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Twenty-five issues and nearly ten years. Not too bad going although not quite the three issues per year we aim for. Indeed, it started off as four per year.

This, our silver anniversary issue, is pretty special. What started life as a normal, if rather large, article has grown into an all encompassing background to one of WFRP's most interesting races, indeed one of the few unique to the Old World. We think Robin Low has done an impressive job and we hope you'll agree. We certainly hope you don't mind the one-off change to the normal format.

Robin's article is, I believe, the near-definitive version of the Fimir. Not everyone will agree, but that is the way it should be. It is an RPG cliché, but you take from it what you want. Indeed, no article or background can survive contact with GMs and players intact. Many seem to get hung up on what is and isn't official. However, this approach should not stop those who want to constructively criticise articles in Warpstone for whatever reason they choose.

Next issue will be business as usual, although it is a bit of a scenario special. Conspiracy comes to an end and it will be, in all likelihood, the last article we will publish with WFRP1 stats.

We have also relaunched the *Warpstone* website, now with a dedicated forum (more news on page 3). I would like to take this opportunity to thank Roderic who supplied the webspace we used for the last few years. Thanks also to Konrad for designing the previous site and Clive for maintaining it.

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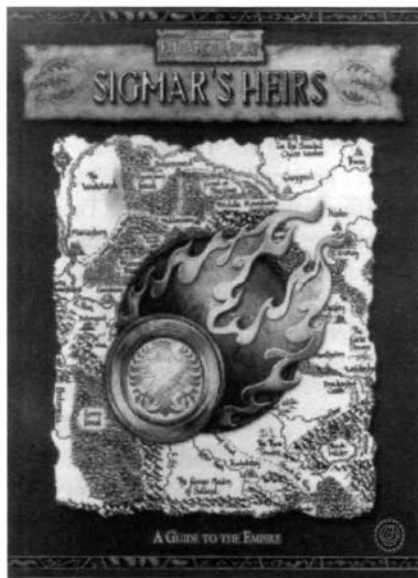
REVIEWS

Sigmar's Heirs

By Anthony Ragan

Published by Black Industries

Reviewed by Andrew Law



If you whipped up WFRP2, *Warhammer Fantasy Battle*, *The Enemy Within* and some imagination in a lidless blender, *Sigmar's Heirs* is probably what you'd get. It combines elements of each - it's shiny, filled with original details and gazetteers, features the Storm of Chaos, and has an adventure set in Bögenhafen - but great chunks of material have spilled

over the open top, never to be seen again. What we are left with is certainly smooth, but you can't help feeling that maybe someone ought to have found a lid.

The 128-page 'sourcebook of the Empire' was blended by Anthony Ragan, the pen behind the widely respected *Marienburg: Sold Down the River*. For those used to Black Industries' full-colour publications, this one's no different. It's neatly laid out to minimise dead space and has a combination of new illustrations and reused art from other Games Workshop projects. The art quality varies, with some superior illustrations (page 22's picture of Marienburg buying its freedom) and others that are poorer (page 39's War Altar of Sigmar). Basically, it is another glossy book of the type we've come to expect from Black Industries: a colourfully presented hardback that will take heavy use, but feels a little thin.

Once inside, that thinness begins to show. The first chapter, 'The Land and its People', comes after a one-page piece of functional fiction about the Storm of Chaos, and allows only six pages for all the geography of the Empire and descriptions of the four PC races that live there. The results are full of colourful detail, but feel very brief. Further, due to the limited space, there are some obvious omissions. An example of this is in the Elf section, which details the Wood Elves but excludes the High Elves, even though both are mentioned as Imperial PC races in the main rulebook (two-fifths of all randomly-rolled Elf characters are High Elf).

The next three chapters follow a similar pattern: good material squeezed tightly into a small space, resulting in detail getting lost. We have nine pages for all of the Empire's history (including a three-page timeline), only four pages to cover all aspects of Imperial government and foreign relations, and six pages apportioned to the varied complexities of Imperial Law, including

rules for trials. Again, these chapters are filled with useful information, but come across as introductions rather than full chapters, as they are brief and full of omissions. An example of an omission here is the treatment of the Runefangs. The Runefangs were gifted to each of the chieftains of man that commanded Sigmar's army and became an important symbol of an Elector's right to rule. However, in the history chapter the blades are only mentioned in passing without any explanation why they represent Electoral authority or even what they are. Even *Warhammer Fantasy Battle's* Empire book has more detail than this (six paragraphs over two pages), and the *Warhammer Fantasy Battle* books are, by necessity, typically far less detailed than their WFRP equivalents.

The two chapters covering Imperial religion, Chapters 5 and 7 (oddly split for no obvious reason), are similarly tight. The ten pages of Chapter 5 begin with an overview of religious practices and then concentrate on the nine primary cults mentioned in the core rulebook, and how they are individually organised within the Empire. They finish with a list of minor deities and a sample of some Imperial names with religious meaning. Chapter 7 is barely a chapter at all, explaining forbidden cults and detailing two of them in only three pages. What is included in both chapters is appropriate and useful, but is again brief and contains occasional errors (such as claiming that there are no Templars of Morr, even though pg. 88 of the same book details a town owned by the Raven Knights, and other current Games Workshop publications also have Morrian templars).

Chapter 6, 'The Grand Provinces', is the largest in the book, coming in at fifty-five pages. Each of the ten Imperial provinces are described in seven sections - an overview; geography; people; gazetteer; detailed description of a few locations; sample NPC; and adventure ideas - interspersed with examples of local sayings and in-character opinions. This all adds great depth to the setting and helps the Empire feel more like a living, breathing place. As should be expected, the chapter takes the Storm of Chaos into account, but it also provides details for pre-invasion conditions. So, although all of the gazetteers quote population numbers post-Storm of Chaos, figures for before are given as well. Further, the criticisms of WFRP1 city populations have been heard, and the larger cities now have numbers in the tens of thousands, rather than rarely breaking the 10,000 mark. Overall, the chapter is crammed with useful material and makes an interesting read. However, it is not without flaws. Primary amongst these is the lack of maps. For a chapter that aims to detail the provinces, maps seem necessary. The chapter only presents one, which is of the Empire as a whole and has surprisingly few details. To make matters worse, it also seriously conflicts with previous maps of the same. There are also other problems, such as conflicting information regarding the city of Talabheim and direct contradictions to established *Mordheim* and *Warhammer Fantasy Battle* imagery. The Mootland and Averland entries have the clearest examples of such conflicts: the Mootland has been entirely rewritten and had all mention of Ogres removed; Averland has lost its immense wealth and flamboyant upperclasses and replaced

its booming equine trade for 'famous Averland longhorn cattle.' However these do not detract from the strength of the chapter as a whole, which does something never before done in an official WFRP product by providing a detailed breakdown of the entire Empire, and doing it well.

The last chapter, 'Ill Met in Bögenhafen', is a nineteen-page adventure by Chris Pramas and Robert J. Schwalb with a fairly linear plotline that plays out quite well, and also brings the Bögenhafen setting up-to-date after the fourteen years that have passed since the events of *Shadows Over Bögenhafen*. It is an enjoyable little adventure, and certainly interesting for GMs that use the city. However, when there is so little room for other, more important elements of the book, it does feel like the nineteen pages could have been used more wisely elsewhere, with maps being a prime candidate for the space.

The book also has two appendices that provide eight useful careers and rules for 'Provincial Features', i.e. optional character generation rules for each of the ten provinces. Of note here is the odd mixture of careers (Apothecary, Astrologer, Exorcist, Forger, Gambler, Knight of the Blazing Sun, Raconteur and Verenean Investigator) that are not obvious choices for an Empire book since they are generalised careers that could come from any part of the Old World.

So, 128 pages later, is the book any good? Yes it is, but another 128 pages of in-depth material would have made it far better. The information that made it in is great, leaving a book jam-packed with inspiring details, adventure hooks and fresh ideas. However, the information that is missing yawns wide (including maps, details on river life, Imperial bloodlines, guilds, and much more), and what is included has many small errors and often seriously contradicts *Warhammer Fantasy Battle* and *Mordheim*, which won't bother most, but will annoy some.

In short: it's brief, has many minor mistakes, but is a great little read.

Plundered Vaults

Published by Black Industries

Reviewed by Steve Moss



Plundered Vaults is a 96 page, black and white hardback book. It contains six WFRP adventures, three of which are new scenarios; the other three were previously published by Games Workshop in *White Dwarf* magazines 94 and 98, and *The Restless Dead* book. I expected adventures that could be used as stand alones or easily introduced into campaigns. I hoped the new scenarios would capture some of the spirit of the

originals and would still feel like WFRP.

The cover features a creepy necromancer conjuring some foulness from a dark grimoire. A skeleton with a pointy hat ably

assists him. It is an atmospheric piece of art and captures the WFRP mood well. Unfortunately the book contains only five pieces of artwork from the original publications. The new illustrations are amateurish, cartoon-like and cluttered. Half of them feature people with scars. Did Black Industries tell the artist to include them? I know it is a grim world of perilous adventure, but you'd think Zorro had been working overtime. The original adventures in *White Dwarf* featured more evocative art and lots more of it. The maps in *Plundered Vaults* are good quality, functional and useful, although the maps in *Grapes of Wrath* appear to be photocopied from the original and are harder to read.

The only outstanding adventure here, and the first of the old-timers, is *Rough Night at the Three Feathers*. It is a very detailed whodunit adventure set in a coaching inn. The action takes place during one night and there is a lot of activity to keep the PCs busy. The adventure has a timeline detailing the events. There are numerous plots with elements of revenge, subterfuge, skullduggery and even farce. It initially appears complicated, but if the GM prepares beforehand it will provide a few memorable sessions of classic WFRP. The original contained additional arm wrestling rules, a full colour map and lots of NPC portraits and a Gnome thief.

The *Grapes of Wrath* is a variation of *The Seven Samurai/The Magnificent Seven*, as the PCs find themselves defending a village, but instead of bandits they are up against floating, fiery eyed skulls. This adventure was originally offered in *White Dwarf* 98 as a link between *Death on the Reik* and the forthcoming *The Power Behind the Throne*. It works well as a stand-alone adventure with plenty to keep the party occupied. The NPCs include a village beauty, a corpulent Bretonnian wine merchant and a village idiot with poor dental hygiene. This is a solid adventure with a few twists along the way. The original adventure featured Skaven as protagonists, but unfortunately these have been replaced by a group of adventurers. In the original, the Skaven had a sound reason for being involved. The replacement is ill thought out, clumsy and illogical. I do not understand why the writers did this, or why in the new version the village beauty now has a dagger added to her trappings and looks like Xena the Warrior Princess, complete with scowls, dagger, a skull-adorned split skirt and leather straps.

The *Haunting Horror* is a straightforward haunted house adventure with a linear plot. It has a dark, brooding atmosphere and feels similar to the claustrophobic tales of Edgar Allen Poe. It is a dungeon crawl inside a house, but there are some rather creepy touches such as a beastman who erupts from a painting, a writhing mass of unidentified meat on a spit and a vile creature that thinks it is half Dwarf - half frog. This can be an enjoyable adventure for both GM and players, but time needs to be spent on creating a horrific atmosphere.

Turning to the new kids on the block, *Carrion Call* is another linear haunted house adventure. It has a few interesting female protagonists and an imposing gothic setting. The PCs need to discover a number of pieces of valuable information in this adventure, and if they do not find them they may find it tough going. At one stage there is an excellent moral dilemma for the PCs to sweat about. How they respond to this affects their chances of survival. There are a few combats in this adventure and the ending is quite tough. The players will need luck and/or skill to escape unscathed.

The second new offering is *For Love or Money*. Although it contains investigative and rescue elements, it is the least satisfying of the three new adventures. The NPCs and plot feel clichéd. The party enter town, go to an inn and then accept a job to recover a lost item. It contains a few WFRP elements - Skaven, mutations, dodgy Bretonnian geezer in an Inn - but it felt more like a D&D adventure. The final section of the adventure runs out of steam. The chase sequence is unimaginative and the stop-the-ritual ending is tired.

Finally we have *Sing for Your Supper*, a city based investigative adventure set in Nuln. The PCs must thwart a foul Nurglish plot, rescue a butcher's daughter and avoid eating too many sausages. It has a detailed plot and interesting NPCs and requires the PCs to play detective if they hope to solve the case. The NPC listings contain helpful descriptions, typical quotes and a brief synopsis of the NPCs. My only complaint about the adventure is the lack of a sense of place. Although there is a lot of travelling across the city, there is no real sense that it is Nuln. More descriptive text about Nuln or a map of the city would have been useful.

Looking at *Plundered Vaults* as a whole, a few of the adventures are similar: two involve damsels in distress, two have Skaven and two even offer the PCs Fate Points for completing them! This goes against the Fate Point guidelines in the rulebook and is just plain silly. The detailed lists of gold and equipment in some of the adventures once again smacks of the worst of D&D. There are quite a few typos, a failing in most of Black Industries publications to date. There was also a distinct lack of NPC images that would help a GM visualise things better.

Although there are a few good adventures here and a selection to suit different styles of play, Black Industries could have done a much better job. The original versions were of a much better quality and some of the changes to them do not make sense. I expected one of the initial books for WFRP2 to be fresh, exciting and outstanding. Instead it is plain, average and uninspiring.

Old World Bestiary

By T.S.Luikart & Ian Sturrock

Published by Black Industries

Reviewed by John Foody



Prior to *Sigmar's Heirs*, perhaps the most important WFRP2 release to date, the *Old World Bestiary* contains background for monsters and other beastly inhabitants of the Old World. The material and rules will do much to shape the background. At worst it could be a list of monster statistics, at best a deepening of the fabric of the Old World.

The WFRP1 rules contained a wide-ranging bestiary which was rarely

added to over the years, although there was some fan material. *Warhammer Fantasy Battle* had a wider range of races and creatures. It was going to be interesting to see what would survive

in this post Storm of Chaos WFRP2 world. The bestiary in the WFRP2 rules was a disappointment. It felt like a teaser and, as made clear by Black Industries, it was.

Old World Bestiary is a hardback 126 page book with full colour and plenty of illustrations. Some of this art is excellent: atmospheric and evocative. Other pieces are terribly bland, poor generic fantasy. For a world with such a strong visual history it is a real failing.

The book is divided into two sections. The first is in a similar style to recent Black Library releases, such as the *Liber Chaotica*. That is, it consists of in-game background. Creatures can have up to three sections: Common View, The Scholar's Eye and Our Own Words. Each contains fragments of text and speech from various Old World sources, from scholars to peasant farmers. These are, as suggested here, ideal for passing on to players during a game. It is a nice idea and works well.

Here we find we are missing a number of creatures from WFRP1, for example Fimir, Zoats and Liches. In their place we have Fen Beasts, Warhawks, the interesting Dragon Ogres and the awful Squigs. Among the many changes to existing creatures are the Mummy, Vampires (now with Bloodlines) and Direwolves.

The second half of the book contains a listing of the creatures consisting of a brief description and a profile, including any special rules. There are also a number of new Talents for creatures. Talents and Skills work well for creatures, but perhaps there should also be "negative" Talents. So, for example, we get the same description of the Mindless rule in a number of profiles. If it had been a Talent then it could have been described once, saving space.

Adding to the "monster" careers in the main rules, we are presented with three Shaman careers here. This is a very good and simple way to deal with monsters. Some of the special rules for creatures are a little odd. Trolls, for example, are subject to stupidity with Intelligence 18, but Minotaurs with Intelligence 16 are not – perhaps this separates intelligence from common sense. Goblinoid Animosity is potentially unplayable and a bit silly. The Slaughter Margin is a system for judging how difficult creatures are to fight against. This is a good idea in theory. I look forward to seeing how it works in practice.

There is a lot to like in the *Old World Bestiary*. The Old World background works well and will enliven games and offer GMs good ideas. However, overall, I feel the *Old World Bestiary* is a missed opportunity. The main problem is that the creature descriptions lack any real meat. There is background information and hard stats, but little to really work with in how these creatures impact the game. There is little reference to society, beliefs or habits. It feels a little too much like a *Warhammer Fantasy Battle* bestiary. Too many descriptions are simply about how to fight the creature. Perhaps we could have had fewer creatures, but more solid background.

The *Old World Bestiary* is an essential purchase for WFRP, but hopefully one that will be expanded upon and developed.

Denizens of the Empire

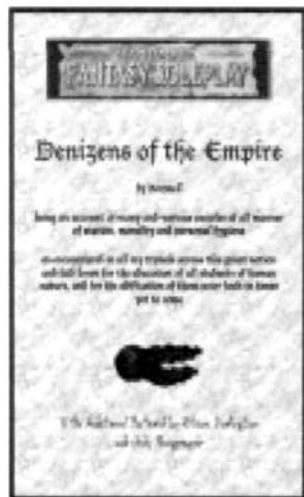
By Steve Darlington and Jody Macgregor

Published online as a free pdf

Reviewed by Robin Low

Denizens of the Empire is an impressive and useful compendium of 67 characters for WFRP, demonstrating broad ranges of races, careers and levels of experience. The characters are divided into

chapters: The Upper Classes, Agents of the Empire, City Folk, Country Folk, The Serving Classes, The Criminal Classes, The Insane, Members of a Magical College, The Crew of the *Ingrid*, Monsters!, Some Unlikely Heroes, and Wanderers and Vagabonds. Each section is introduced by the fictional author of *Denizens of the Empire*, Bozwell, who also appears as a character.



The layout is clear and simple, following the format of the bestiary in the rulebook with the addition of career(s), experience point level, dashes to indicate the number of advances taken in each characteristic, and a brief section of background on the character and a quote. Each character takes up no more than one page, which makes printing and looking over details during play very quick.

The background sections are relatively brief, but effective. Although I like detailed character background, the

simplicity of the descriptions makes it far easier for GMs to slot these characters into games and add to their backgrounds and personalities as necessary, or get to grips with a character at a moment's notice during a session. Of course, even without the backgrounds the raw characteristics, skills and talents remain a valuable tool.

Most GMs are likely to use the characters as NPCs, possibly as the basis for plots. However, given that experience levels are provided for each character, the collection could be used as pre-generated PCs, something that also benefits from the concise backgrounds.

A few monster races are included (a Banshee, Giant, Mummy and Vampire), as well as three examples of Ogres and three mutants. Though few, these are a good addition, and a similar collection dedicated to monster characters would not be unwelcome.

The writers have struck a good balance between humour and seriousness. Some recognisable names are to be found (the Banshee's name, Weeping Wilhemina, was presumably inspired by Moaning Myrtle of Harry Potter fame, Norden Tubbsman runs "a local shop for local people! We don't want you adventurers here!"), and Hansup, the Ogre Watchman could be straight out of Discworld. At the same time, you have the stark violence of the Halfling vampire hunter, Foster Braybrook, with his darkly tragic past.

The characters are indexed by careers (alphabetically, and then by basic and advanced), race, experience point level, and finally by name. Having several indexes is remarkably useful and shows the authors have thought about the needs of GMs. The experience point level is particularly handy for finding an NPC with experience comparable to the PCs, for example.

This is a genuinely useful piece of work, well-presented and structured, and definitely worth downloading.

Denizens of the Empire can be found at www.steved.org/roleplaying/rules/denizens.html.

FRAGMENTS

Black Industries

Things have been busy at Black Industries. They have been at Gencon USA, Gamesday and Dragonmeet. *Realm of Sorcery* is out now and in the pipeline we have the final instalment of the 'Paths of the Damned' trilogy *Forges of Nuln*, *Knights of the Grail: A Guide to Bretonnia*, *Barony of the Damned: An Adventure in Mousillon*, *Children of the Horned Rat: A Guide to Skaven* and *The Tome of Corruption: Secrets from the Realm of Chaos*. Previews are now available for *Realms of Sorcery* at the Black Industries website.

The forums were alive with discussion after the news that Simon Butler was no longer in charge of Black Industries. Black Industries have moved more within the Black Library structure, with Kate Flack taking over as manager of the WFRP line.

Witch Mistake Was It?

A couple of mistakes accompanied the Witch careers last issue. The +2 and +3 advances for Movement should be for Magic instead (although it would help in outrunning Witch Hunters!). The picture was also unaccredited and was drawn by Mike Rooth.

Warpstone Website and Forum

The *Warpstone* website has been revamped and relaunched at a new home. Now at www.warpstone.org, you will find all the usual material from how to order *Warpstone* to lots of WFRP material, including old *Warpstone* articles, and articles and scenarios unique to the website. To celebrate the launch of the new site, issue 5 of *Legion* is available for download, as is *Sigmar Provides*, a new short story by Klaus Mundt, and a new German scenario *Jahrmarkt des Schreckens* by Karl-Heinz Zapf.

The new site has been put together by Steve Moss and he will help administrate the *Warpstone* forums, which can also be found on the site.

We hope you'll check it out.

Strike-to-Stun

Strike-to-Stun was five years old in September 2005. Congratulations from all the *Warpstone* team!

Fimir Extras

The *Warpstone* website contains a couple of PDFs to support this issue's Fimir material. You will find WFRP1 stats for all the creatures and some background on favourite Fimir environments.

TimCon IV

Taking place as part of Shadowcon, a convention to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the Shadow Warriors club, was the latest Timcon. For once, Timcon did not start so smoothly, with GM and player no-shows. This resulted in your *Wrpstone* editor trying out the new game Rocketman, and losing rather badly. Meanwhile, Clive Oldfield ran his Doctor Who in the Empire (not words you hear together every day) game. This started with a rather raucous council meeting, which had everyone thinking, "what a good idea for a game." The afternoon session found Tim Eccles running *Salty Tears*, a scenario of multiple plots and tangled webs, and John Foody's game, "Who was Hans Kotter of Essendorf?", had player characters putting the knife in, hoping for their promised inheritance.

TimCon V has been provisionally set for the first weekend of September 2006.

THE
FIMIR
RUINOUS INHERITANCE





In the
**NIGHTMARE
CLUTCHES**
of the
**BOG
DAEMONS!**

by
Sigismund Spurrius
Late of Wissendorf



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THE FIMIR

RUINOUS INHERITANCE

by Robin Low. Additional Material by Lea Crowe

I had been struggling across the moors for many hours, having long since lost the path in the wet and dismal fog. The sodden ground sucked at my feet, the mist soaked through to my skin and I shivered, my teeth chattering with the cold. Finally, I could go no further and I dropped heavily to my knees, sinking into the icy sodden moss.

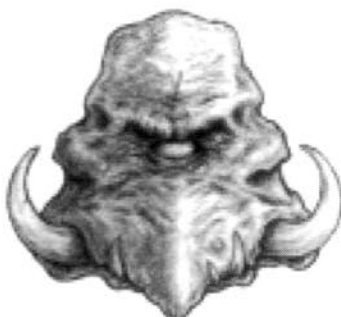
I knelt there for I know not how long, not having the strength to move, weakening with the cold. Then, I thought I heard something: a sound, a splash of feet coming through the gloom. Men, perhaps! I forced myself to my feet in hope, trying to catch the sound again, looking wildly around me. I cried out, almost choking on the thickening, tainted mist. Someone answered, a high-pitched voice, but I could not tell from what direction it came or what was said. The fog, I thought. I called again.

The sound of voices became slowly louder, but still incomprehensible to me, accompanied by the sounds of feet splashing in the boggy earth. Gradually, dim shapes began to form, shapes like men.

But then, as they emerged from the mist, I knew that these were not men and I began to scream.



INTRODUCTION



Throughout the northern Old World and all around the Sea of Claws folk speak of the Fimir. Although the name Fimir is not always used, similar stories of murder, theft, abduction and bloody sacrifice are told around the communal fires of isolated fenland villages and cosmopolitan port taverns alike. Coachmen give nervous, earnest warnings to their colleagues to keep their blunderbusses ready when the mist rises across the track. Merchants bid their guards be extra wary when travelling to Marienburg through the Wasteland. Mothers threaten misbehaving children by reminding them what happened to Old Gregory's daughter when she went late to the river for water. From out over the moors, strange calls are heard when the moon is full, or at least that is what the old folk say.

In spite of all the tales, the Fimir remain a mystery. There are people who say the Fimir worship Daemons, but there are others who insist that the Fimir *are* Daemons; both beliefs are accompanied by fearful hints of suspected blasphemous atrocities. They believe the Fimir can come and go with the mist, which they can apparently turn into a choking, killing fog. Few are certain what the Fimir look like beyond having a freakish single white eye. Some claim that Fimir have horns, others that they do not, and everyone disagrees in their descriptions of Fimir tails and skin colour. Fimir captives or dead bodies always seem to vanish mysteriously before they can be brought back to civilisation, which adds to the enigma. Nobody knows what the Fimir really want or why they live in filthy stinking bogs. Nobody knows what the Fimir believe in, although word has spread of a terrible god named Balor whose eye slays all it gazes upon. The Fimir appear to prefer kidnapping women, but take men as well; the apparent bias toward the former has given rise to much cruel and lurid speculation as to their motives, but just what happens to the men who are taken? What is known about them is usually exaggerated or distorted; what is unknown is made-up, based on the cruellest and most sinister interpretations. All that is certain is that the Fimir are a mystery to be feared and hated, but mostly by those who live closest to the bleak and

lonely lands that the Fimir are believed to frequent. Of those who have lost friends and loved ones to the Fimir in the distant or recent past, only the luckiest of them have had the certainty of a battered, bloody corpse.

The reputation of the Fimir is an abominably poor one: a race of thieves, of murderers, of rapists, and probably in league with Daemons. Most people know little more than that and care even less, but after all, just what *is* there to know about murderous Bog-Daemons that live in the mire except that they should be wiped out to protect civilisation? And that is if people even believe in the existence of the Fimir in the first place; not everybody does, especially in the more cosmopolitan parts of the Old World. The Fimir have become all-purpose bogeymen in popular imagination, every kind of villain rolled into one deformed and ugly package. This is not wholly unjust - by almost any Human standard the Fimir *are* evil - but it isn't the whole truth.

The only true goal of the Fimir is survival, but they can only achieve this by theft, kidnapping and murder. Their lands are often infertile, so they must raid Human settlements for food; their few females are infertile, so they must kidnap Human women as unwilling brood-mares; and, not surprisingly, Humans loathe them, so they must lurk secretly in the mist or fight and kill to stay alive. The Fimir have had to follow this terrible road for millennia now; none can foresee its end and not many more are looking for it.

Terrible though they are, the Fimir are not creatures created by the transforming touch of Chaos. They believe themselves to be the descendents of a union between a Human woman and a Daemon who had nothing in common with the truly dark Daemons of Chaos. The tales of this union, the murder of the Daemon father and the expulsion of the Fimir children from their mother's homelands form the foundation for Fimir nature, belief and behaviour, and are vital to understanding the Fimir.

A FIMIR GLOSSARY

Balor: A Daemon Prince worshipped by the Fimir. A martial figure, his name is sometimes a battle-cry, leading to mistaken rumours that Balor is the god of the Fimir.

Dirach: The second most senior caste of the Fimir, between the Meargh and the Fimm Nobles. All Dirach are male and powerful, instinctive wizards who form close bonds with Daemons. 'Dirach' is both singular and plural.

Fimar: The language of the Fimir race, a fusion of the speech of Daemons and the language of an ancient culture.

Fimm: The warrior caste of the Fimir. Actually divided into three sub-castes: the Fimm Warriors, the Fianna Fimm and the Fimm Nobles. All Fimm are male. 'Fimm' is both singular and plural.

Fimúl: A Daemon, often called the Mud God or simply the Father, believed by the Fimir to have fathered their race before being murdered by the Humans of the Waterland. Fimúl is unknown outside Fimir society.

Fimúlneid: Fimir name for the moon Mannslieb, which Fimir symbolically equate to Fimúl's eye. Fimúlneid plays an important role in regulating aspects of Fimir activity. The Chaos moon, Mórrslieb, is largely ignored and distrusted by the Fimir.

Hell-mother: A name given in Dobbe Arend's saga of the ancient Juton/Fimir war to the Meargh Witch-Queen who united and led the Fimir. It is a term still used by some Wastelanders for the female leaders of the Fimir. The Fimir also use it to refer to the eponymous Meargh.

Maris: A royal Human sorceress of the Waterland, believed by the Fimir to have been the mother of their race. Often referred to simply as the Mother. Maris is unknown outside Fimir society.

Meargh: The most senior Fimir caste; a single Meargh leads each Fimir clan. Meargh are the only female Fimir, but they are infertile. They are exceptionally powerful wizards. Also called witch-queens or hag-queens. 'Meargh' is both singular and plural.

Shearl: The lowest caste of the Fimir, but the most numerous. The Shearl are the servants, workers and craftsmen of the Fimir race. All Shearl are male. 'Shearl' is both singular and plural.

The Wandering Island: A legendary moving island, surrounded by rocky shores, with a great black obsidian castle at its heart from which Maris the witch princess is said to rule. The Fimir believe the island travels the rivers and coasts of the northern and western Old World. It possibly represents a lost 'third branch' of the Fimir race, the other two being the coastal Fimir and the Fimir of swamp and

marsh. The idea of a mysterious moving island can be found in folk tales of both Humans and Elves.

The Waterland: A vast misty river delta. A place of great and serene beauty, with many castles and gleaming white towers. Believed by the Fimir to have been the home of Maris and the place of origin of their race. The Waterland is unknown outside Fimir society, and may be a myth or a memory of a real place.

Previously on the Fimir

In some ways, the Fimir are a forgotten race. Despite the enthusiasm shown by WFRP players for the Fimir, relatively little has ever been done with them. Originally, this may have been for financial reasons. It has been suggested that sales of Fimir miniatures for *Warhammer Fantasy Battle* were poor because the over-sized miniatures were expensive and their points value in the wargame so high that players could get more for their money by buying other troops. Consequently, Games Workshop had little incentive to develop the race. It is also possible that Games Workshop had private concerns about the nature of Fimir procreation, understandable given the age of the company's target market.

Over the years some information about the Fimir has been 'officially' published. Of most importance was *White Dwarf* 102. This contained an article about the Fimir and a scenario entitled *There's a One-eyed Fellow Hiding to the South of Kammendur*, of greatest significance in the article is the mention of Balor, the supposed god of the Fimir, and the concept of the Death-Quest. *Warhammer Fantasy Battle* 3rd edition included the Fimir, but said less than the WFRP1 rules. The Fimir were also mentioned in the long out of print *Warhammer Armies* hardback, but no new information was offered. The Fimir also put in an appearance in Hogshead's *The Dying of the Light*, but as these Fimir are corrupted by Chaos this depiction of the race has limited value.

Typing 'Fimir' into an Internet search-engine throws up a seemingly endless list of sites mentioning the Fimir. Most focus on the Heroquest boardgame; others concern themselves with Fimir teams for *Blood Bowl*. None are of any real interest or use to anyone looking for original, solid roleplaying material; at best they regurgitate details from the WFRP1 rules and *White Dwarf* 102.

Since this was written, WFRP2 has been published. Although the Fimir remain officially out in the cold, an unofficial fan-written article by Andrew Law describing the Fimir for WFRP2 (styled attractively after the *Old World Bestiary*) is available at the Black Industries website. Fans will no doubt offer more Fimir material in the future.

The Fimir and Daemons

The WFRP1 rules made it very clear that the alignment - Good, Evil, Neutral, Chaotic or Lawful, for those unfamiliar with WFRP1 - of any given Daemon was that of its ruling deity. Since there were deities of every alignment, it followed there were Daemons of every alignment. However, most supplements suggested that the only sort of Daemons out there were aligned with Chaos, and the first edition of *Realms of Sorcery* said that while there were a few Daemons of Law, the vast majority were Chaotic. The Evil Baalrukh and the Lawful Vydagg in the WFRP1 rulebook were the only non-Chaotic examples of Daemons.

WFRP2 has removed the concept of alignment, save in the case of Chaos and Law. However, the view taken in this article is that every god and goddess has a small pantheon of Daemons. WFRP2 has not divided them into Greater Daemons, Lesser Daemons, Daemonic Steeds and Daemonic Beasts, but this remains a useful framework. For example, ancient legends of the Teutognens suggest their shamans summoned and communed with four different servants of Ulric. The greatest was a giant with the head of a wolf and claws that could tear a man in twain. Another was smaller and manlike, but faster and more cunning, covered with fur and possessing long fangs and nails. The remaining two were a giant wolf upon which men could ride into battle and an apparently ordinary wolf, which could follow a trail like no other. Even Necromancers whisper fearfully of what they call Undertakers, Daemons of Mórr who come to reclaim the dead stolen from him. As well as Daemons serving specific gods, others no doubt exist, such as ones that form in the Warp spontaneously or in response to exceptionally powerful individual emotions and beliefs, or those formerly serving long dead and forgotten gods.

Whether Daemons serving Ulric, Mórr and the other acceptable gods are still recognised and called upon by priests depends on the GM and future WFRP supplements dealing with religion. However, it is likely that widespread fear of Chaos means Daemons who once acted as intermediaries between the non-Chaotic gods and their mortal followers are no longer recognised as such. As far as the vast majority of Old Worlders are

concerned all Daemons are Chaotic, and this is taught in all the Colleges of Magic throughout The Empire and often beyond.

Why is all this important? The answer is simple. In this article the view is taken that the Fimir, whilst evil and daemoniac, are not inherently Chaotic (see **The Fimir and Chaos**). Dirach and Meargh deal regularly with Daemons who are merely evil and even a few Daemons of Law, but they do not deal with Daemons of Chaos. Dirach or Meargh who summon Chaotic Daemons are either corrupted by Chaos or dangerously clumsy. For this reason, it must be recognised that there are countless Daemons out there that are not allied to the forces of Chaos, which the Fimir can call on and interact with.





THE SONS OF MEN AND ANGELS

They're just monsters, same as the Orcs, same as the ratmen, same as the mutant scum. Ugly bastard monsters, that's all. Marins and his tribe sorted them once, and if they ever cause trouble again, then, by the Gods, we'll damn well sort them ourselves! Don't credit them with any special powers, that's all just peasant superstition. Come on, think about it: if they really did have any power worth having, would they really live out in sodden, stinking mudholes?

Ruud Hiservook, Wastelander Trapper

What are the Fimir? Don't ask me, I don't know. What I do know is they've always been there. On the outskirts and on the fringes, like a seemingly asleep dog in the corner who'll take a good bite out of your ankle if you get too close.

That old fellow who is always by the fire in the tavern

We are younger than humankind, but closer to our gods. We are less numerous than humankind, but understand our place in the world more clearly. We may never be greater than humankind, but we will endure at least as long. You know virtually nothing about us, but we know all we need to know about you.

Unnamed Meargh

Out of the Waterland


The Fimir trace their origin to an ancient, near-mythical river delta they call the Waterland, a place of gentle beauty where earth and water merged. They believe their race was born when a Human witch-princess of the Waterland fell in love with and bore the sons of a Daemon she had summoned. For this crime the princess, named Maris, was eventually imprisoned whilst her Daemon lover, Fimúl the Mud God, was cruelly murdered and his body cast into the marshes by the men of the Waterland. Driven from the Waterland for their foul appearance and their half-Daemonic souls, the sons of Maris and Fimúl fled in search of a new home for themselves and their mother. Fimir society, myths and goals resonate with the memories of that parentage, exile and the cruelty of men. Today, Fimir claim the damp, desolate places of the Old World, the closest they will ever come to the paradise of the Waterland. Their strongholds, especially the ragged towers of the Meargh, are parodies of the great castles of the Waterland, and their poison fog is a tainted echo of the sea-mists of the great delta. Some Fimir, aware of their race's longevity, believe their parents still live, walking amongst Humans, or perhaps ruling as King and

Queen in the great, lost island stronghold of the Fimir race, the so-called Wandering Island.

This is a story - to them a literal truth - that the Fimir cling to body and soul. It is constantly retold and sung of by the Fimir, taught by the Meargh and the Dirach to juveniles and adults alike. As far as the Fimir are concerned, even the oldest and wisest of the Meargh, this tale tells them *exactly* where they came from and *exactly* why they must live the way they do. What other races would make of the legend of the Waterland is of no interest to the Fimir - it is *their* history and it will not be taken from them.

The Fimir do have a written form of language, but their history and record-keeping is predominantly oral in nature, told in song and story. Consequently, history as they tell it sounds more like myth, legend and allegory. Unsurprisingly, these stories remain a mystery to almost all non-Fimir and so nobody has had the opportunity to reinterpret Fimir legend based on the histories of the other races. These ancient origin myths and tales of the Fimir (their personal racial history) are discussed in much more detail in **Memories of the Waterland** and are relevant throughout, but here we are more concerned with Fimir history where it connects with relatively recent Human histories, particularly those of the Wasteland and the northern Old World.

Regardless of where their race originated, due to their requirement for Human women to reproduce, the Fimir have always been tied to the fate of the Humans. As Human tribes explored the world, so did the Fimir who located lonely marshes and secluded coastlines where they could live quietly and periodically venture out to raid the Humans. However, despite relying on humanity for their continued survival, the Fimir have remained a secretive and largely hidden people, skulking in the mists and in the poorest lands on the edges of Human territory. They have figured little in the affairs of others beyond being an occasional terror in the night. There has been little academic speculation regarding the Fimir because the Fimir have played no significant part at all in the history and political shaping of the Old World. Most of what is said of them is born of nightmares and folktales from the remote regions of the land (see **What the Others Know**). That said, there are believed to



have been two ancient historical wars involving the Fimir that sometimes inspire academic curiosity, specifically in scholars interested in the city-port of Marienburg and the region known as the Wasteland.

The first of these wars is thought to have occurred during the period following the departure of the Elves and the Dwarfs from the Wasteland (around -1500 Imperial Calendar), but before the coming of men (around -20 I.C.). It is claimed that during this interval the Fimir fought a very lengthy war with the Skaven who were pushing northwards into Fimir territory. Both sides were trying to magically alter the landscape to suit their natures, claiming territory and building strongholds for themselves. The Fimir suffered the most during this long fight and were losing, but both sides were decimated in some sudden and rather mysterious cataclysm. This disaster may have resulted from the Fimir making one last desperate push for victory or the land itself reacting against the magic being wielded by both sides, but either way terrible magical forces washed over the region. The land shifted, convulsed and cracked, swallowing all that was good, raising all that was bad, and reducing the region to the bleak and dreary landscape seen today. This was how the Wasteland gained its name.

Some scholars have pointed to a couple of problems with this story. The first is that nobody can say for sure precisely where this tale originated; written records are relatively recent and seem to be based on stories told by Wasteland farmers. Secondly, this war is supposed to have taken place at a time before Humans are known to have been present in the Wasteland. If that was the case, how were the Fimir breeding and replacing their losses during this apparently lengthy and brutal war? Yes, the Fimir are said to have been losing the fight, but without Humans it seems unlikely that the Fimir could have prevailed for any significant length against the ratmen hordes, even with their Daemon allies. (However, there are academics who claim that the stories of Fimir breeding with Human women are offensive nonsense and so disregard this criticism.) It is possible that at this time, there *were* Humans living in the area, possibly a lost and unrecorded tribe, maybe even Humans who had been subjugated by the Fimir as slaves. However, what is far more likely is that this whole story is pure Human fabrication, a simple folk myth to explain why the Wasteland is the bleak and desolate place that it is, and placing the blame firmly in the claws of inhuman beasts. Only the eldest of the Meargh are likely to know the truth of the matter and even they would only have heard the story from the Meargh who trained them.

Apart from this, there is only one other incident involving the Fimir recorded in serious Human histories; this one has a stronger foundation and greater significance. During the time of Sigmar it is said that the Juton tribe fought a war of genocide against the Fimir. This tribe had journeyed west into the

Wasteland, led by its leader Marius, fleeing the prospect of slavery or annihilation at the hands of the large and powerful Teutogren tribe. Although the details are unclear, it seems that the Jutones were in the Wasteland by -20 I.C. and spent the next 10 years fighting with the Fimir for control of the region. Fragments of an epic by Dobbe Arend, the oldest dating from the Sixth Century I.C., describe how after a decade of constant war Marius met and defeated the Fimir Witch-Queen, the so-called Hell-mother, in single combat by impaling her with a spear (see **The Spear of Marius**). This duel allegedly took place at the site where the Staadtholder's palace in Marienburg now stands, called Slagveldsrots or 'Battlefield Rock' in Arend's epic. With the Hell-mother's death the war came to a resounding end and the Fimir mostly disappeared into the mists of folktale. (This war is mentioned in *Marienburg: Sold Down the River*; the article 'The Nine Tribes: The Empire before Sigmar' in *Warpstone* 17 provides more background on the Juton tribe.)

Although the exact details of this conflict have been largely forgotten, it is accepted - at least in Marienburg - that it actually happened. What's more the Fimir could confirm it if they were asked, though it is not something they care to discuss amongst themselves, never mind with outsiders. As the Human tribes expanded into the north-eastern Old World and established various petty states (around -500 I.C.) the Fimir clans followed. Being a rather desolate and infertile place, the Humans left much of the Wasteland alone. Many Fimir on the other hand, finding the climate, the nearness of the sea and the bleak landscape to their liking, began to establish themselves there. They had a particularly strong presence in the fens and islands of what would later become Marienburg. Later, when the Juton tribe was forced to flee to the west, other Fimir followed, raiding and kidnapping along the way. At first the settled Fimir simply took advantage of the incoming Jutones, but it wasn't long before the Fimir realised these Humans would take the region wholly for themselves. The Fimir, having so little to call their own, were prepared to fight for it.

At first the war consisted of individual Fimir clans using their traditional stealthy hit-and-run tactics and their poison mists to fight off small bands of Jutones spreading through the Wasteland. However, even with Daemons and elementals at their disposal, individual Fimir clans were too small to stand for long against the Humans, who readily united to aid one another and who were, in some ways, mightier in those days. What happened then was apparently unique in Fimir history and certainly contrary to their traditions: slowly, clans began to unite to fight the Humans. Previously, Fimir clans had always remained separate, partly through tradition, partly to help remain unnoticed by the rest of the world and partly due to the extreme reluctance of Meargh to share power with one another. This unheard of unification resulted from the rise of an immensely powerful and charismatic Meargh. She had such uncanny powers of persuasion that other Meargh were swayed

The Spear of Marius

Ever since the city-port of Marienburg declared itself independent from The Empire there have been men seeking the location of a relic of the Juton tribe. This relic is the simply named Spear of Marius, used by the eponymous hero of the Jutones to slay the Fimir Witch-Queen, the so-called Hell-mother, as described in Dobbe Arend's saga. Some Marienburgers seek the spear as a symbol of the independence and defiance of Marienburgers and Wastelanders alike. On the other hand, there are some devout Sigmarites who claim that Sigmar once blessed the Spear of Marius and who seek the spear as a symbol to reunite the city-port with The Empire. And then there are always greedy, treasure-hunting thieves, collectors and, yes, adventurers.

The fate of the spear is not known. Dobbe Arend's saga describes how Marius impaled the Hell-mother and how she tumbled into the sea, possibly with the spear still buried in her body, possibly not. The spear may not have been lost beneath the waves, but could have survived and been buried with Marius, wherever he was laid to rest.

It is unclear whether or not the Spear of Marius is a spear, a javelin or a harpoon, as the word used by Dobbe Arend in his saga is archaic and scholars of the text dispute its precise meaning. Other scholars have suggested the spear may represent some sort of spell or magical item, or even a miraculous intervention on the part of some god or goddess. One individual, who has so far been able to remain anonymous, recently published a short monograph suggesting the tale of the Spear of Marius and the impaling of the Fimir Witch-Queen is a crude innuendo describing an act of retribution against the Fimir for their crimes against Human women. However, this has been a staple of bawdy Marienburg tavern-songs for centuries.

by her arguments to abandon secrecy and separation. Coming together, she argued, would form an army that could reduce the Humans to a subject race, its men slaves more lowly than the Shearl, its women simple breeding stock. Only a few Meargh dissented: these either left the region swiftly with their clans or were killed by the Witch-Queen through evil sorcery. At least one of these Meargh, named Aughra, was deserted by her clan in an almost unprecedented Dirach-led coup, but she managed to escape (see **Solitary Meargh** in **Meargh: The Witch-Queens**).

It was certainly this unification that allowed the Fimir to prolong this horrible and bitter war, but at the same time it was certainly their undoing. Had the Fimir continued with their usual tactics of keeping out of sight and making raids only when required then some balance might have developed - although the Humans would never have accepted the Fimir and their deplorable activities, they may not have felt the need to eradicate them. Instead, huge numbers of Fimir died, whole clans were

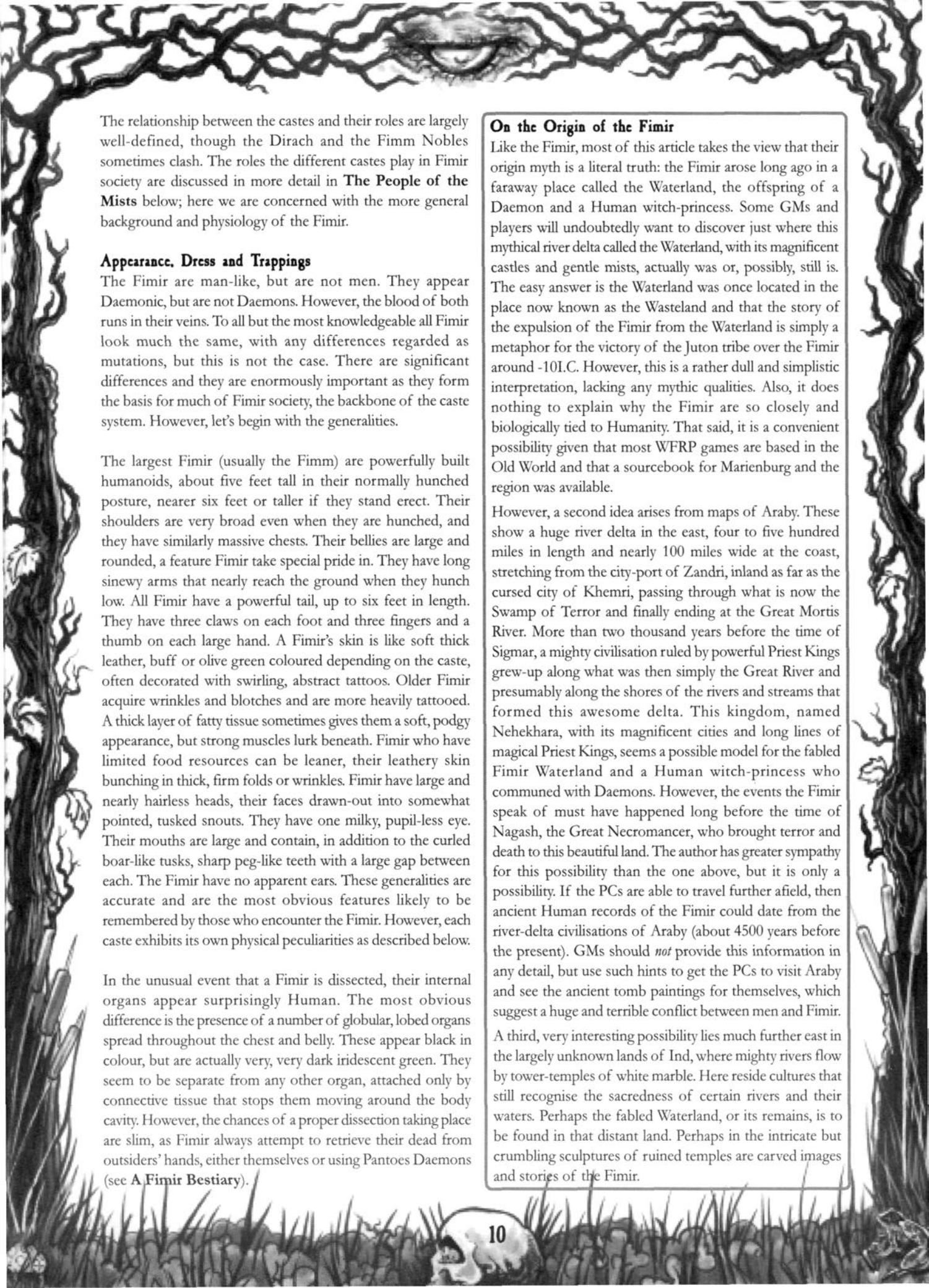
slaughtered, their craggy black castles toppled. Save only for their race's expulsion from the blessed Waterland, those were their darkest days.

