

THE SIX SECTS OF THE ORDER



DIFFERENCES OF APTITUDE

By the dawn of the Order's second century, understanding of The Light and its mysteries had begun to reflect the identification of six distinct areas of influence. Though Radiant individuals were able to influence all of these areas to some degree, they always proved sensitive to one area above all others. This susceptibility inevitably gave the adherent considerable power within a specific range of skills. The Order began to diversify its educational emphases, encouraging students toward their areas of greatest influence.

Individual creeds and codes soon followed, further differentiating the specialized members of the Order. Within a matter of decades, this method of specialization had given way to the Six Sects, schools of thought and tradition within the greater Order of The Light.

THE SECTS MATERIALIZE

The Ordo Venefari was the first sect to establish itself, drawing from the original Khi'Hinn monks that had first experienced The Light. The Venefari emphasized the power inherent in the mind, specializing in a host of psychic powers like telepathy, telekinesis, and meditation.

The Ordo Dominari became a natural offshoot, using The Light to influence sapient minds and sense hidden emotions. Naturally, many members of this sect made for influential, charismatic leaders and advisors, opening avenues of negotiation that were closed to others.

The Ordo Ouiori and Ordo Medicari developed together soon after. The Ouiori focused their efforts on understanding and influencing the natural world – particularly its flora and fauna. The Medicari, meanwhile, applied their understanding of The Light to the healing arts, eradicating disease, mending broken bodies, and even prolonging life.

With the forging of the first bolan crystal sabers at the dawn of the Order's third century, The Light's effect on a warrior's skills became abundantly clear. The Ordo Bellati soon developed, becoming the military strongarm

of the increasingly-powerful Order. Last to be established was the Ordo Vindori, whose powers gave them an affinity toward defensive tactics and the preservation of The Order itself.

THE DANGERS OF SHADOW

The Sects grew in power and influence within the Order, ultimately dictating the education, purpose, and direction of a Guardian's entire life. Yet as the power found in each of the Sects materialized, their ability to be abused also became apparent. Just as each discipline offered a unique set of aptitudes, it also offered a unique set of temptations and affinity for misuse. If an acolyte focused solely on manifesting the abilities of their Sect, the possibility for abuse grew stronger. These dangers came to be colloquially known as "Shadow," and threatened to destroy the Order if not kept in check.

WHAT IS THE SHADOW?

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"YOUNG GUARDIANS LOVE TO ASK: 'WHAT IS THE SHADOW?' THE PROBLEM WITH THAT QUESTION IS EVEN THE GREATEST VENEFARI SAGES ARE STILL ASKING IT. IS THE SHADOW A FORCE OF ITS OWN, SEPARATE FROM THE LIGHT? IS IT A PERVERSION OF THE LIGHT ITSELF? OR IS IT – LIKE A TRUE SHADOW – THE VERY ABSENCE OF LIGHT ITSELF? THESE ARE QUESTIONS WE STILL ASK. EVEN AFTER NEARLY A MILLENNIUM OF TRYING TO UNDERSTAND, WE DON'T HAVE SOLID ANSWERS..."

Witnessing this growing threat, the Grand Masters banded together to reestablish a unified Order that ensured all students received instruction across all aspects of The Light. Radiant students would still be governed by their natural affinities, but would learn to balance their powers through knowledge from every Sect. Recognizing and dissipating the potential for corruption and Shadow continues to be chief amongst the teachings of all branches of study.

While sensitivity to The Light is sometimes known to

be hereditary, sensitivity to individual sects is far more variable. It is not at all uncommon for new initiates to demonstrate skills completely independent of their parents — though generational continuity is often celebrated

when it occurs. Long family lineages within all of the sects are well-established and respected, though not without their exceptions.



ORDO VENEFARI

OFFICIAL NAME:	Ordo Venefari	SECT COLOR:	Blue
GREATEST ABILITIES:	Psychic Arts	SECT MANTRA:	“Knowledge and Truth”
SINGULAR FORM:	Venefae	PLURAL FORM:	Venefari

The Venefari are the oldest of the sects, having materialized almost directly from the traditions of the Khi'Hinn monks that established The Order of The Light. As a result, the Venefari are the most mystical members of the Order, concerning themselves with attempting to unravel the mysteries of The Light still further.

