



ΚΥΛΤ ΟΙ ΑΡΤΕΜΙΣ

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Mystery Cults series for the Amazons vs Valkyries adventure setting. The religious cults presented here are just a few of the hundreds that exist in this setting. Some are dedicated to chthonic gods that are almost forgotten, while others worship new deities, such as Alexander the Great. These cults are most common in Greece and the Greek colonies, but also exist in Egypt, Persia, Rome, and Carthage. Even in less civilized lands druids, witch doctors, and other religious leaders join together, keep secrets, pursue common goals, and organize themselves in a hierarchy.

MYSTERY CULTS

Mystery cults are secret societies that exist within religious institutions. Like other secret societies, their existence is well known, but their rituals, lore, and objectives are concealed. Only the initiated are allowed access to these secrets.

Levels of Initiation. Cult membership is divided into a hierarchy of at least twenty degrees or ranks. Some cults have more than sixty ranks. Only the high priestess (or priest) is privy to all the cult's secrets.

Exclusivity. None of these cults require their members to disavow or deny other deities and cults. In fact, many people are simultaneously members of multiple cults.



Cult Secrets. Only the initiated know the true name of the cult's deity, and they are forbidden to speak it to anyone outside the cult. At each level of initiation, a different true name is revealed to the member with only the high priestess knowing the actual true name of the deity. Mystery cults also harbor many other secrets and esoteric lore. Some examples are listed on the table below.

Initiation Fees. Although membership in most cults is open to everyone, initiation rites have fees. These fees offset the cost of the ritual and help support the temple and its ambitions. The amount of the fee increases with each degree and depends on many factors, including how much the applicant can afford and how much the cult leaders desire the new member.

Initiation Times. Most cults conduct initiations once per year. Common dates include the first full Moon after the Winter Solstice, the Spring Equinox, and the Summer Solstice. The process usually involves preliminary ritual purification, eating sacred foods, and confessing of wrong doing. This takes at least three days and sometimes up to two weeks. The actual ceremony begins at sundown and continues until sunrise. During the ritual, the initiates consume psychoactive substances and venture into a deep cavern where they have unnerving encounters with deities and demons.

Membership Advantage. Besides access to secret lore and powerful associates, being a cult member has other perks. Membership can mean that your business wins a lucrative contract from a trade guild or local magistrate. It could mean that your child is educated by an expensive Greek tutor, or your competitor suffers a tragic setback.

Leadership and Members. Cult hierarchies are separate from temple priesthoods. While most leadership positions within the cults are occupied by priestesses (or priests), not all temple priestesses are members of the mystery cult. Likewise, most cult members are not priestesses or employed by the temple; they are private citizens, lawyers, merchants, stage actors, lords, scribes, and princesses.

D20 Secret Lore

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| 1 | Facts about mythical events |
| 2 | Location of an entrance to the Underworld |
| 3 | Location of a gate to another dimension |
| 4 | Location of a prison holding a demon or deity |
| 5 | Formula for creating magical items |
| 6 | Rare spells |
| 7 | Facts about other planes in the multiverse |
| 8 | Facts about a mythical beast |
| 9 | Facts about distant lands |
| 10 | The true ambitions of a major political figure |
| 11 | Archaic or extinct language(s) |
| 12 | Secret of navigating the tunnels of Europa |
| 13 | Lore of a lost or forgotten civilization |
| 14 | Location of a legendary magic item |
| 15 | Clues or answer to a puzzle or riddle |
| 16 | Location of a sacred site |
| 17 | Lore about a humanoid or monstrous race |
| 18 | Lore of a lost, magic-like technology |
| 19 | Location of a magical island |
| 20 | Lore about the Amazons Vs Valkyries conflict |



THE CULT OF ARTEMIS

Domains: Forest, Nature, The Hunt

Location: Anatolia, Ephesus, Greece, Rome (Diana)

Cult Secrets: Archery, Midwifery

Artemis is the daughter of Zeus and Leto and the twin sister of Apollo. The legendary huntress has dominion over wild animals, vegetation, and childbirth. She is the patron and protector of women and young children, particularly girls. Deer and cypress trees are sacred to Artemis. She travels on a chariot pulled by six golden-horned deer and is often surrounded by dancing nymphs. The two symbols most prominently associated with Artemis are her bow which came from the Cyclopes and her hunting hounds which the god Pan gifted to her.

VIRGINAL AND VENGEFUL

Besides her renown for excellence in archery, Artemis is known for her chastity as a virgin and her penchant for seeking vindication when wronged. By remaining a virginal maiden, Artemis ensures that no husband will be her master. She maintains her independence, never to be subservient to a man; Artemis is considered equal in power to male gods.

