

# FACTION GUIDE

In the Forgotten Realms, five factions have risen to prominence. These factions seek to further their own aims while opposing destructive forces that threaten the folk of Faerûn. Each faction has its own motivations, goals, and philosophy. Some are more heroic than others, but all band together in times of trouble to thwart major threats.

Factions are an important part of the D&D Adventurers League experience, but characters don't have to become a member of a faction right away, or at all. Belonging to a faction sometimes means having responsibilities, but it also carries with it support and rewards for service.

If you ever switch factions or leave a faction, you lose all ranks and renown with the old faction, and must start at rank 1 with zero renown with your new faction.



## FACTION ADVANCEMENT AND BENEFITS

As a character allied with one of the factions goes on adventures, he or she earns renown for accomplishing tasks that align with the faction's goals. This is expressed in the awarding of **renown points** at the end of an episode or adventure. Completion usually earns 0 renown (no interest to the faction), 1 renown (some interest to the faction), or 2 renown (great interest to the faction). Each faction can award different renown points to adventurers.

As characters earn renown, they progress in the ranks of their factions, granting them greater authority and additional benefits.

## FACTION ADVANCEMENT

Rank	Renown	Other Requirements
1	0	—
2	3	—
3	10	5th level, 1 secret mission
4	25	11th level, 3 secret missions
5	50	17th level, 10 secret missions

## RANK 1: INITIATE

This is the rank a character receives when first joining a faction. It is available at character creation or any time the character wishes to join.

**Participate in Faction Activities.** You can participate in any activities that are considered faction-specific for your faction.

**Earn Renown.** You can earn renown points in your faction and advance in rank.

**Receive Your Faction's Insignia.** All new faction members receive an insignia of their faction, fashioned into a wearable or held item.

## FACTION INSIGNIAS

Faction	Item
Harpers	Pin
Order of the Gauntlet	Pendant
Emerald Enclave	Leaf clasp
Lords' Alliance	Signet ring (symbol palm side)
Zhentarim	Gold coin (stamped symbol)

## RANK 2: AGENT

Rank 2 characters have shown that they're aligned with the faction's goals, and are able to take on more responsibility.

**Secret Missions.** During certain adventures, you might be given the opportunity to undergo a secret mission on behalf of your faction. Completion of these missions might earn you additional benefits.

**Apprenticeship to an Adventurer Mentor.** Your character can be apprenticed to another higher-ranking adventurer from your faction. The benefits of this apprenticeship will become available when rank 4 benefits are released.

## RANK 3: STALWART

Rank 3 characters are reliable faction members, entrusted with many secrets and deserving of additional support during adventures.

**Faction Downtime Activity.** You gain access to a faction-specific downtime activity that gives you additional benefits when you use it. The specific downtime activities and benefits will be released in the next update of this guide.

## RANK 4: MENTOR

Rank 4 characters are trusted voices within the faction's leadership. They are looked upon as champions of the faction's beliefs, and as mentors by those of lower rank.

**Become a Mentor.** You can designate other rank 2 or 3 characters as your charge. You can have multiple charges if you wish. The benefits of this will be released when high-level play becomes available.

## RANK 5: LEADER

Rank 5 characters are ensconced within the leadership of the faction and have a great degree of influence, guiding faction decisions.

**Become a Faction Leader.** You gain the ability to make decisions on behalf of your faction and influence current and future faction direction. The benefits of this will be released when high-level play becomes available.

## HARPERS

This clandestine network of spellcasters and spies seeks to tip the scales in favor of the innocent, the weak, and the poor within the Realms. Harper agents pride themselves on being incorruptible defenders of good, and they never hesitate to aid the oppressed. Because they prefer to work behind the scenes, they are rarely noticed as they thwart tyrants, depose rulers, and head off any growing force that is rumored to have evil intent. The Harpers has its finger on the pulse of power in the Realms and works tirelessly to even the odds for the downtrodden.

Individual Harper agents operate alone, relying on their wits and extensive information networks to gain an advantage over their enemies. They know that knowledge is power, so gathering intelligence beforehand is paramount to their success. They are well-informed and always have access to aid, magical and otherwise. Veteran members have access to secret caches of knowledge stashed all over Faerûn, along with trusted sources stationed in every major town and city.

The organization is always on the lookout for powerful items, expressly to keep them out of the hands of evildoers. To this end its agents use various guises and identities to gain access to carefully guarded secrets such as ancestral maps, buried cities, and mages' keeps.

The bond between Harpers is strong, and their friendships are nigh unbreakable. Rarely do they operate in the open, but on rare occasions they must, because there is no other choice. When that happens, you can be sure that a fellow Harper is watching closely, ready to emerge from the shadows and help a comrade at a moment's notice.

