

Rule One

An independent
Glorantha magazine

Issue 3



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Kralorela



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Contest



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A story of the First Age

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THE CULT OF
BERAK-TAL

PELORIA FAQ

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Hexads of Kralorela

David Millians

Hexads thrive throughout Kralorela. They have many faces. For most Kralori, they are ill-organized gangs of toughs and criminals. In some neighborhoods, especially each community's Four Vice district, they act as a shadow government and provider for many. For some magistrates, they are secret servants and spies. For the minions of the tongs and the followers of Sekever, they are possible applicants.

The symbol for the hexads is a dragon inscribed on a regular hexagon. They claim to be ancient servants of the dragon, acting as its agents in the shadows. Some sages claim this symbol is a wriggling huan to, not a dragon. Thus, the hexads are seen as pre-



sumptuous at best, pernicious or worse in all likelihood.

Each gang has its own variations and additions to this symbol. Such symbols mark territory, and many gangs use unobtrusive tattoos. Members do not dress in any identifying manner.

It is important to note that hexads and tongs are not the same, though they may appear so, and it usually matters little for their targets and victims. Hexads may be criminal in their pursuits

History

Some say that the hexads began in Boshan, but they have been in existence for many ages. Whatever their claims, they are now involved in activities across Kralorela.

In Boshan, the hexads claim to be descendants of the followers of Bright Spear, an early hero of southern Kralorela. They hark back to a man named Loo Pianhsing, a mystic follower of Bright Spear. Master Loo has visions of troubled times Kralorela's future and taught the skills and rituals necessary for such events. His six followers are said to have founded the lineages of the Hexads. Women have played a part in the hexads, even as leaders, throughout its existence.

Many hexads espouse an anti-centralization ideal: "Love the emperor but not his officials." Across the empire, the hexads have always

gained influence during times of weak central government or large-scale conflict. They flourished during the False Dragon's Ring and found renewal during the depredations of the Pentans, usually working against the evil invaders.

Today they flourish as criminals, local patriots, and anarchists.

Organization

A hexad group refers to its leader, its gang boss, as the "Dragon Head." Different groups tend to be autonomous unless united by a strong leader. Lieutenants are known as "Dragon Claws," while their strongest men are called "Dragon Feet." Regular members are collectively the Dragon's Tail. Dozens, maybe hundreds, of other draconic terms and mystical jargon litter the speech of hexad men and women. Such specialized language and many numerical codes disguise much of their activity

Lieutenants tend to control a dozen or so followers. Sometimes these might be just a mix of thugs and street youth. Another lieutenant might have only followers skilled in a particular set of skills or crimes.

Dragon Heads and Dragon Claws provide for their followers in much the same patronage system that dominates so much of Kralori society. Hexad members can expect to eat and sleep for free through the boss' influence. Special events call for greater largesse, and loyalty tends to remain high.

Members of a hexad are bound by strong oaths, usually sworn on the blood of the new member. Some groups add more complex rituals. The Baopan Hexad of Sha Ming, a small but skilled band of criminals, has an elaborate initiation ritual that culminates in the applicant cutting his arm and allowing several drops

of blood to fall into a large cup of wine, from which all members drink. The new member then passes beneath the spears of his brothers while reciting the oath of the hexad.

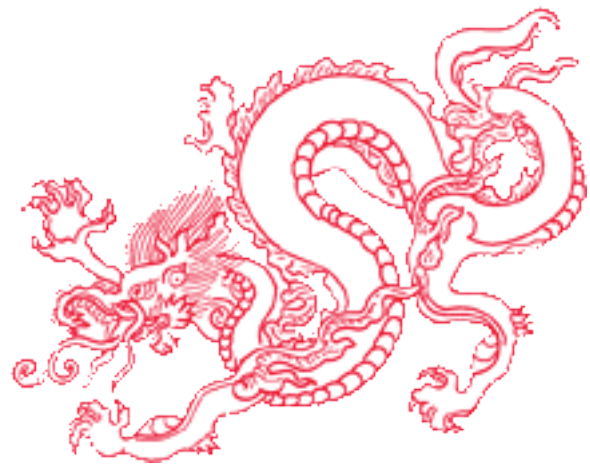
For example, "6" is a member, "66" is a higher official of the hexad, and "666" is a hexad chief. "To hang the lantern" is to become a follower of a chief.

Practices

Hexads are primarily involved in smuggling and distribution, protection rackets and extortion, counterfeiting, gambling, and prostitution. Some also include major thefts, murder for hire, and drug smuggling and sales. Few hexads engage in all such fields of malfeasance, and many have legal activities as well.

Hexad members favor simple weapons like cleavers and machetes, though fists are most commonly used in conflicts. They tend to limit their violence to one another, as they feud over territory and privileges, rather than inflicting it on the general population.

Ritual executions tend to involve the Sixty Sacred Cuts, no one of which is immediately lethal. More degrading is to bury someone alive; this is usually only done against treacherous members.



In addition to the efforts of local law enforcement, hexad members, especially bosses, are in constant danger of falling too deeply into the Four Vices and becoming or being drawn into the tongs, the agencies of the vile Huan To.

Some Prominent Hexads of Kralorela

There are hundreds of hexads spread across Kralorela. Some are local to a single neighborhood or small town, while others spread their influence and activities from one end of the empire to the other. Most are moderate-sized and modest in their ambitions.

Better Future Brotherhood

The Dragon Head of this gang is Maruku Goor. His hexad operates from the city of Tung Shui and conducts its business throughout the towns and islands of central Vaska Long. They are prominent smugglers.

The Broken Teeth

This gang is one of the “legal imperfections” of Chi Ting. They always operate according to their ancient charter, said to be a grant of Emperor Mikaday, and never bring harm to good citizens of the empire. Their gang takes its name from their initiation rite, in which every new member receives his “mark of imperfection.”

The Four Brothers

The Four Brothers founded this gang in Guiching, but now only one remains, Wang the Laconic. His followers will prey on the foolish folk of the city, but they typically target the vice-ridden visitors. Their main operations are gambling halls and brothels, but their rumored activities are wide-ranging and sordid.

The Spectres of Sha Ming

Directed by the mysterious Doctor Noh from a rumored offshore island base, the Spectres are thought to be linked to or part of a tong society. They are particularly ruthless in their activities and operate throughout the city, especially the harbor district, but keep to the prescribed hours.

Strikers

Based in Hsiang Wan, the Strikers operate elaborate smuggling operations among other things but never run brothels and are dangerous defenders of the dignity of the Mistress of the Compassion. They are said to field a host of skilled assassins, including the mysterious Agent 47.

Young & Dangerous

Chan Honam leads this small, violent gang, based in Chang Tsai. Coming to predominate the area through murder and assassination, they are suspected of being in the service of the huan to, but their main enterprises are running the Four Vices District smoothly and operating a host of brothels.





Hexad Oath

David Millians

1. After entering the brotherhood, I must treat the parents and relatives of my sworn brothers as my own kin. I shall suffer death by six thunderbolts if I do not keep this oath.

2. I will always acknowledge my brothers when they identify themselves. If I ignore them I will be killed by myriads of spears.

3. I shall not disclose the secrets of the brotherhood, not even to my parents, brothers, or wife. I shall never disclose the secrets for money. I will be killed by six thunderbolts if I do so.

4. If I have supplied false particulars about myself for the purpose of joining the Han family I shall be killed by myriads of spears.

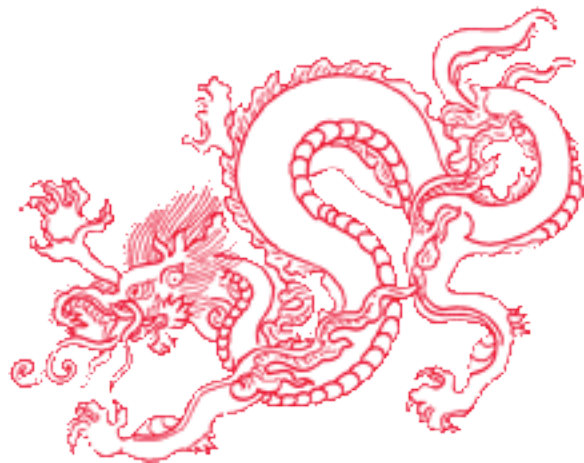
5. If I should change my mind and deny my membership of the Han family I will be killed by six thunderbolts.

6. If I am arrested after committing an offence I must accept my punishment and not try to place blame on my sworn brothers. If I do so I will be killed by myriads of spears.

7. When any of my sworn brothers have been assaulted or blamed by others, I must come forward and help him if he is in the right or advise him to desist if he is wrong. If he has been repeatedly insulted by others, I shall inform our other brothers and arrange to help him physically or financially. If I do not keep this oath I will be killed by six thunderbolts.

8. If it comes to my knowledge that the government is seeking any of my sworn brothers who has come from other provinces, I shall immediately inform him in order that he may make his escape. If I break this oath I will be killed by myriads of spears.

9. I shall not appoint myself as Dragon Claw without authority. After entering the brotherhood for six years, the loyal and faithful ones may be promoted by the Dragon Claw with the support of his sworn brothers. I shall be killed by six thunderbolts if I make any unauthorized promotions myself.



10. If my natural brothers are involved in a dispute or law suit with my sworn brothers, I must not help either party against the other but must attempt to have the matter settled amicably. If I break this oath I will be killed by myriads of spears.

11. I must not take advantage of the brotherhood in order to oppress or take violent or unreasonable advantage of others. I must be content and honest. If I break this oath I will be killed by six thunderbolts.

