

ESHI

GODDESS OF EARTHLY LOVE, NIGHT'S TWIN, THE TRICKSTER'S DAUGHTER — LESSER GODDESS

Eshi is the first daughter of Ils and Shipri, twin sister of Shalpa, sister and wife to Anen. She is the goddess of love, sensuality and passion, and of every kind of beauty in this world and all others. Seduction and carnal desire are Eshi's domain too, whether with mortals or gods—she is the eternal adulterer and temptress, who flaunts a thousand affairs under the nose of her divine husband and laughs at his tears. Yet there is no meanness in Eshi, just as there is no forethought; she is what she is, the Trickster's Daughter, and she acts on her desires and emotions without thought for the consequences, like the cats that are her holy animal. She is the patron of young lovers, the muse of artists, and the enemy of those who would control or repress desire. Eshi teaches that life is to be enjoyed, beauty and passion are to be celebrated, and love is more important than responsibility. She is venerated and prayed to by young people, artists and dancers—but yet, these passionate ones rarely *worship* her, for she is too flighty and inconstant to attract devotion and congregations. A few organized cults to Eshi are small, primarily composed of prostitutes, middle-aged women and the emotionally lost—people who have missed out on passion and desire, and would do anything to finally receive it. Of course, her priestesses run the women's bathhouses and brides-to-be usually make offerings to her before their weddings. And so, though she is the goddess of love and beauty, she is also the goddess of hope and passion.

Symbol: Figs. Priests of Eshi grow fig trees near their homes and temples, use figs as ingredients for potions (and mundane dishes), and wear fig-shaped amulets as holy symbols.

Portfolio: Sensuality, beauty, seduction, art and music, manipulation

Domains: Beauty, Charm, Pleasure

Favored Weapon: Dagger

PRIESTS

Eshi's priestesses are almost all women, and tend to fall into two groups—young women glowing with passion and desire, and middle-aged women who use desire and manipulation for political gain. Some take levels in savant or noble, or enter the Mistress of Red Lanterns prestige class (see *Thieves' World Player's Manual*, page 99). Priestesses of Eshi tend to channel the *commanding presence*, *glamour of Eshi* (see sidebar) or *state of grace* powers.

GODSWORN

Eshi's godsworn are passionate, artistic, erratic and deadly, charged with fighting the enemies of love and beauty. Their targets are tyrants who forbid dancing or art, patriarchs who prevent young lovers from eloping, or invaders who despoil a beautiful temple in search of gold and rapine. Some have levels in savant, thief or assassin, and common gifts include *divine health*, *mortal might* (*Charisma*), or *denial of fate*.

PRAYERS & RITES

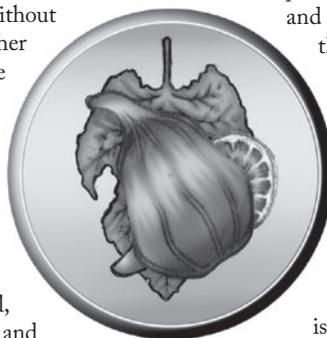
Many people mutter quick prayers to Eshi every day—usually when trying to get the object of their desire into bed. Congregations gather on Eshiday evening for informal prayers and socializing (and occasionally romance). The 12th day of Andaria is especially holy, and on this day, Eshi's followers must bed a new romantic conquest or else be the slave of four other members of the congregation for a month.

TEMPLES

As a lesser goddess, Eshi has few temples, but rather has an altar in each of Shipri's temples. Small shrines to the goddess are quite common, and can be found in most brothels, areas where prostitutes ply their trade, and sometimes in art or dance schools. A statue of Eshi has stood on the Street of Red Lanterns since Sanctuary was founded and it is always decorated with the garlands of the hopeful.

SERVITORS

Eshi's *planar allies* are celestial nymphs, lillend and Huge air elementals. A priest of Eshi can use *planar ally* to call an avatar of Eshi (not included); the additional sacrifice is an original and unique work of art worth at least 1000 sh, which the avatar sends back to Paradise as she manifests.