*"A Harper is first and foremost self-reliant, for once you are autonomous then no one can tempt you into using power as a crutch. You are sovereign unto yourself. Therefore, a Harper's soul must be incorruptible. Many believe themselves to be so, but power comes in many guises, and it will surely find your weakness. Of this you may be certain. Only a true Harper can pass this test and transform weakness into strength. That is why we are the hand that stops the tyrant, feeds the oppressed, and asks for nothing in return.*

*"We are the song for those who have no voice."*

— Remallia "Remi" Haventree



The **Harpers** is a scattered network of spellcasters and spies who advocate equality and covertly oppose the abuse of power. The organization is benevolent, knowledgeable, and secretive. Bards and wizards of good alignments are commonly drawn to the Harpers.

### GOALS

- Gather information throughout Faerûn.
- Promote fairness and equality by covert means.
- Thwart tyrants and leaders, governments, and organizations that grow too powerful.
- Aid the weak, poor and oppressed.

### BELIEFS

- One can never have too much information or arcane knowledge.
- Too much power leads to corruption. The abuse of magic, in particular, must be closely monitored.
- No one should be powerless.

### MEMBER TRAITS

Harper agents are trained to act alone and rely on their own resources. When they get into scrapes, they don't count on their fellow Harpers to rescue them. Nevertheless, Harpers are dedicated to helping one another in times of need, and friendships between Harpers are nigh unbreakable. Masterful spies and infiltrators, they use various guises and secret identities to form relationships, cultivate their information networks, and manipulate others into doing what needs to be done. Although most Harpers prefer to operate in the shadows, there are exceptions.

### RANKS

- **Watcher** (rank 1)
- **Harpshadow** (rank 2)
- **Brightcandle** (rank 3)
- **Wise Owl** (rank 4)
- **High Harper** (rank 5)



## ORDER OF THE GAUNTLET

The Order of the Gauntlet is a relatively new organization dedicated to smiting evil wherever it lurks and without hesitation. The Order understands that evil wears many guises, playing games and tricking others in order to spread. That is why its members act on their own authority, identifying threats and smashing them before they can grow.

Because the seeds of evil are nourished in the shadows, the Order of the Gauntlet rides out to the most dangerous dungeons, the darkest caverns, and the foulest pits to weed out wrongdoers. But the Order is keenly aware that the shadow of evil lies within everyone, waiting for a moment when it can gain a foothold on their souls. Thus its paladins, monks, and clerics spend long hours deep in prayer to keep their inner eye vigilant and focused on their own thoughts and emotions. In this way they purify themselves from within before taking up their swords to cleanse the world.

The Order of the Gauntlet believes that all sentient beings must come to the light of reason and goodness of their own volition. That is why it is not interested in controlling minds: it focuses only on deeds, setting an example to the world in hopes of inspiring and enlightening others. The Order holds that faith in one's god, one's friends, and one's self are the greatest weapons in quelling the hordes of malice.

With such devout conviction, the Order's members can be depended on as a source of strength to themselves and others, a bright light against the darkness. They are not preemptive bullies, though. A strict code of honor allows them to strike only when evil deeds are being committed. Thus, the Order of the Gauntlet is hyper vigilant, using every resource at their disposal—both divine and mundane—to know where and when dark deeds will occur.

*"That's the thing about evil: it is darkness, it is shadow, it hides in your blind spot. Then, when you are distracted, it sneaks in. Evil is a master of disguise—and what is the greatest disguise, you ask? Yourself. Evil will cloak itself in thoughts and emotions pretending to be your own, telling you to get angry, to be greedy and envious, to hold yourself above others.*

*"People aren't born evil—it takes time for evil to fool you into thinking that its voice is yours. That is why to know who you truly are is what the Order requires from each hopeful who wishes to join our ranks. Bravery isn't fighting the dragon out there—it is fighting the dragon within. That is what we do in our prayers. Once you have slain that dragon, you have overcome the darkness lurking within yourself. Only then do you have the capacity to know true goodness. Only then are you ready to take up the sword and wear the badge of our Order."*

— *Kajiso Steelhand*



The **Order of the Gauntlet** is composed of faithful and vigilant seekers of justice who protect others from the depredations of evildoers. The organization is honorable, vigilant, and zealous. Clerics, monks, and paladins of good (and often lawful good) alignments are commonly drawn to the Order of the Gauntlet.

### GOALS

- Be armed and vigilant against evil.
- Identify evil threats such as secretive power groups and inherently evil creatures.
- Enforce justice.
- Enact retribution against evil actions—do not strike preemptively.

