

Hive Hero Contest: 7

Faction/Alter | Solo | In-game Resources

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Hi. I'm Softmints, and over the past 10 years I've made about 250 heroes over the various iterations of my maps. Most of the early ones were pretty terrible, but over the years I've developed a good understanding of what a "hero" is, and should aspire to be, as a component of gameplay across many different maps and genres.

I am not a ladder player, but I have done my best to consider how your heroes might work in that setting, as it is an important element of the contest.

I hope that my explanations of the various judging criteria on your entries will prove useful to you, and help you improve on your future creations. I encourage you to read through some of the other entries, as many users lost marks for similar reasons.

If you have questions about something I said, feel free to PM me on Hive.

However, **my judgments are final**, and marks will not be changed for any reason (unless I have incorrectly summed a total, in which case please contact the organisers).

**On the next page, I discuss some general advice for all contestants.**

Document version 1.3.

## Judging Criteria Post-Mortem and General Advice:

### *Theme:* /10

Most contestants settled for a fairly weak/generic theme. My general advice here is to always blend at least two characteristics when making a hero; even picking two from the hero model is fine. The Priestess of the Moon hero in DotA is a great example of doing this right: her skills use the fact that she's a moon-priestess for two of her skills, but it's acknowledged that she's riding a tiger with her leap skill, and that she's an archer with her arrow skill. That creates a complete sense of character.

Far too many contestants lost marks here because their hero's spells lacked suitable visual/audio feedback. Many spells should have had sound effects, buff and graphics for their DoT buffs, or explosions when projectiles impacted. These little things help make the character feel alive.

### *Role:* /10

I specifically address internal synergy (within the hero's own skills) in this section. Many contestants gave their heroes 3+ skills which do exactly the same thing (usually AoE damage). It is far better to have *one good skill* to accomplish that purpose, and fill out the hero's other skills with *utility*. This avoids redundancy of both theme and effect, and demonstrates a respect for the user's need to get things done in *one* keystroke.

If a hero can solve all its problems by itself, then it is actually *bad* design. If Blood Mage had Flame Strike, plus an AoE slow, that would be boring as there are less complimentary units/heroes to pair that Blood Mage with (such as Sorceress with Slow/Polymorph).

### *Balance:* /10

Here I look at the hero as a component of its faction's army and the War3 game as a whole. (I ended up adjusting the review categories a bit, this does not affect overall score)

I suspect most contestants picked a race based on the theme of their preferred model, rather than how well the hero would fit into that race. There were too few examples of heroes that fit nicely into the race that was chosen for them. Numerical balance was occasionally a concern as well, but overall was pretty good.

### *Creativity:* /10

This varied from person to person; I think it correlates strongly with theme in most cases.

### *Coding:* /10

I also considered usability (tooltips, descriptions, appropriate targeting...) and other aspects of implementation in this category.

The vast majority of submissions used GUI, and many were not multi-instance. In my humble opinion, the multi-instance requirement is too stringent for the diverse skill levels in the Hive's community. I will mention this where it occurs, but not deduct marks.

In practice, I was more bothered by actual gameplay bugs and incorrect/misleading tooltips, which seemed a more reasonable area in which to demand correctness.

### *Awesomeness:* /5

This was a mix of visuals, theme, and execution of the theme.

## CONTESTANT: A VOID

**Goblin Sapper:** Explosive team of Goblin sappers, exceptional at disrupting battles and harrasing opponents with the use of explosives.

*Theme:* 2/10

A very one-dimensional take on the “goblin sapper” theme. For a hero that's full of rockets and bombs, there are no actual explosion special effects. Total let-down.

*Role:* 0/10

This hero can't “disrupt” battles: he has a single-target stun and mines with a *10 second activation delay*. The phoenix fire passive costs an entire skill point and has too low range for harass, while the ultimate is easily stopped by stuns/silence. There is no consistent goal that this hero helps the orcs achieve.

*Balance:* 2/10

The hero is totally impractical to use. It has low strength and can't survive in combat, it has no attack so it can't focus fire priority targets, making it ineffective offensively. Its only source of usefulness are gimmicks which can work when an opponent isn't expecting it, but committing an entire hero pick to it is a sure way to get countered into uselessness. Gimmicks here include mines, and loading the hero into a zeppelin to drop it as a surprise nuke (the hero is not classed as a 'sapper'). Oh, and the ultimate kills the hero, which you must pay to revive. Far Seer and Tauren already provide good AoE damage without that drawback.

*Creativity:* 0/10

All of the abilities already exist in Warcraft III, while Kaboom and Goblin Land Mine are already available to the Orcs via the Goblin Lab.

