

REALMSWORN

Realmsworn (Plural) / Realmsworn (Singular)
REALM-sworn / REALM-sworn

Long ago, when the Realms were young, Elementals rampaged the lands. Those who survived gathered as small bands, scurrying across the wilderness to avoid the Elementals' destructive wrath. For generations, this was a way of life until one band of survivors took a stand and changed everything. Malevolent Elementals had been hunting them for sport, driving them through scorching sands and frigid tundra until there was nowhere to run, nowhere to hide, and nobody to turn to for aid. The small community huddled together, clutching close their loved ones, as their desperation coalesced into action. It was then, at the brink of eradication, with Elementals bearing down on them from all sides, they swore the Primal Vow:

*Realms united, heed my vow.
I beg you, give me strength.
That I may rise against the tide,
And on me it shall break.*

*The time has come to take a stand,
Against threats from beyond.
I swear that I shall guard this Realm,
and be its paragon.*

*This vow, and any I shall swear,
are my eternal bond.
I pledge to serve the Realms and land,
'til my last breath is gone.*

The Realms assented and the community was transformed. Their flesh reknitted with the hardiness of the land and their bodies grew sturdy and capable of shrugging off the fury of the elements. So great was the might of the Realms coursing through them that it erupted from their flesh as rocky or bony protrusions. The Realmsworn were born. For the first time in memory, they felt hope that they could carve out a future for their people. Buoyed in their hearts by the strength of the Realms pulsing within them, the Realmsworn made their stand against the Elementals and tasted the first of many victories.

The Realmsworn are most commonly known as a pragmatic and stoic species defined by their unyielding commitment to duty. Above all else, they are united through their Primal Vow to protect the Realms of Refuge from Elemental and Extraplanar threats. They tend to be contemplative, measured warriors who choose their words carefully and speak plainly. They also understand action is the clearest form of communication and are willing to step up when duty calls. This willingness to take a stand makes it common to see Realmsworn as pillars of their communities or on the battlefield. They make for steadfast allies and tenacious foes.

Wherever Realmsworn are found, they are known for their strong sense of community. Many continue to lead nomadic lifestyles, believing that constant travel keeps them focused on the mission of defending the Realm without the distractions of settled life. Realmsworn who call a city home often feel the best way to protect the Realm is by being at the



heart of civilization and serving as an example to those around them. Regardless of where they live, Realmsworn tend to congregate together. Realmsworn adventurers who have left their birth families to answer the Call of the Realm tend to seek out other Realmsworn. This frequently means joining an existing company or sometimes forming a new one. These communities are notorious for fiercely protecting their members and for treating a threat to one member as a threat to all.

Realmsworn cultures typically choose one member as a leader. The leader's primary role is to guide the community and ensure the safety of its members. There are no specific requirements to be chosen, only that a Realmsworn is willing to lead and holds the respect and esteem of the group. In some communities the leader will appoint a scribe whose job involves recording the various vows members have taken as well as chronicling any formal gatherings of the community. Traditionally, there are five main reasons a gathering may be called but this varies from group to group:

- To celebrate new life
- To mourn a member's final death and celebrate their service to the Realm
- To witness the swearing of the Primal Vow by young Realmsworn ready to defend the Realm
- For dealing with one who has broken their vows
- Other events of major significance to the group



Realmsworn societies are constantly in flux as members freely come and go to answer the Call of the Realm. They recognize that all must serve, and their travels will take them near and far. As such, they do not emphasize goodbyes unless it is a final farewell. This can impact their romantic relationships. Most Realmsworn are comfortable finding romantic relationships wherever their travels may lead. Realmsworn who choose one or more permanent partners may even take the immense step of swearing a vow to their lover(s). Such Realmsworn are fiercely devoted and loyal, frequently putting the needs of their partners ahead of their own.

While Realmsworn have a similar lifespan to Humans, they spend their years differently. Most train from a very early age in the ways of war so they may defend the Realm. While not an inherently hostile species, Realmsworn understand the necessity of being ready to take up arms to defend that which they cherish. Before they learn to read, young

Realmsworn already understand that someday the Realm will call them to serve. As they age, Realmsworn frequently find the adventuring lifestyle a natural fit. Most Realmsworn eschew the creature comforts of a luxurious lifestyle in favor of a humble lifestyle that keeps them sharp and ready to protect the Realm. Realmsworn warriors never stop serving, even as their bodies become weathered and worn from decades of answering the Call of the Realm. They continue to help others by sharing their knowledge and wisdom until their eventual passing. Realmsworn not suited to combat tend to be inventive, finding clever ways to defend the Realm. They understand a cunning mind or honed craft can be more potent than the sharpest blade.

