

Bast

by Kenneth Hite



Pelgrane Press



BAST

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KEN WRITES ABOUT STUFF

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Contents

Contents			
The Great Goddess Bast	4	Remek-Bast	9
The Cult of Bast	5	13th Age	10
The Many Moods of Bast	6	Quote	11
Trail of Cthulhu	6	Usual Location	11
Brood of Bubastis	6	Common Knowledge	11
Ashen Stars	7	Adventurers & the Icon	11
The Contract	8	Allies	11
Twist	8	Enemies	11
Backstory	8	History	11
Complications	8	The True Danger	11
The Choice	8	Malkin/Cat-Folk	11
TimeWatch	8		



In his essay “Something About Cats,” H.P. Lovecraft asks, “What fully civilised soul but would eagerly serve as high priest of Bast?” And indeed, what soul would not, in any civilization, from Ulthar to England to the Dragon Empire to outer space? Read further that you may join the souls Bast plays with, the many souls pricked by She Who Scratches. Good kitty!

THE GREAT GODDESS

BAST

“MY HEART IS BAST,
I SHALL ASCEND AND RISE UP TO THE SKY.”

– PYRAMID TEXTS (CA. 2300 BCE.)

Bast begins as the patron deity of the city Per-Bast (“House of Bast”), or Per-Bast (*Pibeseth* in the Bible, and *Bubastis* to the Greeks) began as her temple city. Both the goddess and her city first appear in records of the 2nd Dynasty (c. 2890 BCE). If her name doesn’t come from her city, it may come from *bas*, meaning “perfume jar,” or from *bas-t*, roughly “she who devours.” Some scribes wrote her name as *bas-tt*, as though to make sure readers recognized her femininity, leading some modern authorities to call her “Bastet” although it’s unlikely her name was ever pronounced that way.

Bast likely began as one of several local goddesses, all of whom played the same role in Egyptian myth. The Distant Goddess slaughters mankind until she is given beer (later, wine) disguised as blood to drink, then tamed or adopted by Ra. As the Daughter of Ra, the goddess becomes his Eye, and kills the serpent Apep at the end of the Twelve Hours of the Night. She completes the cycle by having a son by Ra, either the

lion-god Maahes (or Mihos) or Horus-Nefertum, who incarnated the smell of the blue lotus or lily and may be related to Bast’s role as Lady of the Perfume Jar. In the *Pyramid Texts*, she becomes the mother of Anubis as well.

The Apep-killing cat begins in myth as Ra transformed, then becomes his daughter – identified as any of several goddesses: Bast, Mut, Pakhet (“She Who Scratches”), Sekhmet, Mafdet (“the Runner,” possibly a cheetah goddess), Tefnut, Neith, Wosret (“the Powerful”), and even Hathor. Inscriptions identify Bast with all of these goddesses; with its theology of multiple souls, and its need to unify a vast and diverse urban empire, Egyptian religion was less picky about separate identities for its deities. A statue found in Bubastis (c. 1850 BCE) is dedicated to “Sekhmet in all her names,” a statue of Hathor is labeled “She Who Dwells in Bubastis,” and an inscription at Philae (150 BCE) describes Hathor-Tefnut: “She rages as Sekhmet and plays as Bast.”

By any name, Bast was an important goddess: Khafren’s temple at Giza (c. 2570 BCE) has only two names on it, Bast and Hathor; Shepseskaf (c. 2510 BCE) was the “beloved of Hathor-Bast.” Bast may thus have represented all of Lower Egypt even in the Old Kingdom. Amenhotep II (c. 1425 BCE) “slew foes in battle like Bast kills along the Road of Amen,” and Amenhotep III (c. 1370 BCE) made a major pilgrimage to Per-Bast to worship “She Who Protects the Lands.” An inscription on the Temple of Mut at Karnak (c. 1400 BCE) refers to Bast as the “Ruler of the Divine Field.” Ramesses II built her great Red Temple in Per-Bast around 1275 BCE and allowed her priestess to be buried in the Valley of Kings. The female pharaoh Tawosret (1191-1189 BCE) made Bast

her patron goddess; around the same time, the vizier Iuty was buried in the Cemetery of the Nobles at Per-Bast, and his son Ay became high priest of Bast.

