

# Eshebala

## (Queen of the Foxwomen, the Vixen Queen, Lady Kitsune)

### Lesser Power of the Abyss, CE

PORTFOLIO:	Vanity, charm, greed, cunning, objectification, vulgar and obscene art, werefoxes, wolfweres
ALIASES:	None
DOMAIN NAME:	193rd Layer/Vulgarea
SUPERIOR:	None
ALLIES:	Cegilune, Loviatar, Malar, Mask, Tlazolteotl
FOES:	Aphrodite, Artemis, Balador, Baldur, Ferrix, Hanali Celanil, Lliira, Nanna-Sin, Sharess, Sehanine Moonbow, Selûne, Sune, Verenestra, the Seldarine, the Celestial Bureaucracy
SYMBOL:	Vixen
WOR. ALIGN.:	LE, NE, CE

Few powers are as self-absorbed as the beautiful and cunning queen of the werefoxes and wolfweres, Eshebala (eh-SHEH-bah-lah). She embodies the fleeting satisfaction felt at acquiring objects of art and beauty when the possessor has no ability to recognize their true worth, and the constant pursuit of that feeling by desiring that which others have. She values others only in ways use them to directly benefit her, and treats them as little more than disposable and a means to an end. For all of her beauty it is only skin deep, masking the cruelty in her heart and her vulgar and prurient desires.

Myths surrounding Eshebala are found throughout the multiverse and in many pantheons, human and nonhuman alike. In all, they portray the Vixen Queen as the female counterpart to Daragor's evil. Few such myths describe her origins, with those that make mention indicating that they are offspring or manifestations of the bestial side that civilized peoples try to suppress. Eshebala's role is especially prominent in elven myth, and perhaps the central nature of artistry and beauty to elven life spawned or contributed to her obsession with such matters. In some ways she is a dark reflection of the elven powers Hanali Celanil and Sehanine Moonbow, representing a corruption of the love and moonlight provided by the pair, although if there truly is a connection between them, it is unknown. What is known is that all myths label Daragor her sibling, and there is great enmity between them; so well-represented in myth is this conflict that it is featured in the constellations of many worlds. However, a subtle thread in these myths is that the enmity and conflict hide a forbidden, incestuous desire between the pair that is only rarely made explicit.

Eshebala has few complex relations outside of the conflict with her brother Daragor; she sees most other deities as either those she can use or those who have spurned her charm or obvious superiority. As a rule she despises goddesses of beauty and love, seeing them as soft and obviously inferior to her own magnificence. She expects them to be obsequious to her, and when they aren't, they typically earn her eternal hatred. She has seduced, or attempted to seduce, many male deities, but none have rejected her as the beautiful and charismatic Balder; in turn, Eshebala takes special delight in pursuing and slaying his priests when she can. As a goddess of lycanthropes, she also considers rule over the moon to be her rightful domain, and holds lunar deities who refuse to acknowledge her position in furious contempt. She of course despises Balador, but the full brunt of the Vixen Queen's hatred is reserved for Ferrix. She sees the Huntress as a spoiled little girl who plays at having womanly charms, and calls her naught but a "mewling kitten" when speaking of her. For her part, Ferrix reciprocates this enmity. Finally, she seeks to wrest the fox spirits known as the hu hsien from the Celestial Bureaucracy, viewing them as related to the foxwomen, both in demeanor and outlook. To them she is known as Lady Kitsune, a queen among their kind, and has slowly been siphoning their fealty from the Jade Emperor and his ministers. As the Emperor has yet to take action, it appears there is still a debate among his advisors on how best to handle the situation.

To an extent it is a wonder the Vixen Queen has any allies at all, given the way she treats other powers. Most of those she maintains are with deities who have little overlap with her or those willing to flatter her to achieve their goals. She currently holds an alliance with Tlazolteotl,

