



“Our business is keeping the peace. And peace is good for business.”

The Red Wardens are a non-governmental military entity that employ themselves as mercenaries, monster hunters, and neutral diplomatic envoys. In a small set of instances, the Red Wardens have been involved in deposing nefarious rulers or serving as advisors to new rulers to ensure lasting peace in a region. They extend their services to anyone able to pay their fees or can provide sufficient information about a threat to warrant their involvement. As is necessary for their work, they are often on the leading edge of magical and technological progress, with most of their developments focused on improving the operational efficiency and quality of life of their soldiers.

Hierarchy

The vast majority of the Red Wardens' standing forces are referred to as 'Blades.' These volunteers are usually equipped with half-plate armor with full helms, a longarm (usually a polearm, arquebuse, or crossbow), a longsword, a boot knife, and a small selection of utility items, such as healing salves, alchemical 'light bottles', gunpowder-based explosives, and quickly transferrable runic seals to contain hazardous energies. A basic understanding of small squad tactics, magical physics, and unarmed combat is included alongside weapon training and military discipline. Blades are often employed as foot soldiers used as supporting forces and patrol squads in territories where the Red Wardens are accepted as supplements to the local authority. While accommodations are often made for a Blade's unique biological abilities, such as natural weapons or an innate magical affinity, Blades cannot request specialized equipment or training until they have completed the Three Feats, requiring an aspirant to go above and beyond the call of duty to embody the values of a Red Warden or complete their assignment three times, and have their deeds reviewed by an advisory council of five randomly selected Wardens.

'Wardens' are considered the face of the organization, and are among the more competent members of the Red Wardens' fighting force. Given the right to request specialized equipment and additional training to best suit their observed specialty, Wardens often operate in small groups of three to five members, ignoring any support units assigned to them. The only limitation on chosen equipment is that a part of their attire should have clearly visible Red Warden colors or iconography at all times, to identify them as a member of the organization. Each Warden possesses their own expertise and combat style, and are privy to strictly necessary portions of the company's cache of restricted information.





A Warden that displays sufficient tactical acumen to lead a larger group of soldiers is often given the rank of Lieutenant, which in turn gives them command of 10 Blades as backup, in addition to any accompanying support staff or fellow Wardens. With sufficient operational success, a higher ranking officer of the Red Wardens can promote a Lieutenant to a Sergeant, which expands their retinue to 20 members. Sergeants are promoted in turn to Captains, who command units of 30 members. This process continues up the chain as such:

Title	Retinue Size	Sub-commanders	Access to Restricted Info.
Lieutenant	10	-	Need-To-Know
Sergeant	20	2 Lieutenants	Low
Captain	30	3 Lieutenants	Low
Knight-Captain	50	1 Captain, 1 Sergeant	Moderate
Commander	100	2 Knight-Captains	Moderate
General	1,000	10 Commanders	High
Lord-General	100,000	10 Generals	Complete

Each high-ranking officer of the Red Wardens enlists the lower-ranking members of their retinue as a presiding council of local operations and as supplementary leaders in the event of a hierarchy collapse. The Lord-Generals of the Red Wardens operate as a ruling council, presided over by an elected High Marshal that maintains court order and provides the deciding vote in the event of a tie or contested decision.

Support personnel assigned to each retinue of Red Wardens are referred to as 'Scabbards,' in reference to their function of keeping the Blades maintained and protected. The Scabbards are separated into four disciplines. The Ranger discipline studies the flora and fauna the Wardens encounter, to determine their level of threat to operations as well as their edibility and use in fabricating new equipment, alongside the maintenance of any stable animals in the retinue. The Seeker discipline studies the arcane, seeking out and codifying minute differences in the supernatural energies the





organization encounters in their operations. Makers create and maintain their retinue's arms and armor, as well as designing new devices and tools in the field to improve operational efficiency. Finally, the Keepers maintain records and administrative logs, as well as being additionally responsible for investigating the health and well-being of all levels of the Red Warden forces. All four disciplines are only deployed to potentially dangerous operational areas as needed, but as their duties also collectively include protecting Red Warden equipment from would-be thieves and harsh conditions, they are far from incapable in battle.