In the New Kingdom, Bast became more and more associated with the cat as well as the lioness. Egyptian hunters and housewives steadily domesticated the Egyptian desert cat (*felis silvestris lybica*) over the third and second millennia BCE. By 1000 BCE, most depictions of Bast show her as a cat-headed woman dressed in clinging robes, holding an aegis (a shield with a lioness’ head on it, probably invoking her earlier iconography) and a musical instrument called a sistrum. Her city intermittently became the capital of Egypt under the 22nd Dynasty (943-720 BCE), founded by invading desert Libyans who may have wanted to promote their own totem animal into Egyptian godhood. Two pharaohs of the 23rd Dynasty (c. 830-730 BCE) took the name Pedubast, “given by Bast.”

Even after the Libyans left, worship of Bast exploded among the common folk: Bast became a domestic protectress just as the cat became a domestic pet. She not only ruled cats (and thus fertility and music) and perfume (by punning extension from her name), but guarded pregnant women and protected houses from disease, demons, and poison. By the Late Period (664-330 BCE), the cult of Bast was one of the most popular in Egypt; visiting Greeks identified Bast with their goddess Artemis, who turned into a cat to escape the monster Typhon. Under Greek influence, especially after Alexander’s conquest of Egypt, Bast shifted personae from Ra’s sun to Artemis’ moon.

Under the Ptolemies and the Romans, Isis began to absorb Bast. On the temple

Bast

of Horus at Edfu, we read that “the soul of Isis (*ba-Aset*) is present in Bast,” and Isis claims “the city of Bubastis was built for me.” Bast's name also shifts to “Bubastis,” and as Isis-Bubastis her cult spread to Ostia and Pompeii in Italy, Pannonia Superior (modern Hungary and Croatia), and to southern Gaul (we have a Roman inscription to Catia Bubate near Vienne). When the city of Bubastis became a Christian bishopric in 325 CE, her worship was prohibited. Even then, she may have survived in the Languedoc cult of St. Agatha, or Sant Gata (“Holy Cat”), who appears as a cat to those who work on February 5, her holy day.

The Cult of Bast

“I AM BAST, WHO GIVES MY WILL TO ALL MY SERVANTS.”

-- UNDATED INSCRIPTION ON A LAPIS LAZULI CARVING OF BAST

“WHOEVER KILLS A CAT [IN EGYPT], WHETHER INTENTIONALLY OR UNINTENTIONALLY, HE IS CERTAINLY PUT TO DEATH, FOR THE COMMON PEOPLE GATHER IN CROWDS AND DEAL WITH THE PERPETRATOR MOST CRUELLY, SOMETIMES DOING THIS WITHOUT WAITING FOR A TRIAL.”

-- DIODORUS SICULUS, *LIBRARY OF HISTORY*, I:83

The cult of Bast began at Per-Bast, but had spread to Dendera near Thebes and Sakkara near Memphis by the 3rd Dynasty (c. 2600 BCE). By the 6th Dynasty, she has an entire temple compound in Memphis near the pyramid of Teti (c. 2340 BCE). Other cult centers included On (Heliopolis), the “Hill of Bast” near Henen-nesut (Heracleopolis), Taremu (Leontopolis), Ta-senet (Letopolis), Per-Wadjet (Buto), Zau (Saïs), and a so-far unknown site in the Delta called Ba-ir-Ra-st.

Her temple singers had a major role at the court of Merneptah (c. 1210 BCE), which approximately corresponds to the period when Bast begins to be depicted holding a sistrum. This early

tambourine may have originated earlier than that, as a sacred instrument in Per-Bast. Egyptian worship involved sung or chanted hymns; if Bast was indeed the “Lady of the Sistrum” this implies a crucial role for her cult in Egyptian ritual. The priesthood of Bast was not necessarily hereditary, although the position of cat caretaker likely was in the New Kingdom and after. Monetary offerings to Bast paid their salary and the cats’ upkeep: the petitioner shaved half his child’s hair, weighed it, and donated that weight of silver to the cats.

