

# The Mindbreakers BG3 party guide

by [/u/boachl](#), last updated 1st of April 2024

*This is a party guide about a very cool mechanic many players will miss on their first play through or fail to understand its full potential. What if I told you that with this build you will be able to take 50% of the game's final boss in one hit...with a dagger... Interested? Good, read on!*

**Preface:** I am not the OC of this build, credit goes to [/u/Prestigious\\_Juice341](#) and his incredible [Party Building Templates](#) guide. However his guide points you only in the right direction but you need deep game knowledge to unlock its full potential which is the reason for this guide.

This guide is written with **Honour Mode** (HM) in mind but I will add reminders if a non-HM optimization can be done to push the build even further - ideal for modded playthroughs. I know that good players can clear the game solo but since only 1.1% of players have the HM achievement on Steam there are a lot of people struggling with it and this guide is for them. This guide contains minor spoilers so I assume you have completed the game before otherwise I strongly advise against playing on HM (spoilers are marked).

## TL;DR Version

This party build revolves around making your enemies weak to psychic damage using the [Resonance Stone](#) and then using the most potent **psychic damage** spells and attacks to end most encounters in 1 or 2 turns. The cornerstone of this build is a **dual wielding Paladin** using the [Shadow Blade](#) in the main hand and a Bard/Sorcerer that will spam CC and high level [Dissonant Whispers](#). It comes online immediately before fighting the final boss of act 2 thus around level 8/9 instead of many builds that require you to have cleared most of the game already.

I will start by explaining the classes and items first and afterwards dive into the relevant mechanics.

## Party overview

I will cover five builds here, four main ones that define the build and a substitute I found to be very flavorful although being more risky and thus not recommended for your first honour mode play through. This party will use a lot of illithid powers as they are a great source of psychic damage.

### Oathbreaker Paladin 12

This is your late game carry that will demolish everything in sight.

### Lore Bard 6, Sorcerer 6

This is your control mage and spell damage caster that can also twin-haste the other martials.

### **Abjuration Wizard 11, Sorcerer 1**

This is your party support and tank that will soak up damage, buff your party and debuff your enemies. Damage is secondary.

### **GOO Warlock 12**

This is your physical damage dealer swinging a big sword that also provides some utility.

### **Shadow Monk 12**

You have never played this class before...right? Well maybe now is your chance. This is the substitute I was talking about that can be swapped in e.g. for your Paladin before you get the Resonance Stone or your Wizard or Warlock later on if you feel like it.

As you can see we have three characters (Paladin, Bard, Warlock) that use Charisma and thus any of the three can be your party face ("Tav").

Before we dive into the details of every class I would like to clarify something first: many build guides you find especially on YouTube with click-bait titles will only cover one character and are built around having basically all endgame items available to you. I personally find this questionable since at that point there is only the final fight and maybe 1-2 optional bosses left and therefore I will provide you with a minimum setup of items and skills necessary first before moving on to the BiS items.

Honorable mention: We don't have a Cleric or Druid in the party so your Tav will likely wear the [Silver Pendant](#) throughout the game. If a fight is coming up, pre buff (lasts 10 turns thus 60 seconds) and equip your damage necklace. Put both amulets into your hotbar!

### **The late game carry: Oathbreaker Paladin**

Most of it is covered in Prestigious Juice's paladin guide already, see [this link](#), however there are some notable exceptions. The ideal progression for this character will use a respec but if you find that too tiresome here is the way to go.

Our goal is to reach 22 or even 24 Charisma by the end of the game and therefore this character should

[*Spoiler*] receive the Hag's Hair, read the Necromancy of Thay and interact with the Mirror of Loss.

Race: for Min-Maxing choose this character as your Tav and go Half-Orc, otherwise it doesn't really matter, but check the other class sections first.

Starting Attributes: 17 CHA, 16 CON, 14 DEX (with the BiS Amulet respec and dump CON and get 16 DEX)

Subclass: does not matter, pick what you feel is strongest in the early game (see below). Ultimately we want to break our oath anyway *which is easily done by murdering a civilian...*

Fighting style (level 2): Defence (if you are respeccing and want to do damage early: Great Weapon Fighting)

Feats: ASI (+2 CHA), Savage Attacker

For the third feat there are options:

- if you want to use the BiS offhand you must go for Dual Wielder
- if you are lazy (like me) and hate when your concentration breaks go Warcaster
- you can never go wrong with Alert as this will also free up your ranged weapon slot

If this is your Tav and you plan to respect anyways: Getting Actor at level 4 makes conversation easier and sets your Charisma to 18.

Consumables: You will basically use the best strength elixir available every time you wake up after a long rest (see other guide on his notes about Bloodlust elixir).

### Mandatory Items

Items you will never unequip once you get them. All of these are act 1-2 or immediately available at the start of act 3.

- Ring 1 and main hand weapon: [Shadow Blade Ring](#) - this makes the whole build possible (see mechanics section below for details), will be put into our main hand
- Ring 2: [Strange Conduit Ring](#) - we are always concentrating thus this nice damage rider is always active
- Head: [Diadem of Arcane Synergy](#) - will always be active to boost our damage
- Ranged weapon: Unless you get the Alert feat the [Hellrider Longbow](#) is mandatory for regular gameplay. For a boss fight that you can set up with e.g. Hold Monster the maximum damage option is [Viscous Shortbow](#) as it gives you additional 14 bonus damage on critical hits

### Additional items

- Offhand:
  - [Harmonic Dueller](#) - If you go with the Dual Wielder feat this is your BiS Offhand. However it only lasts 10 turns and you need to pass a DC 15 performance check (*which I failed more often than not and thus stopped bothering with it*) and you have to use this before combat starts
  - Otherwise you need a dagger or shortsword and there are a couple of nice options: [Rhapsody](#) (adds 6 damage, if not used by the Bard) or [Bloodthirst](#) (decent damage if you fail your concentration), earlier you can use the sword from Jaheira that adds your CHA modifier or the good old Blade of the Undermountain King
- For the chest you have a couple of options. You are the only one in the party that can use heavy armor so you can use one of these as a more defensive option like [Armor of Persistence](#). For the early game go with [Luminous Armor](#).
- Cloak should be any of the defensive options, like [Cloak of Protection](#) or [Cloak of Displacement](#). The only pseudo offensive option is [Cloak of Elemental Absorption](#).
- Gloves: Before you reach act 3 I recommend the Gloves of Dexterity to help with your initiative. Afterwards your BiS is [Legacy of the Masters](#) but those are not available when playing as the dark urge. Good alternatives are [Helldusk Gloves](#) and [Craterflesh Gloves](#).