goddess of vice and temptation, despite her beauty and indecent nature. The nature of this alliance is unknown, but suspected to be part of a temporary plot to seduce another power that has offended one or both of the goddesses. A similar situation appears to hold between the Vixen Queen and Loviatar. Despite the sinister beauty of the Maiden of Pain, Eshebala relishes the delicious tortures Loviatar creates and eagerly inflicts them on her own captives. Of male deities, Eshebala has long consorted with Malar; she sees little threat from his dominion over evil lycanthropes in general as she seeks to attract only refined and civilized and cares nothing for the beastly marauders he governs. This alliance appears to be primarily one related to her conflict with Daragor, with Eshebala seeking to either make her brother jealous of her attentions or cause the pair to fight over their followers. Either way it has yet to bear the fruit she wishes. Eshebala has also had a long dalliance with Mask, although to what end is not known. The only other power she seems to have a stable positive relationship with is Cegilune. The Vixen Queen has been known to trade the souls of former lovers and interloping tanar'ri to the Hag Goddess as larva, for unknown benefits in exchange; some sages believe it was Cegilune's magic that allowed Eshebala to gain dominance of the wolfweres, but the evidence for this supposition is lacking. Interestingly, the Hag Goddess's dominion over dark lunar magics doesn't seem to cause a conflict between the pair, possible because of some flattery or lip service she pays to the vain Vixen Queen. Regardless, both appear to mutually benefit from the relation, for the time being at least.

To all outward appearances, Eshebala's realm in the Abyss is a respite from the horrors on other layers. She dwells in a grand villa deep within a great forest, built of expensive marble and covered in gold and jewels. Attending her within this palace are innumerable werefox petitioners, and she always keeps a coterie of at least a dozen charmed males of great handsomeness and beauty around her. However, close observation of her estate reveals the jewels and gold that decorates the place gaudy and gauche, while the innocuous appearance of the artwork and sculpture hides scenes of debauchery, carnality, and death. Despite this, visitors brave enough to risk their lives and souls can attempt to gain the favor of the vixen queen through the offering of great flattery and enormous wealth; those who offend her are liable to be subjected to the great cruelties she delights in before their eventual death and consumption by the Vixen Queen and her followers.

Beyond her great palace, and scattered amongst the trees of the layer can be found far smaller villas, isolated houses, and idyllic villages, and no tanar'ri roam the layer openly. Visitors can often find a warm welcome at the estates and village inns, but this is all a façade. Handsome males will be charmed by the resident foxwomen and other petitioners of the Vixen Queen, and those deemed not worth keeping as trophies are tortured and eaten or frightened into fleeing into the woods to be hunted by wolfweres and other vicious creatures. The time it takes for these actions to take place varies by the whims of Eshebala and her petitioners, so visitors aware of these dangers never know if they will be turned on in hours or days; as such, some travelers consider it worth the risk if they need to hide for a short time from the tanar'ri. This whimsy can also give enough time to the unsuspecting to detect the signs that not all is as it seems; close inspection of the beauty of the realm reveals the hidden vulgarity underlying everything. Any visitors who manage to escape the traps of this realm once are never allowed to do so again should they return. Interestingly, it is said that there are some tanar'ri hiding within the woodlands who have escaped death at the hands of the wolfweres and foxwomen; whether they would be willing to bargain with other visitors in exchange for a way out is anyone's guess, however.

Eshebala is a frequent but irregular visitor to the Prime Material Plane, sending an avatar for sport or hunting when she grows bored and jaded with her current possessions. On these trips, she sets her sights on handsome males, pursuing them with illusions, trickery, and charm. While the Vixen Queen sometimes takes charmed paramours back to the Abyss for a time, more often she disposes of her victims in most horrible ways once she has had her fun. Her preferred method involves immobilizing a victim, and then dispelling her charms and illusions before slowly devouring the unfortunate male by carving strips of flesh off with her silver dagger. Occasionally she pays visits to females she has infected with lycanthropy for gossip, while demanding to be the center of attention, flattery, and adulation. Her favorite targets of infection are human and elven women proud of their beauty and virtuous demeanor.

On any trip that she finds her path crossing that of another deity, she is quick to abandon her endeavors and return to the Abyss unless she is absolutely sure she has not been noticed. Even then she will rarely stay any longer than it takes to determine if the other power is a threat to her followers; should they pose a danger, she does not interfere, but may offer a warning to her flock.

## Eshebala's Avatar (Illusionist 28, Bard 16, Fighter 14)

Eshebala typically appears in her hybrid vixen form or as a lovely, young elven maiden. She has never been known to appear in fox form, although it is believed she can. Her vixen form has spectacular silver fur, and eyes of golden amber. Her elven form has long, luxurious silver or red hair and intense blue eyes; in either form she wears expensive silk gowns that are light and breezy, while also being low-cut and exceptionally provocative. She always wears a variety of extremely expensive gold and silver jewelry, set with emeralds, sapphires, topazes, and rubies. She always carries a gem-studded silver hand mirror for self-admiration. She draws her spells from all schools save necromancy, but favors illusion/phantasms and enchantment/charms almost exclusively.

