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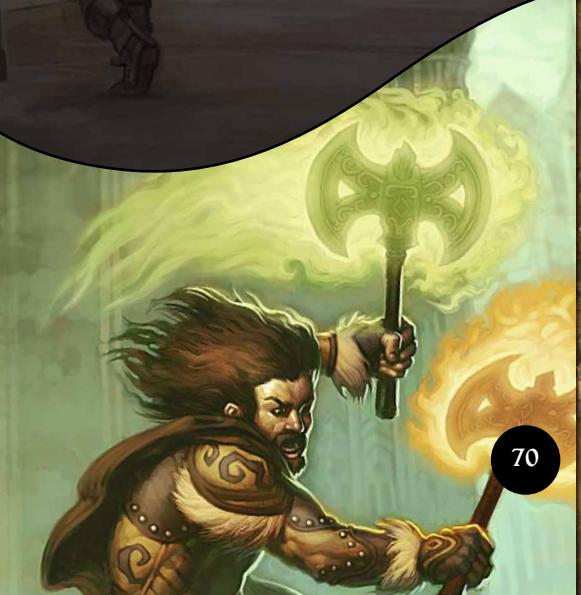
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EXCLUSIVELY YOURS

It's good to be loved

It's an exciting time for *D&D Insider*. Last month, Bill revealed that we were releasing the revenant -- a new PC race -- in June's issue of *Dragon*. This was our first, true *D&D Insider* exclusive. The thing is, we didn't really explain what "exclusive" means. In terms of our content release plan, "exclusive" means it won't be appearing anywhere else.

But what does "anywhere else" mean exactly? Sometimes, we get so excited about an announcement that we just make the assumption you're right there with us. Allow me to clear up any confusion.

Question #1: Does "exclusive" mean the revenant will not appear in a future print product?

Answer: Yes, that's correct. The revenant will only appear as part of *D&D Insider*. We're not planning to pick up the magical elements of the race for any print product. The [revenant article](#) (and the [compiled issue containing that article](#)) will be the only places you'll find this content. However, that does not mean a print adventure might not feature a revenant villain or that a novel won't feature a revenant character down the line, hypothetically speaking.

Question #2: Will content that appears as a *D&D Insider* exclusive ever have additional support?

Answer: Yes, and support articles will likewise be exclusive to *D&D Insider*. You won't see revenant feats or paragon paths, for example, appear down the road in a print product. We already have plans in the works for an article this fall that features new revenant racial feats, and we'll treat the revenant like any other race in the game. As an article warrants, we'll provide revenants with new character options.

So we've covered our approach for support for the revenant and, I hope, allayed fears about the plans for exclusive content as a whole. But what about the

assassin? For starters, everything I said about the revenant above is also true of new classes exclusive to *D&D Insider*. Plus, we have an ambitious support plan for the assassin. Since we know there won't be new assassin powers appearing in a power source supplement or *Player's Handbook*, we're already planning to support September's two complete builds with more support just a few months after. Plus, early next year, we plan to introduce a third assassin build. Once the assassin is out and about, we'll also be accepting new submissions for the class -- new class-focused articles, new Class Acts, and so on.

Finally, we've noticed a number of conversations about the necessity or value of the assassin class to a game that already features a strong rogue option. I've now seen the assassin first hand, and let me tell you: this is no rogue. The assassin plays, looks, and just fundamentally feels different from any other class in the game. We try to avoid introducing a class that steps on the toes of another or, worse, makes a party experience untenable (assassins don't need to be evil). The shadow power source opens up new play options for future design, and you'll soon see for yourself how the assassin taps into these concepts. The class is inextricably linked to shadow magic. I'm so stoked about the new class that I actually started plotting my character's demise, just so I could roll up my next character: a revenant assassin.

Now that you know the shadow power source is on its way, what other classes or races do you think fit that concept? And what's your vision of the perfect assassin?

Send your feedback to dndinsider@wizards.com!



