



HEROQUEST



HeroQuest Voices *Peoples of Glorantha*

*Legion are the peoples of the world, many and varied are their ways.
All are connected by the cosmic webs of Arachne Solara
Who brings and binds all together, in life as in this book,
Who takes and rends apart those who would tear her webs.*



Produced by Issaries, Inc.
P.O. Box 272914;
Concord, CA 94527

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Issaries Publication ISS 3001

First Publication August 2003

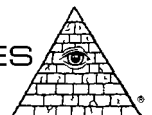
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Glorantha Voices

The rich cultural backdrop of the world of Glorantha has always been one of its greatest strengths, keeping gamers fascinated for over twenty-five years. One of the many ways in which this was explored in the former *RuneQuest* game was through short narratives for major cultures and races detailing “What the Priest Says” and “What My Father Told Me.” Pithy, often witty, and always insightful, these narratives were a popular feature of the game and were a quick, easy way to introduce new players to peoples and beliefs of this game world.

Now Glorantha is coming to a new generation of players with the release of *HeroQuest*, the game of epic roleplaying. This book is one of a range of game aids. It contains these introductory narratives for all ten homelands described in those rules, as well as for seven other peoples and races. Furthermore, as a sample for those who do not yet own *HeroQuest*, *HeroQuest Voices* contains one of those homelands (Teshnos)

at the end as an example of how the cultures are presented in the game in an easy-to-use format.

Although some of these narratives have appeared before, they have been updated to reflect development of the world since their original publication. Additionally, project manager Nick Brooke has assembled several new pieces written by many of today’s key Gloranthan authors, including David Dunham (co-creator of the *King of Dragon Pass* computer game), Mark Galeotti, and Greg Stafford himself. Illustrations by Gloranthan artists old and new show sample members of these peoples.

We hope you enjoy these narratives. From the brutal directness of the nomadic Bison Rider to the elegant mysteries of the Kralori, from the uplifting hymns of the Esvulari clergyman to the deep—in every sense—wisdom of the merman priest, thirty-four voices from Glorantha speak to you of their ways and their dreams, their lives and their hopes.

A Personal View of Bison Life

What My Father Told Me

Who are you?

I am Vanish Rib-Crusher, warrior of the Bison People.

Who are we?

We are the Skull Bat Clan of the Bison People, also called the Flower Bison Clan. You can know the animals of our clan by the bat branded on their backsides. The bone beads in our beards mark the men of our clan, and you can tell the women of our clan by the narl-flower necklaces they sing to.

Waha is the Founder of all the Dedra, we riders of Eiritha's children. He saved us during the Long Night, and we have done what he says ever since. He told us if we followed all his rules we could live anywhere, even if Storm Bull died and Chaos returned. We cross the empty Greatlands with his help. Many tales tell of true people who fell prey to the soft living of the Western or Eastern folk, and died badly because of it.

What makes us great?

We are the best people in the world. We have big herds. The cows bear many calves and we keep them alive. We have stolen many animals. Our warriors are strong and tough. Each has taken an enemy beast to earn his cheek scars. When the Bison People meet our foes, our clan is always the first to charge. Our Khan is mighty, too, and when the Bison khans meet in council, he can show many scars.

Where do we live?

All of the Greatlands are our home. Waha set aside this place for us because it is the best place for us to live. Eiritha's Paps are our spirits' home. If you are lucky, you will visit the Paps some day.

How do we live?

We live on the good things Bison-Eiritha gives us. We drink the milk of our bison and eat the meat of other tribes' beasts. Some plants are good for us to eat: the sacred skullbush our bat spirits visit, arrowstalk root, freeberry, and Eiritha's holygrain; our women gather those when they are ready. Others are forbidden, such as the dreamweed that only shamans may eat, or Tada's Tears. Do not eat forbidden plants.

We wear the same tough skin as Bison-Eiritha. Our clothes are of the hides of our own and our enemies' beasts. In spring, our bison rub off much of their hair; our women gather this up and spin it into rugs, blankets, and cloth.

We fight with the weapons of our Bison Founder: bone and horn, sinew and strength, and heads so hard they cannot be broken. Our khan, Narmed Whirlvishbane, is rich. He owns five iron-tipped arrows, a magic piece of the Block, and a glass gourd with firewater from the Lands Beyond the Sunset.

We are protected by Bison-Eiritha's love. We live in tents made from the hides of our bison. When many of us meet together, or when we must protect our bison from Wild Hunter's storms, we join many tents to make a single one large enough to hold all of our people and bison. And each of us has his own blanket to roll up in when he is alone on a hunting trip or raid.

I am a rich man, with two herds. My wife owns more than five hands of cows, and I own seven bulls. In my herds are four impalas, two llamas, and a captured gern, which is a beast even though it looks like a person.

What is important in my life?

The year you were born, we marked your birth in the Calving Festival with the other new parents. The Bison Queen blessed you to have many sons. Our khan blessed you to kill many foes. And I blessed you and gave you your name.

You are still a boy. Until you are a man, you will live in my tent. You must learn to fight as well as you can ride, and you must learn magic and the Peaceful Cut ceremony. When you think you are ready, at the Butchering Festival you must go before our khan with the other youths and show yourself to him. If you have not shamed us, and you can ride, and fight, and have learned some of Waha's Survival Tricks and the secret ways of our people, then you will be made a man. Most boys become men when they are four hands-of-years old.

When you are a man, you will live in the Bachelor's Tent until you are married. You may marry only a woman of the Bison People, and you may not marry one from our clan, for all of our women are your sisters. Your wife will bring her cows to you, possibly many cows if her family's herds are great. Once you are married, you will be a warrior of our clan, and you and your wife will have your own tent. But you must prove yourself to your wife's parents before you can marry. The best way to do this is to show her father that you are brave and strong, and to prove to her mother that you will be a good provider for your children. You may only have one wife, unless you become a khan someday, but you may have many concubines. I like the tall llama women best.

When you die, the clan will commit your body to a great burning. All the warriors of the clan will pray to the Daka Fal that your strength remain with them.

Who rules us?

Our elders rule us, for they have all proven themselves. Each man has stolen an animal from each of the other Great Tribes, and they know all the old wisdom of our clan. They give wise advice to our khan, and then choose a new khan upon his death. When the great khan of all the Bison People dies, the clans all meet to choose the next.

The great khan leads us in battle. When many clans meet, he is advised by all the lesser khans. You are not the son of a khan, but my father's father was, and so you can be one some day, for you trace your ancestry to Waha himself.

Our Bison Queen is the best woman. She has the most cows, the healthiest children, and the deepest wisdom. She can find water in a drought, and can sniff out the best path even in the trackless season.

All Bison People, wherever they live, belong to the Great Bison Tribe. There are many bison clans, each ruled by its own khan, bison queen, and council of elders. Clans often meet each other to exchange goods, worship the spirits, and seek wives. My wife was born in the Bull's Blood Clan.

What makes a man great?

Bravery, stubbornness, and endurance make a man great. A great warrior has stolen many beasts from other tribes, and so has many animals to feed his family. Destroying Chaos makes a man truly great!

HEROQUEST VOICES

What is evil?

Chaos is evil. Everything that is bad is because of Chaos. Chaos laid waste to our land. Chaos killed the spirit giants, like Genert. Chaos still harms us. Broos abound. Chaos helps outlanders to attack us, too. We grow old and die because of Chaos, we are sad, hungry, and lonely because of Chaos. Chaos makes holes in our clothes and wears the edge off our swords. Chaos is evil.

Horses are taboo, and you must never touch a horse, especially not to eat it! You should kill horses whenever you can. You *can* eat cattle and other lesser beasts if you must, but never horses or their spawn, the outlander donkeys and ponies.

What is my lot in life?

Goals are important. You should get many wives, who have many herds. Men will come to your command and you will live among a big herd. You must strive to be a tough and strong fighter, and try to capture many herd beasts of your own.

To show your greatness you must be brave. You will become tougher and master many skills as you grow. Every day is a challenge, and you must fight or die. If you want to be the best, you will visit the Chaos marshes and kill the worst evil in the world. Only fighting Chaos can truly make you greater than other men.

What is the difference between men and women?

Men own weapons, slaughter animals, kill men, and serve the forces of Waha the Butcher. Women own the cows and serve the forces of Bison-Eiritha. Never knock heads with a woman, and never come between a mother and her child. Together we bear children and raise calves, protect each other from dangers we can see and dangers we can't, and serve the great spirits.

How do we deal with others?

You can trust everyone in your family and clan. We always help each other in times of need. If all your beasts die or are taken, if you are crippled, or if your wife or children are taken as slaves, your people will aid and provide for you. Other Bison clans are our friends, but they only *have* to help us against Chaos or when we're in big trouble, and you must always pay them back. We're better than they are, but we all have the same Founder.

Watch out for people from other tribes. Although they follow Waha's Way, they are sneaky, and they all want to steal your animals and enslave or kill you. It is only safe to talk to them at the Paps, when you are strongest, or when all the Dedra have allied under a khan of khans to fight a great enemy, such as when Jaldon Toothmaker led us to destroy Pavis and raid the Sunset Lands called Dragon Pass.

People from outside the Greatlands are our prey. Their weakness is good only for robbing. Never trust them, lie to them if you want, kill them and take their goods if you wish. They don't know Waha's Way at all, and that means they aren't proper humans, even lower than the despicable morocanth, who *are* people even though they look like beasts.

Who are our enemies?

Chaos is our first enemy. Vrak Kargl Vozn the Devil made all that is evil, and we must combat it. To slay the evil is to be great. Bellow to Storm Bull for his help against Chaos.

The pesky Impala People, stuck-up High Llama People, crafty Sable People, and cheating Morocanth are all enemies. They steal cattle, take our daughters and sisters, and kill our sons and brothers. Don't ever be caught by them and end up as a slave. The lesser peoples of the Greatlands are our enemies, too—the upside-down unicorn women, pygmy bird lizard folk,

silly ostrich riders, and the foreign Walkers.

We are at war with the horsemen from the north. They come at us from the north and east and west, the bastards. A ridden horse is the mark of an outlander or a Pentan devil, and both are our enemies.

Who are my spirits?

All the Great Tribes, and most of the lesser ones, follow the Way of Waha, Father of Khans. Men worship Waha the First Khan, and women worship Eiritha, beloved Herd Mother. We love the Storm Bull, father of Waha, even though his Desert Wind sometimes batters us, for he is the destroyer of Chaos.

There are lots of lesser spirits wandering the Greatlands, left over from the old days when the spirit giants lived. The horned men can talk to these spirits and make them work for us. Prax is our holy land, and most clans go there once in a lifetime. Our own clan visits the Paps every ten-hands-plus-one years, following our beasts' great migration across the Greatlands. You were born there, and I do not expect us to return in my lifetime.

What is there to do around here?

Life is work, and work is life. Deadly winds and poison rain can come on us. Hyenas and pack lizards prey on the herds. Morocanth spy on us, seeking slaves and cows. Broos and scorpion men roam the plain. When we've beaten them, or on great spirit days, we have fun. The best fun is when we raid our enemies, hold head-butting contests, or have a big butchering and calving day. And slave women, they're fun, too. You'll see, one day.



Tales of the Wastes

Wisdom from the Tribal Shaman

Where did the world come from?

Genert and the spirit giants made the world so long ago no one remembers. They were strong, and lived in a fertile garden. Food was everywhere: jackrabbits came freely to the eating, and if you dropped a seed you had to jump back when the tree sprang up with much fruit. But the dead giants failed at last—they tried to deal fairly with the Devil.

When Chaos came, Genert mustered his clans: the golden people, the copper warriors, the sky-spears, the white elves, and our ancestors. And he fought as hard as he could and as well as he could. But he was destroyed, his armies turned to sand, and his garden turned into an acid bog. The Devil slew the spirit giants, blasted the land, and killed everybody he could find. Only the Storm Bull and his friends could fight him, and Storm Bull finally imprisoned the Devil beneath the Block. Now the old ways are gone, maybe forever.

Waha is Storm Bull's son. He came out of the soil into a world of darkness and Chaos. People still walked the blasted land, dazed and dying of stupidity. But Waha the Tracker gathered us and showed new ways to live. He freed the herd beasts and founded many families. Through Waha's deeds, the yellow-bellied giant felt brave enough to come out of his hiding hole and began to shine on us again.

Where did I come from?

At first, everything starved alike: bison, impala, llama, sable, morocanth, and human. There was too little food. Then Waha made the Survival Covenant. Some became animals, able to eat thornbush, weeds, and roots of the earth. Others became people and ate the plant-eaters. We drew lots to see who would eat and who would be eaten. In every case but the cheating morocanth, we humans won and became people. That is why we ride and eat the herd animals, and why morocanth are people also.

Why am I here?

You are a relic from Genert's time—you hold the holy life force. Your fathers and mothers lived through the Long Night and so, through them, did you. They lived, and you live, to fight Chaos, to spread life and death.

Why do we die?

Before Waha came, everything was dead or dying, and that is the way of the world. Waha taught us death's secrets; how to use it for life. He taught us the Peaceful Cut that returns our sister-animals to bliss within the womb of Eiritha, supplying our tribe with food from the Mother. And Waha taught us the warlike blows, whereby we send our foes to dark hells.

What happens after we die?

Our souls go to the Spirit World, to the Great Grasslands of the Happy Herding Ground. Eiritha is there, with endless ghost herds, and Waha is there, too, with all of the ancestors.

How do I do magic?

Waha came when all was gray, and he taught us how to survive; his tricks are still the first magic that our children learn. The Horned Man came later and taught our shamans how to talk to spirits from lost ages. These spirits do mighty magic, but the mightiest magic is done by our khan, who can call the Founder of our tribe to war.

I have heard of other spirits and powers. Can you tell me the truth about them?

All the world was hurt by the evil of Chaos. We escaped because of Storm Bull and Waha. Others were unlucky, weak, or stupid, and now exist as bodiless spirits, not living or dead. Some are old companions, some are ancient foes.

...Chaos?

Everything bad, painful, and ugly in this world came because of the Devil. Chaos is evil and should be killed by every living soul. Bless Storm Bull who fights it so ferociously.

...Darkness?

Dark Eater is our friend and our foe. He helps us against Chaos, for he hates it as we do. But he also wields the powers of night and shadow that plunder our herds and make our women barren. The inhuman morocanth love him too much.

...the Earth?

The earth is everything's mother. She did not fight Chaos when it came, thinking her peace would save her. It did not. Now only Eiritha, her best daughter, lives to aid us.

...Forests?

Once the world was covered with lush plants, all of which stemmed from a great spirit. She failed her people because she did not see what Chaos would do to her. Her leaves withered to brown, and her trunks fed the great fire of Oakfed. She no longer blesses the Greatlands.

...the Moon?

The Red Moon is evil, brought by bad men to destroy us and our kind. She was born at the edge of the world, but reaches everywhere, even into our hearts, with temptation, lies, and fear. The traitorous Sable People worship her, proof of their evil.

...the Ocean?

The sea khan was a mighty giant before the Long Night. He tried to fight Chaos through cunning and tricks, but like everyone else he failed. Now he is a shadow, pierced forever by the Devil's invisible spear. His serpents that twist across our lands must never be trusted.

...Sorcerers?

These fools are under the sway of the Devil, for they know no true magic. They curse the name of Storm Bull who scourges the world of Chaos. They are empty, without spirits.

...the Sun?

This old giant tried to fight Chaos with high rules and distant powers. Like all the rest who did not fight the evil with their whole selves, he died and is now but a hollow glowing shell. Yet he is our bright treasure, for he sends the dark away.

...the Wind?

The great wind from the west is Storm Bull's brother, and like the Bull he is dangerous. His tricks allowed evil into the world. He did great wrongs, but when he tried to fix them he made more mistakes that made the world even worse. But we brave Bison People respect him, because he is so strong and tough.

HEROQUEST VOICES

A Personal View of Dara Happan Life

What My Father Told Me

Who are you?

I am Vuranesh, Third Tier noble of House Urvakus, the greatest House in Induppa. I am Decimarch of the ninth file, an initiate of Vankamant the Hoplite and devoted to Urvakus, our ancestral founder. I am your father; you obey and respect me.

Who are we?

We are members of House Urvakus. It is my ordained duty to instruct you so that you may be a loyal servant of the House, the Emperor, and Yelm. Urvakus the Elleden, one of the sons of Urvairinus, the Soldiers' Emperor, founded our House in the ancient past. House Urvakus provides *elleden*, what the Lunars call hoplites, to the Emperor in return for our status and position within the Light of his Perfection.

What makes us great?

All of Dara Happa is great: we are the holders of the Rich Land itself, the chosen people of Yelm, Emperor of the Cosmos. We are loyal servants of the mightiest Empire under the Sky Dome and no foe can withstand our spears when we deem it worthy to march against them.

Within Dara Happa our House is greater than most—if not in wealth or numbers, then in age and wisdom, experience and magic. Few can match ours in tradition or in so esteemed an Ancestral Founder and most, like the upstart House Yerendesh of South Gate, envy us and would do us down at every turn.

What is the difference between men and women?

Men and women have different roles in the hierarchy of Yelm's design, but are utterly vital to each other.

Men are the ruling hand of Yelm, his servants in war, trade and sovereignty. We are the Rays of his Light, and like Yelm, we have to touch upon the earth to beget our bloodlines.

Women are of earth; they are fertility and growth while we are purity and war. Your mother thinks this belief forces women into subservience to men, but she is mistaken, too taken with her Lunar philosophies of "equality" to listen to me on such matters, although she is a good wife in other ways.

Women and men bridge the gap between earth and sky so that Yelm may have a people to rule, his chosen people. But like the fall Lodril experienced when he delved into the earth too deeply and too wholeheartedly, men must refrain from intense earthly pleasures. Do no more than Yelm requires, or else you will be lost like a lowly Lodrili or a filthy Darjiini, forgoing the purity of Yelm's light.

Be wary when you find your future wife: never revel in the lusts of the Earth, maintain your dignity, purity, and distance, or you will forever be lost to the higher light of Yelm. Perform your duty with her and father sons for Yelm, but never with desire. Duty only, duty always: such is our way.

Where do we live?

We live in the great Dara Happan Empire, which so-called "new nobles" call the Lunar Empire after the Red Moon you see in the sky. Our Empire is ancient, vast, and powerful. The heartland of the Empire is Dara Happa, the rich and populous valley of the Oslir River.

Dara Happa is divided into three lands, each ruled from one of the Great Cities of Yelm, the Tripolis. The southern land is

Henjarl, ruled by the hell city of Alkoth where the berserk warriors of Shargash dwell. They are fierce and deadly, but lack our discipline and resolve. The land of Vonlath is in the center of Dara Happa, ruled by Raibanth, once the Imperial capital and still fond of its pretensions. In the north is our land, Esvuthil, ruled from the star tower city of Yuthuppa.

Induppa, jewel of southern Esvuthil, is our home. Our city stands at the confluence of the mighty Oslir and the bountiful Kesteran rivers. Induppa is built within a circular wall, and its streets radiate from the center where sits the Overseer's Palace and Yelm's Temple: the design was laid out by wise Buserian, the first priest, to symbolize the glory of Yelm. Our city is ancient, its walls strong and well maintained, even though our lands have known long peace thanks to the armies of the Emperor. We have not outgrown our walls like teeming Yuthuppa, or let our defenses slide like the newcomers in Red Fish, who steal our fishing rights and pretend to be Dara Happan, though their Houses are mere centuries old. Our House compound sits near the northern gate; here we have a palace, the temple to Urvakus, barracks, warehouses, drill square, garden, and dormitories for the servants.

How do we live?

As a decimarch, I command nine hoplites in battle. For performing my duty, I am allotted food and comforts by the buseri. I am issued a house in the barracks. This is where I have raised you, as did the countless officers of my rank who lived in this house before us. Their souls imbue the house with its martial essence, and their battle trophies decorate its ancient walls. Tradition is all around us, and makes us strong.

Your mother manages our household, and I listen to her in these matters, and so should you.

What is important in my life?

Obedience to Yelm's will and to the orders of your superiors, showing proper respect, and in turn demanding respect from your inferiors. We are the Rays of Yelm, and you must act with the pride, discipline and nobility expected of us.

Who rules us?

The higher Tiers of the House nobles. Our house is ruled by an Eighth Tier noble whom we only see on holy days and great ceremonies, or mounted on a golden horse behind our lines as our regiment goes into battle.

House Emperor Deregash is a mighty man and a great soldier. His radiant authority is derived from a holy proximity to the Emperor and our ancestors that you or I see as a distant but piercing light. Though I have faced a thousand foes in battle, to stand in the presence of Deregash leaves me tongue-tied and weak-kneed. I have great difficulty in not prostrating myself before his glory, even when he orders me to stand easy.

The ruler of Induppa is City Overseer Raidadesh the Stolid, an old ally of our House and a defender of traditional values. It is he who maintains our walls, forbids construction beyond, and keeps the garrison forces in regular training. Our local ruler is the Regional Overseer of Eastern Esvuthil, Keredenesh Shipwright, who has made the region wealthy but has done little for the soldiers and defenses of our land. The Satrap who rules this region is a distant figure living in Lunar Torang: we care



little for his policies or ways, though we give him loyalty and obedience, for the Emperor appointed him. Though the Lunars, such as your mother, say that their Goddess is all, we know that the Emperor is the Avatar of Yelm and *that*, not his Lunar origins, gives him the right of rule. Often the Lunars forget that being Moonson does not always make one Emperor. We do not forget this.

What makes a person great?

Those of the blood of Yelm are great, hence we rule the lesser peoples of Peloria. Within our ranks, some are greater than others. We all follow one or more of the Ten Masteries of Yelm: these are his ways of living, chosen as your life progresses. Each of us also follows the gods in some manner, whether through devotion to a part of Yelm or to one of the many other Celestial cults. We all belong to a house, league, or association. Our Tier rank on the Ten Step Ziggurat of Yelm is thus determined by a combination of those factors.

For example, though I am only a lowly decimarch, I am a devotee of Urvakus and thus a Third Tier noble, the same rank as my Hundred commander, my brother Gerevesh Shieldbearer, who is only an initiate of Vankamant and nothing more. I obey him while in battle, but in social situations I am his equal and act as such.

What is evil?

Rebellion is evil. Not understanding and accepting one's place in the Universe under Yelm is rebellion and all great evil comes from this. When Orlanatus slew Murharzarm, the Emperor, Yelm was shattered. Every Emperor and noble who has faced rebellion has seen terrible suffering and loss as a result. If the foreigners of the barbarian lands only knew their place and accepted Yelm's rule, strife and discord would not exist, and the world would be returned to perfection, the Golden Age. Sadly, they do not yet accept their place nor our rule, and thus we have soldiers and armies, war magic and weapons. We fight them to end rebellion, end evil, and assert the rule of Yelm above all and everything, as it should be, as it shall be.

What is my lot in life?

You are my third son and tradition states that the first son rules, the second is a priest, and the third a soldier. Like you I was a third son and like me you shall take your place in the spears of our House, perhaps as a decimarch in my place or if you aspire to greatness and excel in heroic virtues, maybe higher.

How do we deal with others?

When introduced to other Dara Happans, even those of Alkoth, show respect and courtesy. They are our brothers and we love them.

The Empire beyond Dara Happa is filled with many peculiar peoples, many of whom hate us for our past victories. With them I counsel grave caution: some may be friendly, others harbor a secret lust for vengeance and will assail you with cunning trickery. How will you know? Learn your histories, and be prepared for anything.

Beyond the Empire are foreigners, the deluded followers of Evil. These we deal with on the point of a spear, and never let down our guard or show one ounce of mercy.

Who are our enemies?

The Orlanatus tribes of the barbaric south are now our greatest foes, but in the past Kargzant's nomad riders troubled our land greatly, and they will doubtless do so again. That is why we must always maintain our defenses and skills.

External threats have always been overcome, for we are Yelm's chosen people, but worse than any barbarian army is the threat from within: from arrogant nobles, dabblers in new religions, and unruly peasants. Only unbending adherence to the ways of Yelm can stamp out such scourges.

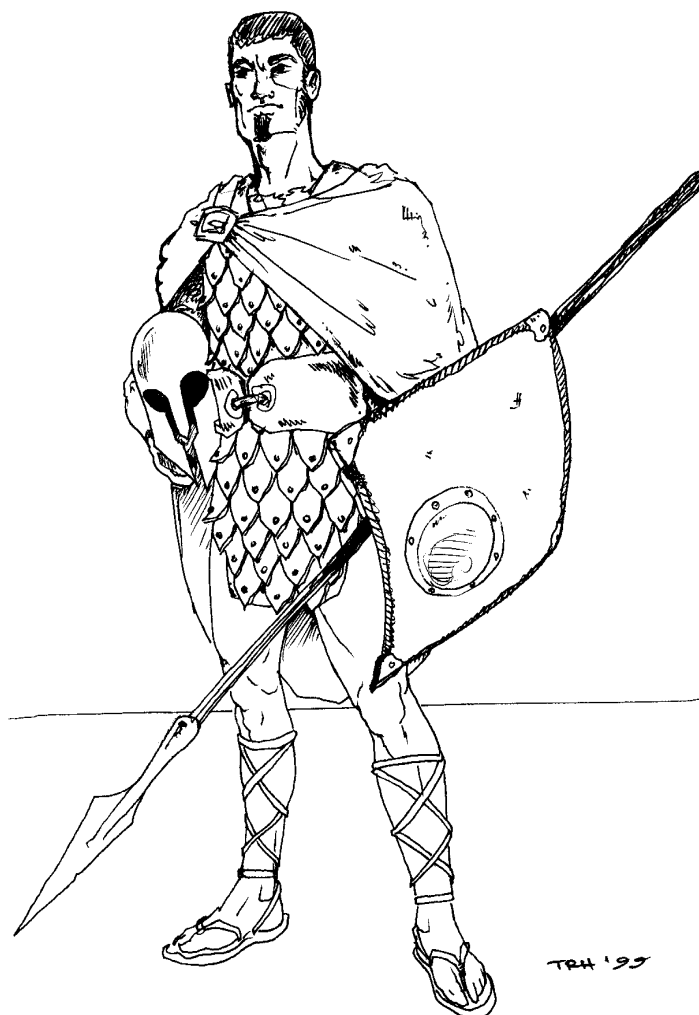
Who are our gods?

Ask your brother Helemshal: he is a buseri, and knows these things. I am a servant of Urvakus. He is my god, for he is the soul of our Hundred and the fire on the tips of our spears. Until you initiate you cannot know of what I speak, for it is in the heart, beyond mere words. Go, ask your brother, and he will explain.

What else is there to do around here?

The needs of the regiment must be met, from training new recruits, to guarding caravans to distant cities. When not on duty we pray in the temple, bless the table of our family when eating, and compete in sports to maintain our strength and speed. Playing polo makes a man a great rider, but my favorite sport is still shield push: our Hundred has won a dozen trophies in the last ten years.

If you wish to learn more of what it is to be Dara Happa, spend time with your brothers in the library, seek out your peers or superiors and hear their stories and wisdom. Many of our best men gather in the bathhouse or the barracks halls to speak of matters best left behind closed doors, of politics and plans, outrages against Yelm and ways of fighting them. Join us when you are ready.



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The Glorious ReAscent of Yelm

Lore from the Star Seer

Where did the world come from?

First there was One, called Aether: from him came the Many, and from the Many came the One to rule us: Emperor Yelm.

Where did I come from?

Yelm and his brother Lodril, with help from his good wife Dendara, made mountains, cities, animals, and people. They made and ruled the world in which we live today. When Yelm had children with Dendara, his loyal wife, he left the eldest to rule in his place and he was Murharzarm, the second Emperor.

Why do we die?

Murharzarm was slain by rebels who destroyed our perfection and Yelm split into his six parts in his grief. Yelm died and all beings now die, gods or otherwise. This may sound terrible to you and it is! Only his righteous suffering in the Underworld brought the rebels back to obedience when they saw the error of their ways. Thus, from an eternal night we call the reign of Kazkurtum, Yelm reascended and the Empire was recreated as we know it now.

What happens after we die?

We are the rays of Yelm upon the earth and when our earthly vessels die we ascend to the Sky, returning Yelm's light to him. We are judged by his Righteous Gaze in the afterlife. From there we may live eternities in the Celestial Cities of the Sky World or we may be reborn as Yelm decides. It is the way you have used the gift of Light and Life that Yelm has given you in the mortal world that determines your status after death.

Why am I here?

As a noble you are here to serve Yelm and the people you rule. Remember that all of your authority and power is derived from Yelm and he in turn expects you to treat your peasants and servants with true nobility. We lead the lesser peoples with the radiance of our example, with the purity of our essence and the perfection for which we strive.

How do I do magic?

You will worship one of the approved gods, according to your status, and wield his magic. Common people in Dara Happa worship the pantheon and do not initiate into specific cults. The magic they receive is limited, but they have accepted that their role is not to wield magic but to serve. Their empowerment of our ways gives us of the nobility the High Magic, the magic of position.

What is the High Magic? Every time you order a peasant to do something or enter a room, the High Magic is at work. Your position and rank on Yelm's Ziggurat is reflected in your noble aura: all below you in rank can feel it and will be affected by it. Remember how you felt when the Emperor walked past you yesterday on review? How your knees trembled and you desired to prostrate yourself before his noble magnificence? That is the High Magic and it is from Yelm himself—the magic of nobility.

I have heard of other powers. Can you tell me the truth about...

...Chaos?

This is the ultimate product of rebellion and is the end of the world. The Lunars claim to control it, but you cannot control rebellion, only destroy it.

...Rebel Gods?

Orlanatus the Rebel slew our First Emperor, aided by other bad and evil gods. He was banished, but returns to plunder us time and again. His rebellion is evil, and he must be destroyed.

...Sedenya?

The ways of the Lunar Goddess are within the purview of Yelm's cosmos, and so she is honored, though like all female deities she can cause great upheavals and must be watched carefully.

...Sorcerers?

Carmanians are sorcerers, and they are evil; some Lunars are sorcerers, and they are misguided. Sorcerers are soulless creatures who cannot see Yelm's light with their hearts, only with their eyes.

...Spirits?

The Darjiini worship spirits and we know what they are like! If you wish to cavort with animals in a field of dung, persist with this curiosity into things that should disgust you!

I have heard of other races. Can you tell me the truth about them?

All other races are monsters, and should be tamed or eradicated, for they are the spawn of Kazkurtum.

...Dwarves?

The Iron folk are tolerated for their skills in metal and because they hide away from the light of Yelm, for which we can be thankful. Their god is a valueless thing of metal and stone, without a heart and bereft of the radiant joy of Yelm.

...Elves?

Ah, the tree monsters. Some say they worship Yelm, but I say fire works well with them.

...Trolls?

The digijelm are dangerous monsters, fearsome and magically powerful. Best let the Alkothi fight them for their own darkness renders them immune to much of the power of the Black Ones.

The Ten Gods of War

Yelm has three weapons: the Spear (Hastatus), Bow (Sagittus), and the Mace (Ulkamoon). All three are available to the Ten Gods of War sanctioned by Yelm and his priests. Currently the Ten Gods of War are Shargash the Destroyer, Urvairinus the Conqueror, Elmexdros the Warrior, Yelm-gatha the Hero, Vankamant the Hoplite, Kastokus the Horseman, Erraibdavu the Hunter, Tarnils the General, Anirestyru the Logician, and Karvanyar the Dragonslayer.



The Gods' Wall

The Gods' Wall is our most sacred monument. It was made at the start of the world, stamped into the eternal cliffside at Eggar-lodril, and on it are the 111 gods and goddesses we recognize, from Emperor Yelm and his court down to the lowly and corrupted Bad Deities of Below.

Yelm

Yelm is the Emperor, all that is noble, martial, righteous, and pure. He has six parts to his soul. All humans, even foreigners, have at least one of those parts, and those of us who know Yelm best have more than one, and are thus powerful or pious.

