

The Druidic Faith

(From the 2nd Edition, AD&D)

Historical Context

Historically, druids lived among the Germanic tribes of Western Europe and Britain during the days of the Roman Empire. They acted as advisors to chieftains and held great influence over the tribesmen. Central to their thinking was the belief that the earth was the mother and source of all life. They revered many natural things -- the sun, moon, and certain trees -- as deities. Druids in the AD&D game, however, are only loosely patterned after these historical figures. They are not required to behave like or follow the beliefs of historical druids.

The druid is an example of a priest designed for a specific mythos. His powers and beliefs are different from those of the cleric. The druid is a priest of nature and guardian of the wilderness, be it forest, plains, or jungle.

Ethos

As protectors of nature, druids are aloof from the complications of the temporal world. Their greatest concern is for the continuation of the orderly and proper cycles of nature--birth, growth, death, and rebirth. Druids tend to view all things as cyclic and thus, the battles of good and evil are only the rising and falling tides of time. Only when the cycle and balance are disrupted does the druid become concerned. Given this view of things, the druid must be neutral in alignment.

Druids are charged with protecting wilderness--in particular trees, wild plants, wild animals, and crops. By association, they are also responsible for their followers and their animals. Druids recognize that all creatures (including humans) need food, shelter, and protection from harm. Hunting, farming, and cutting lumber for homes are logical and necessary parts of the natural cycle. However, druids do not tolerate unnecessary destruction or exploitation of nature for profit. Druids often prefer subtle and devious methods of revenge against those who defile nature. It is well known that druids are both very unforgiving and very patient.

Mistletoe is an important holy symbol to druids and it is a necessary part of some spells (those requiring a holy symbol). To be fully effective, the mistletoe must be gathered by the light of the full moon using a golden or silver sickle specially made for the purpose. Mistletoe gathered by other means halves the effectiveness of a given spell.

Druids as a class do not dwell permanently in castles, cities, or towns. All druids prefer to live in sacred groves, where they build small sod, log, or stone cottages.

Initiations (SL:1-9)

All druids below 12th Level are known as Initiates. They are referred to as such by their brethren, even if the rest of the world calls them druids.

Druids (SL:10 & 11)

At 12th level¹ or later, the druid character has the opportunity to officially acquire the title of "druid". There can be only nine druids in any geographic region² (as defined by oceans, seas, and mountain ranges; a continent may consist of three or four such regions). A character can reach and surpass 12th level if he isn't one of the nine, but he will still be known as an initiate and have his Social Level capped at 9.

He can only take his place as one of the nine druids if there are currently fewer than nine druids in the region, or if the character defeats one of the nine druids in magical or hand-to-hand combat, thereby assuming the defeated druid's position. If such combat is not mortal, the loser drops to Social Level 9 and must be referred to as an Initiate.

The precise details of each combat are worked out between the two combatants in advance. The combat can be magical, non-magical, or a mixture of both. It can be fought to the death, until only one character is unconscious, until a predetermined number of hit points is lost, or even until the first blow is landed, although in this case both players would have to be supremely confident of their abilities. Whatever can be agreed upon between the characters is legitimate, so long as there is some element of skill and risk. The challenge and the combat must take place in the regions holy site, under

¹ That is 12 *Druid* levels.

² See below for a list of regions

the judgement of the Great Druid.

When a character becomes a druid, he gains three underlings. Their level depends on the character's position among the nine druids. The druid with the most experience points is served by three initiates of 9th level (and has a social level of 11); the second-most experienced druid is served by three initiates of 8th level; and so on, until the least experienced druid is served by three 1st-level initiates.

Archdruids (SL:12 & 13)

Only three archdruids can operate in a geographical region. To become an archdruid, a druid must defeat one of the reigning archdruids or advance into a vacant position. Each of the three archdruids is served by three initiates of 10th level. From among the archdruids of the entire world, three are chosen to serve the Grand Druid (see "The Grand Druid and Hierophant Druids" section). These three retain their attendees but are themselves servants of the Grand Druid. They have social level 13, whilst the others have social level 12.

The Great Druid (SL:14)

The Great Druid is unique in his region. He, too, won his position from the previous great druid. He is served by three initiates of 11th level.

The ascendance of a new Great Druid usually sets off shock waves of turmoil and chaos through the druidical hierarchy. The advancement of an archdruid creates an opening that is fiercely contested by the druids, and the advancement of a druid creates an opening in their ranks.

The Grand Druid (SL:15)

The highest ranking druid in the world is the Grand Druid. Unlike great druids (several of whom can operate simultaneously in different lands), only one person in a world can ever hold this title at one time.

The Grand Druid is attended by nine other druids who are subject only to him and have nothing to do with the hierarchy of any specific land or area. Any druid character of any level can seek the Grand Druid and ask to serve him. Three of these nine are archdruids who roam the world, acting as his messengers and agents. The remainder are normally druids of 7th to 11th level, although the Grand Druid can request a druid of any level to serve him and often considers applications from humble aspirants.

The position of Grand Druid is not won through combat. Instead, the Allaveer directly selects his successor from the great druids. The position is demanding, thankless, and generally unexciting for anyone except a politician. The Grand Druid can request an audience with Allaveer at any time and can request to retire at any time. In return, she will give the bulk of her orders through him.

Hierophant Druids (SL:15 but sub-servient to the Grand Druid)

Any Grand Druid becomes a Hierophant Druid. At this point the druid is offered the option of ascending into Allaveer's realm. The offer is made in person when the Grand Druid retires. Whilst most accept, a few choose to stay. If so, they retain their social status, albeit subservient to the current Grand Druid.

Hierophant Druids have the power to *Plane Shift* between their own material realm and Allaveer's realm. This power only affects them personally, plus any equipment they carry.

The Druidic Regions

Continent	Region	Description	Notes
Allath Atol	Allath Weald	The north-eastern lands of Allath adjacent to the Atol	
Allath Atol	East Wold, The	The eastern coastal regions and Blackma	
Allath Atol	South Deep, The	The southern lands where forest and plain borders jungle	
Allath Atol Faerlanse	West Weald, The Blarn Weald, The	The far western and northern shores What remains of the great Forest of Blarn	This region, being desolate of sylvan creatures is a 'dead' region
Faerlanse Faerlanse	Kingwold, The Morgenig High Weald, The	The Forest of the Winter Kings The Morgenig mountain ranges	
Faerlanse	Plains of Telshuin	Plains of Telshuin and the Princedom of Isefald	
Faerlanse	Vorstak, The	The Vorstak Hills and Forests and the Princedom of Ralsgard	
Hurssia	Bleak Weald, The	The human lands of Kursaval, Ukrall and East and West Turse (excluding those forests mentioned elsewhere)	These are considered a dying region. Those pockets of Sylvan life still left are administered from the Larrowmor.
Hurssia	Larrowmor, The	The remaining sylvan woodlands which constitute the Kingdom of the Larrowmor. This also includes The Shire, The Shirewood, Bramblewood, Netherwood, Gnore-Garak, The Gon'Wrath Moor and the Grusk Mountains	One archdruid of the Larrowmor will always be a hobbit from the shire, since the druidic faith is so strong there.

For a list of personalities in Hurssia refer to the works of Pedrin's Peerage, 2nd Hurssian Edition.