

# Level UP

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For use with the 4th Edition

**DUNGEONS  
& DRAGONS**  
ROLEPLAYING GAME

Requires the use of the D&D Player's Handbook, Monster Manual, and  
Dungeon Master's Guide core rulebooks, available from Wizards of the Coast, Inc.



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# FROM THE EDITOR

WELCOME TO THE FIRST ISSUE OF *LEVEL UP*, a quarterly magazine devoted to Fourth Edition Dungeons & Dragons. That's right, you read that correctly. I said *devoted* – as in solely committed – to Fourth Edition Dungeons & Dragons. I can't be any more forward or frank than that. This magazine is all about providing you with top-quality 4E material written by both industry professionals and talented freelancers.

Okay, now that I've made it clear where this magazine is headed, let me tell you a little bit about it. In the pages of this issue and those to follow, you will find intriguing new material to enhance your 4E game. You'll discover a ton of crunchy goodness in the form of new monsters, paragon paths, feats, and adventures; but you'll also find plenty of useful fluffy bits, from new gods to great advice articles for both DMs and players.

We'll be presenting a number of reoccurring articles and features in *Level Up*, all focused on offering you new options for your 4E campaign. Here's a little bit more about each of these features, some of which you'll find in this very issue.

**Azagar's Advice for Adventurers:** In this series, the infamous hobgoblin general dispenses his own hoary brand of wisdom in an attempt to educate "the greatest fools in the Known World" on matters military. Here you'll find new feats, weapons, armor, and all kinds of useful tidbits for the military-minded PC.

**Beyond the Bookshelf:** This series features additional material from one of the Goodman Games 4E releases. Here, you'll find a wide variety of useful information and crunch that will further expand the material presented in the original product.

**Blackdirge's Bestiary:** Need more monsters for your 4E campaign? Then look no further. In this series you'll find challenging new monsters to throw at your PCs, complete with stats, lore, tactics, and illustrations. We aim to cover a wide range of levels in this series; from lowly level 1 minions that do little more than make an ugly stain on your armor, to mighty solo monsters guaranteed to scare the hell out of your epic-level PCs.

**Dear Archmage Abby:** Need some advice on how to manage your unruly gaming group? Or maybe you just need a sympathetic shoulder to cry on. Either way, Archmage Abby is ready to answer your gaming-related questions with wit, charm, and just a dash of absent-minded eccentricity.

**Deities of Aereth:** Looking for some new gods your expand your 4E pantheon? Let author Jeff LaSala give you the low-down on the various gods of the Dungeon Crawl Classics world of Aereth. Each installment features a new Aerethian deity, and comes with all the information you need to drop the new god right into your own campaign. This feature also presents new crunch associated with each deity, including paragon paths, prayers, magic items, and rituals.

**GM Gems:** This series is aimed at the poor, beleaguered GM, hungry for new material to add to his existing 4E campaign. In this series you'll find a little bit of everything; from new monster templates to supercharge your existing 4E critters, to useful advice articles aimed on designing monsters, adventures, and campaigns.

**Jack's Ultra-Short Reviews:** Tired of reading page-long reviews on 4E material? Then let Jack give you what you need shotgun-style with his patented ultra-short reviews. Each ultra-short review is packed full of information about the product, highlighting its strengths and weaknesses with scalpel-sharp precision.

**PC Pearls:** This series provides players with new options in the form of paragon paths, epic destinies, powers, feats, and just about anything that can make your PC shiny and unique.

**A Picture Tells 1,000 Words:** In this feature, we take a single fantasy illustration, and then build a short, 1,000-word encounter around it. These short scenarios are generic enough to drop right into your campaign as random encounters or even the precursor to a larger adventure.

**Roads to Adventure:** Each issue of *Level Up* includes a complete, short 4E adventure designed to easily fit into nearly any existing fantasy campaign. Often the adventure will feature new material, such as monsters, that appear in the same issue. You can expect the talented authors of the Dungeon Crawl Classics line of adventures to make an appearance in this feature, including the illustrious Harley Stroh in this very issue.

So there you have it; the lowdown on a magazine committed to 4E excellence. We hope you enjoy this first issue of *Level Up* and all those to follow. If you have any comments or questions, drop by [www.goodman-games.com](http://www.goodman-games.com) and let us know what you think of our little magazine. Also, if you'd like to get involved with *Level Up* on a more personal basis, check out issue two for submission guidelines.

**Aeryn "Blackdirge" Rudel**

Editor-in-Chief

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# Deities of Aereth

## Gorhan

By Jeff LaSala

## GORHAN

(GOR-HAN)

*THE HELMED VENGEANCE, THE BRAVE ONE,  
HE WHO FIGHTS FIRST*

**LAWFUL GOOD GOD OF WAR,  
VALOR, AND CHIVALRY**

Since humanity and its draconic mentors first forged weapons and armor in the earliest ages of the world, the image of a warrior in golden armor striding across the field of battle with a sword in hand has been Gorhan's alone. As a virtuous god of war, his is the name most invoked — and reviled — upon the battlefields of Aereth. Yet only those who take up arms in a worthy cause against the cruel and unjust dare to name the Helmed Vengeance as their patron, for this god of assertive combat does not suffer the lip-service of warmongers and militant tyrants. He is the patron of warriors, soldiers, and any willing to raise weapons against their enemies for a righteous cause. Gorhan holds the powers of war, valor, and chivalry in his grasp, and those who worship him must extol the virtues of his faith by action, not words. An old Gorhanan proverb states: "Speak not, if your deeds may show your heart."