As early as the 8th century BCE, Phoenician traders made and sold Bast-festival commemorative plates and jars as far away as Spain and Cyprus; pilgrims may well have come to Per-Bast from all over the Mediterranean. Certainly by the time of Herodotus’ visit to Egypt (c. 454 BCE), the festival of Bast was one of the biggest in the country. He described it first-hand, as follows:

Now, when they are coming to the city of Bubastis they do as follows: They sail men and women together, and a great multitude of each sex in every boat; and some of the women have sistrums and rattle with them, while some of the men play the flute during the whole time of the voyage, and the rest, both women and men, sing and clap their hands; and when as they sail they come opposite to any city on the way they bring the boat to land, and some of the women continue to do as I have said, others cry aloud and jeer at the women in that city, some dance, and some stand up and pull up their garments. This they do by every city along the river; and when they come to Bubastis they hold festival celebrating great sacrifices, and more wine of grapes is consumed upon that festival than during the whole of the rest of the year. To this place (so say the natives) they come together year by year even to the number of seventy thousand men and women, besides children. [Histories II:60]

Herodotus also describes the law of Egypt at that time: “If any one kill [a cat], the penalty, if he do it with his own will, is death, and if against his will, such penalty as the priests may appoint.” This law did not apply to the priests of Bast, who ceremonially killed cats by the thousand during the festivals when pilgrims paid to place a mummified cat on the temple grounds. When the temple filled up with cats, the priests buried the mummies in enormous feline necropoleis outside Bubastis and Memphis. During the late 18th Dynasty (c. 1330 BCE) priests of Bast actually emptied an older cemetery in the cliffs of Sakkara to use for cat burials; the Ptolemies called this network of (ahem) catacombs the Bubasteion.

Herodotus’ big festival probably occurred during the middle of April; a month later was the joint festival of Hathor and Bast. She appears in procession at the end of August (now the Egyptian New Year), and celebrates another festival in mid-November and another procession in early December. (The modern Coptic calendar moves all these dates a month and a half forward.) Sacred days of Bast also depend on the stars: according to one reading of the Egyptian system of decans (subdivisions of the zodiac), Bast has power over July 14-28, September 23-27, and October 3-17. On the Dendera Zodiac (c. 50 BCE), Bast is pictured below the first half of Aries near the cusp with Pisces (circa March 18-28); thus, the decan Remenhery (Rigel) has been associated with her by some scholars (May 11-20).

By the Ptolemaic period (330-30 BCE), the cult of Bast was a genuine mass religion. The divine name most commonly used in people’s names in that period was Osiris; Bast was the second-most popular. Bast was especially popular with women, who left 90% of the surviving dedications to her. By Roman times, her priests and priestesses wore silk robes of purple and green and linen garments of white and purple, both implying royal patronage. Bast’s temple in Ostia also held a golden belt and a key of unknown purpose.

Ken Writes About Stuff

THE MANY MOODS OF BAST

If even the Egyptians never seemed to settle on a given version of Bast, why should you? She can appear in any game: a lover-rival of Quandos Vorn in the *Gaeen Reach RPG*, or as a feline-themed lady super-burglar with a heart of kibble in *Mutant City Blues*. She could be a possessed murderer in *Fear Itself* riffing off *Cat People*, or appear as the “Outer Dark with a human face” seducing humans into soft-porn archaeology and feckless superstition in *The Esoterorists*.

Herewith, some meatier treats for other Bast-themed Pelgrane games.

Trail of Cthulhu

“... THERE HOVERED OVER THEM SOME TRACE OF THAT PROFOUND AND INVIOLENT SANCTITY WHICH MADE THEIR GODDESS GREAT IN THE TEMPLES OF BUBASTIS.”

-- H.P. LOVECRAFT, *THE DREAM-QUEST OF UNKNOWN KADATH*

Lovecraft never explicitly mentions Bast by name in his fiction, although her cats take center stage in *The Dream-Quest of Unknown Kadath* and most likely “The Cats of Ulthar.” Robert Bloch brings her on stage in more horrific mien in “The Brood of Bubastis,” and alludes to her cult in his Egyptian cycle, especially “Fane of the Black Pharaoh.” Sax Rohmer crosses the streams between occultism and pseudoscience, but avoids cosmicism almost entirely in his mystery *The Green Eyes of Bast*.

As with the discussion of the other gods and titans in the *Trail of Cthulhu* corebook, the following variations on Bast intentionally contradict each other.

- Bast is one of the weak gods of Earth, created by the mutual ambivalence of human and cat. An emergent property of two species’ self-will, she has taken more direct action in the affairs of humanity than the other gods of Earth,

Brood of Bubastis

“JUST HOW NEAR THE OLD PRIESTS HAD APPROACHED THEIR IDEA OF GODHEAD I DARED NOT SURMISE. MANY OF THE BONES BEFORE ME HINTED OF GHASTLY SPAWNINGS BETWEEN BEAST AND MAN.”