*Coding:* 1/10

The hero barely meets the requirements of having “two coded skills” at all. The tooltip on Cluster Rocket has the wrong numbers. At least it isn't obviously going to break in multiplayer.

*Awesomeness:* 0/5

Nothing any ladder player hasn't seen before.

*Total:* 5/55

Low-effort submission.

## CONTESTANT: ANGKYSAPUTRA

**Elven Shadow:** Cunning hero. Master at confusing enemies with illusions.

*Theme:* 6/10

I like that this hero is exploring something a bit different for ladder War3; illusions aren't a mechanic that's widely used, and it has some potential. However, the hero has very little presence aside from copies of him popping in and out of the battlefield: his only opportunity to leave an impression (his nuke) has no graphics of note. We're left with no real sense of who or what this Elven Shadow really is.

*Role:* 6/10

The hero is mostly a one-trick pony, where the trick is to right-click. That's not the end of the world, since so is Blademaster, but Elven Shadow has no way to get out of sticky situations or unit-blocking like BM does.

I really dislike that the hero has two passives, especially since they're coupled so tightly with the rest of his kit. Their low percentages at early levels make them undesirable, and not very satisfying to learn. There isn't really an alternative build progression for this hero, you *have* to take Shadow Blade first.

*Balance:* 6/10

It's a tough call on whether this hero fits the Night Elves. True, they don't have illusions, but they do have a blade-wielding fighter with evasion and a skill which damages multiple opponents when he's in the thick of things.

I think a more pressing issue is that his illusion generation relies on him being hit, which is very contrary to what is most likely to happen: dispels or AoE nukes. Druids of the Claw can reasonably provide him with rejuvenation to help him tank, or perhaps Faeries can Mana Flare to punish the casting? Had he a more diverse skill set, with 1-2 utility spells, this would be much less of a problem, and he would be a more engaging and dynamic hero on the whole.

Numerically, Shadow Blade offers 100% uptime of a 90% movement and attack rate slow against enemy heroes, which is a bit nuts.

*Creativity:* 4/10

Most of these abilities bear a close resemblance to DotA's Phantom Lancer, so I can't attribute many points here.

*Coding:* 5/10

It's functional, but awfully inefficient. Creating units is one of the slowest operations in the game, and you do this every time any Elven Shadow gets attacked. It's much better to have one dummy unit per player, and use that to cast each time. I didn't encounter any other problems.

*Awesomeness:* 1/5

Lots of slicing noises, but not much lasting impact. Nothing made me feel like I'd want to try the hero and all the very temporary copies of the hero again.

*Total:*            28/55

Not a bad hero, but not a good one either. You spent four abilities doing one thing: of course the result feels like a lot is missing! Blademaster takes one ability and accomplishes pretty much everything Elven Shadow does, except he can scout, initiate, deal AoE damage, and enjoy spell immunity too. That makes BM dynamic and an interesting component of the game with lots of possibilities. You need to do this too! Focus on having more utility skills, and never having 2+ skills doing the same thing.

## CONTESTANT: COKEMONKEY11

**Blessed Ranger:** Agile hero, adept at killing single enemy heroes, and augmenting bulky allies

*Theme:* 8/10

This hero incorporates a successful blend of the holy, ranger/woodsperson, and archer themes. No one theme dominates the others, there's a nice balance across the hero's skills without themes bleeding into each other. Solid work.

I would have liked to see Arcane Arrows have a different projectile while active: numbers on arrival aren't visually impactful. Holy Sigil's visual effects are too small, and I was not a fan of making the hero semi-transparent while Forestwalk is active – it's easily confused for invisibility.

The ultimate lets me dash around before the blue orb arrives back from the sky, which I dislike. It's flashy, but makes me wonder if the effect is delayed until the orb arrives? There's no buff icon to help me find out. For the least ladder-like skill, the graphics weren't simply lacking: they were misleading.

I am glad you did not put her on Night Elves where she would clash with PotM.

*Role:* 10/10

Blessed Ranger has a clear vision and purpose, which is well executed. The hero wants to be attacking, and particularly high-priority/level targets if she can get them. That feeds into being able to keep some of her army alive via Holy Sigil. Her ultimate allows her to boost her impact with her attack-based skills, while also letting her position herself (close to trees for Forestwalk if that's an option).

*Balance:* 7/10

The hero would have some problems fitting into ladder matches.