Gorhan is known as the Brave One for his steadfast courage even among gods, and as He Who Fights First for his unwillingness to wait for an enemy's attack. His faith warns against complacency of any kind, for acquiescence — even mere inaction — is one of evil's greatest opportunities: like casting aside one's armor when the enemy is hiding. In the faith of Gorhan, peace remains the foremost objective, but peace must also be ever reaffirmed. A follower of He Who Fights First does not wait for her enemies to muster or plot against her; she takes the battle to them to eliminate the threat. Gorhan's fervent crusade against evil is often criticized by other faiths for being rash, quelling reason in the face of courage. And, indeed, the boldness of Gorhan's clergy frequently outweighs the wisdom of caution and well-advised reserve. For this reason, the goddess Justicia — Gorhan's own wife — often tempers his steely initiative with her more judicial counsel; likewise, followers of Gorhan frequently consult Justicia's clergy. At the same time, Gorhan's overzealous aggression has made enemy faiths wary of regions united under his holy banner.

The epithet by which Gorhan is most commonly referred is the Helmed Vengeance, for the slender, athletic knight in golden armor that he is always depicted as keeps the visor of his helm closed at all times. His face remains hidden in all religious renderings, emphasizing Gorhan's deliberate ambiguity of race. While humans, elves, and dragonborn most commonly revere him, even dwarves, halflings, and gnomes have been known to venerate him in times of desperation or war. When surrender is offered to the guilty and is rebuffed, the Helmed Vengeance becomes the executioner. In the faith of Gorhan, death is mercy for the wicked.

# POWER SKINS

## Mayhem in Mirahan

By Aeryn “Blackdirge” Rudel

Your character’s power can do a lot more than just give you more options in combat; with a few tweaks, they can actually add atmosphere and verisimilitude to the entire campaign. In the *Power Skins* series, we’ll explore the idea of repackaging, or “re-skinning” powers to fit specific types of campaigns; and we’ll demonstrate how minor cosmetic changes can make your character’s power fit seamlessly into campaigns ranging from high fantasy to horror.

In this issue we take a look at repackaging at-will and 1st-level fighter powers to fit a campaign that might feature the upcoming adventure *Death Dealer: Shadows of Mirahan* by Goodman Games. *Shadows of Mirahan* allows players to run characters in the grim and brutal world of Frank Frazetta’s *Death Dealer*, and the repackaged powers below reflect the violently graphic and morally ambiguous nature of such a campaign.

Note that in this first feature we’ve given you the entire power description plus the new name and flavor text, so that you can compare it to a standard power and get a clear idea of what a “re-skinned power” looks like. *Hewing strike*, for example, should be considered synonymous with *cleave*. However, in future installments we’ll just detail the new name and flavor text with a reference to the standard power it replaces, giving you double or even triple the amount of “re-skinned” powers in the same sized article.

### AT-WILL POWERS

#### Hewing Strike Fighter Attack 1

*Your greatsword hews through your enemy’s flesh in a shower of blood and gore...only to bury itself hilt-deep in another enemy lurking nearby.*

**At-Will ♦ Martial, Weapon**

**Standard Action** **Melee** weapon

**Target:** One creature

**Attack:** Strength vs. AC

**Hit:** 1[W] + Strength modifier damage, and an enemy adjacent to you takes damage equal to your Strength modifier.

Increase damage to 2[W] + Strength modifier at 21st level.

#### Unavoidable Doom Fighter Attack 1

*Your axe rains down in an avalanche of steel upon your opponent’s defenses. Even when he manages to stave off a blow, the sheer power of your strikes bruises flesh and cracks bone.*

**At-Will ♦ Martial, Weapon**

**Standard Action** **Melee** weapon

**Target:** One creature

**Attack:** Strength vs. AC

**Hit:** 1[W] + Strength modifier damage.

Increase damage to 2[W] + Strength modifier at 21st level.

**Miss:** Half Strength modifier damage. If you’re wielding a two-handed weapon, you deal damage equal to your Strength modifier.

#### Blade of Set Fighter Attack 1

*Like a striking adder, your blade hungrily seeks out chinks in your foe’s armor, and then sinks fangs of steel into his flesh.*

**At-Will ♦ Martial, Weapon**

**Standard Action** **Melee** weapon

**Target:** One creature

**Attack:** Strength + 2 vs. AC

**Hit:** 1[W] damage.

Increase damage to 2[W] at 21st level.

#### Giant’s Fist Fighter Attack 1

*Your warhammer makes a fist-sized dent in your opponent’s helm; and while he’s reeling, you slam your shield into his face and send him stumbling backwards.*

**At-Will ♦ Martial, Weapon**

**Standard Action** **Melee** weapon

**Requirement:** You must be using a shield.

**Target:** One creature

**Attack:** Strength vs. AC

**Hit:** 1[W] + Strength modifier damage, and you push the target 1 square if it is your size, smaller than you, or one size category larger. You can shift into the space that the target occupied.

Increase damage to 2[W] + Strength modifier at 21st level.