



Class Acts—Warlock: Strange Constellations

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In June, we presented rules updates to the warlock in the form of a playtest article. After receiving feedback from the playtest, we made some changes and posted the [final updates](#). One piece of consistent playtest feedback was the need for more star pact warlock powers that rely on Constitution at certain levels. To that effect, we went to warlock-and-tentacled-horror expert Bruce Cordell and asked him if he'd write an article responding to the desires of the fan community. This is what he wrote. Read at your own peril!

INTRODUCTION

Pact-swearing warlocks live dangerously, but not through choice. They can't help having this personality trait. It takes a certain reckless craziness to pledge oneself to an entity that is amoral, diabolical, uncaring, or, worse yet, utterly indifferent to reality except for its potential use as a chew toy.

Bizarre patterns in the sky are visible to those in the right place, in the right time, or in the right frame of mind. That's when warlocks seize the power bequeathed from the pitiless points of light that shine unchanging beyond night's void—points of light that, in sum, form strange constellations.

Star Pact

Some stars are said to provide good luck; to see them wink from heaven's vault is considered a blessing. Other stars are associated with benign omens and powers of beauty, healing, and clarity of thought. Quite a few serve as beacons for navigation.

But other stars are stranger, such as the stars used by alien creatures as illumination to peer into our reality. These entities are lumped together and described as residents of the Far Realm. Labeling them as such is a reasonable first organizing principle, and it's the safest too. Attempting to gain deeper clarity on the true nature of such stars can bring researchers an unhappy fate. When it comes to alien horrors, truisms about "the more you know" being an advantage crumble to dust.

Despite the dangers, the mad, the passionate, and the nihilistic continue to seek greater understanding of the very thing that tears asunder the minds of most inquisitors. Through trial and error, these people named new entities, guessed their natures, and teased out new spells for those whose pact is with the stars. These warlocks, sages, and scholars consolidated the bulk of that knowledge in a wizard's tower, where they constantly researched more lore.

Then rumors told of a horrifying new constellation that would rise in the east and that would bring in a terrible new age (according to some prophecies). To prevent this prophecy from being fulfilled, some enterprising people caused the tower and all its contents to burn to the ground one night during a spectacular meteor shower. None of those who originally pieced together the information survived. All that remains regarding the nature of the enigmatic star pattern that failed to appear, including many of the constituent stars, is embedded in the crystal headpiece of a warlock's rod. The embedded message (a sort of psychic engram) is called the *Confession of Melech*.

CONFESSION OF MELECH

The *Confession of Melech* is recorded as a psychic impression inside a fist-sized chunk of purple crystal set as the capstone of a rod. The rod acts like a *rod of wrathful dismissal*.

The names and natures of terrifying new entities associated with the Elder Constellation becomes known to those who sleep or meditate with the crystal in their possession for at least one hour.

Stars of the Elder Constellation

When time draws to its inevitable close, most of the stars visible in the sky will have burned out. Only a scattered few will flicker with fossil light, peering and presiding over the end of everything.

Besides previously named stars whose properties have been partially described (including Caiphon, Allabar, Nihal, and Zhudun), several other stars also survive (or perhaps appear) at the end of time: the stars of the Elder Constellation. Despite the fact that the constellation shouldn't be visible for eons beyond count, visions of it have seared themselves into the minds of those unlucky enough to dream too close to weak spots in reality. Those who wake from such dreams prophesy an early end to the cosmos that is heralded by the appearance of the Elder Constellation millennia too soon. These prophets then die an early death or undergo a slow transformation into a humanoid abomination.

Those who can imagine the Elder Constellation without perishing or becoming an alien in their own skin can also call upon the spells resident in each of the primary stars of the pattern. The names include the following: Atropus, Father Llymic, Pandorym, Ragnorra, and the Worm That Walks.

