

Madness is a sword borne of brimstone and treachery ages ago, forged in the depths of Cania by Mephistopheles himself. It stands as a material testament to the fate of those foolish enough to attempt to trick the archdevil, destined to either wreak destruction or drive its owner to insanity.

Thousands of years ago, an elven warrior, Mhaenal Birieth, fought his way down to the eighth layer of hell to challenge the archdevil to a duel in exchange for some of his power. The terms: If Mhaenal was able to best Mephistopheles in the duel, Mephistopheles would have to craft a weapon containing his essence: A powerful blade Mhaenal would use to unite the Material Plane under his rule. After a long and bloody fight, Mephistopheles emerged victorious and prepared to banish Mhaenal from the Nine Hells, as “any creature that is brave enough to challenge my strength and match it is one that has earned my respect”. But Mhaenal revealed his true plan at the last moment: According to the words of the deal, he did not have to defeat Mephistopheles— merely best him, for however long. Since Mhaenal had successfully outmaneuvered him for a few moments in the duel, Mephistopheles was forced to honor the exact words of the deal.

But Mephistopheles is not a devil who enjoys being tricked. He kept his part of the deal and forged a sword for Mhaenal— a sword created from all the deepest, most chaotic parts of himself. A sword built to drive its wielder to insanity. Mhaenal emerged from the Nine Hells with the sword believing himself one of the only creatures to ever outsmart the devil.

Mhaenal began his journey of conquest with the sword of Mephistopheles in hand, felling entire kingdoms under the might of his new weapon. But not long after his quest had begun, the dark energy of the sword did its creator’s work. With every village Mhaenal leveled to the ground, every castle he invaded, every ruler he struck down, the weapon lodged itself deeper into his psyche, corrupting his mind and driving him mad.

Mhaenal became obsessed with the power of the sword, refusing to let it fall from his hand even to sleep. He was totally convinced that any creature who came near him was trying to take the blade from him, and cut down friends and foes alike in attempts to protect his “dearest treasure”. None could defeat him, and his mind thought only of two things: His sword and the blood he could shed with it.

He met his end disgracefully— truly insane, Mhaenal was leading his armies towards the last kingdom of the material plane when he and his men made camp for the night in the mountains. Mhaenal set up to sleep in a cave with his two remaining

generals when he discovered a deep pool of water, and his own reflection in it. Unable to recognize himself in his madness, he believed another had stolen his blade and attacked. His generals watched as Mhaenal drowned in the pool and his body— along with the sword— sunk into the depths.

The two men made a pact with one another to hide the location of Mhaenal's body along with the sword, so that no man would be driven mad by its power ever again. But the story of Mhaenal and his sword persisted through the ages, and the blade became known as Madness— a legendary weapon lost to time itself.

Thousands of years passed before Madness was discovered again. By this time, it was no more than a fairy tale: A warning for adventurers who became too consumed by conquest. But it was found. Urthimir, a half-orc conquest paladin, was camping for the night when he noticed a glimmer at the bottom of the pool he'd camped beside. He dove in and retrieved the sword Madness, and the process began once more, as if it had never ended.

Urthimir now wields Madness from the depths of the cave, in a temple he and his followers have built to honor Madness' resting place. They all have sworn to protect the sword and its master to their death, and Urthimir treats it as if it were his god.