AC 0; MV 15/21; HP 130; THAC0 7; #AT 5/2 or 7/2

Dmg 1d8+5 (*longsword* +2, +3 STR, +2 spec. bonus in *longsword*) and 3d6 (*bite*)

MR 20%; SZ M (5 feet tall)

STR 18/10, DEX 18, CON 15, INT 16, WIS 17, CHA 20

Spells W: 7/7/7/7/7/7/7/7\*

Saves PPDM 8; RSW 3; PP 5; BW 7; Sp 4

\* Numbers assume one extra illusion/phantasm spell per spell level.

**Special Att/Def:** If unable to avoid melee combat, Eshebala uses *Fleshcarver*, a silver *long sword* +2 that can become a dagger at will. In vixen form, she can also deliver a savage bite for 3d6 points of damage, and she is 90% likely to transmit lycanthropy to any human, elf, or half-elf she bites. This affliction can be prevented as with normal werefox lycanthropy, but the spells must be cast by a 16th level priest.

Eshebala can charm person at will, and her beauty is so entrancing that saving throws are made with a -2 penalty. In addition, this power halves the normal elven resistance to charms. Three times per day she can sing a song of *lethargy*, as a wolfwere. This song acts as a *slow* spell for 3d4 rounds to all who hear it within 60 feet and fail a saving throw versus spell with a -2 penalty. Once the effect has begun, it cannot be countered. In rural and sylvan environments she is able to *pass without trace*, and she is 95% undetectable in undergrowth when evading pursuit or seeking to hide.

The Vixen Queen is immune to all enchantment/charm and illusion/phantasm spells, as well as poison and paralyzation. She can only be hit by weapons of +2 enchantment or better, although silver weapons of lesser enchantment deal half damage. She is always accompanied by 1d4+1 charmed male servitors, detailed in the *Lycanthrope*, Werefox entry in the *MONSTROUS MANUAL*. However, all of her servitors will be of levels 1d6+3, as well as being 90% likely to possess a magical weapon, 70% likely to possess suitable magical armor, and 10% likely per level to possess 1d2 minor miscellaneous magical items appropriate to their class.

## Other Manifestations

The Vixen Queen has never been known to manifest her power in aid of a follower, but on rare occasions when a human, elven, or half-elven woman invokes her name, she sends a must fox-like force to nip them. This bite causes no serious harm, but carries with it an 80% chance to inflict werefox lycanthropy. The invocation that arouses her attention need not be a request for aid; she is just as likely to manifest this power on a woman merely mentioning her name. She has no other known manifestations.

Eshebala is served primarily by silver foxes and incarnates of covetousness, envy, lust, and pride, as well as firestars, fox hengeyokai, gemstone golems, glass golems, jackalweres, quasits, shadow hounds, sirines, and wolfweres. She displays her favor through the discovery of gems and jewelry of all sorts, especially those made of silver. She displays her displeasure through the instant tarnishing of jewelry or the discovery that seeming valuable materials are actually paste or glass. Both cases are, however, quite rare.

## The Church

CLERGY:	Clerics, specialty priests, wizards, enchanters, bards
CLERGY'S ALIGN.:	LE, NE, CE
TURN UNDEAD:	C: No, SP: No, W: No, Enc: No, B: No
CMND. UNDEAD:	C: Yes, SP: No, W: No, Enc: No, B: No

All clerics and specialty priests of Eshebala receive religion (lycanthrope) as a bonus nonweapon proficiency.

The clergy of the Vixen Queen interacts little with other faiths, focusing almost entirely on their own goals and schemes. Those interactions they do have tend to be in the form of petty rivalries or jealousies with individual priests, or the charming and subversion of handsome male priests, especially from the clerics of deities of beauty. They also often ally themselves with packs of wolfweres in order to oppose Daragor's werewolves. In general, the clergy of the Vixen Queen goes unnoticed by other faiths unless they interact directly; even then, her priesthood may not appear to be any different from common werefoxes.

Eshebala's priesthood builds no temples, as they are much too vain to create grand edifices dedicated to another being. Instead, they maintain shrines in their abodes that look very much like dressing tables, with large mirrors and small items useful to enhancing one's own beauty. Worship at these vanities involves long prayers that are verbose in their descriptions of the Vixen Queen's personal qualities and beauty, all the while the priest looks at themselves in the mirror. The vanities always make copious use of silver, and include some fox-related item, such as a stolen pendant or figurine, if possible.