12. If any of my sworn brothers has committed a big offense I must not inform upon them to the government for the purposes of obtaining a reward. I shall be killed by myriads of spears if I break this oath.

13. After entering the brotherhood, I shall be loyal and faithful and shall endeavor to undermine all oppressors by coordinating my efforts with those of my sworn brethren, even though my brethren and I may not be in the same professions. Our common aim is to avenge our Six Ancestors. If I break this oath, I shall lose my life to the Secret Dragon.

Chaos Feature Competition

Matthew Cole and friends

In January, 2009, Matthew Cole suggested a competition:

Hey all

I would like to propose a Chaos Features Competition.

We have, in the RQ rules, lists of chaos features found in Glorantha and these are a fine example to work to but..

I thought it might be fun and informative to follow up my '100 words for your campaign slot' with a competition to find out the top 10 best chaos features everyone can think of.

Here's how it will work. Everyone can suggest up to 3 non-list features (we can reduce that if necessary) and we all have 2 votes each (only one of which can be given to our own entries). After we think we have enough entries, people can send their votes to me off-list and I'll collate the results and post them. We could use a forum voter but I think with chaos quick and dirty will be most apt.

So, let the entries flow!

Matthew

Matthew eventually received 106 features from 56 people.

The winning feature (as voted on by those going to his website) was:

Takes damage from insults—David Dunham

Runners Up:

Schrödinger's Chaos Creature—David Lloyd

Only Visible in Reflections—Jamie MacLaren

Appears closer to you than it actually is—Bruce Mason

Fabian Kuchler wrote a critique of the submitted Chaos Features called "Amidst the Chaos", printed in Issue 2 of Rule One.

Below is the entire list of submitted Chaos Features:

- Only susceptible to indirect attacks. You can write down or draw damage, but not harm it with a weapon.
- Healed by any magic, empowered by wounds. Wounds strengthen its magic, spells cast upon it heal its wounds.
- Takes damage from insults. Words *will* hurt it, sticks and stones don't
- Conduct to the Ultimate. Will make illuminated and occluded characters face a major crisis, and might illuminate others.
- Appears closer to you than it actually is. Whenever you try to touch it you realise that it's too far away. If you turn around and it's behind you then *IT IS OMG BASICAL-

LY BREATHING IN YOUR EAR* Possibly the most dangerous missile weapon user in the world..

- Insensible. When the creature is first encountered, and at random intervals thereafter, roll a d6 (1=creature cannot be seen; 2=creature cannot be heard; 3=creature cannot be smelled (not very useful in combat); 4=creature cannot be tasted (ditto); 5=creature cannot be touched (very handy in combat); 6= creature cannot be sensed magically (may have interesting side effects)).
- Burrowing Teeth. When the creature bites an opponent, if it does damage, then 1d6 teeth break loose and burrow into the target, eventually reaching an internal organ and killing the target.
- Duplicator. When it is "killed" it takes on the form of whatever killed it (sword, wolf, fire..). You can't ever really get rid of it, but you can contain it.
- Done By As You Did. Whatever is done to the beneficiary of this chaos feature is instead done to the doer. Over a certain distance away the influence fails to reach its target and snaps back on the chaotic.
- Slick, entangling hair covering body. Weapons might slide off or get entangled.
- Merely a Puppet. We may speak of being merely a puppet in thrall to higher powers. In this case it's true. On close examination, the creature proves to be made of wood, wire and paint. Fine strings control its movement but seem to fade into nothingness a few feet above the body.
- Vomits Fruit. Vomits up perfectly edible (non-chaos tainted) fruit when frightened.
- Chronovision. Victim's right eye sees everything aging and decaying while their left sees things grow younger and more vital. While using both eyes, vision can be normal. Careful use of closing one eye

lets creature see future or past of a given target. The left eye appears decayed to observers, the right appears oddly young and bright.

- Emits clouds of powerful hallucinogenic gas. To which it is not immune
- Smokey skin. This creature has skin that is like dark smoke. It drifts sluggishly and you're not sure what it is but you *don't* want to touch it. Its greatest use is sneaking into steeds - it doesn't reflect or gleam, it blends into shadows and it disguises movement. Its feel causes dread.
- Sounds Extremely Dangerous. This Chaot can only speak Chaos Speech, but anyone meeting him will hear him mention secrets about the person, including things that nobody else knows. " Hi there! How was Storm-Roarer's wife? Is she as good in bed as they say she was? What about that Ogre you let live last week? How is he? Does Orlanth mind that you also worship Krarsht?"
- Invisible tentacle. Think about it, don't YOU want one now?
- Two or more souls in one body. They struggle for control if they disagree about what action to take. Mind affecting magic affects only one at a time (unless it would affect multiple targets.)
- Bowels of Chaos. The Void exists where your bowels are.
- Translucid body. The skin and muscles of the creature are semi-transparent, you can see all of their internal organs and its veins. And whatever it has eaten too, half dissolved in its digestive system. You better have a strong stomach.
- Enticing smell.. The creature smells like the most fragrant, sexiest perfume you have ever known.
- Noitarapes. The creature radiates a field where separations are broken down.

This can take any number of forms: things blending together physically, the dead appearing to bother the living, family ties reasserting themselves mythically/magically. In a way, it is an anti-Humakt power, restoring the confusion before things were separated into their proper categories.

- Schrödinger's Chaos Creature. The creature is simultaneously both alive and dead and thus cannot be killed or restored to life until hit with an appropriate detection magic (e.g., detect undead turns it into an undead, detect life turns it into a living creature, etc.).

- Ages backwards. The creature is born as a frail, wrinkly, grizzled oldster, grows younger into adulthood and adolescence, to finally die as a mewling infant.

- Overwhelming Delusion. The creature firmly believes, despite all evidence to the contrary, that it is something it is not. e.g. a scorpionman believes it is a Storm Bull khan, a cave troll believes it is Queen of Tarsh.

- Only Visible in Reflections. The chaotic can only be seen by his reflection in other objects. You can glimpse him in that puddle, or in that metal bowl on the table or perhaps a polished sword and shield.

- Devours Emotions. The chaotic can feed on and relishes emotional energy, and in doing so removes the capacity for that emotion from its victim (I would leave recovery options up to the story).

- Self Cannibalism. The chaotic appears with bite marks all over it, some healed, some partially so.

- Deadly sonorous eructations or flatulation. The bodily emissions of the creature are extremely loud and dangerous in some way, belches emit deafening noise like a super huge cathedral organ, musical farts emit toxic gas or flame..

- Bowel Scream. The beneficiary of this chaos feature can scream or howl from the very depths of it's chaotic soul; the resonance and fearsomeness of the sound loosens an audience's bowels and nerves.

- Can temporarily absorb disease spirits. The being can cure any disease by absorbing the spirit into themselves. The spirit is apparently banished or destroyed, being no longer detectable. After a while (which is shortened for every absorbed spirit) the spirits are released, first infecting the being (inflicting symptoms but causing no permanent harm) and quickly spreading to the surrounding population.

- Any Chaos Feature You Haven't Thought Of. Thanks Grant Morrison.

- Unwilling shapechange. Takes the form of the last being it has killed, but keeping its original abilities and size.

- Imitation. Takes on the looks of someone else in the battle, may be friend or foe

- Emotion Vacuum. Sucks the emotions from a person. Games like HeroQuest or Pendragon would work best mechanically, as they quantify emotions. The effect is like an aura - come within X yards/meters of the creature, and it automatically "feeds" on your emotions. It's a always-on, area effect Tap [Any Emotion].

- Rebellious Limbs. Subject's limbs are somewhat self-aware - and self-interested! In extreme cases they may actually hold a plebiscite and depart the body en masse. In lesser cases mistreated members of the limb classes may attempt to secede alone - typically while the subject is sleeping.

- Turns To Jelly At Slightest Provocation. Subject turns to a basically indestructible chaos ooze when prompted by *something*.

- Emotional Vision. Subject suffers from a kind of aphasia, combined with the ability

to perceive visually the emotional makeup of others.

- Rubber away soul Touch feature. Spirit combat by touch.
- Scolding voice. Sounds just like your Mother when speaking.
- Speaks any language.. Somehow, the creature can communicate with anyone, regardless of what languages the other speaks.
- Randomly produces sensations. Randomly produces a sensation to every living being at 100 metres from him, including himself. For instance, he could produce pain, hunger, fear or love. He could also produce multi-sexual attraction which would surely end in an orgy. The creature can't control what or when it happens.
- Skill Swap. Randomly determine 1d8 skills and swap them.
- Aphrodisiac Ingredient. Random body part becomes easily recognised as the principle ingredient in a much desired aphrodisiac or similar potion.
- Personal reality glitch. Probably best used for a sentient Chaotic. The being has a belief which differs sharply from reality in one narrowly defined but crucial way. They might, for instance, believe that the sky is green, or that water is dry, while otherwise acting normally. If others argue with them about this, their attempts to justify their belief in the face of overwhelming evidence that they are wrong will gradually become more and more frantic and obviously insane. Minor things such as the colour of the sky can be harmless and pass unknown for some considerable time (it isn't something one often discusses), a belief that water is dry can be masked by a tendency to drink beer instead and not wash (both habits sadly all too common), but someone who suddenly starts believ-

ing that all Humakti are pacifists is probably in trouble, especially if this happens mid-fight. It seems possible that several cases of this illness (for so it is often regarded) are present in most Lhankor Mhy temples, and dismissed as normal eccentricity.