- Amulet: Early game you want the [Amulet of Misty Step](#) to reposition (refreshes on short rest) or [Amulet of the Harpers](#) (more defensive). Ultimately the [Amulet of Greater Health](#) is best for the massive amount of HP and frees you from taking the War Caster feat (*[Spoiler] only if you feel confident fighting Raphael himself as you can potentially fail to steal it*) or the easier to get [Fey Semblance Amulet](#).
- Boots: Damage option are the [Boots of Arcane Bolstering](#), but I personally prefer the [Nere Boots](#) or [Boots of Stormy Clamour](#) (if not given to the Bard)

#### Honorable mentions

- If you don't want to drink a strength elixir you can equip the [Gloves of Hill Giant Strength](#) instead and use Bloodlust Elixir.

As of patch 6, hotfix 23 there is currently a **bug that lets you get as many shadow blades as you want permanently and without concentration**, so you can dual wield two on the paladin and get two more for the monk. Thanks to /u/Additional-Bar-8572, check [this link](#) and abuse it if you like while it lasts (also works with Flame Blade).

If you are not playing honour mode: Go 7 Oathbreaker and 5 GOO Warlock with Pact of the Blade for the additional attack. You will lose your 3rd feat though, so you are limited to a light offhand.

#### Gameplay

Hit things...really hard. Things will die. Regular hits and a smite kill everything below 100hp. NEVER use any Smite outside your Divine Smite, as all of those require concentration and thus break your Shadow Blade. In fact 90% of your skills are useless.

If you can't reach your enemies your options are very limited. Throwing [something pointy](#) will do the most damage because we are always using a strength elixir.

*Tipp: At least two late game bosses retaliate on radiant damage, don't oneshot yourself!*

### The Spellcaster: Bard/Sorcerer multiclass

His/her role is to control the battlefield and damage enemies with spells from afar. This character does not require a respec, however one respec at level 11 is ideal for smoother spell progression. *You can play as College of Swords early game if you want.*

Race: Does not really matter, if this is your Tav and your first honour mode run go for Halfling since it [prevents getting those nat-1 rolls](#). Otherwise Human for the Shield is nice.

Starting attributes: 16 CHA, 16 DEX, 14 CON

Subclass: College of Lore, Draconic Sorcerer (any)

Feats: ASI (+2 CHA, mandatory), Dual Wielder

If you are a Human and want to stick with a Shield get a second +2 CHA ASI

Progression: Start with Draconic Sorcerer (which one is irrelevant) until level 6 then switch to Lore Bard - unless this is your Tav, then starting Bard is recommended for easier skill checks.

- Mandatory Spells (Bard and Sorcerer): **Dissonant Whispers**, Longstrider (alternatively from Wizard)
- Recommended spells: Glyph of Warding, Enhance Ability
- Helpful early game: Faerie Fire (grants Advantage to your melees), Silence (before we get Counter Spell), Cloud of Daggers (best early game AoE)
- Magical Secrets (at Bard level 6): **Command** (mandatory), Haste or Counterspell (get the other from sorcerer)
- Sorcerer Metamagic, mandatory: Extended, Twinned, Quicken

Consumables: Bloodlust Elixir, Elixir of Battlemage's Power, Elixir of Peerless Focus or a resistance elixir are all valid options.

#### Mandatory items:

There are no build defining items, you want to get all the "standard caster gear". [Armor of Landfall](#) is the biggest upgrade you will ever get so buy this once in act 3.

Additionally we want to aim at an AC value that is higher (by 1 point at least) than what our support wizard is having, so get [Ring of Protection](#).

#### Progression items:

- Weapon: you want to grab and hold onto [Melf's First Staff](#) as soon as possible. If you have Wyll in your party at the end of act 2 you can get the [Infernal Rapier](#). The level 6 summon is actually quite good to initiate combat since it can try to cast Charm and then use its Draining Kiss Ability that deals 5d10+5 base psychic damage!
- Offhand: nothing since we don't get dual wielder before level 10. If you are a human, equip a shield though.
- Head: [Firstbreaker Helmet](#)
- Chest: [Sparkwall](#) or any other +1 spell DC
- Boots: [Boots of Stormy Clamour](#) or [Evasive Shoes](#)
- Ring 2: several options [Ring of Mental Inhibition](#), [Coruscation Ring](#), [The Whispering Promise](#), [Callous Glow Ring](#)
- Pick up the [Braindrain Gloves](#) while picking up the Resonance Stone (*not mandatory but they are nice and I always forget them*)

#### BiS Items:

Standard spell damage caster endgame gear, except for the chest. Even though we have a wizard in our party there is only minimal gear overlap.

- Mainhand: [Markoheshkir](#), mainly to conserve spell slots and against psychic immune enemies. Or keep using the Rapier at least when fighting against Humans.
- Offhand (that's why we get dual wielder): Rhapsody, Staff or Spell Power or any +1 spell DC. If you are a human, use [Kethric's Shield](#)
- Head: [Hood of the Weave](#)
- Chest: Armor of Landfall so your concentration on Haste/CC does not break
- Cloak: [Cloak of the Weave](#)
- Hands: [Spellmight Gloves](#) (those are also good on the Paladin but he has better alternatives)
- Amulet: [Amulet of the Devout](#), [Spellcrux Amulet](#) should always be kept in your inventory, you can swap to it to restore a level 6 spell and then take it off again.
- Boots: any Defensive if necessary or keep using Stormy Clamour

- Ranged: [Darkfire Shortbow](#) for the resistance is nice

### Gameplay

Your best crowd control spell is **Command** (Halt or Approach), which should be combined with the cheap **Extended Metamagic** to last two turns. Then cast either twinned Haste on both your martials or Hold Person/Monster on a big target that should die (guarantees critical hits). Otherwise cast high level Dissonant Whispers for damage and frightened (ideally on melees so they skip their turn) but always check that the enemy is inside the stone's aura of influence.