Yelm is so great that none can worship him in his entirety, so we follow the cults of his aspects. Yelm is Noble, Warrior, and Priest; many cults follow a particular aspect of his power and glory. The noblest Houses follow the Emperor-cults: the Imperial ancestor who gives them favor was sanctioned by Yelm, and so their powers of nobility are rooted in Yelm's splendor and right to rule.

Most people gain their magic from knowing their soul part of Yelm or from following the pantheon and worshipping Yelm Ruler of the Cosmos.

Dayzatar

Distant Dayzatar is the light of the Sky World, and is so far beyond even the Sky Dome that he is beyond any mundane concerns. Only the most devoted priests follow him to spend their lives skygazing.

Lodril

The brother of Yelm wallowed in the Earth and was forever exiled from the Sky thanks to his iniquity, yet he has a role to play. The Lodrili, peasants and lower class urbanites, follow Lodril and his many aspects and manifestations, for he is a Great God, potent in war, in earth magic and in the secret fire that can destroy nations when it is unleashed.

Lodril's Ten Sons and Servants are the main gods of supervising and working Lodrili. Without them the cities, irrigation, fields, canals, and ships that we depend on would not exist. Lodril is the solid ground over which our nobility can tower. Respect him as such, but do not let his children forget their place.

Buserian

The god of priests and sky watching, Buserian is the son of Yelm and god of the bureaucracy. Countless scribes, accountants, and wordsmiths follow his many forms and maintain the Empire. It is they who order the Empire, sort its wealth and allot its resources.

Shargash

Shargash is the great and furious son of Yelm who destroyed the world to save it from Kazkurtum. He is the god of Alkoth and the keeper of demons. His people are fierce and deadly, powerful and mad.

Antirius

The Sun above us is Antirius, the part of Yelm that holds his nobility and the Sunspear. All Emperors worship him, as do the nobles of the many Emperor cults. One cannot be a noble in Dara Happa without giving some worship to Antirius, and one cannot worship Antirius without being a noble.

Erissa

Erissa is the White Lady, the most powerful healing goddess in the world, for she serves Yelm. Where she sees hatred, she brings love. Where she senses pain, she brings comfort. Where she finds discord, she brings joy. She healed the hate of the Rebel Gods so that they saw the evil of their ways.

Lokarnos

The Mover is also vital to the Empire; he provides transport for the goods of Dara Happa with his wagons. He is the source of the gold wheel coin, and his cult is in charge of all transactions of Imperial wealth and goods. Some of his newer cult heroes have begun to trade, much like brazen Etyries of the Lunar pantheon, but this is a mistake, and will doom us to the evils of Lunar commercialism.

Dendara

The good wife, Dendara is the goddess of obedient wives. We love her and honor her ways, for she respects her place and the prominence of Yelm.

Oria

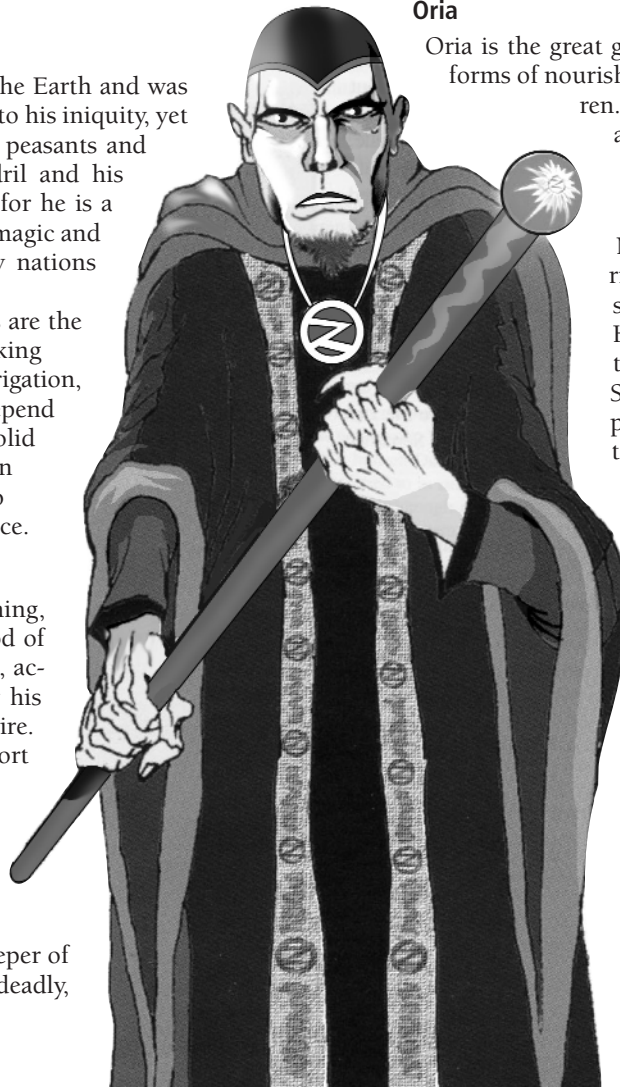
Oria is the great goddess of Dara Happa, blesser of all forms of nourishment and mother to countless children. She is the main Lodrili women's deity and we accord her similar value as we do Lodril.

Oslira

Mighty Oslira is the goddess of the river, tamed by Murharzarm and the source of the bounty we call Dara Happa. She is at times turbulent and troublesome, but the Ten Sons and Servants of Lodril control her, and her priesthood is relatively obedient. She too has many children, mostly traders, fishers, and boaters.

Deshkorgos

Deshkorgos is the God of the Underworld, whom Lodril defeated and bound into a prison with the worst of its denizens. He has a role to play as keeper of demons, and his priests are sanctioned, if despised.



A Personal View of Esrolian Life

What My Mother Told Me

Who are you?

I am Imarjarin Seven-Shrines, I am your mother, and you love me. I am matriarch of our prosperous and healthy household, a Priestess of Ernalda Great-Mother, and a loyal follower of Queen Varadis of the Old Earth Alliance. I am the Walker of the Seven Clay Pot and Spoon shrines, who takes Ernalda's blessings to those who cannot come to the temple.

Who are we?

We are the Hulta family, a lineage that has produced many priestesses. We are proud to be Esrolians.

What makes us great?

The Goddesses make us great: they show us the better way to live and protect us from the competitive hierarchy of male rulers whose errors nearly destroyed the world. Imarja the Great Goddess, who made us one people in one land, saved us from destruction.

Women's wisdom makes us great: the Ring of Women took their rightful role as leaders after the Sword and Helm War, when so many men died that our people were doomed. But through their wisdom we found that there is always another way.

Love makes us great: we are filled with compassion; is not a mother's love the strongest thing in the world?

Fertility makes us great: our lands are rich and plentiful, our stores are full, our children strong and healthy and our herds are plentiful, all through the blessing of the Goddesses.

Community makes us great: we come together to talk and listen, to share and belong, and everyone is shown their place and knows their duties.

Where do we live?

Our land is called Esrolia after Esrola, the Earth Mother. We are the Daughters and Children of the Earth. We live in Pennel, a fine river town in bountiful Esrolia, the "great-rivered land," of lush fields, glorious temples, towns and cities and happy homes. To the east is the bay of Choralinthor, a child of Esrola who gives up his bounty in honor of the Goddesses. To the south is volcanic Caladraland, which warms the Goddesses; to the north-east is the Shadow Plateau, which protects them for love.

How do we live?

Most Esrolians are farmers, and most of the land is a vast patchwork of wheat, barely, oat, and rye fields. Where there are not fields there are orchards and vineyards of succulent fruit. Everybody's pantry is filled with good food, so every home is happy, and there is no reason to squabble or go hungry.

Women and men work together on the land, although it is the women who own the farms. We keep the men laboring: a well-worked man is a happy man, whose mind is far from war and discord.

Our villages and towns are central to our lives, where we work, pray, talk and sing together. The Councils, groups of elder women, guide the villages through day-to-day life. When not working in the fields, we set our hands to crafts; the women weave peace rugs, and use the time to plan and prepare for days ahead, while the men carve, hammer, and gossip.

Nochet is the greatest city in the world, a metropolis of a hundred thousand souls living in harmony under the leader-

ship of the matriarchs. Within the city, folk group together in great squares of houses centered on a shrine, market or craft hall. Crafters gather together into guilds to support one another and share their secrets. Traders sell their wares at the great daily markets, or travel through the villages to haggle for spare grain and local wares.

Many great and bountiful temples bless our land: huge complexes where great sisterhoods of priestesses gather to worship the Goddesses, guarded by Babeester Gor warrior women. The three greatest temples are Ernalda's Home at the heart of Esrolia, Asrelia's Retreat in the north where the Grandmothers divide the harvest, and the ancient Necropolis, where the Queens' tombs stand.

We are a peace-loving people: we are the great negotiators, and the Peace Rugs of Orventili are carried to every meeting, even in times of war. We always seek a peaceful solution to every argument; if two women cannot agree even after seven days of talking then they seek an arbiter to help their decision.

If war comes, then the Goddess made it that men can die, but the land and people can survive without them: we thank them for this, and are grateful. Before any husband goes to war he lies with his wife, so that if he dies his life may be reborn. Then he goes to the muster, led in our defense by the daughters of Vinga and the wisdom of the Queen.

What is important to us?

Family, peace, community, and full stomachs: these are the things we yearn for and the things that the Goddess rewards us with.

Who rules us?

Our Queens are all heirs to ancient earth traditions by birth or by choice: no one knows how many there are at any one time, as new queendoms are founded and old ones die out. The Queens establish how Esrolia is governed: it is they that rule us. They are all priestesses of the Goddesses, and so are led by divine inspiration as well as women's good judgment.

The Queens gather together into factions, each organized around a different Year Father. This is the name given to a ceremonial male deity important to the local religion. Once the wicked Pharaoh, so-called "God-King" of the so-called "Holy Country," usurped the position of Year King in most of the rites and tried to rule Esrolia, but he is dead now and the old rites have returned.

We are followers of the Old Earth Alliance, which is led by Queen Varadis; our Year Father is Fethel Bav, a son of Argar Argan. We work to reinstate the practices of the Rites of Darkness, which existed when the Only Old One ruled the land. Our faction has strong ties with the trolls of the Shadow Plateau, with the priestesses of Asrelia and within Nochet.

What is evil?

There are those who will foolishly tell you that the rule of men is evil or that war is evil: this is not true, as both are just foolish and unfortunate. The true evil in the world is Chaos, which seeks to corrupt and pollute and destroy. Erveria's followers are able to sniff out Chaos and see through falsehood, and Belveren's healers can cleanse its curse, but you must fear it.

Failure to communicate is evil. If the other factions would only listen to Queen Varadis, this foolish civil strife would end.



What is my lot in life?

You should work hard, respect others and do good things; for that, you will be remembered and blessed.

One day you will find a man who appeals to your senses, and want to marry. He will come to our home and live under our roof and his mother shall pay for his wedding. When you are ready we will call together your kinfolk and build you a home of your own. You will inherit my house one day and perhaps—if you choose—follow in the footsteps of your foremothers and become a priestess.

One day you may have children, girls to make you proud and boys to look after you in your old age, but both will leave worry lines on your brow.

One day, if the Goddess chooses, you will become a grandmother. Depending on the course of your life, you might perhaps sit and count grandchildren and corn with the priestess of Asrelia's Retreat, or mourn for your lost kin and tend the dead within the Necropolis.

What is the difference between women and men?

Women are the landowners, the heiresses and the interpreters of the Goddess' words. Women dominate politics, trade and religion, which makes us different from those around us.

Men are great workers, our lovers and devoted husbands, and we cherish them dearly. Just as we represent the Goddess, so do they represent the Husband-Protectors, the gods who defended the Goddess. They fight for us if we cannot make peace, they lift us up when we stumble, and they hold our hands when we need comfort.

What men are not is leaders. This has been proven a thousand times. They are too warlike at heart, their focus blurs, and they soon forget their charges.

How do we deal with others?

We love our families: they are the core of our lives and should be protected with all our strength. You may argue with your cousins and sisters, but these squabbles are soon put aside when crisis comes.

Our community is those people we live near in Pennel: Ivya the Council Woman, Felchari the fishmonger, Rolsa the baker, and many more. We seek their respect, and do good by them so that they will do good by us. They are nearly family and are to be defended in a crisis, as we hope they would defend us.

Friends are like family and should be treasured, but they do change and you can grow out of friendships. Cherish them while they last.

There are so many folk in Esrolia that you cannot know them all. You must use caution, so hail a stranger with Ernalda's Cheer to see if they are friendly. The bounty of Esrolia is great and her gifts attract foreign people to our villages and cities. If they come in peace, they are welcomed, but if they threaten you, then call the hue and cry!

Who are our enemies?

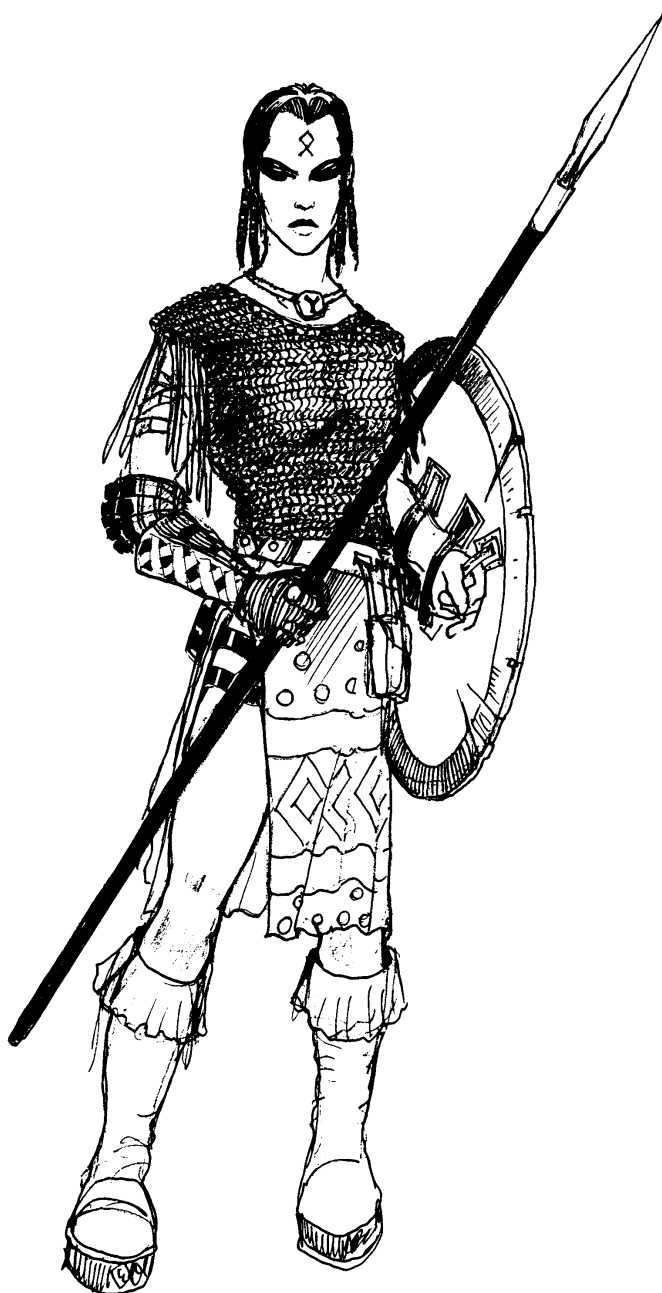
Those who seek to steal our bounty are our enemies. We are fortunate that our good sense and peaceful nature do not lead us into conflict, but even so to the west the Warlord Greymane encroaches upon our lands, raping, pillaging, and tearing at our borders. Some ignorant factions say we should ally with him; the Old Earth Alliance knows that we must resurrect the Only Old One to protect us again.

Who are my deities?

Ernalda the Earth is the greatest Goddess: she is the Allmother, the Healer, the Queen, everything to which we aspire, and we worship her in all her aspects. Esrola the Earth Mother is most beloved. Imarja is the great protectress who shows us the way to live and provides the simplest magic, yet she is beyond mortal comprehension. All of Ernalda's family are loved and held dear: Voria the Daughter, Redalda the Horse, Asrelia the Grandmother, Babeester Gor the Avenger, Maran the Shaker, Vinga the Protectress, and Ty Kora Tek the Crone are all revered.

These are just some of the Goddesses we know, but every farm, village or city may know a dozen or more daimones of the earth, land, and folk.

The men worship their own gods. Foremost are the Husband-Protectors: Argar Argan the Dark, Orlanth the Wind, Elmal the Sun, Rozgali the Sea, and Vestkarthen the Volcano. All defended Ernalda, even from their own kin. Other deities are known, such as Humakt the Sword, Epikhor the Librarian, Voudisea the Lance Goddess, and Harst the Reeve; but none is so beloved as Ernalda.



ESROLIA

Teachings of the Earth Woman

The Esrolian Priestess Speaks

Where did the world come from?

Once there was nothing but darkness and the Endless Sea that covered everything. Imarja made the world grow, and Ga the Great Earth emerged from the depths. Mountains, plains, ridges, and hollows rose above the waves. Gata was born, and she in turn birthed the twin daughters Asrelia and Ty Kora Tek, who dwell within the earth. Asrelia's daughters were Maran and Ernalda, whose bounty and beauty brought the land to life. Ernalda was wooed by many suitors, and gave freely of herself, populating the world with goddesses and gods. This was the Green Age, when seeds filled all the world and no drought or famine visited the land. Everyone was equal, and all lived in eternal peace and plenty.

Where did I come from?

You are made from the clay of the Goddess, born from her love and perfection. You were made in her form, a vessel filled with life. We are all children of the Goddess, treasured and loved.

Why do we die?

We die because First Ancestor was murdered through the jealousy of men, and Ana Gor, Goddess of Death, came into the world to take all his children. Ernalda was once thought dead in the Gods' Age, but she only slept and drifted through the world to Hell in order to heal the world. Other goddesses slept with her to save the world, but all were reborn with her. You too will die.

What happens after we die?

Nontraya was Ernalda's spurned lover who tried to steal her body when she slept. Her kin hid her body, thus our bodies too are buried, returning to the earth. Our souls go to the caverns under the earth, where Ty Kora Tek the Keeper watches over them until they awaken again to new life.

Why am I here?

You are here to serve the Goddess, to populate the world with joy and children, just as she did. We are here to live, to love, and to seek peace within the world. Our endeavors will one day return the Green Age.

How do I do magic?

The Goddesses give you your magic, the soul of our lives, that which animates our clay. Imarja and Our Good Friends give you Home Magic to make life easier, but it is Ernalda who gives you the greatest power: she blesses your home, ripens your corn, heals your children, and makes your life rich. The bounteous goddesses each have their gifts: Esrola and her children feed us, Vinga protects us, Asrelia keeps the harvest, Ty Kora Tek tends the dead, and all the good goddesses bless us.

What about gods? Can you tell me the truth about them?

Men worship many gods, but it is the Husband-Protectors who help Ernalda, rather than try to rule her. Orlanth the Storm, Elmal the Sun, Rozgali the Sea, Argar Argan the Dark, Flamal the Green, and Vestkarthen the Deep are most revered. They protected the goddesses and even stood against their own kin to defend their wives, such was their loyalty.

...Argar Argan?

The Night Tribe attacked Ernalda without thought, but Argar Argan, Son of Night, loved Esrola and used words of peace to stop his kin. He was gifted with Ernalda's bounty, and showed us the way to deal with the darkness. Ezkankekko, our Only Old One, the son of Argar Argan and Esrola, led us wisely for over a millennium until murdered by the Pharaoh.

...Elmal?

The Sky Tribe formed the Stagnant Empire. The Emperor sent Angdartha to trick the foolish men of old. He killed them and kidnapped Esrola, but Ernalda showed the women the dances that forced him to free her. Bright Elmal the Sun turned against the Sky Tribe for love of Esrola, and he is now king of the Day Tribe. Ernalda made him her husband and set him in heaven to watch over her.

...Flamal?

Flamal is the father of plants, source of all things that grow. His greatest daughter is Aldrya, whose mobile children, the elves, worship the verdant earth. Although Aldrya is wild and unruly, Overdruva shows us how to communicate peacefully.

...Orlanth?

Orlanth is the King of the Storm Tribe, who defended Ernalda against his rapacious brothers. His wooing of the Goddess is legendary; eventually she consented, but only after teaching him self-control. Like all men, Orlanth was reckless, and his actions nearly destroyed the world. Ernalda left him, making him follow her to Hell to set the world right again and atone for his deeds.

...Rozgali?

Magasta is the King of the Sea Tribe. He flooded the world, but Rozgali his kinsman turned against him and warned Ernalda, who built a great breakwater to defend her people. His actions earned him the affections of the Goddess, even as his brother had once loved Esrola. The sea eventually quieted, and the goddesses calmed and loved the rivers that still remained.

...Vestkarthen?

Vestkarthen is the great lord of the fire within the earth. When Chaos came, he fell from the Sky into the Earth, who bore him children named Caladra and Aurelion. He was wounded unto madness, and so the Goddess sent Argar Argan to imprison him until the love of his children could tame his volcanic fury.

I have heard of other powers. Can you tell me the truth about...

...Chaos?

Chaos is the great enemy: what it kills cannot be reborn, what it destroys cannot grow again. Chaos creates monsters of children, devours communities from the inside, and eats away the world. Hate it and destroy it!

...Mostal?

Mostal is the mechanical King of the Stone Tribe. He became cold and calculating when his brother Stone was killed and became unmoving, and now he seeks to undo that tragedy by repairing that which is not broken.



...Sedenya?

The Red Moon was once a mortal girl who coveted the power of Imarja, so she wrapped a piece of the earth around her and rose into the air, leaving behind a great wound that pains us yet. Her armies and priests seek to conquer the world, but when they tried to reach the Home of the Goddess they were halted by the Building Wall and turned away. The Goddess' wound must be healed, but like a patient mother she will wait until the right time to teach her errant daughter her lesson of life.

...Sorcerers?

Some people are like empty pots: they have lost Ernalda's spark in their lives and follow false hopes, seeking invisible powers that have no meaning. Sometimes this false worship can make new things, like Zistor the Machine, but when that was broken it was shown to be nothing but metal. We pity them, and let them live among us, hoping to fill their emptiness.

...Spirits?

Some spirits are remnants of the Gods War, some are unformed entities, some are the ghosts of the lost. The Earth Witch holds them for Ernalda, and the priestesses of Ty Kora Tek can send them to the Silent Caverns to be reborn as whole beings.

Goddesses of Esrolia

Imarja, the Great One, Our Savior

Imarja is the wise mother who saved her children from the wars of brutish men. She brought them to Esrolia and gave them the Eight Silent Songs binding them to their land, and the Ninth Silent Scream to halt men's follies. She is the primal feminine force, and the source of the Earth Tribe.

Asrelia, Giver and Keeper of Plenty

Asrelia once roamed the world, beautiful and desired, but in the Stagnant Age she retreated into the earth. She took with her all that which the Earth Tribe's enemies coveted, including her daughters. She sustained them through the darkness so that the world could live again.

Ty Kora Tek, Crone and Holder

Ty Kora Tek is the tender of souls, the keeper of all things good. When death came to the world, many souls came to the Underworld, where Ty Kora Tek dwelt. She aided and sheltered them, but she would not release them from her grasp. She kept everything back from the world until it needed it most, and only her love of her sister Asrelia weakened her hold at last so that she filled the sorry emptiness.

Esrola, the Earth Mother

Esrola is the very fabric of the earth. All people, animals, and plants, everything within or upon the earth, is part of her. She is the mother of the Grain Goddesses, who feed us: Esra Barley, Pelora Wheat, Suchara Rye, and Usara Oat. She is mother of the Animal Goddesses, who serve and feed us: Uralda Cow, Entra Sow, Nevala Ewe, and Isbarn the Goose Girl. She is the abundance of the land and the great provider.

Maran, the Active Earth

Maran is the creative and destructive energy of the earth. Once she danced to create the valleys and hills, shaping the world. Then she stopped dancing, summoning earthquakes against her foes. She fought until everything was dead, including herself. In the caverns of the dead she was reunited Ernalda and Esrola, and together they remade the world.

Ernalda, the Great Goddess

Ernalda is the power that animates the world, so great it could not exist without her, so great that mortals cannot comprehend her. Instead, she manifests herself as the many Earth Goddesses.

Ana Gor, Goddess of Death

She was created with the first murder, entering the world to become Death. Many stole her powers and drove her away, but she always comes back, forever a part of the universe. She comes to take the Year Fathers during the ceremonies to complete the cycle of fertility.

Vinga, Defender of the Defenseless

Vinga is the warrior goddess who took the secrets of war from men and made them into the skills of protection. She is there when women need to defend themselves, when they must seek revenge alone, or when they must fight hard in childbirth.

Babeester Gor, the Bloody Avenger

The Avenging Goddess was born when Ernalda lay dead, at the place where her Axe Hall now stands. She saw the dead goddesses about her, and leapt up with axe in hand to hunt down her family's murderers and take bloody vengeance. She is the defender of the temples, guardian of the Goddesses, and the wrecker of revenge.

Voria, the Girl's Goddess

Voria was the herald of the first spring, when Life returned to the world after the Great Darkness. She is the goddess of young girls, worshipped for her innocence.



A Personal View of Esvulari Life

What My Mother Told Me

Who are you?

I am Lady Mesinthe of Beauchief, wife to Sir Chotaran. While he is away on the Crown's Business, I am the Provost of the Salt Point. And, always and ever, I am your mother.

Who are we?

We are the Beauchief. For five generations, our family has held Salt Point for the Count of Vizel.

What makes us great?

We have a proud heritage. Your great-grandfather Haurstan Book-and-Blade single-handedly converted ten villages of Hendreiki pagans after slaying the horse-demon that terrorized them, and your father has told you of his own feats many a time. Yet glory is not a family heirloom like Haurstan's sword, but a flame that each generation must rekindle for itself. You will make us great, just as will your sons and daughters in their turn.

Where do we live?

Beauchief is a small, but pleasing village at the end of Salt Point, where the cold waters of the fjords crash into Choralinthor Bay. According to the soul-take, as of last year, 402 adults live within the village itself, half Esvulari and half Hendreiki, and there are perhaps another 500 Hendreiki living in small farms and fisherfolk crofts in the rest of Salt Point.

How do we live?

The Beauchiefans are fishers: the little boats go out onto the Bay every morning, while every evening the Hendreiki eel-fishers head into the Great Brackmarsh in their willow-branch coracles. We eat much fish, but most of the catch is unloaded and sold at Vizel of an evening or preserved in the salt pits outside our walls and sold in markets across Esvular. With the proceeds from this trade, as well as the taxes we charge on our Salt Sellers, we buy the grain, meat and other foodstuffs we need, as well as timber and bronze. The soil on the promontory is not very fertile, but we do also have a little orchard, vineyard and vegetable gardens.

What is important in my life?

What do you want to be important? Honor and responsibility, obviously, but Saint Aeol put it most plainly in the eighth canto of *The Examples of Karatch*: "No one can make you do anything. Only you can find your own song, and then only you can sing it. If you do not, that song will never be heard."

Who rules us?

This you need to understand, for soon you will become a man and take your place in the family council. Your father may want you by his side in distant Dragon Pass or else you may serve as my seneschal here in Salt Point.

Heortland's king has long owed fealty to other rulers. Once, it was the Only Old One, then the so-called "God-King," but his union of nations broke when the Pharaoh was killed. Heortland's royal line ended in 1617, when the king died without an heir. A bloody-handed foreign mercenary called Rikard Tigerhearted seized the throne. We spilled no tears when he was deposed by the invading forces of the Empire. They placed Bandal Tigerbane on the throne, but real power rests with the

Imperial emissaries from the far north.

We are not yet sure what to make of these oh-so-polite men and women, with their talk of Lunar inclusion and Solar might. They are so blinded by their fear and hatred of our pagan kinsmen in Dragon Pass that they seem to feel that wind itself is their enemy. Your father fears this will become a problem in the future, but for now they smile sweetly and appoint our knights as sheriffs throughout Heortland and even southern Sartar. That is where your father is now, trying to bring hope and justice to a tribe that has just been 'pacified' by the Empire. I find it hard to reconcile what he writes in his letters with the smooth reassurances of the Lunars I meet, but as Saint Aeol said, "Heed deeds, not words alone."

A long answer to a short question! We hold Salt Point for the Count of Vizel, who has pledged his fealty to the Earls' Conclave. So long as the Earls accept King Bandal and the Lunars as their legitimate lords, worthy of support, then so do we.

What is the difference between men and women?

There are physical and theological differences, but they should not be considered natural laws. It is generally the case that men do the farming, fighting and ruling, while women raise the new generation and keep the home. But here I am, Provost of Salt Point, while your sister Elfine plays not with dolls but mace-sticks and platter-shields, fancying herself already a warrior of Saint Inganna!

What is my lot in life?

You are the son of a knight and in line to inherit the sigils of Beauchief. This is a great honor, and a great burden. There are those who have adopted these new-fangled western ways of sending their young men away as 'squires', but your father and I believe it is more important that you understand your people and your duties. That is why, as well as being tutored by Sacrificer Parsovil and trained by Sir Banfred, you have picked apples and fished the Choralinthor with our Hendreiki, sat by my side as I held the Windsday Court, and walked the Lesser Pilgrimage to the Font rather than riding on your fine Eauban pony.

Your lot is to rule your people with justice, honor, compassion and understanding. Do that, and when it is your time to pass through Saint Aeol's Peaceful Passage, your soul will be clear and your life-hymn harmonious. Make us proud.

How do we deal with others?

With honor and honesty. We Esvulari have been loyal servants and allies of every ruler of Heortland, even that mercenary Rikard, not because we are opportunists and turncoats, but for precisely the opposite reason: because we are scrupulous in our dealings with everyone. When we take on a responsibility or pledge our allegiance, that means something to us. Even when your uncle Haurlev turned against Rikard, he took the path of honor, personally seeking audience with the tyrant to denounce him. Aeol bless his honest soul, we miss Haurlev so, but still we are proud of him.

Remember that almost everyone has some good in them, and just because others' ways are different that does not make them bad. Treat the Hendreiki as you would Esvulari. They have not yet come to accept that their 'Orlanth' is really Saint Worlath, not yet been baptized into the Aeolian faith, but they

are good people. Some Hendreiki are even lords in their own right, although most are peasants and fishermen.

There are some strangers we must oppose, though. Here in Salt Point, we need not fear the corruption that roars and slithers from the Chaos Woods to the north, nor need we fear the dark men of the Troll Woods. But like all coastal villages, we face the raids of the Wolf Pirates and other corsairs. That is why such a small village nonetheless has an earth rampart and palisade, and why the knights of Saint Ehilm man their stone watch tower, day and night.

But other strangers we would prefer to greet as friends. After all, Saint Aeol did say that "Dialogue is the first option, warfare the last." That is why we call our warrior orders the "Last Optioneers." Yet while it is always glorious to bring the Karatch of Saint Aeol to an unbeliever, you should not try to force them to heed the Word; that is neither right nor sensible. We show our faith by our deeds, and let others come to us.

What is evil?

The worst evils are those that dwell within our own hearts. Arrogance, bigotry, hatred, disloyalty, wasted potential, falsehood, all these are evils.

These evils will take shapes. Personally, I think that this is really what Chaos is, but it is not something about which I know much. But certainly you can see the other manifestations and forms of these evils, like the callous selfishness of the machine-people of God Forgot or the self-righteous impiety of the Rokari. Their church is a western caricature of our Aeolian ways, brutal when we are forgiving, bigoted where we are open.

Who are our enemies?

As I said, Chaos and the pirates who would pillage our towns are our enemies. There are always those who would destroy rather than create, and we must not shirk from delivering them an appropriate rebuff. As he has told us all on more than one occasion, your father distinguished himself in the campaigns against the Two-Hook Bandits of the Upper Bandori. When you are older, you will defeat our enemies as well.