Although Marius' war and slaying of the Fimir Witch-Queen did terrible things to the Fimir race, small groups led by Meargh survived and disappeared into the secret places of the Wasteland and other dank, dismal hideaways of the Old World. Others set sail in black-hulled longships in search of safer lands or even the legendary lands of their Mother and Father. One thing the surviving Meargh vowed was that the Fimir would never ever again unite as one since it would surely lead to their race's annihilation. The Meargh reminded their Shearl and Fimm and Dirach of the *Tale of the Sons of Maris and the Mother's Exile* (see **Memories of the Waterland** below) and how it showed that every clan must find its own way if it was to endure.

Over the last two and a half thousand years the Fimir have remained true to this vow. Although there have been instances when two or more clans have briefly come together to fight a mutual enemy, this has *only* happened when the alternative would have been the death of all Fimir concerned. They have lived and continue to live in places largely shunned by others, shrouding themselves in mist and fog whenever they have to raid the hated Humans. They have survived and grown in number, but not to the extent that anyone else really notices or cares much, which is just how the Fimir want it. Only the most ancient of Meargh actually remember the war with Marius and the Jutones, but they've taught their apprentices well. The true name of the Fimir Witch-Queen is all but forgotten - the Human term for her, the Hell-mother, is adopted if reference to her is made. Many Meargh now suspect the rise of the Hell-mother may ultimately have been part of the manipulative schemes of the Chaos god Tzeentch, which is just another reason for the Fimir to distrust and shun Chaos in all its forms.

Sons and Daughters

Fimir society is built around a caste system. Which caste a Fimir belongs to is based entirely on physical appearance, which goes on to dictate everything from that Fimir's role in society to what clothes and weapons he is allowed to wear and use. The castes also differ in terms of their intelligence, behaviour and magical abilities. There are four castes: Shearl (thralls), Fimm (fighting Fimir, divided into Warriors, Fianna and Nobles), Dirach (Daemonfriends) and Meargh (witch-queens). The Shearl exist only to serve and work, fetching and carrying, gathering food, cooking, performing various crafts, mending clothes and looking after captives, although they can fight and are involved in hunting and raiding activities as required. The Fimm exist only to hunt, fight and defend. The Meargh and Dirach are the keepers of the race's secrets, handed down from the days of the Waterland: they are the guardians of the Fimir's filial obligation to their supernatural father and of the magical knowledge handed down from their mother the witch-princess.



The relationship between the castes and their roles are largely well-defined, though the Dirach and the Fimm Nobles sometimes clash. The roles the different castes play in Fimir society are discussed in more detail in **The People of the Mists** below; here we are concerned with the more general background and physiology of the Fimir.

Appearance, Dress and Trappings

The Fimir are man-like, but are not men. They appear Daemonic, but are not Daemons. However, the blood of both runs in their veins. To all but the most knowledgeable all Fimir look much the same, with any differences regarded as mutations, but this is not the case. There are significant differences and they are enormously important as they form the basis for much of Fimir society, the backbone of the caste system. However, let's begin with the generalities.

The largest Fimir (usually the Fimm) are powerfully built humanoids, about five feet tall in their normally hunched posture, nearer six feet or taller if they stand erect. Their shoulders are very broad even when they are hunched, and they have similarly massive chests. Their bellies are large and rounded, a feature Fimir take special pride in. They have long sinewy arms that nearly reach the ground when they hunch low. All Fimir have a powerful tail, up to six feet in length. They have three claws on each foot and three fingers and a thumb on each large hand. A Fimir's skin is like soft thick leather, buff or olive green coloured depending on the caste, often decorated with swirling, abstract tattoos. Older Fimir acquire wrinkles and blotches and are more heavily tattooed. A thick layer of fatty tissue sometimes gives them a soft, podgy appearance, but strong muscles lurk beneath. Fimir who have limited food resources can be leaner, their leathery skin bunching in thick, firm folds or wrinkles. Fimir have large and nearly hairless heads, their faces drawn-out into somewhat pointed, tusked snouts. They have one milky, pupil-less eye. Their mouths are large and contain, in addition to the curled boar-like tusks, sharp peg-like teeth with a large gap between each. The Fimir have no apparent ears. These generalities are accurate and are the most obvious features likely to be remembered by those who encounter the Fimir. However, each caste exhibits its own physical peculiarities as described below.

In the unusual event that a Fimir is dissected, their internal organs appear surprisingly Human. The most obvious difference is the presence of a number of globular, lobed organs spread throughout the chest and belly. These appear black in colour, but are actually very, very dark iridescent green. They seem to be separate from any other organ, attached only by connective tissue that stops them moving around the body cavity. However, the chances of a proper dissection taking place are slim, as Fimir always attempt to retrieve their dead from outsiders' hands, either themselves or using Pantoes Daemons (see **A Fimir Bestiary**).

On the Origin of the Fimir

Like the Fimir, most of this article takes the view that their origin myth is a literal truth: the Fimir arose long ago in a faraway place called the Waterland, the offspring of a Daemon and a Human witch-princess. Some GMs and players will undoubtedly want to discover just where this mythical river delta called the Waterland, with its magnificent castles and gentle mists, actually was or, possibly, still is. The easy answer is the Waterland was once located in the place now known as the Wasteland and that the story of the expulsion of the Fimir from the Waterland is simply a metaphor for the victory of the Juton tribe over the Fimir around -10I.C. However, this is a rather dull and simplistic interpretation, lacking any mythic qualities. Also, it does nothing to explain why the Fimir are so closely and biologically tied to Humanity. That said, it is a convenient possibility given that most WFRP games are based in the Old World and that a sourcebook for Marienburg and the region was available.

However, a second idea arises from maps of Araby. These show a huge river delta in the east, four to five hundred miles in length and nearly 100 miles wide at the coast, stretching from the city-port of Zandri, inland as far as the cursed city of Khemri, passing through what is now the Swamp of Terror and finally ending at the Great Mortis River. More than two thousand years before the time of Sigmar, a mighty civilisation ruled by powerful Priest Kings grew-up along what was then simply the Great River and presumably along the shores of the rivers and streams that formed this awesome delta. This kingdom, named Nehekharu, with its magnificent cities and long lines of magical Priest Kings, seems a possible model for the fabled Fimir Waterland and a Human witch-princess who communed with Daemons. However, the events the Fimir speak of must have happened long before the time of Nagash, the Great Necromancer, who brought terror and death to this beautiful land. The author has greater sympathy for this possibility than the one above, but it is only a possibility. If the PCs are able to travel further afield, then ancient Human records of the Fimir could date from the river-delta civilisations of Araby (about 4500 years before the present). GMs should *not* provide this information in any detail, but use such hints to get the PCs to visit Araby and see the ancient tomb paintings for themselves, which suggest a huge and terrible conflict between men and Fimir.

A third, very interesting possibility lies much further east in the largely unknown lands of Ind, where mighty rivers flow by tower-temples of white marble. Here reside cultures that still recognise the sacredness of certain rivers and their waters. Perhaps the fabled Waterland, or its remains, is to be found in that distant land. Perhaps in the intricate but crumbling sculptures of ruined temples are carved images and stories of the Fimir.

Shearl



The Fimir have little need for clothes as the fatty layer beneath their skin keeps them warm in all but the coldest weather. What clothing they do wear is practical, often symbolic and determined by caste. The weapons a Fimir is allowed to carry are also limited by his caste. All Fimir are tattooed to some degree, and usually those within a caste tattoo one another (Meargh tattoo their apprentices). Many tattoos are just ornate patterns, but certain designs have to be earned, signifying bravery in battle or that the Fimir was part of a Death-quest that succeeded in finding a new clan, for example. A Dirach always performs the tattooing of these earned or awarded designs, regardless of the caste of the one being tattooed. Tattooing is examined further in **Social Activities and Hobbies**.

Shearl: Members of this lowest caste of Fimir are typically shorter and less heavy than the Fimm and have completely smooth heads and tails. Their skin is buff coloured. Shearl usually wear little more than coarse loincloths or kilts woven from fibrous marsh plants or cloth and clothes stolen from other races, but they cover themselves with ragged cloaks or blankets in the depths of winter. Shearl are not allowed to wear armour and may only carry clubs or staves, although some may be allowed maces if they have distinguished themselves in some way.

Fimm: There are three sub-castes in this group, which will undoubtedly cause confusion to those unfamiliar with the Fimir¹.

Fimm Warriors: Members of this sub-caste have a smooth head, but the last foot of their tail is lined with rows of bony knobs, and at the very end there is a bony mace-like structure. Their skin is buff coloured.

Fianna Fimm: As the Fimm Warriors, but their skin is a light olive green colour.

Fimm Nobles: The Nobles have tails with rows of bony spikes and a sharp cleaver-like blade at the end. Their skin is either a dark buff or brown colour, or a dark olive green.

All Fimm, regardless of sub-caste, may wear armour, although not all will have undertaken a rite of passage and earned a belly-shield (see **Ordeals in Social Activities and Hobbies**). Armour is usually made of bronze, as iron and steel tend to rust in the damp environment of the marsh (belly-shields are *always* made of bronze); Shearl blacksmiths construct all armour. Armour, especially the belly-shield, is covered with elaborate designs. The belly-shield of the Fimm Warrior or Fianna Fimm is just a rounded shield, but that of a Fimm Noble is part of a larger piece of armour that wraps around and protects his sides. The Fimm often

wear helmets, sometimes with horns - this infuriates many Dirach who see it as an infringement of the caste differences or even outright mockery of their own horns. (The Nobles usually get away with this since the horns are often deliberately shaped to look different to Dirach horns, or take the form of a serpent-like crest representing the Daemon Prince Lisaart.) The Fimm Nobles, especially those of Albion, also wear long cloaks, fastened at the shoulder with gold broaches, set with gems. These are often garnets since they are the colour of Human blood (cloaks are often dyed to match) - acquisition of the materials for such broaches is considered major good fortune. Fimm use heavy axes or maces when fighting and Fimm Nobles often go into combat with one in each hand.

Dirach: The magicians have somewhat narrower heads than the other castes and have two or more horns growing from the sides or top of the head. These are sometimes carved into ornate shapes. They have smooth, unadorned tails and their skin is a dark yellow. Dirach wear loincloths or kilt-like affairs and sleeveless shirts, often decorated with patterns similar to the Fimir tattoos. They also dress in long, sleeveless cloaks. Small ornaments and trinkets such as snail or sea shells, bits of

¹ N.B. the following details on the Fimm are based on painted Fimir miniatures from ancient issues of *White Dwarf*.

Fimm Warrior



All Meargh are completely sterile, even young apprentices. New Fimir are born *only* to *Human* women who are ruthlessly abducted, imprisoned and raped by Fimir selected by the Meargh. It is a bleak existence for these women and there is no guarantee of a swift death.

The Fimir show no preference for any particular type of female, apparently uninterested in physical, mental or social attributes. The nature of the small rural communities they usually raid and the random occupancy of waylaid coaches limit such choice anyway. The Fimir males do find Human women physically attractive (or at the very least, do not find them unattractive), but they do not place much value on it. It is an unpleasant irony that the Fimir ideal of feminine beauty is the same as that of Human males, but they are not so shallow as to over-value it.

Captive women are treated roughly, but not violently until the rape. The Meargh decides which of her Fimir should mate with which captive, sometimes performing scrying rituals or consulting Daemons to determine the best unions, but often her decisions are made with the intention of rewarding individual Fimir. However, it is common for more than one Fimir to be allowed to mate with any given female, so the father of any child is not normally known. Even when the father of a baby Fimir is known, he usually plays no further role. A baby Fimir is regarded as a child of the clan and its caste rather

than of any individual - although if a Fimir fathers a child that goes on to become a member of his own caste (see **Lifecycle of a Typical Fimir** for details of Fimir development) he may take a special interest in him.

bog iron, carved bog oak pieces, old bones, small animal skulls and feathers are tied or sewn to their clothes. Some Dirach wear cowls through which their horns project. Dirach never wear armour, but some wear decorative torques around their arms or necks. They traditionally carry a staff and a large sacrificial dagger.

Meargh: Meargh are usually shorter and skinnier than the other castes. Unlike male Fimir, they have hair, usually lank and greasy, dark green or blue-black in colour. They usually have horns, though these are smaller than those of the Dirach. Their skin is the same dark olive of the Fimm Nobles and due to great age is often wrinkled and blotchy (young Meargh may be blotchy and wrinkle-free). They have smooth, unadorned tails. Witch-hags wear long, sleeveless dresses ornamented in the same fashion as the Dirach. The lower front halves of their dresses are stained with dried blood, a result of their monthly sacrificial rituals (see **Sacrificial Rites in Memories of the Waterland**). Like the Dirach, a Meargh carries a staff and a large sacrificial dagger.

Reproduction

This is a deeply unpleasant subject, but it cannot be avoided.

Only the Meargh are female; the other castes are entirely male.

When she is pregnant, a woman is treated almost kindly and is occasionally allowed to walk around the stronghold, especially when her belly is heavy and swollen, but she is always very closely watched, with at least two Shearl following nearby. The pregnancy lasts nine months, as per a normal Human birth. During this time, the expectant mother is well fed and cared for by the Shearl until she is ready to give birth. At this point the Meargh usually takes on the role of midwife to ensure a safe delivery, although she may delegate this task to one of her Dirach with some special knowledge of healing. After the woman has given birth she is expected to look after and breastfeed the baby Fimir, usually with a Shearl to act as 'father'. The whole Fimir clan is enormously protective of the newborn as it represents a potentially important asset to the clan. The baby Fimir looks like a podgy, pink Shearl, but later undergoes a physical transformation that is called *Svabhaavajam* (ancient Fimar meaning 'born to his own nature'), during which his future caste is determined. The exception is the Meargh caste, members of which are obvious from birth.



Fianna Fimm

Female Fimir are exceptionally rare, with maybe only one born in a clan each century. A female born when the current Meargh is still young and fit is often passed on to another clan where the Meargh is getting old and in need of an apprentice to follow her. If the current Meargh is old then the child is kept and trained to become her successor. On rare occasions when a Meargh is still young but rules a clan that is getting too large, the baby Meargh is trained with the intention of splitting the clan in two. When a baby Meargh is born it is immediately taken and cared for by the Meargh.

(N.B. GMs are advised to think long and hard about using this important but troubling aspect of Fimir nature in their games and to consider the sensitivities of their players. However, it is not an issue that can be written out of WFRP without destroying the very essence of the Fimir. This article avoids dwelling on this matter any more than is necessary, but it is important to understand the underlying attitude of the Fimir to rape. Unlike in most other races, it is not about power or control and it is not about hostility toward women or Humans in general. Fimir are motivated purely by the practical issue of the survival of their clan and their race, and they feel no guilt or remorse for their actions, or for that matter any disgust. To almost all Fimir minds it is an inconvenient necessity, although the more intelligent Fimir such as the Dirach and the Meargh

are acutely aware of the symbolic parallels with their race's origins (although the relationship between Maris and Fimúl was mutually consenting, and initiated by Maris herself), so for some clans rape has a spiritual element to it. This is not in any way intended to justify Fimir behaviour, only to explain why they do what they do and how they feel about it.)

Ageing

The Fimir live much longer than Humans do. Barring violent death or starvation most Shearl and Fimm can potentially see out their two hundredth birthday, Dirach twice that. The Meargh can live to be 2000 years old; a tiny number may go on for longer, meaning the most ancient of them were present during the birth of the Empire! Their Daemonic heritage undoubtedly contributes to their long lives, but the Dirach and Meargh can also make bargains with Daemons for a few more years, most likely in return for sacrifices. The Fimm and Shearl are expected to fulfil their duties to their caste and clan well into their old age. Many old Fimir, when they feel that they are no longer of use, offer themselves for sacrifice, rather than deteriorate and die of old age. This is encouraged or even enforced as Fimir clans cannot afford to carry dead weight. Dirach grow old and become wrinkled, but tend not to lose much of their vitality

and keep going until they simply drop down dead, sometimes in mid-speech; the same is true of the Meargh. Both Dirach and Meargh often know when their time is due (some Daemons delight in giving them advance warning). When a Meargh knows she has but a short time (in Meargh terms this could mean 200 or more years) and still has no heir, she orders more raids on Human settlements to kidnap women, in the hope of producing a female Fimir to be her successor.

Senses

Having a single eye means that the Fimir have no depth perception and for this reason rarely use missile weapons (although they do occasionally use throwing axes, hammers and rocks as missiles). However, they offset this disadvantage with their magical mists. Fimir can see about fifteen yards through fog, mist and smoke, and have Night Vision to a similar distance. Fimir have no external ears, but under the skin on either side of the skull are honeycombed regions that register sound. Although it is often hard for Humans to determine where a sound is coming from when in heavy fog, Fimir do not have the same problem. Fimir have nostrils, but don't smell through them. Instead, they can taste the air with their tongues. Combining tasting the air with tasting wet ground, the Fimir have a rudimentary tracking ability similar to a dog. Some members of the Shearl also possess the ability to smell Human

women from a distance. Such Shearl are often used to identify coaches containing Human females, which allows the Fimir to target their highway attacks more effectively - trying to trick Fimir into attacking a coach full of soldiers dressed in women's clothing is not easy.

Language

Fimir have their own language, which they call Fimar. Wizards who hear it spoken might recognise parts of it as a form of Daemonic speech. A routine Speak Arcane Language (Daemonic) or an average Academic Knowledge (Daemonology) test is required to recognise this fact. It should be noted that Daemonic and Fimar are *not* related to the Dark Tongue spoken by the followers of Chaos and Chaotic Daemons, although Fimir corrupted by Chaos may well be familiar with the Dark Tongue. GMs who wish to develop

words in Fimar could look to Sanskrit as a basis, modified by local Human dialects (be aware that Sanskrit is the ancient and sacred language of the Hindus in India).

There is a written form of Fimar, but only the Meargh and Dirach can read and write it and its use is beginning to die out even amongst those castes. Very few Meargh or Dirach still record information on bark, papyrus, or slate, preferring to rely on personal, clan and race memory. Written records from times long ago are becoming increasingly rare and decaying rapidly (information recorded in more durable form such as carved slate tablets or ancient cave walls is very rare), and both Meargh and Dirach prize them very highly indeed. Scholars with the talent Linguistics and a few other languages under their belt and who make a Challenging (-10%) Intelligence Test may recognise the written form of Fimar as having links to an

The Fens of Albion

A significant Fimir presence can be found in the broad swathes of bog and fenland in the east of the island of Albion. The grey skies and endless drizzle suit the Fimir well, and the landscape of scattered boggy islands separated by narrow stretches of water is unpopular with Humans. Here, the Fimir have a stronger hold on their territory than elsewhere in the Old World, in part because they never suffered the losses of those in the Wasteland during the war with the Juton tribe. There is strength in numbers, and historically the Fimir here have defended their land more forcefully and with greater success, although they have rarely made any attempt to push the boundaries beyond the fens. Their dominance here has given the Fimir of Albion a certain confidence, and they carry themselves with a greater self-certainty and dignity, literally holding their heads higher than their brothers in the Wasteland. However, they are no stronger physically or magically than Wasteland Fimir, and their confident demeanours and raised postures vaguely annoy the morose Wastelanders.

Clearly, conflict still goes on between Fimir and local Humans - the needs of the Fimir here are no different to those elsewhere. However, they have the advantage of numbers, and local Humans have incorporated the Fimir into certain aspects of their lives. In particular, some Human communities punish their criminals (of both genders) by transporting them into the fens and leaving them tied to stakes for the Fimir to find. This serves the needs of both communities, although it does not always provide the Fimir with a sufficient supply of sacrifices, so their threat never entirely recedes. A few of the eldest greybeards of the Humans remember their long-dead leaders in parley with the Fimir leaders, tall noble monsters who dressed in blood-red cloaks and carried gleaming blades.

One of the common local claims made about the Fimir is that they can walk on water - many say that on moonlit nights

they have seen Fimir splashing across the water, dancing and running through reeds and bulrushes. There is truth in these tales, but there is nothing supernatural at work, no matter what anyone says. The truth is that the Fimir construct simple wooden walkways just below the surface of the water, linking the numerous fenland islets they inhabit, so that they do not always have to rely on boats. The submerged paths have the added bonus that they cause problems for other boat-users who are unaware of the obstacles. Older, less-well-used paths in poor repair can be treacherous for the unwary who attempt to use them.

The Fimir here have legends about their lands too. One concerns a giant who sleeps beneath the waters; green-skinned, his hair long and tangled with waterweed. He is equally dangerous to men and Fimir when he wakes, erupts from the waters and goes looking for food. Another story concerns the loss of a magical sacrificial knife belonging to a Meargh dead long before the birth of any Meargh now alive. The story tells that the dagger was lost over the side of a boat by a clumsy Dirach who was fetching it for his Meargh. Despite his own efforts and that of his Daemonfriend (an eel-like beast), the dagger was never found. The Meargh, furious beyond words, strangled him with her bare hands and threw him overboard. The Fimir believe that the Dirach's ghost, together with a ghostly Daemon eel, still searches the waters for the dagger. Finally, both Human and Fimir know the legend of the Hodmadod, a gigantic snail whose shell is large enough to house a small tribe or clan.

Gaming material about Albion for GMs wanting to use the Fimir there is scanty, but some good material can be found on the Strike to Stun website (www.strike-to-stun.com). Also of considerable interest is *The Albion Isles*, which can be found at www.atoom.dk/world/Albion.html - this is a simple but intriguing picture of Albion, with room for GMs to develop as they see fit.

Fimm Noble



ancient and distant culture (though which ultimately depends on how GMs choose to interpret Fimir origins - see **On the Origin of the Fimir** for suggestions); scholars may attempt a limited translation, but the precise meaning is likely to be tantalisingly obscure.

Fimir also use a system of secret signs (in the manner of the usual Secret Signs skills), which can be understood by all the castes. These symbols, related to the written form of Fimar, are simple and designed to be easily scratched on stone or wood or drawn in mud or wet sand with the claw of one finger or toe.

Meargh, Dirach and some Fimir Nobility can often speak one or more Old Worlder dialects, depending on their location, either learnt from prisoners or taught by Daemons. Words and phrases from local dialects sometimes find their way into Fimar. Some Meargh can speak other languages, frequently in archaic forms (remember, Meargh are often *very* old). The Shearl and most rank-and-file Fimm are usually capable of understanding very simple words and phrases in their local Old Worlder dialects, but are not bright enough to learn and speak other languages sufficiently to hold a proper conversation. All Fimir can instinctively understand and communicate with any Daemon.

A Fimir's voice is very high-pitched by Human standards; high frequencies penetrate dense mists and fog more effectively. This gives them an advantage when out hunting and during raids in that it allows them to split into smaller groups and maintain contact with each other. The shrieking hunting calls of the Fimir cutting through the mists is a truly terrifying sound. When talking directly to Humans, Fimir lower the tone of their voice and add a sinister hissing to their pronunciation - the Fimir have found that this is more intimidating to Humans.

Discase

Perhaps unsurprisingly Fimir are susceptible to many of the same diseases that affect Humans, although they show a degree of resistance to those transmitted by the biting summer flies of the marshes. Healers of a more mystical bent might suggest Fimir blood could offer a cure for such marsh fevers. The Fimir are particularly susceptible to Human venereal diseases, which can bring severe illness, madness and sooner or later death to a Fimir. Given that varying degrees of violence, tattooing and blood-sacrifice are part and parcel of Fimir life, such diseases can spread and cause severe damage within a clan. Fimir that are driven mad by venereal diseases sometimes (rarely successfully) flee into Human lands, even into towns and cities if they can hide themselves, where they are subject to bizarre and strange visions resulting in seemingly meaningless schemes and plans that they attempt to put into operation. They may be visionaries or prophets, but saner Fimir always attempt to put them out of their misery.

Favourite Environments

The Fimir are a largely nocturnal race, preferring the mist and darkness to the light of day, which they find extremely uncomfortable. Nevertheless, they are prepared to leave their strongholds during daylight, shielded from the sun by the magical mist that can be created by the Dirach and the Meargh (though they are reluctant to enter Human lands under such circumstances - a mist suddenly appearing from nowhere in the height of summer is something of a giveaway). If the mist is dispelled and/or the Fimir are exposed to bright sunlight they tend to panic and must pass a *Will Power* Test or retreat as fast as they can. However, they are not significantly affected by the soft daylight of grey, overcast days, which are quite common in northern parts of the Old World. Dusk is a common time for an encounter, so they do not always need to rely on magical fogs when going about their everyday activities.

Although primarily people of the land, the Fimir prefer to live close to water: the coming together of earth and water figures strongly in their origin myths and religion. Fimir enjoy swimming in the sea and in lakes and rivers (all Fimir have the skill *Swim*); they're not particularly fast, but then neither are

hippos and they do all right. Their tails and powerful arms overcome the drag of their large bellies, and Fimir are naturally buoyant despite their size. However, they can submerge and swim underwater, and are able to hold their breath for up to fifteen minutes; they can also breathe and remain submerged by putting their nostrils just above the water. Fimir not only swim for recreation, but also when spearfishing and to avoid detection by others.

With their fatty layer to insulate them, from cold weather and icy water bother the Fimir little. When the weather is very hot Fimir become somewhat sluggish, but for the most part their mists and shadowy stone strongholds keep them comfortable during the summer months. Perhaps unsurprisingly, autumn is their preferred season, not just because of the cooling air and thickening mists, but also because the browning of leaves and the increasingly skeletal appearance of trees appeal to their nature. The availability of edible fungi is an added bonus.

Fimir around the World

The Fimir are predominantly found in the northern and western parts of the Old World, mostly in coastal regions, but also haunting fenland bogs, marshland and desolate moors in lands where misty and inclement weather suits them. Further inland they can be found in isolated regions of dank and dismal aspect, although the only major marsh within the Empire proper is *The Schadensumpf*, 110 miles west of Middenheim on the Middenland/Nordland border. There are marshes closer to the heart of The Empire, around Altdorf and Castle Reikguard, and *the Furdienst* lies just east of Carroburg, but if any Fimir live in these places they keep very, very quiet. Fimir are found living (in *relatively* large numbers) in the Wasteland and the unnamed marshes south-west of the city-port of Marienburg near Halsdorph (see *The Dying of the Light* or *Marienburg: Sold Down the River*). *The Grootscher Marshes* around the city-port are free of any significant or permanent Fimir settlements (a little too close to the city-port for the Fimir to feel secure on a permanent basis), but the Bitter Moors and the Mirror Moors, west and south-east of Marienburg respectively, are possible havens. Sea-going Fimir have been observed along the northern coasts of Bretonnia, the Wasteland and the Empire where the waves of the Sea of Claws crash against the rocks, and secluded settlements are hidden along the coast all the way to the icy shores and cliffs of Kislev. Significant Fimir communities are found on the fenland islands of eastern Albion (see **The Fens of Albion**), as well as parts of the Badlands (where may be found the enormous *Marshes of Madness*) and on the coast of Norsca. The article 'The Sea of Claws' in *Warptime* 19 should be considered a basic resource for GMs planning on using the Fimir, as it provides innumerable plot ideas and plenty of excellent scenery that can involve Fimir.

In the marshes and on the coasts Fimir seek out abandoned buildings and villages, or rocky outcrops where they can

establish settlements. They prefer occupying existing ruins to building their own, since their construction skills, whilst adequate, are not inspiring. However, they often build tall, grim-looking towers for the Meargh to rule from, echoing Fimir legends of a capital with a vast obsidian castle at the heart of the mysterious Wandering Island. Fimir communities are remote even from one another and Fimir strongholds are made as hidden and secure as they can be. However, they are often within a month's travel (by boat or foot) from Human villages or transport routes from which the Fimir can obtain material resources and living captives. Fimir settlements are described in more detail in **Life amongst the Fimir**, below.

What the Others Know

"I think their predominant colour was a dark green, though they had bronzed bellies. They were mostly smooth and leathery, but their tails were ridged and spiny at the ends. Their forms vaguely suggested the anthropoid, while their heads were oval and drawn into a snout, with a single prodigious white eye, gleaming malevolently. There were no ears on the sides of their heads and their three-fingered paws were clawed. They loped along the marsh, their tails high and swaying, sometimes dropping onto all fours to taste the ground... their high squealing voices... held all the dark shades of cruelty which their staring faces already suggested."

From 'The Shadow over Gasthaustmund', by H.P. Lieberwerk

The people of the Old World know little of the Fimir and understand them even less. Their rural isolationism, dislike of daylight and use of magical mist to hide themselves all mean that scholars have limited accurate information regarding the Fimir physically, socially or culturally. What information there is has been gleaned from tales of misty encounters, the hysterical ravings of the lucky few who escape their clutches and centuries of ghostly folklore espoused by ignorant peasants. Anyone attempting to learn more about the Fimir will have to deal with countless half truths, lies, inaccuracies, contradictions, misunderstandings, fairy tales and the suppositions of city-based scholars, some of whom even question the very existence of Fimir. In the imaginations of most people who have heard of them, even of those who've actually encountered them, the Fimir are little more than folktale Daemons: malicious, evil and largely characterised by the imagination of the storyteller. However, four defining characteristics consistently come through in the stories: the mist, a single large white eye, a Daemonic nature and the kidnapping of women. The writers of penny-dreadfuls, controversial playwrights and scandalous artists in particular have used the latter time and time again with unsavoury relish.

One very important point to remember is that relatively few people refer to the Fimir by the word 'Fimir'. Most speak of Bog Daemons or marsh spirits, one-eyed trolls or giants or Orcs, or even bloodthirsty ghosts that haunt the moors when the fog comes down. Only scholars and the rural folk that have lived with the threat of the Fimir for years tend to call the

Fimir by their true name, and even they more often use a local nickname rather than risk speaking the word Fimir aloud. (Some GMs may decide that the word 'Fimir' is completely unknown - after all the Fimir are not in the position or of the frame of mind to say to anyone, "Hello, we're the Fimir" - and other races and nations have different names for them or use the vagaries already described.) To add to the confusion, due to the similarity between the word Fimir and the Bretonnian word for thighbone (*fémur*), some Bretonnians refer to Fimir as Bone-Daemons. There is even a Bretonnian folk tale concerning a terrible old witch living in a marsh who magically steals travellers' thigh bones (for her three sons to suck the marrow from) by striking their legs with her stick, making it impossible for them to walk properly and escape the bog.

There is a tower, tall and built of rough-hewn stone, set on wild, wet and unkempt ground. Rotting trees sway in the wind. The stone of the tower appears black in colour, but this blackness seems to be the black of old encrusted blood. There is cloud in the night sky, but stars and a half moon, reminiscent of a half-closed eye, are visible. Stood on top of the tower is an indistinct feminine figure in a loose grey-green dress flowing in the wind, frighteningly close to the edge. Variations appear in several Tarot decks that are popular with the more superstitious Bretonnian nobility, often featuring inhuman skeletal figures or Daemons.

Details of the painting 'The Lady of the Marsh' by an unknown Bretonnian artist.

On a political level, the Fimir barely register. The politicians and military of the Empire do not regard the Fimir as a significant threat. Occasionally, reports of repeated attacks on

Travellers' Tales - Jezza Fairwind

It is a tradition that has fallen from practice in recent centuries, but at one time it was traditional for all large Elf sea-vessels to carry a ship's poet. A good portion of High and Sea Elf poetry tells of the sea, its beauty, the terrors it can hold and the stories of those who sail it. Jezza Fairwind (Human tongue) is one of the few Sea Elves who still practice this art. What has made his work most notable in recent years is that it concentrates wholly on the sounds, smells and physical sensations of being on a sea-voyage. The reason for this is that whilst Fairwind once had sight keen as any Elf archer, he is now blind.

Two or more decades ago, Jezza Fairwind travelled aboard the *Trallarnarinda* ("carved shell"), which ventured to the small islands scattered around the extreme north of Albion. It was a prospecting mission - the captain had information that the islands' inhabitants were producing exceptionally fine whalebone carvings. The captain's thinking was these artworks could be bought cheap and sold high back in Marienburg, even higher in Ulthuan. However, all the captain had to go on was an example of the craftsmanship, a beautiful bone blade with an elaborately carved hilt. The merchant who sold it had bought it from another merchant, who had in turn bought it from another; she seemed keen to sell it and charged less than what it was clearly worth.

The journey to the northern islands was dull and uneventful, although the captain complained of several unsettled nights' sleep, describing vague misty nightmares that Jezza Fairwind duly recorded in his poetry-log. When the ship finally reached the first of the islands, it was cold, misty and the wind was slight.

The crew spent a week exploring a number of the desolate moorland isles. On one they found the remains of an abandoned Human settlement, only the ragged remains of fleeces and old bones indicating its former purpose. They rowed into a sea-carved cave in the high cliffs of another island, this time finding the bony remains of a Human, skull

crushed, with signs of rope around its wrists. There were unknown symbols carved into the rock above the remains, which Fairwind copied down.

The crew became increasingly downhearted by their finds and the cold misty weather, but the captain insisted on pursuing his goal, convinced that they would find the carvers. Jezza continued recording the captain's dreams of mist and bone knives, but he kept his increasing concern to himself. Foolishly, in hindsight.

During their second week among the islands, they found one with something very strange. On a high rocky outcrop at the heart of the island there was a settlement with bizarre houses built of whalebone, lightly charred and blackened. It seemed deserted. Jezza Fairwind, the captain and several of the crew explored it for an hour, but found no indication that it was still inhabited. The reluctant captain was eventually persuaded to leave, but as they turned to go a howling wind erupted from nowhere and knocked them all to the ground. The mist swirled and Jezza was certain that he could see shapes forming in it. One of these forms suddenly struck down at the prone body of the captain. The captain stood up, like a puppet, apparently unaffected by the wind that pinned the other Elves to the heather-covered rock. The captain's hands scabbled through the folds and pockets of his clothes until they pulled out the carved bone dagger. It was dropped to the ground, and the captain followed it as the mist-form left him.

The wind howled harder and Jezza, captain and crew were bruisingly rolled and tumbled out of the weird village and down the rocky outcrop. The wind dropped a little, allowing them to stand up and run to their boat which they rowed hurriedly back to their ship. Even now their torment was not over. As they desperately set sail, a swarm of black winged fish burst from the sea around the ship and flew over it, slashing as they passed with razor-edged wingtips. It was an assault designed to harry rather than kill, but even so, several sailors, as well as Jezza Fairwind, lost their eyes before the black fish flickered out of existence.

Dirach



villages and farmsteads by mysterious monsters provoke a small military expedition to investigate (especially if the local noble or merchants with influence are losing money as a result). However, given that those in power in the towns and the cities have relatively little concern for the plight of distant peasants there is little impetus for serious investigation. The commanders of such investigative forces often only see the after-effects of the Fimir rather than the Fimir themselves, and even those who do engage the enemy are hampered by the mists, resulting in vague and confused reports to their superiors. Most of these reports are sober, if limited, accounts, whilst a few are wildly imaginative and speculative, but even the latter typically fail to provoke any long-term interest.

My Lord, as ordered I led ten men to the remote hamlet of Pennymead to investigate reports of Human sacrifice. Despite persistent, thorough and intense physical investigation of the villagers, no evidence of murder or other proscribed activities was forthcoming. However, it seems to me and my men that the villagers of Pennymead have an almost unnatural fear and respect of the marsh. I suspect the villagers may pay more respect to the so-called Old Faith than Our Lord God Sigmar, but again there was no physical evidence to confirm this. If your Lordship wishes, a more detailed investigation of the marsh could be made, but this would be a dangerous pursuit given the treachery of the marsh.

I lost one man to the bog in the course of my investigation. The man's footprints, along with those of a young local woman, were found leading to and then past a large tree on the edge the bog. It seems that their pursuit of privacy led to their drowning.

Oh, and as you suspected, my Lord, the village's name does indeed refer to the price of the local beverage. Your Lordship's brewers may be interested in acquiring the recipe, as the quality of the ale is far higher than one would normally expect of such a backwater.

Transcript of a verbal report given by Captain Stevan Ravenson.

The various religious cults of the Old World also have little interest in the Fimir, although some village priests have local concerns they pass to their superiors in the towns and cities (who pay little or no heed). One exception is the cult of Shallya, which has a particular interest in women's welfare and has hospices and nunneries throughout the Empire staffed predominantly or entirely by women. In particular, the House of Beguine at Jutonsryk in the Wasteland (see 'Clerics of Shallya' in *Warpstone 10*) has obvious concerns with regard to the Fimir. The cult feels it has an obligation to protect people and especially women from the horrid activities of the Fimir and encourages the Merciful Knights of the Hospitals of Shallya to offer protection and aid to those at risk. However, in the event that the cult becomes aware of the true circumstances of the Fimir and begins to understand their needs and motives, then a very, very

tiny number of *exceptionally* compassionate Shallyans are likely to feel, privately, some measure of sympathy for them.

Witches freely give themselves to the fen-dwellers in return for evil secrets and Daemonic companionship and it is said that women of the decaying noble houses of Bretonnia do the same.

I seen Fimir, I 'ave. Seen 'em, run from 'em. Been at sea too, an' seen 'em great Orcas. An' you know what? 'Ems got same teeth. Sharp pegs wi' gaps 'tween 'em. Reckon Fimir are fish like Orca, but ent natural. Mutant Orcas, legs an' all. Reckon 'ey just walked out one day, liked it an' stopped 'ere. Eh? Whadyuh mean Orcas ent fish? Live in sea don't 'ey? Orcas, deafo! Not bloody greenskins! 'Em big black an' white fish. Eat seals. 'Ey's not fish neiver? Who said 'at? Oh, an' what are you, some sort o' bloody professor? Oh, right. At Great Library. What's 'Orcas 'en? Mammals? Wha'r'ey 'en? Like us? Orcas ent like us, 'eys fish. Live young and milk, warruh you on about? 'Ang on. If Orcas are like us... and Fimir are like Orcas... then we're like Fimir? You sayin' I'm a Fimir? Wha'yuh mean I 'av an amazing capacity for pseudo-logical extrapolation? Get this in the bollocks!

How fights start in Marienburg taverns.

In contrast to the Empire, the Marienburg authorities acknowledge the existence of the Fimir and take the threat they represent more seriously, if only in terms of making some

Meargh



Whilst he knows as much about the Fimir as anyone else (i.e. not much) he's one of the few people who might be interested in helping PCs uncover more about the Fimir and providing PCs with leads.

Fellow Verenans and Noble scholars. I return from Lustria with an extraordinary insight into matters far closer to home. My detailed studies of both live and dead specimens of the reptilian crocodilians of the Lustrian rivers have led me to an astounding conclusion. I bring before you a skull of one such crocodilian, with lower jaw and teeth attached. And here, we have a skull of a Fimir - the Temple of Verena has kindly allowed me to bring this exceptionally rare specimen to assist in my demonstration. Now, whilst the Fimir skull is lacking its lower jaw, we can still see the teeth in the upper jaw. Now, compare the crocodilian teeth with the Fimir teeth and what do we see? Both skulls have sharp peg-like teeth with gaps between them. This, I believe, confirms previous suggestions that the Fimir are a race of marsh-dwelling reptiles. I beg your pardon, Sir? Orca? I'm sorry I don't see the relevance, especially as Orca are fish. They live in the sea don't they? Yes, I am familiar with the laughable monographs of Claus Derwin. I suppose you're one of those...Derwinists who think that Humans and Goblins are next of kin. Ha! Preposterous nonsense! And I still don't see the relevance of Orca to my crocodilian skull, so kindly shutup. Don't you wave your crutch at me! No! My crocodilian skull!

How fights start in the meeting rooms of the Great Library in Marienburg

effort to protect the major roads and shipping lanes into and out of the city-port with irregular and limited patrols (a requirement against Human pirates and bandits in any case). Whilst there is little concerted effort at an official level to deal with the Fimir on a permanent basis, the inhabitants of the city-port and surrounding countryside fully believe in malevolent Daemonic creatures hidden in the marshes and secluded caves along the coastline; Marienburg sailors traditionally sing songs about black-hulled longboats emerging from thick sea-mists. There are more sightings in the Wasteland than in other parts of the Old World, and the rural Wastelanders have a slightly clearer picture of what the Fimir look like, but the cultural and social aspects of the Fimir are as obscure to the locals as anyone else in the Old World. However, it is in Marienburg that one is most likely to find historical information on the Fimir. There are a few, though not necessarily wholly reliable, accounts of the war between the Fimir and the Human tribe, the Jutones, which pushed its way into the Wasteland in the decades preceding the Goblin Wars (see **Out of the Waterland** above). Of these, the saga by Dobbe Arend is the oldest and most complete, but it is hazy on specific details about the Fimir, concentrating on the heroism of the Jutones. More recently, the controversial academic Claus Derwin (see *Warpstone* 18, 'The Trust' for more about Derwin) has been attempting to investigate the origins and nature of the Fimir.

It is fair to say no other races have the same degree of experience of the Fimir as Humans. Although some Sea Elf clippers have been attacked when mired by magically calmed winds and thick sea-fog, their vessels are rarely victims of Fimir piracy. The Sea Elves of Marienburg hear the same rumours and gossip as the Humans of that city, but believe less of it. However, a few magicians of the race who have seen Fimir longboats are firmly convinced there is something unnatural about the black-hulled craft, and that they are in some small way *alive*. This is, of course, dismissed as Elvish whimsy. Their cousins the Wood Elves have little knowledge of the Fimir and the High Elves of Ulthuan have only heard of the creatures from the Sea Elves, although their libraries no doubt contain some commentary on them if one had sufficient time to find and examine certain ancient and long forgotten manuscripts. If one spends enough time with a well read Elf bard or minstrel, it might be possible to coax out a very, very old song concerning an Elf who is taken by a Human sorceress as her lover. It is a song of joy, swiftly turning to one of rejection and desolation, followed by fear and anger towards the new lover who takes his place but fear and anger tempered with the respect held for a leader. It is a complex song, and only those with considerable knowledge of Fimir culture are likely to make any sense of it. The few Elves who have had any close contact with Fimir say the Fimir were cautious, almost shy, in their presence. The

Travellers' Tales - Tarni Axland

Dwarven artists tend not to use brush, paint and canvas, but work with hammer, chisel and rock instead. Tarni Axland is one of the most renowned Dwarven artists (at least within Dwarven circles). Born in Norsca, he has travelled widely, spending many years in numerous Dwarven strongholds creating and repairing relief imagery telling stories of ancient battles and glories, disasters and grudges. He has a reputation for making sure the details of his work match the tales that they are based on, exemplified by his woodcarvings of the monstrous creatures from the *Cry of Catholled*, a myth cycle of Norse legend. A big Dwarf, illuminated by a blaze of white hair and beard, Axland's reputation as a warrior matches his artistic renown; his hammer and runic chisel can create and destroy with equal finesse.

Currently, Axland is at work in Kraka Drak, the largest and wealthiest of the Norse Dwarf strongholds, where he has been commissioned to produce a wood and amber-studded relief depicting the ancient clash between an ancestor of Queen Sifna Throrindottir and the Fimir. The first panel is to depict Thori Threnson's famous meeting with the Meargh Heggrant on the shore of the Sea of Claws and their argument over the amber scattered through the shingle. The second is to show the duel between Thori and Heggrant's bodyguard. The third panel is to be a depiction of the sea-battle between the longboats of the Dwarfs and those of the Fimir. The fourth represents the truce between Thori and Heggrant, where Heggrant surrenders her rights to the amber and Thori gives Heggrant a magnificent carved amber statuette, acknowledging the prowess of her clan in battle.

Axland's problem is that he has never seen a Fimir and the stories he hears from those few Dwarfs who have are vague and contradictory, which offends his sense of accuracy. Also, there is no record of the nature of the statuette given to Heggrant, and an amber miniature of the statuette is intended to be the centrepiece of the final panel. Faced with such vexing uncertainty, Axland is putting together an expedition to find some Fimir for himself, so that he knows what he should be carving. If he can find the clan of Heggrant all the better, as then he might discover the nature of the amber statuette given by Thori.

Fimir did not seem scared of the Elves, just keen to get back to the concealment of their mists. Finally, something that is almost forgotten these days, but the very eldest of the Elves vaguely remember being told as children by their eldest forebears that those with one eye were the forgotten children of gods and should be honoured by avoidance.

Of course, it must be said that the Bretonnians have their share of encounters with the Fimir, or Bone-Daemons as they insist on calling them. Indeed, the old legends of the Bretonni tribe tell of a time when the western seas reached further inland giving rise to vast salt marshes. The

legends have these marshes full of hideous monsters that are always attacking the Bretonni, but the beasts gradually vanish as the sea recedes and the land dries. Either that or the land is cleansed by some noble knight or another. Mind you, it does sound a bit similar to old Dobbe Arend's epic of the Jutones, Marius and the Hell-mother. Hard to say which might be true. Could ask the Fimir, I suppose, but there may be safer ways to waste one's time!

Mist at noon; heartbreak soon.

Wastelander saying

The Dwarfen experience of Fimir is an interesting one. While the Dwarfs of the mountains tend to regard the Fimir as just another type of Orc or Troll ("kill them and be done with it"), the Norse Dwarfs award them a more mythic quality. Sometimes calling them sea trolls, sometimes Cunal-Trows, the Norse Dwarfs view the Fimir as an ancient and mysterious warrior race. This doesn't mean that they won't fight with the Fimir (old Norse Dwarf sagas tell of week-long wrestling matches between Dwarf heroes and Fimir warriors), but the Norse Dwarfs do grant the Fimir a certain respect and nobility. The tales and legends of the Norse Dwarfs speak of Fimir prowess in battle with high regard and even tell stories of Dwarfs who were outwitted by cunning seawives (Meargh). In fact, the Norse Dwarfs are unusual in that they are aware of the Fimir caste system, that there are workers, warriors, wizards and women leaders, although they do not necessarily appreciate the details. Whilst the Norse Dwarfs would never actively side with the Fimir against Humans (they might against Dark Elf pirates, Chaos or mighty sea beasts), it has been whispered that during times of bad blood between the Norse Dwarfs and the Norsemen that the Dwarfs have stood by when the Fimir have raided the Humans. However, there is no evidence at all to support such whispered allegations.

For their own part, the Fimir act in such a way as to maintain the mystery that surrounds them. After all, if they were constantly attacking, stealing and kidnapping from the farmsteads and villages surrounding their lands, then they would either provoke a determined attack upon themselves or drive the Humans they rely upon too far away from Fimir territory to be useful. Instead, the Fimir strike a balance, knowing just how far they can push the local peasants without forcing the Humans to go to war or to flee. (Of course, some Humans simply accept the threat of the Fimir as part of life, as they've never known anything else and have nowhere else to move to anyway.)

One-eyed Peter, Long-tailed Jack

Caught us all up and put us in a sack

Tied us by our ankles, bit off our toes

Drowned us in the marsh where nobody goes

Children's skipping rhyme, with variations throughout the Old World

Travellers' Tales - Greehamdeevuss

Greehamdeevuss probably knows more about the Fimir than any non-Fimir alive today. And he's a Skaven.