After a long rest in act 3 don't forget to convert all of your low level spell slots to sorcery points.

### The support: Abjuration Wizard

In this party we are not running a cleric and thus no healer. The role of the support is to set up party buffs, apply debuffs and **soak up unavoidable damage** by having the lowest armor class (AC) of the party. Your primary goal is not dealing damage in the late game but throwing around fireballs is also a way to support your party ([if you don't hit your mates](#)). This character requires a respec at level 6 for optimal progression.

Note: Prestigious\_Juice341 also has a guide for his "[Valjurer](#)". The spec is not the same as this one - this one is WAY more straight forward and leans more on the offensive side - however check it out for more gear explanations and also how you can trick the AI into attacking you!

Race: Does not matter, Gale/Wyll can wear a shield which helps in the early game before we get really tanky and should then take it off

Starting attributes: 16 INT, 16 CON, DEX is a bit more complicated but 10-12 should be ideal to still go first

Subclass: Abjuration wizard, White Draconic Sorcerer dip

Class progression: Go Abjuration Wizard to level 6, then respec and start as a White Draconic Sorcerer for the CON save proficiency and Armor of Agathys (starting attributes stay the same, don't get charisma!) and then go Abjuration Wizard until the end.

Feats: Alert (mandatory, you want to go first), Dual Wielder (or War Caster)

### Spell progression:

You are a wizard, so get all of them! But most importantly always get these (most important at the top):

- Counterspell - we have no healer thus need to prevent damage at any cost. Also gives abjuration stacks.
- Glyph of Warding - Strong AoE that also fills up your abjuration stacks
- Armor of Agathys - we get this from the sorcerer subclass, keep this up at level 5+



- Dimension Door and Misty Step: the first one can save a HM run by teleporting you and a buddy away, the range is huge, the other will help with positioning. Seriously, always have those two prepared!
- Globe of Invulnerability - reset a fight if sh\*t goes sideways. Preferably casted from a scroll instead (buy at Sorcerous Sundries)
- Magic Missile is an excellent early game spell and hard counters Hags but falls off later...
- Enhance Ability is maybe the best level 2 spell in the game
- Haste: you will not use that very often but can be handy regardless

#### Mandatory items

- [Phalar Aluve](#) ("PA") - should be obvious, the best damage rider in the game. Pick this up before doing any (hard) fights in act 1. Resets on short rest and lasts 5 turns.
- [Swordmaster Gloves](#) - so we can even equip PA (see comment under race above).
- [Boots of Speed](#) - helps with positioning PA aura using your otherwise often unused bonus action. Once you can fly from illithid powers you *could* switch to something more tanky if need be.
- [Silver Pendant](#) if not worn by Tav

#### Progression items:

- Any item with a bonus to spell DC that the Bard is not using but those items with a bonus to saving throws are ideal.
- Although this might look strange on a Wizard, using [The Whispering Promise](#) combined with [Amulet of Restoration](#) (you get one in act 1 and another one in act 3 to swap) and [Hellrider's Pride](#) is insanely strong to bless especially your GMW warlock's hit chance and it also works when throwing potions.
- [Staff or Arcane Blessing](#) is good once per long rest, swap it out after using.
- [Psychic Spark](#) is very strong for the act 1 fights. Can be combined with...
- [Ne'er Miser](#) is nice in act 2 but Magic Missile ("MM") falls off late game.

#### BiS items

In contrast to the "Valjurer" this character cannot wear medium armor thus the very handy Adamantine Scale Mail should go to your warlock instead.

- Armor: anything that does not boost your AC higher than anyone in your party. [Robe of the Weave](#) is not used by the Bard and is thus fair game
- Head: [Helldusk Helmet](#) for the Crit Immunity
- Cloak: [Mantle of the Holy Warrior](#), only viable option to boost your party's damage.
- Amulet: [Spineshudder Amulet](#) is strong when combined with Spellsparkler and Scorching Ray or MM while inside the PA aura range.
- Rings: up to you, [Burnished Ring](#) is a good option, [Coruscation Ring](#) pairs very well with Glyph of Warding
- Offhand (if Dual Wielder feat): any +1 spell DC item or even [Spell Sparkler](#)
- Boots: whatever the bard is not using as long as you stay below the others on AC

#### Gameplay

Thanks to Alert you should always go first. Activate Phalar Aluve and get as close to as many enemies as possible. Keep your armor up, save your reaction to be used on Counter Spell (when fighting strong mages) or your Arcane/Project Ward reaction, never use it to

attack! If available, group enemies up using Black Hole. Otherwise spread Reverberation or Radiant Orb using any multi-target ability (AoE or MM).

## The flex spellsword: Warlock

The warlock provides physical damage with a nice psychic damage rider and a couple of utility spells. This character does not require a respect. The warlock will carry you through the early game once you get around the hit penalty of GWM.

Race: Githyanki (or always be disguised as one), thus simply pick **Laezel**

Starting Attributes: 16 CHA, 16 DEX, 14 CON

Subclass and Specialization: Great Old One, Pact of the Blade

- GOO can make the target and everyone around it frightened on critical hit. Furthermore at level 10 we get resistance to psychic damage to counter the Resonance Stone (see mechanics section below). On top of that we get the Dissonant Whispers spell.
- [Pact of the Blade](#) will let our melee damage scale with Charisma instead of Strength

Feats: Great Weapon Master, ASI (+2 CHA), last one can be ASI again or Alert

Progression: We do not multiclass, keep leveling warlock.