Realmsworn believe service creates strength. By serving a cause greater than themselves, they elevate themselves and those around them to reach their true potential. This is best exemplified in the vows they take. To Realmsworn, a vow is an unbreakable promise and a burden willingly carried. In doing so, they take a bold stand for all their days. They strive to become a banner for others to rally around, creating order from chaos. In bearing the burdens of their vows, they deepen their connection to the Realm and build the strength and resolve they need to defend it. As such, the taking of any

vow is a solemn act for Realmsworn that requires significant deliberation. Once taken, the vow becomes a part of who they are. Realmsworn take immense pride in the vows they have taken and display this by prominently wearing a Var.

The Var can be crafted from any material but is usually made from metal or wood. The shape of the Var varies from individual to individual with circles, ovals, and squares being most common. Realmsworn in some communities choose to wear similar Vars to show solidarity with their community. Vars are adorned for each vow a Realmsworn has made. These adornments can be made from any material (e.g., gems, feather, or string). They may be as simple or intricate as the Realmsworn prefers. For particularly meaningful vows or through great service to the Realm, new facial protrusions may also emerge on the Realmsworn.

Realmsworn vows represent a bond so deep it cannot break without the Realmsworn experiencing some degree of fracturing. How this manifests varies and may be physical, mental, or even result in a change to one or more of their protrusions. Those that have broken a vow are often referred to as “vow-breakers” or “unsworn.” When a vow has been broken, the leader of the community will usually call a gathering where the vow-breaker may explain their transgression. Each member of the culture will carefully weigh this testimony. The unsworn’s standing in the community will be greatly reduced and severe cases may involve substantial punishment. In particularly egregious and rare circumstances, a vow-breaker may be killed or exiled from the community. It is possible, through great deeds or service, for an exiled vow-breaker to redeem themselves and regain their place in the community.

In defending the Realm, Realmsworn are likely to find themselves encountering their sworn enemies: Elementals and Extraplanar creatures. Though some Realmsworn exist who pursue the eradication of any creature from beyond the Realms of Refuge as a point of principle, most Realmsworn are reasonable enough that they could be convinced an Elemental or Extraplanar creature means no harm to the Realm.

Special Abilities

1. Species Resolute
2. Resist Element
3. -1 cost for Hardy

Appearance Requirements

Realmsworn are required to wear prosthetics on their face that portray rocky or bony protrusions. The size and patterning must be such that they could not be mistaken for another species. These prosthetics are usually smaller than three inches and there must be at least three of them on the face.

Players must also have a Var that is at least two inches in diameter that is worn as part of their costuming. It may be any shape and made of any material. The Var is to be adorned with decorations to detail each vow the Realmsworn has taken. How this is done is an individual decision (e.g., gems, feathers, or string).

Realmsworn facial prosthetics can be made from many types of materials. Common materials include latex, molded resin, modeling foam, or EVA foam. If there is a medium you prefer that you think will hold up to being in combat and running around, go for it! To attach the prosthetics, most players use spirit gum or prosaid. If you’d prefer to start with something purchased instead of making your own, you may have some luck finding facial costume prosthetics in a local store or online and repurposing them for your needs.

If you’re working with latex prosthetics, consider using a foundation that matches your skin tone and using this to blend the base of the appliance with your skin. This will add a nice element of realism for your facial protrusions.

If you're feeling stumped for ideas on your prosthetics or your Var, feel free to speak to your local chapter, or check out images of Realmsworn on official Refuge social media.

Roleplaying a Realmsworn

The description of Realmsworn above gives an overview of generic Realmsworn culture. We want you to fill in the blanks and make alterations if it makes sense with your character concept. Feel free to reach out to your local chapter since they may have further details on Realmsworn culture in that particular Realm. Being armed with this knowledge can help bring your character to life and help you dive into immersive roleplaying. Please note that there are some absolute expectations for Realmsworn roleplay which we'll detail below. These were designed to help Realmsworn feel like a cohesive species without being so restrictive that they stifled creativity and uniqueness. After all, we want you to love your character concept and have lots of fun!