The strength of the Venefari draws from their psychic abilities; A Venefae can use their powers to communicate telepathically and manipulate objects through Light-driven telekinesis. Meditation is an often-emphasized skill, being used for both quieting of the mind and the restoration of one's abilities. Advanced training can yield the ability to read into the movements of The Light and — in the rarest and most powerful cases — be used to predict future events.

VENEFARI PRECOGNITION

“THE VENEFARI ABILITY TO READ THE FUTURE IS... COMPLICATED. IT'S RARELY — IF EVER — A DIRECT FORETELLING OF WHAT IS TO COME. THE LIGHT SIMPLY DOES NOT COMMUNICATE IN THE SAME WAY THAT WE DO WHEN IT COMES TO OUR UNDERSTANDING OF TIME. MORE OFTEN THAN NOT, THE VENEFAE IS PRESENTED WITH IMAGES OR THEMES THAT MUST BE INTERPRETED...”

The Venefari maintain a strong influence within the modern Order. Traditionally, respect for ancient traditions has encouraged the vast majority of Grand Masters to be drawn from Venefari ranks. In the last three centuries the position of Supreme Master has held an even

greater ratio, with all but four of such leaders possessing Venefari backgrounds.

Following the Dominari Rebellion, a sizeable portion of the Ordo Venefari swore themselves to a creed of pacifism, denouncing the warrior culture that had begun to characterize the Order. Though still often brandishing crystal sabers as a means of defense, they prefer to rely on their psychic powers to influence and defend.

THE CALL TO PACIFISM

“THE VENEFARI WHO PRACTICE PACIFISM GENERALLY ARGUE THAT ALL GUARDIANS ARE HELD TO A SIMILAR IDEAL. IF GUARDIANS ARE CALLED TO PROTECT LIFE, DOES THAT NOT MEAN ALL LIFE (THEY WOULD ARGUE, OF COURSE)? THE TOPIC HAS GENERATED MUCH DEBATE WITHIN THE ORDER AND THE EMPIRE AT LARGE, EVEN CAUSING SOME MAJOR CONTROVERSY ON A FEW OCCASIONS...”

Unlike the other sects whose Shadows can easily lead to the abuse and exploitation of others, the Shadows of the Venefari compel them to withdraw from others altogether. The allure of understanding the great mysteries of the universe — meant for the benefit of sapient beings everywhere — can easily lead Venefari sages into isolation and obsession, removing their influence from the universe. Even some of the greatest minds of the Sect have fallen prey to this fate; The seventh Supreme Master, Eva Shan, was driven into two centuries of isolation and madness by her obsession with understanding The Light's healing and regenerative properties.



ORDO DOMINARI

OFFICIAL NAME:	Ordo Dominari	SECT COLOR:	Red
GREATEST ABILITIES:	Mental Manipulation	SECT MANTRA:	"Ambition and Charisma"
SINGULAR FORM:	Dominare	PLURAL FORM:	Dominari

The greatest strength of the Ordo Dominari came from their ability to use The Light to influence the minds of other beings. While the Venefari reached out to The Light within the universe, the Dominari reached out to The Light that existed and thrived within the minds of sapient individuals. Just as a Venefae could manipulate an object within the world, a Dominare could manipulate a thought, an emotion, or an idea.

In centuries past, the Dominari used these powers for the cause of peace, de-escalating hostile situations with mere words or cleansing painful thoughts and memories from broken minds. Their supernatural ability to read into hidden emotions allowed them to act with compassion and understanding. The very presence of a Dominare could sometimes calm an uneasy negotiation and even among non-Radiant leaders, the Dominari were trusted as capable political advisors.

Such skills lent themselves powerfully to the political world, allowing the Dominari to gain considerable influence both before and after the establishment of the Empire. When the Empire was finally born, they solidified their place as its de facto leaders, ruling for several centuries and overseeing the galactic golden age.