Whom do we venerate?

From Beauchief you can just about see the White Faces, where Saint Aeol's blessed countenance looks out across the bay. When you take the Chalk Road to Vizel you pass right beneath it, and no doubt feel his calm, inspiring presence. Saint Aeol was the true messenger of the Creator, and he baptized and converted the pagan storm gods, awakening them all to truth, from Saint Worlath the Free to Saint Bartath the farmer.

Do you remember your catechism? Here are the main saints whom we worship in the name of the Creator and Saint Aeol:

- Saint Ankormy, the Scholar
- Saint Bartath the Farmer
- Saint Bran, the Smith
- Saint Chalarn, the Healer
- Saint Donandar, the Choirst
- Saint Dormal, the Sailor
- Saint Earna, the Good Wife
- Saint Ehilm, the Watchful Sun
- Saint Inganna, the Warriress
- Saint Ishaar, the Merchant
- Saint Odal, the Hunter
- Saint Taurox, the Sacred Bull
- Saint Worlath, the Free Wind



But we can all be saints in our own little way, even as we revere and respect these great saints of blessed memory. Remember, my son: your life is yours to shape. When Saint Worlath's cheery breath sends the windmill's vanes turning above you, or you watch Saint Ehilm's golden light sparkle on Choralinthor Bay, remember that this is a wonderful world, and it is up to you to play your part in shaping it. Be good.

A Prophecy of the Hero Wars

*Saint Aeol's Peaceful Passage
Unites our world and his,
Extending Joy and Solace
Into the storm's abyss.*

*Until the Day of Closing,
When sacrifice is due,
And heav'nly conflagration
Will every world renew.*

A Hymn from the Liturgist

What the Sacrificer Sings

*Lift eyes unto the heavens,
With blessed air fill lungs
Aeol's Word bear witness
With life, with deed, with tongue!*

Where did the world come from?

*All earthly possibilities,
Were from Creator born.
One Holy Power Invisible,
Our God who made the world.*

Where did I come from?

*This world he did populate,
With life of every kind,
To worship and to honor
His heart, His soul, His mind.*

Why do we die?

*Alas the One Whose Name's Forbidden
Did our Lord betray.
Though He has truly Risen
We mortal price must pay.*

What happens after we die?

*We go through Peaceful Passage,
Aeol washes sin clear
'Til we can rise to Solace,
One with our God most dear.*

Why am I here?

*While earthly life we're living
We witness Aeol's creed.
A life without his message
Is tragic waste indeed,*

How do I do magic?

*The pow'r of our Creator
Is boundless in its might.
In Aeol's name we call it,
That we may fight for right.*

I have heard of other powers. Can you tell me the truth about them?

*When Aeol wrote the Karatch,
He bade us to unite,
Back into truest harmony
These shadows of the Light.*

...Chaos?

*And yet all Lights have Shadows,
And Chaos does assail
All that is Right and Proper:
'Gainst it we cannot fail.*

...Heathen Spirits?

*In the Creator's world-hymn,
These are but single notes.
One day they will find purpose
And roar from all our throats.*

...Pagan Gods?

*For like the pagan idols,
They one day will convert
And take their place among us,
The Karatch to assert.*

*So pity the poor pagans,
By superstition bound
But Aeol's Word shall save them
From ignorance profound.*

*Worlath for one was lost to us
The pagans used him ill
Saint Aeol showed him just how
His fate he could fulfill.*

*'Orlanth' into Aeol's
Baptismal pool submerged.
And choirs of angels hymned him
As Worlath did emerge.*

*And so the Wind was tamed,
The storm was brought to heel,
And will the Moon then join it
In Aeol's commonweal?*

*For powers elemental,
Are naught without the Word,
Passions without purpose,
Hymns unsung and unheard.*

*Magasta, Yelm, and Xentha,
Imarja and her kind,
Are waiting for Saint Aeol,
Salvation genuine.*

...Western Churches?

*For others speak of Solace,
And claim Creator's writ,
But empty Words suit only,
The dunce or hypocrite.*

*And only in the Karatch,
By Peerless Aeol penned
Has God revealed the Passage:
This mortal world transcend.*

...Aldrya?

*The wood folk are not soulless
But they still won't admit
The Holy Hymn that they all hear
Comes from Aeol's pulpit.*

...Kyger Litor?

*So too the dark men have their own
Sacred song secrets too.
The day will come when they will see
That Aeol all these knew.*

...Mostal?

*The dwarven hives are ordered
By metronomic tone.
How long till they do realize
That they are not alone?*

*For all the races of the world
On land, in sky, at sea
Are bound by common harmony
As Aeol did foresee.*

Saints of the Aeolian Church

Saint Aeol, the Communicator

*He came from farthest westlands,
He spoke of Hope and Life.
He won war with his kindness,
Brought peace where there was strife.*

*Saint Aeol healed the dying,
Saint Aeol saved the dead.
Saint Aeol spoke to one and all
Touched heart and soul and head.*

*The pagan folk he did convert,
New ways they did embrace.
No more was blood shed
sacrificing
Bread did take its place.*

*And when his time was over,
Creator called him home.
And saints and angels see him
Beside his Father's throne.*

Saint Worlath, the Free

*Once a pagan thunderer,
But was no master he,
A slave to bestial passions,
'Til Aeol set him free.*

Saint Taurox, Sacred Bull

*Saint Taurox, simple servant,
Strong in faith and arm,
From the blight of Chaos
Protects his folk from harm.*

Saint Ehilm, the Watchful Sun

*From his sun-bright station,
Saint Ehilm stands his watch.
Though we offer peace to all
Aggression we must scotch.*

Saint Earna, Wife and Mother

*For we'll not let disharmony
Intrude upon the home,
The family and hearth-place
Earna calls her own.*

Saint Bartath, Saint Mister Farmer

*Where honest Mister Farmer,
Will hard work sanctify
And when the day is over
Sing hymns of praise on high.*

Saint Chalarn, the Merciful Beginning and End

*And Saint Chalarn the white-clad,
Our lives and strength prolongs.
The Creator's deep love for us
Expressed through healing song.*

Saint Ishaar, Honest Prophet

*We share ideas and
blessings,
Through gift and fair
exchange.
The Honest Prophet
blesses
Those who this trade
arrange.*

Saint Ankormy, the Word Remembered

*For we cannot diminish
Saint Aeol's Word with use.
Ankormy will remember
And the Karatch effuse.*

The Bishop Saints

*And every generation,
Will add its own saints, too.
Martyrs, heroes, bishops,
Souls rich in their virtue.*

*But we all are determined,
That our parts we will play
To bring worlds together,
And blessed be that day!*

*So, eyes unto the heavens,
With blessed air fill lungs.
Aeol's Word bear witness
With life, with deed, with
tongue!*



A Personal View of Grazer Life

What the War Chief Told Me

Who are you?

I am Jalorast Shining Arm, son of Yaranrast Night Gallop, son of Jalorast Bright Lance, descended from Yu-Kargzant the Imperial Sun.

Who are we?

We are the Pure Horse People, tenders of the sacred herds that are descended from the Great Horse. Outsiders call us Grazers.

We belong to the Hoof-Dancer Clan. Our horses are branded with two horseshoes, and are renowned for their nimbleness and speed. You can recognize the men of our clan by our beaded anklets, and you can recognize the women of our clan by the same beadwork in their hair.

What makes us great?

We are the only people who still follow the true example of Yu-Kargzant and his sons, and care for and worship Horse. Others may ride horses, but they do not know the right forms of worship, and pollute themselves by herding other beasts.

Where do we live?

We live in the Grazelands, territory granted to us by Ironhoof the Centaur generations ago. Each spring the clan splits up, and takes the herds into the hills above Maregraze Vale or to the banks of Jaldon's Wrong River. In winter, we reassemble in the valley.

The Feathered Horse Queen lives in North Post, but frequently travels among the clans.

How do we live?

We live off Arandayla's bounty. We drink the milk and blood of our herds. We eat their flesh at our most important ceremonies, and women make cheese, yogurt, and koumiss. In addition, we eat the wild animals hunted by our men, and plants gathered by women or grown by the vendref. The vendref also make bread, wine and beer. And we receive exotic foods, cloth, and gold from the traders who wish to pass through our territory.

Our herds provide for us in many other ways. Our tents are sewn from the hides of many horses. Our pants and women's dresses are also made from their hide, and the hair from their mane and tail is woven into ropes and rugs.

But most of all, the herds carry us and our possessions, so that we don't have to live in one place forever, which is a sign of poverty.

What is important in my life?

You are now a Rider, and have moved from my tent to those of the Riders along the edge of the camp. You are responsible for tending the herd and bringing home game, and for learning the skills of the Warrior.

In eight years, your age group will be initiated as Warriors, and will be responsible for bearing arms in the defense of the clan. You will live in the Warriors' tents by the entrance to the camp. Once you have sufficient wealth for a gift to a girl's father, you may marry and set up your own tent. Your gift should be generous, for this helps bind her clan and ours together.

My own age group is the Leader. Leaders are chosen to direct slaves, to lead small bands, or for special functions, as I led a delegation to the Sun Dome last Storm Season.

In time, you will attain the Elder age group. These men speak with the voice of experience, and lead larger groups, even the clan. Their advice is sought and revered.

When you die, let your body be burned in a great pyre, so the sparks will carry your soul to Yu-Kargzant, who will judge if you are ready to be reborn, or must spend time in the Underworld until you are purified.

Who rules us?

Bandroste Brave Charge leads the Hoof-Dancer Clan. Like all clan chieftains, he wears a band of feathers on his right arm to indicate his descent from Yu-Kargzant, and carries the Five Stars Whip. He appoints men of other noble families from the Leader age group to advise him. Dinalish Mighty Leap also gives advice, consulting with the spirits and requesting their aid when necessary. My cousin Taradarin Ten Day Run leads the clan into war; his bravery is noted throughout the Grazelands.

Bandroste is loyal to the Feathered Horse Queen, Bearer of the Head, who incarnates the powers of the Feathered Horse Goddess. Her magic unites all of us, even the women and vendref, and she appoints the rulers of the trading posts. Bearer of the Head rules the tribe in times of peace.

Bandroste also owes allegiance to Jarsandron Ten-Herds, whom he helped elect as Chief. Jarsandron rules the Grazers in times of war.

What makes a man great?

A great man owns many horses and slaves, and wears glittering gold. Bravery, honesty, generosity, and obedience are the mark of a great warrior, as are the many scalps he's taken in battle.

What is evil?

Chaos is evil. It was let into the world when the Rebel Gods slew the Sun, and ever since, we've had to fight it.

Failure to follow Yu-Kargzant's rules always takes a heavy price, if not in this life, then after death.

Never commit the folly of adding beasts to your herd heedlessly. They might fill your belly, but they can't nourish your soul.

What is my lot in life?

You show much promise in target practice, and I think you may someday qualify to join the Brotherhood of the Golden Bow. You will then be able to win much glory by participating in the most daring raids.

Strive to become prosperous, increasing your herd through raiding and careful breeding. Maybe you will become wealthy enough to take a second wife.

When I become an Elder or die, I will divide my herds among my sons. As the eldest, you will receive the most, Jalasdrad half as much, and Melipolti half that.

What is the difference between men and women?

Men are the protectors, providers, and leaders. Women are gifted with the powers of life, bearing children and caring for mares during foaling. They are in charge of the herds, and decide when it's time to move to a new pasture. When you are married, your wife will do your bidding, but in turn you must care for her and be kind to her with words and deeds.

I know your sister thinks she will grow up and become a shaman in the service of the Feathered Horse Queen, but I asked Dinalish about this, and he believes she is not blessed by the spirits.

How do we deal with others?

We can always trust everyone in our clan. If your herd sickens or is stolen, or if you are wounded, our clan will help you. You must always offer what aid you can to a member of our clan.

Other Grazers may help you as well, but you will then owe them a favor. If you ever need to seek their aid, go first to your mother's Sun Ring Clan, and avoid the greedy Sky Bows.

The vendref, our slaves, should be treated strictly but fairly. For the most part, they are hard-working and loyal, but they are prone to temptation from their cousins in Sartar or Tarsh.

Ironhoof aided us long ago, and the people of Beast Valley are our friends. But be warned: minotaurs mean well, but they can easily forget who their friends are, especially when they drink or are consumed by the battle frenzy.

Dragonewt cities are located to the east and north of the Grazelands. They sometimes act as our intermediaries with other lands, but you would do well to avoid them, because none can truly predict their actions.

Years ago, Sartar came to challenge the Feathered Horse Queen, but ended up marrying her. For a while, his kingdom was on good terms with ours. However, the Orlanthi are an unruly lot, and some tribes have raided us.

Other foreigners should be treated with suspicion until they perform some act to earn your trust. If you offer your friendship, be sure it is as constant as the Sun.

Our war bands often serve in the armies of other lands. The Feathered Horse Queen makes sure that our employer will be trustworthy and generous. If she is unable to find such an

employer, then our war bands make swift raids deep into foreign lands and carry off great treasure to glorify her and Yu-Kargzant.

Who are our enemies?

The tribesmen of Prax, who ride unworthy beasts and long ago sought to enslave our entire tribe, are our enemies. Our shamans set up altars in the Guardian Hills to keep the beast-riders out of Dragon Pass.

Trolls, who skulk in darkness and eat our horses, are always our foes.

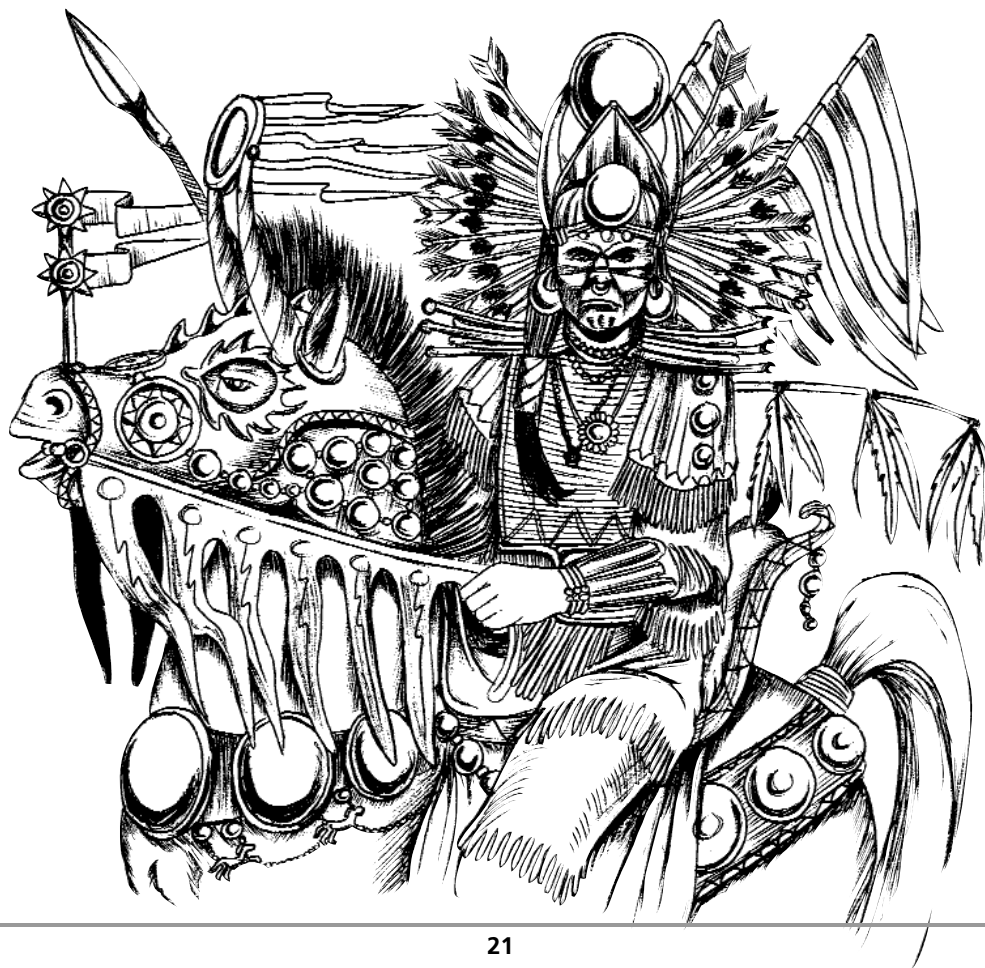
Who are my spirits?

Radiant Yu-Kargzant is our ancestor as well as our great spirit, and we follow his laws. Men worship his sons Dastal the Hunter, Jordan the Warrior, Henird the Leader, and Josad the Elder, depending on their age group. Most women worship Arandayla, the Horse Mother, as well as the spirit for their age group: Charai for girls, Lereen for mothers, Estei for teachers, and Henedra for elders. Our shamans contact Light spirits from the Sky World, each of which gives us good magic. And never forget that our herds are holy, too.

The vendref have their own gods; never worship them, but know who they are: Kenkacho the loyal slave, Kanestall One-hand who runs the trading posts, Ernalda the cut earth, Barntar plow of barley, Lodril plow of wheat, and Hiia Swordsman, who serves the Feathered Horse Queen.

What is there to do around here?

In Dark Season when the entire clan camps in Maregraze Vale, we hold feasts and dances; compete in horse races, hare-spear- ing, chadash, and archery contests; play Horse-and-Vulture; arrange marriages; and tell stories and listen to songs.



The Endless Pastures of the Sun

What the Grazer Shaman Says

Where did the world come from?

Creator made the sky first, then the earth.

Where did I come from?

Our people and our cousins the horses came down from the sky to conquer the earth. Our ancestors touched down at First Print, and traveled many times to where there was better grazing. We won't stay in the Grazelands forever.

Why do we die?

Monsters came up out of the ground and began destroying the perfect world. They mutilated Arandayla, taking her wings, fangs, and claws, leaving her crippled. Yu-Kargzant sent Jordan to save her from death, but he could not be everywhere, and so the monsters tore Venst Voloi to bits and ate him.

What happens after we die?

Your body will be placed on a platform so that the beasts can't defile it, or if you fall while on a distant raid, it will be burned. Your spirit will then travel to the Pastures of Endless Sun, where you will continue to serve Yu-Kargzant until La-Ungariant sends you to be reborn.

Why am I here?

We await the Sun Bells, which Yu-Kargzant will ring to call us back to the sky to fight for him there. Until then, we are on the earth to rule over inferior people.

How do I do magic?

Denbitos taught us how to tell the good spirits from the bad ones. He teaches us how to ask the good ones to help us. He teaches shamans how to drive off and crush the bad ones. I will give you charms to hold the spirits you should deal with, which will use their powers for you.

Some people use other magic, too. The Innocent Magics are not from Denbitos, but they are not bad, either. But don't be seduced by the Guilty Magic that taints your spirit.

I have heard of other powers. Can you tell me the truth about...

...Chaos?

Some think that change is the same as motion. This is not so.

...Darkness?

Kanvak is ruler of the monsters and demons of the night, such as the trolls. Within his shadows, Enkreva the Night Huntress chases down her prey outside the light of the campfires.

...Ernalda?

This earth goddess was kin to La-Ungariant, but she lets her body be cut with plows. Thus, she is weak, as if bled white from a hundred slashes. She is fit only for vendref to worship.

...the Ocean?

The ocean is like a river so wide you can't see the other side. The waters were defeated long ago, and are unimportant.

...the Moon?

This goddess of the River People tricked them into worshipping her as a False Sun. But her color is not gold, and she was

not strong enough to rise all the way to the sky realm. She even tricked some of us Pure People, but our chief now sees through her lies. We dance to the Sun to make sure she falls again.

...Storms?

Wingkoalad, whom the Sartarites call Orlanth, once defeated Yu-Kargzant by trickery. We are now on guard against this, and await the time when we will drive his clouds from the sky, so that the Sun and stars can shine clearly on us.

...Yelm?

The River People could not understand the glory of Yu-Kargzant, even though our ancestors tried to show it to them. This is because they are not from the pure lineages. Instead, they worship a False Sun, which they call Yelm. It does not ride, and so can never join us in the Pastures.

I have heard of other peoples. Tell me the truth about...

...the Beast Riders?

The spirit of the beast-riders is not a powerful one, but he can stir up trouble and seduce weaker people into performing bestial acts. Our shamans keep him safely at a distance, just as we cleverly keep the plow people between us and the beast-riders.

...Dwarves?

The dwarves refuse to listen to the great spirits, and so they hide underground, where they hope Yu-Kargzant cannot find them. They forget that La-Ungariant knows all the secrets of the earth, and will one day direct us to plunder them.

...Elves?

The mother of forest once choked the entire world with trees. But she had no light of her own, and so she and her people withered during the Dark Time, leaving the grazelands for us.

...Sorcerers?

The Black Horse Troop get their magic from marks on dead skins they bind into "books." But their scribblings and scrolls have no life in them, and soon neither will the Troop nor the demons they ride.

Spirits of the Majestic Horses Tradition

Arandayla, the Horse Mother

The horse mother serves, but she serves best when loved, and we have always loved her. When she was whole, we loved her. When she was crippled, we still loved her. We love all of her children, especially our sacred goldeneye brothers, which can see into the Pastures of the Endless Sun and run faster than any other horse. We live off her bounty.

Folorene, the Wanderlore Spirit

Folorene was a man in a woman's body, or both, or something else entirely. Or perhaps he was a horse that became a person, or vice versa; or maybe a star that fell and did not return to the sky; or perhaps a spirit that had no mother or father. She belongs nowhere, but Denbitos told everyone they must accept him as one of the tribe, and still today she is the protector of those who have no other place, but are still Grazers.

La-Ungariant, the Feathered Mare

La-Ungariant is the daughter of Orest, the Earth. She is the source of earth, mares, good women, nurturing, virtue, good animals, and life itself. She bested her sister Tara to become the Firstwife of Yu-Kargzant, and thus is mistress of the Grazer women. Her daughters teach all women their place in society, according to their age.

Charai, the Rider

Charai is a maiden's First Friend. She teaches women's secrets and the Six Ways to tend horses. Charai is seen in the western sky, staying up late into the night like most young women.

Lereen, the Mother

Lereen is the Mother, loving and respectful of her husband, caring and responsible for her children. She is a source of blessings and healing. Lereen is seen in the northern sky, often up late in the night nursing and tending her children.

Estei, the Teacher

Estei the Firstwife organizes all the other women, and instructs them as to how to best perform their tasks. She is so busy that she is not seen in the sky.

Henedra, the Elder

Henedra has experience and knowledge of many things, and her advice is always welcome. She is seen in the eastern sky, awakening early in the morning like many old people do.

Tamar, Lord of Wild Beasts

Tamar is the lord of all wild beasts. If he does not receive sacrifice before a hunt, the prey will be angry and unpredictable, the take meagere.

Tara, Lady of the Wild

Tara is the untamable daughter of Orest. She holds the secrets and terrors of the mountains, rivers, and other places where horses do not go. She loved Yu-Kargzant as La-Ungariant did, and she even let him catch her and father a child. But she would not let him tame her, so La-Ungariant became the Firstwife, and Tara became the Lady of the Wild.

Yu-Kargzant, the Burning Stallion

Yu-Kargzant is lord of the Majestic Horses Tradition. He is the source of fire, stallions, good men, action, morality, good weather, and life itself. He made himself visible to ordinary people, and so gallops across the sky each day, blazing with life and light. At night he raids the Underworld and releases the spirits of his people from Hell. His wife, sons, and daughters all serve him faithfully, as do a host of stars, planets, horses, and other spirits

Dastal, the Hunter

Yu-Kargzant's youngest son Dastal allows all men into his dances and ceremonies. He is the patron of young men, obedience, archery, hunting, and herding. He is chief of the Hunting Spirits, which he dispenses to men of all ages. Every night and year Dastal circles all the way around the sky performing his duties.

When Jordan saved Arandalya, he tried to force her to serve him as a slave, but she would not submit. Then Dastal came and spoke to her of an alliance, and so she agreed to serve as an equal.

Jordan, the Warrior

Jordan is the patron of fathers, of stallions, of flutes, and of lancers and all who strive face-to-face against their foes. He rides across the sky every night, keeping lonely patrol over the herds of horses and sleeping peoples. Jordan is also patron of the Golden Bow Society, who dedicate themselves so completely to him that they no longer worship Yu-Kargzant directly. Each of them rides a goldeneye.

Henird, the Leader

Henird is patron of war leaders, chiefs, and kings. He can sense enemy spirits and knows how to deal with them properly. His tent is in the precise center of the sky, and from there he leads the tribe, even as Yu-Kargzant leads the universe.

Josad, the Elder

Josad is the first son of Yu-Kargzant and La-Ungariant. He is the wise counselor who has acquired great knowledge through experience. He is intimately familiar with the Sky World. Josad circles his younger brother's tent every night, sharing his great wisdom with the whole tribe.



A Personal View of Heortling Life

What My Father Told Me

Who are you?

I am Aski Harbardsson, thane of the Varmandi Clan.

Who are we?

We are the Varmandi Clan. Old Man Varmand came here and lived with his family up in the branches of the Oak of Vengeance over there. When the Many Kings vied for attention Varmand's grandson chose King Colymar as his leader, and got the Two Great Gold Rings as a sign of alliance. Colymar's grandson King Borngold lost two sons on this land fighting for our rights, and we have never broken from their tribe.

Are we a great people?

The greatest. The world is full of many kinds of people, but none can measure up to us. Orlanth, our great god, saved the world from doom when all other gods hid during the Gods War. King Sartar, Founder of our ancient kingdom, preserved the world from destruction by braving dangers without ordinary weapons. Old Man Varmand knocked a grizzly bear cold with his bare fist. My father fought in three great battles and filled this house with trophies. I have killed eleven men in combat, all of them justly and fairly, even though they were Lunar soldiers and did not deserve it.

What is the difference between men and women?

Beyond the obvious sexual differences, women are more cold and calculating, less emotional, and more inclined to be peaceful and stable.

Men are more passionate: we love to fight and shout and run all about full of the battle frenzy, ready to do and to die then and there. Afterwards we love the smell of the new flowers, or even of the dry desert dust which reminds us we are alive. I love to breath deep on a frosty starlit night, and to hold a woman in my arms and exchange caresses under the covers. My children fill my chest with joy, the clan moot makes me laugh and shout with friends, where we love to clash our weapons on a vote, and to preen before our fellows, boasting truth and pride in our accomplishments.

Women are more thoughtful, careful of their mortality. Most of them seek children, and protect them with the fierceness of a she-bear. They usually think before they act rather than acting on their feelings. But I cannot say anything without mentioning the men and women who have changed roles in their clans. Warrior maidens are known in every clan's past, and some say Starbrow is making a new sisterhood of them right now.

Where do we live?

This stead is our home. Our clan owns it. From those hills where our sheep graze, to the forest where we hunt the red deer, down to our fishing river there, is what Orlanth gave to the Old Man. Many generations ago our clan longhouse was in the second valley over, the one with the birches, but it was the Varmandi Clan. My uncle told me he knew where there were other old buildings, ruined, in the north of where we saw the fox that day. Those must have been ours too. We have always been on this land.

How do we live?

Hard work, bent over the plow and treading its furrows, then reaping the bounty of the Mother, is our life. Every man plows, or wishes to, or works for those that do. Even Orlanth plows. And we hunt, fish the rivers, tend the sheep in the hills, and trade for special goods.

Our food is barley, wheat, and rye—Ernalda's bread is our staple, eaten in porridge, breads, and ale. Only the poor, like your no-good cousins at the Rotroot place, eat only root vegetables; "More cabbage, less bread," they say. We are well off, so we eat pig, chicken, cow, and the wild game of the good red deer. For shelter, we have log houses for us and barns for the animals. Have you seen the things called chimneys which those rich people built in Apple Lane?

Our property is odal or personal. Odal property is everything which the clan owns, like the land and the trees and the animals and buildings. The clan owns them, and we have personal rights, like us always being able to live in this, the Solid Oak stead, and to dispense of the sheep we breed from our flock. Personal property is whatever you get on your own, like the herd of black bulls which the Anmangarn Clan's chieftain has, or the horses born of the pair which Branbrig's ancestor stole, or this, my trusty sword Mooncutter.

What is important in my life?

You are a member of the clan. Soon you will have your adulthood rite—do not shame us before the rest of the family. Then you will be an adult, and no longer have to listen to me and the elders in silence. You can join into the discussions, and your words will bear their own weight. You should be looking for a wife now. I hope you have chosen someone rich and friendly when you dance those nights away in the barn. I see the girls looking your way. Do you know which of them has a rich dowry? Which of them will be good to raise your daughters if she leaves you?

When you die we will burn your body with rune-carved logs. Your children will shout your name and the priest will summon the wind to send your soul to Orlanth. Your son will inherit your goods and your rights, just as you shall inherit mine.

Who rules us?

Gentle Vastyr is our leader now, since Rastorlanth did not return from the last rebellion against the Lunars. Vastyr knows all the times to plow, all the ways to help a birthing cow, all the signs of whether the frost is over, all the proverbs and stories to keep boys and warriors from fighting. He was selected by the women, you know, who fear more war and have been seduced by the feminine powers of the Red Moon. Not enough men survive to lead the Colymar to war again. Not until you and your age mates come of age will we dare.

Our clan is loyal to the king of the Colymar Tribe, and we will maintain that history of loyalty as long as it is honored by both sides. We are bonded by history and tradition. Only something terrible and severe—perhaps the King of the Colymar becoming an initiate of the Red Moon—could break that bond. All the clans who follow the tribal kings do it by free will. We can change anytime we want to.

The Kingdom of Sartar is no more than a dream. Once, not long ago, all the tribes of Dragon Pass joined together under



the rule of the House of King Sartar. Now they are all dead. The kingdom is no more, save that an heir be found and we all choose to fight for him.

What makes a man great?

All people can be great if they follow the virtues of Orlanth: courage, wisdom, generosity, justice, honor, and piety.

Another thing you should know: we always fix what we have made wrong. We care for ourselves and the world and take responsibility for our errors. We can break and we can fix. We are powerful, and we are responsible.

What is evil?

Chaos is evil, for Chaos is to gods as death is to life. Chaos takes and can never give, for it is not natural, not even in the way that trolls are natural, like when they ate all the sheep on Aksander's Ridge. Chaos tries to make Orlanth stop moving, stop bringing the rains, stop tending the plants and herds of Ernalda.

Things that are bad are those things which try to restrict our traditional way. Orlanth gave us our life because he intended us to live this way. Anything which defies us and tries to make us obey rigid laws or to worship stupid gods is bad. One time the Emperor of the Universe tried to make Orlanth obey written laws, but the Emperor was killed for it. His children, the Emperors of Dara Happa, were killed by our grand-fathers for trying to conquer us. Now a new Emperor has come, and maybe it will be time for him to learn something soon too.

What is my lot in life?

You should strive to work hard and marry well, raise many brave sons and daughters. You should go to the holy meetings and send your prayers to Orlanth and Ernalda. You should keep your spears sharp, maybe make a couple of extras, and visit that penny-pinching Gringle when you go to Apple Lane to see his strong hats.

If you do those things, and live a good life without some evil monster breaking all bounds of normalcy by raiding our farm again, then you will get the Solid Oak stead to tend after I die, and fill it with your own children to bring glory to the wind. If you are lucky and skilled you can be the clan chieftain, and live in Vastyr's big house with warriors and men of courage. Maybe you'll be rich enough to have a chimney built.

How do we deal with others?

Our clan is our family—they are the air we breathe. Even those no-good cousins at Rotroot are blood kin, and they will never starve as long as a Varmandi is alive with a pack of food.

Friends are better than treasure. You do not have to keep friends who are trash like those Rotroot brothers—you are known by the friends you keep. Bolik is a friend, you know, not kin, but I would die or stand in court for him as quickly as for a kinsman.