- Plague of Altering Size Breath. Plague of Altering Size Breath
- Thought leak. People in range of the creature begin to hear each other's thoughts. This can be surface thoughts, emotions, deeply hidden secrets, what have you. Who is thinking what thoughts isn't easily discerned. It is possible to get thought leak with non-sapient, although it is not particularly likely. In such cases, what is shared is often a scent, a hunger, or an instinct. Needless to say, this has a tendency to cause quite a bit of disruption and paranoia.
- Inconceivable. People cannot accurately describe the creature to others.
- Rubber Soul. Other spirits that engage you or are engaged by you in spirit combat simply bounce off. ie, you're immune to spirits.
- Devour Words. Or Reverse Meanings of Words in a Radius, if you prefer.
- Part physical, part spirit/soul/essence. Only part of the beneficiary is corporeal. The other part is purely insubstantial.
- Half-a-creature. Only 1/2 of the creature is present in the physical world (the other is..somewhere else). For Example, if it's a broo, then you have the right side of the broo, and a view of his insides at the "split".
- Gestalt Body Sharer. One soul spread among two or more different physical bodies. Mind- affecting magic(or mind-affecting anything, really) that affects one affects all.
- Spiritually Conjoined Near-Immortal Twins. On contracting this chaos feature, the beneficiary immediately splits into two

seemingly identical beings, each taking the other's vulnerability with it. Each being has only one weakness but is otherwise not vulnerable to direct attack. These weaknesses are actually the only way to hurt the being's twin but the hurt doesn't show until the point of death - when both twins expire together. They need each other to live but believe they are both immortal - they don't know how their chaos feature works!

- Aura of peace. No one is able to hurt this chaos creature directly, at least not without suffering mental pain which kills the aggressor. Unfortunately for the chaos creature itself also can't harm anyone.
- Lascivious. No matter how ugly and compelling the chaos creature looks, everyone of the opposite sex can only think about to find a way to have sex with that creature.
- Elastic tendons. Most obviously allows jumping like a grasshopper. But also consider the application to thrown weapons and escapology (not sure why anyone would tie up a Broo but if they do..).
- Magic Birthmark Companion. Meet my brother. He's called 'Strawberry'. Careful he may bite!
- Limbs Detachable. May be traded with others like you.
- Disassociated. Limbs and organs are only loosely connected and may swarm apart.
- Reincarnated in you. Its killer/eater becomes the creature. Its memories may be transferred.
- Doppelganger. It takes the form of the last being it has eaten, but not its size we can have very short dinosaur or very large humans..
- Hollow shell of skin. Interior filled with hundreds of crawling poisonous vermin that fly or scuttle out when skin is ruptured,

while spiders try to sew it back together again from inside

- Born after death. In infant form back at the nearest chaos pit but remembers how it died. It has to grow up again and suddenly, a few years on in the campaign, IT RETURNS! "I know you. We killed you!"
- Cause stammering. I-In range we h-had t-trouble speaking.
- Tap Sanity. If it touches, you might start seeing/hearing things, believing strange contradictory ideas or even laughing a bit too long after the joke is over.
- Amalgamation. If it loses a body part, may replace it from a victim.
- Can't move when anyone is looking at it. However it can't be physically or magically harmed while anyone is looking at it. Add it to lightning fast speed for extra plagiaristic goodness :)
- Left and right reversed. Hit its right arm, the left takes damage.
- Sprout New Dialect every minute. Highly contagious at hearing.
- Completely hollow. Handy for storage.
- Inverse Swelling. Grows bigger when it is hungry, shrinks as it feeds.
- Goopy Flesh. Flesh becomes goo, all the skin and muscle of the creatures becomes a sack of transparent goo, which shifts and oozes to reveal bones and internal organs.
- Indestructible Flash Sleeper. Falls asleep at random intervals, then emits a deafening snore. Immune to mundane damage while asleep ("immune" includes not being woken by it).
- Causes excessive body hair growth. Exposure to this chaos monster causes excessive body hair growth.
- Causes sunburn. Exposure to this chaos monster causes acute sunburn.

- Radiate Acceptance. Everyone within range receives a warm and fuzzy feeling when the chaotic is around.
- It is your child. Everyone else who can see it knows exactly what it is but to you it is your child. You carry it with you, suckle it (regardless of whether or not your female) you love it and care for it and can bear to see no harm come to it. When you finally die, worn out and shrivelled, it will be someone else's child.
- Transfers own image. Every time someone fights it, that person looks like it to others for the duration of the fight. An observer would see two identical broos fighting, or two gorps, etc.
- Weaken separation to Otherworlds. Encounters with the creature tend to move in and out of Otherworlds, for which this creature suffers no Otherworld penalties. Struggles that move into, and then back out of, the Spirit Plane can also shift the combatants across long distances. Those that flee the fight might find themselves in some alien Hell. Hopefully heroes can hold out until they intersect with the Hero Plane (and, ideally, a heroquest that they know).
- Able to absorb the skill of anyone in their presence. e.g. can use a swordsman's skill at their ability, only lasts while person is in their presence.
- 1000 Arms. Disturbingly, also possessed by some Mystic beings..
- Eyes shifted into spirit/gods/essence plane. Disturbing hollows in sockets
- Changing visage. Creature's facial features constantly undergo a slow morph. Time to completely change features could be minutes
- The Thing. Creature has chaotic holographic consciousness and replicating infection. Anything it kills it can transform into. Can only be destroyed by fire, acid,

- magic etc. If any of it survives (e.g., an arm etc) it can transform to a creature of equivalent SIZ. Transformation between species takes 1 round (e.g., from a human into a dog).
- Wormy. Covered with small red worms, which squirm and wriggle through the slime covering the Chaos creature. Disgusting to see - roll against Con to look at without vomiting.
- Everything you touch turns invisible. Clothes, weapons, armour etc
- Reversed digestive tract. Censored.
- Legs facing the wrong way.. Cannot walk forwards.
- Sarcophagy. Can only digest dead or necrosing tissue. When found in a gorp, means that body parts can be immersed safely in the gorp, which will cleanse the wound. (Wonderful for confusing players who think that all Chaos is evil.)
- Two random body parts are made of gorp. Body parts affected change frequently. If abdomen or chest, can excrete or vomit micro gorp. If limbs, can elongate, attach, whip, throw micro gorp etc., etc. (depending on gorp type). If head, becomes 'Brain of Gorp'.
- Part of the crowd. Appears so normal and part of the surroundings that observers don't realise they've seen it. This ability can be invoked at will, and the creature only detects as Chaotic when it's in use. This may result in an enraged Storm Bull being certain that something Chaotic is right in front of him, and brushing aside the irrelevant person standing there to go and look for it.
- Gift of Colour. Anything touched changes permanently to it's complimentary colour. The players find an apple tree with blue apples (blue being the complimentary of

red). A track of magenta grass is found crossing a field.

- Sticky skin. Anything that hits the skin of the creature adheres (with some high strength needed to tear object away - and if it's your flesh that's stuck, then you're going to leave some behind!)

- Look like you. Anyone that sees/touches/interacts with the creature senses the creature as a duplicate of themselves. Multiple targets would see/hear/sense completely different things, but that's the way with chaos, isn't it? This is not an illusion of any sort. It's more like simultaneous physical mimicry that breaks all the rules.

- Merges with Mount. Any creature that the chaotic can sit on or ride becomes an extension of the chaotic, if the 'mount' is intelligent then there is a continual power struggle for dominance between the two parties requiring concentration and strength of will.

- Changes colour. Another less extreme version of Changing Visage.

- Improbable Voice. An opportunity for the narrator to use his best impressions (e.g. a feral broo speaks like Marilyn Monroe, a Thanatar Priest speaks like a pirate. A-har-rgh!)

- This monster uses D&D rules. All characters must be converted for this encounter.

- Sneezes balls of explosive snot. Achoo! Whizz! Bang!

- Eye Spawner/Remote Viewer. Able to tear out eye (which regenerates) and implant on another creature's body. Creature can see through up to 2 'extra' eyes.

- Skin Graft Healer. Able to tear off strips of own skin, that when wrapped round wound of another chaotic creature causes it to have temporary regeneration.

- Changing features. A less extreme version of Changing Visage.

- Regrow body slowly. A feat matched against the ability used to destroy it. You chop off a bit and it regrows, unless it is burnt, dissolved in acid or whatever the GM has it being vulnerable to. This might be the same or very similar to the old RQ2 regeneration. How much the GM wants him back will depend on the feat's rating and difficulty. As the regrow is slow adventurers returning to the same area will see the same broo again and again.

- Edible Excretions. +10 Camping for your companions.

- Love Darts. (Excellent for dragonsnail) Shoots love darts into its victims, which causes them to love, protect and obey the Chaos creature.

PELORIA FAQ

Keith Nellist

Some questions regarding Issue 2's Peloria boardgame modifications to **Britannia**.

Q: Who are the "warlords"? Okay this isn't really a question, as I am sure they are the three nations of horse nomads that kick the game off. Still, it is not made explicit, and I think it needs to be because it has an impact on the scoring.

A: The Warlords are: the Hirenmador, The Hyalorings, and the Veshtargos. You are absolutely correct.

Note on "historical" accuracy: - it is my opinion that there were all sorts of nomad bands riding around Peloria at the dawn terrorizing people and lording it over peasants. The division into three groups is really a concession to the 4 player nature of the game although the Hyalorings are a definite group of Horse riders originating in Saird, and the Hirenmador (aka Chariot Lords) represent a Chariot riding group. The Veshtargos probably represent a Deshkorgos propitiating band of cannibals with a bad reputation, although that might be what anyone thinks of an enemy horse riding group.