THE "EVIL" OF THE DOMINARI

"IT'S TEMPTING FOR MODERN STUDENTS TO SEE THE POWERS OF THE DOMINARI AS 'EVIL,' BUT IN THIS TIME BEFORE THE REBELLION, THEY WERE USED FOR ANYTHING BUT. THEIR POWERS COULD CALM MINDS, HEAL MENTAL WOUNDS, AND PREVENT BLOODSHED BEFORE CONFLICT EVER STARTED. THE DOMINARI BROUGHT PEACE TO A SHATTERED GALAXY, NEVER KNOWING THAT THESE SAME POWERS WOULD LEAD IT TO RUIN..."

Eventually, though, the Dominari succumbed to the Shadows of their own power en masse. Influencing minds expanded to include outright control as the Dominari commandeered elections and treaties in their favor. Though other Radiant individuals were often immune to their power, those outside of The Light could easily be dissolved of their own free will.

A BEND IN THE LIGHT?

"WHILE SOME ARGUE THE DOMINARI COLLECTIVELY CHOSE TO FALL TO SHADOW, OTHERS ARGUE THAT THE LIGHT ITSELF SOMEHOW 'BENT,' TAKING THE ENTIRETY OF THE SECT (AND LATER, THE ENTIRETY OF THE BELLATI SECT) WITH IT. IF THAT IS TRUE, IT SUGGESTS THE LIGHT (OR AT LEAST, THE SHADOW) HAS THE ABILITY TO OVERRIDE FREE WILL, WHICH IS A TERRIFYING THOUGHT INDEED..."

This only furthered a growing lust for power and enabled the Dominari to swiftly act in their own interest following the election of the first Vindori Emperor in 898. The most powerful Dominari leaders could control entire armies, bending the goals of warriors to their own objectives. As the Dominari Rebellion broke out, they rallied entire populations to their cause, allowing them to strike swiftly at the Order and the Empire.

When the Rebellion was finally crushed, the remaining Dominari retreated into the unknown reaches of space. In the time since their defeat, no new initiates to the Order have demonstrated an affinity for Dominari skills. This has led many sages to declare the Dominari sect effectively cut off from The Light. Though the last remnants of Dominari leadership remain unaccounted for, their inability to draw power from The Light makes their threat little more than a forgotten memory.



ORDO OUIORI

OFFICIAL NAME:	Ordo Ouiori	SECT COLOR:	Green
GREATEST ABILITIES:	Influence Over Natural World	SECT MANTRA:	"Harmony and Growth"
SINGULAR FORM:	Ouiore	PLURAL FORM:	Ouiori

While every Sect carries with it a profound respect for the natural world, the Ouiori see it as the focus of their power in The Light. Preferring the warmth of forests and meadows to the cold of ancient temples, the Ouiori maintain a strong spiritual bond with nature.

Ouiori adherents can use The Light to influence the minds of beasts, the growth of vegetation, and — in some rare circumstances — the very elements themselves. Ouiori scholars are typically trained in the properties of plants and behavior of animals, using this knowledge to better improve populations of sapient beings and their relationship to the environments they call home. Dangerous life forms are rendered harmless by Ouiori skills, and lush gardens can materialize with ease under their watchful eyes.

OUIORI ELIXIRS

"ONE OF THE GREAT SKILLS OF A OUIORE IS THEIR ABILITY TO CRAFT LIFE-SAVING ELIXIRS. USING THEIR KNOWLEDGE OF HERBS, FLOWERS, AND OTHER PLANTS, THEY CAN INFUSE CONCOCTIONS WITH THE VERY ESSENCE OF THE LIGHT ITSELF. THESE ELIXIRS CAN CAUSE WONDERFUL EFFECTS, ALLOWING THEM TO ASSIST THEMSELVES AND OTHERS IN THE THICK OF A DANGEROUS SITUATION..."

Devout naturalists, the Ouiori have historically been a profound force for the preservation of wild spaces and the regrowth of war-torn or exploited environments. Their work in cultivation has led to bountiful crops to feed the Empire while their terraforming skills turn barren planets into virtual paradises. Continually tempted by the chaos of unbridled nature, the Ouiori must use their gifts to preserve a sense of balance and harmony.