Novices in the service of Eshebala are known as Kits, while full priests of the Vixen Queen are known as Sharp-Ears. The priesthood is autonomous and independent in nature with no hierarchy, so each priest crafts her own title to enhance her prestige and ego. Specialty priests are called vixens. The clergy consists entirely of females (100%); males are never allowed to join and never granted spells by Eshebala. Specialty priests dominate the priesthood (82%), with small numbers of clerics (8%), bards (4%), wizards (4%), and enchanters (2%) filling out the remainder. Eshebala's clergy are drawn overwhelmingly from werefoxes (90%), other lycanthropes (5%), wolfweres (3%), hu hsien (1%), and humans, elves, half-elves, and other races (1%). Note that races such as dwarves, gnomes, halflings, orcs, goblins, and the like are never allowed into her clergy, but other generally human- or elf-like races such as some giants, sirines, hengeyokai, and spirit folk.

**Dogma:** Beauty deserves the best, and foxwomen are the most beautiful mortals in existence. Surround yourself with the most exquisite examples of art, jewelry, furniture, and companionship, and let nothing stand in the way of acquiring it. Everything exists for your own beauty and pleasure; use it all as you wish and indulge in life's physical pleasures. Honor your queen, the most beautiful of deities, and treat her as is her due.

**Day-to-Day Activities:** Eshebala's clergy spend their days as normal for werefoxes, pampering themselves and plotting ways to gain those things that catch their eye, especially in the realm of male companionship. In fact, they have no particular duties as clergy, unless the Vixen Queen herself shows up, in which case they are required to pamper and flatter her, and shower her with all manner of gifts, attention, and praise.

**Important Ceremonies/Holy Days:** Eshebala's priesthood observes no formal ceremonies or holy days, although those who were infected with lycanthropy at Eshebala's hands may celebrate the anniversary of it with a spectacular feast, often including victims they've tired of.

**Major Centers of Worship:** There are no sites that the Vixen Queen's followers make pilgrimages to, nor are there any temples that draw her clergy to a central location.

**Affiliated Orders:** The Eshebalan clergy sponsor no religious orders of any sort.

**Priestly Vestments:** As the Vixen Queen's priesthood maintains no religious rites, they have no formal priestly garb. When they feel the need to display their authority and prestige as priests, they favor loose, light dresses and robes of expensive cloth and revealing cut, with a considerable amount of valuable jewelry. In all, this often comes off as gaudy or vulgar. Colors are slightly more likely to be silvers and red-orange, although whatever the local region considers fashionable is

common as well. The holy symbol used by the priesthood is a silver hand mirror or silver fox head pendant.

**Adventuring Garb:** When the Eshebalan priesthood travels, they favor expensive cloaks and traveling dresses, but they attempt to travel by carriage if possible. If combat is unavoidable, they prefer magical protections such as rings and bracers, using armor only as an absolute last resort, with many choosing not to use such common items in principle. Their weaponry is always elegant, with rapiers, daggers, and long and short swords preferred.

## Specialty Priests (Vixens)

REQUIREMENTS:	Wisdom 10, Charisma 16
PRIME REQ.:	Wisdom, Charisma
ALIGNMENT:	CE
WEAPONS:	Any, but see below
ARMOR:	Any up to chain mail, but see below
MAJOR SPHERES:	All, animal, chaos, charm, creation, healing, protection, summoning, sun (reversed and moon-related only), thought
MINOR SPHERES:	Divination, necromantic, plant
MAGICAL ITEMS:	Same as clerics, plus any <i>charm</i> -related items
REQ. PROFS:	Acting (PHBR7)
BONUS PROFS:	Singing or musical instrument