If you're thinking of playing a Realmsworn, you may find it helpful to start with the essence of the species and develop your ideas from there. By doing this you will be able to answer some key questions about who your character is in the Realms of Refuge and be prepared for the experiences you may have while playing that character. This will help make roleplaying your character feel more natural.

The first essential aspect of the Realmsworn is their commitment to the Primal Vow. Most characters will have already sworn the Primal Vow in the past. If, however, you decide that your character concept includes having not sworn the Primal Vow, that should be an actively pursued goal for your character. Showing up without a Var or with a Var with no decorations will appear very odd. The same is true for a character who ends up changing from a different species into a Realmsworn. One of the first things they would seek out is to construct a Var and swear the Primal Vow. Seeking out local Realmsworn for guidance could be an excellent roleplaying opportunity.

Part of the Primal Vow involves protecting the Realm from Elemental and Extraplanar creatures. Eventually you will encounter them. Think about how you would react in that situation. Some Realmsworn may be zealots in this regard and seek to actively destroy one of these creatures in a frontal assault as soon as they can see them. Others may be conniving and wait for the opportune moment to strike. Conversely, a level-headed or thoughtful Realmsworn might give an Elemental or Extraplanar creature a chance to prove themselves, despite their suspicions. If the creature can prove it is not a threat to the Realm, the Realmsworn may feel they have upheld the Primal Vow and leave them alone.

The other part of the Primal Vow a Realmsworn must uphold is to defend the Realm. This is intentionally open for interpretation. Think about how your Realmsworn would carry this out. A lot of interesting ideas can emerge from this! Perhaps they adventure to gain the strength they need to protect others. Perhaps they serve a brutal tyrant loyally since a united army is the best defence against a horde of invading Elementals. Some Realmsworn may feel that necromancy is a threat to the wellbeing of the Realm and seek to eradicate it. Others may embrace the power necromancy offers as the best tool for fighting off Extraplanar creatures.

Next up is the idea that Realmsworn believe service creates strength. How this is interpreted is up to you with one exception: you cannot choose to just serve yourself! Pick a higher purpose/cause and build a fun concept to run with! If you want to be a benevolent knight, this is where you might find your calling. Someone who is a real do-gooder might



think it means that you should serve everyone in the community (or specifically the needy) in order to strengthen and uplift the whole village. Some may choose to serve ideals such as serving as a defender and steward of nature to protect the Realm or as a loyal agent of the nobility, upholding the laws of the land. Realmsworn with a more malevolent or self-serving bent may interpret it to mean that serving the truly worthy elite or those who can reward service with great rewards is the best way to defend the Realm.

Finally, when it comes to roleplay, nothing is more core to a Realmsworn than the vows they have sworn. Think about what vows your character may have made before they started adventuring. This will help add depth to your character. Remember that a Realmsworn is proud of the vows they have sworn. Your Var is prominently displayed and is an easy conversation piece so think of good stories to explain any vows you may start with. Also think about what sorts of things would inspire you to swear a new vow. Remember that vows are permanent, so think carefully before you take on the burden of any additional vows! When a vow is sworn, remember that it is a burden borne willingly. Realmsworn vows aren't contracts with clever loopholes where responsibility can be skirted. Quite the opposite, in fact. Perhaps your character carries deep shame because they begin as a vow-breaker and your initial quest is to redeem yourself. Also keep in mind that you could be forced into a situation where different vows you have sworn come into conflict. Think about how you would try to resolve this and how you would prioritize your vows if you were forced to. This could be an intense and rewarding roleplaying experience if it happened at an event!

Just because Realmsworn honor their vows does not mean all Realmsworn live honorable lives. If you want to play a magnanimous character who never tells a lie, feel free! It certainly would make for challenging roleplay. However, if you want to be a cutthroat brigand, there is no reason you can't. Lie, swindle, and steal to your heart's content! Perhaps you're part of a guild of thieves and have sworn a vow to never harm or steal from another member of the guild. Giving someone your word or making a promise is not the same as swearing a vow. A cunning Realmsworn may choose to exploit the vulnerabilities of the weak and gullible. However, it is imperative to remember that a Realmsworn would never mislead or misconstrue when it comes to swearing a vow.

Hopefully some of these ideas help you round out a concept for playing a Realmsworn. We look forward to seeing how you choose to answer the Call of the Realm at an event!