In recent decades, many Ouiori knights have taken up

the practice of establishing "familiar," animals intensely bound to them through The Light. In most cases, such creatures are drawn from an adherent's native planet, and are meant to serve as a companion and — when possible — an assistant in their duties. Establishing such a mental bond is no easy feat and is typically reserved for more experienced members of the Ordo Ouiori.

THE IMPORTANCE OF A FAMILIAR

"BEFORE THE REBELLION, I HAD THE PLEASURE OF WORKING WITH A FINE OUIORI KNIGHT WHO ACTUALLY USED A PORTHIAN ORVO LIZARD AS THEIR OWN FAMILIAR. CAN YOU IMAGINE HAVING SUCH A DEADLY BEAST SITTING ON YOUR SHOULDER? THEY OFTEN SAID THE CREATURE GAVE THEM COMFORT AND ASSURANCE, AND ACTED AS A CONDUIT OF SORTS IN THEIR OWN MEDITATIONS..."

Seduced by the assurances of the Dominari, many Ouiori shunned the Order during the Dominari Rebellion decades ago. Promised the opportunity to heal broken worlds, nearly a third of Ouiori Guardians turned against the Empire. While most have since returned to The Light, the exodus underscored the fact that above all else, the Ouiori are loyal to the natural order of the galaxy more than any other.

THE OUIORI CHOICE

"UNLIKE THE DOMINARI AND BELLATI, THE SITUATION FOR THE OUIORI APPEARS TO BE SOMEWHAT DIFFERENT. RATHER THAN FALLING TO THE SHADOW WITH A BEND IN THEIR LIGHT, MANY OUIORI ACTIVELY CHOSE TO FOLLOW THE DOMINARI, BELIEVING THIS CHOICE TO BE AN EARNEST GOOD..."



ORDO MEDICARI

OFFICIAL NAME:	Ordo Medicari	SECT COLOR:	Silver (or White)
GREATEST ABILITIES:	Healing Arts	SECT MANTRA:	"Compassion and Life"
SINGULAR FORM:	Medicae	PLURAL FORM:	Medicari

The sister sect of the Ouiori, the Medicari apply similar skills to the biology of animals and ambulaplantae — particularly their restorative properties. While the Ouiori influence natural systems on a large scale, the Medicari often find themselves manipulating systems on a microscopic, cellular level. Some have argued the Medicari to be a more specified suborder of Ouiori, but most would contest they operate in fundamentally different realms.

Renown as exceptional healers, the Medicari influence The Light to mend broken bones, fight disease, heal torn flesh, and even delay death. Though many specialize in the healing of one sapient species over another, most of the principles of restoration lend themselves across all living things. While most Medicari can be found in hospitals, clinics, and even veterinary centers throughout the Empire, others find useful roles as combat medics or medical researchers.

MEDICARI FREAK ME OUT

"ALRIGHT: FIRST OFF, I LOVE DR. VRAY AND KNIGHT STAV. BUT LET'S GET SOMETHING STRAIGHT: THE MEDICARI ARE TERRIFYING. SURE THEY CAN FIX AN INJURY. BUT DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA HOW CRAZY IT IS THAT THEY CAN JUST... SHUT DOWN BIOLOGICAL SYSTEMS AT WILL? OH, HEY, YOU DON'T NEED TO BREATHE ANYMORE. BOOP. HEARTBEAT? OFF. BOOP. ANEURISM. BOOP. AGAIN, I LOVE THEM, BUT... HOLY SHIT..."

It is widely believed that the Medicari possess the ability to influence cells themselves, prompting their growth and — when necessary — contraction or death. This unique ability allows them to affect a being's biology on the smallest of levels. They are equally capable of affecting their own cells, allowing them to slow their heart rate and respiration and survive in the most ad-

verse conditions.

Since the establishment of the Empire, the Medicari have been responsible for eradicating a number of infectious diseases and carrying out complicated surgeries whose results are nothing short of miraculous. The so-called "Hungry Death" that wiped out millions of beings on Arbora was finally remedied in large part to the efforts of Medicari scientists. Many of the best attempts at counteracting the Naran Contamination have come from Medicari minds, despite its still-pending resolution.