- Eldritch invocations:
  - Level 2: Agonizing Blast
  - Level 2: does not matter, I personally like Devil's sight since a clutch Darkness can save a fight going south on HM
  - Level 5, 7: anything you like
  - Level 12: Lifedrinker
  - Note that Repelling Blast is good in the early game but annoying later
- Spells, recommended:
  - Eldritch Blast - does more damage than our bow in case we can't reach the enemy, also handy for opening doors/chests
  - Counter Spell (required)
  - Hex - use as your BA early game (falls off late game)
  - Misty Step
  - Hunger of Hadar
  - Hold Person/Monster
  - Mystic Arcanum (free level 6 spell once per long rest): Animate Dead, since the Mummy has a CC and deals bonus damage to frightened targets. Arcane gate is not bad either (same reason we get Dimension Door on the Wizard)

Mandatory items:

We will use the [Soulbreaker Greatsword](#) for its 1d4 psychic damage rider for a good chunk of the game. This will ultimately\* be replaced by the [Silver Sword of the Astral Plane](#), which is just better in every regard. Both swords have an ability that deals additional psychic damage and can stun the enemy, which can be used once per short rest.

*\* Technically this can be obtained in Act 1 but getting requires some luck and is basically*



*cheese, so do whatever you like. The normal way to obtain this is in early or later stages of act 3, depending on your choices.*

#### Progression items:

Use any gear that you would use when leveling a Fighter. Most importantly aim for items that improve your chance to hit while Great Weapon Master is on, like [Gloves of the Growing Underdog](#) will serve you well into act 2. Laezel (any Gith) can naturally wear medium armor so you can wear the [Adamantine Armor](#) until the end of the game (if you don't want to risk going to House of Hope). I personally like the [Wound Closure](#) Amulet.

#### BiS Items:

Basically the same as you use on any other martial like a Fighter. Many options can go to the Paladin or the Warlock.

The only exception is the [Ring of the Mystic Scoundrel](#), if you want to use it. If you cannot kill an enemy you have little use of your bonus action and can therefore use it to cast one of the CC spells (like Hold Person/Monster) or Dissonant Whispers, the latter being boosted by the resonance stone and at level 11+ will do 12d6 damage (in practice around 50 damage since we don't have spell DC gear).

- Helm: various good offensive options - [Birthright](#), [Horns of the Berserker](#), [Sarevok's Horned Helmet](#), [Helmet of Arcane Acuity](#) (only if you are using the Scoundrel Ring)
- Chest: [Helldusk Armor](#) since no one else will use it...
- Cloak: anything defensive the Paladin is not using like [Cloak of Displacement](#)
- Ring 1: various options like [Caustic Band](#) or [Risky Ring](#)
- Gloves: standard melee options like [Bonespike Gloves](#) (*if you don't forget to get them*) or [Helldusk Gloves](#)
- Amulet: whatever the Paladin is not using, [this](#) is also nice to swap in
- Ranged: Deadshot if not used by the Paladin
- Boots: anything defensive but the maximum damage option is using [Boots of Psionic Movement](#). It does not activate on the Illithid flying skill, but you can use this prior to a fight → make a bunny hop and then smack, another hop and smack again

#### Consumables

Oil of Accuracy is your best friend, always buy those if you see them. Elixir is up to you, Bloodlust, any Resistance or the Alert one are valid options.

#### Gameplay

Like every other martial, hit them with your big sword while enemies are inside the stone's aura to amplify your sword's damage rider... If you fail to kill an enemy and thus have your bonus action unspent you can cast Dissonant Whispers if using the ring or any illithid power if you have the Awakened buff.

If you are about to wipe: Since we don't have a dedicated healer you can use your two actions to throw two potions and then drink one yourself to stabilize.

If you cannot reach your enemy use Eldritch Blast, not your ranged weapon!

## The 5th wheel (if you want it) - Shadow Monk

The Way of Shadow Monk subclass gets a very nice attack called [Shadow Strike](#) at level 11 which deals 3d6 psychic damage. It costs 3 Ki points and can thus “only” be used 4 times per short rest and also requires the monk to be hidden or invisible, but it deals a TON of damage. Optimal progression will require one respec.

*I will keep this section short since it is recommended for players that know what they are doing and thus don't need a guide. Also [/u/AerieSpare7118](#) made a [similar cool build](#) that uses the Shadow Blade and Shadow Strike, check it out although the damage of our Paladin will be higher unless you account for bugs!*

Race/Companion: does not matter, it fits Astarion perfectly though, very flavorful!

Starting attributes: 16 DEX, 16 CON, 14/15 WIS

Since you attack with your weapon, get DEX to 20. You can start with 15 Wisdom if you want to wear the amulet.

Subclass: Way of Shadow

*I am fairly certain that doing 12 levels of monk for the 3rd feat is overall better than going 11 Monk but starting 1 Rogue for the Sneak Attack, however I have not done the math.*

To make the first half of the game easier you can level this character as a normal TB OH monk using the psychic damage from [Manifestation of Mind](#) and respec once you get to level 11 or 12. Or stay Open Hand and stack those juicy damage riders on your BA (but then you need 2 strength elixirs per long rest). If you stick with Shadow Monk Get Monk 6, then Thief 4 and then respec at 11.

Feats: 3x ASI (2x DEX, WIS later after you get your BiS [Boots](#)) or you can get Savage Attacker if you prefer that.

*Alert is not terrible but ideally you want your party to engage and then join the fight from hiding so ASI is better.*

Items:

- Cloak: When using the recommended party keeping Dammon alive in Act 3 is optimal (thus no Dark Urge origin). However for this character to work you want the Durge Cloak [Deathstalker Mantle](#). Otherwise go defensive or even the [Fleshmelter Cloak](#). [Shade-Slayer](#) is also good but ideally we want to hit an opponent that is affected by Hold Person/Monster
- Weapons: Opposed to an OH monk you will use two **light weapons**, early one use e.g. the handy [Sussur Dagger](#), [Undermountain King](#) or [Shortsword of First Blood](#). The only light weapons that has a psychic damage rider built in available in act 2 is [Render of Mind and Body](#), but you need advantage and thus the Durge cloak to activate it<sup>1</sup>.  
Ultimately you want weapons like [Orin's Sword](#) or [Dolor Amarus](#)  
*As mentioned before: if you want to abuse the bug, use at least one Shadow Blade.*
- Helm: Going all in you would then complement your equipment with the [Helm of Grit](#) for the additional BA to finish off an opponent (you lose Monk mobility however).

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<sup>1</sup> Thanks to [/u/Tony\\_Sacrimoni](#) for reminding me of this weapon I have never seen before...