Forestwalk is adding +2 situational agility per skill point. That's almost nothing! Also, once air units enter the fray, the vision past trees and cliffs is borderline useless. I think Forestwalk is conceptually and numerically her weakest skill by far (the activation condition is fine), and regretfully locks her into one skill build. I think you had the right idea: attaching utility to Forestwalk so that she isn't useless outside combat, but vision wasn't the right choice.

Arcane Arrows is rightly strong, but I don't think it needs to restore (so much) mana. The skill is “doing everything” for her right now, and she is hardly punished when the enemy interrupts her flow, since it will probably be off cooldown by then.

In practice, Holy Sigil's healing percentage of 50%/60%/70% felt way too low, even when smacking turtles with Arcane Arrows. It could barely keep a footman alive: contrast this with even a level 1 Holy Light. The duration or percentage would have to change here. I can see no point whatsoever in the 1000 range limit for Sigil given the existing limit of a low duration.

She is a nice addition to the human heroes, who lack an agility character, and don't yet have any ranged attack hero. The human casters work well to compensate for her lack of disables and defence mechanisms.

*Creativity:* 10/10

I really like some of the ideas that went into this hero. Being rewarded for focusing fire on a high-level target is a fresh mechanic that is exactly the right level of engagement that ladder needs: neither too micro nor macro. The supplementary skills build well on that core concept.

*Coding:* 9/10

Minor oversight: she can't attack air units! Also if I get an Arcane Arrow charge from hitting something, it won't expire. The ultimate's blue orb won't appear if she stands still after using casting. That's minor though; the code is of an excellent standard.

However, I was not happy about the tooltip and implementation of the ultimate. I expected to be able to dash 1000 range as many times as I liked during the 10 second duration. The dash itself has no indication of how much distance I have left, and honestly, feels out of place in ladder: it's like slippery movement.

I would have implemented this as “up to three dashes of 350 distance each” (or unlimited times on a short cooldown), and make each dash a discrete action which is visually different from regular movement. For example, dashing in a straight line, ignoring pathing, with some ribbon or dummy-unit trails: that would look and feel distinct.

*Awesomeness:* 3/5

I really dig the satisfaction of focusing on one of the enemy's high-priority targets. More satisfying visuals and sound effects would have warranted a higher score here.

*Total:* 47/55

Great hero, and deserving of its mark. It would take some polish and iteration, but this could fit right in with the rest of Blizzard's cast. Impressive stuff.

## CONTESTANT: COSMICAT

**Artificer:** Cunning Hero, adept at controlling combat from a distance and deterring attackers.

*Theme:* 6/10

While I didn't feel like the abilities were a strong match for the name Artificer, I suppose she is technically creating things like an energy bubble, a shield, and a lightning rod. Three of her abilities use lightning; in particular they all recycle the same lightning graphic which was a bit unfortunate. I don't feel like enough of the concept's potential was unlocked.

*Role:* 4/10

There is a really confusing anti-synergy between your ultimate summon which is powerful but can't move, and Energize, which gives enemies the opportunity to run away from it. Static Shield is cool, but I don't think her other skills do enough to make her a high-priority target. Particularly not her ultimate, which is likely to get focused down instead of her anyway. Her ultimate would be great for base harass since it has chaos damage and high life, with a 30 second cooldown. But her other skills don't supplement that.

*Balance:* 6/10

Energize feels very limited in its potential uses, especially considering that it will undo the effects of common Human spells like Slow, Polymorph, Thunder Clap, Banish... The long cast time doesn't make it easy to use in the situations where it might be helpful either. Area damage is already decently covered by existing Human heroes; Blood Mage already has a strong ultimate summon... she doesn't bring enough that's unique to the table. Her numeric values felt very authentic and "balanced" compared to ladder, so good job there.

*Creativity:* 6/10

Her skills are too close to existing ladder abilities: Charged Bolt is nearly identical to Chain/Forked Lightning, while the ultimate is a glorified Serpent Ward. I liked Static Shield, it's a nice twist on the existing thorns mechanic used by Crypt Lord and Keeper of the Grove.

*Coding:* 6/10

The coding is okay, it's customisable and multi-instance, but lacks comments and is sorely inefficient in some aspects. For example, you create a new unit to retaliate to incoming attacks with every attack, and don't clean up the unit afterwards. Avoiding leaked variables is nice, but leaked units are way worse. Energize is a trigger that does exactly what any summoning spell would have done without a trigger. Also, I noticed that occasionally enemy units would be permanently paused while testing, which is a major bug.

*Awesomeness:* 2/5

The ultimate was a nice addition: even though it's simple it feels powerful. Static Shield is quite satisfying, and Charged Bolt is a bit too familiar, but it's not bad.