When you see someone you don't know, use the greeting. Everyone who follows Orlanth knows the greeting. If they do not answer rightly at least you know where they stand. When my brother was outlawed he traveled all the way to Pralorela, a year of walking and hunting, and everyone he met greeted him properly.

Be careful with strangers. Most of them are harmless and many are entertaining. Remember that they are different, and do not know our ways. Take offense slowly when they insult you or act stupidly—they are not blessed with our god's knowledgeable ways. You can learn much from them. But if they are enemies, fight them fair and foul, do your best to kill them.

Who are our enemies?

We have two great foes today. The Lunar Empire is our greater foe, along with everyone in it. The people there mock true life with perversity. Their customs are dirty. Their gods are evil. They seek to destroy everything of our way of life. None are to be trusted. They are of Chaos.

The Orleving Clan is our foe, too. Ever since Orlev of the Eye-spear stole the goddess from Iskalli Varmandsson we have been their foes. We bested them with the Seven Beaver Pelts, and they harmed us with the Bison's Claw. When the Lunar Empire attacked us the Orleving Clan joined their army to wreak further harm. Curse them and their ancestors.

Who are our gods?

Orlanth the King is our god. He is ruler of the universe by virtue of his might and right. He has a great throne house in his city which moves about the sky, and there his family and friends decide the fate of the world. His wife is Queen of the Earth, his sons are the Thunder Brothers, his allies are War and Wisdom, Loyalty and Cunning. The elements are his weapons: lightning fire, winter winds, drenching rain, and the cloaking dark. Everyone else is his subject, from the Sun and the stars above to the darkness below.

What is there to do around here?

In the autumn when we have time to relax we have many sports besides those which keep us fit to bear weapons. We like to wrestle, and among some horse-fighting is popular. The old game of kick-the-ball is played in every clan. Singing is always a favorite, and clap-dancing is the best way to practice for the festivals when instruments are used and the gods themselves watch us. Swords-and-shields is the board game with the greatest challenge.



Staves from the Storm Voice

The Barbarian Priest Speaks

Where did the world come from?

*Dead the world 'til Umath the Free,
Broke Emperor's curse and moved the world.
Umathsons and stalwart liegemen set the world
in its present ways.
Now all feel the world's winds at their backs.*

Where did I come from?

*Humans are wind-born, freest of free.
Orlanth Breath-giver gives you first lungful.
Follow the winds, like Orlanth before you.
Yours is the path-choice, make it and live.*

Why do we die?

*Stale the world was, unchanging and solid.
No one could die, so no one could live.
Orlanth and Humakt, brothers in bravery.
Brought Death to the world and gave life an edge.
Slew they the monsters who undying plagued us.
First of them Unchange, who binds us to sloth.
Now there is Death, who prompts us to live life,
Slayer of foes who brings respite to friends.*

What happens after we die?

*Death is a comrade, a tool for our needs.
Orlanth found it, and fought it in turn,
Defeated Death fully, and brought the Sun out,
Fulfillèd is Quest, the Lightbringers' glory.
Death is the boatman, guide to last journey,
Carries you safe to the gods' brazen hall.
There presides Orlanth, his table for heroes,
Tell him your stories, take your right place.*

Why am I here?

*Life is for living, feel to your fullest.
Challenge the challengers, carve out your place.
Faithful to friends, relentless to foes
Loving to kith, fulfilling your wyrd.*

How do I do magic?

*Great among gifters, storm gods gave magic,
Taught runes to godi, first among followers.
Godi teach feats, wise men learn them.
Magic lets all men work with the world.*

I have heard of other powers. Can you tell me the truth about...

...Chaos?

*Foulest of slime, curse of existence,
Twisted the god gifts, bred many foul monsters.
Only the Lightbringers, conquerors of Chaos,
Could right the wronged world, restore the Law.*

...Darkness Tribe?

*Mother of the trolls saw the world born.
Crawler in darkness, eater of dead.
Hungry and cruel, like the dark days of winter,
Lurking at gates, waits for men to grow slothful.*

...Fire Tribe?

*Yelm ruled a world that was stale and changeless.
Orlanth, his enemy, released freedom for all.
Yelm met Death, he fled down the dark path,
Only Orlanth and Lightbringers walk that path alive.
Orlanth the liberator, freed loyal Elmal,
Brought him to honor into a thane's station.
Elmal follows his path, unwilling to break it,
But Orlanth is free to follow the winds.*

...Plant Tribe?

*Great among goddesses, Aldrya gave forests.
Bulwark of old world, preserver of trees,
She holds her counsel, favors not good or evil,
Friend or foe at the change of a season.*

...Sedenya?

*Lover of Chaos, mocks the gods' blessings,
Tangles the wind in her secret shackles.
Gives blasphemous secrets to lure the unwary,
Destroy her now or the world is enslaved.*

...Sorcerers?

*Woe to the atheists, they die without gods,
Souls sink slowly, fall empty to hell.*

...Spirits?

*Great were those who fought Orlanth's gifts,
Many were broken or made to be small.
Now the survivors are spirits for bushmen,
Kolatings coerce their small magic spells.
Notice and praise those spirits sundered,
Some can be helpful, perform useful deeds.
Do not give them worship, keep from them your soulforce,
That is for King Orlanth, their conqueror and liege.*

...Stone Tribe?

*Deep in the earth, stone god sits rocklike,
Frozen like elder, wracked with age.
No winds for Mostal, no challenges met,
Pity the dwarf god, pity his people.*

...Water Tribe?

*Mover of Seas, changing forever.
Unlike other old gods, Magasta can change.
Orlanth fought him five times, and conquered,
Freed him again to rule his deep realm.*



Gods of the Wind

Chalana Arroy, the White Woman, healing goddess

*Her touch heals all, Lightbringers' white lady,
No hurt can withstand her soft ministrations,
She healed our chieftain when pain made him mad.
She healed the world, made Life come again.*

The Earth Goddesses

*Three are the bounteous goddesses of earth,
Three the number of their dark sisters.
All are our allies, friends of the storm,
Orlanth claims all earth as his kin.*

*The giving goddesses; grandmother, mother, and daughter.
Asrelia the crone, keeper of good things.
Ernalda the mother, bride to great Orlanth.
Voria, spring's daughter, herald of youth.*

*The grasping goddesses; sisters to the kindly ones.
Ty Kora Tek, hag-lurker in darkness.
Maran, violent sister to kindly Ernalda.
Babeester Gor, vengeful guardian, jealous of the
earth's rights.*

Ernalda, earth mother

*Mother of all, wise spouse to King Orlanth,
All hail and protect fair mistress of earth,
Every man must revere the arts of all women,
Mother and lover, her needs are our wants.*

Eurmalk, the trickster

*No jape nor trick too hard for the Trickster,
Stole fire from Vestkarthen to warm all mankind,
Was both boon and trouble to his traveling companions,
Stands loyally by Orlanth his lord.*

Heler, god of rain

*Orlanth took Heler from Magasta's dull lair,
Used him as weapon in wars against drought,
Heler the staunch, his name is a by-word,
Sheep to him sacred, Daga his foe.*

Humakt, god of death and war

*Orlanth's fell brother, noble Death-Finder,
Humakt is guardian, protector from foes.
Humakt brought Death to ennoble and free us
Gave us struggle to make our lives full.*

Inora, goddess of snow

*When mountains extend their cold to the lowlands,
Inora, White Princess, dances among us.
When summer arrives, sends snow from the valleys,
Inora, Snow Queen, reigns still on the peaks.*

Issaries, god of trade and communication

*Issaries found the way of the dead,
Broke Darkness of Silence which covered the world.
Issaries chose trails, was scout for the Lightbringers,
Now merchants and heralds worship his name.*

Kolat, the shaman

*Kolat's strange family, the spirit Seven Winds,
Three names are known, the Three Good Friends,
Three names are secret, Left Hand, Above, and Below.
Kolath is the secret helper, the hidden power.*

Lhankor Mhy, god of knowledge

*Finder of riddles, he knows the world's secrets,
Rescued all wisdom from ignorance's gloom.
Helped save the world during the Gods War,
Now lawspeakers and elders call for his praise.*

Mastakos, god of motion

*Mastakos Mover, the God with No Home,
Vigorous god, drives immortal storm chariot.
He alone handles Orlanth's mighty steeds.
Servant of Storm God, mover of men.*

Orlanth, King of the Gods, Storm God

*Orlanth Adventurous makes change in the world,
Rescued us all from stagnation and death.*

*Orlanth Thunderous brings life-giving rains,
Blesses the plowman, blesses his herds.*

*Orlanth Lightbringer led the Seven,
Rescued all life, all earth lauds his name.*

*Orlanth Rex, King of the Gods,
Rules in the Heaven and takes tribute from all.*

Umalk, father of the storm gods

*He was born with great noise, deafening, disabling
Like thunder in a cavern,
Like living in a horn.*

*His visage rolled over the earth with anger,
Rumbled across the sky with greed,
Filled the space with his gray brows and thunders.*

*Umalk's five sons ruled the world after him.
But he made the place for his sons and us to live.*

Urox, berserker god, Chaos-killer

*Untamed beast, savage passion,
His mad berserk fury beats even Chaos.
So doth wild Storm Bull lead the war against Chaos.
He holds vile Wakboth under mountains of stone.*

Valind, god of winter

*Savage Valind, god of winter,
Sweeps the earth with ice from the north.
Ally to Orlanth, sometimes wayward and willful,
Each year takes the earth in his grip.*

Vinga, warrior goddess

*No spindle or basket for Vinga the dauntless,
Red-headed daughter, warrior maiden,
Fought off the ice, fought water and darkness,
Defender of women and children in need.*

A Personal View of Life as a Puma

What My Grandmother Told Me

Who are you?

I'm your grandmother.

Who are we?

We are the Walen family of the Puma People, members of the Blacktuft lineage.

What makes us great?

The Walen family are great because I am the smartest and most clever of all the puma people, who are the smartest and most clever people in the whole world.

Where do we live?

Anywhere that we want. We live here, in Gelerfield, because I chose it. I chose it because the hunting is good, no evil lives nearby, the days are long and warm without much snow in the winter, and it is close to our ancestors.

How do we live?

We are hunters of the wild.

What is important in my life?

Your ancestors are most important, because they made you. You can't live without them. They taught us to be independent. Your independence is the most important thing. Never submit to anyone or anything, unless you have something significant to gain from it. Even then, make it temporary if you can.

What is the difference between males and females?

The females are more important because we are the progenitors who extend the ancestors into the present and future. As our Ancestors made Us, I made You. Males help feed you cubs sometimes, but we can do just fine without them. Except for the Great Pleasure we have once per year, they are useless.

Who rules us?

No one, ever. Once you become an adult and leave, you are free and independent.

What makes us great?

We are the smartest, most clever and most beautiful creatures in creation. We are perfect, free and powerful. We can be whatever we wish to be, and what we are is what we are supposed to be. No one else can claim that.

What is evil?

Chaos is evil because it destroys without creating, because it sucks up life without rebirth, and because it so readily helps everyone else against us.

What is my lot in life?

Your lot is to be yourself. To live with pleasure, to mate someday for men and to litter for females. You are to roam the world enjoying what you wish, seeing the wonders and sights and supporting the ways of the ancestors.

How do we deal with others?

Carefully, of course, and never so as to compromise yourself and your freedom. They are all lesser beings than we, so be careful with them. But you can cheat the cheaters, lie to the liars and always, always kill the killers.

Who are our enemies?

Anyone who wants to reduce us or our ways are our foes. First is Coyote who stole from us, then are Wolves that killed everyone. Our foes are also the settlers who keep trying to move into this forest. Then anyone who dislikes us, which includes many folks. Of course, Chaos the destroyer is our foe.

Who are my spirits?

The Ancestors are first. Without them we wouldn't be, and they are always happy and available to help us out as long as we remember and revere them. There are also a variety of inferior gods, spirits and essences that you can use as you wish, but you don't need them. Just use them when you want to.

What is there to do around here?

Play with your litter mates, for now. You are a child. When you are an adult, maybe when you are ten, then go and wander, look around and fill your belly.



Tradition of the Bush Voice

The Skull Crusher Speaks

Where did the world come from?

SheHe was the Creator, the first Puma who made the earth, sky, rivers and sun, plants and animals for fun. But SheHe grew lonely and looked into Mirrorsea one day and liked the view. So SheHe made itself into two beings, Most Ancient First Grandmother and Most Ancient First Grandfather, in order to enjoy itself to the fullest. They made the Great Pleasure, littered, and we superior beings spread throughout the world to overlook it and enjoy it.

Where do we come from?

Most Ancient First Grandmother and Most Ancient First Grandfather indulged in the Great Pleasure whenever they could, and each time the result was a litter. We, the Blacktufts, were from the sixth litter. That was long ago, and now we are all over the world.

Why do we die?

Most Ancient First Grandmother and Most Ancient First Grandfather had a secret power given them by Creator. He intended it to let us visit Creator in the Big Wide Hunting Land. Everyone wanted it too, though they did not deserve it. At last Coyote put Most Ancient First Grandmother and Most Ancient First Grandfather to sleep, woke them in a dream and tricked them to share it. It was Death, and Coyote ran away with it. Of course the Ancestors chased him, so he gave it to the Wolf Brothers, who killed far and wide. Now Death is everywhere, and takes everything.

What happens after we die?

Most Ancient First Shaman was one of the Spotted Cubs, who were the First Litter. He made the way open for us to go to Big Wide Hunting Land, and also sent everyone else to different places after death so we can hunt them.

Why are we here?

We are here to live and to love, to enjoy and to be loved. We are here to partake in the Great Hunt and the Great Pleasure, to play in the wide world and to do whatever the Ancestors tell us to do to continue the Creation.

How do we do magic?

We are magic itself, thanks to the Ancestors. You see that because we can change our shape. Every one of us has some kind of innate Talent, simply because we are Pumas. Finally, various Ancestors choose to help us and so we can use their magic as well, which we keep in these little bones.

Always ask your ancestors for help first. Here are some that I have known to be useful: Grandmother Hide Tracks, Far Uncle Fix Up, Auntie Stone Chipper, Third Uncle Carver, Great Great Aunt Call Deer, Single Uncle Climber, Uncle Strong, Lost Cousin Fix Wounds, and Second Cousin Blinding.

I have heard of other powers. Can you tell me the truth about...

The powers and entities that SheHe made have many names, for no one, not even us, can see them in their entirety. Many of them are not our kin, so when I speak of them I use the names given to them by the humans of this area.

...Aldrya?

That is the name of the Plant Being that was made by SheHe. It provides us with cover and hiding places, with shade to sleep in and with wood to make our tools.

...Chaos?

Chaos is evil, a force that destroys Life. It was made to destroy the Wolf Brothers, who were so fierce everyone had to either run and hide or make things to defend themselves. It destroyed them, and then began to destroy everything. Most Ancient First Shaman got the Three Friends and together they sent it away, to its own world. Now it only sneaks in sometimes, but it must be removed immediately.

...Gods?

Some beings did not want to go where Most Ancient First Shaman wanted to put them, so they made their own place. They call it God World, and the beings who go to or come from there are called gods.

...Kyger Litor?

After the wolves ate the Sun this being ruled the world. It made trolls to destroy Chaos and us, and it made the Underworld to live in when Most Ancient First Shaman sent it away.

...Magasta?

SheHe made waters to surround the world, but this one was not content and kept flooding over the lands. Now it rules a vast salty sea to the south of this land, and it has a huge following of beings that it drowned and brought back to life as slaves. Avoid water if you can.

...Mostal?

SheHe appointed many overlords, such as Aldrya for the plants and Magasta for the waters. Mostal was appointed to be overlord of the rocks and metals, and it lets us use stone to make our tools.

...Orlanth?

Orlanth is overlord of the airs. His winds ruffle our fur most pleasantly, but his rain soaks us. He can never be trusted.

...Sedenya?

That red spot in the sky is her. She was always up there, after SheHe made the world. When Death was being used by everyone she was killed, and Kyger Litor took her to the Underworld, or maybe we just couldn't see her. But she is clever and escaped, and took back her place in the sky.

...Sorcerers?

When Most Ancient First Shaman was putting the dead in their places some people made their own world, and then crashed it into ours. They were these, the sorcerers. They made beings to fight us, but they failed. Now they have their own world, and anyone who comes from it is called a sorcerer.

...Yelm?

Yelm is the name that some men call the Sun. It is also called by other names, but there is one Sun, the bright orb overhead that heats us and gives light. SheHe made it.



A Personal View of Seshnegi Life

What My Father Told Me

Who are you?

I am Sir Harfien, the loyal man of Count Igini Hedenveld. All honor to you, young squire my son.

Who are we?

We are the Vandervasse family of Bormandy. We serve Count Igini Hedenveld. Because the Hedenvelds are sworn to King Guilmarn, we are part of the Kingdom of Seshnela.

What makes us great?

The Hedenveld family has ruled Noyelle for fourteen hundred years, and we have served them for nine hundred of those years. Our family is rich in history. In 716, Sir Kernie Vandervasse killed the steed of the Dark King's nephew with his bare hands. In 948, Sir Oleg Vandervasse exiled forty-nine of his relatives for treason against Count Homarr Hedenveld. In 1198, Sir Henrag Vandervasse became Supreme Advisor to the Ecclesiarch of the Church. In 1320, the Vandervasse family was outlawed by the King of Seshnela and we became robbers. In 1368, we were pardoned and restored to Bormandy. In 1581, Sir Grugen Vandervasse met and spoke with Saint Dormal in Pasos. Remember your dates, my son: our family history is our family treasure.

Where do we live?

We live in the shire of Bormandy in Noyelle, the westernmost county of the mighty Kingdom of Seshnela.

How do we live?

We are fed by the farmers of Bormandy. In summer we eat veal, salt cod, apples, peaches, beans, cabbage, barley, and rye bread, and drink cider and barley beer. In winter we eat beef, venison, dry cod, and barley and rye bread, and drink apple and peach wine.

Our clothes are simple; trousers, long-sleeved shirts, gloves, and boots. In winter, we wear heavy cloaks, coats, and hoods. On High Days, we wear black capes with blue velvet edging, as a sign of our rank. Ordained knights also wear a breastplate.

Each branch of the Vandervasse family lives in its own manor. Six such manors are spread throughout Bormandy. Summerland is the oldest and greatest manor, and is always occupied by the family head.

The Vandervasses own the fruits and hunting rights of all Bormandy as long as we can muster twenty-five mounted soldiers, according to ancient custom. Each year, we send Count Hedenveld one hundred seventeen quintals of peach wine, forty-seven dressed stags, two bronze greatswords, and maintain two knights in the Count's private service. Also, each year the King commands us to send six wagonloads of red cabbages and fourteen quintals of peach wine to the Theurgic Amphitheater at Hingswell.

The family priest, Old Wizard Marlet, and his apprentices heal us of injuries and the old women in town heal us of our sicknesses.

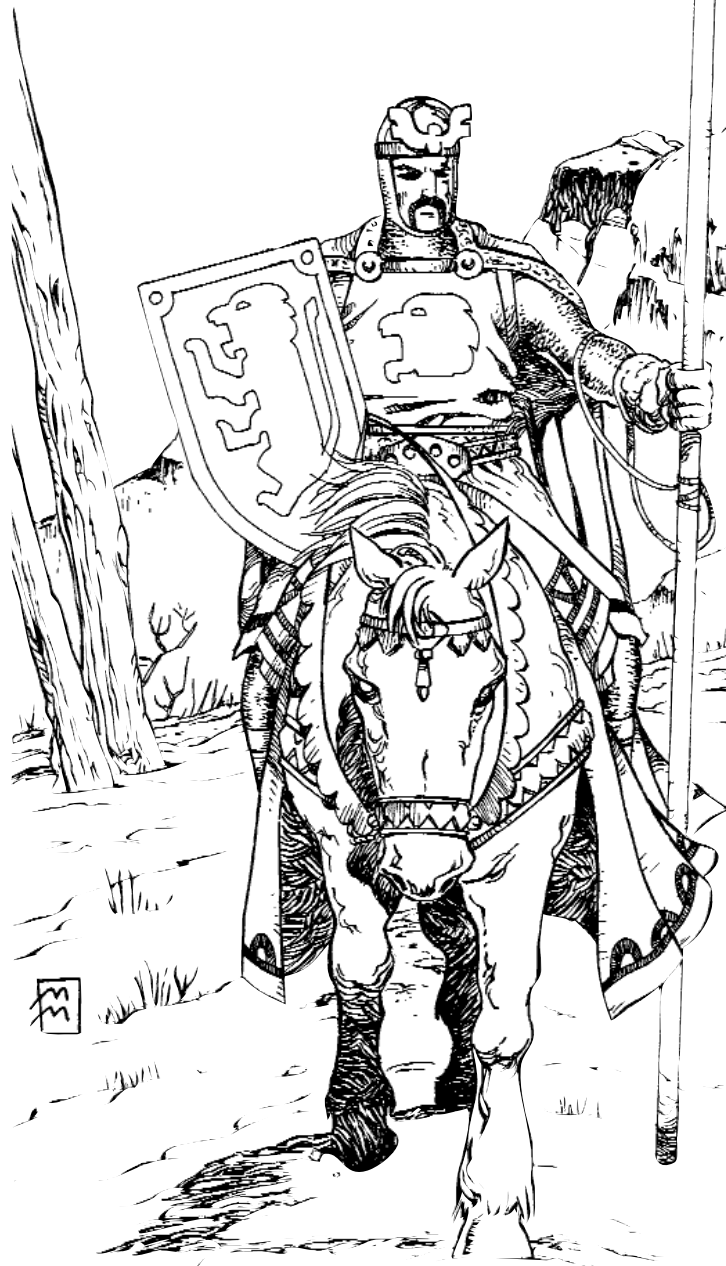
What is important in my life?

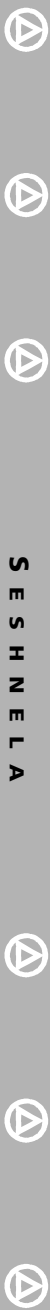
When a new Vandervasse is born, he is taken to Summerland and blessed by Wizard Marlet. At the time of the Spring Festival he is brought before Count Hedenveld for official recognition as a member of the Vandervasse family.

The summer after a Vandervasse boy grows tall enough to leap over the Age Pole without touching it he is ordained by Wizard Marlet to the office of Squire. When, several years later, he has proven himself in manly sports, he is taken to Marlet and blessed with his weapons. Then he must travel on foot to Count Hedenveld, and if he is personally accepted by the Count he gets a surcoat, helmet, and dagger.

Strictly speaking, only Vandervasse knights are permitted to marry, though if you are never knighted, you may keep a concubine. The children of concubines are, by definition, not Vandervasses.

At death we are buried, and Wizard Marlet blesses the grave and soul of all Vandervasses upon their death. He also blesses the future happiness of all knighted Vandervasses each year at Wintertide.





Who rules us?

Most of our folk are peasants; herders, woodsmen, plowmen, and craftsmen. Such must be defended from vile pagans and robbers. That is the task of our house, and especially of its knights. The duty and obligation of the Vandervasses is to provide soldiers and knights. Not everyone qualifies for true knighthood. Some Vandervasses must spend their lives over-seeing the peasants and orchards.

A healthy land also needs magic, and we knights share the place of protector with those who wear the white robe: the wizards, whose name means "Wise Ones." Their words are our guidance, though they lead us not into battle or in court.

Both we and the Wizards are governed by the nobility. Though we are ruled by the Hedenveld family, only the eldest Hedenveld, who has been crowned Count, may properly claim our support. It is to his office that we swear, not to him.

What makes a man great?

The greatest man is he who best fulfills the lifelong task that God has set him, as signified by his birth. We serve our Count and our King not only because we are bound to them by centuries of service and gratitude, but also because Count Vandervasse and King Guilmar are just and noble, worthy of commanding our respect.

Everyone who wishes to be good, whether knight or peasant, must be loyal to his Lord. A lord's word is the follower's will. If you are loyal to the death, you are forgiven all sins.

Nonetheless, you should be humble, and know your place. You must be chaste and faithful to your wife. Avoid pagan women, who mate promiscuously, like animals. Be merciful, kind, and generous to your lord, your family, and those you protect. Be courageous and ruthless as your lord commands you to war on the pagan threat.

What is the difference between men and women?

Men fight, farm, hunt, and defend the land. Women raise children, comfort, and tend house.

What is evil?

Pagan gods and heathen spirits are ever ready to lead us down the path to perdition. The Invisible God has shown us the way to immortality and happiness, and His word is to be followed in every way. The pagan gods and their sinful witchcraft must be shunned.

Disloyalty is the greatest vice. Harming your lord in any way dooms you to unhappiness in this life and loss of Solace in the next.

Too much pleasure must be avoided, for drunkenness, gluttony, and lust are all truly vices. But only too much, I say. The liturgists dun us daily with their fear of God, telling us that anything that is of the flesh is bad. I am not so sure: have they never sipped the chill wine or sank teeth into a fresh haunch of venison? Never felt the warm quiver of naked flesh? No, of course they have not, and their bitter vows turn them into damnable hypocrites or shrill-voiced saints admonishing us against life itself. So walk the path of experience and temperance together.

What is my lot in life?

You will receive the things promised, and then you will go to the Count. If he needs men, and if he likes what he has heard of you and what he sees, he will take you into his service. Perhaps you will survive as one of his mercenaries—may God see to it that you do. If he does not accept you then you will join one of the other bands.

I hope you have the virtue to join one of the good leaders who finds honest war for work and not one of the common robbers like those who pillaged us two years ago.

If you want a hard but glorious fight, you could fall in with the Crusaders, who are gathering to liberate New Malkonwal from the pagans in the east. But I fear their expedition will end as badly as the last one, unless the King supports it this time.

If you are lucky you will be recognized by someone, and you might be made into a knight. Your oldest brother will, of course, be a knight already. If you receive the honor you will have found success in the house of a nobleman and your future will be secured. You can take a wife and send your children here, or raise them in your new lord's house as fate decides.

How do we deal with others?

The family is first, of course, and in the family the father is first and the eldest son second. You must honor and obey him as long as you are here.

Loyalty to friends is important, but only as long as it does not interfere with a lord's wish.

Be cautious with strangers, but keep a friendly eye open towards them. Most people are good, if given the chance.

Do not trust foreigners. They do not understand our true way. Use them as you would, but do not fall for their wiles, which are many.

Learn what you can—you never know when it may be handy in a campaign.

Who are our enemies?

We have two great enemies: the godless pagans and heathens who covet our rich lands, and the heretical deviants who lurk within them. The onslaught of the pagans is blatant, and can be met by force of arms. The treacherous heretics, whether they be flagellant Losers, self-righteous Hrestoli, sinister Arkati, or atheist Zzaburites, are more insidious, and their evil seed must be opposed by all good Rokari.

In wartime, we ourselves must fight to protect the farmers and all Bormandy. Seshnela is continually threatened by pagans and heretics to the east and monsters from the north and west, so we must ever be ready to march with Count Hedenveld to fight for King Guilmar.

Who are my gods?

Gods? There is but one God: Makan, the Great Mind, our Invisible God. We also revere Malkion and Rokar, His Prophets. Through long tradition, our family knights take Talor and Gerlan as patron Saints.

A Prophecy of the Hero Wars
*The Ship in the Sky shall rise again,
Sailing on the River of Broken Laws.
Waertag is on it.*
*The Waertagi shall come again,
Searching through the Fog of Broken Brithos.
Zzabur calls them.*
*Zzabur shall come again,
Raising up the Land of Broken Dreams.
Dormal fears him.*
*Law will sink the Ship in the Sky again.
Fog will overtake Brithos again.
The Golden Dream will break Zzabur's Curse again.*

Teachings from the Wise Ones

What the Wizard Says

Where did the world come from?

The world is the result of interactions between impersonal natural powers. Many forces of nature exist, working in extremely complex patterns. We collectively name these forces Makan, the Great Mind: our Invisible God and Creator. These energies have always existed and always will exist, as is written in *The Abiding Book* and as we can demonstrate through methodical experimentation, within the guidelines and theological confines laid down so wisely by Ecclesiarch Theoblanc.

Where did I come from?

Your mother bore you as a result of natural reproductive processes. Everything in the world has a natural origin. What makes you different from an inanimate object is your essence—that measurable part of you that gives you life.

Why do we die?

All natural mechanisms eventually break down. While our bodies can be maintained for many years, ultimately everything and everyone dies, even if only through happenstance.

What happens after we die?

Paths of knowledge have been discovered whereby we can earn identity and consciousness in Solace after death. This is why we worship Makan and keep the laws of Malkion and Rokar.

Why am I here?

This question passeth beyond your understanding. Each man has only one life, and it is his responsibility to live as well as he can. Only thus can we come to appreciate the works of the Creator and earn the right to eternal fulfillment.

How do I do magic?

Magic is the process of manipulating natural energies through skill and the authority of will. This requires natural aptitude and many hours of study. In any civilized society, the services of professional wizards are available to all, for appropriate fees.

Lesser cultures derive magic power from other-planar entities. These alternate methods of magic impose limitations upon their practitioners—priests and shamans are slaves to their magic, even as we are masters of ours.

I have heard of other powers. Can you tell me the truth about them?

...Air?

Those who worship the personification of atmospheric forces are like the wind: first blowing hot and hard, then wavering, and finally fading when needed most. The Aeolian heretics mistake a pagan deity for our Invisible God; they must be corrected.

...Aldrya?

Elves are animated plants. They have no souls of their own, and can never know Solace.

...Chaos?

When grouped together, the truly evil gods are called by this name. They are the spawn of the Devil, the raw Chaos from which Glorantha originally formed. Followers of these monstrous entities are evil and worthy of destruction.

...Darkness?

Trolls are a race of dangerous, brutal creatures who understand only strength. They feed the heathen spirit Kyger Litor to fuel their black magic. Trolls know about Arkat, from whom they stole the knowledge of sorcery.

...Earth?

Dwarves have uncovered the same natural laws that we know, and have no delusions about the reality of the universe. However, they lack the key truths of Solace in the afterlife, and so are doomed to senseless existence and meaningless death.

...Fire?

The shining orb of the Sun has been an object of worship by savages since it rose into the sky. Primitive peoples seize upon the visible sun as the most obvious sign for the ruling power of their universe, and anthropomorphize it.

...Heathen Spirits?

The ignorance of savages is proverbial. Study of the petty beings they worship shows why. At best these creatures are minor in ability, of local importance, or are so vague and distant that they provide only pitiful magic.

...Moon?

This goddess is the modern example of misplaced belief in artificial gods, in this case a large rock that has been induced to hover above the Pelorian Bowl. Like the belief in Gbaji, belief in this manufactured goddess will drive her worshippers into suffering, degradation, and death.

...Pagan Gods?

During the Great Winter, people were lost and frightened. In an effort to understand their world they imagined gods in their own image, personifying their needs and desires and the forces of nature. These gods are always represented as benevolent forces, but each possesses a dark side that is revealed only when it is too late. We are free of the self-imposed limitations induced by the personification of natural forces. We try to understand nature as it is. All other gods are, at best, lesser beings subject to the laws of nature and to worship any of them is folly, ignorance, and blasphemy.

...Water?

The deep and ominous sea holds a history a hundred times greater than the human world. The ignorant have personified their fears, and emotionally feed monstrous entities, which are thus empowered to make real those fears. But our wizardry is more powerful, as the Closing and Opening clearly show.

Holies of the Invisible God

Makan, the Great Mind, Invisible God and Creator

The Invisible God is, was, and shall be. He is the force of nature, the Great Mind, greater than all other forces. In the time since the world was formed, two great men have discovered secret truths of the Invisible God, and have tried to show other men the path to happiness.



Malkion, First Prophet

Sometimes, mankind has fallen away from union and understanding with the Great Mind. Makan then sent prophets to visit us to teach us again how to find God through body and heart. Malkion was the first prophet of the Invisible God.

