

# BEHIND THE CURTAIN

## OF THE NEPHANI SEA WITCH

When I asked my players what sort of characters they wanted to play in my new ACKS campaign one of them went into an amazing amount of detail in a brief amount of time explaining how her character came to be on the road and cultivating a special collection of power. After some additional questions on my part to clarify exactly what it was she was picturing and how it might work I set about developing a class to fit her interests that also worked well in our world. It turns out that she helped me define how the world itself started and where in it the four major elemental powers fit.

First was the determination of build points. I approached the class as a racial class based on how all its members are claimed by the power they serve. With that in mind the Sea Witch was limited to 12<sup>th</sup> level. This represents how at the highest levels the gods of mortals are the true masters of the Arden rather than the ancient elemental powers that helped spawn the world.

This gives 5 build points to use. They were spent as follows:

Category	BP Spent	Value	XP Cost
Hit Dice	0	1d4	0
Fighting	1	As Cleric	500
Thievery	0	None	0
Divine	2	Cleric	500
Arcane	0	None	0
Nephani	2	None	850

Once the 5 build points are assigned the fighting abilities are further reduced to better reflect the class's limited martial prowess while providing Custom Power slots to give the class the final touches needed.

Fighting Values Traded Off	Custom Powers Slots	Additional XP Cost
Armor reduced to Narrow	2	0
Remove 1 weapon style	1	0

These choices limit the Sea Witch to leather armor or lighter and the only fighting style she is familiar with is two-handed style. So while the character can defend herself competently for a brief time her lack of heavier armor and few hit points reinforce she is not an up-front fighter. Because the Fighting Value is only a 1, there is no additional XP cost associated with the trade-offs.

The three custom powers gained are used to make the class just a little more unique. They are spent as follows:

Special Abilities	Cost
Detect Invisible within 30'	1
Gain access to 4 forbidden spells	1
Delay to gain 2 powers later	1
Gain access to 8 forbidden spells	2*

By spending the choices to select arcane spells as part of the sea witch repertoire, it further differentiates the sea witch from other divine spellcasters.

One unusual aspect of the sea witch is their ability to turn elementals instead of undead. This is an atypical use of the turn undead power and some would argue it is not as useful or powerful as the ability to affect undead. How valid this is depends on the frequency of the monsters in question. In the end, the choice was made to go with flavor over pure munchkin power.

Another unusual aspect is the idea of developing a new race. The Nephani racial cost was calculated using the various races listed in the ACKS Player's Companion. The goal was to come up with a potent race that gave a divine instead of arcane benefit. The mix of bonuses and penalties worked out as follows:

### RACE = THE CHOSEN (2)

**Dark Blessing:** Divine Casting is increase by +1/3 level.

**Dread Touch:** The harsh power channeled by The Chosen allows them to harm others by touch. A successful unarmed strike allows the Chosen to deal 1d4 damage. Dread Touch has no effect on inanimate objects.

**Elder Fellowship:** Those selected by the Elder Gods to be their servants in the waking world receive a +2 reaction bonus from elementals, fey creatures, and nature-spirits because these beings still feel a connection to the world from the time before the gods of mortals ascended to rule.

**Elemental Tongues:** The Chosen can speak with any creature native to the elemental planes, fey creatures, and nature-spirits.

**Inexorable:** The Chosen have been exposed to the terrifying nature and pure primal power of the Elder Gods. Because of this the Chosen are immune to all natural and magical fear effects.

**Inhumanity:** The Chosen is fundamentally changed and other mortals feel this on an instinctive level. This results in a -1 penalty to the reactions, loyalty, and morale of humans and demi-humans.

**Swimming:** The Sea Witch's devotion to the Elder of the Deep allows them to move about in an environment foreign to other land dwellers. The Sea Witch gains a swimming movement rate of 90' per turn and may hold their breath for 5 minutes (30 rounds).

**Water-Natured:** The Sea Witch is closely aligned to water, if she spends an extended period of time in a dry, arid area she will suffer a -1 penalty on all attack, proficiency, and saving throws.

The final flavor of the class, skills and dominion level were chosen based on how the class was envisioned fitting into the world. The ACKS Player's Companion gives good information on how to develop these options and the other classes serve as a good back-up guide. The end result satisfied the player and fit nicely into the campaign setting making it a proper custom class for our game.