THE PSION

Mechanical Design by Bruce R. Cordell

*Commentary by Andy Collins,
Bruce R. Cordell, Mike Mearls,
and Stephen Schubert*

*illustrations by Cyril van der Haegan and
Christine MacTernan*

Welcome to the first official debut article featuring content drawn from *Player's Handbook*® 3.

Most of the world must wait until March 2010 to learn the secrets of the psion class. As an Insider, however, you can start playing a psion today . . . eight whole months before the book hits the shelves!

But we're not stopping with a single class: Over the next several months, Insiders like you will see over 100 pages of debut content taken from *Player's Handbook* 3. Next month it's the githzerai race (including a racial paragon path and several racial feats), and then we're on to more class, race, and feat debuts until February of 2010.



This article—and future debut articles—follow a different format from those you’re used to seeing on DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® *Insider*. Rather than simply presenting entire sections of text verbatim, we’ve blended book content with commentary from the designers, developers, and editors who worked on it. Think of these entries as the commentary tracks for your debut content.

For this article, we have commentary from *Player’s Handbook 3* Lead Designer Mike Mearls, *Player’s Handbook 3* co-designer (and all-around psionic guru) Bruce Cordell, *Player’s Handbook 3* Lead Developer Stephen Schubert, and Andy Collins, manager of D&D® development and editing (and part of the *Player’s Handbook 3* development team).

Purely mechanical items, such as powers and feats, appear only as list items accompanied by brief descriptions and/or flavor text; the mechanics of these items appear in the D&D Character Builder and D&D Compendium.

Let us know what you think of this article, and how we can make future debut articles more informative and entertaining by sending feedback to dnd-insider@wizards.com.

PSION

“I can bend the desires of mortals and immortals to my will.”

CLASS TRAITS

Role: Controller. You can mentally influence the actions of your foes, and you can toss your enemies around the battlefield with psionic force.

Power Source: Psionic. You direct psionic energy from within your own mind, focusing that power through meditation and contemplation. Your magic works on the minds of others or manifests your will as a physical force in the world.

Key Abilities: Intelligence, Charisma, Wisdom

Armor Proficiencies: Cloth

Weapon Proficiencies: Simple melee, simple ranged

Implements: Wands, staves

Bonus Feat: +2 Will

Hit Points at 1st Level: 12 + Constitution score

Hit Points per Level Gained: 4

Healing Surges per Day: 6 + Constitution modifier

Trained Skills: From the class skills list below, choose four trained skills at 1st level.

Class Skills: Arcana (Int), Bluff (Cha), Diplomacy (Cha), Dungeoneering (Wis), History (Int), Insight (Wis), Intimidate (Cha), Perception (Wis)

Class Features: Discipline Focus, Psionic Augmentation, Ritual Casting

COMMENTARY

Andy Collins: The psion entered our discussion of classes way back in the early days of 4th Edition design. A theoretical “telepath” class shows up in an internal document entitled “Building a Party” dated June 3, 2005—only a few weeks after conceiving for the new edition began—as an example of a potential controller. We knew even then that the psionic power source was unlikely to appear in the initial *Player’s Handbook*, but we realized that we had to think early about where the game was going after 2008.

Mike Mearls: This role decision was perhaps the easiest part of the class’s design. The most traditional and iconic manifestations of psionic powers in D&D and lore match up perfectly with the controller role. Whether your psion controls the minds of your foes—like the telepathic psion detailed in this article—or psychically slides them around as if they were toys (using the second build, which you’ll see in *Player’s Handbook 3*), you’re acting exactly like a controller.

Andy: While the psion is the second class we’ve shown that uses the psionic power source—the monk, appearing in playtest form in *Dragon #375*, was the first—this is the first class to embrace a key new mechanic shared by most psionic classes slated to appear in the game: psionic augmentation.

This system, described in more detail below, allows a psion great flexibility in determining the precise effect of his or her powers. This is a throwback to previous editions of D&D, but the new system addresses the shortcomings of a purely point-based power system as you’ll see below.