Capabilities and Philosophy

The Red Wardens seek to promote trade and prosperity for all levels of society. As such, they willingly offer themselves as the front line against the dangerous creatures and dark forces present in a dimension they have a foothold in. They believe that the average member of their organization, or in society in general, should have access to the same rights and resources as the highest echelons, and that no individual should be forced to sacrifice for the group. This extends to their weapon and training philosophy; if it cannot be performed or used by all members of the company, then it is of no use to any but a Warden that willingly specializes in it.

Technologically, the Red Wardens have access to the highest quality materials that can be produced by hand in a forge or workshop, provided the necessary ingredients are available. Their recent innovations in gunpowder-based weaponry has already been disseminated to all levels of the organization, though some prefer to continue using bolt-and-arrow weapons to prevent ammunition shortages or support personal beliefs. Magical techniques and systems follow a similar philosophy to their combat doctrine: if it does not work in all 'average' cases, it should not be taught to others. This change in beliefs came following the discovery of intra- and extra-dimensional transit magics. While useful for maintaining communications and supply lines, they often malfunction or misfire unless the conditions where the spell was originally made almost exactly match the conditions it is used in. Such is the case with the Mirage Node, a small runic obelisk that generates a zone where conversation and physical objects can pass freely across space, regardless of distance. At worst, a Mirage Node requires minute adjustments in its internal power to restore operational efficiency, regardless of the arcane energies in play in a given dimension. Lord-General Safri-Gera said, when regarding the efficiency of her magical technique to selectively halt the flow of time, "The more specific a spell is, the less likely it is to work everywhere. And we need it to work everywhere."





The Tower

In recent years, the Red Wardens have gained access to a structure they have come to refer to as The Tower, a magical gateway that exists in (theoretically) every dimension. Entering the building reveals a stairway that continues upward and downward (seemingly) infinitely, with each level of the structure containing a doorway that leads out of another dimension's Tower. In the interest of bringing peace and security wherever they can, the Red Wardens have taken it upon themselves to patrol and study The Tower, as well as expand their forces by recruiting from the populations of other worlds that willingly tolerate the group's presence.

Named Characters

Michael Shadowstrider: Leader of the 31st Exploratory Squad. An accomplished duelist and monster hunter, age has done nothing to dull his skills. Shadowstrider is something of an anomaly within the Red Wardens: he prefers to solve problems diplomatically, operate with a small team instead of the large force his rank entitles him to, and shirks and sort of administrative duty in favor of remaining in active duty, hunting threats to whatever community he finds himself in and training the next generation of monster hunters. When off duty, he demonstrates a humorous, optimistic, and wise temperament earned through a lifetime of seeing the worst in the world around him and striving to be better.

Azariyah: A dragon rescued from a life of gladiatorial combat by Shadowstrider. Possessing a tactician's wit, remarkable combat skill, and innate electrokinetic powers, Azariyah serves as the second-in-command of Shadowstrider's team. The young dragon seems most at home in his human disguise, only unleashing his full power when the situation calls for intimidating presence or overwhelming force. Some say his entire outward demeanor as a proud, arrogant, and dismissive elitist who takes joy in needling his opponents is simply another mask for a kind and selfless soul who has been exploited by others one too many times.

Adeline: A half-giant warrior hand-picked by Shadowstrider. While still rough around the edges, she makes her home right in the center of battle, using her great strength and immense size to make space for her allies to exploit key weaknesses or pull off their latest schemes. She is often found maintaining her team's equipment outside of battle, drawing on her childhood as a blacksmith's adopted daughter. Friendly and outgoing, Adeline is eager to make a name for herself as a traveling hero, though her clumsiness tends to get her into trouble.





Linzi: An alchemical experiment rescued from a distant cult by Shadowstrider's team. While mostly human in appearance, Linzi possesses a number of psionic abilities and immense magical potential that she has yet to fully master. She tends to come off as nervous and excitable, sometimes seen arguing with some unseen force or muttering to herself when she thinks no one is looking. Regardless, she possesses an encyclopedic knowledge of a wide range of topics, and is dedicated to mastering her talents in service of others.

Wilson Padfoot: A rat-man from a distant land brought onto the team by Shadowstrider. While an adept marksman, Wilson prefers to serve in a non-combat capacity, serving as the team's medic, quartermaster, and demolitions expert. A veteran of The Field Wars of his homeland, Wilson hopes to bring some goodwill and hope back into the world. His upbringing as a nobleman sometimes manifests as a foppish and uptight personality, but he largely looks forward to meeting new people and committing his talents to the service of others.