Greehamdeevuss was part of a warpstone-hunting party that ventured into the marshes in search of a legendary lost goblet supposedly made of the stuff. Instead of a warpstone drinking vessel, Greehamdeevuss' hunters found the Fimir... or rather the Fimir found them. Luckily, at least initially, for the Skaven this small group of Fimir was Chaos-tainted, and the Dirach leading them welcomed the Skaven as brothers. However, after talking through the night, the twisted Fimir showed their Chaos credentials and turned on the Skaven. Subduing the ratmen with subtly drugged food, they staked them out, waited for them to regain consciousness the following night and began the torture. Most died on that second night, but Greehamdeevuss, stronger than his fellows, survived to see a third night.

In the delirium of torture, Greehamdeevuss experienced a vision of the warpstone goblet. A silky-furred Skaven doe whispered in his ear and stroked his whiskers, telling him that he was destined to find the goblet, but he must first undertake a long and arduous quest to find it. The vision sustained the Skaven through the third night.

On the fourth night after meeting the Fimir, Greehamdeevuss was the only Skaven left alive. He would have died then if not for a storm of burning Daemons sent by the Meargh of the Chaos Fimir's former clan, which descended and annihilated them - their own cruelties had given her time to scry them out and send her vengeance. The Daemons, strange creatures that they are, decided to bring the ragged, but still living body of Greehamdeevuss back to the Meargh.

The Meargh Melliss was surprised and annoyed when presented with a ratman. Her initial response was to have the Daemons destroy it. However, whilst that was exactly what she would have done had she met Greehamdeevuss normally, the Skaven had been tortured and mutilated by corrupted members of her own clan. Her sense of responsibility suggested a small penance was in order. Also, she sensed something strange, almost mystical in this rat, and her curiosity was aroused. So,

Melliss let him live, cleaned him and healed him herself.

Greehamdeevuss was changed dramatically by his experience and the mysterious vision in particular. He suddenly felt little connection to his pack and skavenhold, but instead an obsession with the warpstone goblet. Although he felt nothing himself, the Meargh, her Dirach and their Daemons all insisted he was no longer tainted by Chaos - at least in their eyes. His need and craving for warpstone disappeared, and he became convinced he was being sustained by an intangible link to the goblet of his vision. But he didn't understand what it meant.

Melliss was equally baffled, not that she emphasised this point, although she wondered if the burning Daemons that had carried him to her had scorched the Chaos taint from him. However, she decided it might be worth allowing the ratman to remain with her clan, at least for a while, to study him more. After all, something useful might come of him. As a result, Greehamdeevuss was able to observe and come to understand Fimir culture and society, spending the better part of a year with Melliss' clan. The flow of knowledge worked two ways, and Melliss gained considerable understanding of Skaven society (Greehamdeevuss being a simple warrior, the technology of the Skaven did not make the exchange).

Eventually, other Meargh became aware that Melliss was harbouring a Skaven. Only partly convinced by their own Daemon ambassadors, who agreed the rat was not Chaos-tainted, the other Meargh still insisted that Greehamdeevuss be expelled. Fearing conflict Melliss agreed. Besides, the rat did eat an awful lot. For his part, Greehamdeevuss left with no ill-feeling - he understood the Fimir (even though he was secretly never convinced by their legends) and had decided that it was time to set out on his quest for the warpstone goblet.

Today, Greehamdeevuss is a strange figure who haunts the lands of the Fimir and beyond in search of a legend. He has rejected his kin, and those Skaven he has encountered since his first meeting with the Fimir have rejected him. They no longer recognise him as one of their own. His body is badly scarred, his ears and tail ragged from the abuse of the Chaos Fimir. But he is happy, and his mind is open. Presently, he is heading west, drawn towards the reedy marshes of Bretonnia.

The Fimir are long lived, so whilst they do raid and kidnap, they do not necessarily have to do it on a frequent basis; some clans only kidnap women every 100 years, operating in cycles. A clan that avoids getting into fights might only need to raid villages for women once every few Human generations, meaning that the younger peasants listen to their elders' stories and warnings about the monsters in the marsh with amusement, unaware the time for breeding is fast approaching. Even victims for their regular monthly sacrifices can be obtained by quietly kidnapping travellers on lonely paths, as there are plenty of other horrors out there, as well as mundane risks, to take the blame.

I've got these eggs, see. Found them in the marsh, I did. An' you know what I reckon? I reckon they're Fimir eggs! No, really! They're lizards, right, an' lizards lay eggs, don't they? Maybe those women they capture lay them unnatural like, or maybe they've got some Fimir women hidden up somewhere. Anyways, I took 'em from this huge nest an' I've kept 'em warm an' when they hatch I reckon I can sell the batchlings, maybe to a wizard or one of them scholars or even to a pit fighter trainer.

Josef Unalheim, Trapper

Breeding with Human women? Stuff and nonsense! Nothing more than the tawdry gossip of the filthy minded! Fimir kidnap Human women because their flesh tastes better than that of other races' womenfolk.

Nothing more, nothing less. As for their breeding, Fimir are bog-dwellers who spawn in the manner of frogs and toads, which should be obvious to all who've seen them! Well, no I haven't personally seen them, but I have excellent contacts who have, and who have described them to me fully.

Several of you have asked about possible uses of the Fimir, or parts thereof, as spell ingredients and alchemical recipes. Firstly, one must consider the practicalities. Much of the evidence for the existence of the Fimir is anecdotal, and many of the disappearances blamed on them could be attributed to treacherous marshland paths, bandits and goblins, so there is a question mark over their very existence. This is supported by the apparent lack of physical evidence, as Fimir remains have a remarkable tendency to vanish before any reliable scholar can examine them. This latter point is of key importance: if you have no physical piece of Fimir, you have nothing that might be used to support a spell. The only Fimir artefact I am aware of that holds any provenance is the incomplete skull that may be seen in the Temple of Verena in Marienburg.

That said, let us start from the proposition that the Fimir do exist and that it is possible to obtain body parts. From here, we should apply the Laws of Sympathy and Contagion and the Doctrine of Signatures, as I have outlined in earlier lectures. What do we know of the Fimir? Sadly, remarkably little, but the little we do know is of use to us. The Fimir are associated with marshes and with mist, so parts of the Fimir anatomy might be useful in casting standard Battle Magic spells such as Mystic Mist, Slippery Ground and even Stand Still if the caster envisions a victim of the latter as being mired in muddy ground. The impressive single white eye attributed to the Fimir could be of use in spells involving vision. Their dreadful reputation for the abduction of women might be subverted to support spells of protection that only defend women against harm. Indeed, I have heard recently of charlatans selling 'Fimir finger' necklace charms to female travellers to ward off attacks from Fimir, bandits or even aggressively amorous men!

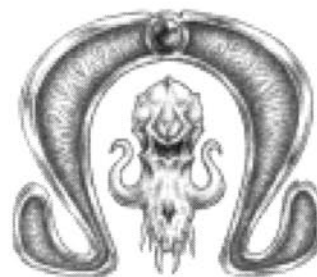
From a series of lectures by Harald Töpfer at the Wizards' and Alchemists' Guild in Middenheim, based on his work, 'Phoenix Feathers and Firey Goblets: The Theoretical Principles and Practical Uses of Spell Ingredients'

The Bog-Daemons are in league with frogs. No, it's true, absurd as it may sound. You go to Bretonnia and ask the frog hunters what their greatest fear is and every one of them will tell you it's the bogmen. The monsters hate them and attack frog hunters whenever they spot them. They've even been known to launch raids on frog farms and release all the frogs. That's why frogs' legs are such an expensive delicacy in Bretonnia, especially wild frogs' legs, because of the risk. A man could make good money supplying fresh frogs. All right, they may not be in league together - that's just my little joke - but there's something strange going on there.

On a practical level, the GM is free to handout whatever details to the PCs he wishes. However, it is more atmospheric if information is provided in the forms that most people in the Old World encounter it: cheap novels or scholarly texts for the

illiterate few, plays, folktales, lectures, gossip and conversation with alleged experts for the illiterate majority. Be sure to provide as many red herrings, untruths and distortions as you can, and remember that if there are things in this article you do not like, do not just put them to one side, actually use them as disinformation. If you want to provide the PCs with the serious cultural information about the Fimir, their origin myths and beliefs, it shouldn't be available through normal channels. Ancient Elven or Dwarven written histories (especially those of the Norse Dwarfs) might provide stories and background, as may obscure works on Daemonology. Daemonologists who've discussed the Fimir with knowledgeable Daemons might also have a clearer insight. In fact, Daemons are probably the best source of information on the Fimir, although many Daemons are notorious liars and facts do not come free. The PCs maybe able to trace and talk to a woman who was captured by and lived amongst the Fimir for a time before escaping, though they should not expect her to be willing to discuss her experiences and she almost certainly won't give an objective account; she may not even be sane anymore. PCs may resort to divination and scrying techniques to learn more of the Fimir. This might work, but the same magical mists that hide the Fimir from physical sight may hide them from magical sight too. Also, Meargh may have erected spells against such prying eyes, or have ways of magically tracing the spies and sending something unpleasant after them, no matter how far away they are. (See **Mother's Magic** for more on the scrying talents of the Meargh.) The PCs could just go and talk to the Fimir themselves, but of course that won't be easy and every clan is slightly different anyway, so no one should expect any absolute truths.

Finally, the greatest misconception that exists about the Fimir is that they are creatures of Chaos. Many may believe that the Fimir are allied with Chaos or that they were created directly by its corrupting touch, but that is simply lazy thinking, born of simple Human fear and ignorance. However, it is not a belief that the Fimir can ever expect to overturn in a world obsessed with the grim perils of Chaos.





Travellers' Tales – Niki Bibi

One of the many foreign travellers who now reside permanently in the cityport of Marienburg is the noted Tilean Gnome and artist/engineer Niki Bibi. Bibi, exceptionally small even by Gnome standards, is the builder of some of the finest miniature automata ever constructed outside of the High Elf kingdoms. His strong, tiny fingers have allowed him to build tiny chirping songbirds, butterflies with moving wings encrusted with tiny cut gems and elaborate recreations of famous Tilean battles with highly detailed carved and painted lead soldiers. Sadly for Bibi, vicious Tilean politics together with a family feud forced him to flee his home city. With plans to re-establish himself, he settled on Marienburg as a place with good links to Bretonnia, the Empire and the Elves. Tragically, Fimir pirates attacked the ship he sailed on during the final stage of its journey. Only Bibi's speed and smallness allowed him to flee from hiding place to hiding place as the Fimir tore the ship apart searching for captives and useful goods. An unusually inquisitive Shearl blacksmith looted almost all of Bibi's miniature automata, although what was left, together with the story of his remarkable survival, was sufficient to allow Bibi to become an overnight celebrity in Marienburg.

One of Bibi's first projects in his new home city was an automaton of the Fimir attack on the ship and his escape. Insertion of a silver shilling into a slot shows a Fimir longboat emerging from a parting cloud of woolly mist and crashing

into the Tilean merchant vessel. Model Fimir pop up out of little doors in the water and appear to climb up the sides of the ship, or spring up through the deck and fight the sailors. Through all this, the small figure of Bibi weaves its way across the ship, stopping and moving as Fimir figures appear and disappear. Finally, the Fimir and their longboat vanish, leaving only Bibi alone on the deck with a handful of corpses. One of the many remarkable features of this automaton is the sheer size of the Fimir, who are depicted as bulky giants, twice the size that they are in reality. Bibi's own tiny stature and the terror of the original situation have served to greatly increase the size of the Fimir in his mind. As a result of this automaton, it is currently believed in Marienburg that the Fimir are a race of giants, twice the size of men. Also, all of Bibi's Fimir appear to be green Shearl with Dirach horns, so for those that have viewed the model, this is what all Fimir must be like. However, Bibi's depiction of the Fimir longboat is quite accurate, as he was one of the first to see it emerge from the fog.

The automaton is currently displayed in Ree's Wax Museum and Studio (see *Marienburg: Sold Down the River*), but it has been exhibited in other sites around the city and will be elsewhere in the future. It is said to be worth in the region of 150 gold crowns. By his own admission it is not Bibi's most valuable or beautiful work and was aimed to appeal to the commoners of Marienburg, but it is something he felt he needed to do to deal with the nightmares.

THE PEOPLE OF THE MISTS

Do you know what the worst thing about them is? It's not that they kill and steal and abuse. It's not that they're hideously ugly. It's not that they worship Daemons. The worst thing about them is that they're barely any different from us. They work, play and worship, do what they have to do to survive and every one of them is at the mercy of those more powerful. They're no crueller than we are; they're just more honest about it. Everything bad they do has been done by one Human or another at some time. They're just a more concentrated, purer form of our own evil. I loathe them, despise them and they haunt me every single bloody night! But believe me, I don't feel much better for being back amongst men.

A rare lucid outburst from 'Alice', an unknown woman believed to have escaped from the Fimir, now cared for by the Clerics of Shallya

Life amongst the Fimir

The Fimir are divided into clans, essentially separate settlements or nomadic groups, each ruled by a Meargh after whom the clan is usually named. Some clans are named after some unusual characteristic of the Meargh - such as One Armed clan mentioned in **Scenario Seeds** - or after some significant event in the clan's history. Clans have a rigid tribal structure, and are bound together by a strong sense of family. They vary considerably in size, though they never reach the size of Human towns and cities - Fimir breeding practices and the sparse resources of the areas in which they live impose limits. There is relatively little contact between different clans, which are usually, though not always, geographically isolated from one another. Clans that are close together or meet in passing trade with one another and engage in sporting competitions, storytelling and feasting. However, each clan is vigorously independent. This is predominantly down to the innate wariness of each Meargh towards every other Meargh, but also ensures that if one clan collapses (for whatever reason) other clans are not dragged down with it. In this sense at least, the Fimir have no concept of a Fimir nation that binds all the clans together and no clan is considered more important than any other. The last attempt to form a true Fimir nation occurred before the founding of the Empire when the Fimir engaged with the tribe of the Jutones in a brutal war for control of the Wasteland (see **Out of the Waterland** above). The damage that brutal war did to the Fimir has not been forgotten and no Meargh is keen to repeat that experiment in nationhood (especially as some Meargh now speculate that the Chaos god Tzeentch had a hand in the rise of the Hell-mother). However, all Fimir clans consider themselves spiritually united by virtue of the race's origin and circumstances.

The Caste System

The Shearl represent the lowest caste in the Fimir hierarchy, but are most numerous of the Fimir. They are thralls, doing most of the labouring needed to keep Fimir society running. This role stretches to far more than simply gathering food or fetching and carrying. They cook, preserve and store food for the whole clan. They harvest reeds and weave them into baskets for carrying and storage and weave fibrous grasses into rope and nets. They fashion wood, stone and bone into weapons for the Fimm. Where such resources are available, they mine for tin and copper and use it to create bronze for the warriors' armour, or iron for weapons and other tools. The Shearl also do most of the building and maintenance work around the strongholds. In other words, the Shearl are the craftsmen and labourers of the Fimir; an unofficial pecking order within the caste can arise, based on divisions between those with a definite craft and those less skilled. Their efforts in most things are frequently crude though undeniably functional, as anyone who has been struck with a Fimir weapon can attest. As well as the endless chores that consume their day, Shearl are expected to fetch and carry for the other castes on demand and are responsible for keeping captives alive and secure. They also participate in raiding parties, large and small, fighting alongside the Fimm and carrying or dragging the spoils home afterwards. Shearl are a pretty dour lot, but they come to life in battle and during clan social events.

The Fimm are the true warriors of the Fimir race. Their duty is to fight to ensure the safety of their Meargh, their stronghold and their clan. They rank more highly than the Shearl, but are beneath the Dirach and the Meargh. The Fimm are not quite as numerous as the Shearl, but they still form a large percentage of a typical clan. It is actually a relatively complex caste, with three divisions within it based on physical appearance (see **Sons and Daughters** above). The commonest and lowliest are the Fimm Warriors. Above them are the Fianna Fimm who often act as leaders for small parties of Fimm and Shearl when no Noble or Dirach is present. The Fimm Nobles are the highest ranking of the Fimm, almost but not quite as high up in the caste hierarchy as the Dirach, and are discussed in more detail below. The Fimm spend their days training, patrolling, guarding, hunting and, when the need arises, making raids on Human settlements, dreaming of true and ongoing war. They live to fight and have little motivation in their lives beyond that, save the desire to mate and honour Maris and Fimúl. In larger clans,

individual Fimm Nobles often have their own retinues of Fimm, which they train and lead.

The Dirach, often called Daemonfriends for the close relationships they form with individual Daemons, are wizards controlling powerful instinctive magic. They act as a buffer between the Meargh and her clan, relaying messages between the two, allowing her to pursue her own magical activities and concerns. Dirach are very few in number compared to the lower castes, but command great respect and power and can inspire considerable fear in the lower castes, although Fimm Nobles offer their respect rather more grudgingly. Dirach are discussed in more detail below.

Meargh, also called witch-queens, sometimes hag-queens, are the undisputed leaders of their clans. Few of them are born and they are immediately taken by the Meargh as an apprentice; if the Meargh already has an apprentice, the baby may be passed on to a clan whose Meargh is in need. Wielders of great magic, commanding both Daemons and the elements and able to scry what the future holds, Meargh are terrifying beings capable of great cruelty (and occasionally generosity) when the need arises. Meargh are discussed in more detail below.

Fimir Settlements


Fimir build their strongholds in lonely, desolate regions where few others care to visit - the heartlands of marshes, swamps and moors or ragged cliffs with treacherous reefs beyond. Sometimes they find and take over the decaying remains of settlements long abandoned by other races: old mining outposts where the ore has almost played out, failed farmsteads, fishing villages wiped out by storm or rock-fall from the cliffs, even around long forgotten megaliths and barrows of the Old Faith. However, the Fimir have to strike a balance between their desire for isolation and their need for Human beings.

Wherever a settlement is found water will not be far away, whether in the form of the sea, streams, rivers, estuaries, or large ponds and lakes. At least one Human settlement or highway (road or river) is likely to be located within a month's travel, by foot or by boat; coastal Fimir settlements are often situated where rivers enter the sea so the Fimir can make raids inland in their black longboats. Their strongholds are usually shrouded in mist or obscured by rain and dark clouds; travellers are often on the outskirts of a Fimir stronghold before they are aware of it. Whilst their home is important to them, the Fimir have found over the centuries that it doesn't pay to become too attached, as circumstances so often force them to move on. Perhaps this is why Fimir strongholds appear so



ramshackle, even strong and substantial ones built of stone.

The Fimir are capable builders, but they are prepared to make use of caves or restore abandoned buildings and settlements as best they can, sometimes even digging into the chambers of the Old Faith burial mounds. When they do build they use the construction materials to hand. This may mean they build from wood, thatching the roofs with reeds or covering them with wooden tiles, or quarrying rock to construct stronger structures, often using dry-stone techniques. (Fimir love slate as it is easy to work with and the colour suits their outlook.) For special buildings such as the Meargh's tower they occasionally use the same black wood they use to construct their ships (see **Fimir Wood in Mist on the Water** for details of the black wood's source). Sometimes buildings are made using great blocks of peat cut from the marsh. Fimir buildings are often very thick-walled, providing cool shadowy hideaways during the summer months. Some temporary settlements are tucked amongst dense tangles of large bushes and brambles - shelters woven from living plants, keeping the worst of the wind and rain away and the Fimir hidden from casual observation. Occasionally, Fimir summon Daemons or earth elementals to assist them, typically in the construction of a



dark tower for the Meargh to dwell in. This can be an impressive sight, as Daemons or elementals from deep within the earth force a ragged pillar of black rock up through the ground and into the sky, then plunge themselves into the column to hollow out rooms and stairs and passages. (However, this is *not* a rapid process and the Fimir cannot simply produce defences overnight.) The result, like so much about the Fimir, is crude and functional, but frighteningly intimidating at the same time. It is commonly said Fimir live in grim and sinister castles of black stone. This could be the result of confused accounts of the mist-bound towers of the Meargh and the blocky, unadorned buildings the other castes use. However, it is reasonable to believe that some remote, ancient and well-hidden Fimir strongholds have grown and expanded over the centuries into truly forbidding edifices (see also **Nomadic Clans, Ancient Strongholds**).

Fimir settlements are highly variable in layout and always take advantage of natural defensive features in the landscape. Fimir sometimes build such features into the land with the aid of elementals and the raw muscle of the Shearl (moving the path of rivers, building banks and ditches). The majority of the structures within the stronghold are living quarters, with separate buildings for different castes. There may be one large barrack-like communal building each to house the Fimm and the Shearl, or smaller ones if the Fimir are using pre-existing structures. The contents of these caste quarters are usually limited to blankets and maybe mattresses and pillows stuffed with grass and leaves, communal tables and benches, and a central fire with a cauldron for cooking, as well as the tools of the caste's trade; Shearl buildings often double as workshops. The fewer Dirach and Fimm Nobles usually have caste buildings of their own, but with private rooms within, especially the Dirach who like privacy and space to work their magic and commune with Daemons. Another building of note is a prison for captives, but this probably won't be much different from other storage buildings, save being more secure and guarded by Fimm or Shearl. There will also be a building for storage (see **Fimir Economics and Technology**). The single most striking building is, of course, the Meargh's tower, dominating the heart of the stronghold or perhaps looming above it on a hill or rocky headland. As mentioned above, the Meargh's tower is usually built by the Shearl or sometimes magically constructed, but abandoned watchtowers and lighthouses or disused windmills are attractive alternatives. For some strongholds, especially coastal ones, the word 'building' might be replaced by 'cave'.

Fimir structures made of stone or the black Fimir wood are robust and it would be very difficult to break through a wall to gain access quickly or quietly. However, Fimir lack the means to produce Human-standard locks and keys, and so doors have to be barred from the inside (or in the case of prison structures, the outside, and secured with stout rope and good knots).


Meargh often cast the spells *Magic Alarm* or *Magic Lock* on the entry points of important structures. Of course, a settlement's perimeter defences have to be breached before buildings can be entered anyway.

In addition to embankments, ditches and moats, the Fimir also defend their strongholds with palisades of sharpened posts or dry-stone walls as many other races do (an inner wooden wall supporting an outer dry-stone wall directly against it is not uncommon). However, the Fimir also use more subtle deterrents. Many clans grow carnivorous plants such as Bloodsedge outside the stronghold boundaries. They grow the plants from seed or dig them up whilst immature and replant them. Coastal Fimir make cunning use of sand clams, planting smaller juveniles like bear-traps around their stronghold - the shocked screams of those who inadvertently stand on them serve as an excellent early warning system. Humbler plants like nettles and briars, thistles and thorny bushes also hamper those trying to get close to Fimir settlements. Of course, the Fimir do not rely entirely on such passive defences, and the Fimm post sentries and patrol their territory, usually in pairs.

As already noted, Fimir settlements are typically shrouded by mist. This may be natural, but can equally be magical in nature. The creation of a mist covering an entire Fimir settlement requires a group effort from the Meargh and the Dirach. In rules terms, the mist can be replaced with the Lore of Shadow

Nomadic Clans, Ancient Strongholds

Almost every Fimir clan is nomadic at some point during its existence, as circumstances - such as lack of resources locally or direct aggression from outsiders - can force clans that have been settled for decades or even longer to pack their belongings and abandon settlements. However, a significant number of clans are permanently nomadic, constantly wandering the outskirts of Human lands as need and the whim of the Meargh take them. Some have travelled the same routes for centuries (a single tour may take a decade or more) and are always on the move, whilst others simply travel between regular seasonal haunts (the sandy dunes in the winter, the marshes in spring and autumn, an abandoned mine for the bright summer months). In contrast, a tiny minority of Fimir clans have lived in settlements that were established centuries ago, or perhaps even longer. Perhaps it is these ancient strongholds that have given rise to the stories of the great Fimir castles. Of course, such settlements are incredibly well hidden to have survived and developed, and are only likely to be discovered by chance or through possession of secret knowledge. Such settlements are not necessarily that remote from Human lands, but may be protected from prying eyes simply by being at the heart of a marsh so treacherous that no explorer has ever safely navigated it or in a manner similar to the hidden Wood Elf forest towns and cities (courtesy of Daemon magic).



Spell *Pall of Darkness*, replacing the swirling darkness with swirling mist. As an alternative rule, the area covered by either form of the mist may be directly related to how high the casting roll is, combining the casting rolls of the Meargh and her Dirach. Once in place, the mist lasts until dispelled, so it is effectively permanent, although occasional thickening ceremonies are performed. In practice, such large mists are not as thick as smaller ones, but they are sufficient to conceal a settlement until one is almost upon it and to protect the Fimir from the sun on a bright day. It is possible to wander into the thinner edges of the mist and believe it has arisen entirely naturally.

Despite what many might expect, there are no sacrificial slabs or altars to be found in or even near Fimir settlements. Sacrificial rites always take place by water or marshy, boggy ground. Some settlements may construct platforms on the edge of rivers, perhaps in the centre of ponds and lakes or even short piers into the sea, but this is for convenience only. The only Fimir who use altars for sacrifice are those few who turn to Chaos.

Fimir Economics and Technology

The Fimir are essentially omnivorous hunter-gatherers with only a basic economy based on barter, theft and scavenging. Only a handful of clans tend goats, sheep or cattle for meat and milk, and even fewer live in areas suited to growing crops that are not already dominated by Humans. They catch fish in nets and marsh rodents and lizards in simple traps. Marshland birds are snared in nets and their eggs stolen from their nests. The Fimir eat edible roots and any fruit they can lay their claws on. They even crunch up snails or boil them in big pots. Fimir sometimes go after bigger prey such as Bog Octopus. Coastal Fimir eat a lot of fish, but also shellfish, crabs and seaweed, and they hunt Dragon Turtles and steal their eggs - coastal Fimir rarely have to resort to raiding and stealing merely for food. However, many Fimir clans are periodically faced with food shortages. When food is limited there is usually a caste pecking order for who gets the best bits, although it is quite common for all the food to be boiled up in a massive cauldron and ladled out. Female Human prisoners, especially pregnant ones, are *always* well fed, although the food may not be to their taste! When food is very scarce, which is often the case in inland bogs, Fimir raid Human settlements. They rustle cattle and sheep from time to time (sometimes using Cromara Daemons to entice cattle away: see **A Fimir Bestiary**) and raid (or sneak at night) villages and farmsteads to steal weapons, food and whatever else they can find and carry. Coastal Fimir are expert beachcombers and some clans indulge in the unsavoury practice of wrecking. On stormy nights and foggy days, the Fimir light fires to lure unwary ships onto the rocks around the Sea of Claws and then attack and plunder the stricken vessels for all they're worth. (There have been rumours of Human wreckers, worshippers of Stromfels, allied with Fimir.) Fimir barter and trade goods, food and prisoners with other clans (they are loathe

to part with Human females), but also deal with Goblinoids and sometimes Dark Elves when at sea.

In terms of skills and technology, the Fimir simultaneously occupy the stone, bronze and iron-ages according to the resources available at the time. If all they have access to is flint, they make flint tools. If all they have is bone and antler, their fishhooks and spearheads are made of the same. In suitable areas Shearl mine for metal to make weapons, armour and tools, and Fimir settlements are sometimes built near or on the sites of abandoned mines. A poor-quality iron, known as bog iron, collects in the saltpan of some marsh bottoms, but the Fimir do not use it unless they have to because it rusts easily. They prefer to mine for copper and tin to make bronze, which is primarily used to make armour, specifically the belly-shield, but also weapons. Bronze is a relatively soft metal, so it is not good for blade weapons, and Fimir belly-shields have to be thick and heavy to be effective. Fimir make use of natural materials whenever possible, especially long grasses for making rough clothing, rope and nets, stone, bone and wood for weapons and building materials. Animal hides are cured for making clothing, bags and other coverings, animal guts and sinew for cord and bindings. Peat is dug for fuel, and the Shearl also dig in search of bog oak - wood from trees long since dead and sunken in the marsh. Bog oak is stained dark and made hard but brittle by years in the peat and is used mainly to make ornaments, toys and jewellery, rather than weapon hafts.

Luxury materials such as gold and jewels are generally uncommon in Fimir culture, but Fimir can acquire such things after attacks on coaches and merchants, and some harvest pearls from oysters and fresh-water mussels and gather amber. Fimir who mine for copper and tin sometimes strike more precious metals (although copper and tin are precious enough to the Fimir). Most Fimir are unimpressed by luxury goods, although the Fimir Nobles, especially those in Albion, like to wear gold cloak-clasps set with a blood-coloured jewel such as a garnet or ruby. Similarly, Dirach and occasionally Meargh, wear gold torques around their upper arms. Fimir who possess such jewellery are either lucky thieves, have an excellent Shearl craftsman within their midst or else indulge in trade with a clan that does. Some precious stones and metals are used or made into spell components used by the Meargh.

General Stores, Big Equipment and Travelling Kit

As scavengers and hoarders, often desperate for resources, Fimir clans accumulate all sorts of junk, especially clans living in permanent settlements. Much of this stuff is useless, bits and pieces randomly looted from villages or ships during raids or found washed-up on lonely seashores. Some of it is worth having and other individually useless items can be cobbled together into something the Fimir can make use of. Fimir are tidy up to a point, and set aside a room, building, cave or patch of ground where this can all be heaped and rummaged through



later. However, important things such as food, weapons, tools and immediately useful raw materials are usually organised and stored separately for ease of access.

Store rooms may be filled (if the Fimir are fortunate) with rope, nets, sacks, preserved food stored in leather buckets, pots and barrels, weapons, raw materials of wood, peat and coal, stone and flints, bones, animal hides, metal ore and just about anything else that the Fimir could have conceivably stolen from others. (Nomadic Fimir may have stashes hidden at points along their traditional routes.) However, do not assume the Fimir have any of these things, especially not in great quantities - most Fimir have just enough to survive and not much more.

One of the most useful items Fimir can find or build from stolen rubbish is a pump. As bog-dwellers and seafarers, hand-operated pumps are enormously valuable items. Fimir cannot build pumps from scratch, only bodge together from leather tubes sealed with pitch, metal pipes and a Shearl blacksmith's limited ingenuity. Other large equipment used by the Fimir includes A-frame cranes, winches and pulleys. Not all Fimir clans necessarily have the know-how to construct these things, and so the knowledge or the items themselves become tradable resources between clans.

Fimir who are going on expeditions away from their settlement for a significant period of time often take with them a small selection of kit (carried by Shearl) that is likely to come in handy; this is apart from the usual items such as food and weaponry. This kit includes spades (to dig holes to skulk in), rope (to secure prisoners or drag heavy objects), nets (to fish or trap with) and tarpaulin, heavy skins or even tents (to shield themselves from the sun). Shipboard Fimir also have ropes with hooks or grapples for grabbing enemy ships or dragging things from the water.

It is worth emphasising that despite the range of tools and materials listed above, the Fimir are not normally overburdened with resources, especially nomadic Fimir who are limited to what they can carry. This also applies to Shearl craftsmen - not every clan is blessed with the presence of such skills.

Prisoners

The presence of prisoners is a normal part of Fimir existence. Although Fimir themselves may be used during their monthly religious sacrifices, it is usual for a male of another race to be used (see **Sacrificial Rites** for more details) and this means most Fimir clans have at least one male captive at any time. Additionally, a clan may have a number of Human females.

Clans avoid overburdening themselves with captives, especially if they are nomadic, but they may stockpile a half dozen or possibly more, depending on how easily and frequently they can acquire new ones.

Perhaps surprisingly, the Fimir are not viciously cruel, at least outside the specific contexts of sacrifice and procreation. Fimir settlements typically have a very secure building to keep prisoners, guarded by enough Shearl or Fimm to prevent escape. The conditions of captivity are tolerable, as the Shearl regularly clean up and feed their prisoners - females in particular are well looked after, though heavily guarded. Nomadic Fimir rely on stout rope, good knots and Fimm to ensure that their captives do not escape during the course of their wanderings.

Captives are rarely used as slaves. Given that men soon figure out they are destined for sacrifice and Human women that they are doomed to become mothers to monsters, they are likely to take any opportunity to escape, and the Fimir know this. As a result, they do not use prisoners as a labour force, but keep them secured in one place (although men and women are separated). However, heavily pregnant women are allowed outside, chaperoned by vigilant Shearl. Also, it is not unknown for Fimir to involve prisoners in their social activities, forcibly if necessary (pushing them into the water for swimming races, forcing male captives to join in wrestling contests with the Shearl or Fimm). Whether this is intended as humiliation, some peculiar attempt at bonding with the Human side of their souls or has a ritualistic or religious purpose is not made clear to captives.

Social Activities and Hobbies

Fimir are highly social and appreciate one another's company, even those of different castes. Social activities are mostly confined to caste brethren, although the castes are more likely to mix in smaller clans (although not as equals), and larger hunting and raiding parties are usually mixed anyway. Social activities include swimming, wrestling (a bit like Sumo) and hunting. There are formal swimming and wrestling competitions for the Shearl and the Fimm (within, rarely between, castes), which the whole clan, including the Meargh, comes to watch. The Shearl brew an alcoholic drink that is somewhere between a beer and a fruit wine, made from wheat or barley, wild cranberry and bog myrtle; honey, if they can get it, increases the alcohol content. It is actually quite pleasant and the precise recipe would be of genuine interest to Human brewers and wine-makers alike. The Fimir like to drink it whilst telling stories and singing their weird songs. Some Fimir, usually Dirach or Shearl, are able to play a crude bagpipe-like instrument made by the Shearl from an animal bladder and carved wooden or stone pipes - their music can be quite tuneful, but the more haunting and discordant notes have been used to



inspire nightly fear in lonely Human villages. Despite the caste differences and restrictions, these musical story-telling sessions are whole-clan events and serve to strengthen clan bonds.

Dirach have a variety of word games and board games they play with one another; the games are largely meaningless to the lower castes, although the board games and their pieces fascinate the Shearl who like to watch. Many Shearl are accomplished whittlers, carving bits of bog oak into the shapes of animals, gaming pieces for the Dirach, and three-dimensional versions of the complex and attractive knot-work tattoos Fimir decorate their bodies with. They also carve soft stones, such as chalk and slate. Carved items are found lying around in Fimir settlements and are cast as offerings to Maris and Fimúl into lakes and pools, rivers and streams. Items thrown into the sea, especially wooden ones, are sometimes washed up on beaches and found by beachcombers or fished out of the water by sailors and fishermen, who are both ignorant of their significance and fascinated by them, and make up stories of mermaids and craftsmen who live in caves at the bottom of the sea. A commonly carved figure is the frog, a symbol of fertility and of the foetus for the Fimir; the Shearl carve them for Fimir given the right to mate. Other figurines consist of depictions of revered Daemons such as Balor, Lisaart and Kroll; carvings of Maris and Fimúl are rare, especially the latter, and show little consistency in appearance between clan.

Tattooing

During their free time, Fimir indulge in tattooing, and to a lesser extent scarification; a few clans practice branding. Most often, these activities are social acts, with Fimir of the same caste tattooing one another. Most tattoos are simply abstract decoration, rather than the pictures preferred by Old World

sailors and mercenaries, but some have greater significance than mere decoration. The best examples are those of the three Fimm sub-castes. Various titles are awarded to Fimm who experience significant events or who successfully face and overcome certain challenges in battle, and are taken as indication of an individual's prowess. These titles include Fian, Finmor, Flaith, Flaithmor and Mistmor. (GMs are left to determine the specific significance of these terms, but it is suggested they refer to an interesting event, experience or encounter, rather than merely reflecting higher ability scores). The right to bear such tattoos requires permission from the Meargh; she may simply award it, otherwise a hopeful Fimm has to petition her via the Dirach (see **Dirach: the Daemonfriends** for details on petitioning). Special tattoos, scars or brands that do bizarre things such as move or change shape are created with the aid of certain Daemons.

Ordeals

Although they do not sound like a pleasant pastime, the ordeals of the Fimm are considered clan social events. All Fimm aspire to undergo ordeals, as success grants them the right to wear a belly-shield - the prowess a belly-shield signifies is more valuable to them than the physical protection it provides. Permission to attempt an ordeal come from the Meargh and the Dirach must be petitioned first. If permission is granted, the ordeal usually takes place within a month and when the moon is waxing full, but before the full moon when the Fimir conduct their monthly sacrifice. All the clan, including the Meargh, come to watch.

Ordeals vary greatly, and are decided upon by the Meargh. The simplest ordeals involve resisting some sort of incredible pain inflicted by the aspirant's fellows or Daemons, or demonstrating extraordinary stamina (such as running around the perimeter of the settlement so many times or swimming underwater without coming up for air). Defeating an especially strong or unusual opponent in battle (ranging from a captured monster or a party of PCs) is another favourite, but it does mean the Fimir have to acquire a suitable challenge. Unusual ordeals can be set, and these often involve sending the Fimm out into the wider world to successfully achieve some goal and return safely home. Particularly cruel Meargh set puzzles or other mental challenges, although these are often designed as subtle punishments for previous transgressions. The difficulty of an ordeal depends upon whether it is a Warrior, Fianna or Fimm Noble undergoing it. The success or failure of the Fimm is usually clear, but if there is any doubt or judgement to be made, the Meargh makes the decision. A successful Fimm may now wear a belly-shield, although the process of gaining the required materials and making it can take time.

Lifecycle of a Typical Fimir

A newborn Fimir is Shearl-like, about the size of a large Human baby and pink-skinned (they have their mother's skin colour, so non-Old World mothers give birth to appropriately coloured

baby Fimir). At a distance they could easily be mistaken for a Human baby and even their cries are eerily similar to those of Human babies. At this stage, the baby Fimir is considered to be without caste, although the Fimir still treat it with care and a certain reverence. The Human mother is expected to look after the baby, watched and assisted by a Shearl acting as a temporary father-figure - the baby's true father (if he is known) is not involved and is expected to keep his distance. The baby Fimir becomes quite active within a matter of months, quickly learning to crawl and perfectly able to swim underwater. Over the course of a year the baby grows larger, but remains essentially a small pink-skinned Shearl until it enters a stage the Fimir call *Svabhaavajam*, an ancient word that translates as 'born of his own nature'. *Svabhaavajam* always takes place between one full moon and the next. During this period the baby cries pitifully and almost constantly, keeping the whole clan awake and on edge for the whole time. Its Human mother (unwilling or not), its Shearl 'father' and a Dirach keep a vigil over the baby. When she is not preoccupied with other matters, the Meargh joins this vigil.

The Fimir believe that within a baby Fimir all other male castes lie dormant: soul-castes. Some Fimir believe the Human side of their souls temporarily suppresses the soul-castes. Whatever the truth of the situation, when *Svabhaavajam* begins the soul-castes awaken and begin to fight for control of the physical form. During the month of *Svabhaavajam* one soul-caste fights more vigorously than the others and the increasing power of this soul-caste is shown as the physical body begins to exhibit caste characteristics. Sometimes there is such a raging battle that the feverish baby starts to show features of one caste, then lose them in favour of another, or even manifest the features of two or more castes at once. However, no multiple castes occur; one caste always emerges triumphant at the full moon. The father's caste has no bearing on the child's caste - a Dirach can father a baby that will become a Shearl, a Dirach or any of the Fimm sub-castes. The majority of baby Fimir become Shearl, closely followed by Fimm (most of which are Fimm Warriors), but only a handful become Dirach. It is perhaps ironic that the soul-caste that most often dominates the fight during *Svabhaavajam* goes on to become the lowest in Fimir hierarchy. The baby Fimir grows incredibly quickly during *Svabhaavajam* and is about the size of a Human toddler by the end of it. The young Fimir is able to walk upright within a matter of days.

The obvious exception to the above is in the case of baby Meargh. On those extremely rare occasions when a Meargh is born, it is immediately obvious the child is a Meargh, as it exhibits all the characteristics of that caste from birth. The birth is almost always fatal to the mother because the small horns of the baby Meargh are usually enough to cause terrible bleeding. The life and apprenticeship of a Meargh is described in **Meargh: The Witch-Queens**.

After Svabhaavajam the young Fimir is no longer considered a baby and is taken away from its mother and inducted into its own caste, which now cares for him and begins his training. Young Shearl are bright enough to be able to help with simple fetching and carrying, initially learning and developing their caste-role through imitation of their older peers, later being properly trained in particular skills. It takes ten to fifteen years for a Shearl to reach its full size and be considered an adult. No special significance is attached to this coming of age, although the Shearl is now permitted to join raiding parties. As the years pass, the Shearl learns a wide range of domestic and craft skills. Some Shearl show talent for certain skills, such as wood or metalworking, boat-building or net-making, and so on. Experienced Shearl craftsmen oversee other Shearl and train the youngsters - these Shearl with an actual profession form the top of an unofficial and rather loose hierarchy within the Shearl caste. Young Shearl also learn the simple skills of survival, such as hiding and sneaking about. A Shearl's life is one of constant toil and being told what to do by others. However, most accept their lot and get on with it. Wilful, disobedient young Shearl are not tolerated, punishment coming in the form of spankings appropriate to the child's age (harsh, but not gratuitously brutal) and, literally, being sent to bed

without any supper. Rarely, unbreakable Shearl rebels appear; these end their days as sacrifices or exiles.

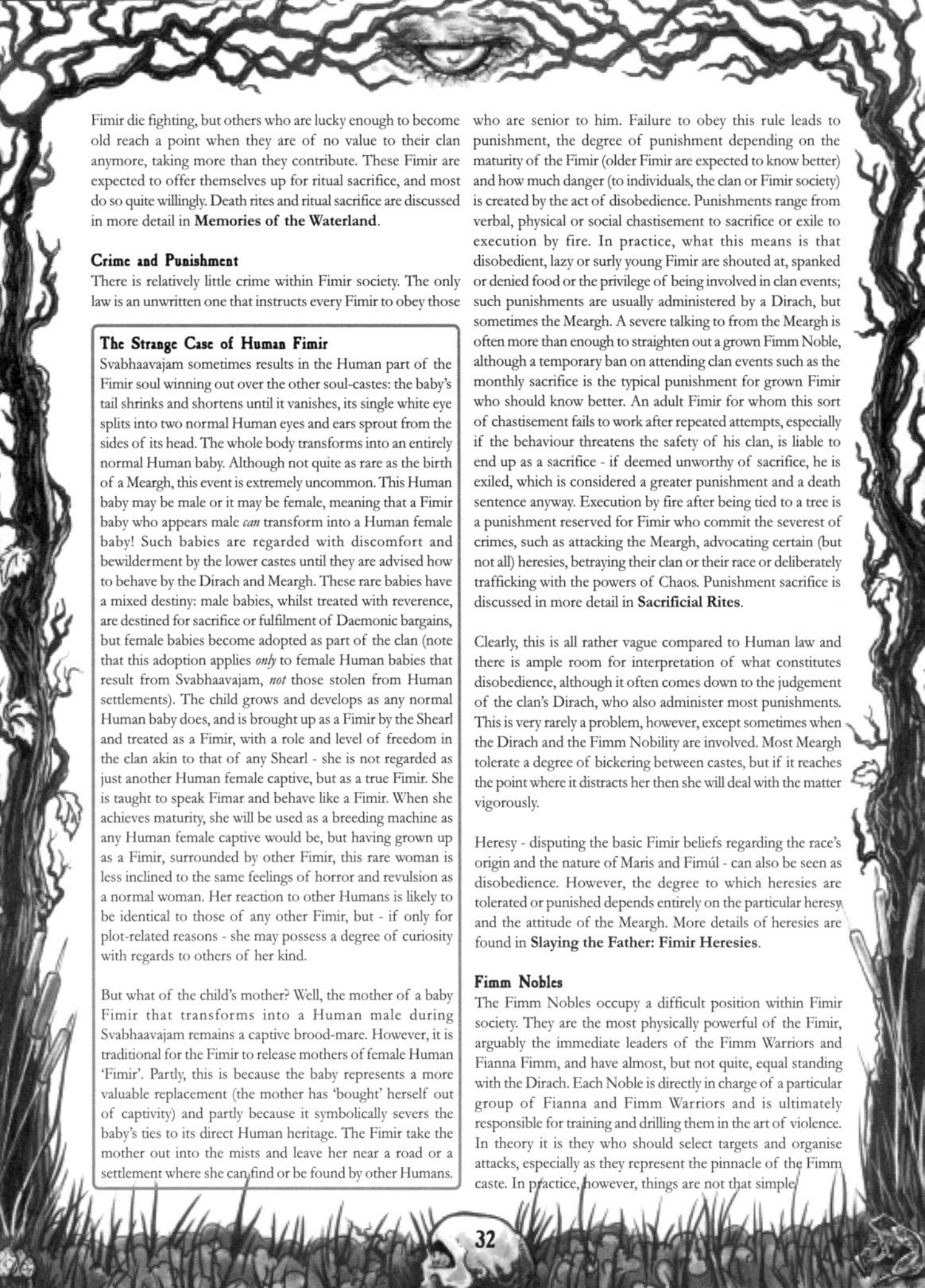
Shearl are not trained to fight and rely on instinct and practical experience, their key combat skills being brute strength, imitation and the ability to react quickly to the orders given by the senior castes. A young Fimm on the other hand is trained by his older brethren within days of undergoing Svabhaavajam, usually handed to one particular Noble to become part of his band of Fimm. Initially, his stamina and strength are developed through exercise and he is taught to wrestle with other young Fimm in imitation of the older warriors. When he is strong and tough enough (a year or two), he is taught to fight with wooden weapons and when he has mastered a level of control he is allowed to train with metal weapons and armour. As soon as he is considered competent and responsible, the young Fimm gets sentry duty and goes on hunting expeditions, but does not get to join raiding parties until fully grown - Fimm reach full size more quickly than the Shearl, about five to ten years after Svabhaavajam. Young Fianna Fimm and Fimm Nobles get more attention from their respective sub-castes than the ordinary Fimm warriors, but their training is much the same, although young Fimm Nobles spend more time with their

elders learning leadership skills and tactics. From this time until his death, the Fimm's life is concerned with fighting or preparing to fight. However, it doesn't bother him, as fighting is what he was born for, what he lives for and what his clan, his culture, his legends demand that he do.



A number of factors offsets the seemingly endless tedium and sameness of the adult lives of Shearl and Fimm. To begin with, all Fimir genuinely and instinctively enjoy what they do and take great pride in fulfilling their roles well. In this respect, they have things to aspire to, whether that be cooking a memorable meal for the clan or helping construct a fine longboat, or slaying the enemies of the clan and bringing home healthy captives - stories are important to the Fimir, so significant actions or creations may become immortalised. If their talents bring them the blessing of the Meargh herself, then even better! The drudgery of the routine is also offset by the clan's social activities of play and religious observance, which reinforce the importance and value of their contribution to the clan as a whole and their position within it. The Fimm Nobles also find time to take pleasure in annoying the Dirach (and *vice versa*).

Death is a major event in the life of not only the Fimir in question, but also of the entire clan. Regardless of the caste of the dead individual, the whole clan participates in the death rite. Many



Fimir die fighting, but others who are lucky enough to become old reach a point when they are of no value to their clan anymore, taking more than they contribute. These Fimir are expected to offer themselves up for ritual sacrifice, and most do so quite willingly. Death rites and ritual sacrifice are discussed in more detail in **Memories of the Waterland**.

Crime and Punishment

There is relatively little crime within Fimir society. The only law is an unwritten one that instructs every Fimir to obey those

The Strange Case of Human Fimir

Svabhaavajam sometimes results in the Human part of the Fimir soul winning out over the other soul-castes: the baby's tail shrinks and shortens until it vanishes, its single white eye splits into two normal Human eyes and ears sprout from the sides of its head. The whole body transforms into an entirely normal Human baby. Although not quite as rare as the birth of a Meargh, this event is extremely uncommon. This Human baby may be male or it may be female, meaning that a Fimir baby who appears male *can* transform into a Human female baby! Such babies are regarded with discomfort and bewilderment by the lower castes until they are advised how to behave by the Dirach and Meargh. These rare babies have a mixed destiny: male babies, whilst treated with reverence, are destined for sacrifice or fulfilment of Daemonic bargains, but female babies become adopted as part of the clan (note that this adoption applies *only* to female Human babies that result from Svabhaavajam, *not* those stolen from Human settlements). The child grows and develops as any normal Human baby does, and is brought up as a Fimir by the Shearl and treated as a Fimir, with a role and level of freedom in the clan akin to that of any Shearl - she is not regarded as just another Human female captive, but as a true Fimir. She is taught to speak Fimar and behave like a Fimir. When she achieves maturity, she will be used as a breeding machine as any Human female captive would be, but having grown up as a Fimir, surrounded by other Fimir, this rare woman is less inclined to the same feelings of horror and revulsion as a normal woman. Her reaction to other Humans is likely to be identical to those of any other Fimir, but - if only for plot-related reasons - she may possess a degree of curiosity with regards to others of her kind.