During the Ice Age Malkion discovered the ways of the Creator, spreading his knowledge among other men to help them survive amidst the evil of the era. Malkion's proofs are essential to intelligent action. He showed men the proper social classes and taught them to be happy with their lot in life. He taught us Solace.

Rokar, Law-Bringer

Rokar is our Second Prophet, who set the Church to rights in Seshnela, restored the laws of Malkion, and brought us Truth: One God, One King, One Church. He was burned at the stake for his faith, but divine messengers led his soul to Creator, confirming his status as a True Prophet, whose laws have come into full and divine enactment through the Estimable Ecclesiarch.

The Abiding Book

On Kaltan's Day in the year 646, a hand materialized from nowhere, holding a quill. A call came, and the command was: "Write!" And the Pen, in obedience to That Which is Most High, obeyed without stint. It wrote upon indestructible paper that appeared when needed, and bound itself to a book with covers of leather from no known animal.

So the Abiding Book describes its own origin. This supernatural work was created by the Great Mind to guide mankind through this dangerous world. It is the most impressive piece of Creation that has been witnessed in human history.

Saints

Though there is but one true God, there are many individuals who have discovered certain Truths, allowing them to intercede in worldly affairs to ensure the well being of the righteous who follow their ways. We term these individuals saints.

Xemela, the First Saint, sacrificed her soul to save her people from the Black Swelling.

Hrestol revealed crucial knowledge and rituals that enabled the followers of Makan to maintain their contact with him in the new age, after the Dawn of Time. He taught the Joy of the Heart, even as Malkion taught Solace of the Body, but heretics have distorted his message. Some even claim him as a Prophet!

Gerlant Flamesword is the famous comrade and liege lord of Arkat. He was forced to choose between his people and his best friend, and he rightly chose his people.

Are there no other Saints?

Of course there are, but beware the sin of iconism! You will hear some talk of older saints, of innumerable "holy orders," and we must acknowledge the part they played in the great story of the Church. Paslac the Ruler was indeed a splendid example, whom kings and lords had every reason to emulate until they had our enlightened Ecclesiarch, Theoblanc, to give them wise counsel and clear guidance.

Would that all such figures were as disciplined. In the Dawn Age, an evil conspiracy created Gbaji the Deceiver to stop the spread of Malkionism. They would have obliterated our civilization but for the efforts of Arkat the Destroyer. In an epic struggle he stopped Gbaji's great evil and killed that spawn of the Devil. But his fanatical purpose eclipsed his reason. He underwent voluntary subjugation to pagan gods so that, although he succeeded in his task, he was a failure afterwards and condemned by all. His story is tragic, a warning to everyone.

Some misguided Rokari worship individuals as saints because of their deeds, instead of innate holiness. The man called Dormal the Mariner came from afar to break the Closing of the seas, which vindictive Zzabur of the Brithini brought upon the world. He taught us the procedure we use now to send our ships again across the waves. This was very useful, but we ought not to pray to a key just because it opens a gate—better to thank the locksmith who crafted it, our holy Ecclesiarch, who knew to welcome Dormal to our land even before he led the Church.

Perhaps better examples, more relevant to this age in which we have the Eminent Theoblanc to guide us, are saints who confine themselves to their appropriate roles. Saint Edarad, for example. His Student Body works tirelessly to cleanse the taint from those who have mistaken sinful euphoria for spiritual enlightenment.

Above all, do not confuse reverence with veneration! The Ecclesiarch, in his great wisdom, teaches that worshipping the saints is false veneration, as if they were pagan gods. Thus, light a candle and say a prayer to the proper saint, but do not seek magic from the blessed ones except by the direct dispensation of the Ecclesiarch's anointed.



A Personal View of Tarshite Life

What My Father Told Me

Who are you?

I am Eirik Pavelsson, huscarl of the Icerni Clan.

Who are we?

We are the Icerni Clan of the Geroini Tribe. Our tribal founder, Geroin Foxrunner, was a shrewd and daring man, who joined Arim the Founder when he led his people over the Death Line and back into Tarsh after the dragons had scoured it. Geroin was a man who could seize opportunities quicker than anyone else could even see them, and this is why we worship him as our ancestor and why we prosper today.

Are we a great people?

Geroin said it: "The strongest seed grows the greatest tree," and there is nothing stronger than a Tarshite. When we were still enemies, we resisted the Lunars for generations, and now we are allies and their Emperor sends praise and gifts to our king. We Geroini are the swiftest and canniest of all, and our family the finest among them.

What is the difference between men and women?

Remember what Geroin said: "Man and woman, axe and cookpot. Without the axe, what is there for the pot, and without the pot, how do you cook the axe's tillings?" Men are people of the physical world, the warriors and the workers, the merchants and the rulers. Women are deeper, darker, secretive: theirs are the mysteries of the Earth and the hearth, theirs, as you will soon discover, are the ways of making both love and peace, or raising lust and fear. When Arim came to Tarsh, he became King of Dragon Pass by wooing and bedding Ana Gor, the goddess of the Six and Seven Secrets, but he also had to gift her his life, which she gifted back to him. That is powerful magic, and it is women's.

Where do we live?

Right here, in Blackhorpe Farm. When you were born, we still lived in an old-fashioned stead like our backward cousins in Sartar, but we have done well. Now our farmhouse stretches round all four sides of the courtyard. You see those fields over there, on the other side of the village's palisade? We own that. That barn over there, and the slave huts next to them? We own them, too. We also own a room in Dunstop, where your brother Ingomark is studying letters and learning with your cousins: as Geroin said, "Nothing learned is wasted." We did not always own all this, but that is the Tarshite way, always growing, gaining and planning ahead. Our neighboring clan, the Berelenos, used to be rebels of the Kerofini tribes, until we Geroini conquered them, and now they are learning the rewards of loyalty. Some day, our king will lead his armies with those of our Lunar allies to finally crush the Exiles who live around mighty Mount Kerofin. Then there will be more land and slaves to be taken, and we Geroini will be at the fore!

How do we live?

In Geroin's words, "Back and brain, wit and main." When we have to, we work hard in the fields, but now we have slaves from Sartar and even Balazar to do much of that work, and your uncle, Braggeh Broadarm, has a sacred Barntar Plow with which he breaks up the hard soil for us. While you and the other child-

ren were polishing the plow and playing run-furrow-down, I was handing over six tuns of our best wheat-vodka to him. That is the way life works, favor for favor, gift for service.

Our ancestors thought trade beneath them, but we now understand its ways. Those fat barges that take our wheat north into the Empire, where the hungry cities spill for leagues, they make us rich, and buy us slaves and horses, this house, those trinkets that delight your sisters and Ingomark's education. But we never forget that what we trade we first must earn, whether with guile, force or toil.

What is important in my life?

Soon you will be an adult, and we will gift you the man-portion: a room, an axe, a mail shirt and a horse. Because we are rich, I shall also add a slave and a bag of silver.

As Geroin said, "Life is a battle, to the winner the spoils." Decide what you want in life, marshal your forces and devise your battle plan! You will have to work hard and be both brave and shrewd, but I know you will do well. Perhaps you will be a trader, but remember that we are at heart a nation of warriors. You have done well in training with the village fyrd, and I would be proud to see you become a huscarl like myself.

Find yourself a wife both strong and shrewd, like your mother. I have seen you eyeing Kallindi, but she is the daughter of a mere cottar and you can do much better for yourself.

Who rules us?

We are all subjects of King Moirades, although these days he is moon-struck, and his son Pharandros is Regent. We are proud to be Tarshites, with a glorious history and a glorious future.

Our tribal chief is Angkel the Brooding, armsman of the king, but his health weakens. His brother and son scheme and plot as if he were already on the funeral pyre. Angkel may spend most days in bed and can no longer lift The Exacting Bite, our tribal warspear, but I would not risk such presumption. His mind is as sharp as ever. This is the man who outwitted the Nine-Voiced Shrew and won us a year's tax exemption in a three-day long game of swords-and-shields with Moirades himself. As Geroin put it, "Even a rusty axe can cut deep and fast."

We obey Angkel, both through our clan chief Indrin Indrinsson, and also through the shrieve, Gray Ostyr. Beware the shrieve, son. He is not from our clan. Instead, Angkel appointed him from the Valarings to be his eyes and ears among us. The Valarings have always resented us, and Ostyr would do us mischief. But he knows that we watch him, too, and if he oversteps his powers, Indrin will have his head. Yes, I saw you look at Blond Crescent. As Indrin's fyrdmaster, it will be my axe that does the deed.

What makes a man great?

Pride, wits, courage and gold, all these make a man these days. Be proud of your family and your people, for these are exciting times. Since we allied with the Empire, there are great opportunities for all, whether in war or in trade. Seize them with both hands, but never forget your history, either.

What is evil?

Evil is a word we used to use too easily. Once, we thought the Lunar Empire evil, because it was different, but now they are our allies. I think Chaos is evil, but Ingomark tells me his Lunar tutor teaches him that Chaos is no more evil than the storm, destructive when untamed but a source of power when controlled. But then again, I don't know much about religion.

What is my lot in life?

You are a Tarshite and my son: destiny smiles upon you!

How do we deal with others?

Times are changing, and sometimes even I find it hard to know who is a friend and who an enemy or when something new is an boon or a threat. In these times, hold to those upon whom you can rely: your family, your friends, your village and clan.

Of everyone else you should be wary. Most of them offer you opportunities. They may be useful allies, like the Empire whose armies fight alongside ours in Sartar and whose silver flows into our coffers. They may have something you want, in which case you should think how to get it. Once this might have meant axe-taking and blood on the snow, but this is now a peaceful land and instead, we might trade. You should never break your word, but neither should you be afraid to use your wits to strike a bargain in your favor. After all, as Geroin said, "If Voriof had not meant them to be sheared, he would not have made them sheep." If they take up arms against you, though, strike without mercy and hesitation, and sell them as slaves or let their blood fertilize our fields.

Who are our enemies?

Remember what Geroin said: "Family make the worst foes." Our greatest enemies are our cousins and wayward sons, the Exiles who live around Kerofin and the Sartari. The Exiles have become bandits and savages, sacrificing free men in bestial rites to savage goddesses. Where they raid, they bring fire and ruin, earthquake and infertility. But soon, they will be tamed.

Then there are the people of Sartar. They are half-civilized,

A Prophecy of the Hero Wars

And Arim came back. And Arim was angry. The rocks outside Maranaba groaned and sang, then split lengthwise, thrice three manheights. Varstapoor's shade shone with joy, but the earth-women tried to stop the Pauper, so blinded by their bloodlust and mean-spirited selfishness were they. Arim drove them from his path with furious sweeps of his staff, the bloated priestess he flung down from her chariot. As she began to summon black blood-earth monsters from the Seventh Cube, suddenly Ana Gor stepped forth, clad in the mute Firstblood girl they called Nobody, and the women and their not-men prostrated themselves in awe and fear and hope.

And Arim came home. The moonlovers barred their doors and cast magics of every kind, but he did not even deign to notice their spells and spirits. Bagnet's gates he wrenched from their iron hinges, but when trembling hands offered him a crown, he flung it aside. Instead, he gathered the people and spoke. He spoke of their destiny and their duty, of strength and mercy, of humility and pride, of offering a haven to the desperate, a terror to the degenerate. When he spoke, huscarls and scholars, farmers and slaves, all stood as one, for one they were now.

Arim had come back.

living in squalid poverty and refusing to acknowledge our monarch as King of Dragon Pass. The problem is that they still worship Old Gusty, Orlanth. Once we also thought him a mighty god, but now we realize that we can do without him and that he is just a troublemaker and rebel. Soon, they will be tamed.

The Valaring Clan is our foe, too. They resent our good luck, fine looks, and great wealth. They cast jealous eyes on our golden wheat fields and make spurious claims about our having stolen the Broader March from them. Now their young men seek to steal our cattle and their old women mutter in the tribal court, but Indrin has a plan, and he has told me it. Soon, they will be tamed.

Who are our gods?

While we have seen through Old Gusty, we still worship the gods of the Storm Tribe, who were revealed to us by the ancient hero Alakoring Dragonbreaker. Many are the sons of Ernalda Earth Queen, from Dar the Chieftain to Durev the Farmer. I worship Starkval the Huscarl, like most warriors in the lowlands, although farmer gods like Barntar, Durev, and Orane are most widely worshipped. Watch Invoc Longfinger next time he comes to buy our grain to sell in the markets of Furthest: he worships Issaries the trader god, who is a smart god indeed. He is honest, but tricky, so you need to make sure he is not taking advantage of you. At the same time, you might learn something from him.

There are many who, like your brother, have turned to the Red Moon Goddess of the Empire, whose mother was Ernalda. The Lunar gods are powerful, but even if you turn to them, you should not forget that you are a Tarshite first and foremost.

What is there to do around here?

Now that we have slaves to do our work, we have more time to do what we want. For some, that is hunting and weapons-drill, wrestling and axe-dancing. We have many festivals, including those secret rites of our tribe and clan, like Geroin's Day, when we show our wits by playing practical jokes on each other, and Tun-Breaking, when we open the first casks of vodka. But there is always work to be done and play to be had, whether a game of kick-the-ball or an evening in the clan hall spent singing and listening to Har-nafel's bagpipes, while the Elders play swords-and-shields at the high table.



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Talking to the Moon Woman

What the Lunar Priestess Preaches

Where did the world come from?

The Creatrix made the two races of gods first, the Gloranthan Court and the Tribe of Chaos. Neither understood the other, nor accepted the other's role in Creation, and from this initial conflict arose the imperfect world in which we live.

Where did I come from?

The Gloranthan Court and the Tribe of Chaos fought each other to destruction, and where they died lay a heap of ashes and slag. From that matter Glorantha, goddess of compassion, fashioned First Woman. She bore the ancestors of all the sentient races, whether they came from stone, dirt, wood, animals, or some human demigod. The races of people grew healthy and numerous, and you are of their descent.

Why do we die?

The disharmony of the Gloranthan Court and the Tribe of Chaos created an illness that sickened all creation. As a result all the world must now die too.

What happens after we die?

All souls, living and dead, move within the compassionate harmony of the world. As a follower of the Lunar Way, when you die you shed the gross matter of your life and ascend to the surface of the Red Moon or some other paradise reflecting your personal patron. Hope that when you are again purged and whole you may be reborn into a new body for a new life.

Why am I here?

The races of mankind were created to restore health to the cosmos. We exist to purify ourselves and, thereby, the wretched parts of the world. Our duty is to restore unity, harmony, and joy to the world of the living and the dead, heal the cosmos, and attain the bliss of immortality.

How do I do magic?

The world is filled with invisible powers. Sedenya places all those powers within your grasp, and you can integrate them in many ways: spirits may aid you, gods can help you, or you can manipulate energy with your own force of will. But all magic should be used to heal the world.

I have heard of other powers. Can you tell me the truth about them?

All the gods who came before Sedenya's rebirth as Rufelza are hurt, incomplete and unwell, stuck in their old ways. Rufelza is the part of the cosmos that has already been healed. We worship her and the New Gods.

...Aldrya?

Aldrya is the uncivilized, untamed, untouched. She is all that is wild—both the dancing light and the sinister dark. Her children are innocent, simple servants to the spirit, born of wood.

...Kyger Litor?

Within us all lurks a shadow, hiding and ready to pounce upon us in a moment of fear. Sedenya has conquered those inner secrets, so no longer fears her dark side. Kyger Litor herself must be cured to no longer fear the world, so that the world will no longer fear her.

...Magasta?

The sea gods have always been secret initiates of the Lunar Way, for their tides are caused by the Blue Moon. The sea heals, and the fear that mankind feels of the sea is the fear of a health unknown to their mortal bodies.

...Mostal?

The dwarves never learned to yield before change, so to them it brings defeat and death, where we would see opportunities for transformation. Their artificial constructs are cold and sterile, whereas our work brings new dynamism to Glorantha.

...Orlanth?

Orlanth is the sterile force that is rebellion without purpose. His creed is change and freedom, yet he is unchangeable and un-free, defined not by a positive vision but negative opposition. He resists the Goddess' liberation and suffers because of it, but with compassion Sedenya reaches out to him and will prevail. We shall free him!

...Yelm?

This proud god of emperors is regaining his divine strength and freedom through the liberation of his worshippers. Honor him, praise him! The bright and shining fire of the universe is the keen mind and sharp eyes of the goddess.

I have heard of other worlds. Can you tell me the truth about them?

Of course, but remember that the distinction between different worlds is a reflection of the fragmented nature of creation. Sedenya's power is manifest in all of them, and Her physical form, Rufelza, is present in each. When Sedenya has healed the cosmos, all worlds shall be as one.

...Chaos?

The Life/Death duality of the Mortal World is mirrored in the Chaos/Divine duality of the Immortal World. The gods of Glorantha fear Chaos in the way that living mortals fear death. But even Chaos, which we prefer to call Entropy, can be conquered and harnessed, as proved by Rufelza. Each thing, monstrous or metaphysical, has its place, even if only as a precautionary tale, for those who understand the entirety of the cosmos.

...Sorcerers?

The god called 'invisible' by the monotheists is visible to Sedenya. She alone has mastered its identity and secrets, and can use those natural powers called sorcery as her own. It is the unhealed cosmos itself, weakened and abused but still vibrant with potential.

...Spirits?

There are myriad minor spirits of the world. When healed each, like you, will be a god. Some are important now, but all are equal before Eternity. Nurturing them brings equal healing and friendship to you. Help them.

Gods of the Lunar Religion

The Forms of the Goddess

Since Before When, there has been a Cyclical Power at work within the universe, known by different names and displaying different powers. The present form is Natha the Avenger, both light and dark, merciless and compassionate.

Natha's powers were brought into the world through a mighty ritual into the body of a girl, Teelo Norri, some four centuries ago. She became Teelo Estara, living embodiment of the Goddess, and she heroquested through the cosmos and her own heart to awaken her godhood, becoming Sedenya, the highest Lunar power.

When Sedenya took physical form, wrapping herself in earth and rock and ascending into the sky, she also became Rufelza, the Red Moon, who still today hovers reassuringly above us. This cannot be understood by the unenlightened, but Sedenya, Natha, and Rufelza are all aspects of the same cosmic power, and we worship them together and separately.

Takenegi Moonson, Our Father, the Red Emperor

Our Red Emperor is one in a long line of wizard-kings, responsible only to their mother, Rufelza. Our emperors are immortal in that no natural death can claim them. Even if slain, they are reborn in a new form, a new Mask, at once different and yet the same. The present Mask, Takenegi Argenteus, is beloved of his people and beloved of them. We burn a pinch of borrhig and light a candle to bless his Seventh Soul every Full Moon day, and you should come and join us then for a reading from the *Rufus Script*.

The Inspirations of Moonson

These are deities and demi-deities born from Takenegi himself. The First is Glamour, patron and guardian of the Lunar capital. The Second Inspiration is Yara Aranis, Goddess of the Reaching Moon and scourge of the horse nomads who threaten the Empire from the east. HonEel is Third, goddess of maize, dance, and seduction. She it was who came to Tarsh and revealed that Ernalda the local Earth goddess was a form of She Who Waits and thus one of the Seven Mothers. The Fourth is JarEel, poet, swordswoman, and heroine, but still a mortal, of sorts.

The Seven Mothers, recreators of the Red Goddess

The Goddess prepared all the world for her coming, and seven individuals came together to bring about her rebirth: Deezola, queen and healer, Yanafal Tarnils the warlord, Jakaleel the witch, Irippi Ontor, sage and scribe, Danfive Xaron, the Bridge of the Seeker, Teelo Norri, the innocent girl whose body Sedenya inhabited, and the mysterious force that we call She Who Waits. In return, the Goddess taught them all of her secrets, and they have achieved immortality.

The Seven Mothers may either be worshipped individually or all together. The branches of the cult act in harmony to familiarize outsiders with the stories of the Red Goddess.

Jakaleel the Witch

One of the Seven Mothers, Jakaleel is the spirit shadow of the Goddess. She teaches of the Spirit World and of death. She founded the all-embracing tradition called From Dark, which recognizes Sedenya as its great spirit.

The Cerise Church

Sedenya transcends the usual boundaries of life and magic. Thus, she is venerated in the manner of the western wizards, through the teachings of the *Cerise Book*.

New Gods

All humanity seeks to regain the immortality lost during the Gods War. Sedenya can show the way to it, and many of those we worship were once mortals, made deities by Her power. These New Gods include the Seven Mothers; Etyries, the patron of communication and merchants; Erana Halfmoon; Pinugia the Protectress; the Moon Bear; and more than seven times seven sevens more.

Healed Gods

Sedenya's way is one of inclusion: "We Are All Us" is her creed. She does not seek to replace other deities and powers, but to awaken their Seventh Part and bring them into the Lunar Way. Many are the local gods, spirits, and saints who have been so awakened, even here in Tarsh, ranging from Ernalda the Red Earth to tribal ancestors such as Perun of the Barastaros.



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A Personal View of Teshnan Life

What My Proprietor Told Me

Who are you?

I am Maheshurgan son of MaheSomash, proprietor and keeper of the Fourth Open House of Exchange that has been in business since Chal walked the lands and took away his flywhisk from that shelf, there, that is framed now in gold.

Who are we?

We are the Fourth Open House of Exchange, an institution of great renown and honor, blessed of Somash Mimi—let us praise him! You are one of the trainees, the child of my third wife Ziramanth of the Grand Place of Five Front Doors.

What makes us great?

We are great because I am a wise and pious follower of *The Book of Well Being*, learned in its ways (especially the twenty-third through thirty-second verses.) Ever since Chal graced us by taking the flywhisk we have been patronized by nobles and priests and sages. His attention caused Somash Mimi—let us praise him!—to look our way, and our pious attentiveness has kept his gaze upon us.

Where do we live?

This is the district of Bara, the neighborhood of sandalwood aroma, where good and generous people live who are always walking in the pathways of Chal. Around us are the neighborhoods of Heza, Marda, Koor, Manaple, Darathot, Jinjib, and Buna, where people of the other verses live. This city is ruled by the House of Dalar Rapoor Arguni, the wise and generous Son of the Third Teaching, which is why it is called Dajanapol Rabur, Tower of Rubies.

How do we live?

We walk in the glory of Chal, who set us upon the way of fiery truth. We exchange the most valuable commodities: black mares, warm cattle, the Five Spices, incense furniture, rubbing emeralds, women's silk clothing, beard oil, and a complete line of household goods for people of all classes.

What is important in my life?

To know the lessons of *The Book of Well Being* and obey the rules of the First Teaching, to sacrifice properly to Somash Mimi—let us praise him!—to fulfill the obligations of your past lives, to restock the inventory when told, to wait on customers with respect, to count the change properly, to bow to the priests, to lie down for the nobles, to accept a wife from a good house and to have many sons.

What is the difference between men and women?

We are in essence exactly the same, being flame, form and perfection. We are subject to the teachings of Chal, to the rules of the King, to the rites of the priests. We are different in that our bodies are dominated by the flames of Great Somash—He is Life!—while women's souls are dominated by the fuel of Kab Vanarana Sa—She is Love!

Who rules us?

I do, of course, for I'm the proprietor of this establishment. I need obey only Dalar Rapoor Arguni and his kin, and also his Lord, the grand and most majestic Pubnashap, Vessel of Light who has the obligation to be perfect, to perform the Great Rites and to provide the land with love and tyranny.

What makes us great?

We are the flames of Great Somash—He is Life!—and that makes us great. We are humble beings, we who know only the First Teaching. Greater than us are those who know the Second as well, and they are the red-robed priests who intervene for us with the gods. Greater than them are those who have mastered the Third Teaching, the fortunate nobility. But the most great are the zitr, sages who have mastered the Fourth Teaching as well.

What is evil?

Everything not of the Flames of Great Somash—He is Life!—is evil in some degree. That basically means everything that is not of our great land of Teshnos is in some way evil.

What is my lot in life?

You will be fortunate because you are in this house, and you will learn the First Teaching and especially the twenty-third through thirty-second verses of *The Book of Well Being*. If you can you will learn the Second Teaching as well, and in your next life be born among the priests. This is the Way that Chal taught us and the way of all good folk. If you are find this stifling or inadequate then you can learn the way of one of the Moving Gods and still be saved.

How do we deal with others?

Patience is the essence of interaction. If we are so fortunate to deal with a zitr then we wait quietly until they take what they want. If we are lucky enough to deal with a nobleman then we wait quietly until they indicate what they wish, and we choose the best and wrap it and send it to the palace with more gifts. If we are blessed enough to deal with the priests then we wait until they tell us what they want and we prepare it and send it off with them to the temples. If we are fortunate enough to deal with another First Flame then we wait for them to say what they want and we show them the best that we have and exchange it for coin. If we are unlucky enough to deal with a Solfite then we watch until they offend us and we strike them and call the Ovansharu to drive them out. If we are cursed enough to have foreigners come here then we wait until the jungle responds to strike them down with a curse or a disease.

Who are our enemies?

We are blessed and wealthy, and thus there are many who are jealous of us enough to be foes. No one in the land is a foe, not the stupid goonda or the decadent Solfite addicts; those are just unfortunate and inferior.

In the east are the amazon Marazi, the peaceful Sofali turtles, the dwarf Babadi, and the tree-climbing Fethloni, but none of those are enemies.

But a great foe is the land of Kralorela to the north, which each year sends a monstrous serpent over the mountain passes to destroy us. We are fortunate that Uranaroon Mashadoroon,

the mighty chosen elephant, defends us from them.

Another foe is the horde of beast men of the west who often forget who we are and come into the land to steal and pillage. We are fortunate that Balandak Zim, the Jungle Master, protects us and curses them, or send disease, or rots their faces in our defense.

In the south on the devil island of Melib is Harstar the Vile, a man who has put out his own flame by killing zitrns and hating us. He has an army and navy of Gachi devils and Ashurtan demons who will turn to dust, we are told, if they lay foot upon our good land.

Who are my gods?

You have one of great importance, Somash Mimi—let us praise him!—who is the power of merchants like us. He is a Reverence of the Great God Somash—He is Life! You must never miss a sacrifice or a prayer to him! As for the rest, you should attend their rites at your pleasure and convenience. I can tell you of them. Practical knowledge, not the philosophies of the zitrns, who see beyond this mortal sphere to higher truths.

Great Somash—He is Life!—has many Faces, each with its own form or Reverence. Only the priests may worship him and participate in his sacrifices.

Somash Vindinaran—Praise his name!—is the Creator of the present world. He is worshipped every day at dawn. He bears the powers of Endi Varo, the self-contained Creator of old who made the whole universe and has withdrawn to worlds beyond our ken.

Somash Neran Bas—May he bless us!—is the Healer, worshipped every day in the mid-morning. He helps us to grow, cures us of our sicknesses, heals all our wounds, and repairs our sorrows.

Somash Ji—May he be merciful!—is the current Father and Emperor, the patron of nobility and the protector of wisdom. He guides the noblemen. His sacrifices are every day at noon.

Somash Mimi—Let us praise him!—is our god, the Great Exchanger, the protector of Merchants. His sacrifices are every day at mid-afternoon.

Somash Hero Madoro—Remember his name my son!—is the scholar who records all the deeds of men and women, and gives the document of the soul after death to determine the next lifetime. His sacrifices are every day at sunset.

Somash Veren is the Beauty Sun, the Lord of Music and the Master of Song. Anything of beauty that is seen or heard is from him.

Somash Endi Varo is the Judge of the Gods, who measures the flames of humankind after death and determines what life they will be formed into on their next incarnation. He is one of the Moving Gods.

Alen Somash Sa is the Warrior Sun and the primary object of worship by the *ovansaru*, the soldiers and police for the kingdom. He is also one of the Moving Gods, recognized as the bright yellow planet that traverses the sky each night.

There are hundreds of other deities. Some, like Solf and Calyz, have many faces or forms. Others show only one face to us mortals.

Kab Tolat Solf is the Great Destroying Warrior. He is also one of the Moving Gods, recognized as the great red planet that is called Tolat.

Besdi Solf Du is the Seventh Little Destroyer, the thief of Heaven and Hell. Sometimes give an ibi deer or a black pig to the priests to sacrifice to him, and you can see the shoplifters when they walk through our door.

Calyz Mandar is our ancestor, the father of humankind and the keeper of the First Flame. His rites are always colorful and joyful. He had many wives, a harem, and from them came all of us humans.

Vai Madar Sa is the Great Star Archer. He is also a Moving God, recognized as the constellation of the Great Hunter.

Balandak Zim the Jungle Master is both male and female, and rules over the vast sweaty forests that ring our cities and fill every hill that is not farmed.

Velit Maniz is the Invisible Leopard, the Lord of the Hunt. He is one of the Jungle Spirits who are our friends.

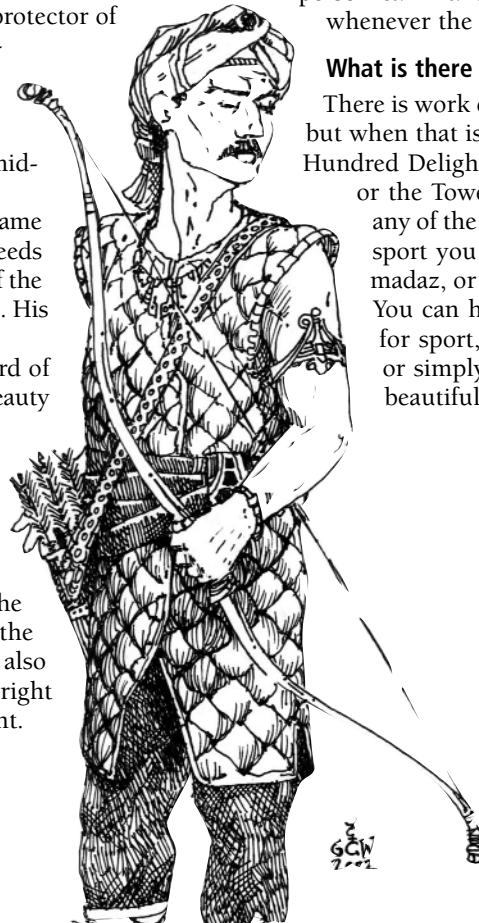
Mairnali Har is the Mother of Compassion. She is called the Mother of Mankind because her kindness and healing saved everyone from evil.

Sera Veren is the Beauty Dancer. She is the Lady of Dance and the Mistress of Love. Anything of beauty that is touched or performed is from her.

Kab Vanarana Sa is the Great Goddess. Her nine hundred daughters provide us with sustenance and health. All of the products in this shop and warehouse are the gifts of a daughter, and all the things that are worn, eaten, or known come from more daughters, and all the pleasures and troubles that a person can make are her daughters. Go to her worship whenever the idea strikes you to do so.

What is there to do around here?

There is work enough to keep you busy if you so wish, but when that is done you may visit the House of Eight Hundred Delights, or the Hall of Uncounted Pleasures, or the Tower of Joy, the Warehouse of Wonder, or any of the two hundred restaurants of this city. For sport you can play baman, medifuralor, or solfin madaz, or watch the professionals of those sports. You can hunt on foot or from elephantback; fish for sport, trophy, or food from the rivers or sea; or simply rest, take your ease, and watch as the beautiful men and women walk our streets.



The Mysteries of Fire

What the Zitr Expounds

Where did the world come from?

First was Endi Varo, the self-contained and self-created Creator. It created the Universe from Itself. It created three worlds, one for challenge, one for play, and one for desire. Each of those then self-created as well, so that within each were beings.

After one hundred dynasties they learned each of Endi Varo, and thus of each other. For one hundred dynasties more they mingled, first in harmony and then in conflict. As a result of that harmony and conflict the fourth world was made, in which we live. This world too self-created, and after another hundred dynasties the Underworld was created, and after one hundred more, the Unworld of Chaos. After another hundred dynasties, Chal the Wise instructed a king and then others and so made the land that we know now as Teshnos.

Where do we come from?

We are people and are made of parts of all the five worlds. Calyz Mandar is the father and creator, and he had many wives who were the bearers of our ancestors, and this is why those who follow Calyz are expected to have many children.