However standard melee helms (see Warlock) are WAY safer, style points for [Mask of Soul Perception](#) though.

- Apart from that you use the normal monk gear. [Boots](#), [Chest](#)  
If you go the 11/1 route with the rogue dip the [Stalker Gloves](#) are very solid, otherwise any of damage-rider gloves like [Helldusk](#).
- [Risky Ring](#) is excellent to give you advantage on your second attack (after coming out of stealth/hide) but enemies are more likely to hit you instead of the Abjurer. Since you are a Shadow Monk you may want to use Darkness at some point so don't miss out on the [Eversight Ring](#) (the Warlock has Devil's Sight so you can make a good pair). If you can set it up the [Shadow-Cloaked Ring](#) is ideal since it adds another 2d4 psychic damage.
- If you start with 15 WIS, get [Khalid's Gift](#). Get the [Sentient Amulet](#) for swapping once per long rest, but early game use [this](#) against humans or [this](#) (Misty Step if everything else is on cooldown)
- [Viscous Shortbow](#) gives you additional 14 bonus damage on critical hits, use if not using Dolor Amus in the offhand and not used by the Paladin. [Dead Shot](#) is very good as well.

Consumables: Invisibility Potion, Elixir of Bloodlust, Elixir of Viciousness (*Strength Potion if TB OH*)

#### Gameplay:

Let your party engage and open from hiding/stealth. Shadow Strike includes a short range teleport behind the target but make sure it is in range of the stone's aura! Kill one target and then get out of sight. [Shadow Step](#) is excellent early/mid game but falls off once we get illithid flying. When hiding you can fly to another spot outside the vision cone and stay in hiding when landing, excellent for setting up your Shadow Strike which can otherwise be a bit clunky.

## Mechanics

### Relevant DnD Basics

Be sure you understand what [Advantage](#) and **Disadvantage** means when performing any check. Both mean that instead of one two dice are thrown. If you have advantage you take the better result, on disadvantage you take the worse result. **Having two sources of the same type has no additional effect, but having advantage and disadvantage at the same time will cancel each other out.** This is very important since this party relies heavily on concentration and thus saving throws against breaking concentration.

Example: Equipping Risky Ring gives us disadvantage on WIS saving throws. The Resonance Stone also gives disadvantage on WIS throws as well. Equipping the Amulet of the Harpers will give advantage on WIS throws and thus cancel out the disadvantage → we roll only one dice as normal.

Being [resistant](#) to any type of damage means you take half the damage of that type. Some items, traits and elixirs grant your resistance to one or more elements or one of the physical

damage types.

Being immune to any damage type means you take zero damage from that type. Enemies (like a certain devil) can be immune to a damage type and there is *no* way to remove this immunity. The only way to get immunity by the player is the level 6 spell [Globe of Invulnerability](#) (my tip for HM: always keep a scroll of this spell on you, once you reach act 3).

Being **vulnerable** to a damage type means you take double damage and this is what we are here for.

Getting one source of resistance and one source of vulnerability on the target will cancel each other out resulting in “normal” damage unless [stated otherwise](#).

## Resonance Stone

The [Resonance Stone](#) can be obtained before engaging the boss of Act 2 and only then as there is no way to go back after defeating the boss, see wiki link where to get it.

It does not have to be equipped like a normal gear piece but has an aura that is always active around the character that has it in its inventory. The size of the aura is relatively big compared to Aura of Murder (which is melee range only), the range is roughly the diameter of one Glyph of Warding. Affected entities have a glowing light around their head which is easy to miss at first glance (the mod [Better Target Info](#) is helpful for this).

The aura gives a buff to friends and foes alike called [Steeped in Bliss](#) that gives the affected entity advantage on physical (strength, dexterity and constitution) ability checks but disadvantage on mental (wisdom, charisma, intelligence) saving throws. This means your party as well as the enemies are less likely to be shoved into a chasm but more likely to be affected by a crowd control spell like Hold Person/Monster etc. However the reason why this stone is so powerful is the fact that it makes the entity **vulnerable to psychic damage**.

Since the stone does not need to be equipped it can be transferred from one party member's inventory to another without cost and therefore with minor micro management should always affect the target you want to hit next.

The recommended party has three major sources of psychic damage all of which will be enhanced through various sources and then doubled by the Resonance Stone:

- The Shadow Blade used by the Paladin
- The Dissonant Whispers Spell used by the Bard if you enemies are crowd controlled (also available to the Warlock)
- Illithid powers (see next section)
- (Shadow Strike from the Monk if used)

Fun fact: You get Advantage on Sleight of Hands checks on any door or chest that is targetable since the door will have disadvantage against it.

Even though they have no psychic resistance the following bosses are not affected by the vulnerability [*Spoiler, obviously*]:

Cazador (low HP thus dies in 2 hits regardless), Ansur (you don't need the sword anyway)

## The Shadow Blade

This shortsword is conjured by the Ring of the Shadow Blade, which - as is the case with all "summons" for items - must be worn at all times. It can be obtained early on in act 2 and is wielded by the Paladin in main hand for the remainder of the game although it is pretty weak before you get the resonance stone and the warcaster feat at level 8.

**Important:** The blade stays on your character as long as you are concentrating on it (and keep the ring on) and the ring recharges on a short rest. You can take the sword off if you are e.g. facing an enemy that is immune to psychic damage. However - and I am not sure if this is a bug - **the blade will despawn if you fast travel to a different region** (you get a prompt to confirm, also happens e.g. if you go to a certain underwater location) which is really annoying when e.g. moving from Wyrms Crossing to the Lower City.

Therefore I strongly recommend conjuring the blade before you head into combat and not immediately after you wake up from a long rest. You have 3 short rests thanks to the Bard but using one 5 minutes after waking up feels really bad. If you forget to do it it is not that bad as conjuring it only costs a bonus action (which is not using psychic damage and is thus way weaker).

If you are dual wielding while conjuring the blade will replace your offhand and you never want that [to happen in combat] so after you fought a psychic immune enemy, unequip your replacement weapon. Worst case you forget the Blade, conjure it using your BA and then swap it into your main hand costing you your only action...