-- ROBERT BLOCH, “THE BROOD OF BUBASTIS”

The necromancer-priests of Bubastis, obsessed with creating an ideal vessel for their goddess on Earth, began magically interbreeding selected humans and felines. After hundreds of generations, the Brood of Bubastis resembles a catlike ghoul: long fangs, tearing claws, matted brown fur, and lambent yellow eyes.

Abilities: Athletics 11, Health 6, Scuffling 7

Magic: 3-5 for regular Brood; 10+ for priestess-caste Brood. Contact Bast, Contact Brood of Bubastis (same as Contact Ghoul with slightly different names and sigils), and Sign of Eibon are common Brood spells. Priestesses may have Create Hyperspace Gate, Dread Name of Azathoth, and Elder Sign as well.

Hit Threshold: 5 (horribly quick)

Alertness Modifier: +1 (+2 for hearing and motion sense)

Stealth Modifier: +2

Weapon: +1 (claw), +0 (bite)

Brood can make one claw and one bite attack against the same target in one round. If both claw and bite hit, the brood grapples with its jaws (automatic bite damage each round) and rakes with its hind talons: rake attacks allow two claw attacks per round against the grappled target, whose Hit Threshold is at -1.

Armor: -2 vs. any

Stability Loss: +0

The Chewer of Corpses

She is an enormous specimen – or apotheosis – of the Brood. She may contain the soul-spirit of Bast, or merely be one of the goddess’ avatars. As of 1937, the Chewer is confined to an abandoned tin mine in Cornwall, but her acolyte may have dug her an escape tunnel before she devoured him.

Abilities: Athletics 16, Health 11, Scuffling 25

Magic: 12; all Brood spells plus Contact Nyarlathotep and Contact Mordiggian.

Hit Threshold: 4 (very large)

Alertness Modifier: +2 (+3 for hearing and motion sense)

Stealth Modifier: +2

Weapon: +2 (claw), +1 (bite); special attacks as Brood.

Armor: -3 vs. any

Stability Loss: +1

nurturing her cults both human and feline.

- Bast is an Elder Goddess who first rose to power in Atlantis, ruled

in Egypt, and now dwells in the Dreamlands. Her sacred city is Ulthar, where by ancient law no man may kill a cat. She cares only for humans who have proven their

Bast

devotion to her cats at the expense of their own life or sanity – many such became witches in medieval times.

- Bast is an avatar of Nyarlathotep embodied in a specific pheromonal code, hence her symbolic connection to the perfume-jar. She clings to cats, lions, wendigo, and a very few human sorcerers.
- Bast is a monstrous humanoid beast who shambled on the Earth in primal days, a titan offspring of Shub-Niggurath. After a reign of terror in Lemuria, she established a dark and carnivorous priesthood in ancient Egypt, devoted to creating a fleshly vessel for her spirit. With her brothers Anubis and Sebek, she joined to exalt Nephren-Ka in the waning days of the 3rd Dynasty.
- Bast is a Great Old One, the Distant Goddess who awakens to devour mankind until, drunk on our blood, she sleeps again. Cats, or perhaps *Toxoplasmosis gondii*, are her servitor species.
- Bast is the destroying daughter of Cthugha, sent to spread his terrible fire-magic to humanity. Her “cat form” represents panicked domestication of her power in ancient Egypt. She hates Cthulhu, the principle of Water.
- When Nephren-Ka fell, the cult of Bast fled to Egypt’s colonies in Gaul and Britain.
- Iuwy-Kheruef, a priest of Bubastis in the 13th Dynasty reincarnated from Atlantis, rediscovered the cult’s doctrines and recorded them in the suppressed *Black Rites*.
- At some time in the Ptolemaic or Roman era, Mormo destroyed Bast and absorbed her, a crime reflected in Bast losing her solar identification



and taking on Mormo’s lunar identity. All worship of Bast since then actually serves Mormo.

- Bast was indeed destroyed at some time on Earth, but her dream self survives in Ulthar.
- The spirit of Bast indwells in those born on her sacred day; certain magics can awaken her spirit and fuse it with the human host.
- The spirit of Bast can only indwell in an ideal form – human or feline -- created by necromancy and eugenics.