Why do we die?

All things being and end, and that is the way the world was created. Without this renewal no one has the chance to transcend themselves and rediscover Endi Varo.

What happens after we die?

Somash Endi Varo scrutinizes the nature of our inner flame and determines its qualities, then determines the type of its resting and the place of its rebirth. The resting seems long to the soul, but in the world of mortals it is short. We are then reborn, and the zitrns can trace the former lives and histories so that each person retains the obligations and debts and blessings of its former life. Thus is the society tied together.

A Prophecy of the Hero Wars

And the life-flames of the Righteous People will burn bright as Great Somash—He is Life!—rises into the skies that day, such that even the unclean and unknowing can see them, and they will burn yellow and red and blue and white and colors no one has any words for. Yet even as the Righteous rejoice, they will see Great Somash—He is Life!—grow dim and ageing, for it is His flames they are burning. And the Righteous will gather in the squares and in the fields, and the sound of their prayers will roll across the land, then the First Sacrifice will leap into the heavens and his life-flame will soar skywards. Then the life-flames of the Righteous will burst forth and mingle above Teshnos, forming a mighty Flamebridge that will join the polluted ground with the reviving Sun. Great Somash—He is Life!—will then beam his blessings upon the Righteous, beggars will become zitrns, elephants will calve twice a year, and the fields will harvest themselves. Then, after the Flamebridge has burnt for twice two hours, it will begin to fade, but as it does, down it will come Chuhenshanabap, the Somash Maharaj, for such has prophecy foretold.

Why are we here?

We are here to carry on the job of Endi Varo and to experience challenge, play and desire. We are created finite to know these things, and to learn of them and advance our being through them to regain unity with Endi Varo.

How do we do magic?

We are finite beings with infinite opportunity, and our station in life determines the nature of expression. We all draw from the God World, the Spirit World, and the Sorcery World. We must limit ourselves to the ways taught to us by Chal the Wise and as detailed in the *Works of Chal*, or in *The Book of Well Being*. *The Book of Well Being* is, of course, right and true, but it is only a brief synopsis suitable for commoners. For those such as ourselves, the deeper mysteries of the *Works of Chal* beckon. By studying these texts and reflecting upon their lessons, we can perform those works that are most suitable for us and ensure our progress through life, lives and to the infinite.

You spoke of other worlds. Can you tell me the truth about...

...Chaos?

This is the Sixth or Last World, a subcreation made by beings of ignorance and trouble. It is farthest removed from Endi Varo.

...Gods?

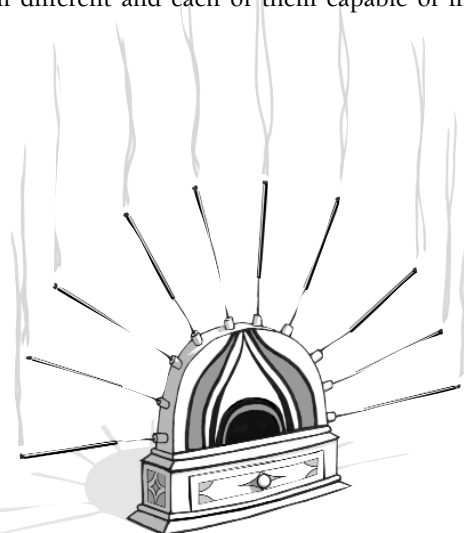
The gods are the beings of play, created by Endi Varo for his enjoyment. Their God World has a million beings within it, each of them different and each of them capable of manifesting a magic.

...Sorcerers?

These are the beings of challenge, created by Endi Varo for his enjoyment. Their Essence World has a million beings within it, each of them different and each of them capable of manifesting a magic.

...Spirits?

These are the beings of desire, created by Endi Varo for his enjoyment. Their Spirit World has a million beings within it, each of them different and each of them capable of manifesting a magic.



I have heard of other gods and powers. Can you tell me the truth about...

...Air?

This great storm lord is the pre-eminent deity of the God World, the Master of Play who became confused with challenge and desire.

...Darkness?

This is the power of the Underworld, or Fifth World, that spilled over into the Fourth World. It is a subcreation brought into existence by beings of limitation and mixed desire, play and challenge.

...Earth?

Mostal is the name for the creator of the Babadi, a clever race of craftsmen who live in the mountains and in the jungle. They are among the unflamed, but they are also the source of our prayer wheels, the sacred mirrors that link the temples of Somash, and many other clever artifices.

...Jungle?

Aldrya is the Fethloni name for the great jungle that provides us with the wood and spices that fuel our mundane fires. She is the mother of Balandak Zim, the Jungle Master, who protects us.

...Sedenya?

The Red Moon is a great being of the Fourth World, an example of the state of higher being that can be attained by the residents of the world of men.

...Water?

This is a power of the Underworld, but which lies halfway between the world of men and the Underworld. It takes the form of ceaseless motion and of water.

Zitric Lore

The Teachings of Chal

Chal the Wise, blessed of Great Somash—He is Life!—brought order to Teshnos after the evil of Sheng Seleris. He taught us the Truth of the world.

His First Teaching shows us that we are all Flames, and that each flame is one of the Five Fiery Forms.

His Second Teaching proves that we are not really Flames, but actually the Form itself, for the Flame is an illusion made by our many imperfections.

His Third Teaching reveals to us that the Forms are also false, caused by minor imperfections. When we realize that all Forms are One Form, flames of a single Celestial Fire, then we are released from the bondage of rebirth and reside forever in the perfection of Creator. There are less than a dozen people alive today who have mastered all three of Chal's Teachings. Some fear the coming of the calamitous Time of No Zitrs, as was prophesied by Chal himself.

The Five Fiery Forms

Zitro Argon

Zitro Argon is first of the fiery forms, with one Reverence, the zittr meditative ascetics. King Pubnashap, the Vessel of Light—may he reign in radiance!—is an avatar of Zitro Argon, and contemplates his transcendent flames in the Soul Furnace at the heart of the Great Temple in Zanozar.

Somash

Somash is the second form, with many Reverences to his many Masks. He is the form of superior human beings, such as priests, nobles, warriors, poets, healers and administrators. His path requires fidelity, purity, and truth. His temples spread the will of the Vessel of Light across the land, and the order of priests known as the *ovansaru* defend his divine person and his realm.

Calyz

Calyz is the third form, and is the fire of normal humankind. Most people benefit from the sacrifices we make to Calyz, whose fires are kept burning within domed kilns, ready for the next offering. The city of Dombain is his birthplace and most hallowed city. The queues of young men seeking the fireseed blessing outside the Broadest Dome can often stretch three times round the temple's outer wall.

Furalor

Furalor is the fourth form, the female fire that receives all things. She is primarily the funeral pyre fire, but is also the recipient of lost items, forgotten thoughts, decay, and lost causes. When a Quenching Mourning is declared, everyone must pay the woe-tax of a copper coin every time they see one of Furalor's white-veiled priestesses.

Solf

Solf is the fifth form, the burnt out fire. His polluted forms include the cold volcano, sexual deviance, gluttony, abuse of intoxicants, waste, suicide, and death of Self.



A Personal View of Doraddi Life

What My Uncle Sang to Me

Who are you?

Huda! Old Cronisper made time, and he made plenty of it. So sit in stillness, for I have a voice that must be heard. I am your uncle, Hawaja Kiwartii, leopardskin hunter of Rasout, brother to your blessed mother. I am your uncle, and my lineage continues through you, the son of my sister.

Who are we?

We are the Kiwartii family of the Instamiru or Sweet Clover lineage, presently of the Maddrun Tribe of the Jolaran Doraddi.

We are Doraddi, noble ones, proud Agimori, Keepers of the Right Footpath, masters of the Plain of Ten Thousand Tribes. We are the land clearers, flame farmers, forest-foes, a laughing people gifted most greatly in speech and fine manners.

What makes us great?

The wisdom of our grandmothers makes us great. Pamalt makes us great, as do the rites that he has taught us. We walk upon the Right Footpath.

The Meeting Contest makes us great. Whenever we meet with others, we engage in the Contest, as Pamalt did of old. The Contest binds us together by our skills and our common tradition. Everybody wins.

We are but men, but we too can be great. Never speak of this in front of a woman, nor any man who is unsworn, but I will introduce you to our secret hunter's lodge, the Brotherhood of the Sabre's Claw. There you will learn secrets and powers no woman can ever know. But quiet now, for the bush in which you shelter has ears.

Where do we live?

Ours is the land of Jolar, upon the Eternal Plain of Pamaltela. Oasis settlements dot the plain, a source of water even when the great rivers run to sand, a haven for ritual and trade and celebration. We garden, herd, or hunt according to the temper of the country and the traditions of our lineage.

How do we live?

We live according to the wisdom of women, the courage of men, and the bounty of the plains. Our lineage has always wandered, and although we may camp in one place, planting gardens for a glorious season or even several years, when the grandmothers decide it is time, then we will burn and move on.

Perhaps we will follow the pathways of the Old Ones, the sacred questlines of pilgrimage. Perhaps we will follow the plants in their blooming, or the great herds, or the rains, or even a carnasaur, to feast upon its leavings. We move on, dragging our burdens behind on tent poles, and the red one is born on the plain.

The plains are rich in clover, herb, and sweetbush, and with all manner of birds and animals. We hunt or avoid or ward each according to its nature, with spear and bow, line and pit, spell and song.

At the night fires and in the family huts, everyone has their position and place. Our family eats communally from the bounty basket, as of old. Plants and grains and roots and small game are shared equally, but a hunting prize is butchered and distributed according to honor.

Our women control what is close: they own most property,

control stored food, and wield magical power over the chieftains they have selected. Men are appointed by the Women's Circle to deal with what is afar—they become ambassadors and war leaders, hunter's eyes, pilgrim poets, and shellbeaders.

What is important in my life?

Our lineage is everything. It has its own special traditions, it is your guide. You must treasure these traditions, and pass them on to the children of your sister.

We walk in the power of a thousand generations, in the footsteps of Pamalt, the steps of the Right Footpath. Everything that can happen has happened before, and every challenge has been overcome, by Pamalt and his Necklace, by the First Drinkers, and by our noble ancestors. Change is never good. With wisdom, even the new can be seen through old eyes.

Who rules us?

We sit at the bounty basket or by the campfire according to age and honor. Some lineages are called to lead, others to follow. It is our way.

The Grandmothers rule us in magic and wisdom, and they appoint chieftains and tribal kings for a season or a lifetime. Not every lineage can produce a chieftain, and not every lineage can vote in his making. Our lineage obeys the tribal king, but if we do not like the path he is tracking, then we will join another tribe. This is our way.

Most of all we rule ourselves, every woman and every man, guided by the Right Footpath, by honor, by gentle kindness.

What makes a man great?

A great man is known by his burdens, by his friends, and by his lineage. He walks in strength, yet practices kindness and generosity. Only a criminal or a witch deserves your contempt.

Huda! These are my words to you. Be holy and proud. Learn patience in all things. The hasty man eats goat, the cautious man eats game. Remember that words are cast spears—once freed, they cannot be turned back. Speak only what is true, for smoke blinds both the gatherer and the bee.

What is evil?

We have a word for evil things—*kakatarnu*, 'monsters without contest.' Out of the north it comes, we say, and we know.

Pamalt's enemies of old are evil. The great monsters who do not breed true are evil, *kakatarnu*. Elves and old trees are evil. The Ill Empire—they were evil, with their roads and their cities and their slaving raids. We have seen their sowing, we have seen their harvest. They are no more.

Change is evil. Baboons and charnjibbers are evil. Swamps and ruins are evil. Forests are evil—bad spirits hide there and even the noble dead can wander lost forever. Trickery at the Meeting Contest is evil, for how can we trust strangers who have no honor? This we call *Vovisibor*, Filth Which Walks.

Witchcraft and sorcery are great evils, but Sikasso's children walk everywhere, even at night! If you practice these things, it is murder, and you will be speared in front of the entire lineage. How shameful for your sisters!

What is my lot in life?

You will choose a profession from the traditions of our lineage. The women of our lineage are among those who choose our chief, and have powers of prophecy in dance and vision. Our men are famed for our grace in speech and song.

Soon you will be a man, and you will become a hunter, or perhaps a long-legged diplomat, or a dust poet, one day to stand as a praise-singer before a king or mighty chieftain. You will wear a man's leather cloak and your hair in braids; the lineage tattoos of your making will itch when the rain comes.

When your making is complete, you should think to travel. He who never travels knows only his mother's cooking.

I know you will meet a pretty woman. Make sure she is of the right lineage, and remember that a beautiful girl passes by a silent campfire. Why do I say this? An old rock goat does not sneeze for nothing! There will be competition from other men, of course: each gecko thinks his tail the longest! But if a woman likes you, you may become her paramour. Perhaps she will be a girl your own age, or perhaps an older woman skilled in the ways of love, many children and husbands already behind her. Remember to please her brothers and her mother: her own heart will surely follow. Dance before her and make songs by her door at night. Soon you will sleep in her hut.

And you may think then of marriage. If you marry you will make your dwelling far away, and your children will belong to your wife and her brothers, not to you.

Remember that husbands and wives come and go, but you always have a grandmother, a mother, an uncle. We share your lineage. If you find a good woman, you will be happy, but if your bride's mother becomes burdensome, you will always be welcome back home here with your true kin.

What is the difference between men and women?

Women are sap and seed and blossom, while men are root and bark. Women command what is close, men command what is far. For women the camp, for men the plain. A man can sleep anywhere, while a woman should sleep only in a lineage hut with her mother and sisters.

A man must have honor and self-control, a ready wit and skill with words. He must be able to hunt, to dance and sing and make riddle games. He must know the five types of manly speech, and the way of the spear and line.

A woman must be able to keep a secret, and speak wisdom without fear. She must know the songs of lineage and law, the ways of plants, the nine healing soups, the magic of counting and shapes, and the three types of womanly speech. If this is so, then her children will be blessed.

How do we deal with others?

Remember that strangers become fathers, and orphans become chiefs. Treat everyone with respect, patience and kindness, and the word of your honor will pass from campfire to campfire. To snare a prize beast, you must be patient, yes?

Who are our friends and enemies?

What is the difference between an enemy and a friend? Why, only wise words, a contest, and a night amongst the beer bowls! Pamalt says, 'Good talk breaks a strong bow.' Our warriors hunt down monsters and strike raiders and kinless criminals, but we are a noble people who have outgrown the need for war. Remember that buffaloes are born with ears: only later do they grow horns!

Who is the person that lives between two swords but is never cut? It is the tongue! Wise words of courage can always

find an alternative to war. And if your neighbor is quarrelsome, you can always move on.

There is little glory in war. Huda! War is not porridge. To wage it is an admission of weakness. It is to shave the leopard's mane: a brave act perhaps, but a foolish one. There is no gain in such an act. To wage plunder war is worse, an admission of greed—how shameful to our mothers!

Who are my spirits?

Pamalt is our spirit, the spirit of men. When evil threatened to break our world, Pamalt called all the spirits together and created the Necklace to save and protect our land. Every one had their part to play, and each one sits in council on the Necklace. Pamalt is the Chieftain. Faranar is the wife, the spirit of women. Wise Aleshmara is the mother-in-law. The children of their bounty are many.

What is there to do around here?

The women are always busy with gathering or gardens by day, but that is woman's work. Perhaps you will be asked to help with weaving baskets or pounding porridge, or in herding the domestic animals.

Soon you will be a man, and expected to hunt with your age brothers, for that is men's work. Hunts can take many days, but once beyond the camp, well, there is always time for a gourd rattle song, for a riddle or enigma poem, or for dirt games and contests. Soon a shellbeader will lead the counting women on a trade journey to the oasis at Moroskolon. Perhaps you will join them? At the oasis live the *drawthi*, the water people, including those of our lineage too old or infirm for life on the Great Plain. The oasis is always exciting, and there you will find the bazaar, and many shrines, and the enigma school. But beware, for many misfits and kinless criminals shelter there at the oasis.



Learning the Right Footpath

The Chieftain Speaks

Where did the world come from?

The children of Yanmorla and Cronisper were the Esiti, the Old Ones: Balumbasta, Kendamalar, Bolongo, and the others. When their children fought, the elders fled into the sky and earth. Then the children each made their own parts of the world. That is where the world came from. From the family of Yanmorla and Cronisper.

Where did I come from?

The Old Ones were amused by making beautiful and useful things. Sometimes they failed, and made things like jelmre or elves, but they also made the first people. When Pamalt was chieftain, the First-Drinkers learned to have children, and you are their descendant. That is where your lineage comes from, where you come from. From your ancestors' success.

Why do we die?

When Pamalt was chieftain, the world was beset by many evils. Sorcerers and gods invaded and everything was sick and dying. The Old Ones were helpless. Only Pamalt was strong. He led the Doraddi on the Right Footpath to our new world. He created the Necklace, the council of all the good spirits. We wrestled Life back from our enemies. So now everyone dies, just like in the old times, but we also come back to life again some day. That is why we die. Because the world was changed.

What happens after we die?

Like you, everyone has four parts: body, breath, spirit, and mind. As long as your spirit is on the Right Footpath, it is with Pamalt. Death is when your mind and spirit and breath leave your body, which is buried to sprout your lineage medicine plant. Your mind then rests with your breath in the Breath World. When you are ready, your breath dies too, and you go to sit on Pamalt's Necklace, mind and spirit together. After a time, the Necklace may send you back to earth as a child, back to your lineage.

Why am I here?

We are the Keepers. Pamalt gives us wonderful gifts and powers on the Right Footpath. We need to be born, live together, bear children, work in harmony with the world, and die. That is why you are here. To be happy.

How do I do magic?

We learn magic from the breath of the Right Footpath. Every lineage has its special magic skills and powers. To learn magic, you must send your mind to the Breath World. There you meet a challenge to learn the magic. Bigger magics are protected by harder challenges. That is how you get magic. By struggle and courage, just as you get everything good.

I have heard of other spirits. Can you tell me the truth about them?

When the Esiti made beautiful things, they made the Fiwan, the Old People. These were plants and animals and other spirits. Some did not join Pamalt's Necklace, but they are still our friends. Others became our enemies. That is what the spirits are. The life of the Breath World.

...Baraku, storm?

When the Old Ones quarreled, this one shouted the loudest and used his fists and knives against his own family. He fought so hard that he was exhausted, and so his heir, Keraun, joined Pamalt's Necklace instead. That is who Baraku is. The bully who thinks strength is all that matters.

...Falutha, jungle?

The jungle is our enemy. Her minions always plot against Pamalt, and try to blanket our beautiful plains with steaming jungle. That is who Falutha is. The enemy who tries to replace your type of life with her own.

...Qualyorni, troll?

When Pamalt was chieftain, monsters roamed the world. Qualyorni was one, but finally Pamalt gave her the north half of the world and she gave him the south. That is who Qualyorni is. The bad enemy who is too far away to hurt you.

...Sikkanos, the bad wind?

Far south, at the edge of the world, sits the Nargan, a parched land where the earth burns your skin and the air decays your mind. Filthy Chaos things live there, and they send the bad god Sikkanos against us. That is who Sikkanos is. The enemy you can never forget.

...Sorcerers?

When we relaxed our watch against Vovisibor, wicked men troubled us with an evil trick: religion without piety. That is who the sorcerers are. People who care nothing for the Right Footpath and the Breath World.

...Tamakderu, ocean?

He tried once to invade our land. But he failed, because Pamalt and his Necklace were vigilant and brave. Now he is far away, and can only hurt those foolish enough to cross his poison waters. That is who Tamakderu is. The enemy that has been beaten.

...Varama, Sun?

When the Old Ones ruled, everyone enjoyed the Kendamalar's wealth. But pride led to his downfall: he thought he could live without the help of everyone else. He lost his powers, and now he is a slave, a bright orb of fire chained to an unyielding path, trapped by duty to his task. That is who Varama is. The one you can always depend on, because he has no choice.

...Vovisibor, Chaos?

Vovisibor is like an evil counterpart to Pamalt; he, too, is a chieftain, but he rules the gods and peoples of hate. His councilors are Pocharngo, Seseine, Ompalam, and other bad gods. These evil beings are our permanent enemies. Pamalt defeated them of old by creating his Necklace. If we tread the Right Footpath we can kill them, and make sure Vovisibor never rises again. But when we are lax and lazy, Vovisibor returns, stronger than before. Vovisibor brings ignorance, cruelty, greed, and selfishness to us. Only Pamalt can stop him. That is who Vovisibor is. The bad man who has no good in him.

HEROQUEST VOICES

The Esiti ('Old Ones') of Pamaltela

Aleshmara, old woman

Aleshmara is Pamalt's sister and mother-in-law. She leads a pack of sisters who must approve the actions of Pamalt's Necklace. She holds the Basket of Life, a gift from Earth Mother when she left the world. Aleshmara owns all wealth, knows all lineages, keeps all women's secrets, and rules her daughter Faranar, who lives in Aleshmara's tent with husband Pamalt. That is who Aleshmara is: the woman who gives you everything.

Balumbasta, fire

The spirit of fire is one of the Old Ones. Pamalt made him raise the mountains of the north, which separate the realm of Pamalt from the rest of the world. He has many children, of whom Vangono is the greatest. That is who Balumbasta is. The man who is strong of thew, but not of brain.

Bolongo, trickster

Bolongo is one of the Old Ones, the trickster, the Empty Mask. He helped make the world. Sometimes his help was bad, like when he got Vangono drunk and took his place in the wedding to Enisoyo. Sometimes his help was good, like when he helped make the Necklace of Pamalt. That is who Bolongo is. The fool who cannot tell between right and wrong.

Cronisper, sky father

Grandfather Sky is one of the two elders of the Gods Council. Like all deserving grandfathers, he sits in the back of the tent and smokes his pipe. He mostly speaks only in vague grunts and nods, but when he speaks clearly, or sings, he should be heard. That is who Cronisper is. The old man whose limbs are weak but whose wisdom is strong.

Faranar, the strong wife

Faranar is the daughter of Aleshmara, good wife of Pamalt and mother of his many fine children. She is the spirit of women, who knows the secrets of planting and counting. That is who Faranar is. The strong wife who is not afraid to speak.

Jmijie, traveler

He is the Wanderer, for he cannot stay in one place. Sometimes he strikes people with the wandering sickness. Jmijie created invisible roads that cross the world, and which magicians can travel on. That is who Jmijie is. The wayfarer, half vagrant, half pilgrim.

Keraun, wind and rain

Keraun is the Rainbearer, ruler of the good winds and rain that water the plains. That is who Keraun is. The strong bad person who has seen her wrong and is now your friend.

Noruma, shaman

This great spirit is keeper of the sacred Fire that was Langumal. He knows the strongest spells, even how to contact the Old Ones. He shares his knowledge with chosen lineages, and sometimes comes in dreams to call people to be shamans,

trance dancers, or beast mimes. He communicates with the Breath World. That is who Noruma is. The medicine man.

Nyanka, good water, childbirth

Before the Doraddi met Nyanka they were not able to have children. She gave of herself, and brought healing. That is who Nyanka is. The woman who gives without need of receiving.

Pamalt, Chieftain

Pamalt is headman of the Council, the spirit of men. He is the only Old One to stay strong in the new world. He shows us the Right Footpath, and helps us on our way. He protects chieftains, and he also protects the helpless, orphans, hunchbacks, lepers, and even albinos, whom he created one day while drunk. He created the Necklace Council, which includes all of the good Old Ones who aided Pamalt. That is who Pamalt is. The wise, good, and clever chieftain.

Rasout, hunter, spirit of men

It has always been the duty of men to hunt the beasts of the plains. Rasout teaches reverence for the kill, love of the hunt, and the arts of stalking, trapping, and the chase. That is who Rasout is. The hunter working hard to bring the best food.

Vangono, spirit of war

Vangono found the first spear, shield, and bow, and he used them to destroy his enemies. He is fierce and bloodthirsty, and he sometimes even gets Pamalt, his chieftain, in trouble. That is who Vangono is. The loyal warrior whom you love in war but who makes trouble when it is peace.

Yanmorla, Grandmother Earth

Yanmorla's tent is deep inside the earth, and all the breaths of dead animals go to her. That is who Yanmorla is. The wealthy old woman who has no use for her goods except to bestow them on her worthy children.



A Personal View of Kralori Life

What My Father Told Me

Who are you?

I am Bi Yao of Tan Lo. My two names denote my importance in this village as well as my most productive role, as Ledger Scribe, whose duty and pleasure it is to maintain accurate records of births, deaths, livestock, produce, auspicious events, crimes, judgments and funeral offerings. Upon these records, good governance and just order depend, which is why, feckless Number Two Son, I had to beat you so severely when you ground ochre instead of cinnabar to make my ink, meaning that my Official Writings Three-Times Darkened Red brush was tainted with mere Semi-Formal Blushing Incarnadine pigment.

Who are we?

We are the Bi Dan family. We are the only Bi in the village, and so we handle all matters of writing, scribing and counting, except those who are quite correctly the work of the staff of the cantonal mandarin, the eminent Guan Li Chih.

What makes us great?

We are Kralori and thus the finest of all people: respectful, virtuous, diligent and happy in our reverence for Godunya, our Divine Dragon Emperor. Beyond the mighty Shan Shan Mountains to the west are only barbarians, devils, and ghosts. Remember the Third Yes and No. *Yes to Pride, No to Uncertainty*. The humblest Kralori ox-driver is nonetheless greater than a king of the foreigners, for they are so corrupt that they have become devils, even if they do not know it.

Where do we live?

Kralorela is the Kingdom of Splendor, where all wisdom, virtue and enlightenment reside. From the rolling terraces with their fertile paddy fields to the teeming cities, ours is a land of harmony, wonder and majesty.

We used to live in Beizu, a town outside Fuknama, capital of this province of Hanjan. There were many, many other registrars there, so I was known as Bi Yao the Silver Ring, after the adornment with which I awoke one morning after a particularly riotous revel in my youth. Beware Lur Nop rice wine, and the company of sailors!

We came to Tan Lo because the Village Elder, the most excellent Hong Ba of Tan Lo, was in need of a Ledger Scribe and he was my second cousin's third daughter's brother in law. Simply to demonstrate his respect and cousinly affection, he offered this fine house with, mark you, a wooden roof, and a purely token stipend.

How do we live?

We live well, for I am a man of some substance here, and work day and night. Even when you think I am sleeping of a summer afternoon in the cherry garden, I am contemplating the felicitous numbers of the Ledgers. Those scurrilous wretches who whisper in their hands that Hong Ba hides some of the tribute due our gracious mandarin and I write the Ledgers accordingly, are liars and tongue-biters. Their gourds will shrivel and their children will all be daughters.

What is important to us?

Remember the first Yes and the first No: *Yes to Reverence, No to Novelty*. Reverence is a step backwards into our eternal future. We have much to revere. First and last are the dragons. Second are the Emperors, now dragons themselves. Third and everywhere are our ancestors, who lovingly scorn our failures that we may improve and defend us from spirits and devils who would steal our hearts and livers in the night. Fourth and ever are our traditions, which show us Right Action that we may serve the Emperor after our deaths in the Excellent Palace of Pleasant Reward.

We rise with the dawn and join the rest of the village in the Imperial Adorations, the Prescribed Movements, and the Harmony Song, and to hear Hong Ba's announcements. We seek harmonious community, punctilious adherence to duty and the opportunity to place our insignificant and miserable lives at the service of our lords and betters.

Of course there are many lesser things of importance. An extra pepper in your bowl of rice, a beautiful sunrise, the delicate tones of a hei-pipe played by a graceful maiden. For me, it is important that every stroke of the brush I make is flawless and elegant, whether I am penning my seasonal report to the Exacting Preceptor of Cantonal Statistics or a letter for an illiterate farmer. It will also be a happy day for me and your mothers when one of you boys marries well and produces grandsons to take forward the name of Bi Dan.

Who rules us?

All power flows from the Divine Dragon Emperor, whose radiant wisdom is interpreted by the divine archexarchs and exarchs who lead his armies and rule each of the fifteen provinces in his illustrious name.

Tan Lo falls within Three Gold Pig Canton, governed by mandarin Guan Li Chih. He visits every season, to receive taxes, pass judgments and lead the Sunrise Rituals, but we more often have to travel to his manse on Chong Ho Hill for him to hold court or notarize wills. Hong Ba is chief in the village, though, and assigns duties and appoints the Watermaster in charge of the irrigation ditches and the Constable.

What makes us great?

Were you not listening, worthless ox of a son? I have told you: we are Kralori! What more needs to be said?

What is evil?

Rebellion is evil: the Divine Order is the ladder upon which we ascend to perfection. Ignorance is evil: knowledge of Correct Thought is the foundation-stone of virtue. Sin is evil: the Four Vices, unchecked, rob a man of wisdom, a woman of fertility, and a people of magic.

What is my lot in life?

If you study hard, you may be worthy of taking the exams to enter the mandarin caste. You are probably too stupid and lazy, though, but as you are a Bi Dan, you will probably not become a farmer. Maybe you could become a factor, taking goods around the country in the name of the Imperial Commissariat. Whatever you do, do it well to uphold the honor of your family. Then your name will be written in gold leaf in our family shrine and

your descendants will burn the good incense in front of it every Revered Ancestors' Day.

Marry well: two wives shows substance and authority, but as I know too well, three is a disharmonious number and leads to raised voices and broken pots. With two wives you should be sure to have sons. Daughters are just a burden, alas. Yes, I know that some families turn to the 'rocky cradle,' but this is illegal and immoral, and we are too well-known and -respected to drown our daughters.

What is the difference between men and women?

You must learn to value women. Your mother, for example, cost me two baskets of ginseng. Women have their virtues and their purposes in the great order. They raise the children, they cook the food, they attend to men's needs so they are not tempted into Incorrect Action.

However, they are clearly inferior to men, in whom the fiery upright powers of solar energy combine with the wisdom of the heavens. This is well known: all my brothers agree.

How do we deal with others?

If they are of a lower rung of the Divine Order, such as paddy farmers with but one name, treat them with polite condescension. But watch them carefully, for they are often feckless, idle and prone to strong drink and weak morals. Beat them fairly but firmly with a stout bamboo and they will thank you for the instruction and admonition.

To those above you, show respect and decorum. Practice the Seven Nods, Eight Kow-Tows and Three Obeisances and be sure to know which to use when approaching whom, and at what time. Never again let me catch you using the Yellow Tiger Kow-Tow to a military officer during the morning!

Those who are not even on the Order, such as barbarians, outcasts, and the more sacred animals, are of little worth or interest. Some may have been born foreigners as punishment, but they have the chance of redemption. For others, their unfortunate birth may have been a clerical error by some minor functionary of the Celestial Court. In this case they may be judged *kralo-nei*, "Kralori Inside," and acquire the dragon tattoo of their status, but I have never yet met such a person.

Who are our enemies?

There are blights and predations against which we must defend ourselves. Within, there are the shadowy crimes of the hexads and the tongs, as well as covens who worship Chaos and other vile aberrations. Without, the beast-men of Prax periodically storm the Iron Forts guarding our western gateways. The Imperial Dispatch of Truth and Enlightenment reassuringly informs us that all such attempts end in failure, though, so we have nothing to fear.

To the north, the Kingdom of Ignorance is a blasted waste inhabited by beasts and near-beasts, who fornicate even during inauspicious hours, openly defying Right Action and the Emperor's just and divine authority. Even now armies muster to cleanse this suppurating pit of corruption.