If you are only wielding a single weapon (which should be the weapon you want to use in your offhand) while conjuring the Shadow Blade will be put into your main hand and the other weapon will be moved to your offhand.

Did I mention the [bug](#)...?! If you want to abuse it be sure to buff the Blade with the [Drakethroat Glaive](#) for another 1d4 damage rider which normally would not work.

## Illithid powers

These [powers](#) are known to be very strong but when used together with the resonance stone they become even more powerful. Therefore this party composition works best if everyone undergoes partial ceremorphosis once given the choice although for a non-modded playthrough this is only the icing of the cake.

To maximize the amount of points you can spend, only allocate a few points on skills in the innermost circle as those are unlocked automatically later. Most important ones in bold.

Getting the [Awakened](#) buff is a big boost if you get it (paladin level 6 aura helps a lot!).

### Base Powers:

- Illithid persuasion: Tav only
- Psionic Overload: Overkill in non-modded playthroughs, get on the melees but be sure you survive the damage you take yourself (1d4 x2 per turn).
- Favorable Beginnings - required for Luck of the Far Realms, thus get it on everyone asap
- Concentrated Blast: decent for the Bard IF NOT concentrating on Haste!
- Ability drain - mandatory for the paladin to proc the diadem
- **Luck of the Far Realms** - get on everyone asap

- **Psionic Backlash** - get on everyone, best on the paladin (since no counter spell and will proc callus glow ring). Does 1d4 times spell level psychic damage, thus a high roll of 4 against a level 6 spells from the devil will deal  $4*6*2 = 42$  damage!
- **Cull the Weak** - mandatory for all damage dealers
- Perilous Stakes - can no longer be used on enemies in HM, thus high risk. Get it on the support

#### Elite Powers (act 3):

- Fly - unlocked automatically, game changer for the paladin's limited mobility
- Illithid expertise - Tav only
- **Psionic dominance** - get on everyone
- Black Hole - get on two characters (at least on whoever has the awakened debuff)
- **Mind Blast** - get on the casters (INT save)
- Free cast - Bard and Sorcerer (free level 6 spell)
- Mind sanctuary - get on whoever has Awakened

While this party's AoE potential is not great early on it gets really powerful once you unlock the elite powers. Group everyone up with black hole and then mind blast while within the stone's aura of influence. Everyone will be half dead, many will be stunned and then you can mob up the rest. Mind Blast resets after long rest though, so use it wisely.

If you don't want to use all of these powers: Get Luck of the Far Realms on everyone and Ability Drain on the Paladin, the rest is just a bonus.

### Comparison to the Bhaalist Armor party composition

The party composition that is most similar - and well known to a larger portion of the community - to what the **Mindbreakers** are doing is the party that utilized the Aura of Murder from the [Bhaalist Armor](#). I quickly want to highlight a few key differences here.

Effect	Mindbreakers	Bhaalists
Vulnerability	Psychic + Mental Throws	Piercing
Area of Effect	<b>Large</b>	Melee range only
Aura movable	<b>Yes</b>	No
Negative side effect	Yes	<b>No</b>
Overcomes resistance	<b>Yes</b>	No
Party members affected	2	<b>3</b>
Build comes online	<b>End of act 2</b>	Mid act 3 (for the average player)

It should be immediately apparent that there are a few key differences between both comps. The resonance stone's aura is very big and the stone can be passed around the party without the cost of an action while the Aura of Murder's area of effect is very small and tied

to one character thus requires good positioning (or a well placed Black Hole or [Void Bulb](#)). On the other hand three party members in the Bhaalists party can utilize the vulnerability, while psychic damage is really hard to come by apart from the Shadow Blade. The Dissonant Whisper spell can hit 3 targets for around 50 damage each once per long rest (one twinned freecast level 6 and one level 6 cast with BA) but all in all the Bhaalists overall party damage will come up on top in most cases. One thing to keep in mind though is that the Aura of Murder will NOT overcome physical resistance while the Resonance Stone will do so and in general there are more enemies resistant to physical damage than those that are immune to psychic damage.

**TL;DR:** Bhaalists should come up on top for consistent overall party damage when played well while the Mindbreakers are easier to play since no setup is required while also making enemies more likely to be crowd controlled.

## Let's do some math

So how much damage are we talking about here...? Let's look at the Paladin doing one main hand swing with the Shadow Blade in the best case.

- Base damage: [2d6](#)
- Bonus from Strength at 27 (using Elixir): +8
- Aura of Hate at 24 Charisma: +7
- Arcane synergy at 24 Charisma: +7
- Legacy of the Masters: +2
- Psychic vulnerability: x2

This results in

- Maximum [psychic](#) damage per swing without damage riders:  
 $(12 + 8 + 7 + 7 + 2) \times 2 = 72$
- Now let's add some damage riders (there can be more like from Astarion's Buff, Coated in Poison, Dipped in Fire etc): Phalar Aluve +1d4, Strange Conduit Ring +2d4, Crusader Mantle +1d4, Psionic Overload +2d4
- Now we add a Divine [Smite](#) level 3 as a reaction: +4d8, which procs some of our damage riders again
- What happens if we crit...? The [base](#) damage of each damage instance gets applied twice, so does the [smite](#) damage!

In the screenshot we have a showcase of the damage of three critical main hand attacks each enchanted with a level 3 Divine Smite against the devil, getting him 100-0 in one round (Hold Monster in Place from the Warlock).



Psycho received Condition: Arcane Synergy.  
Psycho used Main Hand Attack on Raphael.  
Raphael was hit for 154 Psychic damage.  
Raphael was hit for 0 Fire damage.  
Raphael was hit for 12 Radiant damage.  
Raphael was hit for 2 Thunder damage.  
Raphael failed a Saving Throw against Purple Worm Toxin.  
Psycho used Divine Smite on Critical Hit.  
Raphael was hit for 53 Radiant damage.

Dice rolled again!