- Bast can see through the eyes of all cats anywhere.

- The Cats of Saturn worship both Bast and Tsathoggua, her father-brother-husband.

Ashen Stars

“KIRK: WHY A CAT?

SPOCK: RACIAL MEMORIES. THE CAT IS THE MOST RUTHLESS, MOST TERRIFYING OF ANIMALS, AS FAR BACK AS THE SABER-TOOTHED TIGER.”

-- STAR TREK, “CATSPA,”
WRITTEN BY ROBERT BLOCH

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This episode premise for *Ashen Stars* casts Bast as a godlike alien, who plays with humanity as a cat plays with ... you know the drill.

The Contract

The crew arrive on the isolated human-balla world Tanis:

- Escorting a bonded cargo from Old Earth on its final leg, kept in complete stasis and labeled with the utmost in bureaucratic opacity. Without breaching the seal and their contract, the crew can't figure out what's inside: the cargo turns out to be mice, or pre-Mohilar War tubes of Fancy Feast, or *Nepeta cataria* a.k.a. catnip.
- Looking for Arabella Quinzo, daughter of a highly placed official of the Palatine Cluster longshoremen's union. She: followed a boyfriend, or converted to the Tanite nufaith, or has been kidnapped by mobsters who hid out on the isolated world until the heat was off.
- Seeking a cure for a rampaging plague ripping through the tavak world Botig. Plague-specific antibodies have been found in the blood records of the few Tanite citizens encountered offworld, implying that their world knows the plague exists.

Twist

Tanis is full of cats -- and ruled by a godlike entity calling herself Bast.

Bast toys with the crew, appearing as a black cat, beautiful human seductress, dangerous predator, or forty-foot feline specter depending on her whim. Aim her cruel play at their Drives, personal arcs, and psychological weaknesses.

Some non-human crew members see her as their own equivalent animal to a cat:

Balla: See a *vrua*, a felinoid species very similar to your Earth cat, and one of the only three species balla poetic convention equates with sexually

available balla in beauty and grace.

Durugh: See a *grukku*, a carnivorous species used by high lords of the durugh to torture underlings and guard heirs.

Kch-Thk: See a *rr'rkhk*, a legendary "eater of larva" feared and admired in kch-thk myth.

Tavak: See a *divit*, an arboreal pest-eater resembling a large, round-headed Earth flying squirrel, much loved by tavak for its somnolence and placid expression.

Backstory

Tanis began as a nufaith world dedicated to its founders' probably inaccurate understanding of "Kemetic religion." A generation or so before the Mohilar War, Tanis was the subject of *Thirty Pieces of Osiris*, a trivid soap opera (not filmed on Tanis) that became insanely popular among the balla thanks to its innovative use of greenery. This attracted a number of balla converts to Kemeticism, among them the brilliant hyperphysicist and architect Ia (Starglory).

Ia redesigned the Great Temple and attracted -- or summoned, or imprisoned -- a godlike energy being with its geometries. After the War, the colony's economy collapsed and Ia's energy-expensive temple failed. Calling itself Bast, the being emerged to rule Tanis as a goddess.

Complications

- One of the crew (ideally a PC, but a GMC if need be) kills a cat (possibly while testing the plague antidote), and is sentenced to death.
- An emotionally vulnerable PC adopts a cat from Tanis, or a high Tanite official gives the captain a cat as a welcome gift -- although intermittent psionic visions or other tests indicate the cat may be linked with Bast.
- An emotionally selfish Bast bonds with a PC, ideally one who either hates cats or has a strong offworld

connection making the relationship unwise and impossible.

- Bast is actually a Vas Kra, an undeveloped Vas Mal protected by Ia's hypergeometrical temple fields from the Mohilar weapon. Vas Mal players have their own ethical conundrum -- she may indeed deserve their worship, and she certainly demands it. That demand, of course, the modern Vas Mal remember as against their traditions, but Bast knows their memories can't be trusted.

The Choice

Escape Tanis safely or intervene to free the planet from its predatory goddess? Keep in mind the people of Tanis seem happy enough in their cat-filled cities -- although that could be the toxoplasmosis *gondii* talking. Studying a godlike alien also has its own intellectual rewards -- and getting on its good side has many other kinds of reward.

