

REIGN OF WINTER



MILANI

THE MINOR GODDESS MILANI (MIH-LAH-NEE) IS USED TO BALANCING MULTIPLE ROLES IN MULTIPLE WORLDS—ELF AND HUMAN, SAVIOR AND MARTYR, SAINT AND DEITY. SHE REPRESENTS HOPE, DEVOTION TO A CAUSE, AND THE WILL TO RISE UP AGAINST OPPRESSION. THOUGH NOT AS POPULAR OR BELOVED AS IOMEDAE, MILANI IS RECOGNIZED EVERYWHERE AS A MINOR PROTECTOR-GODDESS AND A HERO TO THOSE UNDER THE YOKE OF TYRANTS AND SLAVERS. DESPITE BEING RELATIVELY NEW TO DIVINITY—HAVING ONLY BEEN RAISED IN THE LAST CENTURY—HER FERVOR AND DEDICATION TO THROWING OFF THE SHACKLES OF TYRANNY RIVAL THAT OF ANY OF HER DIVINE COLLEAGUES.

MILANI

Born a half-elf in a community of Forlorn elves that traded with nearby human settlements, Milani was raised to believe that the elves would one day return to Golarion and restore true civilization to the world. When the demon Treerazer attacked Kyonin and the elves did not return to stop him, she realized that waiting for others to save the day was a luxury only the immortal elves could afford. Embracing her human heritage's zest for life and willingness to make sacrifices to accomplish great deeds, the white-haired lady took up arms and used her elfborn skill at the hunt to strike at Treerazer's minions. Her vigor attracted the attention of the living god Aroden, who blessed her with his power and tasked her with protecting human settlements in places where civilization held little sway.

Aroden's newest champion made a name for herself throughout the Inner Sea region, standing up for the common folk against monsters, barbarians, and oppressive lords. After nearly a century of battles, her hair had turned as gray as old iron and age had begun to weaken her limbs. She waited for the right cause that would cement her legacy and inspire others. She found that cause when she battled a cult of Taldan diabolists with plans to sacrifice a hundred peasant virgins in a vile pact in order to gain immortality. Milani's old heart stuttered and failed just as she smashed the skull of the cult's master. As a reward for her service, Aroden made her a saint of his church, returning youth to her old frame and restoring her iron-gray hair to its original shining white. She spent the next several centuries crafting visions to inspire mortals to greatness. When Aroden died, her old training took over, allowing her to escape the fiendish attacks that claimed many of his exalted saints. Bearing a tiny portion of the Last Azlanti's power from that long-ago blessing, she did what she could to help the world in the chaos following the god's passing, and she gained a foothold on divinity.

Though she was born a half-elf, Milani avoids elven culture (though not its role in her heritage, for she is depicted and appears as a half-elf to mortals). Instead, she focuses on the bright hearts and stubborn wills of the human race. She welcomes half-elves and half-orcs into her faith, and many half-humans who reject their non-human heritage see her as their patron—a symbol of the greatness that a mixed-race person can achieve despite prejudice. Milani has no bias for or against dwarves, gnomes, or halflings, though some

halflings venerate her for her freedom aspect, but most of her worshipers are human, half-elven, or half-orc.

Also known as the Everbloom, Milani is an outgoing goddess and treats her followers in a familiar manner, much like a border warden who is willing to joke with scouts she's worked with for years. Having lived an entire half-elven lifetime as a mortal has given her much perspective on mortal existence, and that perspective was not dulled by over 2 millennia as a servant of a god very interested in mortal affairs.

Her religion as a distinct entity is young (barely a hundred years old) and small, so she is able to take a personal interest in the lives of her followers, and it is a point of pride for her that most of the time she is able to personally answer the prayers of her priests, rather than granting spells through one of her celestial servants. As a goddess, her ability to directly intervene in the mortal world is constrained, but she tries to offer advice when she is able, though these communications are necessarily brief.

Milani was a ranger in her mortal life, and in her aspect as the goddess of uprisings she still thinks like a ranger, making strategies that assume her side is outnumbered and outclassed. She sees every object as a tool for fighting oppression, from a common scythe that can draw an enemy's blood to a printing press than

can subvert a tyrant's reputation. In her hope aspect, she teaches that good people can accomplish great things if their hearts are true and they are willing to fight against oppression. As the goddess of devotion, she believes that though individuals may be weak, uniting for a common purpose makes the whole greater than the sum of its parts—whether that purpose is to start a revolution, drive out an unscrupulous lender, or just get through a rough spot in a marriage. A person must recognize her strengths and faults, take advantage of the strengths, compensate for the faults, and push past despair and weakness to achieve victory.

The Everbloom opposes tyranny and using one's power to oppress others. This also means she opposes slavery—even debt-based or voluntary slavery—which puts her into conflict with many people in countries such as Katapesh and Qadira.