Psycho lost Condition: Arcane Synergy.  
Psycho received Condition: Arcane Synergy.  
Raphael failed a Saving Throw against Purple Worm Toxin.  
Psycho used Main Hand Attack on Raphael.  
Raphael was hit for 138 Psychic damage.  
Raphael was hit for 0 Fire damage.  
Raphael was hit for 22 Radiant damage.  
Raphael was hit for 2 Thunder damage.  
Raphael failed a Saving Throw against Purple Worm Toxin.  
Psycho used Divine Smite on Critical Hit.  
Raphael was hit for 57 Radiant damage.

Psycho lost Condition: Arcane Synergy.  
Psycho received Condition: Arcane Synergy.  
Raphael was hit for 7 Thunder damage.  
Raphael was hit for 2 Radiant damage.  
Raphael failed a Saving Throw against Purple Worm Toxin.  
Raphael lost Condition: Reverberation.  
Raphael succeeded on a Saving Throw against Reverberation.  
(Reverberation)  
Psycho used Main Hand Attack on Raphael.  
Raphael was hit for 160 Psychic damage.  
Raphael was hit for 0 Fire damage.  
Raphael was hit for 24 Radiant damage.  
Raphael was hit for 4 Thunder damage.  
Psycho killed Raphael.  
Raphael's mind collapsed.

And here is the damage roll:

### 🛡️ **Raphael's** Armour Class: 21

Attack Roll: 17 (Critical!) (1d20, Advantage) + 1 + 4 (Proficiency) + 2 (Arming Enhancement) + 3 (Scarlet Remittance) + 8 (Strength Modifier) = 35

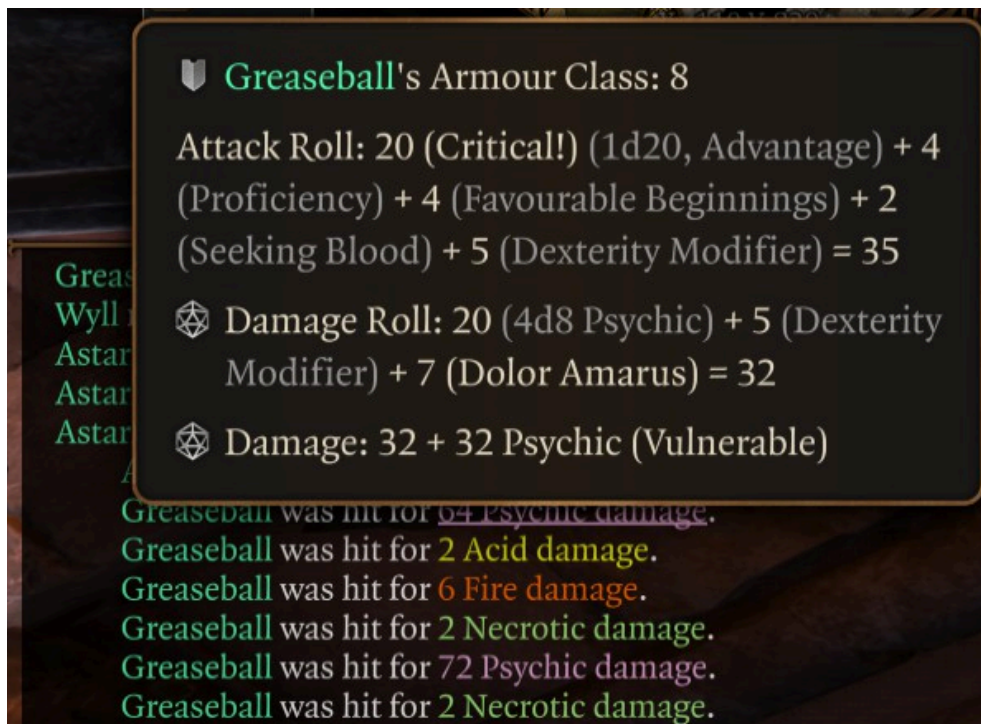
🎲 Damage Roll: 24 (4d8 Psychic, 🎲 Reroll) + 1 + 8 (Strength Modifier) + 7 (Charisma Modifier) (Aura of Hate) + 2 (Arming Enhancement) + 7 (2d4 Psychic, 🎲 Reroll) (Strange Conduit) + 7 (Spellcasting Ability Modifier) (Arcane Synergy) + 7 (Dolor Amarus) + 6 (2d4 Psychic, 🎲 Reroll) (Overloaded With Synaptic Power) + 3 (Scarlet Remittance) + 8 (1d8 Psychic) (Savage Attacks) = 80

🎲 Damage: 80 + 80 Psychic (Vulnerable)

- Arming Enchantment = Legacy of the Masters Gloves

Setting up a critical hit is easy and reliable using Hold Person/Monster thanks to our Bard's high spell DC and the disadvantage on saving throws. I had 100% hit chance against Raphael in both playthroughs.

Now let's look at the Monk doing a Shadow Strike from sneaking...



- 64 damage from the weapon
- 72 from Shadow Strike
- Astarions act 3 1d10 damage rider is missing here

## The tradeoff when swapping in the Shadow Monk

If one of your party members spell slots are depleted and you don't want to long rest yet but do another (easy) fight - btw. not recommended for players new to Honour Mode - swapping in the monk in is a no-brainer. In act 1 and 2 the paladin will likely not contribute much so using the monk to carry you through the early game is absolutely viable, especially if you run a TB OH monk and plan to respec later. Never switch out your paladin in act 3 though, even without smite one main hand auto attack from the shadow blade will do above 50+ damage even before we get to endgame gear.

Swapping out the Wizard is fine if you are feeling confident and not fighting one of the "end game" bosses like the devil or the vampire and can make due without support.

Swapping out the bard is likely not a good idea (he was my Tav thus not an option) unless he is completely dry (if you are somewhat conservative with your spell slots using the legendary staff's spells this should never happen).

Swapping out the warlock has the least downsides as both do solid damage and you are only giving up the option to use a level 5 counter spell reaction.

In my optimized playthrough I never bother with the wizard and just swapped some of the support gear like the Crusader Mantel around to other characters.



# Gameplay

By now you have everything you need, so here are some general thoughts about the party as the game progresses.

## Act 1

As *always* try to not fight before you get to level 4 and get Withers so you can respec your companions (*and resurrect them if you happen to run away*).