ILS

(LORD OF A THOUSAND EYES, LORD OF LORDS, GOD OF KNOWLEDGE & WISDOM) GREATER GOD

Ils is the chief god of the Ilsigi pantheon, lord of the people and nation that took his name. Legend holds that Ils created the world, the gods and all mortals, although even his most devout priests hold that to be more metaphor than fact. He is worshipped not for his power and strength, great though both are, but for his insight, his intelligence, and his quick wit. Ils defeated enemies like Gunder of the Mountain Men with chicanery and schemes rather than by force of arms. All followers of the Ilsigi pantheon worship and revere Ils, who both dictated the laws of the church and allowed loopholes for the righteous to break them when necessary. Ils is the patron of learning, wisdom, oratory and justice, but also of ingenuity, trickery and questioning authority—all characteristics exalted by Ilsigi culture. His flaw is his jealousy and occasionally rash temper, and perhaps his lack of aggression, which left his people ill-prepared for the onslaught of the warlike Rankans and their imperialistic gods.

Ils teaches that life is a puzzle that should be approached from all angles, a series of questions that can be answered in many different ways, and he proclaims that the greatest victory is not to crush your enemies but to trick them into turning upon each other and then allying with you. He is worshipped and venerated by all Ilsigi, but in particular by scholars, nobles, bureaucrats, conmen, adventurers, merchants and others who live by their wits. His cult is large and extensive, and his priests control both their own congregation and those of the other Ilsigi gods.

DIVINE POWER: GLAMOUR OF ESHI

Priests of Eshi may choose to channel a unique divine power, *glamour of Eshi*. For a short period, the priest can call upon Eshi to further bolster her prayers with manipulative and seductive power. The save DCs of any enchantment or illusion spells cast by the priest are increased by a number equal to her Charisma bonus (minimum +1). The benefits of this power last for a number of rounds equal to the priest's Wisdom bonus (minimum 1 round). During this period, the priest takes a -2 penalty to her spell and ritualcasting checks when casting evocation spells.

Symbol: A jeweled eye. Priests of IIs wear pendants bearing a jeweled eye as their holy symbol, and some go so far as to wear monocles or bear a spyglass in homage to their god.

Portfolio: Wisdom, intelligence, subterfuge, investigation

Domains: Eloquence, Knowledge, Trickery

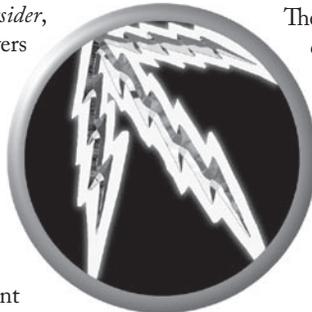
Favored Weapon: Short sword

PRIESTS

IIs' priests are mostly middle-aged men; while some are women, few are young, for it takes many years of study and reading scriptures before one is considered worthy. These priests are primarily administrators of the faith who work to consolidate the church's political stature rather than do good deeds in the community. Some take levels in noble, savant or even loremaster, and tend to channel the *banish outsider*, *commanding presence*, *state of grace* or *tap other domain* powers (see sidebar).

GODSWORN

In contrast to his learned, noble priests, IIs' godsworn are adventurers who wander the continent looking for trouble. Male or female, young or old, their common traits are a healthy skepticism and a willingness to interfere in other peoples' affairs. Many have levels in savant or thief, and common gifts include *channel divine power*, *divine perception*, *divine shield*, *denial of fate* or *divine fortitude*.



NECKLACE OF HARMONY

These golden necklaces of mystical power are among the more powerful relics of the church of IIs. Several exist, draped around the necks of the marble statues of IIs located in his Major Temples or worn by the archpriests of those temples in times of need. There was one in Sanctuary in the Rankan era, but it was stolen by Ischade and later acquired by Molin for forging Enlibar steel. There may be another in the city still and others remain in temples around the continent. A *necklace of harmony* is a +1 *ritual focus* that grants the wearer a +4 enhancement bonus to Wisdom and allows him to use *detect thoughts* at will as a spell-like ability. However, any time the wearer tells a lie, he must make a DC 16 Will save or take 1d8+1 points of fire damage as the necklace grows white-hot.