Atropus

Atropus, the World Born Dead, drifts through the gulfs of space, searching for worlds to consume. When it finds a world, it erases all life from it with a single gruesome touch. As the afterbirth of creation, this entity is committed to unmaking all things. Nothing, not even the gods, can halt the relentless progress of Atropus.

Father Llymic

A mote of alien thought given form and flesh, Father Llymic dwells in an icy prison, awaiting a time when the world will be right for his arrival. As his age of freezing darkness draws near, his brood begins to appear, stalking the wastes in preparation for his reign. If he is released from his prison, he will cover the entire world with a deadly glacier and remove the world from light and hope for all time.

Pandorym

Pandorym personifies the emotionless void of utter annihilation. Though imprisoned millennia ago, a future era will see its release. The god-slaying weapon awaits the arrival of a being powerful enough to reunite its awesome mind with its potent

ELDER EVILS

The names of the stars making up the Elder Constellation first appeared in *Elder Evils™*, a D&D® game supplement outlined by Bruce Cordell and written by Rob Schwalb. Pandorym appeared before that in the FORGOTTEN REALMS® novel *Darkvision* (2006).

Thus the entities of the Elder Constellation are not all associated with the Far Realm as some previous warlock star pact entities have been; however, the names noted here are of inconceivably powerful beings who survive to time's end. In that final gathering of monstrosities, it becomes difficult to distinguish which entities were native to the Material Plane and which came from some place farther. Ultimately, they're all creatures of such insane power that they disrupt the flow of time in their final apotheoses.

body. Pandorym seeks freedom, and thereafter it intends to bring about the extinction of every god in the cosmos.

Ragnorra

Ragnorra, Mother of Monsters, is a primeval source of corrupted life. Bloated, hideous, and filled with a terrible love for her children, this entity waits at the end of time to gather all her fell offspring back to her awful bosom.

The Worm That Walks

The Worm is a sentient tear in reality through which one can see a swarming mass of maggots and worms that goes on forever. The light from this star is green, and it writhes eternally. Nihal is brother to the Worm, or rather, they are aspects of the same entity as seen from different ends of time.

New Warlock Powers

A warlock of the appropriate level can choose from the following new powers. The powers are tailored for star pact warlocks who favor Constitution over Charisma.

Level 1 Encounter Power

Pandorym's Cry Warlock Attack 1

From a distance too far to measure, you evoke an echo of Pandorym's birthing cry: a sound of madness incarnate.

Encounter ♦ Arcane, Implement, Psychic

Standard Action Ranged 5

Target: One creature

Attack: Constitution vs. Will

Hit: 2d6 + Constitution modifier psychic damage.

Star Pact: The target also grants combat advantage and is slowed until the end of your next turn.

Level 3 Encounter Power

Worms Warlock Attack 3

For a moment, your foe is covered in biting, swarming, and crushing maggots that make up the infinite extradimensional body of the Worm That Walks.

Encounter ♦ Acid, Arcane, Healing, Implement

Standard Action Ranged 5

Target: One creature

Attack: Constitution vs. Fortitude

Hit: 2d8 + Constitution modifier acid damage, and you regain 3 hit points.

Star Pact: Add your Intelligence modifier to the hit points regained.

Level 7 Encounter Powers

Elder Constellation Warlock Attack 7

A maddening pattern appears in the air, revealing a few flickering stars that preside over the end of everything. Space wavers, and your foes are caught up in the instability.

Encounter ♦ Arcane, Cold, Implement, Teleportation

Standard Action Ranged 10

Target: One or two creatures

Attack: Constitution vs. Reflex

Hit: 2d6 + Constitution modifier cold damage.

Star Pact: The target also grants combat advantage until the end of your next turn.

Effect: If you hit both targets, you can teleport them, swapping their positions.

Maggot Conduit Warlock Attack 7

Holes devoured through space-time crawl with the green-white maggots of the Worm. You invoke a conduit, which manifests as a writhing pit of maggots beneath your foes.