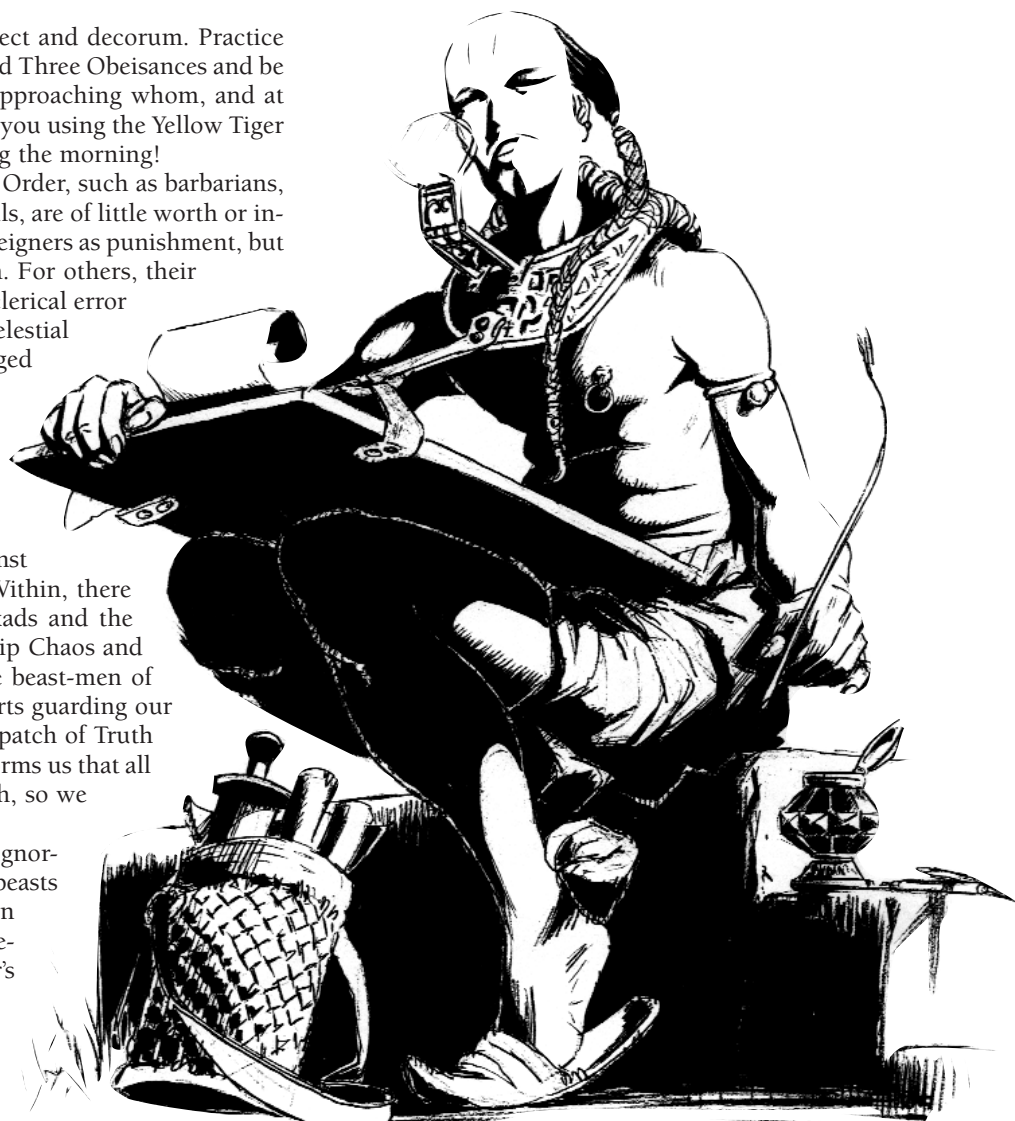
Who are my deities?

Every hill and village has its own gods, spirits, and powers, part of the Divine Order. Atop them all are the Cosmic Dragon and the Deified Dragon Emperors.

I myself pay special obeisance to Vashanti, Emperor of Sacred Nine, whose orderly mind and keen understanding led to his creation of the Web of Righteous Knowledge and thus the logical and perspicacious administration of the Kingdom of Splendor. The fine crystal lens that makes even the smaller ideograms as clear as the boil on Number Three Wife's nose was a gift from Hu Shen Gao, called the Orange Mandarin, for the great service I did the temple of Vashanti in Beizu, even though that meant I also gained powerful enemies there.

What is there to do around here?

Do not be presumptuous! You have yet to scour my jade inkpots, clean Number One Son's room and gather in the garlic-pigs. Only then can you think about going and swimming in the canals with your friends or practicing Two Steps Kicks with old Fu Hu.



Immortal Wisdom from the Kingdom of Splendor

What the Dragon Lord Whispers

Where did the world come from?

The venerable Cosmic Dragon was the sole inhabitant of the former universe. In its inerrability, it comprehended that the many is superior to the one, and it dismembered its sacred form. From Cosmic Dragon's awesome breath came First Ocean. From Cosmic Dragon's consecrated bones came First Mountain. From Cosmic Dragon's exalted scales and hairs came animals and plants. From Cosmic Dragon's ineffable soul came TarnGat-Ha. First Ocean properly apportioned itself into many oceans, seas, lakes, and sky waters. First Mountain broke into ranges

of peaks and hills. The first creatures obediently bred to cover Cosmic Dragon's world. TarnGatHa formed the sky gods from his sacrosanct spirit.

Where did I come from?

From Cosmic Dragon's numinous heart came Ebe, Wild Man. The Empress pitied Ebe, and created Okerio All-giver, first woman. Ebe was tamed to live in quietude with Okerio. Their child is the venerable Aptanace the Sage, and we descend from his divine children.

Aptanace's children each took his rightful place in society: one was the first potter, one the first builder, the first tailor, astrologer, herbalist, farmer, and so on. Thus arose the seven hundred Divine Arts of civilization.

Why do we die?

Death is the natural state of the universe. Ebe was the first of all to die. Correct Thought teaches us that death is a transition, a change. Just as a Dragon Emperor retires his luminous crown to progress to the sixteenth stage of existence, we must discard our bodies to reach our ultimate goals. The hallowed Sun Emperor shows us his path to the superior afterlife.

What happens after we die?

Most folk travel through the dread court of the Udam Bagur, the Archexarch of Hell, to the Excellent Palace of Pleasant Reward to await the Passing On of His Supereminence the Dragon Emperor. At that blessed time, their souls accompany him to the auspicious next stage of existence.

Why am I here?

Unrelenting service to Holy Ones is the secret for happiness. We exist to serve the Emperor, and he exists to serve us. Foreign lands are trapped in ignorance, knowing only inferior or false gods.

How do I do magic?

All life knows its own proper magic. Like eating and sleeping, it is part of existence. Our exarchs know powerful dragon magic. City officials have strong and true magic from the Gods of Light. Farmers in their fields know potent secrets of the Rice Mother that I shall never know and also the simple magic of the so-called Little Mandarins. Talk with me and I shall tell you what magic is meant for your life.

I have heard of other powers. Can you tell me the truth about...

...Chaos?

When the egregious Rebel Gods sought to overthrow the Divine Order they uncovered dreadful allies too powerful to control. Only the wisdom and sacrifice of our commendable land regenerated the pure universe.

...Magasta?

The monster gods of the oceans are enemies of both sky and earth, and ever seek to quench life with their liquid powers. Baneful secrets are hid within the lethal depths of the ocean and behind its blind banks of fog.





...Orlanth?

Orlanth the Rebel is the fearsome usurper who sought to tear down our benign Dragon Empire. He destroyed the Golden Age with pernicious wars. Yet he was conquered through the purity of our celestial truth, and is now tamed by compromise.

...Sedenya?

Those unfortunates dwelling in sordid lands beyond our own certainly feel their lack. The Red Moon is an inferior attempt by the inhabitants of Peloria to emulate our Dragon Emperor.

...Sorcerers?

The sorcerers of the West replace true devotion with empty philosophy. They fail to understand that what some call 'other worlds' are all part of the Cosmic Dragon. Emperor Thalurzni wielded sorcerer magic, but imbued with Correct Thought

...Spirits?

These are broken bits of the old universe, cut off from contact with higher planes. The poor and the lowly may deal with spirits, and these pathetic entities are grateful for any worship, but they are meaningless in the Divine Order.

I have heard of other races. Can you tell me the truth about...

At first, Ebe the Wild Man knew no restraint. Plunging through the world, he basely mated with trees, rocks, and beasts. These miscegenations produced the Four Hundred Sacred Races.

...Dwarves?

This strange race reveres a god who upholds cosmic order, but only by enslaving those who serve him and mocking true life. He is like an undead god.

...Elves?

These beings adore the Sun and are close to his presence always. Strong in summer and pitiful in winter, like the Sun, they and their mistress are tied to barren cyclicism, and can never be released to enjoy true spiritual progression.

...Trolls?

The foul and bitter smoke that preceded true creation could have become transparent and sweet, but the deplorable Rebel Gods prevented perfect completion. This corrupt residue still haunts the living and rules in the squalid lands of ignorance.

Gods of Kralorela

The Dragon Emperors

Before a Dragon Emperor is permitted to Pass On, he must bless all subsequent posterity. Thus did Daruda bring about the wondrous dragon magic, thus did Mikaday teach correct laws and ordinances, and thus did Vashanti create the Web of Righteous Knowledge to unite our nation under one government.

Even as we worship our present Dragon Emperor, Godunya, to attain spiritual progression, so do we worship past Emperors—save for Shang-hsa-may-his-name-be-cursed—to use their magic and skills to exalt our lives while we yet live. Their names tingle the tongue:

TarnGatHa, Face of Creator, the First, the immutable unity of all existence. He thought several beings and peoples into existence, then retired behind the Sky.

HeenMaroun, Peace of the World, the Second Emperor. All existence was his realm. He organized the world into its parts.

Metsyla, Light of Enlightenment, the Eagle Phoenix Emperor, who built the Palace of Eternal Light, made roads of gold

to link his cities, grew silver in the clouds, and created a light that people could eat like food.

Shavaya, Emperor of Splendor, who taught his language to all tribes so they could communicate with him and each other.

Daruda, the Dragon Emperor, who created and ordered the Summer Land Heaven

Thalurzni, Balancer of Elements and Alchemical Arbiter, the Great War Leader who defeated the Shadow Cancer, Earth Eater, Star Permutator, and Secret Waters, and who summoned the wrathful powers that destroyed and replaced the anti-gods.

Mikaday, Watcher of the Populace, who raised up the first mandarins to administer the Kingdom of Splendor and who wrote down his wise and ineluctable laws on stone obelisks for all to see and learn.

Vayobi, who became the War Dragon and brought down vile Sekever.

Vashanti, Emperor of the Dawn, who created the Web of Righteous Knowledge.

Yanoor, Who Stopped the Sun, and who committed ritual suicide rather than lead the frightened dead into oblivion.

Godunya, the Dragon Emperor of the Now.

Godunya and the Exarchs

We Children of Heaven are most fortunate. Even as we dwell in the pleasantest of lands, we are served by the wisest of rulers. In our Kingdom of Splendor are many exarchs whom we are blessed to worship. Through them, our souls touch the unattainable majesty of great Godunya, our sacred Dragon Emperor. Through him, our souls attain progression to higher planes of reality in the afterlife.

The Celestial Court

Beneath the Dragon Emperor is a mighty and glorious array of other deities, each with their appointed place within the Divine Order. They are many, but I speak here of only a few.

Halisayan the Good Wife and Mother of Life, who served Thalurzni, as the superior wife should serve her husband.

Miyo the Rice Mother, whose never-ending bounty blesses the basest of peasants and her generosity extends even to the scabrous and unclean. Other lands are cursed by her absence, forced to consume abominable provender.

Bodkartu, keeper of secrets and forbidden lore, who lurches through the nightmares of the Children of Heaven and bismirches the lovely robes of Halisayan. She strikes with disease, poison, and other evils. Yet gladly would we embrace a thousand such horrors to retain Halisayan's delightful presence.

Serelaloon the Compassionate One, who came to answer the prayers of the innocent with healing and kind actions.

The Mud-Faced Traditions

These are the simple but practical beliefs of the common folk, such as the Ebe and Okerio Tradition, through which they worship their ancestors; or the worship of Aptanace's Sons, such as Alou the Brushman and Julang Hombondol the Ditch-Digger. They lack spiritual depth and philosophical elegance, but they have an immediate and practical application to the shallow and inelegant but nonetheless worthy lives of the common folk.

The Path of Immanent Mastery

The thoughts of some among the Children of Heaven are clumsy and untutored. They foolishly believe that true inspiration and pure dragon powers can be attained through a hasty and crude approximation. The superior man comprehends their system's vanity. Our divine Emperor permits them to persist as a lesson in the folly of impatience.

A Personal View of Rathori Life

What My Uncle Told Me

Who are you?

I am Gaskor Biggowl, son of Armorthi of Greyknoll, descendant of Bariod Mother of Fifteen Kings, daughter of the line of Karringorth Spotted Bear, second son of the Black Bear.

Who are we?

We are the Greyknoll Clan of the Black Bear People.

What makes us great?

We are children of the Bear. We are the most courageous of all people alive. Nothing daunts us in war or peace. We are survivors, and keepers of the secrets of old. We are the protectors of Grandmother Earth.

Where do we live?

This is the Woodland of the Bear. It is the center of the world.

How do we live?

Three honorable ways exist for us to survive: hunting, trading, and raiding. We take whichever path offers us the most wealth and best advantage.

Our food is plentiful. We are hunters, trappers, and harvesters of the wild. In the lean season we eat rabbits and tree bark and whatever the mothers have stored in the dens. In the fat season we feast on salmon and apples, the five nuts, and the twelve grubs.

Our clothing is simple but finely crafted. These leather clothes have served the bear people well since Old Lady clothed us against the snow. If you are lucky you will see us all in our ceremonial robes in the ancestor dance. But my favorite cloak is the one of magic we wear when the dancing is good, the one which grows from my naked skin.

This tent will be your home for the next five years. That pack is all you own. We won't use it in the summer but we'll still carry it. Each winter we will come back here, to the den, to spread our hides before the mothers and tell our tales over the fires.

We hold good property. We own everything we carry here, and part of everything that the mothers keep.

What is important in my life?

When you were born the Blue Star rose, and your water-boiler gave you the timber rattlesnake, so they are important to you. Their signs were tattooed on your wrists at birth. You were lucky that the fletcher gave you one of the iron arrowheads as a tooth gift, for some day you may conquer that spirit and learn his magic.

Soon you will come to be an adult. After your initiatory spirit vision you will meet the ancestors. Maybe you can learn more magic from them. You showed me your running magic, and everyone knows the bluejay badge stops bleeding. Maybe you will qualify for magic like mine: this opossum rib cage holds a spirit who makes arrows bounce off of my skin; this pouch of eyeballs lets me see into the Spirit World; this carved stick can light a fire.

Marriage is an important part of life. It is a joyous occasion when men and women find spiritual harmony, good hunting, and many things to laugh about together. It is usually good while it lasts, and we think it is more and more incredible as it

lasts longer. Grandmother Garestal was married to her second husband for 47 years before he died.

Remember that you must be ready to teach your sister's cubs the way of our people. A father feeds and guards, but it is an uncle who teaches.

Death comes to all, for Trickster made it so that we all die. When the life force leaves our bodies we join the Ancestors, a powerful clan who live in the Den of Power Dreams. If we are fortunate and powerful our stay among them will be long. If not, then we will be reborn here as bears and Rathori again.

What is the difference between men and women?

We are the Hunters and they are the Keepers. The Mothers are the Keepers of the Life Force, the carriers of the river of life. We are the protectors and assistants to the Life Force, honored to be separated from it as men. They carry it, we keep its balance. Together men and women can achieve the balance required to preserve our Grandmother Earth from further harm.

Who rules us?

Gromavon Who Sees Special is our ruler. She guides our Den with the wisdom of a seer. When I outfought the Soldier of Gold three years ago, it was my strike that slew him, but Gromavon's rune carved into the spearhead which allowed me to strike. Once I saw her attach your own mother's severed arm. Your father came here because Gromavon sent him word it would be good luck to do so. You'd better pay attention whenever she speaks to you.

What makes a man great?

The number of followers marks a man's greatness. We follow only leaders who are greater than we are. You decide when you should follow, and when you should stand beside the leaders and speak to Gromavon or to face the angry weapons of foes who wish to kill you.

What is evil?

Remember our taboos. You must never do women's work unless you are walking the shaman's path. You must never cut the Grandmother's skin with a plow, nor bind beasts to work like a slave. You must never forget the secret of language or of fire, or else the bears will lose their status as rulers of animal-kind. You must never kill a creature without purpose, nor without saying the Great Prayer first, nor slaughter it without the Lesser Prayer. You must always attend the Sacred Time dances, or else the Sun will not rise and the world will end.

Beware of the vices that destroy a man. Eating food in secret is corrupt. Slaying a person of the Rathori People is wrong, even if they are of the black or blue bears. Looking at women's secrets is forbidden—you will be struck blind or lame, maybe torn to bits. Telling men's secrets to women is taboo: if lightning does not strike you down then your eyes will dim, your arm weaken, and brain worm spirits kill you slowly.

What is my lot in life?

We are men, born to assist the Life Force. In the old days, Old Man chose not to bear children. Don't believe what your mother said about women having babies alone—only the goddesses have babies without men.

There are many roads to advancement. We all strive to be great. Perhaps some day you will lead a band of men to war, to hunt bears or mammoths, or to the river city to trade.

Are there more people like us?

No people are as close to Grandmother as the Rathori, but there are others who share at least part of our sacred bond with her and our kinship with the animals. They can be found far and wide. You know of the reindeer people, the Uncolings, who live to the north, under the shadow of the Great Glacier, but there are others who live much further away. I have heard of boar people and wolf people to the south, and old Haznaral has said that in his spirit-free-flying dreams he traveled far, far to the east and saw even stranger folk, but he drinks too much mushroom ale to believe.

How do we deal with others?

The members of your family are your first concern. Live and die for the family and ancestors. Without them, we are lost like salmon without a river.

Other Rathori can be good friends. We love to see relatives. Every year we meet the Green Oak Clan and Greyrock Dance Clan at the high oaks at acorn time. This year we'll go see the people along the River of the Old Woman's Laughter. Many of the men from our clan married women from that area.

Be wary of foreigners, and don't make the mistake of thinking all foreigners are the same. Some are easier to understand and safer to deal with than others. The Uncolings are good, but they don't have much to trade except metal goods from the Third Eye Blue.

The foreigners who wear the gold are not to be trusted. There are those women in red, who worship the Red Moon, who come to the Salmon Run each fall—I don't trust them. The elves are our friends. They do not like to deal with outsiders but have often come among us. Once, our people and they had an alliance and we conquered many foes. Since then we have shared this forest as equals.

Who are our enemies?

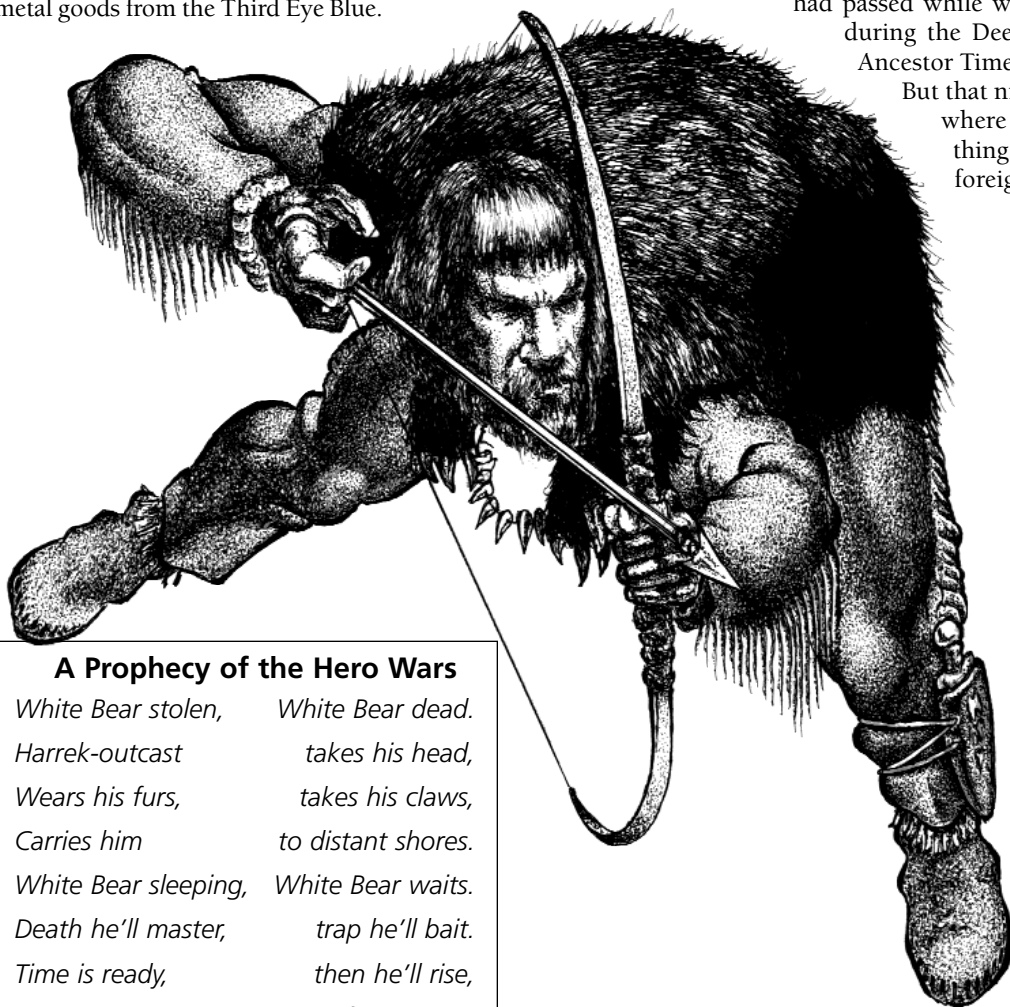
Trickster is our enemy. His troublesome acts robbed Grandmother Earth of her bounty and made the world a place populated by spirits of death, disease, devils, and such evil practices as sorcery, rending the earth with plows, and building cities.

Who are my spirits?

Rathor is our greatest spirit, the Great Bear, our Ancestor who dug the rivers, raised the mountains, and shaped the sky. His boon companions are our protectors: Agikoros the Fire, Silent Stalker, and Enimipol the Mother of Beasts. I think your arrow head will especially acquaint you with Silent Stalker, the hunting spirit. You are advised to sacrifice to Dog Brother, and if you are lucky then Gromavon will summon Harastos of the Salmon to teach you. Thanz, the Acorn Spirit, is one of our mainstays, and Burrowing Toad Mother is our healer. Bluben the nymph of the stream blesses us when we visit her.

What was the Deep Sleep?

Most people think that we slept through a terrible cursed time. When I woke the foreigners we met insisted that time had passed while we slept. I disbelieved—my dreams during the Deep Sleep were the same dreams of Ancestor Time we have every mid-winter festival. But that night the planets were not in the sky where they should have been, so something major changed, and I think that the foreigners are probably right.



A Prophecy of the Hero Wars

<i>White Bear stolen,</i>	<i>White Bear dead.</i>
<i>Harrek-outcast</i>	<i>takes his head,</i>
<i>Wears his furs,</i>	<i>takes his claws,</i>
<i>Carries him</i>	<i>to distant shores.</i>
<i>White Bear sleeping,</i>	<i>White Bear waits.</i>
<i>Death he'll master,</i>	<i>trap he'll bait.</i>
<i>Time is ready,</i>	<i>then he'll rise,</i>
<i>Gods his prey,</i>	<i>Life his prize.</i>

Secrets of the Invisible World

The Bear Shaman Speaks

Where did the world come from?

Korgatsu Earthmaker swam across the endless waters, seeking a place to rest. For ages she swam, sometimes meeting creatures who told of their own wanderings. At last she realized that there was no land, and she decided to make it. She called together her companions, and set to work.

Her First Four Companions were Turtle, from the South, whose wide shell was the platform they worked upon; Loon, from the North, who dived to the bottom and brought up mud; Otter, whose paws shaped the mud, and who slid through it to form rivers; and Swimming Eagle, who brought magic flints from the east to make the land hard. A star shined on them from Above, and a fish swam Below.

The five companions sang songs as they worked, and those are the songs we sing at Holy Time when the earth is renewed. We also sing songs to the Four Earth Powers (Bear, Lion, Wolf, and Weasel), the Powers of Above (Sun Eagle, Red Hawk, Dusk-flying Bat, and Winter Owl), and the Powers of Below (Whale, Mole, Toad, and Rattlesnake).

Where did I come from?

Earthmaker set to making the First People. They were all spirits who lived as equals in those days. Some of them were animals, who are ancestors of tribes and clans. Others were plants, stars, rivers, or even things that no longer seem alive to us today, such as the drum and cooking tripod. One of them was Old Man.

Old Man travelled about, a servant of the Life Force working to manifest creation to advantage. He was a friend and companion of Trickster, the animals spirits, and the powerful tools. Whatever he did, we must all now do, for that is the way of the world. All creatures have their place in the cosmic scheme, and Old Man's was to make people. He met many wonderful beings then, and had many children with them.

At first, everyone was confused, but then Rathor came. He taught people to dance and sing with the rhythms of nature. Tribes were made, speech was invented, and Trickster stole fire for mankind.

Why do we die?

Earthmaker once asked man if he wanted to live like a rock or die like a tree. Living like a rock meant that no one would have to die, but no one could grow or have children either. Old Man chose to be like a tree instead, and that is why we live, have children, die, and are reborn their children.

So Rathor came again and taught people a new dance, and everyone began to die. This was not a bad thing, but Bad Man fooled people into being afraid of death. They forgot part of the dance, and so they grew fearful. Now everyone who does not understand their part in the rhythm of the universe is afraid.

What happens after we die?

When you shed your body your spirit will be met by your spirit allies. They will guide you to the Other Side. They will take you to the place with the ancestors in the Invisible World that you have sought during your life. If your spirit is healthy you will be like a hero and a shaman, but if your spirit is unhealthy you will become like a rabbit that runs before the wolves.

Why am I here?

Earthmaker is infinite and mysterious, but through magical effort we can get glimpses of his magnificence. Those glimpses all say one thing: live! We are here to serve that command.

In the dance of your life you will put on many clothes, and take off many. First you put on the loincloth of adolescence, then the jerkin of adulthood, and finally the cloak of age that weighs men down. In your life you will take off the ignorance of childhood, the inexperience of youth, and the uncertainty of adulthood.

How do I do magic?

Magic is from the Invisible World, where spirits live. Spirits can teach us many charms to overcome our foes, help us to hunt, or make our lives easier. When you become a man, you will seek a spirit ally. One might find you soon, or it may take many years of searching until you find the spirit that has selected you. It might test you during that time, to make sure that you know the ways of our people and are worthy of its help.

I have heard of other powers. Can you tell me the truth about...

...Aldrya?

The Mistress of the Woods is a powerful and changeable goddess. She controls all of the woods and its spirits. If treated respectfully, she will usually ignore you and your work.

...Chaos?

Chaos is the cause of the world's wrongs. If not for Chaos, children would never get sick, no person would ever go hungry, and no one would die before their time. We wouldn't have to toil for a living, and berries would sprout all year long, but for Chaos.

...Gods?

Please, before you begin to list the gods you have heard of, let me tell you the greater truth about gods. Some gods, like Earthmaker, King of Above, or Silent Stalker, can be treated with by a shaman, but the others must not be trusted. They are great and immense spirits, but all seek after their own power. They do not cooperate, they control, and anyone who submits himself to their command, like the priests who worship the sun or storm, is a slave forever. They have lost Earthmaker.

...the Moon?

The Moon Goddess is typical of the gods of the world. She is self-seeking, and she made herself into an immortal at the expense of many others. Worse yet, she is mistress of Chaos and aids the evil of the world.

...the Ocean?

The brooding God of the Deeps is the greatest of the slave-makers. But he is subject to the power of King of Below, and because of that he hates all life on earth.

...Sorcerers?

Worse than voluntary slavery to selfish gods is the empty worship of raw Power. Sorcerers are heedless of nature and cause irreplaceable ruin. Their arts do not seem dangerous to them, but their spirits are like ashes. They have lost Earthmaker.

...the Storm God?

This violent and brutal god delights in upsetting the gentle flow of nature. His storms are capricious and unpredictable, and usually bring more ill than good.

...the Sun?

The sun god is King of Slaves; he even enslaved the other gods into his command. Only the lesser spirits, which he thought beneath his notice, have escaped the chains of his worship.

Spirits of the Rathori

Bad Man

This malignant spirit strives to bring trouble, misery, and woe to all living things. Bad Man broke contact between Rathor and the First People, and ever since he has striven to keep people from re forging their holy connections with the Invisible World. He is the enemy of Rathor and of all Life.

Chief Star, King of Above

This being is sometimes called Pole Star, for he is the only star who does not move. He rules the Sky World, where live creatures that are sometimes like, sometimes unlike those of Earth World. Chief Star is unreachable to us, but many of his subjects are well known. They can send spirits of wind, rain, sunshine, and starlight to shamans.

Earthmaker

The all-knowing maker of the world is sometimes called the Great Spirit. Omnipotent and all-encompassing, this entity is so immense that normal mortals find it hard to reach him. One time everyone knew Earthmaker intimately, but they forgot, and a great fear and horror took them. Since that time, all mortals strive to again reach Earthmaker, guided by their shamans.

The False God

This spirit appears and disappears often. It is a false trickster, capable of cruelty and stupidity, but not able to teach. It always appears in disguise or behind a mask, sometimes seemly, sometimes hideous enough to kill. It promises much, but delivers no magic.

First Four Companions

When Earthmaker created the world these creatures aided him. In reward, they are the overseers of the four directions, the elements, and many spirits.

Grandmother Earth

Ancient and immense, the mother of the Life Force touches and nourishes all her children. The rocks are her bones, and the dirt is her flesh, while plants and animals are her children, our brothers and sisters. She is so great that many people think she is a goddess, and they submit to her command. They would do as well with a shaman; better, because then their spirits would be their own, not hers.

Grasper, King of Below

This great power of darkness is sometimes called Deep Gulper or Eater, because weak and unwary spirits are taken by him and devoured after death. He lives beneath the floating earth, and from him comes the things that frighten mortals and make them forget their place in the world. He is unreachable, but his servants can be reached to send out darkness spirits, some spirits of the dead, and monsters. Anyone who submits to his command will lie in the realm of nightmares, and after death will be reborn as a troll.

Rathor

When everyone in the world was confused and afraid they could not tell themselves from their neighbors. No one knew how to speak to the Powers. Everyone forgot how to drum, dance, and sing in harmony with the world. Among these confused people came Rathor, who taught them what was necessary to live. He is the greatest spirit, for he teaches us all to bring our own powers alive. Without him we could never reach the Great Spirit. Without his children, we would not be here nor know our bear brothers: Irdag the Black Bear, Orenra the Blue Bear, and our own ancestor, Irgar the Grizzly.

Silent Stalker

This spirit teaches people the way to hunt, kill, and then return animals to the womb of Enimipol. He has many children, and everyone claims their hunter is the First Hunter. But like all the great powers, he cannot easily be reached except through his assistants, who are suitable for our needs.

Spider Woman

When the world was made, Spider Woman was one of the First People, meek and almost invisible. One time the world broke because no one danced, but Spider Woman cast her webs about the pieces and held them together. As a reward, she was given command of Nature, and now everyone now dances parts of her Spider Dance to keep the world alive.

Trickster

Trickster is troublesome even to friends, but you can find power in his devious ways. When Trickster shakes things and breaks things and changes his form, the world must respond somehow, and if you can understand the significance of his raucous noises you can learn from him. Just be careful.



A Personal View of Aldryami Life

What the Wood Priestess Told Me

Who are you?

I am born of Falamal's seed grown in Gata's loam. I am called Sweet Voice of the Alder, Wood Priestess of the Alder Grove of the River of the Rainbow Trout.

Who are we?

We are the chosen of Grower, the song of Aldrya. We are the Mreli, the Walking Ones of the grove, guardians and tenders of the life of Aldrya in this realm.