### BELIEFS

- Faith is the greatest weapon against evil—faith in one's god, one's friends, and one's self.
- Battling evil is an extraordinary task that requires extraordinary strength and bravery.
- Punishing an evil act is just. Punishing an evil thought is not.

### MEMBER TRAITS

The Order of the Gauntlet is a dedicated, tightly knit group of like-minded individuals driven by religious zeal or a finely honed sense of justice and honor. Friendship and camaraderie are important to members of the order, and they share a trust and a bond normally reserved for siblings. Like highly motivated soldiers, members of the Order of the Gauntlet seek to become the best at what they do and look forward to testing their mettle. There are few, if any, "lone wolves" in this organization.

### RANKS

- **Chevall** (rank 1)
- **Marcheon** (rank 2)
- **Whitehawk** (rank 3)
- **Vindicator** (rank 4)
- **Righteous Hand** (rank 5)



## EMERALD ENCLAVE

The Emerald Enclave is a far-ranging group that opposes threats to the natural world and helps others survive in the wilderness. Branches of the organization are scattered throughout Faerûn and often operate in isolation from the others. This existence teaches the Enclave's members a fierce self-reliance and mastery of certain fighting and survival skills.

A ranger of the Enclave might be hired to lead a caravan through a treacherous mountain pass or the frozen tundra of Icewind Dale. A druid might volunteer to help a village prepare for a long, brutal winter. Barbarians and druids who live as hermits might appear from nowhere to help defend a town against marauding orcs.

Members of the Emerald Enclave know how to survive and, more importantly, to help others do the same. They are not opposed to civilization or progress, but they strive to keep it in balance with the wild. They restore and preserve the natural order, even as they root out and destroy all that is unnatural. They keep the elemental forces of the world in check and keep civilization and the wilderness from destroying one another.

*"The Emerald Enclave exists as gatekeepers to that vast space beyond the city walls. We are the defenders of the wilderness and of the society that does not understand it. Most have forgotten that there is an ancient, natural order that existed long before our intellectual concepts of it. To come into contact with that primal order is to touch the power that guides all of life.*

*"Those who walk the way of the Emerald Enclave are infused with this power; we embody it, and it moves us to do our work. That is why we are never alone. Even in the midst of a noisy, crowded city we can feel the presence of the natural world inside us, fresh, strong, and alive. The Enclave seeks to make awareness of this power available to all.*

*"Freedom. Is not this the highest of callings?"*

*— Delaan Winterhound*



The **Emerald Enclave** is a widespread group of wilderness survivalists who preserve the natural order while rooting out unnatural threats. The organization is decentralized, hardy, and reclusive. Barbarians, druids, and rangers of good or neutral alignments are commonly drawn to the Emerald Enclave.

### GOALS

- Restore and preserve the natural order.
- Destroy all that is unnatural.
- Keep the elemental forces of the world in check.
- Keep civilization and the wilderness from destroying each other.

### BELIEFS

- The natural order must be respected and preserved.
- Forces that upset the natural order must be destroyed.
- Civilization and the wilderness must learn to coexist peacefully.

### MEMBER TRAITS

Members of the Emerald Enclave are spread far and wide, and usually operate in isolation. They learn to depend on themselves more than others. Survival in a harsh world also demands great fortitude and mastery of certain fighting and survival skills. Members of the Enclave who dedicate themselves to helping others survive the perils of the wilderness are more social than others who are charged with defending sacred glades and preserving the natural balance.

### RANKS

- **Springwarden** (rank 1)
- **Summerstrider** (rank 2)
- **Autumnreaver** (rank 3)
- **Winterstalker** (rank 4)
- **Master of the Wild** (rank 5)



## LORDS' ALLIANCE

The Lords' Alliance is an association of rulers from cities and towns across Faerûn (primarily in the North), who believe that solidarity is needed to keep evil at bay. The rulers of Waterdeep, Silverymoon, Neverwinter, and other free cities dominate the coalition, and all lords in the Alliance work primarily for the fate and fortune of their individual settlements.

Alliance agents include sophisticated bards, zealous paladins, talented mages, and grizzled warriors. They are chosen primarily for their loyalty and are experts in observation, stealth, innuendo, and combat. Backed by the wealthy and the privileged, they carry fine equipment (often disguised to appear common), including large numbers of scrolls scribed with spells of communication.

Agents of the Lords' Alliance ensure the safety and prosperity of civilized Faerûn by standing united against the forces that threaten civilization. They proactively eliminate such threats by any means, fighting with pride for the glory and security of their people, and for the lords who rule over them. However, Alliance operatives are often glory hounds, looking to gain a leg up on their counterparts from other Alliance cities. The leaders of the Alliance know that the order will survive only if its members support each other, requiring a balance between pride and diplomacy. Rogue agents within the Lords' Alliance are rare, but defections have been known to occur.