Milani manifests as a half-elven woman in the prime of life with stark white hair and white swan's wings. She is usually dressed as a ranger, clad in homemade light armor made of leather and wood, and she carries a morningstar



"YOU CANNOT COMPROMISE WITH EVIL OR TYRANNY; SOMETIMES YOU MUST RISE UP AND FIGHT FOR PEACE, LOVE, HEALTH, AND LIFE."

~THE LIGHT OF HOPE

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and buckler. In art, she is usually shown breaking chains, slaying fiends, and leading peasants to overwhelm evil-looking knights.

Milani shows she is pleased through images of roses, the scent of roses, or the appearance of white animals (particularly doves, mice, and owls). When her followers anger her (usually by thinking of betraying their fellows), flowers wither and sprout thorns, tiny wounds bleed excessively, and spilled liquids (especially drops of blood) form the shape of a rose.

Milani is chaotic good, and her portfolio is hope, devotion, and uprisings. Her weapon is the morningstar. Her holy symbol is a rose growing from between the cobbles of a bloody street. Her domains are Chaos, Good, Healing, Liberation, and Protection. Most of her worshipers are humans, but she has many half-elven and half-orc followers. Much of her faith is centered in Andoran, Cheliah, Galt, Isgar, parts of the River Kingdoms, and Taldor. Her priests are clerics or rangers; the very rare inquisitor of Milani has no official role in the church hierarchy.

A typical worshiper of Milani is a human commoner or expert who prefers to live a life of peace and freedom, but is willing to take up arms against evil when necessary. Her followers are optimistic, loving, friendly, and accepting, but not afraid to throw a punch (or take one) in response to an offense or injustice.

Services mix historical speeches, songs, and inspirational personal anecdotes about devotion and overcoming hardship. Temple music is very folksy, using drums, simple stringed instruments, and singing. Many songs of the faith double as revolutionary songs and are used as coded messages to listeners, warning of hostile patrols or members of the community who need help, or ridiculing current tyrants.

Milani greatly encourages her followers to find love and marry. As a mortal who outlived most of her human friends, she understands a widow's grief and teaches that finding love again after a spouse dies is normal and healthy. She does expect married couples to be true to each other, and has little sympathy for a straying spouse—if a partner has a wandering eye, better to end the marriage and find someone who wants only you than to wait for the inevitable pain of betrayal. She believes that children should be spared the horrors of war so that they can grow up with loving hearts; using children or young people as soldiers is abhorrent to her.

TEMPLES AND SHRINES

Milanite temples are built on an incline, like a theater, so the speaker is at the bottom and the seats rise upward from that point. This serves a metaphorical purpose, as to leave the temple the followers must ascend from a low point, just as a person under the thumb of a tyrant must rise up. The structure also serves a practical purpose, as the lowest

point is built at ground level and the inclined floor allows for a small basement area; in peacetime this is used to store supplies, and in times of war it is used to hide weapons and freedom fighters. Most temples have a rose garden or at least a well-tended rose bush.

In smaller communities, a town hall may double as a temple, with a small shrine or altar kept out of the way or behind a curtain when it is not needed. Shrines to Milani are common in old Arodenite temples; even temples that have since been converted to the worship of Iomedae may have a small alcove with rose iconography or a niche along the outer wall where a rose bush grows wild. In lands where her faith is suppressed, a shrine may be little more than a head-sized rock with a rose carved near the bottom (or even hidden beneath on the flat underside), or a small rosebush surrounded by a circle of smooth stones.

A PRIEST'S ROLE

Milani's priests are mainly clerics or rangers. In peacetime, Milani's clerics usually divide their time between tending to the spiritual needs of the community and a standard profession, such as carpentry or leatherworking. Her rangers are the border guards for communities, scaring off dangerous animals, hunting monsters, and capturing fleeing criminals. They greatly value individual freedoms, but recognize that the community is stronger than just the sum of its individual abilities, and even unpleasant measures such as (fair) taxes contribute to the betterment of society and the welfare of the common folk. Priests of Milani plan for the long term, setting aside tools, weapons, and emergency money just in case they need to build, smite, or buy something in a hurry. Most priests are trained in Healing to care for their community and in Knowledge (history) in order to better remember the lessons of the past.

In times of revolution or war, both kinds of priests are strategists, scouts, spies, and militia commanders, lending their expertise and powers to soldiers and commoners, using spells like *imbue with spell ability* and a ranger's bond with companions to make their allies more effective. They prefer hit-and-run tactics and superior battlefield mobility. A Milanite priest feels comfortable leading others, not because he believes he is better than they are, but because he knows together they can tear down something they could not defeat alone. Her priests understand that there is a time for talk and a time for action, and in times of action sometimes great sacrifices must be made to defeat evil, without compromise. A good person doesn't compromise about how often she allows an enemy to steal from her or how many of her children she allows to be sacrificed; it is the priest's duty to draw the line in the sand, stoke the fires of courage, and be the sword that strikes the first blow so others see that the enemy can be hurt.