Artemis's temper flares if she perceives a slight to her chastity or her hunting prowess. On several occasions, Artemis has been seen naked while bathing in the woods—the men were either swiftly killed or permanently changed into animals. Mortals who boast of being a better hunter than her are stalked and killed by wild animals or shot through the heart with an arrow guided by the goddess as punishment for their audacity.

THE TEMPLES

Temples to Artemis are plentiful. Sanctuaries in Greece exist in Brauron, Delos (Artemis's birthplace), Orchomenus, and Sparta. The most notable, however, is the Temple of Artemis (also known as Artemision) at Ephesus on the Western coast of Asia Minor. It is considered one of the seven wonders of the world. The colossal temple, constructed of marble, cypress, and ebony, is 350 x 180 feet. Its walls are adorned with magnificent pieces of art and its central feature is a statue of Artemis built of gold, silver, and black stone.

THE FESTIVALS

Festivals dedicated to Artemis are as numerous as her temples and are held all over Greece, including Attica, Argolis, Brauronia, Elaphebolia, Erchia, Hypsous, Kharisteria, Mounikhia, Orchomenus, and Patrai. The most famous of the festivals are the Feast of Artemis, the Festival of Artemis, the Procession of the Girls, and the Tauropolia Festival.

Feast of Artemis. During this Syracusan feast, worshipers wearing animal masks, one of which must be a female lion, dance in a circle around Artemis's statue.

Festival of Artemis. In this celebration held in the sanctuary at Brauron, girls aged five to ten years dress in saffron robes and pretend to be bears. The girls must serve at the temple for one year to appease the goddess after a young boy taunted and killed a bear in an unsportsmanlike way.

Procession of the Girls. During this celebration held in Sparta, young girls bring gifts to Artemis while singing songs.

Tauropolia Festival. In this Attican festival, Artemis is portrayed as the Bull Goddess who receives a few drops of blood from the neck of male worshippers drawn by a sword.



OATH OF THE WILD

Paladins that take the Oath of the Wild promise to protect the forest's trees and inhabitants from fire, deforestation, pollution, and harm of any kind. They promise to cooperate with good-intentioned fey and always use forest resources wisely. If they eat wild game, they use the entire carcass in one fashion or another—no part of the animal is wasted.

Because these paladins assist villagers in the development of clean water systems, guide travelers through the outback, and share herbal remedies to treat the sick, they are known as Verdant Knights. Paladins that practice the Oath of the Wild maintain vigilance and vengeance in equal measure. Individuals that treat the wildlands with respect have nothing to fear from these paladins, but when a creature disrespects the forest, they meet with swift and definitive retribution from these devotees.

OATH OF THE WILD TENETS

The Oath of the Wild asks its paladins to be stewards of the wildlands, including its vegetation and fey inhabitants.

Provide. I will provide relief to those ailing with nature's healing herbs.

Preserve. I will work to preserve nature by teaching others the ways of conservation.

Protect. I will lend my sword to the fey of the woods to protect them from those that would do them harm.

Punish. I will not let slights to the forest or its inhabitants go unpunished.

OATH OF THE WILD SPELLS

You gain oath spells at the paladin levels listed.

Paladin Level	Spells
3 rd	<i>entangle, hail of thorns</i>
5 th	<i>canine companion, find steed</i>
9 th	<i>conjure barrage, plant growth</i>
13 th	<i>freedom of movement, grasping vine</i>
17 th	<i>commune with nature, contagion</i>



CHANNEL DIVINITY

When you take this oath at 3rd level, you gain the following two Channel Divinity options.

Arrows of the Moon. As an action, you can use Channel Divinity to imbue your bow with the power of the Moon. For 1 minute, your bow inflicts an additional 1d6 radiant damage with each attack. Your arrows also emit a dim light in a 10-foot radius and are magical weapons for the duration.

Kill Shot. As a bonus action, you summon a magical, poisoned arrow to your drawn bow. If you do not attack with it, it disappears after 1 minute. You have a +3 bonus to your attack roll with this arrow, the target takes 1d8 + 3 piercing damage plus 2d6 poison damage. The creature must make a successful Constitution saving throw against your spell DC at the start of each of its turns or take an additional 2d6 poison damage. On a successful save, the poison ends and the creature takes no further damage. After you attack with it, the arrow immediately disappears.



ONE WITH THE WILDS

Starting at 7th level, you are protected from the harsh conditions encountered in the wilderness. You and friendly creatures within 10 feet of you have resistance to cold and fire damage.

At 18th level, the range of this aura increases to 30 feet.

LAND'S STRIDE

Beginning at 15th level, moving through nonmagical difficult terrain costs you no extra movement. You can also pass through nonmagical plants without being slowed by them and without taking damage from them if the plants have thorns, spines, or a similar hazard.