WHY MEDICARI ARE ALWAYS TIRED

"THE USE OF THE MEDICARI ARTS IS EXHAUSTING. IT'S ONE THING TO USE THE LIGHT TO, SAY, PUSH AN OBJECT. IT'S ANOTHER THING ENTIRELY TO COAX MILLIONS OF CELLS INTO COLLECTIVELY REPLICATING AND REPAIRING AN INJURY. AS A RESULT, A MEDICAE CAN OFTEN TIRE FASTER THAN THE OTHER MEMBERS OF THEIR PRISM, CAUSING THEM TO RELY HEAVILY ON OTHERS..."

Though most adherents of the Order are often tempted by their Shadows, the Medicari are constantly being enticed by the abuse of their powers. The same skills used to constrict blood flow and steady breathing are just as able to heal as they are to kill. Accounts of fallen Medicari brutally murdering their victims are often gruesome and horrifying.

Facing these possibilities on a daily basis, the Medicari have some of the strongest constitutions in the Order. They are often able to withstand pain and torture that might otherwise break another being. Arrogance and self-aggrandizement is another common Shadow among the Sect, contrasting sharply with the pillar of compassion that upholds the mission of the Medicari.



ORDO BELLATI

OFFICIAL NAME:	Ordo Bellati	SECT COLOR:	Purple
GREATEST ABILITIES:	Offensive Combat & Tactics	SECT MANTRA:	"Passion and Honor"
SINGULAR FORM:	Bellate	PLURAL FORM:	Bellati

In the early Third Century, Master Ferrick Shae used a shard of pure bolan crystal to forge the first crystal saber. Able to resonate powerfully with The Light of its bearer, these new weapons changed the course of the Order. It was the Ordo Bellati that was best able to harness the power of these blades, using The Light to create a class of powerful warriors.

THE GUARDIAN AND THE SABER

"THE GUARDIANS EXISTED APART FROM SABERS, BUT ONCE CREATED, THE CRYSTAL SABER ACTED AS AN IMPORTANT SYMBOL OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN A GUARDIAN AND THE LIGHT. A PRECISE AND DELICATE WEAPON, THE SABER REMINDS ALL OF US TO TAKE LIFE ONLY WHEN ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY. THE BELLATI, OF COURSE, JUST DO THAT BETTER THAN THE REST OF US..."

Though all followers of The Light — except for most devout Venefari pacifists — are now given some saber training by the Order, the Bellati elevate their combat abilities to an art form. Able to coordinate the movement of their bodies and feed off the energies of their opponents, the Bellati are skilled in offensive tactics. Their combat training exceeds that of any other sect, with thousands of hours devoted to mastering their crystal sabers. While many forms of saber combat training exist, only the Bellati are able to reach the highest tiers. Both competition and collaboration are encouraged within Bellati ranks and tournaments and war games are common exercises in training.

Aside from personal combat skills, the Bellati are also skilled strategists and tacticians, using The Light to gain insight into the greater picture of an unfolding conflict. A rudimentary form of precognition guides their under-

standing of a conflict, allowing the greatest Bellati to "foresee" the possible movements of the enemy and the impact of their own tactics. Many are also skilled motivators, able to rally others and boost their compatriots' skills when necessary. As a result, the Bellati have proven to be some of the most capable military leaders, frequently leading armies and navies in the name of peace.

As the greatest warriors of the Order, the Bellati must powerfully stare down their Shadows and ensure the fight for the freedoms of others. Without this, the Bellati run the risk of establishing themselves as brutal berserkers and listing mercenaries. A similar fate overshadowed the Ordo Bellati in the Dominari Rebellion, when the Bellati collectively sided with their Dominari allies. The Bellati became unfettered, assisting the Dominari in crippling the Empire and laying waste to a number of worlds.

While they were later brought back into the fold at the conclusion of the war, the mass betrayal left a lasting imprint on the Order. The fear of renewed dishonor hangs over the heads of all Bellati leaders, encouraging them to promote loyalty and duty like never before.