*"Everyone wants to sleep at night and feel safe in their homes, but how many want to do what it takes to keep the tide of evil at bay? To stand in the cold and rain, waiting for battle while hunger gnaws at their bellies? Many wish to reap the rewards of a good harvest, but few care to remove the stones and till the fields for planting.*

*"The Lords' Alliance fights the things that the shopkeeper in his bed has never even heard of. We remove threats before the town mayor even knows about it. We make bad things go away. That's what we're good at."*

— Rameel Jos



The **Lords' Alliance** is a loose coalition of established political powers concerned with mutual security and prosperity. The organization is aggressive, militant, and political. Fighters and sorcerers of lawful or neutral alignments are commonly drawn to the Lords' Alliance.

### GOALS

- Ensure the safety and prosperity of cities and other settlements of Faerûn.
- Maintain a strong coalition against the forces of disorder.
- Proactively eliminate threats to the established powers.
- Bring honor and glory to one's leaders and one's homeland.

### BELIEFS

- If civilization is to survive, all must unite against the dark forces that threaten it.
- Fight for your realm. Only you can bring honor, glory, and prosperity to your lord and homeland.
- Don't wait for the enemy to come to you. The best defense is a strong offense.

### MEMBER TRAITS

In order to seek out and destroy threats to their homelands, agents of the Lords' Alliance must be highly trained at what they do. Few can match their skills in the field. They fight for the glory and the security of their people and for the lords who rule over them, and they do so with pride. However, the Lords' Alliance can only survive if its members "play nice" with one another, which requires a certain measure of diplomacy. Rogue agents within the Lords' Alliance are rare, but defections have been known to occur.

### RANKS

- **Cloak** (rank 1)
- **Redknife** (rank 2)
- **Stingblade** (rank 3)
- **Warduke** (rank 4)
- **Lioncrown** (rank 5)



## ZHENTARIM

The Zhentarim, or Black Network, is an organization of well-trained mercenaries, savvy rogues, and crafty warlocks who seek to expand their influence and power throughout Faerûn. Agents of the Zhentarim feel that if they play by the rules, nothing gets done. Ultimately, they want to make the rules—and, in some cases, they already do. They walk a fine line when it comes to the letter of the law and don't shy away from the occasional shady deal or illicit activity to get what they want.

To the Zhentarim, wealth is power. Its agents know that nothing else inspires such confidence and dispels doubt so well. In an instant, wealth speaks louder than a thousand bards. Zhentarim agents routinely carry the finest weapons and armor, with no expense spared. When a merchant needs an escort for a caravan, when a noble family requires bodyguards to protect its holdings, or when a city is desperate for trained soldiers to defend its walls, the Zhentarim provides the best warriors money can buy.

The organization encourages individual ambition and rewards innovators who take matters into their own hands. Results are all that matter. Those who come into the Black Network with nothing can become major players within the organization through their own moxie and hard work.

*“Membership in the Zhentarim is like a key to a thousand doors, each one a gateway to fulfilling a personal desire. Most people shy away from this kind of freedom. They like their restraints, laws, and swaddling—it gives them the illusion of security.*

*“The Black Network provides what I need to explore realms and dimensions that would tear apart minds accustomed to limits. Only in such places can I find magic powerful enough to defeat beings that know no such thing as time, fear, or mercy. You might not like the Zhentarim's methods, but when a demon crawls out of the Abyss and comes for your family, you'll be glad that I have gone to the darkest of realms to find the answer to your problem.”*

— Ianna Asterion



The **Zhentarim** is an unscrupulous shadow network that seeks to expand its influence and power throughout Faerûn. The organization is ambitious, opportunistic, and meritocratic. Rogues and warlocks of neutral and/or evil alignments are commonly drawn to the Zhentarim.

### GOALS

- Amass wealth.
- Look for opportunities to seize power.
- Gain influence over important people and organizations.
- Dominate Faerûn.

### BELIEFS

- The Zhentarim is your family. You watch out for it, and it watches out for you.
- You are the master of your own destiny. Never be less than what you deserve to be.
- Everything—and everyone—has a price.

### MEMBER TRAITS

A member of the Zhentarim thinks of himself or herself as a member of a large family, and relies on the Black Network for resources and security. However, members are granted enough autonomy to pursue their own interests and gain some measure of personal power or influence. The Black Network is a meritocracy. As a whole, it promises “the best of the best,” although in truth, the Zhentarim is more interested in spreading its own propaganda and influence than investing in the improvement of its individual members.

### RANKS

- **Fang** (rank 1)
- **Wolf** (rank 2)
- **Viper** (rank 3)
- **Ardragon** (rank 4)
- **Dread Lord** (rank 5)