*Total:* 30/55

It's not a bad hero, but Artificer hasn't really carved a niche for itself, or made the name its own. I would have liked to see Charged Shot being able to hit Lightning Rod for some kind of special effect perhaps; it would be nice if Lightning Rod "brought the hero together" in some sense. The skills simply aren't doing interesting enough things.



## CONTESTANT: DALVYNGER

**Banshee Queen:** Mystical Hero, adept at ice magics.

*Theme:* 6/10

While a little plain, the hero's offensive frost magic theme is well-executed. She oversteps a little on Lich and shares many of the same graphics, which I am not entirely happy with. Frostwave is really cool and satisfying to use, and her icons are visually consistent. I feel like you could have done more with the ghost side of this hero: themed Cold Addiction to be some kind of banshee's curse, her teleport as some kind of haunt... it would have been a good opportunity for visual depth without being essentially Lich 2.0. Her ultimate felt a little out of place for this reason; I had to remind myself she was a banshee.

*Role:* 8/10

I like this hero's agenda: very punishing on fleeing enemies, good consistent harass, and skills which work together nicely. Being able to blink in, combined with Frostwave's larger AoE at close range is a nice simple combo. Her ultimate doesn't seem to work with anything else she has, since she can already slow most targets easily. I don't like that four effects were crammed into Cold Addict. Again, she already has many slows, though magic amplification and mana freeze aren't really enough on their own.

*Balance:* 6/10

I worry a little about some of the values (instant 3.65 second stun from 800 range, and around departure location), but otherwise I feel like the hero was well thought-through. The long-cooldown on the blink and low base movespeed show that the hero has some weaknesses as well as strengths. The cooldowns feel appropriate.

Her skill overlap with DK and Lich is not a strong point in favour of her being a fitting Undead hero, which unfortunately loses some marks.

*Creativity:* 6/10

My problem with the creativity part of this hero is that the skills are *really* close to existing skills. Frostwave is functionally Breath of Frost, Frozen Fate is functionally Animate Dead (but slows, which she has plenty of anyway). I like Cold Addict's mana freeze and damage amplification, but the skill is still going to be used as a slow half the time.

*Coding:* 10/10

Very satisfactory coding, well-commented, configurable, and multi-instance. You missed out on one small opportunity: I was expecting the number of frost orbs over a unit's head to indicate the number of stacks of Cold Addict, but the buff graphic doesn't change.

*Awesomeness:* 3/10

Frostwave and Frozen Fate were very visually rewarding to use, and the hero's skills combo in a simple but comfortable way. She doesn't manage to break out of being a generic frost mage though.

*Total:* 39/55

A pleasant and well-presented hero, with some good ideas and really pretty effects. It fell short on only a few points, such as how the effects of the abilities were allocated across the four skills, the theme being a bit flat (tooltips/descriptions/icons/visuals), and the unfortunate overlap with existing Undead heroes. This is still very solid work though, and demonstrates good hero design sense.

## CONTESTANT: DED1

**Pirate Captain:** Cunning Hero, adept at frustrating enemies and adventurous treasure seeker.

*Theme:* 10/10

A unique and excellent take on a pirate captain! You covered everything from treasure to insults to pirate ships; this hero was a delight to read and explore. Lots of small touches really brought the concept to life, such as the gold-taking animation and sound effects for Walk the Plank, and the attack animation and visible item-carrying on the parrot. That is an effort that I genuinely appreciate. Furthermore, the way the hero is played is actually about pirating, as there are several gold-theft mechanics, and the ultimate lets your units form a crew to raid coastal towns.

*Role:* 7/10

This hero pivots the Human race in a very cool and interesting way. I like that he's able to steal gold from level 1, and finds more ways to do it as he levels. His Warfare passive makes him that bit more effective at early aggression. The parrot gives humans an option for an early air scout unit, again building on early raids.

The ghost ship is an exciting addition: a long-term mechanical ethereal unit for enemies to try and counter. His high base speed works well with having a knockback skill, since he can get around some slower units.

I am concerned about Pirate Captain's overlap with Archmage, as Mass Teleport is also a long-range mass transit skill, and Water Elements also augment early raiding.

There was some natural synergy missing; something like Walk the Plank being physical to compliment Warfare's armour reduction. Not that I would recommend that specific change, but the current synergy is forced. (Parrot responding directly to insults, ghost ship has reveal for the treasure...)

*Balance:* 0/10

One of the challenges of hero design is making a hero that fits within the framework of the game. Here, the game is ladder Warcraft III, and Pirate Captain is a square peg in a round hole. He introduces a whole mini-game of "finding the treasure", he is quite map-dependent with two skills whose effectiveness depends on the presence of water, he turns half the human units into unfamiliar ghostly counterparts, he can steal items...