TimeWatch

"THE CATS CAME. THEIR SHIPS GLITTERED IN THE NAKED SKY ABOVE ARACHOSIA. THEIR LITTLE COMBAT CRAFT ATTACKED. THE CATS WHO HAD NOT EXISTED A MOMENT BEFORE, BUT WHO HAD THEN HAD TWO MILLION YEARS IN WHICH TO FOLLOW A DESTINY PRINTED RIGHT INTO THEIR BRAINS, PRINTED DOWN THEIR SPINAL CORDS, ETCHED INTO THE CHEMISTRY OF THEIR BODIES AND PERSONALITIES. THE CATS HAD TURNED INTO PEOPLE OF A KIND, WITH SPEECH, INTELLIGENCE, HOPE, AND A MISSION."

-- CORDWAINER SMITH, "THE CRIME AND GLORY OF COMMANDER SUZDAL"

Nobody knows where, or when, Bast was born. She of course claims to be an Egyptian cat goddess, but TimeWatch is pretty sure she's a 34th century scientific (and criminal) genius. She certainly spent a decade or so in the 34th century creating her loyal servitors the Remek-Bast, genetically engineered shapeshifting cat people. She has also spent at least a decade operating

Bast

without attracting the attention of TimeWatch, changing history by inches toward her great plan, whatever it is. Her agenda seems to be, by and large, devoted to two main causes: weakening powerful or oppressive states (she may also be behind the Roman image of the goddess Libertas: a beautiful woman with a cat at her feet) and increasing her own influence.

The worst part? She may have already succeeded in enough shifts that removing her from history irreparably changes what TimeWatch thinks of as the “true” time stream. There are certainly enough weird discontinuities in the myths of Bast to make time meddling a plausible explanation, at least.

Bast’s sleeper agents may have completely infiltrated the timestream. Historically vital figures with trusted and beloved cats include: Confucius, Plato, St. Gregory the Great, Muhammad (“Muezza”) and his Yemeni companion Abu “Father of the Kitten” Huwaira, Nostradamus (“Grimalkin”), Isaac Newton (“Spithead”), Louis XV, Samuel Johnson (“Hodge”), Lord Byron (“Beppo”), Pope Leo XII (“Micette”), Edgar Allan Poe (“Catarina”), Harriet Beecher Stowe (“Calvin”), Abraham Lincoln (“Tabby”), Queen Victoria (“White Heather”), Theodore Roosevelt (“Slippers” and “Tom Quartz”), H.G. Wells (“Mr. Peter”), Charles Lindbergh (“Patsy”), Winston Churchill (“Smoky,” “Nelson,” and “Tango”), Einstein (“Tiger”), Ronald Reagan (“Cleo” and “Sara,” who lived at the ranch), Pope John Paul II, Bill Clinton (“Socks”), and Pope Benedict XVI (“Chico”).

Other suspected Bast operations, targets, or opportunities include:

525 BCE: Conquest of Bubastis by the Persian king Cambyses II; he reportedly defeated the Egyptians at Pelusium by advancing behind a screen of cats the Egyptian archers wouldn’t shoot at. Cambyses may have killed the sacred cat of Bubastis; the pharaoh Pedubast III ambushes Cambyses’ army in the desert outside Siweh in 522.

Remek-Bast

The “People of Bast” are Bast’s genengineered agents. They can take either human or cat form, although their eyes reflect light in both shapes. TimeWatch agents inevitably call them “Bast-ards.”

Remek-Bast Stats

Defense: Hit Threshold 4, Armor 1 (genengineered ballistic fur), Health 12
Offense: Scuffling +3 (first hit, +2 thereafter), Shooting +1; Damage Modifier +0 (extruded claws, may contain sleep or retro-pheromone serum), +2 (neural needler Stun 5, likewise)
Abilities: Athletics 12, Tempus 16; Charm 3
Special Abilities: Blink (includes minor teleportation, cost 2), Catfall (always land on their feet after a throw or fall; never take more than +0 damage from any fall less than 100 meters, cost 1), Clock Out (only inside a fane of Bast), Perfect Balance, Resistant to mind control or (non-Bast) pheromonal domination +4, Resist Stun, Shape-shift (into a cat, cost 2), Strength (cost 0), Technology (cost 2), Super Leap (Jump 6m or 3m vertical, cost 3 Athletics), Venom (cost 2; sleep serum or retro-pheromones in claws, needler)
Misc: Alertness Modifier +2 (darkvision, sensitive hearing and smell), Stealth Modifier +3
Description: Genetically engineered in the 34th century from a mix of human, feline, and ezeru DNA, the Remek-Bast worship Bast as a goddess and serve her unquestioningly throughout time. TimeWatch claims this is because she literally programmed their loyalty into their pheromone receptors; they, of course, know the truth of her divinity.