Q: When do you score for being emperor? It says you could do this during each nation's turn. If so and have the possibility of multiple emperors in one era. If so does the current emperor still need to add another piece of regalia to score in the following era? Also when in a turn does this happen? This might not

seem important, but in one game the Pentlanders managed to grab Vonlath and an extra piece of regalia, at the same time as being cut off from their homeland. Do they claim the throne for Pentland and then defect, or defect and hand the throne to Peloria?

A: You can claim to be Emperor on your Nation's turn, but you only score if you are Emperor at the end of the Round.



The Emperor scoring, Shah of Carmania Scoring and Nation Scoring all occur at the end of the Round - so in Round 1 we have the Hirenmador turn, then the Hyalorings, Veshtargos, Alkoth, Pelandans, Pelorians, Theyalans turns and *then* see who is the Emperor, and which areas/number of units are possessed (for Nation Scoring).

A Nation can claim to be the Imperial Nation (and thus possess the Emperor) at anytime during THEIR turn. So the Emperor can change several times during a round (once per Nation turn) but only gets scored for at the end of the Round. If a Nation has the Emperor and later loses whatever it had that qualified it for the position it remains the Imperial Nation until another Nation claims the position. Once there is an Imperial Nation the only way for it to become Un-Imperial is for another Nation to successfully claim the Emperor, or for it to disappear entirely. As far as timing is concerned - battles are not con-

sidered simultaneous. Whoever is the active player decides which order battles are acted on. So the battle for Pent could be resolved first, or the battle for Vonlath.

Q: On the same theme, how portable are the regalia? It is not stated that pretender nations can move the regalia, and I would interpret this to mean they are very non-portable. This does not sound realistic to me, although I can see why you would want to prevent players from sneaking regalia off into the mountains. Maybe some nations should simply be excluded from having anything to do with the Regalia. If you do allow them to be moved, would this be allowed during a retreat?

A: Although the regalia are “actually” portable, they are also Magical, usually hidden or unrecognized for what they are by the barbarous or ignorant people that possess them. This is the pseudo-mythic rationale (“bullshit”) behind the idea that they are not easily moved. In terms of realism, this level of simulation doesn’t really cater for this sort of detail - even if the Digijelm got the Sandals of Protections and whisked them off to mountains of Yolp, then a brave and noble Dara Happan Hero could surely adventure into the mountains to recover them. I do admit though that the rules are unclear.

The Sandals and Bow, which start in the possession of a Nation rather than an area can be carried by whoever possesses them. This includes in retreat, but they cannot be retreated by themselves - a unit must carry them, it cannot be moved on its own, or even passed on to a neighboring unit.

The “area based” regalia can only be moved by an Imperial Nation in possession of the area containing the regalia. An Imperial Nation could retreat the regalia in his possession but a unit must carry the regalia - it cannot

be moved on its own, or even passed on to a neighboring unit.

Q: Do the Aldryami get population points for occupying the permanent forests?

A: Yes.

Q: Do the Trolls and Telmori get population points for occupying mountains?

A: Yes, they treat them as Rough terrain for Population points as well as movement.

Q: Finally, if the Carmanians get wiped out before the Crimson Bat appears, does it simply fail to turn up? In that case does the Red Goddess fail to manifest, and the Dara Happans remain simple devotees of Yelm?

A: Hmm, this one had me stumped as I had not considered it.

If the Carmanians are all zapped by turn 15 perhaps no one is tyrannizing the Pelorians enough for them to invoke desperate rituals to summon the Red Goddess. Other potential oppressors of the Pelorians are the Barbarians (player 2), Theyalans (player 3) or perhaps the Pelandans or Alkoth. This then becomes messy as they could all be oppressing the Pelorians. I think I have a better solution:

The last dying gasp of the Carmanians should be desperate dangerous ritual to summon the Bat because *they’ve* been oppressed. Yanafal Tarnils (a Carmanian rebel) doesn’t aid the oppressed Pelorians but is instead the last of his Carmanian people and so it is as the last dying prince of the Carmanians that he summons the Red Goddess and the Crimson Bat to aid the last few heroic descendants of Syranthir Forefront, and inflict death, vengeance and insanity on their enemies.

The logo for the Sartar Contest features a large, stylized gold letter 'S' on the left. To its right, the word 'SARTAR' is written in a bold, gold, serif font. Below 'SARTAR', the word 'Contest' is written in a gold, sans-serif font. The entire logo is set against a dark brown, textured background.

SARTAR Contest

Ian Cooper and Friends

To celebrate the release of Sartar, Kingdom of Heroes, Ian Cooper, in association with Moon Design and Rule One, ran not one, but two contests. The prize for each contest was a copy of Sartar, Kingdom of Heroes.

Character Contest

The winner of the Character contest is Soren Peterson:

Sorta

Cunning and deceitful, redheaded Porta is in it for the money. He worked as a street trader in Vanch and knows the magic of the Seven Mothers. Forced to join the Lunar army as a foot soldier, he started worshipping Rufelza. Presenting himself as a loveable rogue, he excels at scrounging, bribery and blackmailing. Porta can get you anything 'for a price'. A superb cook and flute-player, he loves gambling and will cheat at any opportunity. He has contacts with various merchants in Dragon Pass and has saved a large sum of money. Sly and agile, he has somehow acquired a durulz sidekick.

Feat Contest

The winner of the Feat contest is Laurent Castellucci ("LC" on the Yahoogroups):

Lhankor Mhy Names the Foe

When deep in the Underworld, searching for Lost Erissa, the Lightbringers were surrounded by creatures whom they could not identify. Orlanth could not strike them for he knew not where they were, Chalana Arroy could not heal the wounds for she knew not how they were caused, Humakt could not defeat them for he could not determine if they were dead or alive, Issaries could not bargain with them for he knew not their tongue. Lhankor Mhy listened, and looked, and smelt, and felt, and tasted them, then thought deeply and knew who they were, where they were, why they were, and what their magic was. Then they were vulnerable. (The Devotee must concentrate entirely on his foes while in their presence. Gathering all he can from all his senses he can understand their magics, their tactics, strengths and weaknesses, and explain to others how to counter them.)

G: Sartar Contest Characters

Lira-duck-breath

Submitted by: Andrew Graham

Lira-duck-breath works as a healer despite her mother's matchmaking. Lira lacked the required empathy and instead took to potion making and trading in the exotic materials required by alchemy. Short and angular Lira traded eye to eye with the Durulz for marsh treasures. Unfortunately she picked up some of the Durulz's less endearing habits including a low tolerance for fools and a taste for tobacco. Named Nest Saver she gained the everlasting smoke in gratitude for her rescues from often cursed duck hunters. Armed with concealed twin stilettos Lira also has a vicious kick guided by her knowledge of anatomy.

Aren Stormlight

Submitted by: Andrew Graham

Aren Stormlight is a god troubled Godi of the Danlarni who worships Yavor through Orlanth Thunderous. He knows the storm scared sacred hills and the bright points of Farplace and uses Elmal's sharp eye to Pearce its mist and cloud. He has learned to ride Yavor bright Javelins and to walk on Clouds with Shelara his blue woman wife. His Thunder Voice stiffens the Fyrd with his oration when he backs them with his Blazer spear held high. Now he dreams of finding the Lightning Hall and has searched and quested to find its hidden door.

Zerra the Seventh Helper

Submitted by: Andrew Graham

Orphaned by Desolation raiders, Zerra returned to Serris to hunt and live wild in its maze, guiding the Seven-Life-Helpers. She is friend to Ravens and other animal sprits but is haunted by her Eolian Uncle. Zerra was rescued, fed and clothed by the Dara Happen Xanthia, her idol. Taken in and tolerated by the Five Trees of Bounty Association, her imperial sponsors, she shares her good fortune with her brave Maze friends. Now a comely apprentice of Jakaleel she finds some solace from the intruding otherword. Zerra hunts the monster-spawn, not fearing Darkness and knowing their dark underworld, she has gained their enmity and looted treasures.

Kalvie the Elk

Submitted by: Andrew Graham

Kalvie Herra's daughter was born crone dammed as the omens spoke. / A tall deep hunter like her mother she Inherited Powers from the Other. / Fare of face and figure above the waist but below was formed Elk like, solid and strong. / Adaptable she endured much often homeless her inner heat protected her. / Wild children would play with her ignoring the odd smell, enjoying her inhuman speed and sure step. But she protected all children fiercely. With womanhood came the odd horns and strange totem, unknown to Oak-and-Storm. When the hell beast attacked Kalvie robbed and broke it saving the clan

Touchstone

Submitted by: Andrew Graham

A faceless commoner with Stygian leanings, Touchstone trades in the hidden things and places of Syran that others less brave leave alone. An Arkat's-Eye, he keeps his eyes and ears open for signs of the Deceiver. Although ruthless in his dealings as a middleman, high ideals of protecting society keep him from corruption. Reinstating valued goods for profit he builds his retirement fund. His talents have earned him the gratitude of several Houses, but not all know him in the same guise. The Opert Prophecy makes him protective of House Heligan. His lover Sheri keeps his Syndicate henchmen in line.

Kiki

Submitted by: Andrew Graham

Kiki a happy youngster ran errands and fetched healing plants for healer mother. She painted in her forest hideaway creatures that would come to her, attracted by her empathy and kind heart. Animals liked her and the wilds hold no fear. She managed to avoid punishment by the Safelster Church-of-Inspiration over the skyclad painting by proving her purity of action. Now with her quick drawing and accurate hand she is refining her realistic apprentice studies of nature in the "School-of-Sacred-Image". Keeping inappropriate pets has irritated many. Now she paints many of her favourite animals from memory since the "horse-in-the-attic" incident.