These things are not inherently bad, but it is not *one* hero's job to change the game this much. This hero is moving the game more towards an altered-melee, which unfortunately means it's not a good fit for melee as described in the judges' criteria for this section.

*Creativity:* 10/10

I'm very satisfied with the level of creativity on this hero, there are lots of engaging mechanics presented in an enjoyable way.

*Coding:* 8/10

The code wasn't perfect: there are often inefficiencies, the angle calculations for Pirate Warfare are messy (but I know angles are a pain), a lot of the variables take a bunch of lengthy if-else branches when a simple “dice\_compare = 70 – (level of Insult)” would do. I was impressed with the volume and the effort. Everything works, your commenting is okay, and there's effort towards multi-instance compatibility as well.

*Awesomeness:* 5/5

Dropping anchor on an enemy settlement with a crew of ghost pirates, a sassy parrot (love the choice of voice set), and dabloons everywhere? I'm sold.

*Total:* 40/55

I like this hero, but it really suffers on one point: it tries to do too much. The contest specified exactly *four* abilities, and I can see that didn't suit you, because every ability has at least two sub-abilities:

- Walk the Plank: Knockback or Steal Gold
- Pirate Warfare: Backstab or Insult or Failed Insult
- Parrot: Free Spirit, Talking Bird, Steal Object, Rumour
- Ghost Ship: Load Units, Pillage Aura, Ghost Skeletons, Corporeal Form, Ensnare, True Sight

The first problem with this approach is how much it lost you on the balance section: you're designing a ladder hero, you need to work within the confines of ladder. If you're adding new content to the tavern, if there are chances within chances (insult failing), if summons have 2+ abilities: you're doing too much.

As much as I enjoy how well you explored the theme, the result is super inelegant because it has so many moving parts. Stripped down, this hero would fare much better. Does Walk the Plank need a knockback, or could it just steal gold? Does Warfare need insults failing? Does it even need the insult part at all? Check out a favourite article of mine about subtractive design at <http://www.sirlin.net/articles/subtractive-design> and I think it will help you identify the parts of your design which are core, and which are baggage.

Overall I had a lot of fun trying this hero out, great job!

## CONTESTANT: DREFURY

**Aracist:** Powerful Hero, adept at wreaking magical havoc.

*Theme:* 5/10

While the hero stayed true to the theme of a stronger sorceress, I wasn't really "feeling the power" from it. Lightning, with lots of blue-ness to complete that arcane feel, but no substance or character.

*Role:* 4/10

The only internal synergy this hero has is magical damage, with more magical damage, mana regen to sustain the spammy skills, and finally more magical damage. The armour and regen from nourish allowing her to draw out fights helps, considering she deals a lot over time, but I get no sense of place from this hero.

*Balance:* 5/10

Area magical damage isn't something humans are exactly lacking in, with Blizzard, Flame Strike, and Thunder Clap already available, but that's what 3/4 of Aracist's skills do. Nourish is a nice supplementary heal, since humans lack area healing (aside from items in the Arcane Vault). The ultimate giving her chaos-typed damage offers her a nice niche, but otherwise she doesn't add anything to the race.

*Creativity:* 3/10

This hero didn't explore any new territory: it's a "hero sorceress" in both skills and model. The ultimate is literally "AoE polymorph"! Three of the skills are area damage, which is unsatisfying considering there's zero interaction between them.

*Coding:* 4/10

While I'm not out to lambast people for not being strong programmers, there was plenty more that could have been done with this hero that was within reach. Aracist suffered from usability issues (Starburst isn't aimed intuitively, the ultimate learn tooltip is outright misleading), and could easily have been improved with simple graphics like a wisp-detonate explosion when Starburst hits.

*Awesomeness:* 1/5

The lightning bolt was nice, but the unwieldy Starburst, underwhelming sheep ultimate, and lack of fresh mechanics was a bit lacklustre.

*Total:* 22/55

In future when designing heroes, I would recommend always blending two themes together. Check the general advice about Theme on this. It creates a much more complete sense of character, and should provide the inspiration to diversify your hero's abilities as well.

For a sorceress, something like playing on her being alluring, and giving her a taunt ability in line with the succubus voice set, could have worked. Graphics can be a great motivator for hero design, don't neglect them!