- Vixens must be female lycanthropes, wolfweres, jackalweres, humans, elves, or half-elves, although the vast majority are werefoxes.
- Vixens may multiclass as vixen/bards or vixen/thieves if allowable by race. Vixen/bards are a special exception to the alignment restriction that bards must be partially neutral; they are allowed to be Chaotic Evil.
- Non-lycanthropic vixens must become infected with werefox lycanthropy to advance past 4th level, gaining no experience beyond that which is required for 4th until they do so.
- All armor, weapons, and equipment used and owned by a vixen must be of high quality and expensive. When purchasing new gear, they pay twice the regular cost for the goods; this in no way confers additional benefits or effects, for the equipment is no better than normal, but looks expensive. Such items may be exquisite or gaudy; it matters not so long as the increased value is obvious. This holds true for items they find or receive during their careers; they would disdain a plain, unadorned *sword* +4 in favor of a blade with a gem-studded hilt. Armor must be similarly valuable, with the sole exception of elven chain mail, which will always be favored over other types of gear. As such, they will not use a simple, rough-hewn club, but would be pleased to have a truncheon made of rare, highly-polished wood despite there being no difference in the weapon's damage or usefulness.
- Vixens can *charm* (as the 1st-level wizard spell *charm person*) male humans, elves, half-elves, and very similar creatures (including most lycanthropes when in humanoid form, but not dwarves, halflings, orcs, goblins, ogres, etc.) once per day. The target receives a -1 penalty to their saving throw for every point of Charisma the vixen has above 16 (-1 at 17, -2 at 18, etc.).
- At 3rd level, vixens can cast *command* (as the 1st-level priest spell) or *sleep* (as the 1st-level wizard spell) once per day.
- At 5th level, vixens can cast *intensify sensation* (as the 3rd-level priest spell) once per day. Vixens favor using this on creatures they have *charmed* when they decide to kill them, turning intense pleasure into intense pain before their victim expires.
- At 8th level, vixens can cast *slow* (as the 3rd-level wizard spell) once per day.
- At 10th level, vixens can cast *domination* (as the 5th-level wizard spell) once per day.
- At 13th level, vixens can cast *mass charm* (as the 8th-level wizard spell) once per week.

## Eshebalan Spells

In addition to the spells listed below, priests of the Vixen Queen can cast the 3rd-level priest spell *intensify sensation*, detailed in *Powers and Pantheons* in the entry for Sharess.

### 2nd Level

#### Song of Slumber (Pr 2; Enchantment/Charm)

Sphere:	Charm
Range:	0
Components:	V or S
Duration:	5 rds./level
Casting Time:	1 rd.
Area of Effect:	Special
Saving Throw:	None

This spell is a slightly more powerful version of the wizardly *sleep* spell. To cast this spell, the priest must either sing or play a music instrument for a full round. Upon completion, all those within a 30-foot radius immediately fall into a deep sleep, unless their Hit Dice are greater than 6+4. No saving throw is allowed to avoid this effect; although it can affect no more than 2d8 total Hit Dice (ignoring modifiers to the scores). Creatures with more Hit Dice than 6+4 are completely unaffected, and creatures may roll any applicable resistance. All other limitations are as detailed in the *sleep* spell.

### 3rd Level

#### Eshebala's Charm (Pr 3; Enchantment/Charm)

Sphere:	Charm
Range:	10 yds.
Components:	V, S
Duration:	Special
Casting Time:	6
Area of Effect:	1 person
Saving Throw:	Neg.

A more powerful version of the 1st-level wizard spell *charm person*, *Eshebala's charm* can easily affect even elves. In most respects, including the sorts of creatures it affects, when checks are made against the effects, and the reaction of a charmed creature towards the caster are as that spell. However, creatures resistant to *charm* magics, such as elves and half-elves, get no such resistance against this spell if they are male, while those males with no such resistance suffer a -4 penalty to their saving throws. Further, males with Charisma scores of 14 or greater are *dominated*, as the 5th-level wizard spell.

The caster must sing or play a music instrument while casting this spell, as well as being proficient in whichever method they choose.

#### Foxtrot (Pr 3; Alteration)

Sphere:	Chaos
Range:	0
Components:	V, M
Duration:	1 rd./level
Casting Time:	6
Area of Effect:	The caster
Saving Throw:	None

Much as the 3rd-level wizard spell *blink*, this spell allows the caster to instantaneously move from one point to another. Unlike *blink*, the caster can choose the direction and distance of the movement, to a distance of 5 feet per two levels. The caster need not be able to see the destination, but should they try to *blink* into a solid object, the movement fails entirely and they do not move. In addition, for the duration of the spell, they can move at double their normal rate; this does not increase their number of attacks. Like the wizard spell, the blink happens at an initiative point determined by a roll of 2d8, modified by a -1 per 2 levels of the caster. The priest can choose to either delay their action, or act with the hope the action takes place before the blink. In all other ways, the spell operates as the 3rd-level spell.

The material component for this spell is the priest's holy symbol.