Lug TwoSwords

Submitted by: Christoph Kohring

Lug Two-Swords the Drogarsi is the grand-master of the mysterious Sword-Dancers of Dragon Pass. Battle-scarred veteran of the

Sartar invasion as well as of Kallyr's Rebellion, he travelled wide & far from the Vent Volcano to Thunder Mountain & from Corflu to the Elf Sea but never inside the Glowline. Outlawed from the Orleving, he is a member in good-standing of Geo. Gonn Orta the giant gifted him with the Lionskin-of-Savagery & Garrath Swordsharp of Pavis is his blood-brother. He once bought -for an outrageous price- a crossbow & nine iron-tipped quarrels from the Dwarf. Intimidating to his peers, he is kind & generous to the weak.

Pharon Charunsson

Submitted by: Donald R. Oddy

Pharon is a Tarshite hillman from a village near Copper Town. Charunsson comes from rumours about his parentage which he refuses to confirm or deny. He behaves with the savagery that the name implies. However he is not as barbaric as he first appears - he can read and write and is a novitiate of the Seven Mothers. Tatius hired Pharon in 1619 to raise a century or two of mercenaries for the purpose of countering rebel warbands. The unit is outside the normal Lunar chain of command with Pharon reporting directly to Tatius in spite of Pharon only having the rank of centurion. He and his men are all experienced warriors; mostly equipped with axe, shield and throwing axes. They follow a variety of gods although many carry lunar charms. Tatius allows Pharon and his warriors a lot of freedom in how they act in suppressing rebels much to the irritation of regular army officers. Pharon has a feud with Kallyr following a failed attempt to kill or capture her shortly after he arrived at Whitewall. He has vowed to personally hammer in the nails at her crucifixion. Significant Abilities - Intimidate, Torture, Intercept Rebels and Bandits, Ignorant of Lunar Army Regulations.

Parzela Peaceweaver

Submitted by: Donald R. Oddy

Parzela is the clan's senior healer and intiitate of Jera although she has a wide experience of all healing. Middle aged and unmarried she has been part of the clan since birth although she has a daughter who married a few years ago. Her seniority means she holds Chalana Arroy's place on the clan ring but she avoids politics so usually only attends rituals. The title Peaceweaver is recent and comes from her success in averting a couple of potentially nasty divorces which could have badly damaged the clan. She has some internal conflict between the desire to heal everyone and the health of the clan. For if you heal a stranger they may hurt the clan. Parzela resolves this by requiring an oath never to hurt her clan as part payment from any outsider. Some have refused her help on that basis in which case she reluctantly turns them away. Significant abilities: Make Medicine, Heal People, Heal Clan.

Gawohr "Bad Dog" Ensovalsson

Submitted by: Harald Smith

When Tatus sought a Southern Jumper, the King of Imther offered his Huntmaster, Gawohr. Gawohr avidly responded leading his pack, the Bloodhound Hunt, to Dragon Pass where they ritually hunted the Black Legs and Urgal's Winds. Then, armed with the Lost Bear's Claws, took the Left Sinew of Hoargrim Ice-horse. Cunning, relentless, patient, and subservient when necessary, he remembers all scents including the Wyrms' Breath. Though jovial, his barking laugh chills Yinkini. His hatred of dragons drives his quest for Sharvenatars' Ten Treasures. He despises shaman, and earned the Telmori's enmity when he slew the Tarn Wolf spirits.

The Monkey Sage

Submitted by: John Harding

Around 1605 two Jonstown Lankhor Mhy sages, Jaansor Harm and Makyn Garnor nearly came to blows over their differing views of education and knowledge. Makyn headed the "Elitist" faction who held that intelligence and talent were assigned to a person a birth, while Jaansor headed the "Educationalist" faction which believed that given the right education and environment most people could learn to read and worship Lankhor Mhy in the correct manner. In order to humiliate Jaansor, Makyn presented him with a baby Praxian baboon and told him to prove his theories and teach him to read. Jaansor rather than being insulted took this as a challenge and proceeded to bring up and educate the baboon whom he called Ficit. Ficit accompanied Jaansor on his expeditions and was secretly taught how to read, write, study and worship Lankhor Mhy correctly. Ficit proved an apt pupil and excelled under Jaansor's tuition. When the time was ripe Jaansor presented Ficit as proof of the validity of the "Educationalist" view. Ficit answered his examiners with clarity and not a little confidence much to the dismay of his examiners. The Elitist faction had become politically powerful and despite Ficit's obvious talents denied him a place within the temple. Jaansor disgusted at this betrayal of truth took Ficit and became a wild sage. After a time Jaansor died but rumors of a wandering Monkey sage still persist to this day. With most sighting centered around the Monkey ruins in Prax. Ficit is intelligent, polite, urbane and even cultured, but woe bedtide anyone who questions his conclusions or intelligence especially those he perceives hold "Elitist" values.

Vengethus

Submitted by: Keith Nellist

Overseer of Monsters is an easy, if unpleasant, occupation for a noble descendant of Darvedeskorgos. Three elder brothers possess glory, or wealth, or influence and keep Vengethus comfortable, in a villa called Ershkintu, overlooking Yuthuppa. He lives in idle seclusion with his poetic wife, silent servants, and pallid temple assistants. Nominally held prisoner, but actually protected by a ferocious Lion-Guard, he studies the stars, breeds horses, and practices charioteering at his leisure. His occasional macabre duties include dark litanies and dirges, obscene rituals, cruel wardings, propitiatory sacrifice and rituals.

Volle and Vizz

Submitted by: Keith Nellist

One standest amidst a knot of friends, tall and somewhat stooping, in a corselet of bronze, and a cloak of old brocaded silk coloured like tarnished gold; swarthy, and with bristling black moustachios. Tis but Vizz, brother to Volle in godtalking, as well as by consanguinity, both representatives of a line of illustrious warriors and magicians. He returns from far travels the wealthiest in goods of the brethren and was known as Goldtongue, although not an initiate of that god. Both had been called to Orlanth for Volle speaks Runes of Thunder, and Vizz, Lightning. Silent Volle took pride in his storms, exquisite pleasure from the rain on his own tula, but Vizz was taken by adventure, a love of plunder and debaucheries.

Manticore

Submitted by: Keith Nellist

I am a Manticore, brains my repast. King I would be, and rule a city of scholars who

know of all things. I would feast on their wisdom. Ha! Just desserts! Then naiads would not spurn my ugliness and fox women not complain of my smell, but would bathe me in perfumes. I live according to my three natures: I am fierce, strong and brave as a lion; as a man, descendant of Tada, I cultivate poetry, sing songs and laugh; as a scorpion I am a wandering monster, capturing prey by stealth and mating in a deadly courtship dance.

Lemu

Submitted by: Keith Nellist

Toothy trees terrified Lemu, the ebony-skinned ginger-bearded woodworker of Yanchi. During Doldrums spent in Neutebum he built seventh-boats. There he met Errinoru the Rotten Embyli who told him tall tales of fantastic travels and the gullible crafter set off in search of The Elixir, and the cities of Silver. He left Maslo on a working passage, leaving behind the Mother he feared and the mother he loved, the Warweeds he hated and the Yanchi Dust he craved. Spurning sorcery, shamanism and sacrifice, Lemu knows Dormal's tricks, and the talents of Elamle-ata. With his tools and dreams he seeks elf delusions.

Xanophir White Talon

Submitted by: Kevin McDonald

Xanophir is a Carmanian sorcerer and auxiliary member of Count Alehandro of Spol's heavy cavalry regiment. He leads a contingent of sorcerers whose magic aids the Queens Regiment with both protective ritual magic and devastating offensive spells. He is also a close ally of Yolenela - the Taloned Countess of Spol - and many suspect him of being sent to keep an eye on her son, Alehandro of the Brass Arm. This may be true, but it

masks a more sinister reason for Xanophir to seek employment far from the Oronin Valley. Xanophir is secretly a Black Visier, seduced by the lies of GanEstoro - Lord of Evil - to seek forbidden knowledge. Few in Sartar care how Xanophir came to learn spells that strike fear in the hearts of Sartarite rebels, and fewer still are aware of the experiments he conducts behind veils of imperially sanctioned secrecy. Xanophir's latest line of inquiry involves the living dead haunting the Upland Marsh and their supposed master - Delecti the Necromancer.

Kelson Blacksnake

Submitted by: Laurent Castellucci

Master of the House Blacksnake tradehouse in Karse, Kelson Blacksnake is controversial figure. His success under Lunar rule after Karse fell and mixed magics make him suspect to many rebel Sartarites. Rumors persist among some that he is loyal to Starbrow, if not the Rebellion – perhaps due to a personal debt. Publicly, he trades in exotic animals and difficult-to-procure spices, but his real wealth comes from a black-market business in weapons and exotic, lost magics. The latter he will sell to the highest bidder, occasionally adding some to his personal collection. He wields magic from many cultures and all three worlds, preferring practical versatility to a single religious approach.

Sora ShadowHearted

Submitted by: Laurent Castellucci

A secretive and sharp-tongued Lhankor Mhy sage, Sora Shadowhearted does not speak of the past that left her transformed. Left to die in the Troll Woods she was found by Takim and dragged into his HeroQuest. Now her beard is tinged with lead, hiding terrible scars.