Bast Herself

Use Remek-Bast stats with Mastermind, Mind Control (pheromonal, cost 2), Summoning (cost 3 -- cats), Seize Initiative (cost 2), Timecraft 3, and Tempus 40. Add any other ability or power as you see fit.

c. 625 CE: Senchán Torpeist, chief bard of Ireland, saved from Irusan, the King of the Cats, by St. Ciarán of Clonmacnoise.

961: Baldwin III of Flanders suppresses a witch-cult of Bast in Ypres by hurling their cats from the top of the Cloth Hall belfry; he dies in 962. The cat-hurling festival continues until 1817.

July 1 1277: Mameluke sultan Baibars dies of drinking poisoned milk; he has previously endowed a permanent garden home for Cairo’s feral cat population.

c. 1370: Dick Whittington earns a fortune thanks to his cat, becomes Lord Mayor of London in 1397.

1478-1481: Leonardo da Vinci intensely sketches his borderline heretical Madonna del Gato (Madonna of the Cat); he studies cats again from 1514-1515.

1483: A cat saves the life of Tudor conspirator Sir Henry Wyatt, imprisoned in Scotland; he later becomes guardian of Henry VIII.

1569: Thomas Preston writes the play *Cambyses*, containing the first use of “hey diddle diddle” in print. “The cat and the fiddle” refers to Bast and her sistrum.

September 1630: Once confirmed as first minister of France, Cardinal Richelieu builds a cattery at Versailles for his fourteen cats.

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1738: The “Great Cat Massacre”: printers’ apprentices in Paris hang as many cats as they can get their hands on.

1780-1784: Magician and magnetizer “Colonel” Gustavus Katterfelto exhibits his arts, including an enormous black cat, in London; claims to have discovered the microbes causing the influenza outbreak of 1782. He gives a kitten to Marie Antoinette in 1783.

1793: Captain Stephen Clough carries Marie Antoinette’s cats (but not the Queen) to Wicasset, Maine on the ship *Sally*; they become the ancestors of the Maine Coon breed.

1842-1846: Robert E. Lee serves as post engineer at Fort Hamilton in Brooklyn; his dog Spec prevents him from befriending several curious cats.

1859: A three-year-old Nikola Tesla begins a lifelong obsession with electricity after drawing sparks while petting his cat Macak.

March 1865: Lincoln visits Grant’s headquarters at City Point, Virginia and rescues three stray kittens.

1866: The Cheshire Cat appears to mathematician Charles Lutwidge Dodgson.

1886-1889: Swiss archaeologist Edouard Naville excavates Bubastis.

September 22, October 17 1906: Railway workers discover of the Treasure of Bubastis at Tell Basta in Egypt.

August 1920: An unknown person places a cat on the bed of sickly dictator Vladimir Lenin. He adopts the cat, and lives until January 21 1924.

March 20 1924: President Calvin Coolidge’s cat Tiger (one of six) wanders away. On March 24, Secret Service agent James Hanley makes a radio appeal to the citizens of Washington to find Tiger; he turns up under a desk in the Navy Building.

1941: A cat named Oscar survives the sinking of the *Bismarck*; renamed Sam, he survives the sinking of the *HMS Cossack* and *HMS Ark Royal*.

1942-1943: A cat named Mourka carries messages for the 124th Rifle Brigade at Stalingrad.

April 19 1962: U.S. Ambassador John Kenneth Galbraith triggers riots in Pakistan by calling his cat Ahmedabad “Ahmed” in public.

October 18 1963: Félicette becomes the first (and so far only) cat in space, aboard the French CERMA rocket Veronique AGI No. 47. She transmits her brainwaves to Earth via a radio-linked EEG.

1990: Cat owner Pope John Paul II affirms that cats have souls.

1989-1997: A cat named Humphrey resides at 10 Downing Street.