Bruce Cordell: We wanted the psion to have class skills that befit the class’s story concept as a practitioner of esoteric skill and also demonstrate their talents of discernment. These skills also complement the psion’s primary ability scores.

Psions are the quintessential manipulators of psionic power. Psions unleash the potential locked within every conscious mind, move objects with just a thought, and assume command of even the least desire of their foes. Psions manifest their secret wishes when others can only dream about them.

You know the mental pathways that lead to amazing edifices of altered reality. You could be a brash human youth flush with your mental ability's first flowering, a tattooed cenobite enrolled in a secret psionic academy, a fey enchanter using ancient techniques to beguile your foes, or perhaps a specially trained inquisitor who has learned one secret too many.

A flare of mental energy warms you, the thoughts of friends and foes glitter like stars all about you, and your thoughts themselves are weapons half sheathed. If a god can reshape the world and you can enthrall a god, what does that make you?

PSION CLASS FEATURES

Psions have the following class features.

DISCIPLINE FOCUS

Psions focus their studies and meditations toward perfecting or understanding a particular concept or manifestation of psionic power. You choose a Discipline Focus, one of which is presented here.

Telepathy Focus: You gain the powers *distract* and *send thoughts*.

PSIONIC AUGMENTATION

Through discipline and careful study, you have mastered a form of psionic magic that offers greater versatility than other characters command. You know

COMMENTARY

Bruce: This class draws its primary inspiration from the class of the same name that appeared in the 3rd Edition DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game, which in turn was based on a mixture of real-world "psychic" talents and fictional representations of people with mental talents. The previous version of the psion had six flavors (think "builds") of psionic power, but for *Player's Handbook 3*, we chose to focus on just the two most iconic builds of mental abilities. The first, telepathy, debuts here; the second, which focuses on force-based effects, will appear in *Player's Handbook 3*.

Andy: These two powers appear in the D&D Character Builder. The first draws the attention of an enemy at a key moment, while the second allows short-range telepathic communication. (If you're thinking that the telepathic psion makes a great addition to your stealthy strike team, you'd be correct.)

Mike: We've found that, in play, the wizard's cantrips are a great way to get across the power he or she wields outside of combat. Spells like *mage hand* are useful in a variety of situations, and they really highlight that you're dealing with a character who doesn't just use arcane magic, he or she *commands* it.

For the psion, we wanted to do something similar. Psions don't just use psionic magic in combat. They master a number of subtle abilities used as part of their daily lives. Some of these manifest as the Discipline Focus.

a broad array of at-will attack powers, each of which is a channel through which you can pour as much or as little psionic energy as you choose. You channel psionic energy into a reservoir of personal power, represented in the game as power points, that you can use to augment your at-will attack powers, replacing the encounter attack powers that other characters use and giving you greater flexibility in combat.

As a psion, you acquire and use powers in a slightly different manner from other classes. You do not gain encounter attack powers. Instead, you gain at-will attack powers that can be augmented by spending power points.

At-Will Attack Powers: At 1st level, you choose two at-will attack powers and one daily attack power from your class, but you don't start with any encounter attack powers from your class. You can instead augment your psion at-will attack powers using power points. These powers (and certain others, notably the encounter attack power you gain from a psion paragon path) have the augmentable keyword, which is defined in the sidebar on page 8.

You gain new psion at-will attack powers, instead of new encounter attack powers, as you increase in level. At 3rd level, you choose a new psion at-will attack power. At 7th, 13th, 17th, 23rd, and 27th level, you can replace one of your augmentable psion at-will attack powers with another one of your level or lower. The power you replace must have augmentations.

Power Points: You start with 2 power points. You gain 2 additional power points at 3rd and 7th level, 1 additional power point at 13th level, and 2 additional power points at 17th, 21st, 23rd, and 27th level. If you gain power points from another source (such as your paragon path), add them to your power point pool. You can use your power points to augment any