In addition, you have advantage on saving throws against plants that are magically created or manipulated to impede movement, such as those created by the *entangle* spell.

RIGHTER OF WRONGS

At 20th level, you become an avatar of retribution. Using your action, you undergo a transformation. You take on physical aspects of two of nature's most powerful guardians—the unicorn and the treant. You grow a unicorn horn on your forehead, your skin becomes as hard as wood, and your arms grow longer like tree limbs. For 1 hour, you gain the following benefits:

- Your reach increases by +5 feet.
- You gain a +2 bonus to your armor class.
- You gain advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.
- Up to three times while this feature is in effect, you can touch yourself or another creature with your horn as an action to heal 11 (2d8 + 2) hit points of damage. Additionally, this automatically removes all diseases and neutralizes all poisons afflicting the target.

Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a long rest.



FOREST DOMAIN

Deities of nature and deities of the forest both place great value on preserving the wilderness, but their other focuses differ. Deities of the forest maintain a deeper connection with the vegetation and are in tune with the many fey creatures claiming the forest as home. Forest clerics have extensive knowledge of poisonous plants through the study of herbology. They can also communicate with plants and summon fey to their service. These faithful discourage urbanization and often work in concert with dryads, satyrs, unicorns, and treants to protect woodlands.

FOREST DOMAIN SPELLS

Priestess

Level	Spells
1 st	<i>faerie fire, goodberry</i>
3 rd	<i>beast sense, misty step</i>
5 th	<i>conjure animals, speak with plants</i>
7 th	<i>conjure woodland beings, giant insect</i>
9 th	<i>awaken, swift quiver</i>

BONUS PROFICIENCY

When you choose this domain at 1st level, you gain proficiency with an herbalism kit and you gain the *poison spray* cantrip.

CHILD OF THE WILD

At 1st level, you gain a climb speed of 20 feet and proficiency in the Sylvan language.

CHANNEL DIVINITY: FORREST FADE

Starting at 2nd level, you can use your Channel Divinity to disappear into the background much like sprites have learned to do. (This ability is not limited to forest environments.)

As an action, you present your holy symbol and picture your surroundings in your mind's eye. You (and all of your worn and carried possessions) become invisible for 1 minute. If you attack or cast a spell, the effect ends.

CHANNEL DIVINITY: TOXIC SPORES

Starting at 6th level, you can use your Channel Divinity to poison your foes with a cloud of noxious mushroom spores.

As an action, you present your holy symbol and call upon the name of your deity. Each hostile creature adjacent to you is surrounded by a cloud of poison spores and must make a Constitution saving throw. A creature takes poison damage equal to 2d10 + your priestess level on a failed saving throw and gains the poisoned condition for 3 rounds. A creature takes half as much damage on a successful save and is only poisoned for 1 round.

HOGWEED STRIKE

At 8th level, you gain the ability to infuse your weapon strikes with plant poison. Once on each of your turns when you hit a creature with a weapon attack, you can cause the attack to deal an extra 1d8 poison damage to the target. When you reach 14th level, the extra damage increases to 2d8.

FEY BLINK

At 17th level, like blink dogs and other fey, you have learned to travel through space. When you are reduced to 1 or fewer hit points, but not killed outright, you can use your reaction to teleport up to 40 feet to an unoccupied space that you can see. The terrain in a 10-foot radius of the space you leave behind is filled with a jumble of sharp rocks and nettles, creating difficult terrain.

Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a long rest.



APPENDIX: NEW SPELL

CANINE COMPANION

2nd-level conjuration

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 30 feet

Components: V, S, M (a dog whistle)

Duration: 8 hours

You summon a fey spirit that takes the form of a mastiff or other size Medium dog. The dog obeys any verbal commands that you issue to it (no action required by you). If you don't issue any commands to the dog, it defends itself from hostile creatures, but otherwise takes no actions. The dog is either a hunting dog or a guard dog and performs the prescribed task to the best ability of a well-trained canine. It is also considered fey, and it disappears when it drops to 0 hit points or when the spell ends.

The dog is friendly to you and your companions. Roll initiative separately for the dog, which has its own turns.

Guarding. The guard dog will obey several commands including, attack, guard, stay and heel. It guards areas by barking and attacking any intruders other than the caster who summoned it. It guards creatures by barking and attacking anyone that threatens the guarded individual except the caster. Alternately, the guard dog can be commanded to guard prisoners, barking and attacking them if they attempt to escape.

Hunting. The hunting dog tracks scents presented to it by the caster and will attack and subdue the quarry.

The GM has the creature's statistics.



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