But what of the child's mother? Well, the mother of a baby Fimir that transforms into a Human male during Svabhaavajam remains a captive brood-mare. However, it is traditional for the Fimir to release mothers of female Human 'Fimir'. Partly, this is because the baby represents a more valuable replacement (the mother has 'bought' herself out of captivity) and partly because it symbolically severs the baby's ties to its direct Human heritage. The Fimir take the mother out into the mists and leave her near a road or a settlement where she can find or be found by other Humans.


who are senior to him. Failure to obey this rule leads to punishment, the degree of punishment depending on the maturity of the Fimir (older Fimir are expected to know better) and how much danger (to individuals, the clan or Fimir society) is created by the act of disobedience. Punishments range from verbal, physical or social chastisement to sacrifice or exile to execution by fire. In practice, what this means is that disobedient, lazy or surly young Fimir are shouted at, spanked or denied food or the privilege of being involved in clan events; such punishments are usually administered by a Dirach, but sometimes the Meargh. A severe talking to from the Meargh is often more than enough to straighten out a grown Fimm Noble, although a temporary ban on attending clan events such as the monthly sacrifice is the typical punishment for grown Fimir who should know better. An adult Fimir for whom this sort of chastisement fails to work after repeated attempts, especially if the behaviour threatens the safety of his clan, is liable to end up as a sacrifice - if deemed unworthy of sacrifice, he is exiled, which is considered a greater punishment and a death sentence anyway. Execution by fire after being tied to a tree is a punishment reserved for Fimir who commit the severest of crimes, such as attacking the Meargh, advocating certain (but not all) heresies, betraying their clan or their race or deliberately trafficking with the powers of Chaos. Punishment sacrifice is discussed in more detail in **Sacrificial Rites**.

Clearly, this is all rather vague compared to Human law and there is ample room for interpretation of what constitutes disobedience, although it often comes down to the judgement of the clan's Dirach, who also administer most punishments. This is very rarely a problem, however, except sometimes when the Dirach and the Fimm Nobility are involved. Most Meargh tolerate a degree of bickering between castes, but if it reaches the point where it distracts her then she will deal with the matter vigorously.

Heresy - disputing the basic Fimir beliefs regarding the race's origin and the nature of Maris and Fimúl - can also be seen as disobedience. However, the degree to which heresies are tolerated or punished depends entirely on the particular heresy and the attitude of the Meargh. More details of heresies are found in **Slaying the Father: Fimir Heresies**.

Fimm Nobles

The Fimm Nobles occupy a difficult position within Fimir society. They are the most physically powerful of the Fimir, arguably the immediate leaders of the Fimm Warriors and Fianna Fimm, and have almost, but not quite, equal standing with the Dirach. Each Noble is directly in charge of a particular group of Fianna and Fimm Warriors and is ultimately responsible for training and drilling them in the art of violence. In theory it is they who should select targets and organise attacks, especially as they represent the pinnacle of the Fimm caste. In practice, however, things are not that simple.



Although the Nobles are not stupid, they are not as clever, thoughtful or as wisely cautious as the Dirach and the Meargh, and tradition demands the Nobles follow the wisdom of the senior castes. Also, the Nobles rely heavily on the Dirach in time of battle, as well as in time of peace. As noted elsewhere, the Fimir do not react well to direct sunlight (see **Favourite Environments**) and the Dirach are often required to provide a mystical mist to shield the Nobles and their warriors from the hated sun. Without the Dirach, the Nobles and their warriors can be seriously impaired when fighting during daylight hours. Fimm Nobles often resent reliance upon the Dirach and this can lead to a degree of friction between the castes. However, the Nobles possess a very healthy fear of the Dirach, their magic and their Daemonic friends, and also what the Meargh might do to them if they started causing trouble. Also, the Fimir tradition of obedience to those above you is so ingrained that it is second nature for most Nobles to accept the situation. Nevertheless, Fimm Nobles do vie with the Dirach for the favour of the Meargh and become adept at finding ways to put down or humiliate the Dirach without it looking like deliberately stirring up trouble (following orders too literally, constantly suggesting alternative plans, for example). Fimm Nobles also have long-standing tradition of wearing horned helmets, because it so often annoys the Dirach who look upon it as direct mockery of their caste's horns.

For a few Nobles, however, this is simply not enough and they find the control imposed upon them by non-warriors almost unbearable. They may become increasingly surly, rude and disobedient towards the Dirach (although not usually towards the Meargh who is simply far too scary and dangerous). Whilst most Meargh tolerate this, if there is a risk of destabilising the clan structure (say by the Noble encouraging acts of defiance) then the threat of sacrifice or exile may become necessary, threats which will be ruthlessly implemented if the Noble doesn't back down (see **Crime and Punishment**). A few of these Nobles go into self-imposed exile before they can bring the wrath of the Meargh down upon themselves, secretly leaving their clan, either alone or, rarely, having persuaded their most trusted Fianna and Warriors to accompany them; they sometimes end up accompanying or leading Goblinoid warbands far from their original home. However, such Fimir usually find life outside a clan unbearably, wretchedly depressing.

Significant conflict, however, is fairly rare and on a day-to-day level the Fimm Nobles have enough to occupy themselves. As noted above, each Noble leads his own band of Warriors, Fianna and possibly a few younger Nobles, the size of which really depends on the size of the clan and the number of other Fimm Nobles. The Noble is responsible for conducting or overseeing their regular exercise and training. Some of this training takes the form of competitions between each Noble's troops, whether in the form of wrestling matches, swimming contests


to demonstrate stamina or combat with training weapons. These contests, in conjunction with more serious fights, result in a hierarchy within the Fimm caste, and every Noble wants *his* warriors to be at the top of that hierarchy, as this increases the likelihood that they will be chosen by the Meargh or Dirach for exciting and dangerous raids or other missions, or as personal bodyguards when outside the settlement. Although this competition might be expected to lead to infighting within the caste, in practice it doesn't, mostly due to the tight bonds imposed by the caste system. In conjunction with his fellow Nobles, he organises patrols and sentry duty around the clan settlement, although the Dirach, irritatingly, keep an eye on this too.

Dirach: the Daemonfriends

While it remains the duty of every Fimir to serve and obey his clan's Meargh, none follow her more dutifully than the Dirach. They are her disciples and act as her representatives when the Fimir venture beyond the confines of their settlement, and are responsible only to her. They are the brains to the Fimm Nobles' brawn, and they outrank these powerful warriors, albeit marginally. With the exception of the Meargh, they are the only caste to possess magical powers. They are far from the greatest of magicians, but their powers are innate and instinctive, unfettered by the restraints imposed by disciplined learning. Each Dirach forms a close relationship with a particular Daemon ally (hence the term 'Daemonfriend'), which often means that they have a powerful edge over Daemonologists of other races.

Dirach are responsible for day-to-day stewardship of the settlement, ensuring that supplies, especially food stocks, are kept at adequate levels and that the physical structures of the settlement are kept in good repair. In practice this often means directing the activities of the Shearl and making sure that they are always working hard - this is not an arduous task, as most Shearl are in awe of the Dirach's magical power, not to mention fearful of their anger, and usually do as they're told as fast as they can. (However, Dirach are magicians not craftsmen and rarely interfere with the technical aspects of what the Shearl do.) Similarly, whilst the Fimm Nobles are largely responsible for organising the rest of the Fimm and maintaining the security of the settlement (posting guards, organising patrols, having the Shearl add and repair defences), the Dirach keep watch over the Nobles and interfere whenever they feel it is necessary, usually to the annoyance of the Nobles.

The Dirach also police caste rules, watching carefully for transgressions. The rules are not often broken, however, largely due to the strength of their cultural ideology and the painful and sometimes terminal outcome of misbehaviour. Most Dirach help keep control by maintaining a casual aura of Daemonic menace (not a spell, they just have naturally threatening demeanours and carry large sacrificial knives). The



few problems that do occur only rarely include surly young Shearl failing to do as they're told. More often than not, trouble comes in the form of young Fimm warriors disobeying orders (often through honest over-enthusiasm), Fimm Nobles casually 'forgetting' the instructions of the Dirach and unauthorised mating with captives, although crimes of theft and violence are not unknown within and, much more rarely, between clans. They also watch and listen for signs of heresy and general wrong thinking. Crimes may involve other Dirach as well as Shearl and Fimm.

One of the key roles of every Dirach is providing magical cover, support and leadership during raids and expeditions outside Fimir territory, principally in the form of their mystic mist. The tension this can create between the Dirach and the Fimm Nobility is mentioned above, but it is worth remembering that the Dirach are not ignorant armchair generals usurping the role of experienced warriors. Dirach are cunning individuals who have often seen a lot of battles (after all, they can live to be 400 years old), more than many Fimm. What's more, it is often the caution and common sense exercised by Dirach that prevent Fimm rushing headlong to their own deaths in pointless, wasteful battles - without the steadying claw of the Dirach, there would undoubtedly be even fewer Fimir than there already are.

Acquisition of victims for the monthly sacrifices (see **Sacrificial Rites in Memories of the Waterland** below) and for some magical activities of the Dirach and Meargh alike, as well as Human females for breeding, is a special responsibility of the Dirach. Whilst it is not a daily activity, it is the Dirach who organise raiding parties in anticipation of future requirements. This requires planning, probably with preliminary scouting expeditions. One or more Dirach, in conjunction with other Fimir appropriate to the task, leads both scouting and raiding operations - more details of these activities can be found in **Into Battle** below.

Dirach are also spiritual leaders amongst the Fimir. Whilst the Meargh is without a shadow of a doubt *the* high priestess of her clan, she has better things to do with her precious time than constantly explain theology to dim-witted Shearl, a job she leaves to her Dirach. Furthermore, whilst the Meargh is a direct representative of Maris the Mother, the Dirach are the representatives of the Father, Fimúl the Mud God, so they occupy a position carrying considerable spiritual significance to the Fimir. Although the Meargh remain very much in charge, even they do not disregard or undervalue this fact.

In most Fimir clans, all the Dirach share these various roles and responsibilities, especially if the Dirach are few in number. However, certain individuals may have an aptitude for a particular role. For example, one Dirach may be a finer storyteller or singer than any of the others and become the

dominant theologian amongst them (Fimir religion is most commonly taught and understood through songs and stories) or a Dirach with an especially sinister aspect may have particular responsibility for watching for transgressions and administering punishment. Another Dirach may become the clan's principal healer or herbalist, or may have acquired some other specialist skill or knowledge after torturing a captive. A few devotees of the Daemon Prince Lisaart (see **In the Hands of the Father**) practice thievery and assassination (directed at non-Fimir). In this way, individual Dirach sometimes acquire distinct reputations that can spread to other clans - one Meargh who is on good terms with another Meargh may loan her one of these specialist Dirach in return for some special favour.

Petitioning

It is within the Meargh's power to grant members of her clan many things: the chance to mate, a blessing to bring success in some endeavour, the right to wear a belly-shield or to have another Fimir brought before her for judgement. A Fimir who wishes the Meargh to grant him such a boon must make a petition. In order that the Meargh is not swamped with requests, all petitions, whether from Shearl, Fimm or Dirach, are brought to her attention by one or more of her Dirach. Petitions are taken to the Meargh in private (usually at a monthly meeting) and the Dirach brings back her answer to the petitioner. This gives the Dirach considerable power within the clan: if you want to ensure that your petition reaches the Meargh then you do not upset the Dirach. The Dirach find this a good way to keep more difficult Fimir in line. For example, a Fimm Noble who has continued to wear a horned helmet despite the Dirach' objection may find that when he wants to petition the Meargh for permission to wear a belly-shield all the Dirach are very busy or that the Meargh is *far* too deep in meditation to hear any petitions this month. The Dirach are certainly not above such petty behaviour.

Interestingly, Dirach extend this tradition of petitioning to races other than Fimir. So long as such a request is made appropriately (this may be as simple as, "Please will you bring this request/matter to the attention of your Meargh"), then the Dirach can bring the petition to the Meargh if they feel so inclined and return with her answer. In reality, of course, the whole thing is a bit more complicated - Dirach do not do favours for outsiders for nothing and expect something in return. This is believed to be based on traditions of the Waterland, where special attendants or ambassadors from outside the Waterland would bring formal requests from outsiders to Maris.

Dirach and Daemons

As the honorific Daemonfriend might suggest, a Dirach's relationship with Daemons goes beyond that of purely summoner and summoned. Most Daemonologists of other races view Daemons as tools, and dangerous ones at that; Fimir, and the Dirach especially, see Daemons as allies, relatives and



even friends. That said, the Dirach are not fools and they are well aware of the contrary and unpredictable natures of many of the Daemons that they deal with. Also, they're not particularly close to Daemons aligned to good gods, and it is rare that one has a Daemon of Law for a Daemonfriend.

Dirach never summon Daemons on a whim, but at the same time they do not always summon them only with the intention of sending them into battle or off on some errand. Daemons are regularly summoned to attend clan rituals and gatherings. During their free time, Dirach commonly and privately summon Daemons merely to converse, exchange stories, and learn more about what it means to be a Daemon. In doing so, they seek to discover and understand more of their Daemonic heritage. Some seek to learn the true nature and fate of Fimúl the Mud God, the exact truth of which remains a mystery. (Many hundreds of years of Dirach/Daemon communion have not shed much light on the matter.) Dirach also simply enjoy the companionship of Daemons. The lower castes, especially the Fimm Nobles, sometimes whisper, quietly and jealously, that some Dirach are interested in far more than purely *intellectual* intercourse with many of the Daemons that they summon.

Eventually almost all Dirach form a special relationship with a single, specific Daemon. The Dirach and Daemon become great friends, almost like two very close siblings (so there is some bickering and sulking as well as camaraderie). The Daemon may be a Lesser Daemon or Daemon Imp. This Daemon is often the first one a Dirach ever summons; older Dirach or the Meargh herself often suggest the name of suitable Daemons, but sometimes the name of a Daemon mysteriously forms in the mind of a young Dirach. Due to the sheer number of Daemons it is rare for two or more Dirach to share the same Daemonic friend, but it does happen and in some cases can provide a link between Dirach in different clans, and hence between those clans. The strength of the bond between the Dirach and Daemon cannot be under-estimated, and the death of a partner causes immense anguish.

One of the most significant aspects of this relationship is the Daemon's special ability to 'self-summon' in specific circumstances. In game terms, what this means is the Daemon is able to use the Dirach's Magic Characteristic to cast *Summon Lesser Daemon* to summon itself into the real world in the immediate vicinity of the Dirach. However, the Daemon can *only* do this when its Dirach friend is asleep or unconscious, it cannot move more than a few feet from the Dirach, and as

soon as the Dirach is roused the Daemon instantly returns to its own realm - it is as though the Daemon is able to watch over the Dirach.

Meargh: the Witch-Queens

The Meargh is at the heart of every Fimir clan. Not only is she the most powerful wielder of magic within the clan, she is often as physically strong and tough as the Fimm, as her ferocious temper occasionally proves. Most importantly, as the symbolic mother of her clan she is a direct representative of Maris, queen and sorceress. She is as loved by the lower castes as she is feared, which is greatly. Any of her clan would willingly give his life to save hers, and all know they might just have to one day.

The great power and influence every Meargh possesses comes with equal responsibility. As Maris advised and aided the men of the Waterland (at least until they turned upon her), every Meargh must care for and protect her clan from the storms it must undoubtedly face. Each Meargh is bound to her clan, and she cannot simply abandon it to pursue her own interests. Only rarely do Meargh stray far from their settlements (or the safety of the majority of the clan if it is nomadic), and they only lead their clans in battle when settlements themselves are attacked or when their whole clans go off to war. A Meargh delegates leadership of raids and other minor conflicts to her Dirach.

Whilst the well-being of the clan is more important than the fate of an individual Fimir, the Fimir are so few that most Meargh also look out for the safety of individual Fimir, as long as doing so will not compromise the rest of her clan or other Fimir. However, a Meargh's care is not a soft-hearted one - a Fimm rescued from Human captors is as likely to receive a thrashing (verbal or physical) for his foolishness in getting caught, as he is a welcome home. The affection Meargh feel for their charges is well hidden; no Meargh wishes to appear soft.

Although Meargh are undisputed leaders, all rely upon their Dirach to varying degrees. Most Meargh hold regular monthly meetings with their Dirach, usually on nights of the new moon. (Nights when Fimul's eye is closed are considered inauspicious for Fimir to be out and about, but auspicious for making plans in secret; also, a less wakeful Fimul also means a more dominant Maris, strengthening the Meargh's own dominance over the males.) The Meargh is very much in charge of these meetings, asking questions and demanding answers rather than entertaining suggestions and advice from the Dirach. However, some matters and decisions she expects the Dirach to manage for themselves, and she tells them so if she believes they are failing. If the clan is facing serious problems of one sort or another, the Meargh holds formal meetings with her Dirach more frequently. She sometimes summons the Fimm Nobles

Wandering Dirach

Across the northern Old World and beyond there are wandering Dirach who are no longer fully attached to any Fimir clan. Broadly speaking, there are two categories of such Dirach: exiles, and ambassadors who fulfil a role in wider Fimir society.

Some exiles have been formally thrown out of their clan as punishment for some crime (repeatedly publicly disagreeing with the Meargh, for example) and are commonly branded or tattooed in some way to identify them to other Fimir clans, which shun them entirely. These Dirach tend to fall victim to the desperate depression that affects most Fimir who are separated from a complete clan.

Other exiles are Dirach who have left voluntarily because they feel they can no longer be part of a clan (having turned to Chaos or become a believer in the Good Father heresy (see **Slaying the Father: Fimir Heresies** below) for example). Dirach who leave voluntarily with some measure of purpose tend more towards melancholy than depression and despair; the rare Chaotic Dirach are usually just mad. Dirach (in fact, any Fimir) who vanish without word or who are suspected of turning to Chaos are usually tracked to down to find out why.

Sometimes, the number of Dirach in a clan grows too high - it is unusual, but it can lead to conflict when there is not enough for each Dirach to do. When it happens, one Dirach usually volunteers to become a messenger or roving ambassador who roams the land, travelling between clans, bringing news, carrying messages or warnings, preaching and telling stories and aiding other Fimir wherever possible. Dirach who have survived the death of their clan often take this role upon themselves. Such Dirach are a minor but important link between clans. They are treated courteously by the clans they encounter and are shown hospitality, although they never stay with a clan longer than a month before moving on. These Dirach are often quite lonely and although wary of non-Fimir are often willing to talk to those of other races if the risk seems acceptable.

Two examples of wandering Dirach are Affed and his son Arrod. Affed became corrupted by Nurgle and was forced to flee his clan before he was found and out and killed. His son Arrod had already chosen to leave his clan, with the grudging understanding of the Meargh, having come to believe in the Good Father Heresy and desiring to escape his father. However, when his father went rogue, his clan tracked Arrod down and the Meargh charged him with seeking out and killing Affed. Arrod accepted this task and has been chasing the cunning Affed through the fringes of Human lands for decades. Arrod seeks to do good wherever he can and tries to repair the harm done by his father, while Affed cheerfully spreads disease and corruption wherever he goes, delighting in the fact that his son's life revolves around his once more.

to meetings in order to give them orders directly, emphasising the importance of those orders.

A range of issues are discussed at these monthly meetings, the key one being clan security. Meargh like to be informed of any emerging threat and make sure her Dirach are making effective use of the Fimm in watching for and countering enemies. The issue of supplies (food, raw materials, captives) bores most Meargh, but this is an essential matter for a Meargh to keep her eye on, and if she thinks there are problems she instructs her Dirach to seek ways to resolve them and report back. The Dirach also (if they feel well-disposed) tell her about any petitions they have been asked to bring before her (Meargh rarely ask), and she either makes a decision there and then or thinks about the matter and gives her response at the next meeting. The Dirach always raise disciplinary matters with the Meargh if they feel she should be the one to pass judgement, or if they want the transgressor to fall into the Meargh's bad books. Finally, meetings usually conclude with some discussion of Daemons. Discussion ranges from dealing with any annoying Daemons who have been summoned for whatever reason but have declined to leave afterwards, to who should be invited to the next monthly sacrifice to the memory of Fimúl.

Provided it is not in a constant state of peril, relatively little of a Meargh's time need be spent worrying about her clan; this is left to the Dirach. Instead, she concentrates her attention on magic, communing with Daemons and scrying, often hiding away in her tower, only opening the door or yelling out of a window if she wants food or requires some item or assistance in her activities. She won't be lazy, however, and if she needs something from the marsh she goes herself, keeping within sight of the settlement unless she has taken some guards along with her (though more to keep her clan happy than out of fear for herself). She also endeavours to keep a surreptitious eye on her underlings, either through scrying or simple watchfulness.

Meargh are notoriously bad-tempered, rude and aggressive and this undoubtedly stems from their raw power, uniqueness within each clan and position as representative of Maris. All Fimir move out of her path, hurriedly or casually, if they see her coming (those not paying attention usually receive a whack round the head from her staff and a few choice words). The hags also possess the animalistic streak found in all Fimir castes, which despite their intelligence they can never quite throw off; they can descend to brief and sudden savagery if seriously provoked. Meargh hate having their time wasted (few of them see their life-expectancy of 2000 years as really being long enough) and can see through fools and most flatterers in an instant (characters attempting to deal with them using Blather should face penalties to their rolls). However, they are intensely curious about the world at large, occasionally insanely so, perhaps because of their semi-confinement. Anyone, Fimir or

otherwise, who has something genuinely interesting to offer her should be able to evade a Meargh's natural aggression and deal directly with her rude, bad-tempered side (GMs take note: Meargh represent *fantastic* roleplaying opportunities).

Older Meargh have been alive a very, very long time. Although they do not get out much, their age, scrying talents and conversations with Daemons mean they know a lot of history and may have had first hand experience of historical events the PCs might need information about. Information (about ancient events, places or people, or anything that can only be deviously obtained through the use of Daemons and scrying) is a powerful incentive for PCs to deal with the Fimir in a non-violent manner. Of course, Meargh always want something in return.

It is important to recognise that in spite of all they have in common, every Meargh is an individual with her own interests and obsessions. This is another legacy of Maris, who was very much her own person. Differences range from the level of hostility each Meargh displays towards Humans, to an individual who is very concerned about her appearance and grows her hair long to roll it into dreadlocks, to becoming obsessed with observing the comings and goings at a certain town or village. One Meargh has an abnormal interest in the activities of the Fimm caste and practices her own martial skills, to the dismay of her Dirach. She is mostly interested in non-lethal tactics, being keen to humiliate her foes and laugh in their still-living faces!

Few Meargh waste time thinking up grand or subtle schemes to take over the land (as an occasionally nomadic people, most find the idea ludicrous), but most of them have their own peculiar projects. Typically, these are concerned with the long-term security and viability of the clan, but may also stem from personal interests, suspicions and eccentricities. For example, some are curious about the nature and potential uses of the mysterious ethereal entities known as marshlights, and others attempt to learn of and uncover any secrets hidden in their lands. Others consider, develop and put into practice subtle schemes to entice the unwary into Fimir territory. Old and quite probably ancient grudges may inspire the desire for revenge. However, Meargh are aware of the dangers of letting anger guide their actions and so Meargh vengeance is slow and subtle, but icily vicious. Groups or individuals who have thwarted her in the past often become the focus of her attention, a curiosity that might be hostile or (relatively) benign.

Apprentice Meargh

If a Meargh has an apprentice, much of her time is focused on training the young one to take over her role when she finally dies after centuries of rule. Apprenticeship takes decades, if not a century or more, and during that time an apprentice is almost constantly by the Meargh's side. One reason for this

lengthy apprenticeship is the haphazard and disorganized approach to training adopted by most Meargh, whose brains are often leaping from one idea or curiosity to another unless they have something of great importance or interest to focus on. One minute an apprentice can be stood stirring a potion and reciting hundreds of Daemon names in an effort to learn them all, the next she is whisked off for an impromptu herbalism lesson as the Meargh heads into the marsh to look for some birds' eggs. In addition, there is a much knowledge the apprentice needs to learn and practice.

To an outsider, it is hard to see where apprentice Meargh fit into the Fimir caste system. Whilst an apprentice is clearly not a member of any male caste, she is certainly not the true Meargh of her clan. Some Dirach, especially older ones, are inclined to feel a sense of superiority where apprentice Meargh are concerned, though most are wise enough to keep their feelings to themselves. Chances are some of the Dirach alive when the apprentice is born will be dead of old age by the time she takes over, so older Dirach with attitude problems are unlikely to matter much.

An apprentice Meargh is not hidden away from the rest of the clan, as Meargh feel it is important for an apprentice to understand the way her clan works, and about the castes and their natures. However, casual fraternisation is not encouraged. The apprentice's innate sense of seniority and power is encouraged and developed by active involvement. An apprentice shares the Meargh's duties during clan rituals, whether they are cutting the throat of the victim during the monthly sacrifice, summoning a Daemon or deciding on an ordeal for a Fimm hoping to wear a belly-shield. Ostentatious displays of magic by the apprentice from atop the Meargh's tower also enhance her image within the clan.

The personalities of apprentices are as variable as mature Meargh, but elements of childishness are there. Of course, childishness can be cruel, sinister and spiteful as well as sweet, endearing or amusing. Meargh always rein in any tendencies towards rash and impulsive behaviour very early on - although anger is part and parcel of Meargh' nature, the Fimir cannot afford Meargh who vent their fury without consideration of consequences. The Meargh deals with her rebellious apprentice in private, as the apprentice's standing in the clan must not be undermined. The Meargh never attempt to diminish the strength of her apprentice's personality, but will channel it so it can effectively care for, protect and, most importantly, rule the clan.


Traditionally, an apprentice Meargh becomes Meargh of her clan the instant her mentor dies. There is no elaborate ceremony involved in her taking power, though the death rites (see **Sacrificial Rites**) conducted for the passing of the former Meargh are a formal inauguration of sorts. Typically, there is



no warning of the death of most Meargh, who have a disturbing tendency to suddenly drop down dead, usually still in the middle of a rant, extreme old age being the cause. A minority die in battle or from disease. A very tiny few who feel their apprentice is more than ready to take over, and that they have done all they can, actually volunteer to be sacrificed in the name of Maris, offering final thanks and acknowledgement to the goddess.

Through Fimir Eyes

Fimir intelligence varies across the castes. The Shearl and Fimm tend to be brutish and instinctive, whereas the Fimm Nobles and Dirach are of more or less average Human intelligence, though tempered with a cruel, animal streak. The Meargh, although not always mistresses of analytical thinking, possess a tremendous cunning. However, do not be fooled into thinking Fimir are stupid. Many Shearl are capable craftsmen, just not ones with much artistic flare or originality; the less able ones may not have many worthwhile craft skills, but are bright enough to understand and follow the orders of the senior castes and the instructions of their cleverer brethren. The Fimm Warriors are capable of understanding detailed orders and accurately assessing a threat, but do not expect to get much conversation out of them. The Fimm Nobles and Dirach are



capable of forward planning, reacting swiftly to crises, developing battle strategy and maintaining the integrity of their settlement between them, though with varying degrees of petty squabbling. Like pack animals, the male Fimir know their places, though there is occasional rivalry between them. Meanwhile, most Meargh exhibit the arrogance and confidence of those who rule through divine right, but only a fool would try to outsmart a Meargh on her own territory.

It has been a long, long time since the Fimir have had any long-term plans or goals. For more than two millennia, all the Fimir have wanted is to survive with as little interference from or interaction with other races as possible. In the short term and the long term, the main aim of all Fimir is to draw no more attention to themselves and their settlements than is necessary for survival. They have no imperial ambitions or secret agenda and their previous attempt at unification (see **Out of the Waterland**) only brought disaster upon them. Now they seek only to get on with their lives and honour their race's parents, whilst ignoring the rest of the world. Unfortunately,

the Fimir cannot have a quiet, normal life: their race's continued existence depends upon preying on Humans, and their physical appearance and kinship with Daemons is more than enough to provoke hostility even without their need for theft, kidnap, rape and sacrifice.

The Fimir are an incredibly practical race. Having been forced so often to run from the lands they have previously settled, they have learnt to make do and adapt accordingly. They take what they can find or steal and try to make something useful from it. They are resigned to their situation and rarely waste time trying to develop dramatic schemes to improve their lot. The primary motive of every Fimir is the simple survival of its clan, and most actions are decided upon with this goal in mind. If a scheme can bring the clan some benefit without seriously endangering it, then it may be worth putting into action. If a particular course of action is likely to have dangerous repercussions for the clan, then even if that course of action may also provide some advantage to the clan it is unlikely to be undertaken. The Fimir have become adept at making swift


Solitary Meargh

A number of Meargh lost their entire clan during the war with the Juton tribe and others have lost their clan in the centuries since: disease, starvation, lack of breeding stock and conflict all take their toll. There has never been a place for these Meargh in Fimir society and they are all but exiled from it, because there can be only ever be one Meargh and one apprentice in any clan. However, Meargh are made of stern stuff and a clanless Meargh is perfectly capable of carving out an existence for herself. However, she won't normally seek out the company of other Fimir (although she might encounter a Death-Quest and found a new clan) or that of other races who might accept her, such as the goblinoids, so it is often a solitary and lonely life, with only Daemons for company. Some secretly live close to villages and towns, but away from well-travelled roads or worked fields. The Meargh Slall (known to locals as Mother Sally), who lives in a moss-covered, fungus-ridden woodland hovel an hour's walk from town, survives happily by hiding herself in hood and rags, dispensing contraceptive advice, love charms and cursing dolls to young women who dare seek her out.

The decaying village of her dead clan, hidden in the depths of ancient forests, or lurking in a mountain cave far from her old lands: all are places a solitary Meargh might make her lonely home. Such Meargh spend their days talking to themselves, practicing magic, communing with Daemons and spying on the outside world with their scrying skills, much as they always did. Although they are verbally aggressive, rude, spiteful and at least half-mad, they are often willing to talk to anyone who happens upon them. They are quite happy to bargain and deal with anyone who wants information or aid (they are sometimes sought out by Daemonologists seeking to learn new spells, Daemons' names and greater wisdom)

and may even be willing to assist in fighting Chaos. However, just because they aren't surrounded by Dirach, Fimm and Shearl doesn't mean they can be pushed about and casually threatened; they usually have at least a couple of Daemons or elementals that can be called upon at short notice.

One of the most ancient Meargh (over 2,500 years old!) in the Old World is a mad and ludicrously wrinkled creature named Aughra. During the war with the Jutones she was one of the few Meargh who actively opposed the Hell-mother's plans for unification. Unfortunately for her, a conspiracy within her Dirach resulted in the defection of her entire clan to the Hell-mother's side. Before her enemy could catch her, Aughra fled the Wasteland, heading westwards, ultimately to the peaks of the Middle Mountains. In time, she found herself a perfect home: a deep, dark cave well-hidden behind a waterfall, protecting her from the sun and reminding her of her race's ties to earth and water. The forested slopes provided her with food and firewood and there were no local Dwarfs to harass her. With the exception of the local giants (who have come to all-but-worship her down the centuries), mountain goats and the occasional travellers, she has lived a long, peaceful and contented existence with no responsibility to anyone but herself. She remembers her ancestry and acknowledges Maris and Fimúl in her prayers, and sacrifices billy-goats in memory of Fimúl. She binds their limbs and neck, clubs them and cuts their throats as tradition requires, but she saves and eats their meat before casting the remains into the water (there are a lot of old goats' bones in the river running down that particular mountain). Like many other Meargh, Aughra decided long ago that Chaos assisted the rise of the Hell-mother. For this reason, Aughra has a hatred of Chaos which, when expressed, is truly terrible to behold.



cost/benefit analyses: even the Shearl and Fimm in the absence of a senior caste member know that keeping their heads down or running away makes more sense than getting embroiled in a futile fight. However, this is not to say their decision-making is flawless: poor intelligence or reconnaissance, confusion after sudden exposure to bright sunlight or conflict between two or more Dirach or between a Dirach and a Fimm Noble can all lead to errors of judgement. Even the Meargh can make mistakes when enraged or misinformed; they are partly Human, after all.

The Fimir are also an angry and bitter people: the murder of their race's father and the exile of their ancient ancestors from the Waterland by the Humans have never been forgotten, and they resent their reliance upon Humanity for their survival. Whilst the lands they inhabit are to their liking (misty and remote, close to earth and water), they resent the fact these lands are those that Humans have dismissed and rejected as unworthy. However, the Fimir are not subject to the hatreds and animosities that afflict so many of the other races. Firstly, their practicality, as well as bitter experience born of long life, has taught them that succumbing to their aggressive emotions is dangerous to the individual, to the clan and to the Fimir race. Secondly, thousands of years ago the Fimir developed a ritualised outlet for these feelings in the form of regular, highly symbolic blood sacrifices (see **Sacrificial Rites in Memories of the Waterland**). Together with their structured society these things make the Fimir a race of disciplined individuals, able to feel their emotions as passionately as they like, but without allowing them to control their actions (though as described above, they are not perfect machines, and individuals or even whole clans sometimes succumb to their anger). This is not to say most Fimir are aware of and understand how their own behaviour is regulated; the vast majority of Fimir are still brutal, instinctive creatures, and only the Meargh are really intelligent enough to understand why the race behaves as it does.

By most standards, the Fimir are evil. They steal, they murder, they abduct, they rape. They are willing to torture living sentient beings if they feel that it is necessary. They worship Daemons, form friendships with some and are themselves partly Daemonic in nature. As far as they are concerned they have no choice in any of this, but at the same time they feel no remorse for their actions and consider much of what they do to be fair payment for what Humanity has done to them, their ancestors and their race's parents. However, they neither agonise nor gloat over their actions or situation, although they can find pleasure and satisfaction in their successes, sadness in their failures and losses.


The Sunlight Folk

Much as they would like to be, the Fimir are not alone in the world and they have dealt with many other races, usually from a position of ambush. Millennia of other races trying to kill

them have resulted in the Fimir becoming xenophobic in the extreme (their warriors' tendency to wear cloaks the colour of Human blood being one of the more polite examples). The Fimir know they are feared and hated, both for their appearance and their kinship with Daemons, a fact constantly restated and emphasised in their origin myths. However, the Meargh and Dirach try not to allow bitterness, fear and hatred to force them into situations that would jeopardise their race's survival; the Goblinoids in their fecund hordes can afford the luxury of giving vent to their hate and rage, but the Fimir cannot. They tend to regard other races as dangerous rivals that are best avoided, kidnapped, or slaughtered according to necessity rather than desire. For the most part, the Fimir direct their active hostility towards Humans alone, but other races can sometimes serve equally well when the Fimir are looking for sacrifices.

Humans are the ball and chain on the collective ankle of the Fimir and their dislike of Humans is born from resentment of this fact as much as it is from what the men of the Waterland did to Maris and Fimúl. Despite their feelings, the Fimir would have as little to do with Humans as possible if it was not for the fact they are vital to the continued existence of the Fimir. However, even though their origin myth constantly reminds them how badly Humans treated their race's parents and ancestors, the Fimir can't deny the fact their race's Mother, as well as every one of their individual mothers, was a Human. The significance of this is largely lost on the Shearl and the Fimm (even the Nobles), but the Meargh and the Dirach with their greater intelligence and knowledge are aware of the bitter irony. It is perhaps because of this there is a certain ambiguity about their relationship and attitude to Humans. As noted above in **Prisoners**, some clans like to involve Human captives in various parts of the clan's social activity. There is also a strange story about a Reikland village that came under attack by Beastmen. At the most desperate point of the fight when the stockade was about to collapse, a thick blinding fog came down. There followed a terrible shrieking and screaming, and when the fog rose a short time later, the villagers found the mangled bodies of Beastmen laying strewn around the ground beyond the stockade. Some would argue this was the Fimir protecting their resources, but to date the Fimir have never bothered the village; the villagers themselves now have an ambiguous attitude to local Fimir.

If they are not directly threatened and can ensure the safety of their clan and settlement won't be compromised, then Fimir (with the appropriate language skills) are prepared to converse with Humans, even bargaining and trading if the Humans have something the Fimir really need. Likewise, if a small group of Humans (adventurers?) wished to converse with a Meargh, perhaps in the hope of acquiring information or resolving some conflict without bloodshed, and could find a party of Fimir, then they might be able to persuade the Fimir to arrange a meeting with the Meargh herself or through one or more



Dirach acting as liaison. The Dirach names a place and time making it virtually impossible for the Fimir to be subject of an ambush. It is conceivable Humans could be brought to a settlement, but they are certain to be blindfolded or led through thick, confusing fog.

While the Fimir are evil, many Humans are equally evil if not worse. The Fimir consent to work with these evil men and women if what is offered in return is valuable enough to them. In particular, some slavers and smugglers of Human captives deal with the Fimir, perhaps in return for a Daemon to attack a rival or for the chance to spend a night of dark passion with a succubus. Daemonologists go looking for Fimir in the hope of increasing their knowledge. Meargh may trade spells (Dirach can't do this, as their magic is innate, instinctive and not teachable) and the names of Daemons (the Dirach can do this) in return for spell ingredients, the names of other Daemons or magical items. The poisonous form of the Fimir magical fog fascinates necromancers, as it produces such lovely undamaged corpses. Whilst the Dirach and the Meargh cannot teach this innate magical ability, they are able to provide the bodies. They are reluctant to kill their own captives in this manner and some another arrangement must be reached.

Elves provoke a healthy wariness in Fimir, who steer clear of them whenever possible; there is usually little if any overlap in their respective territories anyway. They know Elves have powerful magic at their disposal and are able warriors, and they respect these things in as much as they pose a threat to the Fimir. They have no great fear of Elves, but since Elven women are of no use for breeding, Fimir see little point in provoking them. However, any Elf who actively opposes Fimir activity becomes a legitimate target as far as the Fimir are concerned, and they make perfectly acceptable sacrifices. Nevertheless, Elves inspire considerable unease in some Fimir clans. This unease stems from an uncommon sequence of Fimir stories hinting at a relationship between Maris the Witch Princess and another lover, preceding her relationship with Fimúl the Mud God. The mysterious lover is not named and barely described in the stories, but they do say he was not a man of the Waterland and suggest he had a close affinity for nature, forests and the ocean. He may have fallen from favour with Maris long before her relationship with Fimúl began, but the stories tell of his dark jealousy of Maris' new love. However, he also seems to have been fearful of Fimúl and was unwilling to confront him directly. The stories go on to suggest this former lover stalked Maris and Fimúl during their flight through the wilderness when they were pursued by the men of the Waterland (see **Memories of the Waterland** for more detail on Fimir legend). In these stories, the former lover becomes a very dark and intimidating figure, fearful of direct confrontation with Maris and Fimúl, but threatening nonetheless. Fimir clans that still remember and tell these stories are not only far more wary of Elves than most clans, but are

also far more reluctant to enter the dark and enclosed spaces of the Old World's forests.

Dark Elves are another matter. On rare occasions, the Fimir have met Dark Elves at sea and have discovered they have some things in common, such as ritual sacrifice, strong roles for females in their societies, and a general dislike of other races. However, the Fimir are still wary of the Dark Elves. The Fimir sense the evil cruelty of the Dark Elves and they remain cautious. The Meargh realise the Dark Elves are just the sort of race that would use and manipulate the Fimir if they could, and no Meargh could tolerate that. Trade (prisoners, magical effects and information) might take place between the Fimir and the Dark Elves, but every Fimir will watch his tail. Such dealings are likely to take place at sea, since Dark Elves have no presence in the Old World (as far as anyone knows).

The Dwarfs of the mountains and the Fimir have had little to do with one another, mostly for geographical reasons, and the Fimir are content with that. Those Dwarfs the Fimir have encountered in any significant number are the Norse Dwarfs or others living along rocky, mountainous coastlines around the Sea of Claws. As discussed in **What the Others Know**, the Norse Dwarfs have some measure of respect for the Fimir and beyond a few specific Grudges feel no imperative to fight them. The Shearl are never sure how to deal with being treated respectfully and either fight or back off according to the circumstances, but the Fimir usually accept any offered challenge unless ordered otherwise by a senior caste member. Meargh and Dirach on the other hand tend to play this to their advantage and are willing to speak to and deal with the Norse Dwarfs, as long as the Dwarfs do not immediately try to chop their heads off.

Gnomes and Halflings figure little in the concerns of the Fimir, although they crop up in several comical Fimir stories. It seems the Fimir have some difficulty in taking these diminutive races seriously, and consequently their hostility towards them seems less than to most. Nevertheless, some Fimir have noted that the smallness of these beings makes them easier to bundle up and carry off for sacrifice or as gifts for Daemons. There was a case of two Gnome travellers being strung up by their ankles from a tree branch and swung backwards and forwards for several hours before the Fimir became bored and wandered off into the mist. Also, the industriousness of Gnome and Halfling communities in the rural north of The Empire makes them choice targets for Fimir out to steal someone else's harvest.

Goblinoids are amongst the few races Fimir are prepared to interact with in a reasonably friendly manner. They understand the rage, hate and need to survive that consume these various tribes and races. What's more, the Fimir know these are the only intelligent races not repelled by their physical appearance.

The Fimir show hospitality to Goblinoids, as long as they do not abuse it, and will support them in battle if the rewards and risks are reasonable. They also trade weapons, captives and food. Goblin shamans and Meargh and Dirach happily discuss magic together, and the warriors enjoy showing off their physical and combative skills to one another. Fimir Death-Quests sometimes join with Goblinoid groups, but their bleak and depressed attitude is at odds with the rowdy passions of the greenskins, so such relationships are often temporary. Much of this is also applicable to Ogres and Trolls.

The Skaven and the Fimir have history, or so it is said. As discussed in **Out of the Waterland** above, these two races are said by some to have fought a long, vicious war that was ultimately disastrous for both. It is far from clear whether or not this war actually took place, but regardless of the truth the idea that some old hatred exists between these two enemies of man is worth developing. What is certain though is the Fimir do not like the Skaven. Part of this dislike stems from simple jealousy of Skaven fertility; the Fimir struggle to perpetuate their race and the ratmen breed like the vermin they are. The Skaven also worship a god of Chaos, making them dangerous, unpredictable and untrustworthy. The Fimir object to the Skaven being parasitic on Human society, stealing and consuming its unwanted refuse. As far as the Fimir are concerned, *they* have exclusive rights to use and take from Humans. Furthermore, the lower castes worry that the burrowing of the ratmen through the earth might disturb Fimúl in some way, though Fimúl has never apparently indicated as much. Skaven venturing into Fimir territory, perhaps on their endless quest for warpstone, are vigorously challenged and captured for sacrifice.

Beastmen and mutants often drift into the isolated lands of the Fimir. Whilst the Fimir have some understanding of these creatures as fellow outcasts (especially mutants driven out by Humans because of their appearance), the link to Chaos is enough for the Fimir to avoid them or deal with them by force. Human females are carefully scrutinised (physically and magically through scrying) for signs of mutation before they are used as breeding stock. Mutant Fimir can and do arise from time to time, the same as in Human societies, but it is hard for them to go unnoticed in Fimir communities. Mutant Fimir are pitied by their brothers, but killed and burnt to ash as soon as possible.

Into Battle

The Fimm are a caste of dedicated, powerful warriors and even the average Shearl is more than a match for Humans in terms of muscle, resilience and weapon-craft. Despite their avoidance of unnecessary and futile fights, the Fimir *are* a martial race. They simply have to be in order to take what they need to survive and defend themselves from all those who fear and hate them. Remember, it is not just hostile Humans,

Elves and Dwarfs the Fimir have to contend with, but also the forces of Chaos, rampaging Goblinoids and Skaven rooting through the marsh for Warpstone, as well as all the other monsters infesting the desolate places of the Old World.

During times of major conflict, Fimir take full advantage of their magical heritage, exploiting their mists in particular, but also calling forth Daemons and elementals. They expect and give no quarter, unless they want captives. This does not mean they rush into every fight they can or that they go looking for trouble without reason. If the Fimir have other business when they have an unavoidable encounter with outsiders, they are willing to resort to limited discussion involving intimidation, threat or a simple offer of you-go-your-way-we'll-go-ours to avoid a fight. If forced, they either run or fight, according to what they are facing. The most commonly encountered groups of Fimir, with their tactics, are described below.

Scouting Parties

The Fimir do not rush blindly into battle and unknown situations. Small scouting parties, typically consisting of a Dirach, a Fianna Fimm or Fimm Noble and a couple of Fimm Warriors, explore new lands and observe villages and roads before hunting, raiding or war parties head out. Whilst these groups are ready to fight, secretive observation is the aim and contact with non-Fimir is actively avoided. If they are spotted and hunted, they attempt to lead their pursuers as far away from the home settlement as possible and then lose them. If it comes to a fight they defend themselves, but unless the fight goes easily in their favour they take any opportunity to escape. Scouting parties can crop up in unusual areas, which might account for unlikely tales of Fimir sailing down the Reik.

Foraging and Hunting Parties

Groups of Fimir out looking for food usually consist of maybe half a dozen Shearl, watched over by a Fimm Warrior or Fianna Fimm. They tend not to travel more than a day's journey (there and back) from their settlement or campsite. The Shearl check and set traps and gather edible roots, plants and berries; the opportunities for real hunting are limited out in the marsh. Coastal Fimir go fishing, check lobster pots and scour rock-pools. Bog octopi and Dragon Turtles offer a challenge (as well as a tasty meal), so Fianna Fimm and Nobles accompany hunts if one of these has been sighted. Dirach do not usually go on these hunts, simple food gathering being beneath them. Hunting parties rarely venture close to Human settlements and roads, but if circumstances dictate that they must, Dirach will accompany the group to provide magical mist. Foraging and hunting parties avoid any non-Fimir they become aware of, sometimes lying on the ground, hiding in ditches, pools, or bushes to keep out of sight. Like scouting parties, if they are spotted and hunted they try to lead their pursuers in a direction away from their settlement and into danger if possible (treacherous marshes or the territory of hostile beasts).

Raiding Parties

A raiding party's purpose is kidnapping Humans and/or stealing whatever it can. As this inevitably brings Fimir into Human lands this is the group most likely to be encountered. The size of raiding party depends on the target. An assault on a fortified village might need a score or so of Fimm, a similar number of Shearl and several Fimm Nobles, whereas an attack on a stagecoach may only involve half a dozen Fimm led by a Noble. At least one Dirach is always involved, more for a village assault. Raiding parties travel quite widely, but rarely more than three to four weeks travel from their settlement.

Attacks on villages normally take place at night, the Fimir making full use of their night vision, though never on a new moon, when Fimul's eye is symbolically closed. If the village is on a river then they take advantage of it, swimming in or coming in and escaping with captives by boat. The Dirach summon their mist, allowing the Fimir to sneak up on any guards. Village dogs are always a problem, but the Fimir try using the poisonous form of their magic mist to kill the dogs before they start barking - there are stories of villages being found deserted of people, with dogs and other animals lying uninjured, but mysteriously dead. Dirach might also summon Daemonic hounds to seduce the dogs away from the village (see **A Fimir Bestiary** for more details). Once inside the village boundaries the Fimm burst into buildings and attack anyone who stands in their way, whilst the Shearl rush round stealing what they can and bundling-up women and children in nets and sacks before running away with their prizes. A common tactic is for two Shearl to stand either side of a doorway with a net between them to catch those who rush out to see what the commotion is. The Dirach are on hand to deal with any magical threat, most often in the form of the village priest, but they do not get embroiled in the hand-to-hand fighting unless circumstances force them. Frequently in such raids the Fimir are in and out before any effective resistance is forthcoming. The mist vanishes as quickly as it came, and men stumble bloody and bruised through their village to find their wives and daughters gone, the harvest stolen.