She acquired spider and darkness spirits, and her rune changed. Now she obsessively scours the Derensev library or wanders far afield, always accompanied by her “Brother in Darkness”, with whom she shares a mystic bond. She hunts in dark places for a prophecy which will guide the future of the Hero Wars and redeem her in her own eyes and has amassed a considerable store of signs and portents, along with a growing understanding of the magical nature of Darkness and those who use it.

Sora and Takim backstory

Submitted by: Laurent Castellucci

In 1618-1619, the Kultain tribe was destroyed and broken up by the Lunar Army, which created a new tribe out of other clans. The fall of the tribe had been prophesied, although details were unclear. A Lhankor Mhy sage interpreted signs to mean that the newborn son of the tribal chief would bring the foretold doom upon the tribe. When the infant disappeared, she was accused of the crime, and of kinstrife. She was bound, outlawed, and left into the Troll Woods to die at the hands of the Uz or perhaps even the mysterious Kitori.

Takim (Brother in Darkness)

Submitted by: Laurent Castellucci

A mighty Son of Karrg, Takim finds himself bound to a destiny he never expected. Enacting the Karrg's Treasure HeroQuest, he unexpectedly found Sora and turned down a more dangerous path of the myth. They are now bound to each other, although neither understands it fully. Takim protects his “Sister in Darkness”, believing she has been touched by Orani Mor and will one day discover a great secret that will help the Uz. Loyal and vicious, his lead mace has slain creatures

from hurtplace, wonderhome, and the other-side. Takim is a deft musician, and an excellent judge of character. His dry wit often contrasts with Sora's sharp tongue.

Roganvarth Pentereestsson

Submitted by: Oliver Bernuetz

He is the thrice-born, thrice-sworn. In boyhood he followed Voriof. He swore an oath to let no harm come to his flock. He kept this oath. Reborn she followed Yuhurul swearing a mighty oath to do no harm and heal all. She kept this oath. Finally in this time of trouble he follows Ereltharo having sworn a mighty oath to bring harm to all enemies of Heler. He and his boyhood friend Rana have in turn been friends, rivals, over the trifling Ortossa, and now lovers. He and Rana follow Broyan armed with his oath and their great love.

The Unknown

Submitted by: Oliver Bernuetz

The knife in the dark, the cord around the throat, the poison never tasted. Maker of widows and orphans. Never seen, never heard. Taught by the great masters of the East. Slayer of the vile, the mendacious, and the vicious. Works for payment or for justice. The innocent are always left unharmed. The Unknown haunts the alleys of Glamour seeking justice. The knife of the Unknown never dries. The garrotte of the Unknown is ever twisted around some deserving neck. Master of stealth, disguise, poisons and strangulations. The Unknown only sees in black and white so beware the gray.

Placidus Treibonus.

Submitted by: Oliver Bernuetz

Born in Raibanth. He worked as an informer in Glamour but made a deadly enemy so he

joined the Lunar Army. He lost a leg at Moonbroth. Set up shop in Pavis where his first customer was a Mostali who gifted him with a mechanical leg. Of middling height he works the streets of Pavis investigating crimes. Possessed of a dry wit and a quick mind he moves in all sorts of circles in Pavis, Solars, Lunars, Praxians, Orlanthis and trolls alike. Hates elves though. Has proven valuable to the local authorities so he works without too much official interference.

Rana Riverlocks

Submitted by: Oliver Bernuetz

Rana Riverlocks, or Raindancer, is a devoted follower of Tarena the Blue Woman, full of grace and fair of face. She can dance on the rain drops, braids river and cloud spirits, daimones and spells into her long, uncut hair and can quench the strongest thirsts. As a boy she vied for the love of Ortossa with Roganvarth. Ortossa broke both their hearts and Rana was reborn as woman. She wandered long and far learning great magics. She returned home and met Roganvarth again. They realized they were the same breath from separate lungs. Now inseparable they follow Broyan.

Sir Rotheric

Submitted by: Soren Petersen

The bastard Sir Rotheric is a seeker of the favours of great men and a cold-hearted seducer of women. A dandy who keeps getting himself indebted to his tailor, he also owes money to Damplestone for ill-fated cures for his demon-cursed brother - and bribes to keep it a secret. He is romantically involved with various rich and gullible women in town - and their maids. He earns money for his evil appetites by standing in for other nobles in duels - or even by doing their challenges for

them. Alert and agile, he is a wicked swordsman and a cunning survivor.

Silverquill

Submitted by: Soren Petersen

Silverquill is a wealthy young duck scholar from Alda-Chur. He is writing a thesis on The Far Place. An insightful apprentice of Lhankor Seeking, he also studies Trolls and The Empire of the Wyrms Friends. Poor with a sword, he trusts in his quick wits and good luck to avoid danger. His beautiful plumage makes him vain and fastidious, but he can be charming when he wants to. He has traveled widely and made many friends, especially amongst the Danlarni. He has a Storm Bull bodyguard and carries the Grasshoppers Leg. He won the Globe of Lightning playing loaded dice with a Giant and he knows the secret words to crush Skull Guardians.

Corkstone

Submitted by: Soren Petersen

The only survivor of a Mostali shipwreck, Corkstone the Copper Dwarf built a hut on Coconut Island. He longs to return to his idyllic life in the East Isles: relaxing, pearl-fishing, and working on his tan, with several buxom native girls to do his bidding. Sailing his ship, Flange Bolt Fastener, with Nilson the Brass Monkey by his side, his relaxed and easy-going demeanour is infectious. Renowned as the best diver around, he can control his buoyancy and breath via mechanical means; his Copper Mostali heritage also includes a built-in compass and depth gauge. One day he helped a Dragon, who whispered hot words of gold and legend to him.

Gest

Submitted by: Soren Petersen

Expelled from the Black Horse Troop for refusing to butcher an innocent woman, the young Ridderan Gest wandered aimlessly over much of Dragon Pass. He finally came across her clan, the Black Tusk Clan and was adopted into it. Not yet fully accepted, he patrols the Marsh borders on his battle-trained horse, his Lightning Sword at his side. His tactical training and height give him an edge in fighting undead. Still adhering to the teachings of St. Atrox, he presents a fearsome image with his ritual scars, unflinching endurance and hell-tainted dark armour. He carries the Ninth Sigil of Slontos and the spirit of an insane dragonewt haunts his dreams.

Porta

Submitted by: Soren Petersen

Cunning and deceitful, redheaded Porta is in it for the money. He worked as a street trader in Vanch and knows the magic of the Seven Mothers. Forced to join the Lunar army as a foot soldier, he started worshipping Rufelza. Presenting himself as a loveable rogue, he excels at scrounging, bribery and blackmailing. Porta can get you anything 'for a price'. A superb cook and flute-player, he loves gambling and will cheat at any opportunity. He has contacts with various merchants in Dragon Pass and has saved a large sum of money. Sly and agile, he has somehow acquired a durulz sidekick.

Xanthia

Submitted by: Soren Petersen

Pretty Xanthia is the youngest daughter of Lord Khordavesh, a stern Dara Happan noble. Inspired by the Red Goddess, she rebelled against the staid Yelmic society,

shaving her head and shocking male Dara Happans by wearing revealing clothes. Her father still dotes on her, however. Ordinated to Natha the Balancer, the agile and graceful Xanthia studied strategy and tactics at the Imperial College in Glamour. Here, she also learned to refute gravity and befriended a Lune. She loves violence but paradoxically she can also be found in the Maze, aiding the poor and homeless. A worshipper of Serris, four initiates follow her.

Willow

Submitted by: Soren Petersen

Willow was always a healthy tomboy, brawling, swimming and climbing with the boys. Bored with clan life, she ran away to Boldhome at a young age. She lived by stealing at first, but her natural grace, beauty and perfect pitch caught the attention of Ranulf Clearvoice, who became her sponsor. She initiated to Drogarsi, and with her harpist she rode far and wide, even visiting the Empire. Always

alert for danger, she trusts in her charm, agility and deceptive strength to help her. Well-read, she is interested in ancient cultures, especially the EWF. She is fastidious and appreciates civilized life.

Ymer

Submitted by: Soren Petersen

Ymer is a dark troll initiate of Argan Argar. Seeking glory in order to replace his Warleader, he travelled from Skyfall Lake and knows the horrors of the Deathline. Commanding a pack of squirming trollkin and a pack beetle, he proudly wears his Lunar tattoos and his Registered Monster Badge. Greedy for gold, he now serves Lord Copperface II as a bodyguard. Cunning and fast, he is used to trickery and deceit. He is armoured in insect carapace and several smelly furs. His flanged mace is caked with dried blood and his shield sports a shrunken aldryami head.

G: Sartar Contest Feats

Vinga defends the Clan

Submitted by: Andrew Graham

To defend the clan Vinga took on the mantle of leadership and ordered the men and guided them from shame into courage. Her example emboldened the women and she showed them how to fight and use cunning rather than brawn. So prepared the clan drove off thieves and raiders and even drove off an attack for flying warriors. When the darkmen attacked she deafened them with her yell and drove them off. But the dark lady she shielded and helped give birth. The old clan enemy came but fell to traps and javelins

The Sword-Dance Feat

Submitted by: Christoph Kohring

The Thunderbrothers danced to defeat the Star Captains when they last invaded the Sky. Drogarsi failed to woo Deloradella but later defeated her three sons with two swords and one dance. The hero known only as the Sword-Dancer once landed all of his warband in the center of Palangio's army.