Each morning, a priest typically rises, eats, reads part of Milani's holy book, and thinks of the problems to be addressed

that day. If she believes any of the day's tasks are beyond her experience, she consults with someone who knows more, or asks for guidance during her prayers. If her work is hunting or violence, she studies her intended foe and thinks of the weapons and tools she'll need. If she is caring for or hiding others from the authorities, she tends to them early in the day; otherwise, she proceeds with her normal work much like any typical person with the same mundane professions as the priest. Whenever time permits, she helps train members of the militia, showing them how to use simple and improvised weapons, where to strike a target to incapacitate rather than kill, and where to land a killing blow if necessary.

Milani's followers take their defensive responsibilities seriously; they know the history books are full of razed towns that allowed themselves to be overrun by invaders or crushed under the boots of a tyrant's enforcers. When training others to fight, they set aside any inclinations to joke or be soft, for soft words make weak soldiers.

The church is organized much like a cult, with small, independent cells able to function without communication from other communities, but willing to use whatever communication channels they have to coordinate efforts. The church puts little stock in grand ceremonies, medals, or titles, preferring to let talented leaders rise to the top on their own merits and expecting that other members of the faith will assist when help is needed.

Formal dress for the clergy is a long white tabard with dark brown trim and a red rose in the center. This is only worn for ceremonies and put away when not in use. It is tradition for the priest to add a decoration to the trim—typically a button or embroidered emblem—for each person in the community who died defending another. In most communities, this garment is passed down to successive leaders; a few have scores of decorations going back to the origin of the goddess's church, and these items are treasured and respected by the faithful, much like a memorial to the fallen. Adventuring priests of Milani mark their tabards to commemorate fallen allies, cohorts, or even animal companions. A priest wanting to display her faith may wear a badge with a rose emblem or a dark brown tabard with a red rose.

During an uprising, the church welcomes those with skill at arms. When personalities conflict during these situations, the priests normally allow the visitor to make his or her own plans for dealing with the problem. After all, despite any arguments, the priest should remember that they are on the same side. This coordinates the rest of the community, preferably in a way that endangers as few lives as possible.

Milani's priests understand that the work of a revolutionary is often rewarded with death, and they all come to accept that they may one day be called to die for a cause. Fortunately, the goddess teaches that the truly devout who are martyred saving other people from death or tyranny will rise again in some way—perhaps even immediately,



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though being reborn again in the faith is much more likely. Some priests claim to be the third or fourth incarnation of past followers of the goddess, able to access memories of past lives with the proper magic and meditation.

HOLIDAYS

No month in the standard Golarion calendar is named for the Everbloom. Individual communities celebrate anniversaries of patriotic war victories achieved with the help of civilian uprisings. The church observes a moment of silence on the death anniversaries of local heroes and on Foundation Day to honor Aroden, who made Milani a saint. The faith celebrates Liberty Day in Andoran (an uprising with surprisingly little violence), Armasse for teaching commoners to fight, and Even-Tongued Day for freedom from Imperial Taldor. The church does not celebrate All

Kings Day, for Milani hates the endless violence wrought by Galt's Red Revolution.

APHORISMS

As Milani's followers are ordinary people pushed into extraordinary circumstances, many of the faith's common phrases are used to inspire hope and determination.

Know What Is Worth More Than Yourself: True devotion is the willingness to make sacrifices in order to protect something other than yourself. Whether this is a spouse, a child, your home, or freedom, by accepting responsibility for the things you love, you are given the choice to give up something to promote something greater. In wedding vows, this is usually altered to "love is when you care for another more than you do yourself."

Find Your Hidden Strength: The faithful understand that sometimes you must endure hardship to reach a better place, whether that is a peasant woman going hungry so her children can eat or a candlemaker joining a militia to fight an invading army. Milani teaches that humanity is at its very best when things are at their worst, and hope—courage of the heart—is a source of incredible power.

Peace, Love, Health, and Life: Also known as the "Four Pillars," these ideas are the core of defining humanity's gifts. The cost of any action should be weighed against these ideas—promoting one at the cost of another may be worthwhile if the rewards outstrip the costs.

HOLY TEXT

The official book of the church is *The Light of Hope*, which begins as a history of Milani's deeds as a mortal, supposedly written by her after she became a saint. It also includes homilies about family, defense, hope, and perseverance, and a few ritual prayers and songs. In some communities it is split into two books, one focusing on her history and the other on her specific lessons for mortals. It is traditional to use a pressed rose as a bookmark, and when giving a copy of the book as a gift, it is customary to mark the giver's favorite pages with individual rose petals.