13th Age

“THE CAT’S ARCHETYPAL IMAGE IS PRESENT IN US ALL. IT IS CLEARER TO WOMEN, FOR THE CAT – EVEN THE TOMCAT – IS MUCH MORE FEMININE IN BEHAVIOR THAN, FOR INSTANCE, THE DOG. MEN HAVE THE CAT ALSO, BUT HERE IT IS MORE CONNECTED WITH THE ANIMA. THUS THEY DO NOT ESCAPE THE DISASTROUS TENDENCY OF THEIR ANIMA CAT TO SPIN PLOTS. THIS DEGENERATION IS CERTAINLY VERY REMINISCENT OF THE DAYS WE LIVE IN, WHERE PLOTS ARE SO READILY SPUN IN THE UNCONSCIOUS AND SUBCONSCIOUS LIVES

Bast

Malkin/Cat-Folk

+2 Cha OR +2 Dex

Darkvision (Racial Power)
You can see in the dark.

Shadow Walk (Racial Power)
Once per battle, you can shadow walk as the Rogue Class Talent (*13th Age*, p. 128).

Malkin look as you might expect: slender, furred humanoids with catlike heads, prehensile paws, and tails. (Their fur may be any color from natural cat-camouflage to ginger to teal.) Wilderness malkin, who keep to the old ways of the hunt and the torture-kill, live in the marshes of the Fangs. City cat-folk, who embrace the new ways of getting someone else to hunt so you have more time to nap in the sun, prefer to dwell in the warmer towns along the south coast: Santa Cora, New Port, and Horizon. A malkin in Glitterhaegen or Drakenhall is usually more ambitious than lazy, which means very ambitious indeed.

OF WOMEN AND MEN ALIKE, NOT ONLY IN OURSELVES BUT EVEN ON A WORLDWIDE SCALE.”

-- BARBARA HANNAH, *THE ARCHETYPAL SYMBOLISM OF ANIMALS*

Bast walks between the worlds of animals and mankind, domesticated and wild at once. The cat is her symbol, her ambassador, and perhaps her actual favorite of the world's creatures. She breathes conspiracy, exudes desire both warm and cool, and walks by herself.

She might substitute for another Icon (the Priestess or the Prince of Shadows seem closest), be one of many Icons in an Egyptian- or Mythos-

flavored *13th Age* campaign, or perhaps she is one of the first Icons of the coming Fourteenth Age, walking silently into the world to sniff out the coming change and prepare for it.

Quote
“I AM THE CAT WHO WALKS BY HERSELF, AND ALL PLACES ARE ALIKE TO ME.”

Usual Location

Bast's city is Ulthar, on the banks of the Grandfather in a rolling plain beyond the Wild Wood. She herself walks the world, preferring warm and whispering cities like Axis, Glitterhaegen, and New Port.

In a campaign where she has replaced the Priestess, Santa Cora becomes Bubastis. In a campaign where she plans to do so, it is only Bubastis to its cat-folk, its perfumiers, and to sailors on certain dark galleys that put into its harbor.

Common Knowledge

Bast is the Queen of the Cats, who protects the common folk from poison, disease, and vermin. She comforts them in pain and guards their dreams. She cares for animals and for people who love animals. Even dogs.

Adventurers & the Icon

Malkin adventurers, of course, serve Bast gladly if she asks; most rangers know to serve her warily but well. As a musical goddess, she shares her songs with deserving bards. But any thief on the outs with the Prince of Shadows, any cleric the Priestess has quarreled with, and any sorcerer who remembers his dreams can always seek direction and comfort from She Who Scratches.

Allies

Bast walks by herself, but often walks by herself beside the Elf Queen or the High Druid, who share her fondness for animals and her glowing eyes, although she enjoys humans and cities too much for their taste.

Whether she conspires with or against the Prince of Shadows, they both delight in the game too much to fight.

Enemies

The Orc Lord eats cats, as do all his people. The Lich King resents Bast's habit of walking into the land of the dead without knocking. The Crusader suspects her of nameless sins, and the Archmage patronizes her.

If Bast seeks to replace the Priestess, their relationship can turn frosty despite both Icons' warm natures.

History

Bast has walked the world in prior Ages, save for those without cats.

The True Danger

Everything will be all right until the thirteen thousandth cat is killed in the Empire. Then Bast will claw at its soft throat and secret underbelly. What's that? You're pretty sure that more than thirteen thousand cats have been killed in the Empire? Oh dear . . .