Moderate transmutation; CL 8th; Craft Focus, Craft Wondrous Item, *detect thoughts*, *owl's wisdom*, *zone of truth*; Price 37,350 sh.

DIVINE POWER: TAP OTHER DOMAIN

Priests of IIs may choose to channel a unique divine power, *tap other domain*. As lord of the entire IIsigi pantheon, IIs may allow his priests to briefly cast spells from a domain other than the two a priest normally knows, as long as it is one granted by a IIsigi god. When the priest channels this power, he chooses an appropriate domain, and may cast any spell from that domain up to one level lower than his normal safe casting level (e.g., if a priest can normally cast 5th-level spells safely, he can cast up to 4th-level spells from the tapped domain) as if the spell was on his Known list. The benefits of this power last for a number of minutes equal to the priest's Wisdom score.

Only a select few priests are granted this privilege by IIs. In order to choose this divine power, a character must have at least 8 ranks in Knowledge (religion) and a Wisdom of 13 or more.

PRAYERS & RITES

For the IIsigi people, barely an hour goes by without a prayer, invocation, oath or aside directed at IIs; some priests say that simply living is itself a prayer to IIs. Every ritual or service made for an IIsigi god includes reverence to IIs, as does every spell cast by an IIsigi priest. Formal services to IIs are held, naturally, every IIsday, as are the New Year's celebrations in the month of Andaria. One common rite is to dedicate the first sale, first page of writing, or first challenge of the day to IIs—although if that challenge goes badly, bad luck is sure to follow.

TEMPLES

IIs has a temple in every city where the IIsigi pantheon is worshipped. These temples are given one of three ranks, based on their size, construction and political clout. The cult's only Great Temple is in IIsig itself, an immense building of marble and granite. Sanctuary and other cities have major temples, which also house altars for lesser IIsigi gods. Larger cities may also have a number of minor temples, small wood-and-brick shrines with an attendant priest or two. A minor temple will also be found in any town or settlement that follows the IIsigi ways; such shrines are usually the first building constructed in a village.

SERVITORS

IIs' *planar allies* are hound archons, sikkintairs (see **Chapter Seven: A Thieves' World Bestiary** on page 136) and celestial young adult copper dragons. A priest of IIs can use *planar ally* to call an avatar of IIs; the additional sacrifice is 1200 sh worth of holy books and writings from other faiths, which IIs claims for his private library.

AVATAR OF IIS

The avatar of IIs appears to be a middle-aged IIsigi man, physically nondescript, but power swells around him like an invisible vortex. His eyes are piercing and intelligent, and he bears a gleaming short sword in his right hand.

An avatar of IIs is rarely summoned, perhaps only to battle a great threat to the IIsigi people by working some legendary deception. He enters combat only when he must, preferring to manipulate enemies against each other from afar if possible. If he must fight he casts *charm person* and *confusion* to sow discord among his enemies, attacks with his short sword, then uses *invisibility* or *disguise self* to slip away from danger.

AVATAR OF IIS

CR 14; Medium outsider (extraplanar); HD 12d8+36; hp 90; Mdt 23; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 18, touch 14, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +12; Grap +14; Atk +15 melee (1d6+3 plus 1 Con/17–20, +1 *wounding short sword*); Full Atk +15/+10/+5 melee (1d6+3 plus 1 Con/17–20, +1 *wounding short sword*); SA sneak attack +1d6, spell-like abilities; SQ avatar traits, damage reduction 5/epic, darkvision, ever watchful; SV Fort +15, Ref +13, Will +17; Str 14, Dex 12, Con 16, Int 20, Wis 20, Cha 17.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +18, Concentration +13, Diplomacy +20, Disguise +18, Forgery +20, Intimidate +5, Knowledge (geography) +20, Knowledge (history) +20, Knowledge (religion) +20, Knowledge (the planes) +20, Listen +18, Search +18, Sense Motive +20, Spellcraft +18, Spot +18; Combat Expertise, Improved Critical (short sword), Improved Disarm, Improved Feint, Quicken Spell-Like Ability (*enthrall*).