The Poisoned Chalice Feat

Submitted by: Gregory Molle

This feat enables a devotee of Eurmal to imitate one of his most famous deeds: the discovery of the Death power, later offered to Orlanth, who used it to assassinate the Evil Emperor, setting off a series of catastrophic

consequences that almost led the world to a complete destruction. Devotees of the Trickster use that magic when an important personality of their community is engaged in a conflict against an enemy : if used with success, the devotee makes a "discovery" (a secret or an unknown creature / power / character / "exotic" thing, etc.) which brings a short term victory but - that point is of course passed over in silence by the devotee... - which inevitably leads the community to bad events in the long term (better is the benefit, worse are the long term consequences).

Orlanth Tames the Avalanche

Submitted by: Kevin McDonald

When Orlanth defeated wicked Vadrus he gave Kinslayer's frigid realm to Valind, the Winter Snowstorm. Valind repaid Orlanth's generosity by attempting to bury the entire world under snow and ice. Once, Valind even had the temerity to attack Orlanth's Hall itself. Valind gathered his forces on a nearby mountain top and released them into the valley as a roaring horde of ice and snow. Orlanth was prepared for the attack and met the avalanche head on. The King of Storms hurled lightning and hurricane winds into the face of the horde and divided it into two streams, each flowing harmlessly to either side of his stead. He then showed his companions how to leap upon the rushing torrent and follow its course to the top of the mountain. When confronted by the King of Storms, Valind submit-

ted to Orlanth's justice and thereafter turned the brunt of his aggression upon the enemies of the Storm Tribe.

Humakt's Deathsong

Submitted by: Laurent Castellucci

When Humakt quested to gather all the pieces of the Old Death in the world, he found that Donandar had woven it into song, for death would now always dance with life. He taught this song to Grim Humakt, and in this song Humakt again briefly knew love, and family, and grief, and joy. He called the song Death completes Life, and only sings it when Death must be unleashed in full. All who hear it know that Death comes to claim those who should be already separated from the living, without let or hindrance, without fear nor favour, until the song has stopped.

Lhankor Mhy Names the Foe

Submitted by: Laurent Castellucci

When deep in the Underworld, searching for Lost Erissa, the Lightbringers were surrounded by creatures whom they could not identify. Orlanth could not strike them for he knew not where they were, Chalana Arroy could not heal the wounds for she knew not how they were caused, Humakt could not defeat them for he could not determine if they were dead or alive, Issaries could not bargain with them for he knew not their tongue. Lhankor Mhy listened, and looked, and smelt, and felt, and tasted them, then thought deeply and knew who they were, where they were, why they were, and what their magic was. Then they were vulnerable. (The Devotee must concentrate entirely on his foes while in their presence. Gathering all he can from all his senses he can understand their magics, their tactics, strengths and weaknesses, and explain to others how to counter them.)

Yinkin Stalks the Night

Submitted by: Laurent Castellucci

When Ernalda challenged Yinkin to prove his worth if he was to stay in the Longhouse while still coming and going as he pleased, the mighty Alynx promised he would drive out all the little creatures who refused to make peace with the Storm Tribe and instead stole their grain and their warmth. He hunted for 7 nights, fighting battles with the foes Orlanth and the Thunderbrothers could not, stalking his prey and pouncing upon them when they thought themselves safe. His ambushes were legendary, and though they tried many tricks, none of his foes could shake him from the trail. (The Devotee must hunt alone, and at night, but can track and ambush any foe with terrifying effectiveness.)

Jotorang

A story of the First Age

Greg Stafford

Near the end of the third century after the Dawn a man named Jotorang returned from war in Ralios, across the mountains past Dorastor, with three wagon groaning with riches hauled by a battalion of slaves. He was well received, though he was only one among many men so laden with glory and treasure. He did not deign to remain there in Dorastor, but he did leave his only son there, with a good family who was happy to have such a connection even with a warrior from far Talastar. So it was that Ingkarthor was fostered in Dorastor, where clever men can learn of things other than war. Ingkarthor was one of those clever men, and he returned when his ailing father called him home to share his last years. He brought a wife, several good friends and a book of spells which he alone could read. And even though Jotorang was good with swords but bad at farming he had managed to retain enough of his plunder to give it to his son's keeping.

Old Jotorang died shortly after his son returned, and Ingkarthor was thereafter called Wealthy, to set him apart from the other Hagolings. And so when his wife bore him a son the boy was named Jotorang, to keep the lucky name within the family.

Ingkarthor was popular and successful among the Hagolings. His friends did no antagonize their new neighbors, but were models of good Orlanthei house carls. Ingkarthor did not ignore local talent either, but fostered friendship and relations with his neighbors.

He was of the Listening Clan. When the Red Fern clan killed a cousin then Ingkarthor blessed his war band from his book, and none of them were killed in the reprisals which brought the Red Fern so low that they became slaves afterwards. Ingkarthor had a dispute with the tribal king, but instead of fighting he was instated as a member of the king's own council. The Listening Clan was brought high that way. And when the Hagolings wanted to take all the fishing rights for the Fanrith River then Ingkarthor blessed the tribal war band the same way. A few men were killed in that war, and many were wounded but Ingkarthor said it was because they were not good Orlanthei, and everyone believed him. Thus the Listening clan got a good section of the river to fish in, second only to the king's own clan.

And through all that Ingkarthor was careful to point out the ways and results to his growing son. Perhaps it was that instruction that made Jotorang so blessed, or it was his father's aged grandfather, who lived in one of the family steads and taught him sword and spear play that had made Jotorang's grandfather glorious. Or maybe it was just his own good luck. In any case, when it was time for the youth to be made into a man his blessings came forth like a new wind. Indeed, it was a new wind that came forth.

The founder of the clan, Hederl the Listener, had lived before the Darkness. When the sacred ways were opened then Orlanthei intro-

duced them, and Hederl sent Jotorang flying to the top of Mount Umatum, which others call Mount Matu, which is the southernmost of the Great Mountains of Yolp. There Jotorang was subject to a test which was intended to kill him, but instead he returned with an ally who he called Bearded Wind.

In those days there was much war in Talastar. Jotorang was well outfitted, with good armor and a wonderful sword that his grandfather had borne in Ralios. Many young men came to his band, as was the custom, eager to attach themselves to opportunity and wealth. They reckoned that this was a lucky man, and everyone admired his great wind. They rode with the king's war band.

Two years later Bearded Storm made snow fall on the midsummer High Holy Day of the Sun God, which so terrified the men of Sylila that they turned and fled. Another time Jotorang and Barastal were riding the borders of their lands when they saw an entire herd of the king's cattle beign stolen. The wind blasted them all flat to the ground, and Jotorang and Barastal got the credit for saving them until the war band came up. Later that year, when a regiment of men from dread Alkoth ambushed the army of Dorastor it was the Bearded Wind that knocked them down like cattle, and to counter attack. In that bloody battle Jotorang was surrounded by his foes, standing atop their corpses but surely destined to die even with his Bearded Wind howling about him. It was the young man named Barastal who leapt atop the enemy leader, skewering him with a sword thrust through the chest, that saved Jotorang. It was that deed that convinced Jotorang to always count on the help of men, not just the gods. And it was that deed that made Barastal to be Jotorang's spear man, to stand always at his right side in the place of trust and honor.

Jotorang also got a wife. She was Dorwitha, the daughter of a cousin of the king of the Hagolings. She was good looking and knew her accounts, and had a friendly way with the households so the folk worked hard with few complaints. Jotorang was happy to leave her with the management while he acquired fame and glory.

After a year of marriage, though, he considered getting a new wife, for no child was borne from her womb despite their avid attempts to make one. On the second year she took a journey to the Ernalda temple in Dorastor, and although she vowed she would go all the way to the Great Mother Mountain, in Kerofinela, if she had to so that she would be fertile. But she came home after a month. On the third year of their marriage a son was born, and on the fourth a daughter, and on the fifth another son. Their names were Swenith, Dorelema and Valarstans, all lucky names from the family of Jotorang. The father took great delight with them on the winters when he was at home. In the summers he continued his quest towards glory.

"You will be as great as Heort," the flatterers would say.

"I want to be as great as Orlanth," he would say, in the boastful way of young men everywhere.

THE CULT OF BERAK-TAL

Roderick Robertson



Berak-tal is a Spolite deity, the Ancestor of Ogres in the Carmanian region. The ogres of Berak-tal are clannish, and find sentient beings the most delectable of delicacies. They gain some small benefits in health and strength from the practice of cannibalism.

Mythos and History

When the Sun had been slain by Somathus, when the living and the dead mixed because the way to the underworld hadn't yet been found, Berak-tal and her family were starving. The grains would not grow, the domesticated animals had all been eaten, and prey animals disappeared.

Berak-tal tried to eat the bodies of the dead, but they provided no nutrition, and gave her the belly-gripe in the bargain. Then one day a Stranger God appeared. His eyes glowed blue, and he had horns on his head that resembled those of the big-headed ram. Berak-tal and her family were nearly dead from hunger, and they fell on the stranger with the only weapons they were able to lift – their hands and teeth. The blood of the Stranger God filled their mouths, and they found that the hunger was banished. They slaughtered the Stranger God with nothing more than the weapons nature had given them, eating his flesh and drinking his ichor raw.

The essence of the Stranger God not only filled their bellies, it gave them powers of mutability and movement. They found that they could change their shape, run over water, and leap great distances. But as they became hungry once again, they found that their new-found powers faded. Once again, just as they were about to starve to death, another Stranger God appeared at their door. This god had great teeth, and claws on his hands. His skin was armored like that of an armadillo. This time the family did not hesitate, but attacked the stranger god. Even with



his formidable natural weapons, the stranger was overwhelmed and consumed.