## CONTESTANT: FOOTMAN16

**Grand Marshall:** Mobile Hero, adept at hunting down enemy heroes and increasing the speed of his allies.

*Theme:* 5/10

The hero sticks acceptably to the theme of a Grand Marshall, but doesn't go out of its way to impress. There's no roaring warcry sound effect, no particular bonus for fighting together as a group or in an organised way. The lack of graphics on Power Strike's buff, or when Cry Havoc is cast, or when enemies fight under your banner, left the hero feeling hollow.

*Role:* 5/10

To the Marshall's credit, Humans aren't equipped with any other movement speed boosts, attack speed boosts, or armour reduction. They also lack mobile heroes, giving him a solid niche. However, two of his skills do the same thing, which of course loses points on synergy, and gives me a sense that you're overfocusing/overcompensating on that one point. The ultimate has a long cast time *and is* , contrary to the rest of the hero's speed skills. Overall the hero lacks any real sense of purpose.

*Balance:* 6/10

With such familiar effects on his skills, it's hard to claim anything is strictly wrong with the hero's balance. But neither does he fit that well into Humans; he feels like a lone knight. His mana costs are way too high, and make him frustrating to play. At level 6, his ultimate takes 220 of his 345 mana pool, while his other skills cost 105, 100, and 70 apiece. Most heroes have a passive to avoid mana issues like these; Marshall could have done with one.

His ultimate has a long and obvious cast time (contrary to his “fast” skills), and is so easily focused down that it's hardly worthwhile in the first place. The banner is not even spell immune!

*Creativity:* 1/10

The only new-ish spell is Banner, which is still only applying a stronger Howl of Terror.

*Coding:* 2/10

Power Strike and Banner of the Alliance barely require coding at all, and what's there isn't well-written. See code duplication in Power Strike, and Standard of the Alliance being redundant (the Inferno spell would have done the same thing).

*Awesomeness:* 1/5

Chasing around with this hero might be fun, and the banner is a good fit for the theme. Nothing exciting though.

*Total:* 20/55

Marshall is not a strong submission. When tackling a concept like this in future, look to build synergy within skills. For example, you have an ultimate which summons a ward that applies a negative aura, and a skill which boosts movement speed. If you were looking to build synergy, making that ultimate summon a *unit* whose speed you could boost would make sense. If we aim to build synergy, it is also easier to see redundant skills (such as the two speed boosts – you can't enjoy both, so just make that one skill).

## CONTESTANT: KYRBI0

**Archdruid:** Mystical Hero, adept at disabling enemies and supporting combat.

*Theme:* 5/10

While the hero is a good lore fit for the Night Elves, the consistently poor visuals for his skills fail to support the theme. I cast Fury of Nature, and there was no visual response, just an eerie sound. Where are these “enraged” spirits? Spore Cloud showed no slow graphic on affected enemies, while Preservation's missile is a speck of dust. I can barely see the graphic for the hero's attack.

*Role:* 4/10

A slow/stun with an “immolation” ability makes sense, but the super-low 900 radius on the ultimate means it's not really practical to do any chasing with those skills while ethereal. AoE disables are something the Night Elves lack though, so the hero's motivation isn't bad. I don't feel there was any justification for having a hero with 220 range instead of melee.

*Balance:* 0/10

The hero has a 10 second AoE stun at level 1, for 120/110/100 mana.

*Creativity:* 4/10

Using Parasite to spread spores is a nice concept, as was the ultimate, but I don't feel like either really pushed any boundaries for the Night Elves.

*Coding:* 0/10

This hero barely qualifies as coded, and the implementation was outright sloppy. Tooltips were consistently misleading (“summons a throng of sprights which deal *over*(!?) 10 damage per second”) (how *much* more than 10?), there were no radius indicators despite 2 skills (un)clearly affecting a circle, and the ultimate left me unable to do anything for 20 seconds when the astral form died off. If I have to open the map file to figure out exactly how my skills work, that's a really bad sign.

*Awesomeness:* 1/5

The ultimate didn't feel like it let me do anything exciting with the ultimate's promised mobility, and the hero generally being frustrating to use didn't help either.

*Total:* 14/55

The hero felt like a jumble of unrelated ideas, but suffered even more from its implementation. To explain myself fully here:

Preservation's tooltip says it will stop enemy units from attacking or moving for 10 seconds. It does not say which units? I try to target the ground but it insists on an enemy unit. So I find an enemy unit and cast, and the graphic applies to the enemy units, but not all at once. What's going on? Is it bouncing? Is it a slow moving projectile that I can't see? What is the radius? I have no idea who it's going to hit, or what the logic is.

Opening the map, I see that you spawn 3 units at the target point, which apply a freeze on attack (hence they don't all get frozen at once). But that's not represented at all in-game! Both theme and coding took a big hit from this lack of thought for the end-user. Lots to improve on.