THE CALL OF THE SHADOW

"THE BELLATI BETRAYAL IS A FACT THAT MANY DO NOT SOON FORGET. HERE AGAIN, IT APPEARS AS THOUGH THE LIGHT ITSELF BENT IN SUCH A WAY AS TO DRIVE THE BELLATI TO SHADOW EN MASSE. ONE BELATE DESCRIBED THEIR LOYALTIES TO THE DOMINARI AS DRIVEN BY 'THAT LUST FOR BATTLE, BUT SOMETHING ELSE PULLING AT ME BEHIND IT ALL.' UNLIKE THE QUIORI, THERE DOES NOT APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN A PERSONAL CHOICE IN THE DECISION. FORTUNATELY (FOR ALL OF US), THAT PULL WAS REVERSED JUST AS QUICKLY AS THE BELLATI RETURNED TO THE FOLD..."



ORDO VINDORI

OFFICIAL NAME: Ordo Vindori

GREATEST ABILITIES: Defense and Psychometry

SINGULAR FORM: Vindore

SECT COLOR: Gold

SECT MANTRA: "Tradition and Preservation"

PLURAL FORM: Vindori

The Ordo Vindori was the last of the Sects to emerge. Known as the defenders of The Order of The Light, the Vindori are drawn to history, tradition, and the preservation of the peace the Empire and the Order can bring.

Like the Bellati, the Vindori are typically trained more intensely in crystal saber combat, but with a strong emphasis on defensive tactics. The Vindori are rarely called to offensive campaigns, but serve as powerful defensive warriors in times of conflict. A skilled Vindore can manipulate The Light to produce powerful energy barriers, protecting themselves and others from harm.

One of the most powerful Vindori abilities is that of psychometry. By simply touching an object, a well-trained Vindori knight can gain information about its history and its bearers. The strongest Vindori are able to experience entire events through this power, giving them supernatural access to understanding of the past. For this reason, the Vindori are often skilled historians and archivists, which further propels their desire to respect and protect established traditions. It also enables them as powerful investigators, able to uncover hidden truths that would otherwise escape even the most detailed observation.

THE GIFT OF PSYCHOMETRY

"PSYCHOMETRY CAN BE... SKETCHY. VERY OFTEN YOU GET BITS AND PIECES, BUT THE WHOLE PICTURE CAN BE HARD TO GRASP. CLARITY COMES WITH COLLABORATION AND EVEN MORE SO WITH EXPERIENCE. I DON'T LIKE TO TOOT MY OWN HORN, BUT I'M CONSIDERED ONE OF THE BETTER PSYCHOMETRISTS IN THE ORDER — BUT OF COURSE I'M AS OLD AS SHIT SO THAT'S PROBABLY RELATED..."

While their affinity for the past and its preservation is the greatest strength of the Vindori, it is also their most

frequent downfall. The Vindori are famously stubborn, shadowed by concerns about maintaining traditions over affecting meaningful change. While they have proven essential to maintaining the Order and the Empire at large, they have also — on numerous occasions — prevented its movement forward on many social, cultural, and political issues. The great government reforms proposed by the Vindori in the late ninth century were an unexpected anomaly, but widely seen as a necessary measure to preserve the future of the Empire. Many Vindori still lament the move, as the act destabilized the Empire and led directly to the Dominari Rebellion.

Since the war, the Vindori have established themselves as the new de-facto rulers of the Empire. Both monarchs of the new era have been drawn from Vindori stock, leading many to declare a new "Vindori Dynasty." Whether this legacy will be maintained remains to be seen, but the Vindori will continue to act in preservation of both the Empire and The Order of The Light regardless of who sits on the throne.

A GALAXY OUT OF BALANCE

*Alright, hot take coming through: For much of the history of the Empire, the six sects of the Order kept a delicate but effective balance. With the loss of the Dominari, that balance has been thrown off considerably. Suddenly the other sects have had to step in and take over the role that the Dominari once held. In ages past, the Dominari were skilled at assisting individuals with mental health. That role has now fallen to the less-skilled Medicari. Diplomacy and negotiation has fallen to the less-capable Venefari or the war-prone Bellati. Perhaps worst of all, leadership now rests on the Vindori, and here's the thing: **WE'RE NOT GOOD AT IT.** We're gifted to preserve, not to lead. We get stuck in what was, not what could be. Yes, the Order and the Empire won the war, but we're still paying the price of it...*