Attacks on travellers and stagecoaches can occur at any time of day or night. If there is no natural mist, magical mist is used to slow coaches and disorientate travellers on foot or horseback. Any horses are the Fimir's first targets, usually brought down by a hurled axe or club. This can cause coaches to tip over if the horses rear up violently, allowing the Fimir to rush in and attack the passengers as they emerge from the coach, dazed and shaken. A common tactic for dealing with groups of travellers on foot is to bring down the mist and charge clean through the group, shoving them aside and knocking them to the ground. This disorientates the victims even further and often separates them from one another, making it easier for the Fimir to pick them off one by one.

War Parties

This is the most dangerous group of Fimir anyone could encounter, arguably even worse than stumbling into a Fimir stronghold. A war party involves an entire clan led by the Meargh and backed-up by Daemons. On the incredibly rare occasions when two or more clans temporarily combine into one force, each Meargh leads her clan, but with the eldest of the Meargh acting as overall head of the combined army. War parties are, thankfully, very rare, but ruthlessly single-minded, determined and utterly brutal. Formed in response to sustained and damaging attacks by hostile forces, they have a clear message for their enemies: Leave us alone or die! Unlike raiding parties, a war party does not mess about with hit-and-run tactics. Their attacks are of unimaginable ferocity, brutality and thoroughness, wiping farmsteads, hamlets and villages from the face of the land. Given the risk of such actions to long-term Fimir survival prospects, by destroying and driving away their primary resources and drawing attention to themselves, war parties are not formed unless there is absolutely no other option in the face of extinction.

The only other time a war party is formed is to make an assault on another Fimir clan. Clans sometimes go to war over the simple issue of self-preservation when resources are desperately limited, over a major religious schism (see **Slaying the Father: Fimir Heresies in Memories of the Waterland**) or because a young Meargh has been kidnapped, but usually only after substantial negotiation has failed to resolve the matter. In these situations, the war only ends if one clan surrenders and agrees to move on, recant the heresy or return what was stolen. However, if the war began because a clan has turned to Chaos then it is a fight to the death. A corrupt clan may accept surrender in the unlikely event their opponents agree to turn to Chaos, but a bloodbath is the most likely outcome, with the losers being burnt to ashes afterwards (cremation being an abominable act to the Fimir). Clan-versus-clan conflicts are very private affairs and battles take place well-inside Fimir lands. No living outsider has ever witnessed or even heard about these clashes; as far as the rest of the world is concerned the Fimir are a homogenous group of monsters united in their evil. However, the oldest tellers of tales in the most remote villages of the Old World speak of nights when tremors ran through the earth and the far horizon glowed with coloured lightning.

Allies

It is not unusual to find Daemons and even water and earth elementals among Fimir war and raiding parties. Such entities are not summoned casually, but only when the Fimir genuinely need additional support, either because the enemy is too numerous or powerful or the Fimir too few. Daemons can act as troops or leaders depending on which sort has been summoned, but Daemonic hounds are the most commonly summoned Daemon for normal raiding purposes. Water

Death-Quests

The rarity of female offspring amongst the Fimir means it is not unknown for a Meargh to die with no successor, whether due to age, illness or conflict. If this happens and there are no other local clans to join then a spirit of utter desolation descends upon the clan: they have lost their link to Maris the Mother. Rather than look to the Dirach to fill the role of the Meargh, the clan fragments into different groups, each one following a Dirach and/or a Fimm Noble, which go their separate ways in search of a new Meargh. These groups are called Death-Quests, an indication of their slim chances of success. If they are lucky then the wanderers find and are accepted by a new Fimir clan - most clans are accommodating and new members are accepted with little difficulty. Other Death-Quests meet and fall in with a band of Orcs or Goblins. However, many simply wander, depressed and dispirited, until they either die of starvation or in battle. Such travellers are welcome targets for the corrupting hand of Chaos. They are also hideously dangerous to Humans, as they lose their self-control and do not turn back from fights. Some try to kidnap women in the violently desperate hope of fathering a new Meargh upon them. Sometimes one or more Fimir who severely displease the Meargh are exiled from the clan and forced out of Fimir territory; these Fimir are also said to be on Death-Quests. An exiled individual may survive and fall in with (or even recruit) others on his journey. They may become bandits or even return home for revenge.

One notable Death-Quest is that led by the Dirach Jassen. Most of Jassen's nomadic clan was lost at sea during a vicious storm sweeping down from Norsca over the Sea of Claws. Only a dozen or so Fimir survived; the clan's Meargh was amongst this few, but she died from her wounds shortly after they washed ashore. In the few days after her death, hunting parties of local Humans whittled down the remaining Fimir, and after fleeing into marshland the Fimm Noble was taken

down by a bog-dwelling Ogre who ambushed them. Only the strength of an oversized Shearl named Gungol and the remaining Fimm Warriors and Fianna Fimm stopped the Death-Quest ending right there, and the party fled before the Ogre's furious wife could catch them. When they were finally in a position of safety, Jassen took stock of the situation. He had lost the Fimm Noble, which he felt was to his advantage - fewer arguments. He had a quite bright Fianna Fimm (Brent), an able Fimm Warrior (Fantor) and three Shearl (the huge Gungol, Quinno the craftsman and the lean and dextrous Tinol), as well as his Daemonfriend Deeeef, the Sound in the Night. More importantly, Jassen had an idea: instead of trying to locate a new Meargh, the Death-Quest would seek out the legendary Wandering Island of the Fimir race. Intelligent and persuasive, Jassen convinced the others that trying to locate the island of Maris herself was possible. The idea of a Great Quest appealed to the two Fimm, and the Shearl were carried along with the enthusiasm of the senior castes.

Jassen's strategy for locating the Wandering Island was challenging, and involved learning as much about the island as possible. It required the knowledge of outsiders, and over the years, the party has kidnapped storytellers and travellers, and demanded tales and rumours from them in return for freedom. Jassen and Tinol have even bravely ventured into towns to steal a few books and artefacts that Deeeef thinks might offer some insight into finding the island. Under cover of a long and hooded cloak, Jassen has dared speaking to Human wizards and scholars in their own homes, often giving some Daemonic insight as payment for their hospitality.

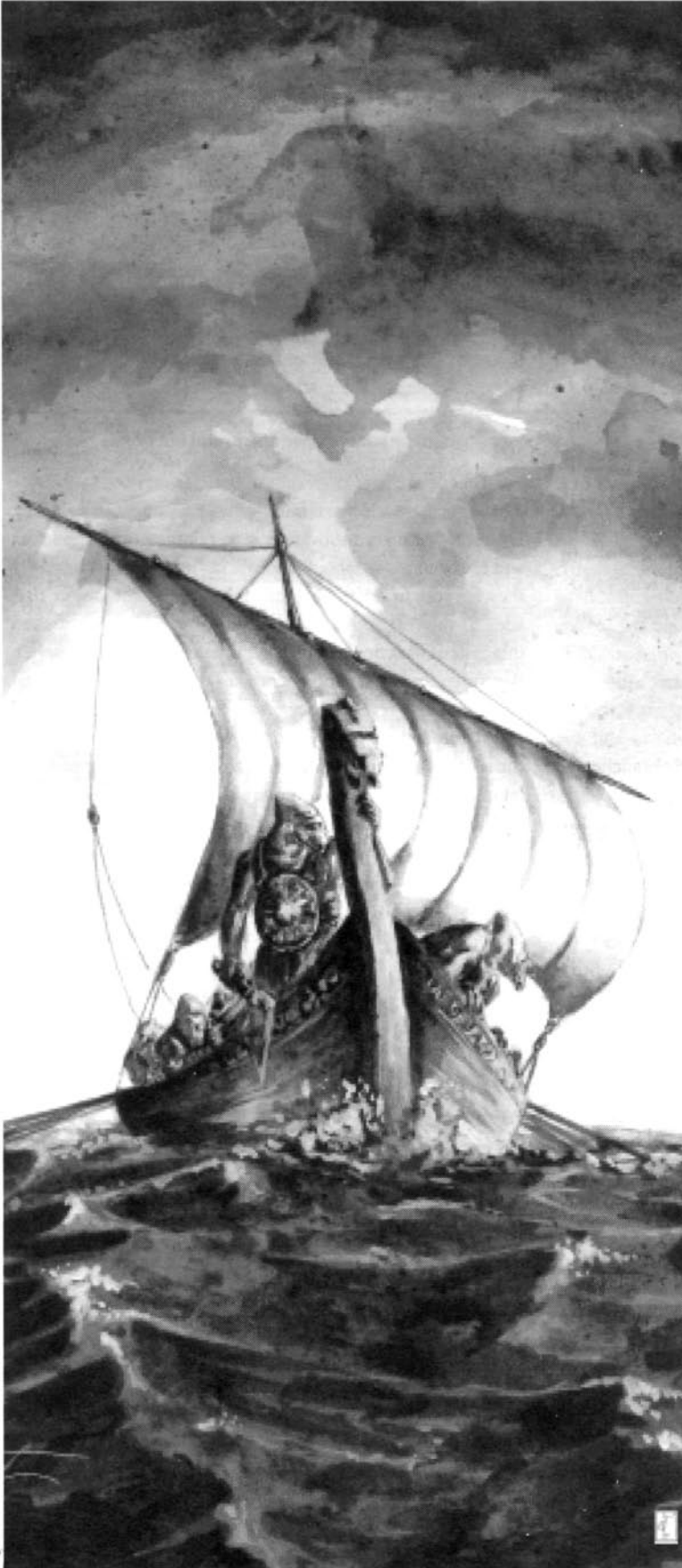
The party has avoided committing acts of excessive violence to minimise any attention they might draw to their actions. Jassen is intelligent and cunning, backed up with a loyal, cautious and able group of Fimir. His passion for the quest has buoyed the group, staving off the terrible depression that might otherwise destroy them.

elementals are summoned to hasten the speed of Fimir ships at sea or on rivers, or to crash against the hulls of enemy ships. Earth elementals assist in ripping apart the earthworks and stockades surrounding villages. Daemons and elementals are often summoned if the Fimir anticipate their enemies having magical abilities which the Dirach or Meargh cannot match. Inter-clan warfare almost always involves Daemons and elementals, leading to spectacular battles as these magical powers collide. Daemons and Fimir fight shoulder to shoulder, whilst above them winged Daemons clash and beneath them the ground shakes and splits apart, and geysers of mud erupt as earth and water elementals try to annihilate one another. The dark power of necromancy is also within the abilities of some Meargh. The summoned dead are typically bog bodies, the corpses of Humans and Fimir sacrificed and put into the marsh centuries ago. After countless years, their preserved

bodies are horribly twisted and stained dark orange-brown from the peat. On the coast, the bloated, fishy corpses of sacrificial victims stumble dripping from the depths to fight for the Fimir. The Daemons, elementals and undead of the Fimir are discussed in detail in **In the Hands of the Father, Mother's Magic** and **A Fimir Bestiary** below. Fimir sometimes form alliances with the Goblinoid races, as well as Ogres and Trolls.

Mist on the Water

A notable number of Fimir colonies are found on the coastlines of the northern Empire, the Wasteland, and as far afield as Norsca and Kislev, in addition to estuaries and rivers further inland. They are able swimmers and live among the marshes in the mist. Clearly, the Fimir have a strong affinity for water, so it is hardly surprising then that they build vessels - black low-



hulled longboats - in which they take to the sea and remote rivers in the north of the Empire, even onto the Reik itself if you believe the stories of some old rivermen.

Fimir Longboats

The Fimir ships have a near-mythical status amongst the sailors and rivermen of the Old World. Since they are normally shrouded in thick sea fog, few Old Worlders have ever had a clear look at one. At sea, sailors are rarely aware of a Fimir ship until it glides suddenly and silently out of the mist and sometimes not even until the longboat crashes violently into the side of its victim. In the subsequent confusion, the sailors rarely get a good look at the longboat; they are too busy fighting for their lives. This fact, added to sailors' natural talent for telling great tales of the sea (and their liking for the odd jug of rum), gives rise to some wild and bizarre stories of Daemon ships devouring all in their paths. Serious scholars examining more sober reports believe Fimir boats are similar to the longships of the Norsemen, but made of a hard black wood. Men, with the usual arrogance of men, assume the Fimir stole the design and even the ships from the Norse.

The image of a black longboat is an accurate one, but the size varies considerably. Fimir living near smaller rivers tend to travel in smaller craft, whereas the coastal and estuary Fimir often have much larger boats as well as smaller ones. The small boats for travelling inland or for fishing at sea range from one or two-Fimir rowing boats to those carrying six to a dozen Fimir; the largest ships used in coastal raiding and piracy can take maybe two dozen or more armed Fimm in addition to a similar number of Shearl oarsmen. The size and number of ships available to a clan usually depends on the number of Fimir in the clan and the size of the local waterways. Shearl rowers often propel longboats, but all large ships and many smaller ones have collapsible masts with square black sails. Ships containing bound Daemons such as Morga (see **A Fimir Bestiary**) do exist, but are exceedingly rare; they are fast and strong and used exclusively at sea. Ship design is very simple, with no shelter or cover on deck (sometimes a tent is erected for the Meargh), but with storage space under removable deck planks for fish, stolen

goods or captives. Decoration is rare and usually limited to the forward prow carved in the image of a Daemon, such as the Daemon Prince Lisaart.

Encounters with Fimir longboats invariably occur in fog, natural or magical. If the Fimir are quietly going about their business then glimpses of their ship may be seen through the fog before it disappears completely and at night even creatures with Night Vision probably wouldn't even notice it. When the Fimir are on the offensive, their ship will seemingly burst from the fog to ram the side of the target ship - this is their standard tactic. The wood they use is extraordinarily strong and larger Fimir ships can do serious damage on impact (see **Fimir Wood**). Fimm warriors swarm over the side of the stricken ship and

begin the assault. Fearful sailors who jump into the water are caught and dragged from it by Shearl with nets. There is rarely any advance warning of such an attack, although those with keen, sensitive hearing like Elves might hear faint splashing as the oars skim the water, but the direction the sound is coming from is hard to determine.

A Dirach usually accompanies voyages to provide fog cover; Dirach or Fimm Nobles may also go along as navigators or river pilots, especially on scouting expeditions and voyages of some distance. Fishing trips and short journeys on foggy days do not usually merit the presence of a Dirach. In battles on the scale described in **War Parties** above, the Meargh takes her usual role as leader, admiral to her Dirach captains.

Fimir Wood

The hard black wood the Fimir use to build their longboats, and sometimes the towers of the Meargh, is not natural. It is cut from the body of a highly unusual Daemon Prince, part of which the Meargh and her Dirach can summon with a lengthy ritual (see below for details). The Fimir call this Daemon Prince *Firest*, although this is not its true name; the Fimir do not share that with outsiders.

Dense forests can be terrible, frightening places. For many thousands of people in the Old World, forests are forbidding and secretive, hiding monsters in their shadows and even greater terrors in their tight tangle of black branches and leaves; there are ancient parts of some forests that inspire fear in Wood Elves, Zoats and Treemen. From this cumulative fear of unknown woodland depths *Firest* is born, a living, intelligent self-aware and thoroughly Daemonic *place*. There is nothing remotely anthropoid about this Daemon Prince; it is literally a forest, filled with trees and birds and animals, as well as more horrible things.

The effect of the Fimir summoning ritual is to draw a part of *Firest* into the real world, where it appears initially as a very ancient piece of forest or woodland: dense, dark and very overgrown. Sunlight all but vanishes after one ventures more than a few yards into it, but deeper within is where the Fimir go to cut down the black trees for the wood to construct their hardy longboats. On foot it is possible to walk around *Firest's* edge within a day, but attempting to pass directly through it is virtually impossible, not merely because of the dense tangle, dells and hollows, but because internally *Firest* borders on the infinite.

Depending on the construction project in mind and the size of the clan, it may take them a week of constant work to fell enough trees and drag them into the light. Eventually, *Firest* succumbs to instability, periodically fading and flickering until it suddenly blinks out of the real world. Those still present within its boundaries when it goes vanish with it. The harvested wood that has been dragged out, however, is not subject to instability (although GMs may wish to play with the idea of

longboats and their crew shifting in and out of the real world in a ghostly fashion).

The Fimir have a long-standing arrangement with *Firest*. The Daemon's primary motivation is to continue to inspire fear and terror in those who encounter it. In return for the wood they harvest from it, the Fimir give *Firest* some object that adds to the fear and terror it can inspire. Common gifts are things like Giant Spiders (difficult to catch, but it can be done), Beastmen and other monsters like Manticores - traditional terrors of the forest. They also provide victims for *Firest's* entertainment, something to play with when it is away from the world. Any number of small children are kidnapped and left in its depths to fend for themselves, as well as adults, city-dwellers and country folk alike. Evil types, such as bandits and witches, are drawn to it, and often disappear within. All those who enter it, even the Fimir, are subject to *Firest's* terror games. These can range from unsettling whispering or rustling in the undergrowth and glimpses of figures lurking behind trees to simple attacks by forest beasts. *Firest* also creates more elaborate scenarios involving the various creatures and intelligent races it has trapped within its boundaries, often using the promise of freedom or the temptation of hidden secrets as motivating factors.

For the Fimir, interaction with *Firest* carries some risk, but less than for most creatures and the advantages of the black wood more than makes up for it. Summoning *Firest* requires a lengthy ritual, taking from one to several hours depending on the quantity of black wood the Fimir need - wood for a small longboat may need a hour-long ritual, wood for a large warship or a Meargh's tower may need a ritual lasting up to seven or more. See, **Heroes of the Fimir** for details on the ritual.

Usually, *Firest* is summoned close to an existing, natural forest so its arrival is less obvious. However, coastal Fimir, for obvious reasons, tend to summon *Firest* more than other clans do. Consequently, there are all sorts of sailors' legends and tales about strange forests mysteriously growing overnight or flickering into existence on lonely shores where no tree grew before.

RUINOUS INHERITANCE

Much of Fimir social behaviour and other activity is based on the stories describing the origin of their race. The Fimir understand and explain their physical and magical natures through these same stories. They represent their primary belief system, which almost entirely controls their way of life. The following sections describe Fimir origin beliefs that have previously been mentioned, but in more detail, showing their place and practical uses within Fimir culture.

Memories of the Waterland

The Fimir do not rely on a written theology, but an oral one told and retold over thousands of years. It is complex and variable, distorted by time, teller and circumstance. The many stories and different versions thereof have also become training tools. Few Meargh or Dirach tell the same story in precisely the same way, but the stories telling the origin of the Fimir race can be broadly divided into six phases, describing a summoning, a courtship, a chase, a birth, a murder and an exile. These phases are described below, but we are dealing with the generalities and not the specifics. GMs should feel free to expand and modify them depending on their needs and whatever point a particular Fimir storyteller is trying to make. Do not expect everything here to make perfect sense, to fall neatly into place or to be free of apparent contradictions. This is religion, and on that score the Fimir are as much like Humans as they are not like Humans.

The Summoning

The mother of the Fimir race was a Human woman named Maris. The Fimir call her a princess and a witch, and in their eyes the latter is as regal as the former. She lived in a place called the Waterland, a mighty river delta leading to misty seas, and resided in a magnificent gleaming white tower that stood amongst many others. As witch and princess, Maris was an adviser, leader and protector of her people, casting her spells, scrying the future and working with Daemons and elementals to ensure the safety and prosperity of her people. It was a role commanding both respect and fear, but mostly respect, from both her peers and those beneath her. However, the Fimir stories say Maris was also lonely and isolated by her position. Few Human men could match her power and knowledge, and those few who were worthy looked upon her only physically or as a tool they might use to serve their own purposes. Because of this, Maris turned elsewhere for love.

Although interaction between men and Daemons was not unusual in the Waterland, Daemons were seen as little more than powerful servants to be summoned and commanded and then dispelled. Maris, however, had long seen them as far more than that. Daemons were her best friends and companions, far more interesting, knowledgeable and imaginative than most of her own race, though being a practical woman she frequently put them to work to aid her people. Whilst many Daemons were naturally contrary and unpredictable, others were sure and constant in their natures and devotions, as befitted their particular natures. Men, on the other hand, could be contrary *and* constant according to their needs and desires, far too much like Chaos and its reviled Daemons for Maris' liking. With this thought in her mind, Maris sought a lover from the world of Daemons, one who could fulfil her in mind, body and spirit, one whom she could rely upon to be unchanging.

The stories are unclear how Fimúl came to Maris' attention and precisely why she deemed him suited to her needs. He may have made himself known to her, either directly or through Daemons under his command. Maris may have discovered his true name via scrying or in written texts. Or, she may have been a follower of or had respect for the god whom Fimúl ultimately served and discovered Fimúl to be a Daemon held high in that god's regard. Whatever the case, on discovering Fimúl's true name, Maris prepared and secluded herself in the highest room of her tower to summon him into her presence, although some insist the summoning took place in the lonely marshes of the Waterland rather than high above them. The ritual took a full lunar phase, from new moon to full, during which time Fimúl opened his eye and awoke to Maris' calling. Curiosity, or desire, or the mystic connectedness of earth and water drew him to accept that call.

These tales are told in different ways for different audiences. Versions told to the whole clan focus on the nature and beauty of the Waterland and of Maris herself. Her rejection of men in favour of Daemons is important, but her ongoing sense of responsibility and duty to her position is made clear. The importance of Maris to her people's well-being is always emphasised by Meargh, as is their deep respect for and obedience to her. Stories of Maris' role in her society and her summoning of Fimúl are used by Meargh to teach apprentices about their own role in Fimir society and to train them in the

practical aspects of magic and Daemon summoning. Apprentice Meargh and Dirach learn most of the true names and natures of Daemons that are known to the Fimir through stories in which Maris considers their suitability as lovers.

The Courtship

The Fimir are more prudish than one might imagine and they do not dwell too long on Maris and Fimúl's courtship. It would seem from the tales that an awful lot of talking and discussion went on, especially regarding the beauty of the Waterland and the elements of earth and water, which the couple, of course, represented. However, this sequence of stories is as close as the Fimir get to being poetic. That said, the Shearl and Fimm are frequently bored by these stories, which are most often referred to by Meargh, their apprentices and Dirach during more metaphysical discussions of elementalism. Nevertheless, the elemental kinship between Maris and Fimúl and their respective elements are used to reassure the lower castes when faced with terrible storms at sea, rockfalls or mudslides, and are referred to when Fimir are sacrificed into the marsh or sea.

Perhaps most interestingly, at least to scholars and magicians, encoded within these stories is a staggering amount of elemental lore pertaining to earth and water as well as spell-related information. Sailors and miners may also find useful knowledge within them if they are prepared to listen - experienced Shearl use versions of these stories to teach younger ones the skills of mining, fishing, sailing and metalwork.

The Chase


As described in the courtship stories, Maris and Fimúl remained in her tower's upper chambers for many days, but she never neglected her role as magical protector of her people, sending out Daemons to aid, repair and protect. Self-imposed isolation was not unusual for witch-princesses, especially Maris, but there came a time when the men of the Waterland began to wonder why she remained hidden from them for so long. At first they sent messengers asking trivial questions about her well-being,

which Maris ignored because she had more important things to do. Then they sent messengers bringing requests and petitions, which Maris consented to hear whilst Fimúl was out of sight, but declined to fulfil, not because she was lazy or disrespectful of her responsibility, but because the time was not right to perform such magic, or because the requests were foolish, or had no purpose. Others were requests for aid in tasks that could be fulfilled easily by the men themselves, and she accused them of laziness. This part of the tale is heavily emphasised, as they remind all castes that Maris does not want her children to become lazy and use Daemons needlessly just because they can. Then they sent messengers issuing summons to meet her peers, which Maris angrily and

defiantly rejected, demanding to know who had the right to summon her like a Daemon or elemental.

The arrogant men of the Waterland would not accept that Maris would wish to shut herself away from them, even though she continued to perform the important duties expected of her position. When the moon was hidden (by cloud or a new moon depending on the story) the men of the Waterland broke





into Maris' tower as a mob to discover what she was doing. It was then, high in the spire of Maris tower, that she and Fimúl were discovered together. The ignorant, arrogant men of the Waterland were disgusted and horrified that Maris had taken a Daemon lover, and affronted because she had rejected them. Their outrage was countered by a furious Maris, who justified her right to find a worthy lover of her own choice, but when the men pressed the matter, Maris struck one down and spread his blood across the floor.

The ensuing battle between Maris and the men of the Waterland is one of the most important and rousing tales of the Fimir origin and has been told and retold many times to much whooping and cheering, and it serves to prepare the Fimir for battle. In it, Maris is depicted as much a warrior as a witch, increasing her importance in the eyes of the Fimm castes. Fimúl appears to take little direct part in the fighting, but at the same time he remains there to support Maris with magic and so is not seen in a negative light – his limited role here is just another part of the mystery of Fimúl. However, no matter how excitingly or bravely Maris fights, there comes a point in the tale when the men of the Waterland become too many and Maris and Fimúl are forced to flee her tower out to the Waterland and beyond.

The chase sequence contains more stories and parables than any other (GMs should feel free to run riot). There are stories to inspire fear, joy and hope, as well as to teach Shearl and Fimm the practical skills of stealth, hiding and trap-making, and numerous other survival skills the couple may have demonstrated during their flight. Certain men of the Waterland become stronger individual characters within the chase stories, providing specific hate-figures for the audience, but there is relatively little continuity between clans in this aspect - individual Humans with whom modern Fimir become entangled are sometimes compared directly with these characters, either becoming characters in stories themselves or being seen as embodiments of those characters. It is also in these tales that hints of a non-Human former lover of Maris can be found. Jealous of Maris' love for Fimúl, he stalks and hinders them as they flee through deep forest, either slowing them or secretly guiding the pursuing men of the Waterland. Not all Fimir have this character in their stories, but those who do are often fearful of deep forests and those who inhabit them such as the Wood Elves. However, they take comfort from the fact the jealous figure is wary of approaching Fimúl too closely, as they are either known or linked to one another in some way, and Fimúl is by far the most knowledgeable and powerful of the two.

The Birth

Although the chase sequence suggests Maris and Fimúl were on the run for many years, the men of the Waterland eventually caught up with them because Maris became pregnant. For the Fimir this story brings both great joy and terrible despair. Maris'

heavy pregnancy slowed the couple's pace allowing their pursuers to close the distance. Despite Maris' great strength of will and Fimúl's support, there came a point when neither of them was able to run any longer and they were forced to rest. When the sun was at its highest, the men of the Waterland came with clubs and chains. Both Maris and Fimúl were taken prisoner and brought back to the Waterland, where they were imprisoned separately while the men of the Waterland wondered what to do with them. The pregnant witch-princess was imprisoned in relative comfort - this she demanded as befitting her noble status and condition and it was given to her, as the men were still fearful of her anger. Maris demanded Fimúl be given the same treatment and the men of the Waterland promised it would be done, but they lied. Fimúl was hidden in the deepest, vilest dungeon they could find.

In time, Maris gave birth to three healthy sons. One was very clever, one was very strong and one was very loyal and helpful. Her children delighted Maris, but the men of the Waterland were horrified and disgusted, and named Maris the Mother of Monsters. They covered their fear with cruel sneering, deriding the sons' single eyes and stepping on their tails. They desperately wanted to kill the sons, but, as ever, were fearful of Maris, and so insisted her children be sent away, exiled from their mother and the sacred Waterland. To this, Maris very reluctantly consented, knowing that eventually the men's anger and hate would overcome their fear and her sons would be murdered. Before they were taken from her, Maris gave each one a gift. To one she gave a great staff-wand so that he could learn how to contact his Daemon cousins. To another she gave a bowl-like shield with which he could protect his belly when he fought his enemies. To the last son, she gave a hammer so that he could protect and build wherever he went. The children of Maris and Fimúl fled the Waterland, feeling the jeers and sticks of the men as they went.

These are predominantly tales of woe, but as usual they provide knowledge and social education. The three sons of Maris highlight the three male castes of the Fimir; their birth and the gifts Maris gives them strengthen their ties to her, reminding them of their expected duties. Additionally, oddly detailed descriptions of the birth are actually training guides to midwifery.

The Murder

As Maris predicted, the men of the Waterland soon overcame their fear of her anger, but not before her sons had been safely exiled from the Waterland. The frustrated men turned their anger and hatred towards Fimúl and decided he should be punished, although he had clearly committed no crime except daring to love a Human woman, who in turn loved him. They bound him, took him out into the marshy depths of the Waterland, and murdered him, throwing his body into the earthy waters.

The Tale of the Sons of Maris and the Mother's Exile

Hear me, children of the Earth and Water, sons of Maris the River Princess and Fimúl the Mud God: the tale of the Wandering Island and our Mother's exile.

After the sons of Maris had been driven from the Waterland, they wandered the world for seven years, seeking a home where they and their mother could live in peace. But wherever they went they were met by hatred, and they were forced further and further from the lands of the Sunlight Folk.

At the end of that time they agreed to go their separate ways, each to seek a home in a different place. The eldest son travelled inland, searching for remote watery lands amidst the earth of the world, where the Fimir could be far from the Sunlight folk. The middle son travelled to the coast, hoping to find a secret harbour where earth and water met, where the Sunlight Folk would never discover them. The youngest set sail into the great empty sea, looking for islands of earth amidst the water, where the Sunlight Folk would never dream of coming.

In time each of them found the place he sought: a great and misty marshland, a hidden estuary, and an island far from the coast. And each sent a message to Maris as she languished in the prisons of the Waterland, inviting her to come share his home. It was thus that our Mother's exile began.

Maris travelled first to the lands of her eldest son, and remained there for seven years, bearing him three sons and a daughter. But at the end of that time she tired of the poison mists, the barren landscape and the endless grey rain, and she decided to travel onwards.

She went next to the lands of her middle son, an inaccessible harbour at the mouth of a slow river. And she remained

there for seven years, bearing him three sons and a daughter. But at the end of that time, she tired of the estuary mud, of living on fish and flotsam and of the salt-tasting air, and she decided to travel onwards.

She rode the waters to the island kingdom of her youngest son, a dark and rocky fortress jutting from the sea, crowned with a castle of shining black rock. And remained there for seven years, bearing him three sons and a daughter. But at the end of that time she tired of the terrible loneliness of the place, and she went to her son and said, "The years I have spent in your proud and terrible kingdom have been the happiest since I left my home, but I cannot abandon my other children. This island shall become my ship when I visit them, and by Earth and Water and Fimúl my lover who intercedes with them, it shall pass without trace through sea and land. And this castle, which shall be everywhere, will be the capital of my children's lands; and you, my favoured child, shall be King above all others except me and my daughters and daughter's daughters, until at last the ship reaches the misty harbours of the Waterland."

And since that time, the Wandering Island has roamed the coasts and rivers of the world, appearing where it may carry the word of the King and of our Mother the River Princess to all the Fimir, and, when the time comes, to bring us tidings of our long journey home.

We are hunters and hunted, exiled like our Mother from the nations which gave us birth. This is how it will ever be for the children of Fimúl, until Maris, mother of the People, claims her throne in the Waterland and makes for us a harbour, where the Wanderers can rest and the Fimir live in peace.

The Murder of Fimúl is probably the most consistent of all the stories told by the Fimir, showing little variation between clans, even ones spread as far apart as the fens of Albion and the icy coasts of Kislev. The reason for this is probably that the Fimir re-enact the story every full moon. With the exception of this important detail, every clan faithfully recreates the sequence of events in Fimúl's murder (described below in **Sacrificial Rites** and the accompanying text box, **The Tale of Fimúl's Murder**).

The Exile

The stories of the exile of Maris' three sons and of her subsequent self-imposed exile are similar to the chase sequence of tales in that they are many and varied, and frequently full of adventures, trials and challenges. Like those stories, they teach the Fimir practical skills, but much more importantly they teach the Fimir about their place in the world and why they must live as they do. The tale of *How the Second Son Became Three*, a story explaining the origins of the three Fimm sub-castes, is also part of this group. Perhaps most importantly, it

is here the legendary Wandering Island of the Fimir first appears. The island represents a sort of heaven for them, although a heaven not necessarily connected with an afterlife.

Once again, GMs have the opportunity to create specific tales relevant to their own campaigns. However, the accompanying text box, **The Tale of the Sons of Maris and the Mother's Exile**, provides an example of the most important cultural themes and issues within these stories. One interesting feature of this tale is the suggestion that the Wandering Island represents a third, lost branch of the Fimir, the other two being the Fimir of coast and swamp respectively. The reality of the island Fimir and the Wandering Island in particular remain a matter of conjecture, but the Wandering Island has acquired a more mystical meaning in Fimir culture, perhaps unsurprisingly considering its apparent mobility. This is discussed below.

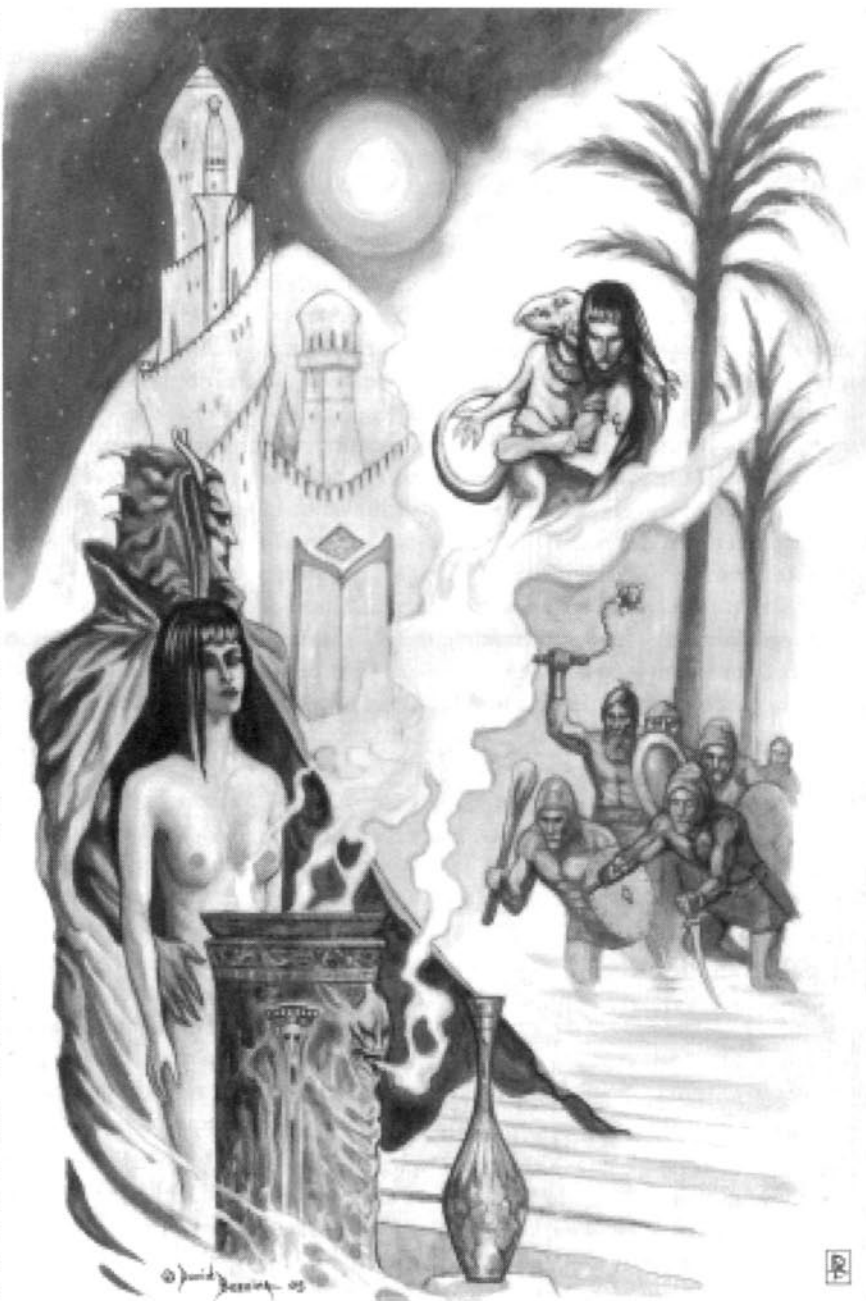
More Tales of the River Bank

Whilst the numerous stories telling the origin of the Fimir comprise the bulk of the Fimir oral tradition, they also have a

number of other stories to tell. The *Deeds of Balor* - stories of Balor's adventures as a mortal Fimir - forms a significant group in itself (Balor's binding of the Daemon Prince Lisaart is mentioned below). They also have several stories involving Gnomes and Halflings, the activities of which seem to amuse the Fimir no end (*Mother Manx and the Gnome*, detailing exchanges between a Meargh's Daemons and a Gnome illusionist's deceipts, is a favourite). Tales of Fimir loss and suffering are common. Ghost stories are also popular, especially with the Shearl, and these deal with the natural fears of the Fimir. For example, the ghost of the Fimir who was (supposedly) burnt to a crisp when caught out in the sun and who comes back looking for somewhere dark to hide is a classic, as well as ghostly Death-Quests that lure away apprentice Meargh to ghostly netherworlds to become their new leader.

Sacrificial Rites

Blood sacrifice of living Humans is a major part of Fimir life and sacrificial ceremonies are performed once every month when Mannslieb is full. These are whole-clan events, involving much singing and chanting, led by the Meargh and her Dirach. Various Daemons are summoned to watch, sometimes including a Daemon of Solkan (see **The Fimir and Law**). The ceremony is full of symbolism for the Fimir and is a re-enactment of the murder of Fimúl the Mud God by the jealous men of the Waterland. Fimir legend describes how Fimúl was bound with his hands behind his back and taken out into the Waterland, led by a rope around his neck. At the water's edge, Fimúl was stunned by a blow struck across the back of his head with a club and had the rope around his neck tightened, choking him. After this, Fimúl's throat was cut with a knife and his body thrown into the waters of the marsh where it sank forever. This sequence of events is recreated with a captive, preferably a Human male, but it may be a male of another humanoid of any other race if there is no other choice. If a suitable captive is unavailable an old Fimir, probably a Shearl, invariably volunteers to play the role of Fimúl - this is



considered a great honour. Females, Human or otherwise, are *never* acceptable for this particular ritual sacrifice, under any circumstances.

Representatives of each caste play a role in the ceremony. Shearl give the victim his final meal earlier in the evening. Fimm (Warriors or Fianna) bind the captive's hands, place a noose-leash around his neck and escort him to the edge of the water where the rest of the clan has gathered; they retain hold of the captive until the end. A Fimm Noble strikes the captive a blow across the back of the head; a Fimm holds the victim upright. A Dirach then tightens the noose around the captive's neck. Finally, the Meargh herself draws a sharp blade, slices the captive's throat, and anoints the front of her skirt below her

waist with fresh blood. Finally, the Fimm who have been holding the captive push or throw the corpse into the water. The whole ceremony is conducted with a calm, controlled dignity in silence or with low rhythmic chanting; only the victim raves or screams; his cries are limited by the rope choking him and then suddenly cut short when he is hit across the head.

This monthly sacrifice under the full moon serves two purposes. Firstly, it honours the memory of Fimúl at the time when he is believed to be most watchful of his children (the full moon representing his open eye). Secondly, it represents an act of revenge against Humanity for what the men of the Waterland did to Fimúl. Despite the brutality and symbolic vengeance of the ritual, it is conducted in a solemn, dignified manner, with no sense of excitement. Outsiders, especially those who've had the misfortune to witness sacrificial rites by the followers of Chaos, are likely to be confused or perhaps more greatly horrified by the apparent lack of passion and enthusiasm shown by the Fimir. Although the Fimir consider this monthly sacrifice hugely important, they cannot find much joy in it. The memory of Fimúl's ancient murder is a bitterly sad one for them, and they know the deaths of a few Humans can never bring him

The Tale of Fimúl's Murder

Hear me now as I remind you, children of the soil and rain, of the terrible tale of the Father's death at the cruel hands of the men of the Waterland.

The men of the Waterland were jealous of the love Maris had shown to Fimúl, and hated him for it. The men came together as one and bound our Father and tied a rope around his neck, and led him out into the desolate places of the Waterland. Where the earth was mossy and sodden they brought him, and at the edge of the water they beat his head with sticks and stones until he almost forgot who he was and almost forgot whom he loved and almost forgot his dear children. But even as he sought to remember these things, the men of the Waterland tightened the rope around his neck so he could not shout the names of those he most cared for. Not satisfied with this cruelty, the men of the Waterland drew a blade and slashed Fimúl's throat from side to side so that his blood poured onto the earth and into the water. Finally, they took his body and heaved it into the mud of the Waterland, too foolish and too unthinking to know how fitting a place it was for Fimúl's body to lie. There the Father sank into the earthy waters and rested.

We are the children of Fimúl, and of Maris, and we shall not forget our Father or the cruelty done unto him by the men of the Waterland. Our remembrance of him will heal him and strengthen him, and in time he will return to us. Be glad, for he may already have returned to Maris the Mother, ruling with her in her castle on the Wandering Island where one day we shall all live together.

back to them (although some Fimir storytellers optimistically suggest otherwise - see the conclusion of **The Tale of Fimúl's Murder**).

Perhaps surprisingly, sacrifices are rarely ever made to Maris. One rare exception is when an old Meargh decides it is time for her apprentice to take over from her (all but a tiny few Meargh however, prefer to drop dead of old age first). This sacrifice is very different from the one described above. The whole clan, probably Daemons and elementals (especially water elementals) and possibly Meargh or their representatives from other clans all assemble on the night of a half moon, when Maris and Fimúl are considered equally watchful. The rite is a very simple one, carried out in silence or with a low, murmured chant. The Meargh to die is led out into the marsh, or the waters of a lake, river or sea, by her apprentice. The Meargh turns to her clan and those others assembled (who cease their chant) and says her farewell and tells a story of Maris and Fimúl that seems relevant to her at that point. Then, the Meargh lies down in the water and her apprentice holds her under until she drowns. The apprentice, now Meargh of her clan, orders a short period of silent reflection, before initiating celebratory death rites for the drowned Meargh.

Death Rites

Although not sacrifices in the usual sense, Fimir death rites share some similarities with the monthly sacrifice, specifically that they are whole-clan events, involve putting the body into the marsh or water and Daemons are likely to be invited to attend. The deceased's body, however it died, is viewed as an offering of sorts to Maris and Fimúl; 'gone to Maris' or 'gone to Fimúl' are common Fimir euphemism for death, as are 'gone into the marsh' or 'gone to sea'. Bodies are wrapped in the best available materials and put into the water swiftly but with reverence. Even if the clan is short of resources, Fimm with armour and weapons take them with them, and the same is true for the sacrificial blades of the Dirach and Meargh. Shear craftsmen are sent with the tools of their trade. Most Fimir believe the dead go to be with Maris and Fimúl, but only a few believe strongly in the idea of the Wandering Island as a Fimir heaven.

Despite their often morose or dour natures, Fimir prefer to celebrate the deceased's life rather than mourn its passing (this might seem normal for us, but it is not yet a fashionable idea for most Older Worlders still influenced by the imagery of Mórr and his priests). It is an opportunity for storytelling, and the more significant the individual within the clan, the longer the rites can go on - death rites for a Meargh can last for days, led by the new Meargh and even attended by other Meargh, especially ones who had dealings with the departed in life. Even a Shear's passage into the marsh can last the night if he had acquired a reputation.

Magical Sacrifices

In addition to religious sacrificial rites, sacrifices are sometimes performed as part of magical workings. Whilst spell ingredients are not essential, sacrifice of intelligent living creatures can boost the chances of a spell succeeding and may be essential components for specific rituals. Sacrifices during spell casting are quick and simple, with minimal ritual. A bound victim is swiftly killed with a large sacrificial dagger, throat cut or stabbed up under the sternum into the heart.

Punishment Sacrifices

Fimir who commit the severest of crimes, such as attacking the Meargh, advocating certain heresies, betraying their clan or worshipping Chaos, become victims of another ancient sacrificial rite: burning alive at the stake. Even the bodies of such criminals already dead are burnt in this fashion. Burnings are typically conducted as far away from water as the Fimir can reasonably travel, preferably on a rocky outcrop. Burning, distance from water and moonless nights are key ritual elements. The purpose of punishment sacrifices is to symbolically sever any link between the Fimir being punished and the element of water, and with it any connection to the Waterland and Maris. With the absence of a moon, Fimúl the father, too, turns away from the criminal. Sometimes, especially despised criminals (such as those who have turned to Chaos) are taken into deep caves, mines or abandoned underground strongholds to be burnt where even rainwater cannot touch their ashes.

Such sacrifices are rare and lack the formality of the monthly Fimir sacrifices remembering Fimúl the Father. The criminal is brought, usually bound at the wrists, to the place of execution and tied to a stake. If a convenient tree is available, the criminal is tied to it (some large, tough trees that can survive the flames have been used several times down the centuries, giving rise to local legends). Firewood and dried grasses are piled up around the criminal and set on fire. Usually the burning is conducted and observed by a small party of Fimir and a Dirach, but if it is a Dirach who is being punished then all the clan's Dirach and possibly the Meargh attend, just in case the victim's magical abilities or Daemonic friends cause trouble.

Given these executions usually take place away from Fimir lands (which are usually too close to water) they may be witnessed by non-Fimir. A strange fire might be seen one night atop a distant hill and prompt an investigation. Or a party of travellers could come across the burnt, blackened remains of several strange skeletons. Or some adventurers might even encounter a burning just about to take place and decide to rescue the apparent victim, little suspecting those Fimir with the flaming torches were probably about to do the world a favour.

Slaying the Father: Fimir Heresies

As with any belief system, there are those who interpret those beliefs differently or tell variations and additional stories

shedding a different light on events and individuals in them. Very, very few Fimir reject their myths altogether: even the few that turn to Chaos are able to reinterpret the myths to incorporate the Chaos powers. For example, Fimúl the Mud God is easily presented as a Daemon prince of Nurgle, or Maris as a servant of Slaanesh who summoned Fimúl to satisfy her dark lusts. However, those particular ideas are abominable enough to drive other Fimir to war with the heretics, who will be lucky if they are simply slaughtered and burnt. On the other hand, there are heresies that are tolerated to a greater or lesser extent by different clans, beliefs that may be held personally and privately by individual Meargh and Dirach, or discussed during theological discussion, or adopted by whole clans. Most Fimir may frown on these ideas and reject them, but they rarely lead to anything more than a war of words.

One unusual heresy concerns the nature of the race's father, Fimúl. Some Fimir clans believe he was a servant of a good god, an angel who dared to fall in love with a Human. The result of this doomed relationship was the Fimir, a race of monsters consumed with a self-loathing that soon twisted into a hatred for all others. For this crime, Fimúl fell from favour with his god, who cast him out. Fimúl fell into the marsh and sank without trace, seeking to hide his shame. For this reason, the Fimir have always sought to hide themselves from the sight of others in places where they can be close to their father. Some Fimir who believe this to be a truer account of their race's origin believe it is possible for them to redeem their father in the eyes of his god by rejecting evil and performing acts of good. Of course, they are severely hampered by their physical ugliness in the eyes of other races, their terrible reputation and appalling need to abduct and rape women to ensure their race's survival. Unsurprisingly, it is rare for a clan to choose this path, and it typically results in bitter disappointment if not disaster. These clans usually have to be content with treating their captives as best they can under the circumstances, and performing the odd good deed in secret, such as guiding lost travellers out of the marsh by scaring them away from danger. Individual Dirach who truly believe they can bring their father redemption have been known to leave their clans and travel into Human lands seeking to do good wherever they can. Martyrdom is their likely destiny. A variation on this heresy also says that the father was a good being, but tremendously ugly. The Fimir were cast out of the Waterland for their appearance, *not* for any inherent evil (people could not bear to live alongside anything so repulsive). It was only because they could not grow their own food in the lands left to them or bear children of their own that they turned to theft and kidnapping. When they turned to evil, their father was cast out too for bringing this scourge into the world. Unlike the first version of 'The Good Father' heresy, this version places the blame for Fimir behaviour firmly in the hands of Humans, arguing that it was the rejection of the Fimir by their sibling race that forced them to descend to rape, murder and theft to



survive and not the twisted self-loathing of the Fimir themselves.