If you're going to have a very distinctive ultimate like Dreamscape, you should be prepared to build the hero around that more, and use abilities which can leverage the added mobility and immunity to physical damage to accomplish something. Archdruid + Fury of Nature alone isn't enough to get anything done, particularly since that skill can't focus fire one unit to spawn more spores (the only use I could think of for it).



## CONTESTANT: MYTHIC

**Dark Sorcerer:** Cunning Hero, able to disrupt enemies and deal high damage.

*Theme:* 7/10

I liked the consistent theme of souls running through this hero. The visuals were a bit mixed: Darkstorm and Tornado were great, while Hand of Corruption had a difficult-to-read impact effect, no visual for the damage over time, and an inconsistent stun graphic. I liked the consistency of colour scheme for the icons, even if it's simple.

*Role:* 4/10

There is a little bit of synergy between his aura and other three magical damage abilities, but nothing else. The hero doesn't stand out as anything other than a nuker, which is too straightforward to be interesting.

*Balance:* 4/10

This hero fits poorly into ladder. Raising minions from dead enemies is well-covered by Crypt Lord and Death Knight, while Lich, DK, and Crypt Lord all have 2+ area damage abilities. Dark Sorcerer brings nothing special to the table.

I would have liked to have seen the hero have a strong synergy with *Destroyers*, since they deal a lot of magical damage on attacks and benefit from his aura. But Hand of Corruption doesn't leave a buff for them to steal, nor do the Deathwalkers have mana for them to absorb. Opportunity missed!

*Creativity:* 5/10

I can only really give points for the ultimate (very nice) and aura which hasn't been done in ladder before. Most of the rest is standard.

*Coding:* 6/10

I like that there was some effort made towards efficiency of the multi-instance spells. In future I would recommend more commenting, and laying out your code better (three spells are smushed into one On Cast trigger, which is bad practice). Sometimes, simple is better: having a dummy cast Parasite would have been cleaner for Hand of Corruption, since it currently leaves no buff during the DoT.

*Awesomeness:* 3/5

I really liked the visuals for Darkstorm and Tornado of Souls; those would be great to actually use in a ladder match!

*Total:* 29/55

When you have decided on a skill like Malediction Aura, the next step is to look at the structure of the game and see how a hero with that skill would fit into it. The other three skills you chose weren't good fits because the Undead already have that. So you should push yourself to find something even more interesting, and find ideas that work well with the mechanics that are already in the game. The aura would synergise with those other heroes on its own!

## CONTESTANT: RUFUS

**Marksman:** Cunning Hero, adept at ranged assaults

*Theme:* 4/10

The hero is an archer, and all four abilities are “shoot arrows”! That's a bit bland for a theme.

*Role:* 5/10

Again, the hero is nothing but “ranged damage”. I like Drawback/Volley's interaction, but there is nothing aside from that. Having a super-long-range skill is quite unhelpful when she has nothing else to help her close the gap; I feel like you included this because Ashe from League of Legends has it, not because it's a good fit.

*Balance:* 4/10

This hero is a weird one. Functionally it's nothing but a “ranged dps unit”, but it can be microed to milk quite a bit more effectiveness out of it by timing Drawback with Volley, and point-blank shots with multishot. I like my micro, but the hero is very one-dimensional.

Other Human heroes offer slows, healing, protection, and summons along with their damage. I can't say Marksman is a great fit for ladder as a result: she has no utility to help her race, and her race has very little utility to help her.

I worry about the damage from point-blank Multishot being overpowered, considering it can potentially deal 1260 spell damage.

*Creativity:* 5/10

None of these abilities are particularly new, but I think you put a nice twist on them. They fit well into ladder, but I'm not sure they should all belong on the same hero.

*Coding:* 3/10

Not the greatest show here. Multishot arrows hit dead units (bug), making the skill useless in extended combat, Volley's tooltip does a poor job of explaining how often a volley will occur, and the triggers make no effort to be multi-instance.

*Awesomeness:* 2/5

I was actually pretty pleased with the interaction between Drawback and Volley. The ultimate is pretty while flying, but the lack of explosive impact was disappointing.

*Total:* 23/55

War3 is not a lane-pushing game like League of Legends, and heroes which do nothing but hit things aren't a good fit. You need to think more about a hero's utility than how much dps and micro are involved. What does this hero offer to my *army*? Right now, the answer is: not much.

