius of this spot suddenly

experience a surge in growth, simultaneously becoming animate. These animate plants then attack the scion's opponents who are within the affected area (ignoring the scion's allies). These attacks take two forms.

First, the opponents are treated as though *entangle* had been cast on the area. They must make a DC 20 Reflex save each round or become entangled. Entangled creatures can break free and move half their normal speed by using a full-round action to make a DC 20 Strength check or a DC 20 Escape Artist check. Creatures not entangled can move at only half speed through the area.

Second, much larger tendrils wrap about the bodies of the scion's opponents, constricting them. Each round, on the scion's action, make an opposed grapple check for each opponent caught in the area; those who fail take 2d8+10 points of damage. Use the scion's base attack bonus for the grapple check, but assume that the large tendrils have a Strength of 25.

This ability continues for as long as the scion concentrates upon it.

St. Martha's Ring

The ring that bears St. Martha's name is the last remaining manifestation of her selfless and charitable power.

Both Her Greatest Gift, and Her Greatest Curse

St. Martha was born in Elena, a small village within the boundaries of the High Kingdom. Her mother was a midwife and herbalist, and Martha learned all that her mother knew about the healing arts as she grew into a vibrant young woman. A conscientious child, Martha endeavored to help everyone that she met, friend and stranger alike. As she grew older, miracles seemed to surround her. She could somehow cure with but a touch, soothing injuries and easing pain, yet the wounds that she healed on one person would appear painfully upon her own flesh moments later. In easing the hurts of others, Martha was forced to bear them herself.

Priests were consulted, and they all agreed that Martha had been given a special gift by the gods. Martha and her mother shared a tearful farewell, wherein her mother gave her a simple brass ring that would eventually bear her name. She was taken away to a convent so that her abilities could be studied and perfected under the watchful eyes of the church's clerics. Through training, discipline, and spiritual insight, Martha was able to perfect her gifts, improving her abilities to heal not only others, but herself as well.

Check Required: Knowledge (history) DC 25.

When the clerics deemed that her powers required no more study, Martha was sent out