In the early game your warlock will struggle to hit due to the penalty from GWM so try to get sources of advantage (Faerie Fire, Blind etc) but if you face high AC enemies using Eldritch Blast will also do decent damage. The Paladin can go GMW as well if you want to respec later but serving as a pseudo support by setting up Phalar Aluve, healing if needed and concentrating on Bless will likely serve you better (although PA can be used with GWM). You can run the Bard as College of Swords together with the Titanstring Bow and a Strength Elixir (from Ethrel or Myconid Colony) to carry you until the end of act 2 and then respec after the boss where the build comes online.

You will get a couple of very strong items by clearing the Creche so do not miss those! Magic Missiles are very strong and reliable early game when combined with the Spellsparkler. Your Wizard is also no tank yet, so if you can slap a shield on. [Shovel](#) is strong for getting that surprise round up reliably.

If you have trouble with damage, get your Monk into the party as monks hit hard starting at level 4. Cast Mage Armor on the monk though.

Give the Hag's hair (CHA) and the Necromancy of Thay to the Paladin but do not open the book before you get Aura of Protection at level 6. Also wait for the Aura before you enter the Machine in the Creche!

## Act 2

The most important thing is to make sure you have all the items you need for your build before leaving the shadow cursed lands behind you! **You have only one chance to get the Resonance Stone immediately before the act's final boss, don't miss it!**

Most of the enemies you fight are immune to your crowd control and immune to frightened (from Dissonant Whispers) so going all in on the damage is the way to go. The Paladin can serve as a frontline with the legendary mace and a shield combined with Smite and Radiant Orb gear.

[Spoiler] I *personally* think the act's hardest fight is the [Self-Same Trial](#). Check a guide beforehand if you are unsure about it, it is a potential run ender (you can bypass the fight but the [ring](#) is nice).

[Spoiler] The act's final boss can be tough since he is resistant to many damage types, see [my comment on Reddit](#) for some tips.

## Act 3

You are now in Rivington, are around level 9, have the resonance stone and the Shadow Blade Ring. It is time to respec your characters if you need to as your builds are now mostly online. You now have everything you need and can proceed through the third act at your own leisure. The easiest way of progression is to head to the Lower City immediately and get all the BiS items you can buy from vendors without fighting. Enjoy!

Word of advice (with major spoilers): Steel Watchers are immune to psychic damage and hit like a truck. Thus either try to avoid having to fight them at all by siding with Gortash or fight through the Foundry without using the Shadow Blade. I'd recommend getting at least Orin's Dagger for the Paladin, one Scroll of Invulnerability and if possible 2-3 [Flashblinders](#) before going in there.

Signing the deal with Raphael will net you the Silver Sword (earlier than otherwise), which is a major upgrade for your warlock. If you decide to fight the devil afterwards - you don't have to if you only want your golden dice, all in all it is a hard fight (harder than final boss to be sure) - steal the contract before engaging, otherwise it's game over (*yep I did that, but since I am writing a guide I obviously had a backup, jokes on me...*).

If you just want to secure the dice before the final fight, just bring Gale...

## F.A.Q.

*Will be expanded based on comments.*

Q: What about [Phantasmal Killer](#)? It deals a lot of psychic damage...?!

A: It's bad for various reasons but see for yourself. It requires concentration which we would rather use on Haste, Hold Person/Monster or Crusader's Mantle. Furthermore it only deals damage from the second turn onwards. In reality most fights will end in 2 or 3 turns. But try it out yourself!

Q: I don't like the Abjuration Wizard Tank as I never take damage anyways.

A: Go with the hyper offensive monk substitute then. I am currently doing a second - more optimized - playthrough where I don't use the wizard. *I will let you know how it went (currently in act 3)...*

Q: I have seen other builds for the Abjuration Wizard tank, why this build?

A: There are variations of the build that use 2 Warlock/10 Abjuration wizard. You don't get CON save proficiency and a bit less damage reduction on your reaction, but this build will also work fine if you like it more.

I have seen one guide suggest [Duellist's Prerogative](#) as a weapon (Wyll can wear Rapiers). This sounds nice on paper since you get a second reaction however your first and foremost job is to carry Phalar Aluve into battle so I would advise against it as no one else in the party can effectively use PA.

Q: What about the [Circlet of Psionic Revenge](#)?

A: It looks good on paper and you can use it on your Gith Warlock after getting it in the creche (where we don't have the stone yet for some time) but since we do not intend to take much damage as combat lasts 1 or 2 turns only, the effect is not great and there are a lot of head pieces in act 3 that are WAY better. But if you want to use it, put it onto the Abjurer and hope he gets hit.

Q: Any enemies to look out for?

A: *[Spoiler]* Steel Watchers are immune to psychic damage and have to be killed the normal way, wet and cold damage are great. The dudes with the golden helmet found in the throne room and foundry in act 3 deal psychic damage and are immune to being frightened. *In my last playthrough one of the Gondians was 1-shot for 80 damage non-crit, o-tone Karlach: "Poor F\*cker"*

Q: *[Major Spoiler]* The Nether Brain deals psychic damage and I am vulnerable to it. Will this make the fight very hard?

A: Easy mode (get that golden dice!) is using Elixir of Universal Resistance on every party member prior to climbing up to counteract this. It stacks with other potions and lasts 10 turns, longer than the fight is going to take (it should be over by turn 4 or 5). If your party goes "inside" with their action up you can easily kill the brain in one turn so you will only be hit by the reaction once. If you don't kill it in one round, blast it with level 5/6 spells from scrolls on turn 2 depending on the immunity (e.g. wet + chain lightning).

Q: Is this build suitable for a **solo playthrough**?

A: You have to do act 1+2 using your own build, but in act 3 it is easily possible to run the paladin solo. In my latest playthrough after hitting level 12 and getting 24 CHA I was able to solo most encounters (except Ansur). You should get a shield instead of an offhand dagger though and the Awakened buff helps a lot for the BA Black Hole which makes it possible to kite very effectively.

Q: Any **cheesy** alternative builds that also use psychic damage?

A: See [this comment](#) from u/anilsondattawen for a great suggestion. - *I guess this counts as clever use of game mechanics* 😊