Another heresy has evolved around Maris the witch-princess. In orthodox Fimir mythology Maris is depicted as a romanticised Human princess, young, beautiful and noble. The heresy suggests that while Maris was indeed young and beautiful once, she sacrificed her beauty either as part of the ritual to summon Fimúl or to prove her love for him. Her sacrifice was one of self-mutilation, putting out one of her eyes and slicing her ears from her head. Some versions of the heresy suggest that Fimúl cruelly demanded she do this in return for his love, whilst others insist Maris mutilated herself before Fimúl could stop her and he was instantly overcome with love for this woman who sacrificed her beauty for him. The latter version is sometimes linked to the portrayal of Fimúl as a good Daemon. Fimir clans believing that Maris' sacrifice was demanded by Fimúl tend to be cruel and bloodthirsty, mutilating their female captives in a similar manner.

A new heresy that has been slowly emerging over the last hundred years or so also involves Maris. It announces the spirit of Maris has travelled beyond the castle towers at the heart of the Wandering Island and into the world of men. There, the spirit of Maris has touched the soul of a Human woman and

imparted something of herself. This woman is herself of little import, but her future daughters will be the answer to the curse hanging over the Fimir. Her daughters will be perfectly normal Human females, but ones capable of giving birth to *fertile female Fimir*. The Daughters, as they are called, may already have been born and grown into young women somewhere deep within the lands of men, and are waiting for the Fimir to find them and bring them home. Despite the attractiveness of this idea, and its extraordinary importance if it is true, almost all Meargh have ruthlessly suppressed it. The Meargh *like* being special and in control, and are comfortable with the rigid social order they have controlled and maintained for centuries. The possibility that the status of future Meargh could be reduced to that of breeding machines appals them almost beyond comprehension. The idea that the social order and their position within it could be so dramatically upset is enough for them to stamp down hard and violently if they become aware of their underlings even hinting at this heresy. This has not stopped a few Dirach privately considering the possible ways of locating the Daughters. These Dirach heretics regard the attitude of the Meargh as a heresy in itself, as Meargh are supposed to be an embodiment of the Mother of the Fimir and should surely wish to take their caste's role to its logical conclusion. This is not an opinion any Fimir is likely to express too loudly, however.

LORD AND LADY

Maris

The Fimir give Maris various names. Maris the Mother, the Witch Princess or the River Princess are the most commonly used, but Maris Daemonwife, the Queen in the High Castle and the Tear of the Water are occasionally used. Some bitter Fimir who like to castigate themselves have called her Mother of Monsters. She is adored by the Fimir, many of whom believe she still lives in Human form in the obsidian castle of the legendary Wandering Island; their respect and love for her are even stronger than the same feelings they have for the Father, Fimúl the Mud God. They regard her as a true goddess, and she is seen as a continual, loving presence in their lives.

Most Fimir visualise Maris as a romanticised and utterly beautiful Human princess who once lived amongst the countless gleaming white towers of the fabled Waterland. She was a great and powerful sorceress who communed with Daemons, and the elementals of earth and water for the benefit of her people. The Fimir hold strongly and unequivocally to this fairy-tale vision of Maris and her Waterland castles, and have done so for at least three thousand years (before the birth of the oldest living Meargh). This vision of Maris may well be true, but at the same time it could equally be that she was a simple tribal shaman, interceding with the spirit world of Daemons and elementals to bring the rains and make the soil fertile for her tribe. The gleaming white towers of the Waterland castles may really have been simple wood and mud shacks roofed with reeds. Alternatively, she and her tribe may have been river nomads, sailing the waters of a river system, ancient memories of which have become the great delta of the Waterland. A storyteller from Araby could easily reinterpret the romance of a tribal shaman and an otherworldly entity as the tale of a desert sorceress guarding an oasis and a lustful djinn born of the fiery desert sands, so it is easy to see how the Fimir may have confused or elaborated their origins. Still, Fimir belief may represent the absolute truth. Who can say for sure?

The Fimir stories depict Maris as a strong and determined woman, which is perhaps at odds with the traditional image of a beautiful fairy-tale princess. She seems to have been a leader or a major figure in her Human society, quite capable of defending herself socially, and violently aggressive when provoked. In the stories, when her relationship with Fimúl is discovered by the men of the Waterland she defends her right to choose her lovers and she kills those who attempt to attack Fimúl, although she has the wisdom to flee and the cunning to hide when she sees that there is no other option. These qualities of leadership and aggression, wisdom and cunning are traits inherited by the Meargh. Human women who share these traits can gain some measure of respect from the Fimir, though they will not lose their status as breeding stock.

Fimúl

Fimúl is a mysterious figure even to the Fimir. Usually only referred to as the Father, the Mud God or simply Fimúl, it is hard to say just who or what Fimúl was and is. Fimir stories suggest he was a powerful Daemon serving some higher being such as a god, although what sort of Daemon he was and what sort of god he served is unknown. Surprisingly, Meargh offer little speculation on these matters. The Dirach, whilst more curious and thoughtful about the masculine element of Fimir nature, are no wiser either. What discussion there is on the subject is frowned upon (see **Slaying the Father: Fimir Heresies**). It is also unclear whether the 'Mud God' aspect and elemental connection to earth stems from Fimúl's original nature or was something that arose after he was murdered and cast into the marsh. Most Meargh and Dirach do lean towards the view that he was connected to the element of earth, and to marshland in particular, *before* Maris summoned him, and that it was these ties that, in part, encouraged Maris to summon him in the first place - his symbolic link to her watery land was important. As a mud god, Fimúl is obviously connected with water as well as earth, although Maris is more strongly connected to water.

Regardless of these mysteries and uncertainties, all Fimir see Fimúl as a powerful Daemon, an elemental force *and* a god. However, he is a resting, wounded god. In Fimir belief Fimúl has never completely recovered from the wounds inflicted on him and he spends more time resting and dozing fitfully in the marsh than he does watching the affairs of his children. Even in stories proclaiming he now resides on the Wandering Island as Maris' consort, Fimúl retains his wounds. It is sometimes said only the blood of the Heart of Man can truly heal him.

Whilst most Fimir believe they know, more or less, what Maris looks like, few have any definite opinion on the appearance of Fimúl and this remains another of the mysteries surrounding him. Even comparisons with the Fimir themselves seems to be considered unlikely, a vague possibility at best. He has become, almost literally, a dark and shadowy figure. However, it is believed the single eye of the Fimir is a trait inherited directly from Fimúl, and for this reason the moon (Mannslieb in Reikspiel, Fimúlneid in Fimar) is an important symbol. Fimúl is most wakeful when his eye is fully open and so it is on nights of the full moon that the Fimir make sacrifices to him (see **Sacrificial Rites** above). Nights of the new moon are considered especially inauspicious for Fimir activity, despite the fact that darkness should benefit them.



The Wandering Island

We'd loosely linked ourselves together with rope so we wouldn't lose one another. Although the fog was dense, the moorland was at least firm and there hadn't been much rain. We were weary and fed up, but then Hans said something about tasting salt in the air, and he was right too. It didn't make much sense since we were miles inland, but there it was anyway. Jann, our young wizardly apprentice, was convinced there was magic afoot - I think she'd been listening to too many stories about the bloody bog ghosts or Daemons or whatever they're meant to be. Still, she'd sensed weird things before and been right, so we were all worried even if we didn't let it show to each other.

Then it got strange. The heather we'd been walking across was pretty springy underfoot, but then we heard Jacob's hobnails sparking on rocks. Soon we were all on sharply ragged rocks sticking up out of the moor, which was fine until we were splashing in rockpools and slipping around on seaweed! Seaweed! I remember little black snails and little yellow snails and limpets all over them. We stopped, talked worriedly about it, but when Jacob tried to retrace our steps he came back saying that instead of moorland he just found water at the edge of the rocks, and saltwater at that. He'd waded in up to his thighs. We argued, not believing him, but we found the same when we all went back. So we walked in the opposite direction.

The fog thinned and we found ourselves on a coarse sandy beach. It was humid and we could feel the heat from the sun fighting through cloud and the remaining mist. Beyond the shore, we could just about see the edge of a wood or forest. Jann wanted to stay on the beach, but Hans and Jacob wanted to go hunt for some food and build a fire. I couldn't blame them, and we outvoted Jann.

It was probably because she was so scared and watchful that Jann saw them first. She screamed at us, pointing. Two figures were running in the distance, one probably a woman, the other possibly a man. They must have seen us, because they paused, then dashed for the forest. We moved to follow, reacting without much thought, but then we saw why the couple had been running: charging up the beach and yelling was a gang of lightly

Slaying the Mother

The single most ruthlessly suppressed heresy is the suggestion that the infertility of the female Fimir is an unconscious sacrifice paid in return for their magical powers. Only rarely has this suggestion ever been made, and usually by a Fimm Noble or Dirach leaning towards Chaos, especially to Khorne. The argument is that their use of magic renders the Meargh sterile, forcing the Fimir into a position that limits their race's expansion and forces them to abduct and rape Human women. Thus, Fimir reliance on magic becomes a self-perpetuating cycle of suffering and evil for all concerned. This heresy has never taken hold because it borders on the rejection of Maris herself, something even the most ruthlessly ambitious Dirach and Fimm Nobles would have difficulty accepting.

armoured men carrying spears. Either they didn't see us or just didn't care, because they simply ploughed into the forest in pursuit of the couple. Their yells were silenced the instant they passed between the trees. We'd paused, but started after them again. Afterwards, none of us really knew whose side we'd planned to be on.

When we were inside the forest too, we could hear the yelling and screaming again ahead of us; we blundered through the bushes and trees following the noise, sometimes even catching sight of the spearmen. But we were still tied together and never stood a chance of catching up. As their cries faded, so did the forest, and before we knew it we were suddenly engulfed in fog again. We stopped to catch our breath.

The fog thinned quickly, burnt off by the sun, and we found ourselves back on the moor again. No sea, no rocks, no beach, no forest. Not even the taste of salt in the air, though Jann said she could still taste it.

It's been years now, but I met Hans in a tavern a while back. He was working as a caravan guard, but said he'd killed some undead in a disused mine and had some other adventures. Might have been lying, but then it was no more crazy than what we'd all experienced out on the moor. Thing was, he said that he'd met with Jann whilst passing through the Wasteland. She was older, more powerful now, he said, but she was obsessed with getting back to the beach, the island as she called it. She'd ended up begging Hans to help her find it again, reckoned that if we were all together again we could do it. Jann told Hans that she'd finally figured out whose side we should have been on that day, but Hans couldn't persuade her to say whose.

The tales of the Exile speak of a great Fimir capital, a vast obsidian castle rising through the mists of a craggy island surrounded by treacherous rocks and reefs (see **The Tale of the Sons of Maris and the Mother's Exile**). In that castle dwells Maris the river princess. Most Fimir believe she rules there alone, but a few believe Fimúl resides with her. The location of this legendary isle is a mystery even to the Fimir. Their tales say it vanishes into the mists or sinks beneath the waves, reappearing elsewhere along the northern and western coasts of the Old World. Some Fimir believe it represents a lost third group of Fimir who chose to dwell on islands rather than on coasts or in marshes. It is also said to appear inland, even in stories told by Humans and Wood Elves, although it is rare for Fimir to feature in these stories. In these Human and Elven island myths, those who step onto the island and explore it find they stay there for weeks, months or even years, but when they leave hardly any time at all has passed outside the island's boundaries; alternatively, they find that just the opposite happens. No Fimir is thought to have visited the Wandering Island within living memory (and remember that Meargh can live for 2000 years or more), though some claim to have seen it, as have some Humans who have linked it to the Fimir.

The Wandering Island is a real but profoundly mystical and mysterious place. How it came into existence is completely


and utterly unknown even to the Fimir. The closest explanation they have is that it was discovered by one of the original three sons of Maris and it subsequently became a royal vessel to carry Maris. Similarly, the Fimir have little or no real understanding of just what the Wandering Island really is or what it represents for their race and none at all for what it represents for Humans or other races.

The whole of Fimir society and culture is based upon stories, ones that have been retold by different Fimir over thousands of years. In that time, in the course of all those tellings, the stories have changed. The broader aspects have largely remained intact (a summoning, a relationship, a chase, a birth, a murder and an exile), but many details have changed or acquired new meanings. What makes the Wandering Island such a special place is that it *remembers* all these variations and interpretations. It is possible it adds its own interpretations and differences. The deeper one travels, the older the stories get. In amongst them all, perhaps at the heart of the island, there may be one that is the true source of all the others. Or there may be separate origins for different parts of the story; and even these may simply be ancient echoes of an even older story or event. Whatever the case, the Wandering Island remembers and replays these real or imagined events, and it is possible for someone to come close to or even land upon the island, and witness them or become involved.

So, what does this mean? In practical terms, those who approach or who land upon the Wandering Island are passing into Fimir history (or at least history seen through the eyes of successive generations of Fimir, as revealed to them through their stories). Also, as a result of Fimir interaction with other races, one can pass into certain parts of the history of other races (or at least Fimir interpretations of those histories). Initially, those who pass close to the island are likely to be only observers (or the observed), but may eventually choose or be forced to land upon the island and become involved in some way. Events (or stories) are replayed or re-enacted, sometimes in the same form; characters might witness the same events from different perspectives. However, this does *not* mean the Wandering Island is a time-machine for running WFRP games in earlier historical periods. In fact, the uncertainties of Fimir belief and their understandably biased views of the past mean the Wandering Island is completely unsuited to this purpose: the weight of myth and prejudice is too heavy for any objective historical truth to survive. Even Fimir who explore the island may not fully understand what they experience here, as their current beliefs may not match what the Island has to show them, and only the Dirach and Meargh have sufficient intelligence to even begin to truly comprehend it anyway.

As one travels deeper into the island, the landscape changes as well as the history. In addition to experiencing the mythic history





of the Fimir, a traveller can experience the journey of exile made by the Fimir race from the Waterland, only in reverse (so for the Fimir, such a journey can be seen as a journey home). The physical shape of the land changes, as does the climate, flora and fauna - a PC who picks an unusual plant before the island vanishes in the mist holds a link to a land that some long dead Fimir once knew, at least if he can find someone to identify it.

Players should really have no more understanding of the place than their PCs. Those who encounter the Wandering Island directly or merely experience its closeness catch fleeting glimpses of mysterious figures, see ghosts (often Fimir or unusually dressed people) or experience weird dreams in which they may become part of a psychodrama, experiencing the experiences of others. Whatever they experience should inspire intense curiosity at the least, obsessive desperation for clearer understanding and closer involvement at worst. Unless a GM plans to have a full-scale campaign exploration of the Island, encounters associated with it should be tantalising, but deny players and PCs alike the knowledge or opportunity to analyse the place to death. Ideally, of course, you want to make the encounters tantalising enough that the PCs want to spend the rest of their lives trying to find it again.

(N.B. This interpretation of the Wandering Island owes a great deal to Robert Holdstock's 'Mythago Wood' sequence of novels: *Mythago Wood*, *Lavondyss*, *The Hollowing* and *Gate of Ivory*, *Gate of Horn*. All these books are currently in print. Before making use of the Wandering Island, GMs are very much encouraged to read at least the first book to gain a far more evocative insight to the nature of the island. Another Holdstock novel, *Ancient Echoes*, may also be helpful.)

In the Hands of the Father

Reclusive and isolated, Fimir clans have infrequent contact with the Sunlight Folk, and even interaction with other Fimir clans or wanderers can be uncommon. However, the Fimir are not entirely introverted, and all clans maintain close and regular contact with one special group of outsiders: Daemons. Like almost everything else in Fimir society, this important relationship stems directly from the race's parental origins; with a Daemonologist for a mother and Daemon for a father, fraternisation with Daemons is hardly unexpected.

The bond between the Fimir and the Daemonic is complex. As a Daemonologist, Maris represents power and control over Daemons, but Fimúl, as a Daemon himself, represents a blood and spiritual kinship between Fimir and Daemons. It is because of this fusion of dominance and brotherhood that the Fimir have a relationship with Daemons unrecognisable in any other culture. The differing levels of power exhibited by the near-infinite diversity of Daemons add to the complexity of the

relationship. For the Fimir, Daemons can be beloved siblings, honoured friends, ambassadors, or worshipped gods; equally, some can be monsters to be feared and enemies to be repelled; minor Daemons are sometimes seen as mere tools, although ones deserving good treatment. Add to this the fact that almost all Fimir utterly reject Chaos and its Daemons, but maintain respect for some Daemons of Law. Compare this with the prevailing Human attitude, where all Daemons are horrific Chaotic monsters serving dark gods, to be feared and hated, controlled only by evil men, with no room for contradiction.

Broadly speaking, the Fimir attitude to most Daemons combines respect and reverence with some arrogance. They feel a certain filial loyalty, but expect their rather extended Daemonic 'family' to assist them when required. Dirach and Meargh find it far easier than magicians of other races to summon and control Daemons (most are far more tolerant of summoning by Fimir), but they do not abuse their power and involve Daemons in the social aspects of Fimir life as well as the militaristic. In fact, it is more common for Fimir to summon Daemons to bear witness to their monthly sacrifices than it is to summon them to assist in kidnapping the victims in the first place. However, the different castes have differing attitudes. The Shearl tend more towards deep reverence, together with a level of fear varying according to the might and nature of the Daemon. The Fimm share this reverence, but are somewhat less fearful of lesser Daemons, and have more time for Daemons of a martial nature. Dirach have a far stronger sense of brotherhood with Daemons than any other caste. Even something as powerful as a Daemon Prince is a brother in a Dirach's eye, albeit a far stronger older brother, one to be greatly respected and not annoyed. The traditional love-hate relationship of siblings can often be seen between Dirach and less powerful Daemons. Meargh, with greater magical might to exert over Daemonkind, are much more arrogant in their attitude and have little fear of anything less than Daemon Princes. Daemons, however, are quite accepting of this, recognising and respecting that this is simply part of Meargh nature, although it undoubtedly annoys and frustrates some.

Given that Fimir see Daemons as entirely natural, part and parcel of normal existence, they have a contemptuous pity for others who cannot distinguish between Daemons of Chaos and Daemons serving other gods. In Fimir eyes, Humans have lost a vital spiritual link between themselves and their own gods (see **Fimir and Daemons**). In fact, the Meargh know more about the Daemons who serve the likes of Ulric, Mórr or Taal (and other gods besides) than most priests of those cults.

Daemon-worship

The worship of Daemons is a major aspect of Fimir society. At the highest level, this means worship of the Daemon Fimúl

who is honoured, remembered and mourned at every monthly sacrifice. However, the Fimir also worship several Daemon Princes. The most important are Balor (who is thought by some outsiders to be the one true god of the Fimir), Lisaart and Kroll, who are described below. Worship of these Daemons is common to most Fimir clans, but individual clans may additionally have special ties to other greater Daemons and Daemon Princes. Worship of Balor, Kroll, Lisaart and others tends to be as-and-when, rather than following some strict set of rules. Sacrifices are made when the blessing of a particular Daemon is needed for a particular endeavour. Sacrifices may be at a clan level (where a living victim is killed in the name of the Daemon) or the individual (a Dirach healer might throw his meal ration into the marsh and ask for Lisaart's guidance when trying to cure a particularly nasty bout of marsh flu afflicting his clan). Maris, however, is not considered a Daemon, but a Human become a goddess.

Daemon-worship is also a subtle mechanism of social control. The Dirach use it to reinforce their own status - they are priests who are seen, literally, to call and commune directly with the objects of worship. Similarly, it reinforces the absolute power of the Meargh. This, without doubt, impresses the Shearl and the Fimm, who have no abilities in this area whatsoever, and who rely on the Meargh and Dirach to enable direct contact with what is, in their eyes, part of the Divine. While neither Meargh nor Dirach can call Fimul from the marsh, both can do the next best thing.

The Fimir and Chaos

From high in the dense foliage of the tree where I'd hidden myself I watched the iron-clad knights of Khorne advance heavily towards the Meargh and her assembled clan. Surprisingly, they advanced slowly, not with the frenzied madness I had come to expect from these bastards. Instead, they beat their weapons slowly and menacingly against their shields as they went. In contrast, the Fimir and their Daemons watched in total, almost sullen, silence.

Suddenly, the Chaotics balted. Their drumming was silenced, the air stilled. From the midst of the horde strode forth their leader, a surprisingly Human figure even when encased in a shell of black armour whose joints glowed the red of the furnace. He raised his sword high, and screamed in the language of the Empire, "Blood for the Blood God!"

Before he could bring down his sword to signal the attack, the air was split with a sudden scornful laugh from the Meargh. Her laugh was joined by the laughter of her clan, a torrent of humiliating abuse. Then, I swear she looked up at me in my hiding place and in near perfect Reikspiel cried, "Mud for the Mud God!" Then her clan hurled itself at its enemy. Our enemy.

Smiling at that terrible pun, I decided to join my cousins and began my descent.

The Fimir hate and fear Chaos. Most Humans also hate and fear Chaos too, but that does not stop a disturbing number of them becoming corrupted or turning willingly to dark gods. Perhaps because of their Human heritage, perhaps because of their Daemonic heritage, the Fimir are just as vulnerable to the temptations of Chaos as Humans are, although Dirach and Meargh are more aware and suspicious of the wiles of Chaos and its Daemons. For their part, the gods and Daemons of Chaos would very much like to turn the Fimir to their cause, especially to make use of their ability to summon Daemons, as well as their sheer physical might. Fortunately, due to the close-knit nature of Fimir society it is almost impossible for hidden cults to flourish within a clan. Either the whole clan is corrupted (this usually requires the Meargh herself to be the initial source of the corruption; this is extremely unusual, but not unknown) or a small band of renegades deserts the clan. Renegades aim to get as far away from the other Fimir as quickly as they can, or face being hunted and killed. Fimir clans that turn to Chaos usually face the combined might of other local clans, which seek to wipe them out utterly, sparing none and burning the bodies (see **Sacrificial Rites**). Some Fimir, like Humans, might be corrupted so subtly that they are completely oblivious to it - the renegade Dirach Gobniu from the scenario *There's a One-eyed Fellow Hiding to the South of Kammendun* in *White Dwarf* 102 could easily be seen as an unwitting pawn of Tzeentch.

Fimir hostility to Chaos stems from ancient instructions given by Maris to her children. Maris made it clear that Chaos was an unstable and destructive force and its Daemons were amongst the most dangerous and deceitful of all. She commanded her children, for their sake as well as the sake of her memory, never to involve themselves with Chaos, its Daemons or its followers. They should not even attempt to root it out or attack it unless Fimir interests were directly threatened, so as to minimise their contact with the deadly powers and to avoid drawing Chaos' attention to their race. Maris also made the subtle but important distinction between Daemons of Chaos and other Daemons, a distinction not always made by other races (see **Fimir and Daemons**). Over the last two and half thousand years, suspicions that the Hell-mother (see **Out of the Waterland**) was secretly aligned with Chaotic powers have only served to reinforce the wisdom of Maris' instructions in the eyes of the Fimir.

The Fimir do not visualise the gods of Chaos in the same way as most of the other races, having their own cultural interpretations of what they represent.

Khorne: The Blood God is an idiot, a thoughtless Human giant with a single blood red eye and a mouth that can swallow a dozen Fimir in a single gulp. He strides over the land fighting for no good reason and gorging himself on anything that moves. Soon, there are no Humans left. The Fimir have no

one to steal from and no one to bear the next generation of Fimir, and so they sicken and die. Soon afterwards, having eaten every living thing in the world, Khorne himself dies. *Khorne's violence holds an undeniable attraction for the Fimm who are an obvious target for the temptations of the Blood God and his Daemons. The Fimm Nobles are the targets of dreams of power and glory; after all they are commanders of warriors, they should be the ones leading, not witches and magicians. Khorne also tempts the Shearl: since the other castes often get first choice of the food, some Shearl have a secret admiration and understanding of Khorne's colossal appetite. Dreams of bloody revolution and cannibalism sometimes drift across their sleeping minds.*

Slaanesh: Gender and the associated differences are major parts of Fimir culture. The idea of a hermaphrodite being is a near impossible one for them to understand. Thus Slaanesh is seen as two Fimir, a male and a female, permanently coupled. The fact that Fimir do not mate with Fimir emphasises the perverse nature of this god. *The origins of the Fimir lie in the seduction and mating of a Human and a Daemon. The continuance of the race is dependent on a violent and abhorrent act. The Fimir are denied the sort of normal relationships other races have. Slaanesh makes use of these facts in its attempts to woo the Fimir.*

Nurgle: Nurgle is seen as a gigantic bloated worm slithering through the ground, spreading sickness wherever it goes. It spoils good food. It causes tail rot and marshfoot. It is responsible for the filthy diseases the Fimir sometimes contract from the depraved Human women. *Fimir very, very rarely turn to Nurgle. The exceptions are Death-Quests for whom the rot has already*

set in. Surely, Nurgle whispers, when all is hopelessness and despair it is better to embrace loss and decay as friends. Such corrupted Fimir miraculously gain a new lease of life.

Tzeentch: Tzeentch is the destroyer, the usurper of the neat, orderly society the Fimir have created to ensure their survival. Tzeentch brings change and disruption to Fimir culture, and eventually causes its collapse. The Changer of the Ways also represents a direct challenge to the word of the Meargh. When a Dirach suggests one-too-many new ideas, a wise Meargh is likely to wonder what Daemons he has been communing with. *Ever subtle, Tzeentch worms its way into the dreams of Meargh, carefully implanting new ideas, new ways of doing things. Using its powerful magic to twist her divinations and its shapeshifting Daemons to impersonate her trusted Daemon advisors, Tzeentch tries to further its unfathomable aims. Dirach, Nobles, Fimm and Shearl are all equally vulnerable to Tzeentch's whispers of change and power.*

The Fimir and Law

Too late the witch-hunter noticed the circle her captive had drawn in the mud with its clawed toe. Foolishly she had ignored the muttered ramblings of her captive and misinterpreted its gestures as pleas for mercy. Now the hunter cowered before the Daemon, a man-shaped being composed almost entirely of shining silver daggers of all shapes and sizes arranged like the scales of a fish. Horrified, she could see that Solkan's symbol was carved upon each and every razor-edged blade. The Daemon stepped forward and with a pass of its hand the chains that bound the Fimir devil fell aside, the ends of the cut links shining brightly. Stumbling to its feet, the



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Fimir nodded to the Daemon before it ran off into the swiftly gathering fog.

"That one, you may not have," said the Daemon.

"But why, damn it?"

"Because it called me; and because it has a grievance far older and nobler than yours."

It will no doubt shock and surprise many people to learn the Fimir have a closer relationship with the forces of Law than they do with Chaos. However, when thought about it makes sense: the Fimir live in a rigidly structured society in which every individual knows his (or her) place and where rules and boundaries are strictly drawn, customs and traditions are followed, and orders are obeyed on pain of, well, pain. The Fimir are a disciplined people: they have to be in order to control their anger towards Humans and the world at large, preventing themselves committing rash actions that would bring ruin upon their whole race. This is not to say they are perfect in their behaviour - far from it - but they certainly strive to be. And nobody ever said that the Lawful are also good.

Perhaps even more shocking, especially to the witch-hunters, is the god of Law whom the Fimir have most respect for, Solkan, god of vengeance and retribution. It is wrong to think of Solkan as a purely Human god: ultimately Solkan is a being formed from anger and desire for revenge, feelings almost every sentient creature has at some point. For the Fimir, these are unceasing and focused emotions, but ones largely controlled and balanced against what is required for the survival of the Fimir. Solkan and his Daemons respect these emotions and the ordered way in which the Fimir express them. The monthly ritual sacrifice in memory of the murder of Fimúl is a symbolic act of revenge against the men of the Waterland; all Fimir harbour a grudge against Humanity in general for this murder and for their race's subsequent treatment at the hands of men. The ritual sacrifice is a controlled expression of Fimir feeling, a safety valve to stop them being overwhelmed by hate and animosity. A Daemon of Solkan is often summoned to observe and acknowledge the importance of the monthly sacrifice.

Of course, some of those who challenge the Fimir do so with a legitimate desire for vengeance themselves, such as those who have lost wives or daughters or sisters; Solkan and his minions acknowledge the righteous anger of those on both sides of this fight and aid both or neither if called upon. However, unless someone has a genuinely personal reason for desiring retribution against the Fimir, Solkan and his Daemons invariably acknowledge the older and deeper grievance of the Fimir themselves over any other.

Kroll

As marsh and estuary dwellers, the Fimir have more experience of the terrible beasts known as bog octopuses than most other races. Many clans have competed for territory with one of them at some time or other and bog octopuses have become respected and occasionally dreaded adversaries, especially the largest of their kind.



In cases of especially powerful bog octopuses, the Fimir have settled for acceptance of a tentacle-waving neighbour who is kept from moving too far by sacrifices of food (live animals or people). This lengthy experience of contact, occasional semi-worship, together with the respect and fear the octopuses inspire, have resulted in the formation of a gigantic, Daemonic creature in their image. Some Fimir believe Kroll has always existed and that natural bog octopuses are her earthly children.

Kroll is a Daemon Prince worshipped at all levels of Fimir society. The Shearl admire her nest building abilities. The Fimm are impressed by her raw strength, deadly flailing arms and armour-piercing beak - the tradition of carrying two weapons by the Fimm Nobles stems from Kroll. The Meargh and Dirach are equally impressed by the quiet intelligence and cunning of Kroll. (In WFRP1, the bog octopus was a stupid animal - GMs should feel free to increase the Intelligence score, as octopuses are known to be fairly bright creatures.) Kroll is as comfortable in salt water as she is in fresh water and so is respected by coastal and inland Fimir alike.

Kroll is rarely summoned, but always appealed to when the Fimm go to battle one of her earthly kin. Sacrifices are also made to her when the Fimir are under pressure on multiple fronts. If the Fimir summon Kroll under such circumstances, rather than appearing in the material world as a single gigantic bog octopus, Kroll can thrust up to eight single, massive tentacles into the world to assault, hold back or threaten those different fronts no matter where they are. The victims of these attacks are unlikely to realise just what it is they are really facing! Kroll is also called upon if the Fimir want to affect something or someone beyond their normal reach (a city, for example). Summoning Kroll involves a ritual requiring the sacrifice of one to nine living, intelligent creatures depending whether the Fimir want one or more tentacles, or the whole of Kroll with her terrible beak.

One to eight of Kroll's tentacles can appear wherever the summoner wants them to. Kroll's tentacles can be subtle as well as violent, able to coil around a sleeping victim's mouth before he wakes and screams, or pilfer objects from his pockets, or even put objects into his pockets (Kroll has the skill, Sleight

of Hand). If she desired, she could also push her eggs inside an unfortunate victim - who knows what might happen then?

Kroll can speak, but only when partially submerged in water - her voice is a terrible, bubbling rumble. However, she can also speak psychically, her watery whispers insinuating themselves into her target's dreams, making all sorts of tempting offers, suggestions or instructions.

Like Balor, Kroll is a very powerful creature and deadly in combat. GMs are advised to use Kroll in more subtle ways, either as a manipulator or manifesting only as a single tentacle (the Fimir do not like having to sacrifice too many other Fimir anyway) with a lowered Wound characteristic. When all of Kroll is summoned, she is subject to the rules for Instability as any other Daemon, as described in the Old World Bestiary. However, when only a single tentacle is summoned, the tentacle remains as long as it takes to complete a specific task, or until it is destroyed, or until the GM has finished using it as a plot device. Rules for Kroll and the ritual to summon her are found in Heroes of the Fimir.

Lisaart

Lisaart is another Daemon Prince who the Fimir revere as a god, although not one in same league as Maris and Fimúl. Depicted as a giant scaled serpent with a long, dragon-like head, Lisaart is worshipped by those Fimm who value cunning and speed over brute force when it comes to battle. Lisaart is a silent and deadly killer, capable of swift, precise and lethal attacks. Cunning and secrecy are also elements of Lisaart's nature, and Fimir who have particular respect for this Daemon Prince often seek to learn Lisaart's skills of camouflage and hiding, especially Dirach who have become assassins and thieves in the service of their Meargh. Fimm Nobles who seek to decorate their helmets and avoid the wrath of the Dirach often have Lisaart as a decorative crest instead of horns; these Nobles and their Warriors can be more deadly than those who admire the unsubtle and brutish qualities of Balor.



Lisaart is said to be an opponent of Chaos in general and Nurgle in particular. Lisaart constantly worms through the marsh after Nurgle, purifying the ground the disease god has contaminated. For this reason, Lisaart is also the Fimir god of healing and is often prayed to by Dirach and Meargh when creating herbal curatives or binding wounds.

The most famous Fimir tale concerning Lisaart features Balor during his mortal days. Balor caught and bound a hundred giant water beetles (insects being the reptilian Daemon's favourite food) and used them and the same cords that he

bound them with to tempt and snare Lisaart. With the Daemon Prince subdued, Balor milked Lisaart's poison fangs. Impressed by Balor's cunning, Lisaart chose not to take revenge when finally released. The venom is said to have been gathered in a brass vessel and sealed with bees' wax. Fimir believe Lisaart's poison to be the most painful and fatal in the entire world. However, Lisaart's role as healer and purifier means the venom is also believed to possess incredible curative powers, although the stories are unclear as to how it can both hurt and heal. Nevertheless, this powerful duality makes the brass vessel and its contents a legendary Fimir artefact, though no Fimir knows where it presently resides, if it ever truly existed in the first place.

The Fimir offer prayers and offerings (usually giant insects killed and thrown into marshy ground or estuaries) to Lisaart in order to secure good luck in matters of healing, secrecy and battle. There is no ritual to summon Lisaart; if there ever was then it was lost long ago. However, the Fimir stories suggest that Lisaart can enter the real world at will in order to counteract activities of Nurgle and its minions when they *directly threaten the Fimir*. The origin of Lisaart's ties to the Fimir is unknown even to the Meargh, but it is presumed the bond was originally formed through Fimúl.

Balor


It said by some that the Fimir worship a powerful god known as Balor, or the Eye of Doom. Balor is believed to be a gigantic Fimir or humanoid cyclops with an eye so large that six Fimir are needed to lift his enormous eyelid. When that eye is open, all whom Balor gazes upon die. This is only partly true. Balor is not a god, but he is a powerful Daemon Prince, believed by the Fimir to be in the service of Fimúl the Mud God.



Fimir legends claim Balor was once a Fimm Noble in a time long, long before the birth of even the oldest living Meargh. His prowess in battle was extraordinary and the Fimm tell many confusing stories about his achievements, mostly involving the slaughter of countless warriors of other races and his siring of many Fimir children, but one tells of his milking of Lisaart's poisonous fangs (see **Lisaart** above).

Long before he lost his vigour, Balor volunteered for sacrifice and in doing so became a Daemon Prince at the will of Fimúl the Mud God. Some Fimir claim direct descent from Balor, especially the Fimm Nobles; theoretically a member of any caste could legitimately do so, but it would be hard to prove as only Balor himself could say for sure, and he's not very talkative.

Apart from his immense size and physical strength, Balor's



greatest power lies in his gleaming white eye. Whilst it does not really require six Fimir to open his eyelid and his eye doesn't automatically kill all it gazes upon, Balor's eye is a *terrible* thing. Any creature less than a god or another Daemon Prince who makes eye-contact with Balor (who must make a successful Weapon Skill attack roll to make contact) automatically loses 2d10 Wounds, *irrespective* of Toughness or armour, and gains one Insanity Point; only one individual can be targeted per round. This is a monstrous power, but fortunately for most PCs Balor rarely wastes it on mere mortals. Balor is only summoned to defend the Fimir from creatures such as powerful Chaos Daemons or Dragons. Balor can turn this ability on and off at will by blinking - some Fimir believe Balor is most vulnerable at this point - so Fimir (and, in theory, others) can speak to him directly.

The alleged need for six Fimir to open Balor's eye probably stems from the requirements of the ritual that can summon him into the world. Only the most powerful Meargh can hope to summon Balor and six Fimir must be sacrificed at the climax. Understandably, Meargh do not summon Balor just for the fun of it, only in cases of dire need (usually if her clan is facing an over-whelming enemy force) and only if there is enough time.

Rules for Balor and the ritual to summon him are found in **Heroes of the Fimir**.

Mother's Magic

The magical tradition of the Fimir is simultaneously divided and united. On the one hand, the magical abilities of the Dirach are not spells in the traditional sense, but innate and instinctive natural abilities, originating from the Daemonic nature of their race's father, Fimúl. However, the Dirach are limited in their ability. On the other hand, the spells and rituals used by the Meargh have come down a traditional route of magical tuition. The spells and wisdom of Maris have been handed down from Meargh to apprentice for thousands of years, giving the Meargh the flexibility and understanding of the other races' magicians. Although this received knowledge has left little room for new discoveries and truly original thought, it is possible for Meargh to learn new tricks.

At the same time, Dirach and Meargh share the natural ability to produce a magical mist, a reminder of their race's origins in the Waterland and a source of comfort and protection, believed to be an ancient gift from Maris. Both are protected from Tzeentch's Curse by the constant love of Maris and Fimúl. Furthermore, the Daemonic heritage of the Fimir allows them summon many Daemons without the usual attendant risks.

Human and Elven Wizards speak of magic as a force that flows into the world from some foreign realm of Chaos and which is inherently dangerous. Dirach and Meargh accept this

and understand the concepts of Dark and Colour magic and the so-called Winds of Magic, but they do not believe the magic *they* perform stems from this source. Rightly or wrongly, they insist their magical power flows from their race's parents. In this sense at least, Fimir magic perhaps has more in common with the Divine Magic of other races whose clerics are granted their magic by the grace of their gods, although neither Maris nor Fimúl displays any sign of Wrath. Since the Fimir believe that Maris and Fimúl are free of the taint of Chaos, they also believe their magic is similarly untainted. In the eyes of outsiders this possibility is over-shadowed by the Daemonic nature of much of Fimir magic, by the need to sacrifice the living to perform certain rituals successfully and by the traditional way in which Meargh teach their apprentices. By Human and Elven standards, this makes Fimir magic look like Dark Magic and not like Divine Magic. However, a divine source goes some way to explaining why the magical abilities of the Dirach and Meargh are different from those of other races (and from each other) and so symbolically tied to aspects of Fimir nature and heritage such as Daemons, earth and water. The only Fimir to dispute this assessment are those few Dirach and even fewer Meargh who turn to Chaos, but whilst they believe that their magic is Dark and Chaotic, they still believe it is a gift from their parents. These twisted creatures point to the fact that when they turn to Chaos they retain their abilities, arguing that if the parents were displeased with them then surely they would be stripped of their power. In the final analysis, the true source of Fimir magic is uncertain, but the Fimir believe what they believe and they remain powerful wielders of magic.

Meargh and Dirach consider their abilities to be gifts from their race's parents. The Dirach believe that without the blessing of Fimúl they would not possess their innate, instinctive spell-casting abilities. Similarly, it is believed the spells and wisdom taught by every Meargh to her apprentice were once taught to the first Meargh by Maris herself, a tradition Maris expected to be continued. This places a responsibility on the Meargh and Dirach to live up to the expectations of Maris and Fimúl and be worthy of their gifts. Most of the time this means that magic should be used wisely to protect the Fimir, but it also permits socialising with Daemons, privately or during clan events, as a way of maintaining links with Fimir heritage and developing greater understanding of Fimir nature.

Despite the magical power of the Meargh and Dirach, both show considerable restraint in their use of magic. Although members of both castes summon Daemons at least monthly for social and religious purposes, few cast spells casually. An earth elemental may be called to create a Meargh's tower in a new settlement, but the bulk of the building work is undertaken by the Shearl. Daemons are not summoned just to see off a handful of wanderers lost in the marsh. A Meargh won't cast *Waterwalk* if there is a perfectly good alternative route and no need to hurry. Only if a threat or problem can really only be



Daemonology

The Fimir relationship with Daemons is described throughout this article and discussed in detail in the section **In the Hands of the Father** above. However, this section deals with the Fimir/Daemon relationship with regards to how it affects their magic, specifically the way Meargh and Dirach go about summoning, dispelling, binding and generally dealing with Daemons. The process is described in rules terms in **Lore of Daemonology** in **Heroes of the Fimir**.

Summoning Daemons


Daemons are dangerous creatures to deal with, but the half-Daemonic Fimir find it much easier to work with them than other races do. This is not to say it is a risk-free business, but Dirach and Meargh can summon Daemons on a regular basis if they have to, with minimal risk. One of the reasons they can be so casual about it is they know the names of so many Daemons, great and small. Maris taught the first Meargh the true names of thousands of Daemons, and while some of these have been forgotten down the millennia many more have been

overcome with magic do Meargh or Dirach resort to their powers.

For their part, the lower castes have a superstitious awe of magic (with the exception of some Fimir Nobles) in spite of it being a normal part of their everyday lives. The fact that the lower castes appear to have been less blessed by the Mother and the Father in this regard only adds to the respect and fear they have for the Dirach and the Meargh and reinforces the caste boundaries. The lower castes do not pretend to understand how magic works, what it is or where it comes from, but they know the Dirach and Meargh have the power to command certain forces that protect the Fimir race and allow it to commune with its Daemonic cousins.

remembered and shared amongst Meargh and Dirach. Most of these Daemons have long-standing obligations to individual Meargh, Dirach, clans or the Fimir race as a whole, based on bargains struck and fulfilled centuries, even millennia ago. These Daemons can be summoned in the knowledge that they will do as the summoner asks without the need to strike a new deal. (What some of these ancient bargains were is often long forgotten, except perhaps by the Daemons concerned.)

Two other important reasons why Fimir can work relatively safely with Daemons are their Daemonic ancestry and lack of fear of most Daemons. Most Daemons know that any Meargh or Dirach who summons them will bargain with them honestly and will also summon them for purely social events (such as the Fimir monthly sacrifice or simply for conversation) and



not merely to send them into battle or bully them for information. This is in marked contrast to most other Daemonologists who see Daemons as little more than tools or servants.

Aside from knowing a Daemon's True Name, a Meargh or Dirach must also draw a Circle of Protection to contain the Daemon; this does not usually offend Daemons as it demonstrates a respect for their power. However, the Circle is not an elaborate one and does not require any symbols to be drawn within it or around the edge. The Circle can be made with a length of rope, poured salt or blood, or just drawn in the dirt with a stick or claw of one toe. An extreme example is creating a Circle to summon one of the powerful sea-Daemons known as Morga. These are 30-60 feet long and can only be summoned at sea. To create a Circle, a Meargh captains a Fimir longboat and has it sail in a simple but very large Circle, pouring blood from the aft of the ship. The Daemon cannot pass the boundary of a properly created Circle except with the summoner's permission. Daemons specifically allied to the Fimir - such as the Daemon Prince Balor or Maris' Ravens - only require a symbolic circle to be drawn as a gesture of respect.

A successfully summoned Daemon must be bargained with - mutual respect or not, Daemons rarely do something for nothing. However, many Daemons have long-standing arrangements with the Fimir. Sometimes payment has already been made in the past, sometimes it is not due to be paid for many years to come, and sometimes the summoner has to hand over payment there and then, but this is left to the GM to decide upon for plot-related purposes. Examples of payments Daemons ask for include: sacrifice of living creatures (intelligent or otherwise, sometimes a specific individual); a magical item; a promise to be summoned again at a specific future time and/or place of the Daemon's choosing and let loose; a random act of cruelty; a random act of kindness; a song to be written about the Daemon by an Elf minstrel; any number of other meaningful or incomprehensible requests. GMs should make such demands the basis for plots bringing Fimir into contact with the PCs

No Daemon is obliged to agree to any task for any offering. Many Daemonologists resort to binding unwilling Daemons. However, whilst a Meargh or Dirach could try to bind a reluctant Daemon, doing so goes against the spirit of a relationship that has lasted millennia. Were word to spread to other Daemons that the Fimir were attempting to bind them, there would be a disastrous breakdown of the reasonably amicable relationship between the two. Instead, Meargh and Dirach summon Daemons that are likely to be in accordance with their aims based on the Daemon's nature. For example, if the Fimir needed to steal a baby for sacrifice, they would not summon a good Daemon for the job, but they might summon

a good Daemon to act as a messenger between them and a Human village in an attempt to build a truce. Given the nature and usual activities of the Fimir, the vast majority of Daemons they summon are evil, although they sometimes call on Solkan's vengeful Daemons of Law. On balance, none of this is a big issue for the Fimir. As they can summon Daemons with relative ease and have access to a range of Daemon names that rivals the knowledge of all Human Daemonologists in the Old World combined, they can usually find a Daemon who will do whatever job they want doing sooner or later.

However, if a satisfactory arrangement cannot be reached, the Meargh or Dirach either formally dismisses the Daemon or simply takes the opportunity to converse with it for a while.

It is vital to remember that even though the Fimir can deal with Daemons comparatively easily, it does not mean they constantly summon Daemons and send them off to work. Meargh and Dirach make it plain to their apprentices that they should never summon a Daemon to do a job the Fimir can do for themselves: Daemons should only be summoned on the basis of genuine need, for clan rituals and celebrations, or for private conversation and discussion. (Exceptions exist of course: Fimir can rustle cattle themselves, but using the natural talents of the Cromara Daemons allows the Fimir to avoid getting too close to Humans.) This remarkable restraint helps maintain the largely good relationship between the Fimir and Daemons. Also, no Meargh wants her clan to get soft from inactivity and over-reliance on Daemons.

Dispelling Daemons

She had summoned it two blinks of Fimúlneid ago at the cost of much of her energy. At the time it was worth it; the Daemon Manatanardinanatrussss had routed the Imperial troops before they had made much headway into the marsh, and they had looked for a different shortcut. The Daemon's subtle trickery (he had manifested as a swarm of undead goblins rising from the bog) had kept her clan's presence secret, at least for a little while longer. But she'd still have to consider moving everyone on soon.

Manatanardinanatrussss was treated well afterwards, asked to stay for the clan's celebrations; she'd been under no obligation to invite the Daemon, as the bargain he had honoured had been struck and fulfilled by her predecessor centuries ago. No, the invitation was pure goodwill, and the Daemon's shapeshifting antics had proved popular with everyone. However, Manatanardinanatrussss had decided to linger close to the settlement, avoiding being drawn back into the Daemonworld.

At first it had not been a problem, but Manatanardinanatrussss soon became bored and decided it would be amusing to pretend to be an attacking bog octopus, an Elf on a griffin flying overhead and a gaggle of women lost in the marsh. Then it began deliberately scaring the Shearl.

She had been tolerant, and remembered the rules of courtesy, but enough

was enough. The thing was too disruptive and had to go. At first she asked politely, but the only response was a blizzard of rapidly shifting forms. She had held her tongue; Manatanardinanatrussss was a powerful, strong-willed Daemon, and she was still too tired from the lengthy summoning to throw him back into the Daemonworld. However, after his insult, that was exactly what she was going to do. So, she had rested.

