

Kiir'Tel'Quessir (The Elfstones Of Aryvaandar)

Among The Masked Mages most prized possessions, the *elfstones* are a magic from the old world – known as *Kiir'Tel'Quessir*, or “jewels of the people” among elves. Created by Faerûn’s first high magi and the fledgling priesthoods of the Seldarine, who bound into them a magic that existed before the elves first walked the woodlands of the multiverse. There are ten *elfstones*, three sets of three (blue, green, and red) and a lone solitary *black elfstone*.

The power of these *elfstones* is measured by the strength of he who wields them. The stones are grouped in sets of three; there was a reason for this. Each stone represented a part of the holder: one stone for the user’s heart (Constitution), one stone for the user’s body (Strength), one stone for the user’s mind (Intelligence & Wisdom). For the magic to be given life, all three must unite as one, acting in concert – three individual strengths joining as one. The success of the holder in employing the *elfstones* was a measure of his ability to unite those strengths. When done properly, the power released can be very great, as described below:

Driving inward he smashed aside the barrier that stood between himself and the power of the stones, smashed it aside through strength of will born of desperation and need. Reaching down within the heart of the elfstones, he brought them to life at last. Brilliant blue light flared up from his clenched hand, gathered itself, then burst forward to strike the demon. He took himself further into the stones, feeling their power intensely. Everything around him grew hazy with their glow, and the elfstones lashed out at the demon. The creature could not withstand the elven magic. Its massive form erupted in flames and became a pillar of blinding light. For an instant it burned deep blue in the night, then exploded into ash and was gone.

Ancient elven magic is nothing to be toyed with, however; it can prove to be more dangerous than the evil it was created to protect against. Our histories have left us with that warning, if little else. The magic may act against not only the body, but the spirit as well. Wounds of the body may be treated, but what of wounds that go deeper?

Each of the three sets of *elfstones* serve a different purpose. The *blue elfstones* (Kiira'Tel'Inisach, or “seeking stones”) are the seeking stones. Possession of the *blue elfstones* enables the holder to find that which was hidden from him merely by willing it to be so, as though under the effects of the spell *find the path*. The *red elfstones* (Kiira'Tel'Talas, or “gemstones of the soul”) are the life stones, or the soul stones, which give the power to peer into a person’s soul, and detect the presence of good and evil (as the wizard spells). They can also restore life in death, as the spells *raise dead*, *resurrection*, or even the *Suyoll* high magic ritual (‘the revival’) which can purge the evil from a beings heart or restore the undead to life. The last set of *elfstones*, the *green elfstones* (Kiira'Tel'Nias, or “gemstones of alliance”, are the summoning stones and they allow their wielder to summon all manner of creatures to his aid, both magical and mundane. This functions identically to the priest spells *call aerial beings* and *call woodland beings*, the magic-user *monster summoning* spells (I-VIII), or even the *Saloh'Cint'Nias* high magic ritual (‘the gift of alliance’).

In addition to their special purpose, all the *elfstones* possess the common characteristic of offering the holder protection against other magics and things created of magic and sorcery. But the extent of that protection – indeed, the extent of the power of the stones – was dependent entirely on the strength of character of the holder. This protection comes in the form of ravening fire which the wielder can release from the stones. An *elfstone* wielder can ordinarily release a maximum amount of *elfstone fire* in a round equal in spell levels to his Constitution divided by 55 minus the sum of his Strength, Intelligence and Wisdom scores. (Note that if the sum of these ability scores exceeds 54, the result could be 0 or -1 through -20. 1 is used in their staid for all such results). If used as a fiery weapon, this fire does a base 2d8 points of damage per spell level to targets. The range of *elfstone fire* is limited by the wielder’s line of sight, not by distance. The wielder must make a successful attack roll (using the normal attack score for his or her character class) whenever a destructive bolt of fire is released at any mobile target more than 10 feet distant. Bolts of fire from an *elfstone* that miss harm something else (including surrounding terrain), but the intended target is unscathed.

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Targets struck by fire from the elfstones take the same damage whether the contact is slight or square-on, but damage is modified as follows: Nonmagical targets are allowed a saving throw vs. spell for half damage. Undead beings that drain life energy (experience levels) make this save at a +2 bonus but are not allowed a saving throw at all if their life forces are sustained by magic and not by the life forces they drain (in other words, a vampire is allowed a saving throw, but a lich is not.) No creature that is created or sustained by magic (such as most undead beings) is allowed this saving throw – and neither are enchanted creatures, such as nonmagic-using warriors who have had protective spells cast on them, or beings who are bearing active magical items. Armor, shields and the like are for this purpose always considered “on,” even if any special powers are not currently being used; wands and the like are considered active if they have been fired within a previous turn.

The Black Elfstone: Unlike the other *elfstones*, the *black elfstone* (Kiir'Tel'Ahnvae, or “night stone”) is a single stone, not part of a set. It is absolutely black, so black in fact that it seems to drink in light nearby. It was the creation of the mad Coronal Ivósaar Vyshann and Malkizid, “The Branded King.” The unbridled power of this stone is almost unimaginable. Its power is that of *absorption*. However, unlike most relics designed to absorb magic, *the black elfstone* is almost boundless – limited in its extent only by the wielder’s line of sight. When unleashed, all magic and all life within its range is greedily absorbed, as described below:

He could feel the dark pulse of the elfstone against his palm. Summoning every last ounce of strength and determination that remained to him, he reached forth into the heart of the dark magic and called forth its power. The black elfstone had been awaiting his summons, anticipating it, linked to him from the moment of its taking, master to slave with the roles not yet determined. Pulsing with expectation, its magic surged from between his fingers in a swath of non-light, a black void that swallowed up everything in its path. It smashed everything. It devoured men and monsters to ash, then stole away their lives and fed them back into the holder of the stone.

He shuddered and cried out as the elfstone’s magic returned to him, imbued with the lives of its victims. Deep into his body went the evil of his enemies and the killing force of their fire. All of their dark intent and wicked need surged through him, filling him, ravaging him. He recognized in that instant the secret of the black elfstone’s power – to negate the power of other magics, to steal them away, to make them his own. But the price was hideous, for the power stolen became the power of the elfstone’s holder and changed him forever.

It was over in seconds. The hole of the enemy force that had confronted him was destroyed. On the sweep of the crater slope there were only bit of clothing and weapons and small piles of ash. In the air, there was the smell of burning flesh. Across the surface of the still crater waters, there were ripples from the passing of the black elfstone’s heat. He dropped to his knees, the expended magic roiling through him. He could feel it eating away at his body and spirit, reducing them to dust. There was nothing he could do to stop it. He was being destroyed and made over. The black elfstone tumbled from his nerveless fingers onto the rocks and lay still. Its non-light had gone out. Its pulsing had ceased.

While anyone can unleash the magic of the *black elfstone*, few can hope to control it and fewer still can hope to survive its effects. In order to control it and direct the *absorption* at specific targets, one must have a cumulative Strength, Constitution, Intelligence, and Wisdom of at least 72 and the character must be free of internal conflict and resolved of will to exert his control over the *elfstone’s* power. The wielder suffers 1d20 points of damage for every spell level, XP level, or HD absorbed, minus his intelligence score. Those with an Intelligence of greater than 20 still suffer 1 point of damage for each level of spells absorbed exceeding his normal spell limit. If the wielder survives the *absorption* process, he learns and is able to cast or record all of the spells drained.