Encounter ♦ Acid, Arcane, Implement, Zone

Standard Action Area burst 1 within 10 squares

Target: Each creature in the burst

Attack: Constitution vs. Fortitude

Hit: 2d8 + Constitution modifier acid damage.

Star Pact: The burst creates a zone that lasts until the end of your next turn. Any creature that enters the zone or ends its turn there takes acid damage equal to 1 + your Intelligence modifier (a creature can take this damage only once per turn).

Level 13 Encounter Power

Maw of Atropus Warlock Attack 13

The World Born Dead consumes anything that it can reach. Your spell manifests a slaving maw of Atropus, which attempts to eat your foes.

Encounter ♦ Arcane, Implement, Necrotic

Standard Action Ranged 10

Target: One creature

Attack: Constitution vs. Fortitude

Hit: 3d12 + Constitution modifier necrotic damage.

Star Pact: The target also takes a penalty to Fortitude until the end of your next turn. The penalty equals your Intelligence modifier.

Level 17 Encounter Power

Llymic's Frigid Prison

Warlock Attack 17

A puff of icy air escapes from Father Llymic's icy prison, foreshadowing when glaciers will cover all the worlds and remaining life will serve to feed the Father's brood.

Encounter ♦ Arcane, Cold, Healing, Implement
Standard Action Ranged 10

Target: One creature

Attack: Constitution vs. Fortitude

Hit: 2d10 + Constitution modifier cold damage, and the target is immobilized until the end of your next turn.

Star Pact: You also regain hit points equal to twice your Intelligence modifier.

Level 19 Daily Power

Malicious Guide Star

Warlock Attack 19

An apocalyptic starscape waits for the world's end. That inevitable end draws a little closer each time you conjure a malicious spark to guide your foes to ruination.

Daily ♦ Arcane, Aura, Implement, Radiant,
Teleportation

Standard Action Ranged 10

Target: One creature

Attack: Constitution vs. Reflex

Hit: 4d10 + Constitution modifier radiant damage.

Miss: Half damage.

Effect: You activate an aura 1 on the target. The aura lasts until the end of your next turn, and the target cannot deactivate it. The target and any of your enemies grant combat advantage while in the aura. In addition, you can teleport the target or another creature in the aura up to 5 squares as a move action.

Sustain Minor: The aura persists until the end of your next turn.

Level 23 Encounter Power

Pandorym's Prism

Warlock Attack 23

A purple crystal intrudes on reality, shining with fell light and turning the one who looks upon it into a dull receptacle for your will.

Encounter ♦ Arcane, Charm, Implement, Psychic,
Radiant

Standard Action Ranged 10

Target: One creature

Attack: Constitution vs. Will

Hit: 2d6 + Constitution modifier psychic and radiant damage, and the target makes a basic attack as a free action against a creature of your choice.

Star Pact: The target also takes a penalty to Will until the end of your next turn. The penalty equals your Intelligence modifier.

Level 27 Encounter Power

Grasp of Ragnorra

Warlock Attack 27

Ragnorra misses her brood and ecstatically reaches into the world to claim substitutes and visit upon them the terrible love she has for her true children.

Encounter ♦ Arcane, Implement, Necrotic, Thunder
Standard Action Ranged 10

Target: One creature

Attack: Constitution vs. Fortitude

Hit: 2d10 + Constitution modifier necrotic and thunder damage, and the target is removed from play until the end of your next turn. It then reappears in its original space or in the nearest unoccupied space if that space is occupied.

Star Pact: You decide where the target reappears, choosing an unoccupied space within 20 squares of you.

About the Author

Bruce enjoys reading good books, eating good sushi, and trying new things—at least if they're not too new. He has also been known to write things, most recently the new D&D GAMMA WORLD™ Roleplaying Game, as well as his latest novel, *Sword of the Gods*. You can find out more about Bruce at www.brucecordell.com.

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