RELATIONS WITH OTHER RELIGIONS

Milani gets along well with most good deities, especially Cayden Cailean (a fellow ally of freedom), Desna (a hope-affirming goddess), Erastil and Torag (community protectors), Iomedae (a fellow servitor of Aroden), and Shelyn (the inspiration for perfect devotion). She is awkwardly formal with Sarenrae, not wanting to offend an obviously good deity much more powerful than she, but is repulsed by some of Sarenrae's followers' (particularly those in Qadira)



acceptance of slavery. She is friendly toward Kurgess, a deity with rural origins and a willingness to help others in need.

The Everbloom uses her position as a minor goddess to her advantage, avoiding attention from—and conflicts with—evil deities except under circumstances where she can aid mortals to thwart the plans of her opponents. Asmodeus and Zon-Kuthon are her most frequent targets, for she despises everything they stand for and especially how they glorify their wickedness. Milani ignores the minor elven deities unless she absolutely must respond to them, and despite similar alignments she has little tolerance for those who shirk their responsibilities toward their neighbors. She does not consider them enemies, but is embarrassed at her elven kinship with such beings.

NEW SPELLS

Clerics and rangers of Milani may prepare *coordinated effort* (*Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide* 212) and *good hope* as a 3rd-level spell; inquisitors may select *good hope* as a 3rd-level spell known. Rangers of Milani may prepare *remove fear* as a 1st-level spell and *imbue with spell ability* (ranger spells from the schools of abjuration, divination, and conjuration [healing] only) as a 3rd-level spell.

Her priests also have access to the following spells.

MARTYR'S LAST BLESSING

School conjuration (healing); **Level** cleric 3, ranger 3 (Milani)

Casting Time 1 minute

Components V, S, DF

Range personal (see text)

Target you and one ally/level, no two of which can be more than 30 ft. apart (see text)

Duration 1 hour/level or instantaneous (see text)

Saving Throw Will half (harmless, see text); **Spell Resistance** yes (harmless)

You charge your body with healing energy, which erupts from you if you are dying or are killed before 1 hour per level has passed. If you're brought below 0 hit points or killed (including by effects that kill without dealing damage, such as *phantasmal killer* and *power word kill*), the eruption of healing energy acts as *mass cure light wounds* on allies (other than you). Allies with the fewest Hit Dice are affected first. Among allies with equal HD, those closest to you are affected first. If the duration ends, the stored healing energy dissipates with no effect.

PEASANT ARMAMENTS

School transmutation; **Level** cleric 1, inquisitor 1, ranger 1, sorcerer/wizard 1 (Milani)

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S, DF

Range touch

Target 1 improvised weapon/level

Duration 1 minute/level (D)

CUSTOMIZED SUMMON LIST

Milani's priests can use *summon monster* spells to summon the following creatures in addition to the normal creatures listed in the spells.

Summon Monster I

Great horned owl* (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3)

Summon Monster IV

Hound archon (CG, otherwise as standard hound archon)

* This creature has the extraplanar subtype but otherwise has the normal statistics for a creature of its kind.

Saving Throw Will negates (harmless, object); **Spell**

Resistance yes (harmless, object)

You transform one or more improvised weapons into equivalent simple or martial weapons. The bearer of such a weapon can wield it with proficiency (no penalty for using an improvised weapon or not having the required proficiency). This does not alter the weapon's shape or appearance in any way. For example, if cast on a chair leg, butter knife, and pitchfork, the weapons function as a club, dagger, and trident, respectively, and anyone who wields them does so without a nonproficiency penalty, but the weapons look no different than they were before the spell.

The spell has no effect on items that are not improvised weapons. For example, if cast on a short sword, it does not grant proficiency to anyone wielding it.

PLANAR ALLIES

Paralleling Aroden's practice, most of Milani's divine servants are dead mortals granted sainthood, and most of those are human rangers with the celestial template, veterans of many battles in life and after as saints. Her herald is Courage Heart (page 84). Her most frequently summoned servitors are the following.

Charl: This sandy-haired sturdy young man is eager to visit the mortal world and lend his expertise to the common folk. He wields a pair of old hunting knives or a homemade shortbow. He is a celestial human ranger 6, and prefers payment in the form of small stone magic items or gems.

Dallem the Lucky: This waifish young woman has black hair except for a white strip in the front. Quiet as a ghost, she loves teaching others how to move silently and incapacitate opponents without killing them. She is a celestial human ranger 4, and she likes being paid for her service with scrolls, sling bullets, and magic ointments.

Nyla: This chaotic-good hound archon is said to have been Milani's companion in life, granted sentience and immortality when the Everbloom became a goddess. The archon prefers her animal form—that of a white retriever—to her humanoid form, and enjoys using this shape to spy on enemies. She enjoys swimming and takes payment in the form of magical foods and potions.