Again, they gained great powers, but those powers faded as the ache in their bellies grew. No other gods appeared at their door, but one day a neighbor appeared. The thought of eating a neighbor was repugnant, but not enough to forestall the family from eating the neighbor. While they did not gain great powers from the neighbor, they still found that they gained *some* powers. From that point on, the family of Berak-tal preyed on their neighbors. They ate everything around them, but found that the most delicious meals were those where the meat was sentient and had magical powers.

When the Sun rose again, the family of Berak-tal found that their ability to absorb powers from their meals was a great benefit to their survival, but that their neighbors were wary. The powers of Shapeshifting that the family had learned from the first Stranger God were used to great effect to lull their prey's vigilance.

Nature of the Cult

Berak-tal is the Ancestor of Ogres in Carmania. From her loins sprang the race of Ogres, and her worship gives them powers of darkness and mutability. Berak-tal is worshipped with sacrifice.

Worshippers of Berak-tal often run inns or guest-houses, from which they are able to select victims. Others live far from the beaten path, waylaying strangers in the woods and hills that they know so well.

Depiction

Berak-tal is simply shown as a pair of fangs in the darkness. Family shrines are hidden

from public view, often in caves or cellars, where the darkness shelters them.

Rune Affinities

Berak-tal is associated with the Darkness and Movement/Change runes

Darkness Rune Affinity

The Darkness rune hides the families of Berak-tal from their enemies and their prey. Berak-tal initiates can use the Darkness rune to: Hide in shadows, Startle Prey, There-Not There, Quench light

Movement Rune Affinity

Berak-tal gained the movement rune from the first Stranger God. With it her descendants may: Leap great distances, Move silently, Run over water, Cling to any surface, Slam door shut from across the room.

Particular Likes and Dislikes

When the Lightbringers came to Spol, the habit of Berak-tal to eat guests brought her family into conflict with the worshippers of Orlanth, whose notion of hospitality means not eating your houseguests. As a result, Berak-tal families will cheerfully kill Orlanthi whenever they see them. Of course, this has rarely been a problem since the fall of the Second Council.

Other types of ogres are fair game for Berak-tal, and they get an even better benefit from eating an ogre than they do from a normal human.

Cult Organization

Berak-tal is a family goddess. Families are led by matriarchs. The children of the matriarch obey her without question – she is not

only their priestess, she is also their mother or grandmother!

There is no higher organization than the family.

Priests

The family matriarch leads worship services to Berak-tal. Priestesses are called “Mom”, “Mother”, “Grandma”, “Ma’am” and the like.

Center of Power, Holy Places

The home of Berak-tal is unknown –she moved her family away from it when she ate the last neighbor. Some matriarchs are actively searching for the Home.

Holy Days

Each season has a holy day on Darkness Day of Movement Week. The High Holy Day is the holy day of Darkness Season.

Sacrifices

The brain and heart of every victim is given to Berak-tal, and on Her High Holy Day a family must sacrifice at least three strangers to her.

Initiates

Initiates who are born into the family approach Berak-tal through either the Darkness or Movement rune. Those that are forcibly married into the family may only approach her through the movement (Change) rune.

Children are lay members of Berak-tal when they are born. They are raised on the flesh of humans and other sentient beings. When they reach puberty, they are initiated into the cult.

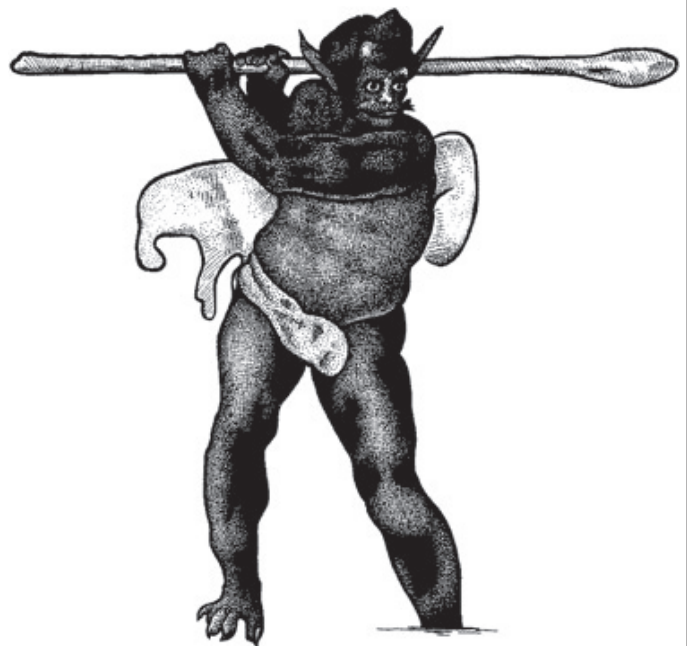
Members of the cult will sometimes kidnap members of the opposite sex in order to marry them and ensure the survival of the family. Kidnap victims will be force-fed cannibalistic meals until they join in willingly. At this point, they are initiated and married into the family in the same ceremony. They will always be second-class family members, however, usually mistreated by the matriarch, if not their own spouse as well.

Subcults

There are no formal subcults of Berak-tal, though each family of ogres has its own magics and stolen abilities.

Devotees

Devotees of Berak-tal are rare, perhaps one in a family each generation. They are usually the superlative provider for the family, bringing in food by stealth and deception, or by actively hunting it in the wilderness.



Feats

● The Innocent House Feat

Even while Berak-tal was eating her neighbors, she managed to keep the secret from her neighbors. Her house was always spotless – no scattered bits of flesh or bloody cleavers appeared anywhere that a guest could see them. Use of this feat allows a worshipper to clean a house or other place so that all evidence of their dietary habits is gone. Blood splatters and butcher's cutlery glow, showing its location show it can be cleaned or hidden. If something can't be moved, a veil of darkness will hide it from sight.

🌀 The Get In Front Of You Feat

Berak-tal's son, Horvin-tal, was always able to get ahead of his prey and ambush it, even if his prey had managed to get far ahead of him. This feat allows the user to use his knowledge of the local land, movement magic, and a bit of authorial hand-waving, to get ahead of a fleeing victim and ambush her. It may also affect the victim with broken shoes, losing her way in the woods, etc.

● The One Always Survives Feat

Unless the victims can make *absolutely* sure that all the worshippers of a Berak-tal family are dead, one *will* survive to plague future travelers through their land. Unless rendered fully and irrevocably dead, it will be the matriarch or a devotee.

Notes

Cult Families

Berak-tal families are incestuous, and new members are only brought in when there are no members of the appropriate gender in a

generation. Such "incomers" are kidnapped, forced to eat human flesh, kept chained in deep holes, and mentally and physically abused until their mind snaps and they are willing to marry into the family and cult. Incomers often become the most ardent of Berak-tal cultists, and may eventually rise to the rank of Devotee or even Matriarch.

Cultist's Appearance

Some cultists are indistinguishable from normal humans, especially those that have married into the family. They are used as the "public face" when strangers come. Other members have a variety of genetic problems, including cleft palates, tumors, mismatched limbs, imbecility, etc. While some may look on these as "Chaos Features", they are not, they are simply products of generations of inbreeding.

Cultist's Abilities

Cultists are Gloranthan Ogres, as defined by your particular set of rules. In general, this means that they are stronger and more robust than normal humans. The Movement/Change rune grants them some power to physically change their appearance, to appear "normal". This is not illusion magic – their body physically changes shape. It is quite painful both when this type of magic is cast, and when it wears off and the body returns to its original form.

Families out in the wilderness tend to be quite proficient hunters, using darkness magic to confuse prey, and movement magic to run it down. Berak-tal families who run guest-houses are more likely to be good with hand to hand combat, usually using butcher's tools, but able to use anything as a weapon in a pinch.

Cannibalism and Acquired Powers

Worship of Berak-tal allows one to gain a small benefit when one eats a magic-using creature (not a magical creature such as a unicorn or pixie)

First, eating sentient creatures keeps the hunger at bay. Eating At least one sentient creature a season ensures that a cultist's normal Ogre abilities remain in top form. Eating fewer than one sentient a season means that the ogre suffers a penalty on "Ogre" powers, as well as all Berak-tal magic. A Berak-tal worshipper will never starve because he's eating only non-sentient flesh, but he will become only as strong as a normal human.

Second, a worshipper gains a minor ability in all magic known by the victim. If the worshipper already has similar magic, he will gain a small bonus to it.

In Heroquest 2, this is modeled by using Rune abilities—for example, eating an Orlan-thi yields minor abilities in Storm and Mastery, and a bonus to your own Movement abilities.

In RuneQuest, it is modeled as a POWx1% chance of casting any Divine Magic spell known by the victim as a one-use spell.

These bonuses only last for about a week.

Eating a Spirit-user or Sorcerer yields no power—first because their magic is different than Berak-tal's, and second because their magic is not innate, but is Book-learning (Sorcery) or simple Charms and trinkets (Animism). A worshipper of Berak-tal may, however, have quite an arsenal of spirit charms stolen from victims, and old families may have libraries of traveler's Grimoires.

Final Note

The cult of Berak-tal is, as may have been gathered by now, an amalgam of the various horror film cannibal families, such as those from "The Hills Have Eyes" or "The Texas Chainsaw Massacre". An alternative depiction would be Sweeney Todd, the Demon Barber of Fleet Street, or the proprietors of "Hotel Hell".