## CONTESTANT: SHADOW FURY

**Fire Knight:** Mystical Hero, effective at ranged assaults and dealing massive fire damage.

*Theme:* 5/10

“Fire Mage” is probably the most common custom hero archetype in across all Warcraft 3 maps, and I always worry when I see it, because I know to expect four fire-themed nukes. And Fire Knight did not disappoint. If you want to make a good fire hero, you really *have* to blend the fire with something else, or you're only going to bore people.

*Role:* 3/10

One stuns, one slows, one lowers attack rate... but all four are primarily AoE damage spells. The one with the largest AoE also slows, making landing any of the others trivial. It's not a very dynamic kit, and really doesn't provide much utility to the Orcs. TC offers a lot more.

The choice of “how will I level my skills on this hero?” has already been made for the player, since when all four skills do mostly the same thing, it's just a numbers game, not a strategy game.

*Balance:* 4/10

The numbers on the skills vary quite a bit; Fire Barrier in particular has a tiny AoE and very low damage/effect. Hell Strikes' 60% slow and massive AoE is overkill; Blood Mage doesn't get anything as nice as that for his *only* nuke. There's no synergy with the Orc race, since the hero can get maximum effect from all his skills on his own.

Cross Fire always forms a cross at 45 degrees no matter which way you aim it, which is not the case for any other ladder spell, and makes the hero better on some maps than others. I consider this a bad thing.

*Creativity:* 4/10

The spells themselves were okay, but only on an individual basis. Nothing really popped out as new or interesting.

*Coding:* 5/10

I wasn't too pleased with the coding here. Variables would have saved a lot of time, some parts deserve a comment or two, and the coding isn't multi-instance. I like that you made the effort to try for flashy skills though.

*Awesomeness:* 0/5

I know this is subjective, but I've seen firey AoE damage too many times before to really be impressed by it.

*Total:* 21/55

Part of designing a hero for ladder is interaction with the faction's army, and Fire Knight completely ignores that. Auras are a great way for heroes to synergise with certain units in an army; it doesn't have to be anything fancy, but it does have to exist. Utility is also important: spells like Siphon Mana, Far Sight, and Sleep can accomplish a lot despite not being obvious sources of damage.

## CONTESTANT: WA666R

**Nathrezim Agent:** Cunning Hero, adept at stealth tricks and working in conjunction with a Dreadlord.

*Theme:* 9/10

What a unique take on the Nathrezim! The abilities create a great sense of character, the ability names are fitting, and the icons match nicely. I don't like that the model you chose is so similar to the Dreadlord, but at least there is a plausible lore/deception justification for it.

*Role:* 10/10

The hero has great internal synergy without overcomplicating things. Every ability works with every other ability, and as a good hero should, relies appropriately on the rest of the game's mechanics to provide the depth.

*Balance:* 9/10

I have one small but important complaint here. Nathrezim Agent is specifically stated to give certain bonuses to Dreadlords only: *and I don't like that*. There is no reason to limit the hero to Dreadlords: after all, Agent can't benefit from Vamp Aura, he can't Feed off a sleeping enemy, Carrion Swarm doesn't provide multiple ticks of damage like a Crypt Lord can. Don't limit options artificially: those bonuses should apply to any player-controlled hero.

That aside, there is some great synergy between Agent and the Undead. Unholy Frenzy is a great compliment to Feeding and Mind War's stun, as is Undead's general mass of units. Sneaking around would be risky with a lone hero, but shades can check in advance what routes to take, and his ultimate is great for pulling in an army of stronger units.

*Creativity:* 9/10

I think this hero is a really solid example of being creative within limits. There's a fresh take on invisibility, a stomp with opportunities for synergy with his army, and I'm particularly happy with how you changed the ultimate from being an instant convene to a staggered one, which lets the player rush any units they missed into the area for the next wave, and gives the enemy a bit of time to react.

*Coding:* 7/10

In Feeding you duplicate the ability logic three times: once for each level, which isn't good practice. Mind War spams unit creation where it should use a persistent dummy. However, I encountered no bugs, tooltips were descriptive, and overall the implementation was fine.

*Awesomeness:* 4/10

Slinking around invisibly, attacking and casting from the shadows, and smuggling in an army from across the map? Exactly the sort of sneaky play that people should be getting excited about.

*Total:* 48/55

All-round a very solid hero that would fit quite naturally into ladder matches. Excellent submission; well done!

Final Scores:

- Wa666r 48/55
- Cokemonkey11 47/55
- DED1 40/55
- Dalvengyr 39/55
- Cosmicat 30/55
- Mythic 29/55
- AngkySaputra 28/55
- Rufus 23/55
- Direfury 22/55
- Shadow Fury 21/55
- Footman16 20/55
- Kyrbi0 14/55
- A Void 05/55

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