At dusk she told her Dirach to stay back and keep the others still and quiet. Low on the horizon, the weak autumn sun gleamed red through the gathering mists. She walked slowly along the stream, which made her think of Maris and she found strength in the flow of dirty water. Away across the stream, she spied Manatanardinanatrussss amusing itself as an overly active willow tree splashing and stomping through the bog. The Daemon shifted to its true form before she was halfway to it; the Daemon knew why she was coming. It was a hideous, terrible thing to see; no wonder it did not want to be itself.

She paused to catch her breath; she was feeling more tired of late and hoped an apprentice would be born soon, while she still had time. Swiftly, Manatanardinanatrussss slid through the mud towards her and reared to its full height, sensing her sudden fear of death and failure. It towered over her small, hunched figure. Laughing at her, it leant its great bulk over her, threatening to devour her, threatening to slaughter her clan. Mouths opened all over its body, deep and black and bottomless, gateways into hell.

She raised her staff.

The strength of Maris flowed through her like a tidal wave; Manatanardinanatrussss felt it coming and let sharp bones and antlers erupt from its skin. Unmoved by the threat, staff still raised firmly in one claw, she thrust sharply toward the Daemon with her dagger and released her unstoppable order through it:

"Look - Just fuck off!"

There was absolute silence.

The Daemon burst in a shower of sparkling black light as it fled. The clan whooped.

The Meargh grinned. Still got it, she thought.

It is generally considered the height of bad manners for a Meargh or Dirach to dispel a Daemon she or he has summoned. In practice they do not need to: the Fimir usually come to some sort of agreement with the Daemons they summon and even if one won't agree the Circle will contain them for as long as it remains intact. Most uncooperative Daemons simply return to wherever they came from after a failed bargaining session; a few of the more annoying variety cheerfully linger in the Circle for a while talking endlessly and generally making a nuisance of themselves from within its confines, until its summoner dismisses it.

The principle exception to this tradition comes when a Daemon of Chaos is involved or if any other Daemon attempts to harm any Fimir or Fimir interest or property, directly or indirectly; most Daemons accept that the Fimir have the right to defend themselves under these circumstances. The other exception concerns Daemons who purposely linger near Fimir settlements after completing a task they were set. Such Daemons are tolerated up to a point, but are politely asked to leave if they create problems; if they prove resistant they are usually dispelled as politely and apologetically as possible. Meargh spread the word of such troublesome behaviour as far and wide as possible, which will call the Daemon into ill repute amongst the Fimir and its kin. Usually this proves embarrassing enough that the Demon issues an apology. Those that do not are cut off from Fimir society and run the risk of having their name traded with Human Daemonologists, who show no respect and give no peace. However, full force is used in the case of Daemons who have been needlessly aggressive and insulting to the Fimir.

Elementalism

Fimir are creatures of Man and Daemon, but they are also creatures of earth and water: their ancestral mother, Maris, was a Human princess of the Waterland, their father, Fimúl the Mud God, a Daemon from the earth itself. While the Fimir do not have the same relationship with elementals that they have with Daemons, elementalism is an important part of the magical repertoire of the Meargh passed down from Maris, and is symbolic of the Fimir heritage. However, Meargh view elementals simply as tools, and do not befriend or worship them as they do Daemons. Nevertheless, some of the oldest Meargh who have made considerable use of elementals over the centuries develop a deeper understanding of them and the ability to communicate with them. They gladly take advantage of the knowledge this can bring. The key practical effect of their superior understanding is that these Meargh are able to make use of the connectedness of the element. For example, if a Meargh summons a water elemental from a river or from the sea, she may ask it a question about what is happening on a riverbank many, many miles downstream or far out to sea. The reply from that distant part, relayed by the elemental, may be a long time in coming (and earth elementals are *incredibly* slow speakers), full of irrelevancies, and is from the rather alien perspective of the element, but that is where the Meargh's centuries of understanding comes in. This ability can lead to truly bizarre and awesome sights, as a Meargh stands at the top of her tower or on an open hilltop communing with an elemental formed from the rain itself.

Earth elementals summoned by Meargh tend to take specific forms. The commonest types are of hard black rock or dark thick peat. When summoned, the former cracks and splinters as it detaches from a cliff-face or rocky outcrop, grinding and cracking as it moves; the latter heaves itself up from the body

of the marsh, dripping water and vegetable matter. Others take forms appropriate to the area in which they are summoned. For example, those summoned near sand dunes may appear as shifting mounds of sand (whole dunes if they are *really* big) with grasses and sand thistles sprouting from them: those from a beach as a mass of rounded pebbles and sea shells or wet sand with sand eels and ragworms writhing through them. Similarly, water elementals should match the site of their summoning in some way, whether that be a stagnant pond, thick with slimy green algae, a fast-flowing river or a salty tidal pool filled with crabs and snails. In rules terms they are all the same - this is about presenting elementals in interesting and atmospheric ways and not relying on the standard rock monster or waterspout images.

Summoning an elemental is essentially identical to the *Summon Lesser Daemon* spell; alternatively, you could modify the **Lore of Daemonology** rules. The elemental itself, be it of earth or water, can be treated as a Lesser Daemon, and subject to instability as per Daemons in the *Old World Bestiary*.

Undead

Some Meargh are capable of casting the spells *Re-animate* and *Raise the Dead*, which allows them to reanimate the bodies of those sacrificed by the Fimir. All a Meargh needs is a source of previously sacrificed bodies. They do not have to have been sacrificed by the Meargh herself, but they *do* need to have been *sacrificed* by other Fimir and they *cannot* just summon up any old corpse in any old burial ground or battle site. A site of regular sacrifice, like a stretch of river or an area of marsh into which bodies are ceremonially thrown, is called for. For this reason, Meargh can rarely summon undead in places remote from Fimir settlements. However, since many Fimir clans are nomadic, ancient Meargh with long memories are aware of ancient sites of sacrifice where bodies may exist. More often than not, bodies that a Meargh brings back from the dead are of those who were sacrificed into areas of peat bog. The oxygen-free acidic conditions of peat bogs preserve these corpses remarkably well, staining the skin a rich mahogany colour. However, the acidic conditions also degrade the bones and the pressure of the accumulated sodden peat compresses



and horribly distorts the features of the bodies. Consequently, these zombies are terrifying things that slither almost as much as they walk - they make truly vile assassins as they squeeze their boneless forms through narrow gaps to choke and smother their sleeping victims. Various tales of 'dead hands' reaching out of the watery earth are likely to have been inspired by these creatures. Undead summoned from the sea or from rivers are normal zombies or skeletons, although the former tend to be horribly bloated and foul-smelling.

Necromancy was not a magical art much practiced by Maris and consequently was not taught by her to the first Meargh. This perhaps explains why most Meargh are so limited in or completely ignorant of this field of magic. However, some Meargh believe that the dead are not raised at all, but that the corpses are only reanimated by minor Daemonic entities.

Scrying

Along with traditional spellcraft, the legacy of Maris lives on in the form of scrying. All Meargh are capable of using the magical skill of *scrying* to try to foresee the future, to get images of current events happening far away or to find an answer to a problem (*an* answer, not necessarily the best or simplest). Scrying is one of the most important abilities of a Meargh, and she puts to regular use. It allows a Meargh to anticipate threats and plan accordingly - more than one Human expedition to wipe out a Fimir castle has discovered only some damp ruins, seemingly abandoned ages before. That said, Meargh do not get it right *all* the time; few visions tell the whole truth. The ability to scry other places, as well as other times, means some people take the risk of seeking out a Meargh to ask for her assistance in spying upon places or people otherwise hidden or protected. Those who successfully meet a Meargh are usually disturbed to learn that she already knows what they want from her.

Meargh traditionally use a heavy basin of carved black stone, filled with clear water, and require a darkened place in which to scry. The light of a candle or of the moon is used to illuminate the water and the Meargh focuses on the reflected light. Images appear in the water visible to all who look or only for the Meargh scrying.

At the time of writing, WFRP2 lacks a skill appropriate for scrying, so until one appears it is suggested that scrying is treated as plot device to provide clues or red herrings to PCs, or to explain why a Meargh was expecting the PCs' arrival and knows so much about them. At the very least it can be used as part of an atmospheric scene, as the Meargh sits in the shadows of a flickering candle observing her bowl intently. However, in game terms, scrying operates in much the same way as the *Divining* skill in WFRP1, although the Meargh gets a +10 bonus to her Intelligence for the purpose of testing. If GMs have access to *Apocrypha 2: Chart of Darkness*, then they can follow the rules for divination by scrying described therein, with the exception that Meargh do *not* suffer any critical effects, be they good or bad.

Scrying basins can be enchanted (treat as the Lesser Magic spell *Magic Alarm*) so that the liquid in them boils and bubbles in the event that the Meargh is being scryed or otherwise magically spied upon herself. A Meargh so alerted then uses her own scrying skills to attempt to track the spy back.

Scrying Basins

The stone basins used by most Meargh for scrying are often very old indeed, passing from Meargh to apprentice on the death of the former, and are considered heirlooms of a sort. They are typically very simple in design: heavy but moveable blocks of black stone with a carved round or oval concavity. The stone may be obsidian (volcanic glass), polished marble or granite. If one is broken, the Meargh will have her clan seek out suitable stone for the creation of a replacement. After a piece has been shaped, carved and polished by a Shearl mason (or an elemental or Daemon in some cases), the basin is consecrated with the juices from the eyeballs of a Human baby. The innocent vision of a babe is said to encourage unbiased visions.

Although clear water is most commonly poured into a scrying basin, many Meargh use blood at least some of the time. The fresh blood of a member of a particular race or species is preferred when the question the Meargh seeks an answer to concerns that race.

A few basins have acquired reputations of their own, either for accuracy or for offering particularly sinister and menacing insights that disturb even hardened Meargh. For example, Anrid (which means 'bleak' in Fimar) has remained in a catatonic state for nearly five decades following a vision in the water, the nature of which is unknown even to her former apprentice and successor, Bedrin, who now cares for her. Bedrin continues to use the basin, but only rarely. Her clan remains somewhat fearful of the stone. Another scrying basin mysteriously fills with blood during thunderstorms, although the Meargh who owns this basin offers this blood as payment to one of the Daemons she regularly employs. Another, the so-called *Daffynda* (meaning 'truth rock'), was lost in what are now called the Grootscher Marshes near Marienburg during the reign of the Hell-mother, and was said to be able to read minds at a distance. Any Human seer or fortune-teller who learnt of these and other basins would undoubtedly want to get hold of any of them, regardless of their reputation, as such ancient tools of prophecy are sure to have unusual and powerful properties



STORIES OF THE FIMIR

Scenario Seeds

All in the Same Boat: The PCs find themselves kidnapped by pirates and slavers and are locked in a ship's hold with a small group of Shearl and Fimm. Somehow, the PCs will have to overcome the language barrier and mutually deep distrust to formulate an escape plan. The pirates are soon to reach their hidden base of operations (either an island close to shore or caves in a cliff-face). Unknown to all, a Dirach-led longboat and a ship representing local Human authorities are pursuing them.

Run-around: A couple of Shearl and a Fimm warrior are out searching for food. They are spotted through the mist by the PCs who have previously heard some rumours concerning the Fimir and a secret gold mine, or something similarly tantalising or intriguing (probably untrue, but possibly not). Assuming the PCs give chase, the Fimir opt for the wiser course of action and run away. However, rather than run towards their settlement and risk exposing its location, they lead the PCs on a wild goose-chase through remote and desolate lands, and through every danger they can find: over treacherous marshy ground, close to a bog octopus lair, through carnivorous bushes that prefer Human flesh to that of Fimir and into the territory of a local goblin tribe. The PCs (and players) are welcome to believe that given they are going to so much trouble, the Fimir must surely have *something* worth chasing after. As soon as they think they have drawn the PCs far enough away from their settlement, the Fimir finally vanish.

Sea Sickness: A stretch of coastline is being terrorised by a ghostly plague ship, possibly a Daemonic entity associated with Nurgle. Several fishing villages are seriously affected as disease pollutes the sea, destroying fish and shellfish. The PCs set sail with a group of fishermen in an attempt to deal with the problem. On the way, they encounter one of the black-hulled longboats of the Fimir under attack from several enormous mutant lobsters (a result of the mutagenic filth following in the wake of the plague ship). The Fimir, led by a Dirach, are holding their own, but could use some help. The plague ship is also harming the Fimir settlement and they are attempting to find and destroy it too. If the PCs suggest it, the Dirach will consider uniting with them and

the fishermen. However, two years ago, some of the fishermen lost wives and daughters to Fimir raids, so some very difficult and delicate negotiations will be required. It should be clear from earlier sightings of the plague ship that the PCs will need all the help they can get, but there is no reason why negotiations should be successful. Once found, the plague ship itself appears deserted and this will give everyone some time to explore the disgusting, rotten ship. Depending on the sort of threats the PCs can handle, sooner or later they will be faced with brown, decaying skeletons, ghostly pirates who died of the plague at sea, animated fungus, collapsing floors and beams or slimy sails that drop from above and attempt to smother them. If they are not already allied with them, the Fimir will eventually show up, although the final outcome is by no means certain. It would be good if the PCs are given the chance to realise they and the fishermen are not up to the challenge and the Fimir are ultimately needed to overcome the threat.

The Fugitive: A Dirach with a special knowledge of trap construction was sent from his own nomadic clan to a Fimir settlement to give advice on the construction of additional defences. In return, he was to be gifted with information about several Daemons unknown to his own clan. However, after a few weeks in the settlement, the Dirach realised not all was well and that the Fimir clan he was visiting had turned to Chaos. In the course of his escape, his personal Daemon ally was destroyed and his Magic has been lost to him (his Magic Characteristic is temporarily at 0); now, he is alone and terrified, desperately trying to locate his nomadic clan before his pursuers catch him. The fugitive's clan is named for its Meargh who lost an arm to a Chaotic Daemon, possibly the very one who corrupted those Fimir that now pursue him. In order to survive and reach his clan, the Dirach may need the help of the PCs. Or the PCs may meet the Chaotic clan first and end up helping them, before they realise their mistake. The Dirach is relying on his knowledge of traps to keep his pursuers at bay, and it may be through one of these traps that the PCs first become involved.

One of Our Dirach is Missing: A Meargh discovers that a Human Daemonologist and his henchmen have kidnapped one of her Dirach while away from the settlement. He is



being held captive in a secure house on the edge of a Human town. She suspects the Daemonologist is using her Dirach as a living spell ingredient to summon Daemons. The Meargh wants to deal with this upstart Daemonologist herself (against the advice of her other Dirach), but requires some non-Fimir to help her pass through Human lands and avoid the sun, which is where the PCs come in (this *really* upsets the other Dirach). The PCs may want to confront the threat themselves, but will probably need the magical skills of the Meargh to deal with any Daemons called up by the Daemonologist. Although warned to stay out of it, the Meargh's other Dirach and Fimm Nobles have no trust at all in her guides, and secretly follow. Who knows what trouble they'll get into when they get to town?

The Enemy of my Enemy: Several merchants with influence over a local council have suffered attacks on their caravans. All attacks have taken place during heavy fog, so the details given by the survivors are vague. In addition, not all bodies are accounted for. The primary suspects are marauding Orcs, but the word 'Fimir' has been whispered. As a cheap solution, the council hires a bunch of adventurers to check things out. The council fails to mention the word 'Fimir', but the PCs overhear other people muttering it under their breath, along with, "I wouldn't want to be in their boots!" and similarly worrying comments.

The truth is that a group of Orcs *are* responsible for the attacks. However, they have also been causing problems for a small nomadic Fimir clan which is resting in the region. The PCs are likely to meet up with Fimir patrols before they meet up with the Orcs. Depending on how that first encounter goes, the PCs may return home expecting a pat on the back for dealing with the Fimir, only to be informed a week or so later that they owe the council money because there's been another attack. Preferably, the first encounter may be a little less hostile, giving the PCs time to discover what the Fimir know, namely that the Orcs represent a larger force of something unpleasant that has its eyes set on the town. Once this information has been exchanged (and the PCs may have to offer something to get it), that may be the last they need to see of the Fimir. However, if you want to see two enemies coming together to fight a greater mutual enemy, then have the Orcs allied to Chaos, and give the Fimir an incentive that PCs can use to persuade them to form an anti-Chaos alliance with the local townspeople. It will be a heart-warming sight. The situation could be complicated even further if the Chaos force has kidnapped the clan's apprentice Meargh for its own ends. The rescue of the apprentice by the PCs could be the price the Meargh demands for her help in defending the town. Or, half the PCs form a PC/Fimir team to attempt a rescue during the battle for the town, while the remaining PCs defend the town, acting as liaison and keeping the peace between the Human and Fimir forces.

Tidal Race: A Campaign Coconut

The following campaign outline was written long before most of the preceding material. Although it has been modified and added to, elements may not sit entirely comfortably with all of the above. For example, the campaign strongly suggests that a civilisation local to Araby (but predating it) was the probable place of origin of the Fimir, but this is by no means certain (see **On the Origin of the Fimir**). Inconsistencies are not necessarily a bad thing given the mysteries surrounding Fimir belief, but GMs should feel free to add, remove, change and mould material in whatever way they like. After all, a campaign coconut is just a rather large scenario seed, and it is up to the GM to grow and shape it.

There are two distinct phases to the campaign. The first phase is very much an introduction: there are no *direct* encounters with the Fimir and as a result it is possible to run it with starting PCs. The PCs should be left with an abiding hatred of Fimir, but unable to do anything about it at this point. There follows an interlude during which the GM should run a variety of other adventures, many not involving the Fimir, but also others allowing the PCs (and players) to discover more about the Fimir and their society. This interlude is entirely in the GM's hands.

The second phase can begin whenever the GM wants it to, and allows the PCs to pick-up where they had to leave off before. Hopefully, the PCs will be a little tougher, a little wiser and a little more knowledgeable about the Fimir and their beliefs. However, the second phase should not be rushed into, not because of the level of challenge (which is easily tailored), but because it involves meeting Maris on the Wandering Island. Unless the PCs (and players) have had previous opportunities to discover the depth and some of the details of Fimir belief in other encounters, then the final stages of the campaign may lack interest and relevance for them.

Finally, it is vital to remember that the meaning and significance of the campaign's closing stages are nowhere near as clear-cut as they may seem. The meeting with Maris takes place on the Wandering Island, and because of the nature of that place it is by no means certain (and probably unlikely) that the Maris who is encountered is *the* Maris. Regardless of what this woman or the Fimir believe, she may be an echo, or a memory, or a figure from a story created through centuries of Fimir belief and storytelling. In fact, the more she appears to fit with the traditional Fimir image of Maris, the less likely it is that she is the true Mother of the Fimir. Alternatively, the woman encountered by the Fimir and PCs may never claim to be Maris at all, content to let the Fimir and PCs make assumptions about her. Or, she claims that the name 'Maris' holds no meaning for her; after all, the

origin of the Fimir is so long ago that this name may have no connection to the original individual it refers to. The concluding sequence of **Tidal Race** needs to be considered within the context of the rest of the article, in particular the descriptions of Maris and the Wandering Island in **Memories of the Waterland**, and not taken or presented at face value.

Synopsis

Thousands of years ago, when the Fimir were first arriving in the Old World, a longboat made the hazardous journey northwards, bringing with it the sacred items of Fimúl the Mud God to their new home. Before land was reached, the ship was caught in a terrible storm off a remote coast, battered against the rocks and lost with all hands.

The place where the ship sank is now a few miles inland, part of a great coastal marsh. The marsh contains a few scattered Human settlements, mostly fishing villages. There are known to be Fimir in the marsh, though the villages have suffered only occasional depredations - infrequent enough that most people are prepared to take the risk and remain there.

After a winter of heavy rain, the remains of the ancient longboat rise to the marsh's surface. They are far enough from any settlement, Human or Fimir, to remain undiscovered at first, but as the ghosts of the crew try to resume their journey, they enter one of the coastal villages. The villagers get the fright of their lives and start frantically recruiting anyone who can help them. This is where the PCs come in.

After a few ghostly encounters, some disturbing dreams, and a great deal of rather fraught wandering around the marsh, they discover the longboat, its ghosts and its treasures. The main thing they find is an amulet in the shape of a heart. They do not find the sacred relics of Fimúl. Given Fimúl's connection to marshland, his treasures dissolved into it a long while ago. The heart, however, is a talisman given to Fimúl by Maris, so that he might remember her.

At this point in the campaign, the PCs are encouraged by an NPC to hide the amulet, go away and have other adventures, while this campaign goes on hold. However, in time, circumstances persuade them to dig out the amulet from wherever they hid it, and begin investigating it in earnest.

After various tribulations involving libraries, sinister alleged scholars and lying Meargh translators, the PCs discover that the amulet contains directions for finding the *Star of the Sea* - an incredibly potent magical treasure on which an ancient civilisation was founded... until it was (allegedly) destroyed by the Fimir. The Star is now located on the legendary

Wandering Island, but part of the directions explain how to find the island. They now face a race between themselves and the Fimir to reach the Star first.

Meanwhile, reports arrive of tremendous rumblings in the Wasteland. Both Fimir and Humans have been found dead, apparently choked on mud. One unfortunate village has been destroyed in a horrific mudslide. Worst of all, similar events are beginning to happen outside the boundaries of the marsh. Fimúl the Mud God, denied his memory of Maris after thousands of years, is no longer quiescent, and his fury knows no limits.

It should be clear to the PCs that this strange threat is linked to earlier events regarding the Fimir longboat, and that only by using the Star of the Sea can they fend it off. They must reach the Wandering Island, see off the Fimir and bring the elusive Star to Fimúl before he can wreck the entire area. The minor catch is that the Star is a metaphor: it refers not to a gem but to the royal line of the Waterland, the line that ended with Maris, and of which she is now the sole representative.

Village of the Dammed

The adventure begins when two fishermen whose village further up the coast is apparently being haunted recruit the PCs in Marienburg. The fishermen are very vague about the nature of the haunting: they know only that “ghostly monsters” are menacing the village. Nobody has been killed, although someone might have died of fright. The fishermen take the PCs by sea and then inland; the village is located on a large estuary in the midst of a great coastal marsh on the western edge of the Tumble Downs (north-west of Marienburg; see *Marienburg: Sold Down the River* for a simple map). Encounters with Razorbills are entirely acceptable, as it doesn't matter unduly if the PCs arrive injured. An encounter with Fimir is possible, but let it be a passive encounter, perhaps a glimpse of Fimir longboats through fog whilst the PCs are still at sea.

After reaching the village, the PCs meet the villagers, get the lie of the land and maybe do a little exploring. There are relatively few farms in the area; apart from Marienburg, the nearest settlement of any size is Fort Solace. The air is cool and smells of salt and decaying sea-life. It is lonely and often fogbound. The villagers are curious about the PCs, but retain the traditional Tumble Downer suspicion of strangers; it will be up to the PCs to make friends.

Initially, the PCs see nothing, but they are occasionally disturbed or woken by villagers who have seen something or had strange dreams. The villagers describe what they have seen as monstrous, reptilian things like giant lizards. The

depictions are reminiscent of whatever the characters know of the Fimir. This part of the adventure should be about roleplaying and getting to know the villagers. Dangerously thick fog and rain can be used to discourage PCs from wandering off into the marsh too early; if any were injured travelling to the village, then make them stop and heal. Some small-scale village intrigue can come into play.

After a couple of nights, the PCs have a shared dream, in which they are sailing during a storm. They seem to be some sort of giant reptilian creatures. They know they should not be out in this weather, but their cargo is vital and must be brought to its destination. One of the PCs dreams he is washed overboard and this wakes him up. For a moment, he glimpses something in his room, but then it is gone. However, the door is open. Exploring the village in the dark, they (or just him if he fails to wake his companions) see more glimpses and hear odd noises, and through the mist they spot will-o'-the-wisp lights out in the marsh.

The village priest sees his first ghost that night. He thinks he recognises it as being a Fimir, and mentions there are Fimir out in the marsh (though none have been seen near this village in living memory). He also tells the characters that a scholar from Marienburg, Claus Derwin, once visited the region looking for Fimir, though he did not find any. The PCs can head off into the marsh if they wish, but it will be dangerous and the villagers advise against it until the morning.

By daylight, the mist has thinned and the PCs go out into the marshes to explore. They meet ordinary marsh creatures, which might give them a shock or two, and they have the suspicion they are being watched. By night, they continue to have further dreams continuing the journey of the ship. These conclude with their ‘deaths’ as the ship runs aground on rocks.

Down, and Shipping Water

After a few days of exploration and jumping at shadows, the characters discover an ancient, rotting longboat, wreathed in mist and half-sunken in the marsh. Perhaps some insight from the final dream of crashing on rocks points them in the right direction (such as a weathered tip of a rock protruding from the marsh, reminiscent of a tall spire of rock in the dream of the shipwreck). However, the first vague glimpses of the protruding bow are laden with menace.

The ship contains a number of remarkably well-preserved Fimir corpses (unnaturally so, as this is not a peat marsh), but the most interesting thing they find is a large heart-shaped obsidian amulet, upon which is a short inscription in an obscure language.

The amulet sounds hollow. If they break it, it reveals a small,

corroded, but just-readable book made of pages of beaten metal; unfortunately, this is written in *another* ancient script, which academic-types (possibly PCs, more likely NPCs based in Marienburg) can identify as being related to both that on the amulet itself *and* to the Daemonic Tongue. Even if a PC has some understanding of Daemonic, the mix with the other unknown language thwarts translation.

While the PCs are away, a band of Fimir - who believe the villagers are responsible for raising the ghosts, and assume automatically that they have already raided the longboat's secrets - attack the village. (The Fimir themselves have a superstitious dread of approaching the ship, which they know of from their legends.) The characters return to find the menfolk and children of the village dead, and the women gone. The village priest is still alive, barely: he has been nailed to the stockade wall with small Daemonic creatures set to torment him. He is able to whisper some cryptic message and advise the characters to take whatever they have found away from the marsh and hide it somewhere secure; he will attempt to extract an oath from the PCs to do as he asks. When the characters discover the outrage done at the village, they may be keen to exact revenge and rescue the women, but any attempt to track the Fimir will prove fruitless: they have disappeared into the mist. The PCs find they have little to do save to head back to Marienburg.

Writ in Water

The PCs may not do what the priest asked of them. Any attempt by the PCs to translate the mysterious language meet with failure for the time being - no one they speak to can make any sense of it. They may try to find Claus Derwin, who was mentioned by the priest. Derwin is very curious and friendly, but unable to help at this time, apart from pointing out a connection between the language in the metal book and the Daemonic tongue (Derwin is a good man, but not scared of dangerous knowledge). He encourages them to do as the priest asked. If they persist in trying to get it translated, the mysterious language's similarities to the Daemonic tongue prompt unwanted interest from the authorities and less pleasant individuals, which should encourage the PCs to follow the priest's advice and hide the amulet securely. If they decide to sell it to the highest bidder, then fine - they will just have to get it back again at a later date.

Once the PCs have done this, change the focus of the campaign completely. Play a series of unrelated scenarios or another campaign altogether. From time to time, drop worrying little hints that someone or something is watching and following the PCs (gut-feelings, hairs on the back of the neck prickling, shadows moving strangely, figures in the distance that suddenly vanish). Run some Fimir encounters

and adventures (use clans unrelated to the one that appears in this campaign) that begin to show the complexity of Fimir culture and their origin beliefs. In other words, use the material in this article.

When you think the time is right, get the PCs back in the general vicinity of Marienburg. Two things start happening at this point. Firstly, the PCs start hearing rumours of tremors in the Tumble Downs and stories of ghosts in the marsh (Fimúl has finally become aware that the amulet, the token of Maris' love for him, has gone, and he is becoming restless). Secondly, they start having shared dreams again, some similar to the ones they had in the village. After this, they experience a ghostly encounter with the dead village priest, who tells them to take the amulet to Claus Derwin; apart from that instruction he's cryptic and confused. Finally and importantly, they dream of nervous, scared Fimir gathered around the familiar remains of an old longboat, digging, apparently searching for something.

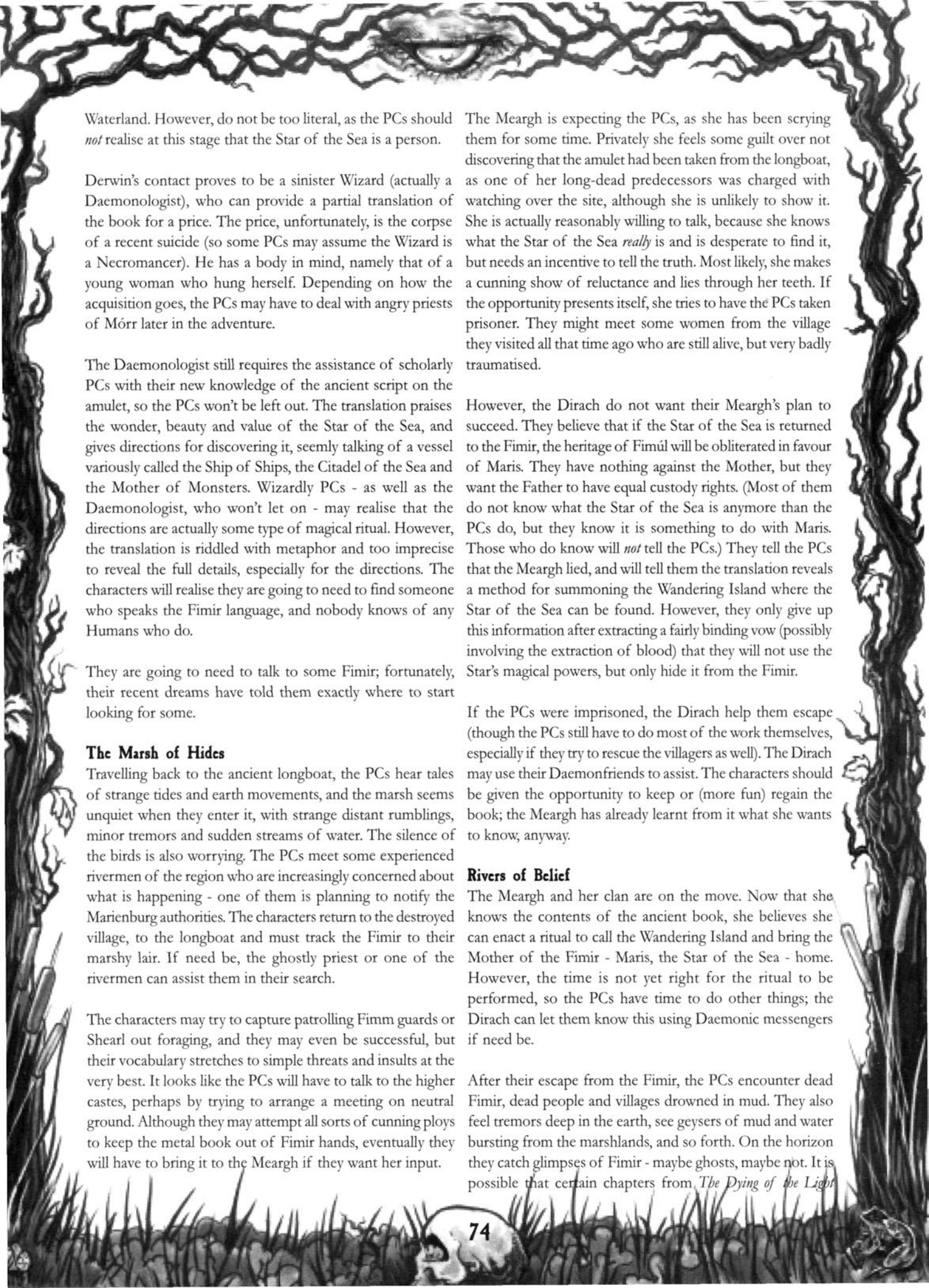
Sea No Evil

Claus Derwin has not forgotten the PCs or the amulet. He arranges a meeting for them with a new contact whom he believes could assist in translation. He also advises the PCs to avoid showing the book to anyone else, because of its Daemonic connections. The script on the broken amulet is a different matter, and he sends the characters off to the Great Library of Marienburg (he has heard that some useful books have recently been brought out from under a dusty heap of less useful ones), where they can discover the following facts.



- The inscription on the amulet is in a script related to but predating the language of ancient Araby, and probably means, "Within me lies the Star of the Sea."
- The Star of the Sea was the name given by a fabled civilisation for the near-mythical magical secret upon which its royal line was founded.
- Creatures very reminiscent of the Fimir destroyed this forgotten land with their Daemonic god, and the Star of the Sea was lost in the catastrophe.

These facts can be presented as a heavily biased and distorted version of the Fimir origin myths from **Memories of the Waterland**, told from the point of view of the men of the



Waterland. However, do not be too literal, as the PCs should *not* realise at this stage that the Star of the Sea is a person.

Derwin's contact proves to be a sinister Wizard (actually a Daemonologist), who can provide a partial translation of the book for a price. The price, unfortunately, is the corpse of a recent suicide (so some PCs may assume the Wizard is a Necromancer). He has a body in mind, namely that of a young woman who hung herself. Depending on how the acquisition goes, the PCs may have to deal with angry priests of Mórr later in the adventure.

The Daemonologist still requires the assistance of scholarly PCs with their new knowledge of the ancient script on the amulet, so the PCs won't be left out. The translation praises the wonder, beauty and value of the Star of the Sea, and gives directions for discovering it, seemingly talking of a vessel variously called the Ship of Ships, the Citadel of the Sea and the Mother of Monsters. Wizardly PCs - as well as the Daemonologist, who won't let on - may realise that the directions are actually some type of magical ritual. However, the translation is riddled with metaphor and too imprecise to reveal the full details, especially for the directions. The characters will realise they are going to need to find someone who speaks the Fimir language, and nobody knows of any Humans who do.

They are going to need to talk to some Fimir; fortunately, their recent dreams have told them exactly where to start looking for some.

The Marsh of Hides

Travelling back to the ancient longboat, the PCs hear tales of strange tides and earth movements, and the marsh seems unquiet when they enter it, with strange distant rumblings, minor tremors and sudden streams of water. The silence of the birds is also worrying. The PCs meet some experienced rivermen of the region who are increasingly concerned about what is happening - one of them is planning to notify the Marienburg authorities. The characters return to the destroyed village, to the longboat and must track the Fimir to their marshy lair. If need be, the ghostly priest or one of the rivermen can assist them in their search.

The characters may try to capture patrolling Fimm guards or Shearl out foraging, and they may even be successful, but their vocabulary stretches to simple threats and insults at the very best. It looks like the PCs will have to talk to the higher castes, perhaps by trying to arrange a meeting on neutral ground. Although they may attempt all sorts of cunning ploys to keep the metal book out of Fimir hands, eventually they will have to bring it to the Meargh if they want her input.

The Meargh is expecting the PCs, as she has been scrying them for some time. Privately she feels some guilt over not discovering that the amulet had been taken from the longboat, as one of her long-dead predecessors was charged with watching over the site, although she is unlikely to show it. She is actually reasonably willing to talk, because she knows what the Star of the Sea *really* is and is desperate to find it, but needs an incentive to tell the truth. Most likely, she makes a cunning show of reluctance and lies through her teeth. If the opportunity presents itself, she tries to have the PCs taken prisoner. They might meet some women from the village they visited all that time ago who are still alive, but very badly traumatised.


However, the Dirach do not want their Meargh's plan to succeed. They believe that if the Star of the Sea is returned to the Fimir, the heritage of Fimúl will be obliterated in favour of Maris. They have nothing against the Mother, but they want the Father to have equal custody rights. (Most of them do not know what the Star of the Sea is anymore than the PCs do, but they know it is something to do with Maris. Those who do know will *not* tell the PCs.) They tell the PCs that the Meargh lied, and will tell them the translation reveals a method for summoning the Wandering Island where the Star of the Sea can be found. However, they only give up this information after extracting a fairly binding vow (possibly involving the extraction of blood) that they will not use the Star's magical powers, but only hide it from the Fimir.

If the PCs were imprisoned, the Dirach help them escape (though the PCs still have to do most of the work themselves, especially if they try to rescue the villagers as well). The Dirach may use their Daemonfriends to assist. The characters should be given the opportunity to keep or (more fun) regain the book; the Meargh has already learnt from it what she wants to know, anyway.

Rivers of Belief

The Meargh and her clan are on the move. Now that she knows the contents of the ancient book, she believes she can enact a ritual to call the Wandering Island and bring the Mother of the Fimir - Maris, the Star of the Sea - home. However, the time is not yet right for the ritual to be performed, so the PCs have time to do other things; the Dirach can let them know this using Daemonic messengers if need be.

After their escape from the Fimir, the PCs encounter dead Fimir, dead people and villages drowned in mud. They also feel tremors deep in the earth, see geysers of mud and water bursting from the marshlands, and so forth. On the horizon they catch glimpses of Fimir - maybe ghosts, maybe not. It is possible that certain chapters from *The Dying of the Light*



campaign could be modified for inclusion at this point, particularly Chapter 1, *A Watery Grave*. Travel should be increasingly difficult, but the disturbances caused by a restless Fimúl have not yet reached their peak.

The PCs need to head back to Marienburg to complete their research. While the Meargh may have recognised the more cryptic allusions in the book, the Dirach did not, and the PCs will need to fill in a few gaps. If the GM wishes, they may have to acquire certain ritual ingredients to compensate for not being Fimir themselves. This need not be difficult or take too long, but they may need aid from Derwin. Their Daemonologist acquaintance has, for the time being, vanished, and if other scholars are brought in and realise the Daemonic connection, then leaving Marienburg may be fraught. If priests of Mórr have not already caught up with them for the crime of body-snatching, then they are likely to now (clever PCs may turn them into reluctant allies).

The PCs eventually establish the ritual they need to summon the Wandering Island and the summoning site: the very heart of the marsh, close to a lake or a river. There is a strong hint that they need to perform the ritual before the Fimir do or else there will be real trouble. In reality this just means they need to get onto the Wandering Island soon after it is summoned or else it may vanish before they get the chance, but there is no reason why they should realise this.

While in Marienburg, they hear more about the strange events in the Tumble Downs. The tremors and bogbursts (fast flowing floods of thick mud) are now spreading erratically beyond the marsh's boundaries. If things go on at this rate, Marienburg itself may be threatened. In any case, anything big or powerful enough to influence the earth over such a huge area has to be a cause for concern.

When the characters leave Marienburg, they are discreetly followed by Derwin's Daemonologist and his cronies, including the corpse the PCs got him (now possessed by a Lesser Daemon). He has a clear idea of the value of what the PCs are after, and plans to steal it from them. Clever or lucky PCs might be accompanied by allies in the form of priests of Mórr on the journey ahead.

Tidal Race

Returning to the marsh, PCs encounter small bands of people fleeing towards Marienburg. They also meet representatives of the Marienburg authorities heading into the marsh to assess the situation and perhaps resolve it; an Elementalist specialising in earth and water magic might be amongst them. This may be a good time to introduce a different clan of Fimir, unrelated to the one already encountered. The most likely such encounter is with a Dirach and a number of Fimm

who have come to investigate the disturbances in the marsh; the Dirach may realise that Fimúl is involved. If there are two Dirach in the group, and the PCs explain the situation, then one Dirach will want to report back immediately to his Meargh, but his companion will agree with the opinions of the Dirach who have been aiding the PCs, which could lead to a certain amount of excitement.

The Fimir clan they are now chasing have a head start on the PCs, who have been held up by the diversion to Marienburg and any encounters. However, the Fimir have been slowed by the increasingly severe disturbances in the marsh; some have been injured and the Meargh has been extremely reluctant to waste her energy on magic. In addition, the Dirach who aided them earlier will send their Daemonfriends to assist the PCs within the marsh if need be. With a bit of luck, the characters reach the summoning site slightly ahead of the Fimir band, and can call Wandering Island themselves. A Wizard or Priest is *not* absolutely necessary, but sacrifice of something valuable to the PCs *will* be required (even if it is just paying Experience Points to learn the ritual). However, it does not matter if the Meargh performs the summoning, as long as the PCs are close enough to quickly follow them onto the island.

A great mist rises, through which a vast rocky mass can just about be made out. The crossing to the island is easy though a bit unnerving due to the lack of visibility. The GM should remember that the arrival of the Wandering Island is a major event and take time to describe it as atmospherically as possible. As they cross to the island, the characters can hear the hunting cries of Fimir in the mist. The sounds seem to come from all around them. The Meargh and her band have caught up with them, and there are Fimir ahead on the island, too.

Although the island seems small, it takes several days to reach what seems to be the centre, longer if the GM wants to use the themes and environment of the Wandering Island to increase the PCs' understanding of the Fimir. The GM may wish to incorporate any ideas and theories the PCs/players have been formulating about the origins and beliefs of the Fimir. Whatever happens, the characters find themselves retracing the collective history of the Fimir in reverse, from their present marsh-bound outlaw existence, the war with the Jutones, through their great migrations and eventually to a bright land of clear water: the land of their birth. It is possible to run a series of adventures that are not directly related to the progression of this campaign, in which the PCs lose their connection to their 'modern' world and become a part of a more primitive pre-Empire world; they may even begin to forget the world they have left behind. During this time the Fimir, who find this landscape of memory much

easier to navigate, are likely to overtake them, but they may be confused by events and experiences that do not fit seamlessly with their current beliefs and stories. (At this point it is worth recommending Robert Holdstock's *Mythago Wood* sequence of novels once more, as these offer an insight into using the Wandering Island during this part of the campaign.)

Eventually, by however complex a route, the characters reach the centre of the island (or at least what they believe to be its heart). Here they find a great and beautiful palace, sunlit and seeming to overlook a great river delta. The Meargh and her followers are already there (and seem unaffected by the light). The Daemonologist turns up very shortly afterwards (he may be greatly changed by his experiences on the island), desperate to stop anybody else claiming the Star of the Sea. A three-cornered battle for the Star is likely to ensue. It may be further complicated if Fimir from other clans or the representatives from Marienburg have become involved. The battle is watched from a high balcony on an obsidian tower by a young woman who eventually calls a halt to the slaughter. She has the magic, Daemons and elementals to persuade all but those with a death wish to do as she says; even the Meargh is cowed.

The woman is the Star of the Sea: Maris, the Mother of Monsters, herself. She is appalled by what her children have become, but she cannot bring herself to blame them; instead, she blames Humanity for rejecting them. If the characters

do not finish the Meargh off, she will implore Maris to return to her children. The Daemonologist, adaptable fellow that he is, will try to put himself in a position where he can exploit the somewhat naive Maris' magical powers. The PCs' main concern should be to persuade Maris to somehow stop the devastation emerging from the marshlands, and then to return to her faraway wanderings. (Keep in mind the points made at the start regarding the reality of this woman being the true Mother of the Fimir. When the PCs eventually leave the island, allow them a brief glimpse of *another* tower poking above the treetops, one that seems deeper into the island than the one that they have just visited. However, by this point it should be too late for them to go back.)

The outcome depends partly on how the battle went, but most importantly on the persuasive powers of the PCs. Maris is inclined to let Humanity be punished for its treatment of her children, but she is also upset that her lover, Fimúl, is in pain. It is therefore likely that she can be persuaded to go to the edge of the Wandering Island (but *not* off it) and soothe his troubled spirit. The destruction will cease that same day.

I must go now, my children, and leave you to a world that is harsh and cruel, a world that forces you to be harsh and cruel merely to survive it. But bear my words, my sons, my daughter. Know them and remember them: I will always love you, as will your father. Go with my blessing, and live.



HEROES OF THE FIMIR

Meargh: Tell me, stepdaughter: what are the principle powers of the five Sea Lords? Rank them in order of might and tell me which of their icbors is most beneficial to the healing arts and which smell the most fragrant.

*Apprentice Meargh: *sigh* Mother, you know you haven't taught me of the Sea Lords yet. You've been promising to for the last three blinks of Fimil's eye.*

Meargh: Ach! You foolish child! Haven't I taught you plenty about other Daemons? If you want to learn about the Sea Lords, then summon and ask the Daemons that you do know of. More importantly: learn to lie! Make it up! Creativity and improvisation are your two most powerful allies. You never know when you'll have to bluff some stupid Humans. They'll never know the difference if you're imaginative and interesting enough.

Fimir Characteristics

The characteristics given below are for average Fimir of each caste, but individual Fimir inevitably vary. A range of possible skills are also suggested for each caste, and these will go some way towards turning a group of Fimir into individual characters, but GMs should remember that characteristics and skills do not make personalities. As an alternative, GMs could take the basic Shearl characteristics and apply appropriate careers to the various castes. Skill Mastery is also applicable – for example, a Shearl may not be that clever, but could still be an able tracker, so a *Follow Trail* (+20%) skill is reasonable. Note: In characteristic terms there is very little difference between Fimm and Fianna Fimm, the latter apparently originating as elite troops for *Warhammer Fantasy Battle*. For convenience, GMs may wish to use the same characteristics for both and rely on the physical and social differences alone to distinguish those sub-castes.

Shearl

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
33%	9%	40%	35%	20%	14%	18%	14%
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
1	16	4	3	4	0	0	0

Possible Skills: Animal Care, Common Knowledge (Fimir), Concealment, Follow Trail, Outdoor Survival, Row, Sail, Search, Secret Signs (Fimir), Set Trap, Silent Move, Strike to Stun, Swim, Trade (Armourer), Trade (Brewer), Trade (Carpenter), Trade (Cook), Trade (Fisherman), Trade (Miner), Trade (Mason), Trade (Shipwright), Trade (Smith), Trade (Tanner), Trade (Weaponsmith).

Common Talents: Flee!, Keen Sense (only for Shearl who can smell women), Natural Weapons, Night Vision, Rover, Specialist Weapon Group (Entangling), Wrestling.

Armour: None

Armour Points: None

Weapons: Club, Quarterstaff or Mace, Net. A Shearl's claws count as Natural Weapons.

Fimm

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
43%	19%	50%	35%	30%	14%	18%	14%
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
1	16	5	3	4	0	0	0

Possible Skills: Command, Concealment, Dodge Blow, Follow Trail, Intimidate, Outdoor Survival, Row, Sail, Search, Secret Signs (Fimir), Set Trap, Silent Move, Swim.

Common Talents: Disarm, Flee!, Natural Weapons, Night Vision, Rover, Specialist Weapon Group (Two-handed), Strike Mighty Blow, Strike to Injure, Strike to Stun, Sturdy, Unsettling, Wrestling.

Armour: Medium (Ragged Mail Shirt) or Heavy Armour (Ragged Mail shirt with a Belly-shield).

Armour Points: Body (2 or 4)

Weapons: Two-handed Axe or Hammer. A Fimm's claws count as Natural Weapons.

Fianna Fimm

WS	BS	S	T	A _g	Int	WP	Fel
43%	19%	50%	35%	30%	14%	18%	14%
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
1	19	5	3	4	0	0	0

Possible Skills: Command +10%, Concealment, Dodge Blow, Follow Trail, Intimidate, Outdoor Survival, Row, Sail, Search, Secret Signs (Fimir), Set Trap, Silent Move, Swim.

Common Talents: Disarm, Flee!, Natural Weapons, Night Vision, Rover, Specialist Weapon Group (Two-handed), Strike Mighty Blow, Strike to Injure, Strike to Stun, Sturdy, Unsettling, Wrestling.

Armour: Medium (Ragged Mail Shirt) or Heavy Armour (Ragged Mail Shirt with a Belly-shield).

Armour Points: Body (2 or 4)

Weapons: Two-handed Axe or Hammer. A Fimm's claws count as Natural Weapons.

Fimm Noble

WS	BS	S	T	A _g	Int	WP	Fel
53%	29%	50%	42%	40%	24%	28%	14%
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
2	21	5	4	4	0	0	0

Possible Skills: Command + 20%, Concealment, Dodge Blow, Follow Trail, Intimidate, Navigation, Outdoor Survival, Perception, Row, Sail, Search, Secret Signs (Fimir), Set Trap, Silent Move, Speak Language (one of Reikspiel, Norse, Wastelander, Bretonnian, Kislevite or Albionian), Swim.

Common Talents: Ambidextrous, Disarm, Flee!, Natural Weapons, Night Vision, Rover, Specialist Weapon Group (Two-handed), Strike Mighty Blow, Strike to Injure, Strike to Stun, Sturdy, Unsettling, Wrestling.

Armour: Medium (Ragged Mail Shirt, sometimes Helmet) or Heavy Armour (Ragged Mail Shirt with a Belly-shield, sometimes Helmet).

Armour Points: Body (2 or 4), sometimes Head (2)

Weapons: Two-handed Axes or Hammers (one in each hand). A Fimm Noble's claws count as Natural Weapons.

Dirach

WS	BS	S	T	A _g	Int	WP	Fel
33%	9%	40%	30%	30%	24%	28%	14%
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
1	18	4	3	4	2	0	0

Possible Skills: Academic Knowledge (Astronomy), Academic Knowledge (Daemonology), Academic Knowledge (History), Academic Knowledge (Magic), Academic Knowledge (Theology), Channelling, Command + 20%, Concealment, Dodge Blow, Follow Trail, Heal, Hypnotism, Intimidate, Magical Sense, Navigation, Outdoor Survival, Perception, Performer (Storyteller), Prepare Poison, Read/Write (Fimar), Row, Sail, Search, Secret Signs (Fimir), Set Trap, Silent Move, Speak Language (two of Reikspiel, Norse, Wastelander, Bretonnian, Kislevite or Albionian), Shadowing, Speak Arcane Language (Daemonic), Speak Arcane Language (Magick), Swim, Torture, Trade (Herbalist).

Common Talents: Aethyric Attunement, Arcane Lore (Lore of Daemonology), Dealmaker, Divine Lore (Lore of Fimúl), Flee!, Meditation, Menacing, Natural Weapons, Night Vision, Public Speaking, Resistance to Poison, Rover, Schemer, Surgery, Will of Iron, Unsettling.

Armour: None

Armour Points: None

Weapons: Large Sacrificial Dagger (treat as hand weapon), Staff, Dagger. A Dirach's claws count as Natural Weapons.

Special Rules:

- *Lore of Fimúl:* Magic available to a Dirach is represented by the combination of the Lore of Chaos and the Lore of Spirits (the latter from the *Old World Bestiary*). However, the spells of the Lore of Chaos should be stripped of any connection to the powers of Chaos (unless the Dirach has been corrupted). For example, *Boon of Chaos* becomes *Boon of Fimúl*. Dirach are not subject to the Wrath of the Gods, Tzeentch's Curse or any other side effects, protected from harm by the power and love of Maris and Fimúl.

- *Fimir Mist*: Dirach and Meargh can create a magical fog to surround the Fimir as they travel in sunlight. One or more Dirach and Meargh make a Casting Roll and for every 3 points scored on the combined total an area of six yards is covered by the mist. Any non-Fimir entering the mist must make a successful *Will Power* Test or suffer a 10% penalty to their *Will Power* while within it. The mist can be made slightly poisonous: a Casting Roll is made as normal, but for every 6 points scored on the combined total an area of six yards is covered by the poisonous mist. Non-Fimir within the poisonous mist must make a successful *Toughness* Test to resist the poison or suffer streaming eyes and coughing, resulting in the following penalties: M-1, WS-10%, S-1, T-1, Ag-10%, WP-10%. Missile fire is impossible within a Fimir mist.
- *Daemonic Affinity*: No *Will Power* Test is required to control most non-Chaotic Daemons when summoned. Chaotic Daemons are only summoned by Dirach who have turned to Chaos, and a *Will Power* Test is required to control them. Summoned Daemons are subject to the instability rule described in the *Old World Bestiary*, rather than remaining for 1d10 minutes as described in the spell. This rule can be effectively replaced by the *Lore of Daemonology* (see below).

Meargh

Aged under 100 (often still apprentices, though not always)

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
33%	9%	40%	30%	30%	34%	28%	24%
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
1	18	4	3	4	2	0	0

Aged 100-250 (recently become clan leader)

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
43%	19%	50%	40%	40%	44%	38%	34%
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
1	19	5	4	4	3	0	0

Aged 250-500 (an established clan leader, known to other clans)

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
43%	19%	50%	40%	50%	54%	48%	44%
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
1	21	5	4	4	4	0	0

Aged 500-1500 (a powerful creature)

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
43%	19%	50%	40%	60%	64%	58%	54%
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
1	21	5	4	4	4	0	0

Aged 1500 upwards (still powerful, but weakening a little physically)

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
33%	19%	30%	40%	50%	74%	68%	54%
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
1	19	3	4	3	4	0	0

Possible Skills: Academic Knowledge (Astronomy), Academic Knowledge (Daemonology), Academic Knowledge (Elementalism), Academic Knowledge (History), Academic Knowledge (Magic), Academic Knowledge (Theology), Channelling, Command + 20%, Concealment, Dodge Blow, Haggle, Heal, Hypnotism, Intimidate, Magical Sense, Navigation, Outdoor Survival, Perception, Performer (Storyteller), Prepare Poison, Read/Write (Fimar), Search, Secret Signs (Fimir), Silent Move, Speak Language (Reikspiel/Norse/Wastelander/Brettonian/Kislevite/Albionian), Shadowing, Speak Arcane Language (Daemonic), Speak Arcane Language (Magick), Swim, Torture, Trade (Herbalist).

Common Talents: Aethyric Attunement, Arcane Lore (Lore of Daemonology), Dealmaker, Divine Lore (Lore of Maris), Fearless, Flee!, Master Orator, Meditation, Menacing, Natural Weapons, Night Vision, Public Speaking, Resistance to Magic, Resistance to Poison, Rover, Schemer, Surgery, Unsettling, Will of Iron.

Armour: None

Armour Points: None

Weapons: Large Sacrificial Dagger (treat as hand weapon), Staff, Dagger. A Meargh's claws count as Natural Weapons.

Special Rules:

- *Lore of Maris:* Magic available to a Meargh is represented by the combination of the Lore of Chaos, the Lore of Manann and the Lore of Spirits (the latter from the *Old World Bestiary*), plus spells drawn from other Lores; all are listed below. However, spells from the Lore of Chaos should be stripped of any connection to the powers of Chaos (unless the Meargh has been corrupted). For example, *Boon of Chaos* becomes *Boon of Maris*. Meargh are not subject to the Wrath of the Gods, Tzeentch's Curse or any other side effects, protected from harm by the power and love of Maris and Fimúl.
- *Fimir Mist:* Meargh and Dirach can create a magical fog to surround the Fimir as they travel in sunlight. One or more Meargh and Dirach make a Casting Roll and for every 3 points scored on the combined total an area of six yards is covered by the mist. Any non-Fimir entering the mist must make a successful *Will Power* Test or suffer a 10% penalty to their *Will Power* while within it. The mist can be made slightly poisonous: a Casting Roll is made as normal, but for every 6 points scored on the combined total an area of six yards is covered by the poisonous mist. Non-Fimir within the poisonous mist must make a successful *Toughness* Test to resist the poison or suffer streaming eyes and coughing, resulting in the following penalties: M-1, WS-10%, SB-1, TB-1, Ag-10%, WP-10%. Missile fire is impossible within a Fimir mist.
- *Daemonic Affinity:* No *Will Power* Test is required to control most non-Chaotic Daemons when summoned. Chaotic Daemons are only summoned by Meargh who have turned to Chaos, and a *Will Power* Test is required to control them. Summoned Daemons are subject to the instability rule described in the *Old World Bestiary*, rather than remaining for 1d10 minutes as described in the spell. This rule can be effectively replaced by the **Lore of Daemonology** (see below).

The Lore of Maris

Lore of Chaos
Lore of Manann
Lore of Spirits
All Petty and Lesser Magic Spells
Earth Blood (Lore of Life)
Earth Gate (Lore of Life)
River's Whisper (Lore of Life)
Daemonbane (Lore of Light)
Re-animate (Lore of Necromancy)
Raise the Dead (Lore of Necromancy)
Cure Wounds (Lore of Shallya)

Fimir Rituals

A Meargh may know a number of rituals, most of which are for summoning specific, powerful Daemons. For example:

Summon Balor

Type: Arcane
Language: Fimar
Magic: 3
XP: 300

Ingredients: Ritual sacrifice of six Fimir.

Condition: Two other spellcasters each with a Magic Characteristic of at least 1 must chant in unison for entire casting time.

Consequences: If the casting roll fails, then six Fimir have died without anything being gained, and another summoning attempt cannot be made for a full month.

Casting Number: 27

Casting Time: 1 hour

Description: If the ritual succeeds, Balor, Daemon Prince, is summoned into the world to fight for the Fimir. He focuses his attention on the most powerful foes available to him in the immediate area. If summoned by non-Fimir, Balor will attack the summoner, unless the summoner succeeds in a contested *Will Power* Test.

Summon Kroll

Type: Arcane
Language: Fimar
Magic: 3
XP: 300

Ingredients: Ritual sacrifice of one to nine living, intelligent creatures; each tentacle summoned requires one sacrifice; the whole of Kroll requires nine.

Condition: Two other spellcasters each with a Magic Characteristic of at least 1 must chant in unison for entire casting time.

Consequences: If the ritual fails another summoning attempt cannot be made for a full month.

Casting Number: 29

Casting Time: 1 hour to summon one or more tentacles, 2 hours to summon the whole of Kroll

Description: If the ritual succeeds, Kroll (or up to eight of her tentacles) is summoned. If Kroll is summoned, then she appears in the summoner's immediate vicinity, and will follow the summoner's commands. If one or more tentacles are summoned each can appear in one or more places of the summoner's choosing, *no matter how distant*, where each will carry out one specific command given by the summoner after which each returns from whence it came. If summoned by non-Fimir, Kroll will attack the summoner, unless the summoner succeeds in a contested *Will Power* Test.

Summon Firest

Type: Arcane

Language: Fimir

Magic: 3

XP: 300

Ingredients: An offering of a creature or person with one of the following talents: Dark Lore, Dark Magic, Frightening, Menacing, Terrifying or Unsettling, and/or intelligent creatures who can become Firest's victims. These are all required by Firest to be alive. One such offering is required for each day the summoner wishes Firest to remain in the real world.

Condition: Two other spellcasters each with a Magic Characteristic of at least 1 must chant in unison for entire casting time.

Consequences: If the ritual fails, another summoning attempt cannot be made for a full month.

Casting Number: 22

Casting Time: For 1 hour per day Firest is required to exist in the real world whilst the Fimir harvest wood; it should be equal to the number of offerings (see above) made.

Description: If the ritual succeeds, Firest appears in the summoner's immediate vicinity, and Fimir can enter it to harvest wood. After the period determined by the length of the ritual, Firest must test once per day for instability as per the special rules for Daemons in the *Old World Bestiary*.



A Fimir Bestiary

The WFRP2 rulebook and the *Old World Bestiary* provide a small selection of Daemons. The most useful of these are the Daemon Imp and Lesser Daemon from the rulebook. The Daemons in the *Old World Bestiary* are all Chaotic and are therefore unsuitable for normal Fimir. However, GMs can still make use of the raw characteristics and rules and apply them to non-Chaotic Daemons of their own making. For convenience, a number of new Daemons are described below. These Daemons are designed to be unusual and untraditional (for WFRP), and in some cases to provide potential plots in their own right. The Fimir themselves were inspired by creatures from folklore and some of the Daemons below have their basis in folk tales. GMs may wish to pursue this angle and develop additional Daemons accordingly.

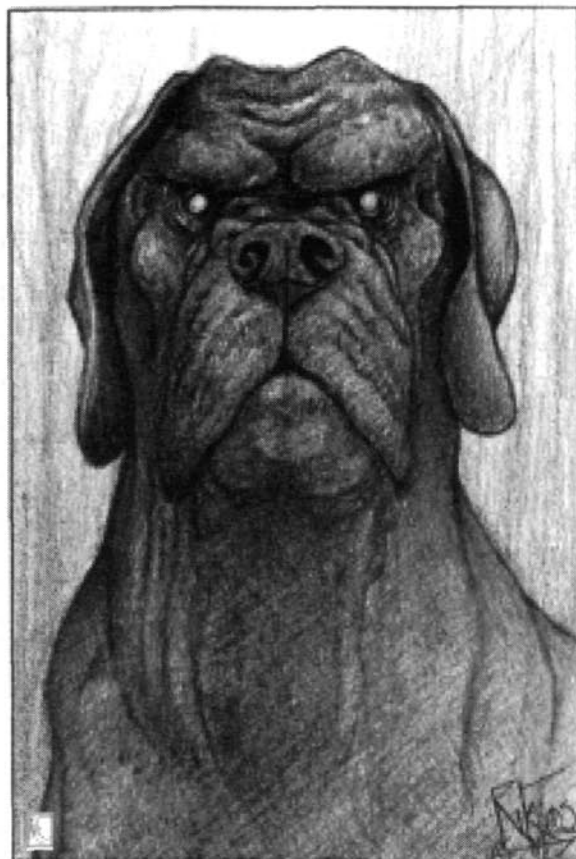
No new non-Daemonic monsters are suggested as the Fimir and their Daemons and elementals are a big enough threat themselves. It would have been good to recommend a number of interesting creatures from the *Old World Bestiary*, but sadly many creatures from WFRP1 have been all but forgotten. Creatures from WFRP1 relevant to Fimir environments included: Amoebae, Giant Beetles, Bloodsedge, Bog Octopi, Dragon Turtles, Fen Worms, Hydras, Monstrous Leeches, Razorbills, Sand Clams, Otters, Snakes, Swarms and Marshlights. Fortunately, some fans are taking up the slack and producing WFRP2 conversions of these creatures – examples are found at the Black Industries website and Andrew Law's site at www.hapimeses.com. As suggested in **Fimir Settlements**, some Fimir use Bloodsedge and small Sand Clams as defences. GMs should think about how the Fimir might use (or perhaps even train) other creatures to their advantage.

Black Shuck

There are countless tales of massive black-haired hounds stalking the moors in search of prey, terrorising livestock and lonely travellers alike. These hounds are sometimes called Black Shuck or Shock. At least some stories are based on the Daemonic hounds summoned by Fimir as trackers or as allies in battle. They are commonly used when raiding villages that have dogs - the Shuck enters the village and attempts to subdue the dogs so they do not bark and alert people when the Fimir enter the village. The Shuck may lead the dogs away from the village or even turn them against the villagers when the Fimir attack. The Fimir of the eastern fenland of Albion are especially fond of these devil dogs, which form a significant part of that region's folklore.

Black Shuck are about the size of large War Dogs (up to 4 feet at the shoulder, up to 6 feet nose to tail) and with coats of coarse and spiky hair or sometimes smooth black velvety fur.

They often only have a single glowing eye, reported as being the size of a dinner plate



WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
43%	0%	32%	35%	30%	19%	43%	0%
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
1	10	5	3	6	0	0	0

Skills: Follow Trail, Perception +10%, Shadowing, Silent Move, Swim.

Talents: Alley Cat, Daemonic Aura, Fearless, Frenzy, Frightening, Keen Senses, Natural Weapons, Night Vision, Rover, Strike to Injure.

Special Rules:

- Alpha Male:** A Black Shuck can attempt to dominate up to 4 dogs or 1 wolf as a Full Action. Each target animal must make a *Will Power* test. Any target animal that fails falls under the influence of the Shuck and will follow its lead.
- Instability:** Black Shuck are subject to instability as described for Daemons in the *Old World Bestiary*.

Armour: None

Armour Points: None

Weapons: Tooth and Claw

Cromara

Cromara are Daemons with the form of exceptionally healthy hornless dun-coloured cattle. They are not particularly malevolent and are only marginally above animal intelligence. Countless centuries ago they may have been associated with some long forgotten rural or agricultural god. Fimir usually only summon them to steal cattle; a Cromara will become part of a herd only to entice the other cattle away at night, leading them into the lands of the Fimir. However, Fimir also summon Cromara to milk them when there are baby Fimir to feed. Farmers and herdsman know the folk tales about these creatures, but are completely unaware of any connection to the Fimir. In fact, many herdsman would love to have a Cromara amongst their herd for a short time, as it is said the bulls father calves of great vigour, and often twins at that. The catch, of course, is stopping them leading the herd away. Cromara often lead cattle away to greener pastures if the farmer is a cruel one. Cromara do not start fights and their usual reaction to being attacked is to run away as fast as they can. Cromara bulls do not start fights either, but will stand and fight if the odds are on their side.



WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
33%	0%	50%	50%	30%	10%	20%	-
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
1	24	5	5	7	0	0	0

Skills: Swim.

Talents: Daemonic Aura, Fearless, Natural Weapons, Unstoppable Blows.

Special Rules:

- *Follow My Leader:* The ability of a Cromara to encourage ordinary cattle to follow them is automatic and can only be overcome by killing or dispelling it. However, any attack that fails to destroy a Cromara cow outright will cause it to run away, closely followed by any cattle in the vicinity. Cromara bulls may run away as an alternative to fighting, as a stampede of cows following it is a more effective attack than anything it can manage alone.
- *Fertility:* Cromara cows that can be persuaded to stay with a normal herd (usually achieved by treating them very, very nicely) give twice the milk of a normal cow and give birth to twins when mated with normal bulls. Cromara bulls mated with normal cows always father healthy twins. Cromara bulls and cows prefer to ignore one another.
- *Instability:* Cromara are subject to instability as described for Daemons in the *Old World Bestiary*.

Armour: None

Armour Points: None

Weapons: Horns

Fuath

These magnificent horses appear as meek, but splendid steeds just demanding to be sat upon and ridden. However, anyone foolish enough to sit on a Fuath's back is swiftly carried off deep into the lands of the Fimir. The Fimir often use these Daemons as a cunning method of kidnap, but do not ride them themselves. Sometimes the Daemon is instructed to attempt to drown anyone who sits on its back by riding into the nearest body of deep water.

Fuath can appear as almost any breed and sex of horse, but whatever form they take they appear as magnificent, docile animals. However, as soon as they are mounted they become uncontrollable and gallop off, mad of eye and flared of nostril, their skin foamed with sweat.

Notes: Fuath in the form of: ponies or mules have Strength 20%; riding horses have Strength 30%; draft horses have Strength 40%; warhorses have Strength 50%. Ponies, mules and riding horses have 8 Wounds, draft horses and warhorses have 16 wounds. The GM should decide what sort is used according to how much of a challenge the PC can cope with.

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
33%	0%	20-50%	35%	30%	15%	10%	-
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
1	8/16	2-5	3	10	0	0	0



Skills: Navigation, Swim.

Talents: Daemonic Aura, Fearless, Flee!, Frightening (only when their true nature is revealed), Keen Senses, Natural Weapons, Orientation.

Special Rules:

- *Hell Ride:* The instant someone sits on its back, the Fuath races off, either into the lands of the Fimir or into the nearest body of water in an attempt to drown the victim. The best way to escape this is to leap from the Daemon's back, but given the speed at which it runs, this is a terrifying prospect. In order to do so, the character must make a *Will Power* test (the Ride Skill and Fearless Talent provide bonuses). If successful, the character finds the courage to jump, but takes Falling Damage as for a six yard fall (5) as they hit the ground (armour does *not* reduce the amount of damage done). It is possible for a character to draw a small weapon such as a knife or dagger and attack the Daemon whilst sat upon its back. However, if the character successfully kills the Daemon it collapses and the rider will go down with it in a terrible heap. This results in Falling Damage as for a 9 yard fall (7) when they hit the ground (armour does *not* reduce the amount of damage done). If the Fuath successfully carries the rider into a lake or a river, the rider is dismounted and the Daemon, which can breathe underwater, attempts to drown its victim. A combat is run, in which the victim's Weapon Skill Tests are Challenging; additionally, the victim is treated as though he is Suffocating (page 136 WFRP).
- *Instability:* Fuath are subject to instability as described for Daemons in the *Old World Bestiary*.

Armour: None

Armour Points: None

Weapons: Kicking Hooves

Maris' Ravens

The Fimir believe these raven-like Daemons were specially created by Maris to act as spies and messengers for her children. Meargh and Dirach sometimes use them to harass Humans, either by attacking them directly (usually in numbers) or by becoming a friendly nuisance. Although very similar to natural ravens, Maris' Ravens are far more intelligent and are capable of understanding and speaking many languages. Although evil, they can be quite charming and, unless specifically ordered otherwise, quite happily converse with anyone who listens, feeding the listener all sorts of news and gossip, only some of which is likely to be true, although they are (nearly) always truthful to the one who summoned them. They cheerfully allow Humans to bribe them for aid and information with gems and shiny gold coins, only to rip them off with lies, half-truths and botched jobs.

These Daemons appear as perfectly ordinary ravens. It is only on very close inspection that one can see that they possess only a single large black eye. This discovery is likely to label them as mutants rather than Daemons, although the effects of instability and their disappearance from the real world following 'death' also reveal their true nature.



WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
33%	0%	10%	10%	35%	35%	20%	40%
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
2	6	1	1	2(8)	0	0	0

Skills: Blather, Charm, Concealment, Dodge Blow, Evaluate, Follow Trail, Navigation +10% , Perception +10%, Search +20%, Silent Move +10%, Shadowing + 10%, Sleight of Beak, Speak Languages (various).

Talents: Daemonic Aura, Dealmaker, Fearless, Flee!, Flier, Hoverer, Keen Senses, Mimic, Natural Weapons, Orientation, Public Speaking, Schemer, Sixth Sense.

Special Rules:

- *Instability:* Maris' Raven are subject to instability as described for Daemons in the *Old World Bestiary*.

Armour: None

Armour Points: None

Weapons: Unarmed

Greenteeth

In many parts of the Old World, the locals speak of Peg Powler, Peg o'Nell or Jenny Greenteeth, malevolent spirits that look like pale and slender women who lurk in ponds and rivers waiting to catch and drag unwary children into the water and drown them. Despite appearing thin and weak, their arms and fingers are extremely strong and capable of great and sudden elongation, so they can grab hold of victims and drag them into the water. Fimir summon these water Daemons to terrorise local Humans. They might do this out of simple spite, but also



if they want to drive locals or settlers away from the area without revealing the existence of the Fimir. They also summon them for the purpose of kidnap, the Daemon dragging its victim to some isolated spot on the river where they are passed into the claws of the Fimir. The Fimir might summon half a dozen or more of them to attack riverboats, where they can reach from the river with their long arms and pull sailors from the deck and drown them. If appearing in a beautiful form, a Greenteeth may be subtler in its attacks and may talk to her potential victim, luring him closer as she sits on the bank with her feet in the water or trying to entice him to join her swimming.

Greenteeth appear as skinny women, sometimes very pretty or seductive, sometimes old, ugly and terrifying, with very long hair, which is often an unusual colour like pale green or a watery blue. Their slim and bony arms are very long with equally long and slender fingers, all capable of sudden and alarming elongation.

Greenteeth must be summoned from a body of water (at least the size of a pond or stream) and never leave the water, although having one foot dipped into the water is sufficient.

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
50%	42%	40%	30%	60%	62%	65%	14/50 ¹
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
2	12	4	3	6/4 ²	0	0	0

¹ The different Fellowship scores represent an old or ugly Greenteeth and a pretty, seductive one respectively.

² Greenteeth have a Movement of only 4 when forced onto land.

Skills: Charm (only in beautiful form), Concealment (in water only), Silent Move (in water only), Swim +20%.

Talents: Daemonic Aura, Fearless, Frightening (once true nature is revealed), Natural Weapons.

Special Rules:

- *Elastic Limbs:* The arms and fingers of Greenteeth are capable of sudden elongation allowing them to remain in the water and make grab attacks at victims on the shore or on boats and rafts. If the victim is successfully grabbed, no damage is done, but the victim is pulled into the water. With the victim in the water, the Greenteeth, who can breathe underwater, attempts to drown them. A combat is run, in which the victim's *Weapon Skill Tests* are Challenging; additionally, the victim is treated as though he is Suffocating (page 136 WFRP2).

- **Instability:** Greenteeth are subject to instability as described for Daemons in the *Old World Bestiary*. However, if a Greenteeth is pulled completely out of the water, then it must check for instability every round.

Armour: None

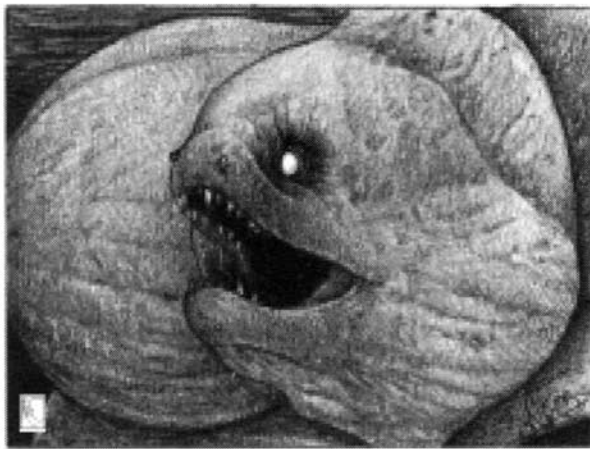
Armour Points: None

Weapons: Claws and Teeth

Morga

Morga are huge eel-like sea Daemons capable of wrapping themselves around the hull of all but the largest of warships. Fimir usually summon them to scare off, harass or attack sea-going vessels and sometimes to attack lighthouses and coastal villages. On rare occasions, a Morga is summoned to pull a Fimir longboat if the Fimir need to travel very speedily, or even magically bound into the hull of a longboat. Morga are not particularly clever and their vicious bite attacks are made against the ship or other structure they are attacking as often as they are against living targets.

Morga look just like gigantic eels 30 to 60 feet in length, with smooth black, dark grey or dark green skin.



WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
56%	-	72%	65%	30%	14%	89%	-
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
2	-1	7	6	10	0	0	0

¹ For every 10 feet of body length a Morga has 15 Wounds. Morga are between 30 and 60 feet in length (usually depending on how much of a challenge the GM wishes the PCs to experience).

Skills: Concealment (in water only), Shadowing (in water only), Silent Move (in water only), Swim +20%.

Talents: Daemonic Aura, Contortionist, Fearless, Natural Weapons, Strike Mighty Blow, Strike to Stun, Terrifying, Unstoppable Blows.

Special Rules:

- **Body Slam:** These brutal attacks involve the Morga smashing its huge bulk into the target. The attack has the Impact and Pummelling Qualities, and requires a Full Action.
- **Constriction:** These attacks involve the Morga wrapping its sinuous form around its target (a ship, building or a Humanoid over 10 feet tall, but nothing smaller) and squeezing. It requires a Full Action. Once a Morga has made a successful attack it automatically does normal damage, with the Impact Quality, each round without needing to make an attack roll. Only when the Morga's Wounds have been reduced to half its maximum (or the next successful attack is made upon the Morga if it was already below half) is the sea serpent forced to release its grip (though it may attempt to make another constriction attack next round).
- **Instability:** Morga are subject to instability as described for Daemons in the *Old World Bestiary*. However, if by some extraordinary means a Morga is pulled completely out of the water, then it must check for instability every round.

Armour: None

Armour Points: None

Weapons: Powerful Jaws, Whip-like Body

Pantocs

Pantocs are Daemons of silence and secrecy serving an unknown god. Whilst these entities are known of by Daemonologists of other races, not a great deal is known about them. However, they apparently hate the Slaaneshi Daemons known as Keepers of Secrets. They are highly variable in form and ability, and never speak. When summoned, the only task they can be persuaded to perform is one involving promoting silence or secrecy. No bargain is apparently necessary as the act of keeping a secret itself seems to satisfy them. Fimir typically use Pantocs to recover the bodies of Fimir killed in Human lands to prevent them being studied and characterised.

Pantocs can take the shape of almost any creature or object. However, that shape will appear to be no more than a shadow, one that can be as substantial as the thing it represents or as



fine as smoke. Their silence and placid invulnerability when in non-solid form can provoke a profound sense of unease.

No Characteristics, Skills, Talents, Armour or Weapons details are given, as these depend entirely on the form the Pantoos takes.

Special Rules:

- *Placid Invulnerability:* A Pantoos can instantly become as substantial as smoke, rendering it immune to physical attack (as well as being incapable of inflicting the same).
- *Instability:* Pantoos are subject to instability as described for Daemons in the *Old World Bestiary*.

Balor – Daemon Prince

Balor is described earlier in the article, but is essentially a giant Fimm Noble with full belly-shield and a two-handed axe in each claw.

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
69%	25%	80%	56%	65%	40%	55%	10%
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
3	35	8	5	6	0	0	0

Skills: None are given, as Balor is powerful enough without getting additional advantages. GMs should feel free to add non-combat skills if they require Balor to be more than a simple thug, using the Fimm Noble details (pg 78) as a guide.

Talents: Ambidextrous, Fearless, Natural Weapons, Specialist Weapon Group (Two-handed), Frightening, Unstoppable Blows, Wrestling.

Special Rules

- *Eye of Doom:* Balor can make a gaze attack as a Free Action. Success inflicts 2d10 Wounds and one Insanity Point, regardless of the target's TB or AP.
- *Mighty Weapons:* Balor can fight with a two-handed weapon in each hand.
- *Tail Blade:* Balor's tail is equal to a sword and gives him an additional free Parry or free Standard Attack each round.
- *Instability:* Balor is subject to instability as described for Daemons in the *Old World Bestiary*.

Armour: Heavy Armour (Belly-shield with side-plates, Helmet)

Armour Points: Head (3), Body (3)

Weapons: Two-handed Axe in each hand

Kroll – Daemon Prince

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
45%	45%	76%	56%	70%	60%	65%	40%
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
9 ¹	50/12 ²	7	5	6/12 ³	0	0	0

¹ Kroll's Attack Characteristic depends on the number of sacrifices made to her, and thus how many tentacles she can extend into the physical world, 9 representing Kroll in her entirety with her powerful beak.

² The first number represents Wounds for Kroll as a whole; the second number represents Wounds for an individual tentacle.

³ The first number represents movement through a marsh, bog or river, the second through deep, open water.

Skills: Sleight of Tentacle

Talents: Contortionist, Disarm, Fearless, Frightening, Natural Weapons, Terrifying (when the whole of Kroll is visible).

Special Rules

- *Flailing Tentacles:* Kroll's tentacles count as Hand Weapons with the Fast, Impact and Snare Qualities.
- *Powerful Beak:* Kroll's Beak counts as a Hand Weapon with the Impact Quality.
- *Instability:* Kroll is subject to instability as described for Daemons in the *Old World Bestiary*.

Armour: None

Advanced Armour: None

Weapons: None

Lore of Daemonology

WFRP2 has removed the ritualistic elements of summoning Daemons. This may speed play, but it lacks a sense of drama and danger. The following describes the process a Daemonologist goes through to summon and control a Daemon. It represents a new Arcane Lore (Daemonology), but Academic Knowledge (Daemonology) and Speak Arcane Language (Daemonic) are both required to make use of the talent. The Lore of Daemonology is an alternative to the Lore of Chaos spells *Summon Lesser Daemon/Daemon Pack* and the Lore of Light spell *Daemonbane*.

Meargh and Dirach are not typical Daemonologists and differences are described in italics where relevant.

Lore Skill: Command.

True Name

Before a Daemonologist can summon a Daemon he must know its True Name. This is not the name the Daemon commonly goes by (such as Merikon the Destroyer) or a generic title (such as Bloodletter of Khorne), but a secret, individual name. It could be as simple as *Ven'rut* or as awkward as *Manatanardinanatrussss*. A Daemonologist must discover these names. He can learn them from his Master during his apprenticeship, find them in dusty tomes and grimoires or translate them from ancient temple walls, or trade and buy them from other Daemonologists. However, True Names are not easy to come by. Daemons guard their names with great care, and even mutually antagonistic Daemons do not reveal their enemies' True Names for fear of having their own revealed in return. Typically, a Daemonologist knows only a handful of

names, relying on the same Daemons time and time again. Consequently, twisted relationships develop between Daemons and Daemonologist over time.

The Fimir know the True Names of many, many Daemons, handed down the generations from Maris herself.

Rules: Acquiring the talent Arcane Lore (Daemonology) gives the Daemonologist knowledge of one True Name, usually of a Daemon Imp. Discovering True Names of other Daemons can be roleplayed - the Daemonologist seeks out someone knowledgeable and persuades or pays him to reveal a few names. Alternatively, if the Daemonologist has access to ancient tomes discussing Daemons, then a successful Speak Arcane Language (Daemonic) Test will reveal a number of True Names equal to the Degrees of Success. Each True Name will take a week's research to discover, and the Daemonologist can abandon his research at any point. The nature of the Daemon is in the GM's hands.

Circles of Protection

The first magical technique a Daemonologist learns is how to create a Circle of Protection. A Circle of Protection is a magically created space into which a Daemon can be summoned, but through which it cannot pass. Furthermore, the Daemon cannot return from whence it came until it is dismissed (*not* the same as being **Dispelled**, see below). Circles are normally drawn on the floor with chalk or wax, with various magical symbols incorporated into the design. Candles, circles of salt or blood, or lengths of rope may also be part of a Circle. Since most Daemons are highly dangerous until successfully bargained with or bound into service, Circles of Protection are essential. A Circle of Protection must be large enough to contain the Daemon it is intended to hold.

The Fimir create Circles of Protection as a gesture of respect for a Daemon's power, rather than out of fear. A Daemon summoned into a Circle created by a Fimir does not have to wait to be dismissed, but can vanish at will, although it cannot pass through it. However, the majority of Daemons summoned by the Fimir are willing to talk to their summoner.

Rules: A Circle of Protection takes at *least* half an hour to prepare properly and requires a successful Arcane Knowledge (Daemonology) Test to be effective. The GM should make this roll secretly: if it fails, the player is told the PC has obviously ruined the Circle and must try again; however, if it fails by three Degrees or more, the Daemonologist is oblivious to an error in the Circle's creation, and the player is told the Circle has been produced successfully. The boundary of a successful Circle of Protection cannot be crossed by a Daemon summoned into it unless the Circle is damaged or the summoner gives the Daemon permission to leave it. (GMs are free to make exceptions for an exceptionally powerful Daemon

or for plot-related reasons, but a successful *Will Power* Test by the Daemon would be a fair requirement.)

Circles created by Meargh or Dirach are very simple (a circle of poured blood or drawn with a claw in the mud, for example) and take a minute or less to create, unless they are for exceptionally large Daemons such as Morga. Due to a Circle's simplicity, it is always obvious if the Arcane Knowledge (Daemonology) Test has failed and the Circle requires redrawing. However, the Daemons the Fimir summon are rarely actively hostile towards the Fimir, so a failed Circle does not always worry them.

Summoning

The magical act of summoning a Daemon Imp takes at least a quarter of an hour; longer is required to call forth more powerful Daemons. During this time, the summoner focuses on the Circle of Protection, calling the Daemon by its True Name and demanding it appear before him within the Circle. The True Name is what enables the Daemonologist to command the Daemon's attendance, but his power is enhanced by appropriate spell ingredients and the assistance of other Wizards and Priests. Some Daemons must be summoned into suitable environments: Greenteeth and Morga can only be summoned in appropriately sized bodies of water. Remember that if a Circle of Protection has not been created or prepared properly, then any Daemon summoned is free to do as it wishes.

Rules: The Daemonologist makes a Casting Roll and must achieve a target Casting Number. The more powerful the Daemon, the higher the Casting Number required. The following are suggested Casting Numbers for Daemons in the rulebook, the *Old World Bestiary* and this article: Daemon Imp, Chaos Fury, Cromara, Maris' Raven (10); Lesser Daemon, Bloodletter of Khorne, Daemonette of Slaanesh, Horror of Tzeentch, Plaguebearer of Nurgle, Black Shuck, Fuath, Greenteeth (14); Morga (18-22 depending on size); Pantoes (variable). A bonus to the Casting Roll can be applied if the Daemonologist has assistance from other Wizards or Priests (who also have the relevant skills and talents), equal to the assistants' Magic Characteristics. Sacrificing self aware living creatures gives a spell ingredient bonus: +1 per sacrifice to a maximum of +3. If the summoning fails, the Daemonologist cannot attempt to summon the Daemon again for at least a month. A Daemon summoned in this way is subject to instability as described in the *Old World Bestiary* rules for Daemons, rather than remaining for the 1d10 minutes given in the *Summon Lesser Daemon/Daemon Pack* spells.

The above is true for the Fimir.

Bargaining

Having a Daemon in a Circle of Protection is one thing; getting it to do one's bidding is another entirely. Bargaining is one approach to getting it to do something useful. This involves the Daemonologist proposing a task and the Daemon saying

what it wants in return, followed by haggling. However, the Daemon is under no obligation to accept any task or offer the Daemonologist makes and most Daemons will only agree to attempt to fulfil a task to the best of their ability, *not* guarantee success. The GM should decide what the Daemon will accept in return for a task, but should remember that gold and gems normally hold little interest for such creatures. The Daemonologist may renege on the deal, and this should have plot-related consequences. It is in the nature of Daemons to attempt to fulfil a bargain it has agreed to, even those of Chaos, although they will often follow bargains literally, so it is important to get the wording of bargains precise.

Rules: Best roleplayed, but may be resolved through an opposed Haggle Test. The GM should ensure the Daemonologist has to give the Daemon something sufficient to balance the task it is set, either before or after the task is attempted.

The Fimir rarely have to bargain, having access to a wide range of willing Daemons, many of which have long-standing arrangements with the Fimir race. However, Daemons who do require something in return for a task are the starting point for plots bringing Fimir and PCs together.

Binding

Sometimes bargaining fails or the Daemonologist is not very generous. In this case he can attempt to bind a Daemon through sheer force of will. The Daemon is bound to one specific task set by the Daemonologist. The Daemonologist can be aided by assistants as in summoning. Binding a Daemon normally makes an enemy of it. Although a Daemon will attempt to fulfil a task it is bound to, it will follow its orders to the letter and take advantage of any loopholes it can, in an effort to take revenge on its binder. Therefore, precise wording of tasks is vital.

Fimir never bind Daemons. It is considered the most appalling bad manners and could lead to the breakdown of goodwill between them.

Rules: To bind a Daemon, a Daemonologist must win an opposed Will Power Test with it. A bonus to the Degrees of Success is applied if the Daemonologist has assistance from other Wizards or Priests (who also have the relevant skills and talents), equal to the assistants' Magic Characteristics. A wand from an oak tree struck by lightning adds +1 to the Degrees of Success. If the Daemonologist is successful, the Daemon is bound and *must* fulfil one task given to it. If he fails to bind the Daemon he must dismiss it (see below) and cannot summon it again for another month.

It is possible to try binding a Daemon already bound to another, but the Daemon gets a bonus to its Degrees of Success equal to its original binder's Magic Characteristic (*not* including those of the binder's assistants).



A Daemonologist attempting to bind a Daemon without knowing its true name suffers a -1 modifier to his Degrees of Success.

Dismissing Daemons

Sometimes, a Daemonologist cannot bargain with a Daemon and fails to bind it. The only option is to tell it to return from whence it came.

Rules: The Daemonologist simply says, "Go!", or, "You are dismissed from my sight," and the Daemon will vanish. However, this assumes the Daemon is still contained within a Circle of Protection; if not, it will have to be dispelled.

Dispelling Daemons

A Daemonologist may be faced by Daemons summoned by his enemies or threatened by one he summoned which escaped from a badly drawn or accidentally damaged Circle of Protection. Fortunately, he has another option other than fighting or fleeing: he can try to dispel it.

Rules: Dispel Daemon is a Full Action, involving an opposed Will Power Test between the Daemonologist and Daemon. If the Daemonologist is successful, the Daemon is forced to return from whence it came. The Daemonologist can be aided by assistants (who must also take the Dispel Daemon Full Action and have the relevant skills and talents) in the same way as summoning, but sacrifices provide no benefit.

If the Daemon has been bound by another Daemonologist, then it gets a bonus to its Degrees of Success equal to its binder's Magic Characteristic (*not* including those of the binder's assistants).

A Daemonologist attempting to dispel a Daemon without knowing its true name suffers a -1 modifier to his Degrees of Success.

Note that only one Daemon can be dispelled at a time – dispelling multiple Daemons at once requires the *Daemonbane* spell.

Fulfilling Bargains and Bound Tasks

A Daemon who fulfils a task set as part of a bargain returns to its summoner to inform him of success or failure and receive its payment if it has not already been given it. A Daemon *will* make its best effort to succeed in a task it has agreed to, and for this will expect payment even if it fails. A Daemonologist can renege on the bargain and attempt to dispel a Daemon, but he can never successfully bargain with the Daemon again and will have an enemy for life. When the bargain is concluded, the Daemon vanishes and cannot be summoned again for a full month.

A Daemon bound to a task will return briefly to the one who bound it, inform him of success or failure and then vanish. It too cannot be summoned again for a full month.



END NOTES

In 1996 I had a phone call from my friend Lea Crowe: Hogshead Publishing was looking for submissions for sourcebooks on various races and would I be interested in collaborating on one? Some races were taken already and although the goblinoids would be enormous fun to work on, Lea suggested we try the Fimir. I said yes.

I scoured various Games Workshop publications, rewriting and vaguely developing what little information on the Fimir there was. A few days later, Lea sent me a synopsis, a structure for the sourcebook and, most importantly, the *Tale of the Sons of Maris and the Mother's Exile* found in **Memories of the Waterland**. In the accompanying letter, Lea wrote: "...there is one major point I think mustn't be obscured: the Fimir are *evil*. They are brutal murderous rapists and we can neither change nor excuse that. This will make it quite a challenge to make them anything other than poorly-characterised all-purpose bastards, but I don't want to be caught making excuses for these scum." Lea's ideas for the origin of the Fimir, of Maris and Fimúl and the expulsion from the Waterland, were vital.

Between us we sent a proposal off to Hogshead. Via Lea, I heard that word was positive, although the idea now was to drop any suggestion that Fimir could be taken as PCs (originally the plan for all the race sourcebooks) and turn it from a pure sourcebook into a campaign with background material. Lea and I put together another proposal, this time with **Tidal Race** (largely Lea's work) central to the outline. I eventually heard from James Wallis that he'd liked it, although he thought that the ending didn't work. However, there was a bigger problem.

There'd been a change at Games Workshop. The Games Workshop representative who had originally said Hogshead could consider proposals for a Fimir book had moved on. Their replacement said that Hogshead could not do a book dedicated to the Fimir. So, that was the end of that.

I can't remember when I first started work on the Fimir again, probably 2000/2001, but I was encouraged by the positive reaction to my article, 'The Trust', in *Warpstone* 18. My original notes were written on a dedicated word-

processor and I had to re-type them into the PC, using Lea's original structure to build on - the title and most of the major headings throughout this article are Lea's work. Now I just had to fill in the blanks and get rid of the rubbish (I never did figure out what I'd meant by the "ritual significance of the marsh willow"). At that point, I think I had maybe 5,000 words; as I write this, before editing, there are over 74,000, so that's a fair bit of blank filling, and hopefully not too much rubbish.

My main aim in writing about the Fimir has been to make them more than, in Lea's words, "poorly-characterised all-purpose bastards". Yes, the Fimir are evil, but there are underlying reasons for their behaviour. Not excuses or justifications, but reasons. I also wanted to avoid the worst trap of WFRP, namely that every threat comes down to violent, rampant Chaos. It is easy to see a fusion of man and Daemon as being innately Chaotic, but the WFRP1 rules made it clear that the Fimir are Evil not Chaotic; they aren't just shaven Skaven with eye-patches.

Most importantly, I wanted to give PCs reasons for wanting or needing to actually *talk* to the Fimir, and give the Fimir a willingness to listen, if only warily. For this, the Fimir needed a culture, something bigger than what was offered in the WFRP1 rulebook and supplements. However, characters also need opportunities to interact with the Fimir, or else there'd be little point in their culture being there. This is why the monthly sacrifice is an outlet for Fimir anger, allowing them to react more rationally when faced with outsiders. This is why the rite of petitioning may be invoked by non-Fimir. This is why Meargh have the ability to scry in addition to having other knowledge and powers that could help PCs. This is why Meargh are curious about the outside world, and why some solitary Meargh and wandering Dirach can be found there.

There are, almost inevitably, some contradictions between this article and official material: Balor is not the primary god of the Fimir; the caste of newborn Fimir is not obvious; Daemon summoning is significantly simpler and safer; and there are probably other differences too. I make no apology for this. Personally, I have little time for the idea of 'official' rules and background, but at the same

time I realise that if I'm writing for publication then the official line has to be acknowledged. Any changes are intended either to add something interesting (say, Maris and Fimúl) or deal with perceived problems (making it easier for Meargh and Dirach to summon Daemons despite their low *Will Power*).

I've stopped writing now (well, sort of), but I want to write more. If after reading **Ruinous Inheritance** you have *any* questions, thoughts and ideas regarding the Fimir and the article, then write to *Warpstone*, or post something to the WFRP mailing list or on the forum at www.strike-to-stun.com. If interesting or repeated questions are asked or if there are good ideas, we'll deal with them in a later issue of *Legion*, available free to *Warpstone* subscribers and eventually for download at the *Warpstone* website.

I want to thank John Foody for his advice and suggestions (the Shearl who can smell and track women are his fault, you know), and for always listening to my justifications for doing things a certain way; his positive comments and willingness to go with my ideas undoubtedly helped me keep writing. Lea Crowe deserves special thanks for originally inviting me in on the project, for the structure of the article and for giving the Fimir a soul from which everything else grew. Thanks also to Anthony Ragan, who kindly provided me with the elegantly simple name 'Hellmother' and whose historical details in *Marienburg: Sold Down the River* proved useful. I should also nod my head to Graeme Davis who kindly gave me the names of his co-conspirators in the original creation and design of the Fimir; if you're wondering who the others were, check out the **Travellers' Tales** in **What the Others Know**. Friends from Bangor Wargames and Roleplaying Society (1989-95 give or take) deserve a mention for opening my eyes to what could be accomplished in roleplaying. Finally, my girlfriend Rebecca deserves a hug for putting up with the annoying daily words, "I really should do some writing".

Now, where are my notes on the Zoats?

Robin Low
December 2003



End Notes 2

It's July 2005 and *The Fimir: Ruinous Inheritance* won't be published for a few months yet. However, the article has been looked over by a number of people. We have a rough publication date for *Warpstone* 25, and the artwork is looking *fantastic*. In addition to those I thanked in my first end notes, I must add all the artists who have contributed to this article. Having spent so much time writing and revising, the article has become a little too familiar and most of the excitement now comes from seeing the brilliant pictures the artists are creating for it.

The arrival of WFRP2 necessitated some revisions, but fortunately the article was never very rules-heavy. The excised WFRP1 details should appear on the *Warpstone* website. Although it has good and bad points, I'm pleased to note that some of WFRP2's changes have been in keeping with changes of the WFRP1 rules I made myself to give the Fimir an easier time, Daemonic instability being one example. I've been able to cut a few thousand words as result, allowing room for a set of rules for summoning Daemons.

I was both amused and pleased by the approach taken by the *Old World Bestiary*, an approach I'd taken (albeit in a different style) in **What the Others Know**. Also, the quotes opening **The Sons of Men and Angels** are spookily similar to the 'three quotes' of the *Old World Bestiary*. At the same time I was saddened by the loss of so many lesser creatures and monsters from the original game, especially ones significant to the Fimir. Luckily, there are other fans making the effort to keep them alive. Cheers, guys.

Thanks are also due to the rest of the *Warpstone* team for checking over this rather long article. It's appreciated.

Finally, thank-you for buying this issue of *Warpstone*. Write to let us know what you think - we really do need and value your thoughts, comments and suggestions on all *Warpstone* articles.

Oh, and although it won't be anywhere near as long as the Fimir, I am working on the Zoats.

Robin Low
July 2005