What makes us great?

We are the offspring of Aldrya. We are the keepers of the Cycle and the song.

Where do we live?

This is our realm: the great forest. Where the trees stand is our home.

How do we live?

We live in the bounty of Aldrya, Creatrix and Giver of Life. We are one with her, one in her, and one outside of her. She gives us everything, and takes us back to her seed when we are tired.

What is important to us?

The Forest is important—nothing else can match that. We live to maintain the wood and all things within its protection. Your life was given so you could protect the trees and growing things.

Who rules us?

The Council of Elders rules us. We have eight members who decide for us there: the Great Tree, the High King Elf, the Elder Sister, the Gardener, the Lightson, the Voice of Mother Earth, the Healer, and He We Name Not.

What makes an elf great?

To fulfill our destiny with Aldrya makes us great. We are born to learn, we wake and dance our lives, we sleep and know our Secrets, and we die to Be the secrets before we are born again.

What is evil?

Oblivion is evil, that which Takes without Giving.

What is my lot in life?

You shall grow to be a strong, lithe elf and join the Marching Aldryami to fight and care for our forest. You will learn to face the things that can destroy us, and will grow courage to fight them. You will enter into the dark secrets of killing for life and of living for death, the twin secrets of Bengara and Veratha that we learned at the Dawn.

What is the difference between males and females?

Females are the seed bearers who increase our race. Males are the pollen bearers, and are expendable.

How do we deal with others?

When you see one who is not of Aldrya, you should run if it frightens you, and send your emotions throughout the Song so that the wind whistles and the leaves flutter with your fear. This way you will contact us all, and we will send the courageous ones to investigate. If you do not feel fear you should hide and observe the Outsider, and when you have a clear image of it in your mind you should dash to your higher ups with the word, and they will send ambassadors to deal with it correctly.

Who are our enemies?

Chaos is our worst enemy, for it is Oblivion personified, the destruction of Potential. The undead are our enemy, for they are a twisted perversion of all we hold true. Dwarves, trolls, and flame are lesser foes, for they are the three faces of the Taker. Humans are our foes, for they have no respect for us or our kin.

Who are my deities?

Aldrya is paramount, for she is Creatrix and Preserver. From her we spring eternal. Falamal is our great father, the first plant. Eron, Halamalao, and Gata are our protectors and nurturers, the strong soils upon which we grow. Bengara and Veratha are the twins who came to us at the end of the Great Winter and restored the Cycle.



Facts for Young Elves

Wisdom from the Gardeners

Where did the world come from?

*First there was Potential,
all that ever was,
all that could be.*

*From it were born Grower and Taker,
together the Cycle,
life and death eternal.*

*From Grower came the Protectors,
Gata, Halamalao, Eron,
earth, light, sea.*

*Then Grower Became Falamal,
the First Tree,
who dwelled at the center.*

This is where the world came from.

Where do we come from?

*We are born of the Cycle,
Taken from the Taker,
Grown by the Grower.*

*We begin life as Falamal's fertile seed
in the rich field of Gata,
born into Seyotel once more.*

There is no beginning to existence, and no ending. Ever since Aldrya, plants have bred after their kind, and elves have bred after our kind. And so it shall be forever more.

Why do we die?

*Death fosters life.
Life ends in death.
Each is half of the same power.*

In the forest, at every instant, dead logs and leaves can be seen. But living plants can also be seen. So death, like life, is omnipresent. This is the Cycle.

What happens after we die?

*Trigora tends us.
We must learn to be unborn.
Then reborn.*

Our souls go to the secret holes of Trigora under the earth, where we sleep. We will stay there many years, preparing for our return to the Cycle.

Why are we here?

*The mind cannot fathom
what the heart knows.
Serve Aldrya.*

Without obedience to the forest, our souls and lives wither. We cannot explain this to outsiders, the not-children of Aldrya. But aid Aldrya we must. It is part of us just as sap is part of a tree.

How do we do magic?

*Listen to discover the fruits of your life.
Guardians of knowledge, your friends,
plant true wisdom into your brain at night.*

We learn the secrets of magic from our dreams, from Seyotel, the Song of Aldrya. The Spirits of the Great are all there, waiting, learning, teaching.

I have heard of other races. What is the truth about...

...Akem?

*A dead being whose followers
never realized he was gone.
They are jealous of Aldrya.*

Dwarves are the children of Stone: spawn of the Taker, mindlessly continuing their unceasing war against the forests. We hate them and war against them, but it is all as it should be.

...Ky Gor?

*Enemies in the dark,
born of Darkness,
sworn to kill us.*

Trolls are the Children of Darkness, the special enemies of Halamalao. They hunt us in winter and send armies against us in summer. They eat our trees and poison our spirits with black magic. We People of the Trees use our resources to kill them when possible, sending them back to their dark hells. Though they are our great enemies, they are descendants of the Taker, the foe of Oblivion, and a part of the Cycle.

...Pamalt?

*The Burner is our foe.
Bringer of war,
Destroyer of jungle.*

Pamalt is the ruler of the great southern desert, and so is the child of Kitapah the Flame, spawn of the Taker. Many turnings of the cycle ago he stopped the spread of Errinoru's New Forest and his people cheered our loss. But he is far from here, across the great waters, so you need not be frightened of him.

A Prophecy of the Hero Wars

*There shall come a new Age of the Taker,
When all that is shall be lost,
It shall be called the Age of Weakness.
The flames shall burn us from the north,
The rain shall drown us from the sky,
The ghost winds shall freeze us from beyond.
It shall be the Age of Strength,
For we shall grow stronger:
Loss is our only way to victory.
Remember the lost seeds who drifted far!
Remember the song that is never sung again!
For we shall find them again in our despair.*

I have heard of other powers. What is the truth about...

...Chaos?

*Evil Oblivion.
Not the Grower.
Not the Taker.*

Chaos is the Last Enemy. It entered the world when unbounded Growth cracked the world. It is the only foe that would destroy Aldrya forever.

...Magasta?

*Eron's kin.
half dead,
half alive.*

He was one of the fiercest fighters in the war against Oblivion, who stood by Eron bravely to the end. His children are friends to those elves who dwell in Eron's embrace.

...Orlanth?

*He carries our seeds far,
Until they are lost forever.
The violent bring violence.*

The Orlanth people are brutal and kill each other. They have no Song to join them together. When they are enemies, avoid them. When they are friends, do not trust them.

...Primitive Spirits?

*Helpless souls
who have lost their way,
never knowing their fate.*

The spirits can be friends or enemies, but they are always useful. Our shamans use them, especially the Plant Brothers, who recognize us as their kin.

...Sedenya?

*An abomination who kills us
without respect, without reason.
Oblivion reborn.*

The Lunar people speak of friendship, of a time when all beings can live together in happiness. But we recognize them as Oblivion reborn. Remember the burning of our forests. The Lunars may one day forget our enmity. Then they all will die.

...Sorcerers?

*Deluded forever.
Without song.
Doomed.*

The wizards of the west are only humans. Although they are often properly respectful to the People of the Trees, they have no knowledge of Aldrya. Though they do not pretend to such knowledge, they deny the Song.

...Yelm?

*Ancient Emperor of Dara Happa,
Corrupted by Oblivion.
Not our sun.*

There are some who claim he is our Halamalao, but this is not true. Halamalao is light and peace and sustenance, while Yelm is fire and strife and war. He is the sun god corrupted by Oblivion and now rises in the night sky as the bloody moon.

Sprouts of the Grower

Aldrya

*Mother of all life.
Falamal and Gata's seed.
The heart of our song.*

Without Aldrya, our lives would become formless and void. We would be no better than men, who know not their destination. We would be no better than trolls or dwarves, who are filled with hate. But we have Aldrya, and our souls have purpose.

Bengara

*Twin born in darkness.
Silent death sung out of life.
Gata cries, she strikes.*

Bengara is Veratha's twin, born at the end of the world. She gives unhappy elves an outlet for their fury. Honor them, for their lives are short and grim, and their service to Aldrya is great.

Eron

*Protector in dark.
Great ruler of the waters.
Calming, healing streams.*

Eron is the healing waters, father of the blue murthi, one of our three great comforters during the Great Winter. He is our healer, though he may never heal his own great wounds.

Falamal

*Father of us all,
whose death in the winter caused
all to Sleep again.*

Falamal is the Great Tree whose virility birthed all the elven races and whose wisdom led them until he returned to the Cycle. Those who cannot fight and struggle, but still serve, follow the ways of Falamal.

Gata

*Beautiful mother.
Fruitful and generous loam.
Loving protector.*

Gata is the earth, daughter of the Grower, mother to us mreli and to the green vronkali, one of our three great nurturers during the Great Winter. She is broken and sundered, but still gives to all alike: elf, human, tree, and robber dwarf.

Grower

*The ultimate source.
Great mother of the cycle.
All life in all life.*

The source of all Life in the world, which transformed itself and grew into Eron, Gata, and Halamalao, and then transformed itself again and became the seed that grew into Falamal.

Halamalao

*Protector above.
Unfailing Light in Darkness.
Warms us in winter.*

Halamalao is the sun of light and warmth, one of our three great protectors during the Great Winter. He is parent to the folemi, the white elves, now lost from this world. His warriors guard our sleeping groves in winter.

Land Goddesses

*Gata's lost fragments.
Each a princess, each tragic.
Never whole again.*

The goddesses of the land each bless their geography and the Great Trees know the name of their Princess. However, there is great sadness in their worship too, for each is so much less than Gata was before the Great Winter.

Seyotel

*Silent music.
The great song of Aldrya.
We all hear her tune.*

Whereas Aldrya is the mother of all Aldryami, Seyotel is our spirit, sung by the leaves and the tender limbs, by the mreli and vronkali, by the embyli and murthi, by the sprites and dryads, heard by all. She is our mind and our consciousness.

Taker

*The ultimate source.
Great father of the cycle.
All death in all death.*

The source of all death in the world, which destroyed itself to become Kitapah the Flame, Akem the Stone, and Ky Gor the Shadow, and then became the seed from which Trigora grew. Equal kin to the Grower, and equally respected.

Trigora

*Tender of the dead.
Destroyer of the unfit.
The Song's reflection.*

When we are Taken and reenter the Cycle we leave behind the song of Aldrya and instead become part of Trigora. She is the Taker born within this world, and all know her dark, gray caverns. She is fearsome, but she is necessary. All of us have visited her many times, and will visit her many more times.

Veratha

*Twin born out of hope.
Youthful life, sung out of death.
The virgin of Spring.*

We who sleep all winter are awakened each spring by Veratha's touch. She is life from death, Bengara's twin, born at the end of the world. Young children sing and dance to her each spring. She is the most harmless and innocent of all. No evil is in her.

Vronkal

*Ancient defender of the Forest.
Hero who saved light from dark.
Still our Protector.*

He is the Protector who led a ragged band of survivors through the Great Winter. We are honored to be able to help him today by defending the woods from insects, fire, blight, or trolls.



A Personal View of Uz Life

What the Great One Told Me

Who are you?

I am your mother, source of your being and ruler of your life. You must call me Great One when you address me, or I will devour your tender parts and make you wait to grow them again.

Great One, who are we?

We are uzko of the Ergnabs Clan, daughters of mighty Ergnabs who came into Hurtplace with Gore and Gash, and who have wandered free since that age.

Great One, what makes us great?

We are the free trolls, bearers of uzko and eaters of foes. No one has contained us, no one has defeated us, and no one can track us for more than an hour.

Great One, where do we live?

We live in this, our land where Ergnabs told us to live in the God Time. We call this Ergnabs' Land because of that.

Great One, how do we live?

We are hunters and eaters, afraid of nothing and no one. In the friendly night we stalk whatever we choose, and during the Hurt Time we hide unseen from the Bright Eye and his foul children.

Great One, what is important in my life?

To survive is the first importance, and to bear healthy uzko is second.

Great One, who rules us?

I do, in the name of the Great and Magnificent Kyger Litor.

Great One, what makes a troll great?

Bearing healthy uzko makes us great. Strength and fortitude make us great, a willingness to do what we must to survive. Fearsomeness lets the others in the world know our greatness.

Great One, what is evil?

Everything that has harmed us is evil. Light is evil. Chaos is evil. Iron is evil. Infertility is evil. Barrenness is evil. Hunger is evil.

Great One, what is my lot in life?

To bear children is your lot, and may Kyger Litor bless them to be of us. To protect the young is your lot, and may Karrg guide your arm in doing so. To feed the young is your lot, and may Zong guide your instincts to do so. To obey your mother is your lot, and may Korasting guide you to do so.

Great One, what is the difference between males and females?

We females are the heart and the body of our race. We are made in the likeness of Kyger Litor and we are the carriers of the life force. The world revolves around us. Males are here to serve us.

Great One, how do we deal with others?

We eat them all, if we can. Everything small and helpless is our food. Things weaker than us were sent here by Kyger Litor to feed us. But evil has weakened our race and strengthened others so that some of them have grown strong. We must hide from the stronger ones, and wait until their internal decay weakens them too. If you see humans, or dwarves, or elves, come to me and I will deal with them.

Great One, who are our enemies?

All things with intelligence are our foes, for they have worked to weaken us. Chaos is first, for it robbed us of our children and our rightful place in dominating the world. Dwarves are second, for they would take our living places and have made evil iron to hurt us. Humans are next because they multiply so quickly, and have taken the best hunting grounds for themselves.

Great One, are elves not our enemies?

Elves are not our enemies, for they make our food grow quickly and in plenty, and they themselves are such a fine foodstuff.

Great One, who are the great spirits?

Kyger Litor is the most important, for she is the source of our lives and our ways, and it is she who will save us in time of need. The others are numberless: Karrg is important, the son of Kyger Litor who teaches the menfolk to fight. Zong is the hunter who feeds us. Xentha carries the Old World to us each night and drives away the evil Sun. Dehore is the one who sends us spirits to make us strong. Boztakang is the one who destroys Chaos. Hombobobom is the one who reminds us of the Dance of the World. Jakaboom is the one who protects us from evil spirits.



Dancing in the Shadows

Tales of the Night Hag

Where did the world come from?

The Dark has always existed. Once, it spawned seas, the cursed heavens, and the harsh surface where we now live. Someday it will swallow everything back into itself. And we and the Dark will go on forever.

Where do we come from?

Once we all lived in the harmony of Wonderhome, our womb-place. The burning horror of Death drove us out to *komor*: Hurt-place, the surface world. Now we struggle in agony to survive.

Why do we die?

Death is the natural state of the universe. Our spirits are alive, and keep us alive. We must be grateful to have a chance at all. But we know that all life must end someday. Nakala created death to return Kyger Litor's lost children to her.

What happens after we die?

Fearsome death is, yet it is the only return to the Underworld. When we die, our spirits meet with Kyger Litor in Hell.

Why are we here?

We are here to serve our masters, to be served by our slaves, and to feast upon our enemies. Life prepares for death, and we send our foes to Hell to be food for Kyger Litor and the ancestresses.

How do we do magic?

All power comes from the shadows. Our spirits and gods know all the secrets of Night and Darkness, and so we have the most powerful magic in the world. Our Mothers know secrets that would send members of other races screaming into madness. Our gods do deeds that would blast the souls of lesser deities. And our home, the Dark, has secrets of ultimate power that have never been revealed.

I have heard of other races. Tell me the truth about...

...Aldrya?

This is a good food goddess. Her children can be annoying to the point of death, but they are well worth the killing and eating.

...Mostal?

This is another good food god. Some of his children are immobile stone, and others, called dwarvess, can move around. They rarely come aboveground and are often clad in poison metal, but they are the tastiest of all. The sweetest meats are the dearest.

I have heard of other powers. Tell me the truth about...

...Chaos?

When we were forced out of Wonderhome to grim *komor*, Arrquong sent Chaos to rob us of even the miserable lands we had left. But we fought it, killed it, and ate it. Now Chaos is driven into the hinterland. They are the foe from Below and Inside.

...the Moon?

She consorts with vile gods who blasted our race with curses. She brings light where no light should be. Yet she tempers the harsh light of the Enemy and controls the monsters of Chaos. We cannot yet say whether her rise has been for ill or well.

...Sorcerers?

These humans from the lands where the Bright Eye dies each day follow a burdensome religion. They are troubled with castes, strange rituals, and a plethora of weak saints. Yet their worthless god gives no good magic. He is "invisible" only to eyesight, but not to us. Arkat Kortagi came from their land and pillaged their religion's secrets for us to use.

...Spirits?

Some spirits are broken parts of dead gods. The most powerful and useful come from the source of all magic—the Darkness. Other spirits are the souls of those who have died—our ancestors. Our shamans know how to deal with all types of spirits.

...Storm Gods?

These human gods battled us when we came to *komor*. When they could not win, one called Orlanth fled to the Underworld, seeking Death to wield against us. When he returned with the Enemy, we were stronger and could endure its weakened light. He and his worshippers fight us still. We have faced far grimmer foes than them, and we still survive.

...the Sun?

The Bright Eye harms but cannot kill. He forced us out of Wonderhome and crippled our ancestresses. When we fled to *komor*, he followed us to persecute us. But now he flees around the universe, pursued by Xentha. His sons have been eaten and broken by us. And Subere has shown us secret places in Hell untouched by the burning presence of this foe from Above and Outside.

...Water Gods?

The gods of the oceans are old, and they hide many mysteries. But their greatest mysteries are from the darkness, oldest of all.

Troll Deities

Kyger Litor, Greatest Mother

Kyger Litor is our greatest mother, and she has given us much. Her secret magic protects us, gives us power, and cripples our enemies. We are her children, and we love her.

Kyger Litor has suffered much. The Dead Sun burned her and drove her from Wonderhome. Chaos gods like Gbaji maimed her and crippled her children. Here in *komor*, enemies battle us desperately and persistently.

We are strong, and feast on our foes. Gbaji is dead, and we have killed much Chaos. The Sun hides from us each night and each winter, when we roam the earth in might. We bless Kyger Litor for this.

We give our troll children Kyger Litor's blessing. We kill, fight, work, and live for her and our other ancestresses, her servants. We give her sacrifices and dances, precious gifts. She is our greatest mother, and we must do her deeds all our lives.

The Seven Sacred Ancestresses

We worship Kyger Litor through her great children, the Seven Sacred Ancestresses. They teach us how to live, how to work, how to fight, and how to kill.

Boztakang the Chaos-Eater slew Arrquong, the first Chaos god, and through him we devour Chaos wherever we find it.

Hombobobom the Beater of Rhythm made the first drum, and we love her for her gift of music.

Jakaboom the Dancer in Shadows was the first shaman, and she teaches us how to face the spirits.

Jeset the Boatman sails the river Adzurana in *komor* and the Underworld. His magic help dead uz find Kyger Litor in Hell.

Karrg the Good Son is what a male uz should be: loyal and protective of his mother. Our warriors worship him.

Korasting the Fertile Mother is Kyger Litor's Womb, and through her loins sprang all the many uz. We worship her to have strong daughters.

Vaneekara the Hurler is the good daughter, what a female uz should be. She made the first sling, and her secrets help us bedevil our foes from a distance.

We worship other ancestors as well, those who founded our lands, began our tribes, and discovered special magic for us. Each land has its own heroes, but ours are the greatest.

Argan Argar, God of Surface Darkness

When we came to *komor*, everything was strange and we made many mistakes. Then came Argan Argar. He showed us the correct ways of surface life. He taught us our enemies' languages and ways. And he conquered fire gods and enslaved them for our benefit. His son, Ezkankekko, was our greatest ruler.

Arkat Kortagi, Killer of Gbaji, Knower of Sorcery

This is the cleverest of all trolls. He fooled humans, elves, and dwarves, and stole their most precious secrets for our use. They are still being fooled by him.

Dehore, Source of Shades

There are many types of darkness spirits, shadows, and shades. All are part of Dehore. Our shamans know Dehore well, and so we can command all the beings of darkness, too.

Gorakiki, Mother of Insects

Gorakiki spawned all the many types of insects in the universe. Some of her children are food, but others are powerful in their own right. Some of our warriors ride and fly her children into battle. She mated with some of our ancestors, too, and their descendants walk among us still.

Himile, Source of Cold

Winter is our friend. We may walk openly, for there are none that dare hurt us or make us afraid. Himile's cold rushes down from his palace in the north. The weak gods of summer flee him and the hollri ice demons. Our enemies and our food hide away, paralyzed with fear of us and Himile.

Subere, Hell Darkness

When the Death Sun came long ago, its unendurable brightness drove us and our spirits from Wonderhome. Its fiery rays burnt and slew many inhabitants of the Underworld. But many creatures found refuge in Subere. She still dwells in Hell, the only one never tainted or blasted by the Enemy's unholy light.

Xentha, Goddess of Night

Half the universe is ruled by Kyger Litor, and Xentha covers the world for her in a veil of dark. Her shadows and children, such as Argan Argar, cover the world and make it safe for us. She brings us Night, ever chasing the Sun out of the sky.

Xiola Umbar, Mistress of the Dark Deep Within.

Xiola Umbar is the weakest of our gods. The most inferior and helpless entities seek refuge in her. But she has healing powers that can help even the mightiest Zorak Zoran berserk, and which we all value. She is our strong comforter, precious to us.

Zong, Stalker of Prey

Zong is the patron of our hunters. He taught us how to hunt food in *komor*, from the tiniest gnat to the mightiest dinosaur. He is not the most powerful of our spirits, but he is one of the most important.

Zorak Zoran, Conqueror of All

Zorak Zoran is the strongest of our gods. Only the mightiest warriors can worship him and survive the battle frenzy he grants. But, though he kills Chaos and our enemies, he sometimes also kills trolls. He breaks many taboos, such as creating foul zombies and using fire. He is dangerous to both our foes and us, and you would be wise to avoid him.



An Impersonal View of Mostali Life

What the Foreman Told Me

Tell me who you are

I am Captain Iraskalobbi, commander of the Second Expeditionary Force of the Nidan Decamony.

Tell me who we are.

We are the Second Expeditionary Force of the Nidan Decamony. We are the military force of dwarfdom. We are the workers in iron, the fighters and defenders who enter the dangerous above to kill for the betterment of the Machine.

Tell me what makes us great.

We are Iron Dwarves, the most powerful of all dwarves. We are the moving parts of the Doomsday Machine. Our task is to kill. We are the best killers in the world.

Tell me where we live.

Between work periods, we live in the Second Barracks, located in Level 1, section 24020-12 of Upper Mount Nida.

Tell me how we live.

Perfectly, or not at all.

Tell me what is important in my life.

Follow orders. Work without mercy or fault. Perfect yourself so that by eliminating impurities and factory-flaws within yourself you can become an iron diamondwarf.

Tell me who rules us.

You shall obey me. I obey the Control Officer, who gets his orders from Iron Diamond Nine, who follows the directives of the Decamony. The Decamony are the operators of the Cosmic Machine and they govern us all according to Plan.

Tell me what makes a dwarf great.

To follow orders without question, to perfect his skills, and to live forever in the greater glory of the Machine.

Tell me what is evil.

All that is not part of the Plan is evil.

Tell me what my lot in life is.

You were cast in iron to serve the Machine. Your fate is to use weapons to execute the will of the Maker. Nothing else matters.

Tell me how we deal with others.

We are Iron Dwarves. With sword and spear, with missiles and bombs—that is how we deal with others.

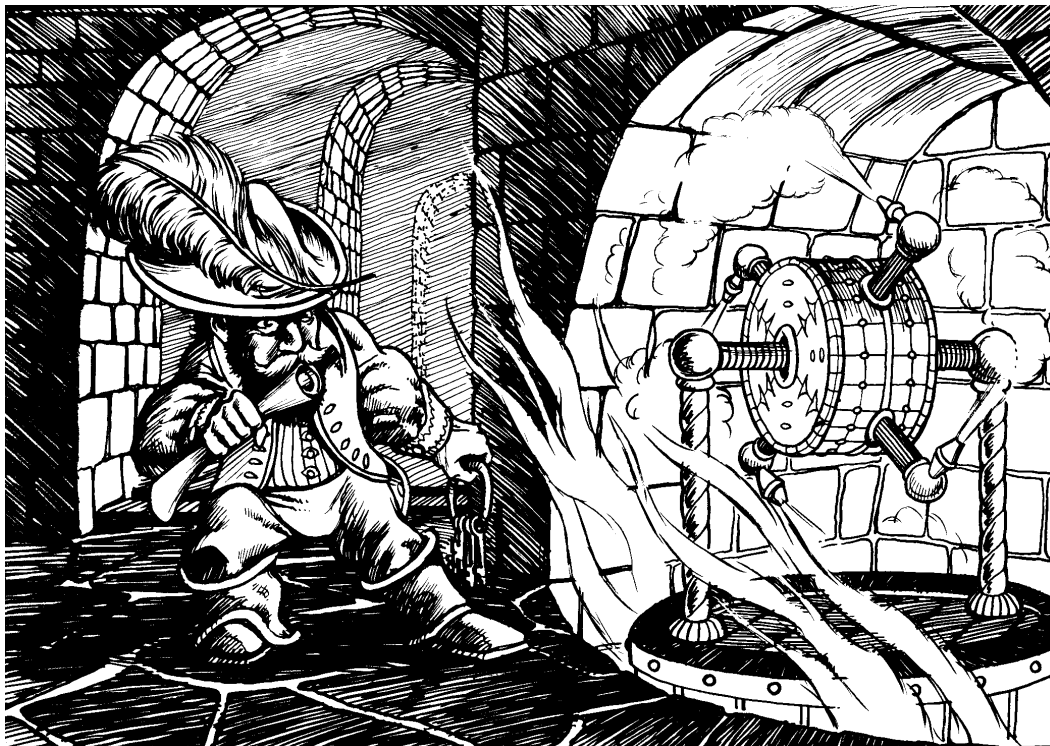
Tell me who our enemies are.

Everyone is our enemy who is not a dwarf, or who is not dwarf-made, or who is not a slave of the dwarves and the Machine. There are many.

Tell me what there is to do around here.

You will stand guard with vigilance, charge into the fray, and take the lives of our enemies. On your off time we care not what you do, as long as you wander not from the sound of the alarm and report any infraction of regulations to me.

However, many of us see no virtue in this “wasted time” and we use it to develop our skills. Rock Dwarves might carve their personal niches into decorative patterns, for example, but I spend this time training. I once spent more than 800 time-units perfecting ricochet shots with my crossbow.



Instructions to New Workers

The Gold Dwarf's Words

Tell me where the world came from.

In the beginning was the Machine, and the Machine was in accordance with the Plan. The Machine built everything. Trolls, elves, and winds created entropy and broke the Machine. We must work until the Machine is repaired. Then the old world shall be restored. This is all you need to know.

Tell me where we came from.

You were made like other tools. Like the World Machine itself. All true life comes thus.

Tell me about entropy.

Entropy causes death. Death is abnormal. Dwarves in working order are immune to entropy and do not die. While you and I fulfill our appointed tasks, we shall live. Only non-dwarves and broken dwarves die. Their bodies recycle in the cosmic currents of the World Machine. Their personalities disintegrate. Their essences dissolve into energy fields.

Tell me why we are here.

We repair the World Machine. All our work, all our spells, all our tools, are for this task.

Tell me how we do magic.

Our magic follows the laws of the old world. Our labor fuels it. Our bodies are its focus. We learn the spells we need. You shall learn the spells you need. They are enumerated in your operating instructions.

I have heard of other powers. Tell me the truth about...

...Chaos.

Chaos is a force of cosmic destruction. It comes from outside the Machine. So we must defend against it, not attempt to repair it.

...the Moon.

The rise of the Red Moon was scheduled long ago. It proves that the World Machine is being repaired according to the Plan.

...Orlanth.

This bad wind and its minions led the attack on the Machine. They broke it once. They would break it again. We shall never give them that chance. When the Machine is finished, Orlanth shall be kept firmly under control.

...Pamalt.

Pamalt is a being of the southern continent. It does not interfere in our affairs. Ignore it.

...Spirits.

There are many fragments of the old world left behind. Most are broken pieces of the World Machine, still mindlessly trying to fulfill their purpose. They are best ignored. When the Machine is completed, they shall be recycled.

...the Sun.

The Sun's rise at the Dawn proves that the World Machine is coming together. The Sun is one part of the world that still works properly and obediently.

...Wizards.

These humans work magic based on the old laws. But they delude themselves with lies about an afterlife. Like all beings, they find only oblivion after death.

I have heard of other races. Tell me the truth about...

...Aldrya.

Aldrya is a mutation, a travesty of true life. It is the principle of bad growth. In the old world, growth provided raw material for the Machine to refine. Now growth is evil. Would a tin of food be improved if something grew in it? When the Machine is repaired, the now-cancerous principle of growth shall be restored to its original purpose.

...Kyger Litor.

Kyger Litor is the source of trolls, foul monsters from the Dustbin. They kill our laborers. They spill vats of potions. They shatter our Machines. They destroy creations that took eons of toil to make. One day the Machine shall be repaired. Then trolls shall be imprisoned in the Dustbin or made extinct.

...Magasta.

The deep water has little to do with us. Its mermen do not assist us. Neither are they important. Magasta's purpose is to maintain the great ocean currents of the Machine. It does this admirably.

Dwarf Models

There are nine distinct dwarf models, each named after a particular mineral, one of the Nine Ancient Minerals. Above these nine are the diamondwarves, who rule dwarfdom.

Rock Dwarves

They mine, quarry, dress, and build with stone. They are the architects and sculptors of dwarf society and build cities and laboratories. They work in cement as well as stone.

Lead Dwarves

They invented plumbing, and later glassblowing. They work closely with the Quicksilver dwarves. Lead dwarves also specialize in making seals and wards to prevent entrance or to block off forbidden areas.

Quicksilver Dwarves

They know the art of transmutation and the science of alchemy. They brew terrible compounds in their fuming laboratories, and know the secrets of gunpowder, medicine, and all forms of vitriol and potions. They also make dwarf food. Although they use magic, they specialize in manipulating physical elements.

Copper Dwarves

They make tools, containers, and some weapons. The original Copper Mostali created the world's first coinage—clacks. One of their tasks is to manufacture special magical conduits, which purvey energy to all the parts of a dwarf factory.

Tin Dwarves

They make tools and containers, and summon those most useful creatures, gnomes. They create semi-living constructs such as jolanti and nilmergs, which work for us in specialized tasks, hard labor, or harsh environments. Tin dwarves also manufacture replacement limbs and organs for crippled dwarves, and the cans that store our food.

Brass Dwarves

They are alloyists and metallurgists, creating new metals from the combination of old ones. They are also in charge of heating the forges and keeping the necessary heat channeled to appropriate spots and at the correct temperature for the job at hand.

Silver Dwarves

They are enchanters and sorcerers. All dwarves learn sorcery appropriate to their model, but the Silver Dwarves specialize in working with magic power. Some construct great enchantments taking centuries to complete, such as the Red Moon that so recently rose into the sky.

Gold Dwarves

They are teachers, and maintain the continuity of dwarf society through correct education and indoctrination. They keep the lore of the dwarves, and represent the mind of the Machine.

Iron Dwarves

The blacksmiths of dwarfdom, devoted to the art and science of war. They forge weapons and armor, and learn how to use the tools of war.

Diamondwarves

Diamond is the tenth mineral. The diamondwarves have reached perfection in their craft. They are the pinnacle of dwarfdom. Each model has its own diamondwarves, thus there are iron diamondwarves, gold diamondwarves, and so forth.

Malfunctions

We must work hard and obey orders or we risk contamination by alien ideas and customs. Most contaminated dwarves have fractured essences and must be recycled. Some are allowed to continue to operate so long as they do not spread the taint. This is according to Plan.

Individualism

The oldest of the malfunctions. Some dwarves say that each must seek his own path. They are wrong. Would a hammer be useful if it changed itself, if it grew a pulsating brain? These broken dwarves destroy their own usefulness. They harm the Plan thereby.

Octamonism

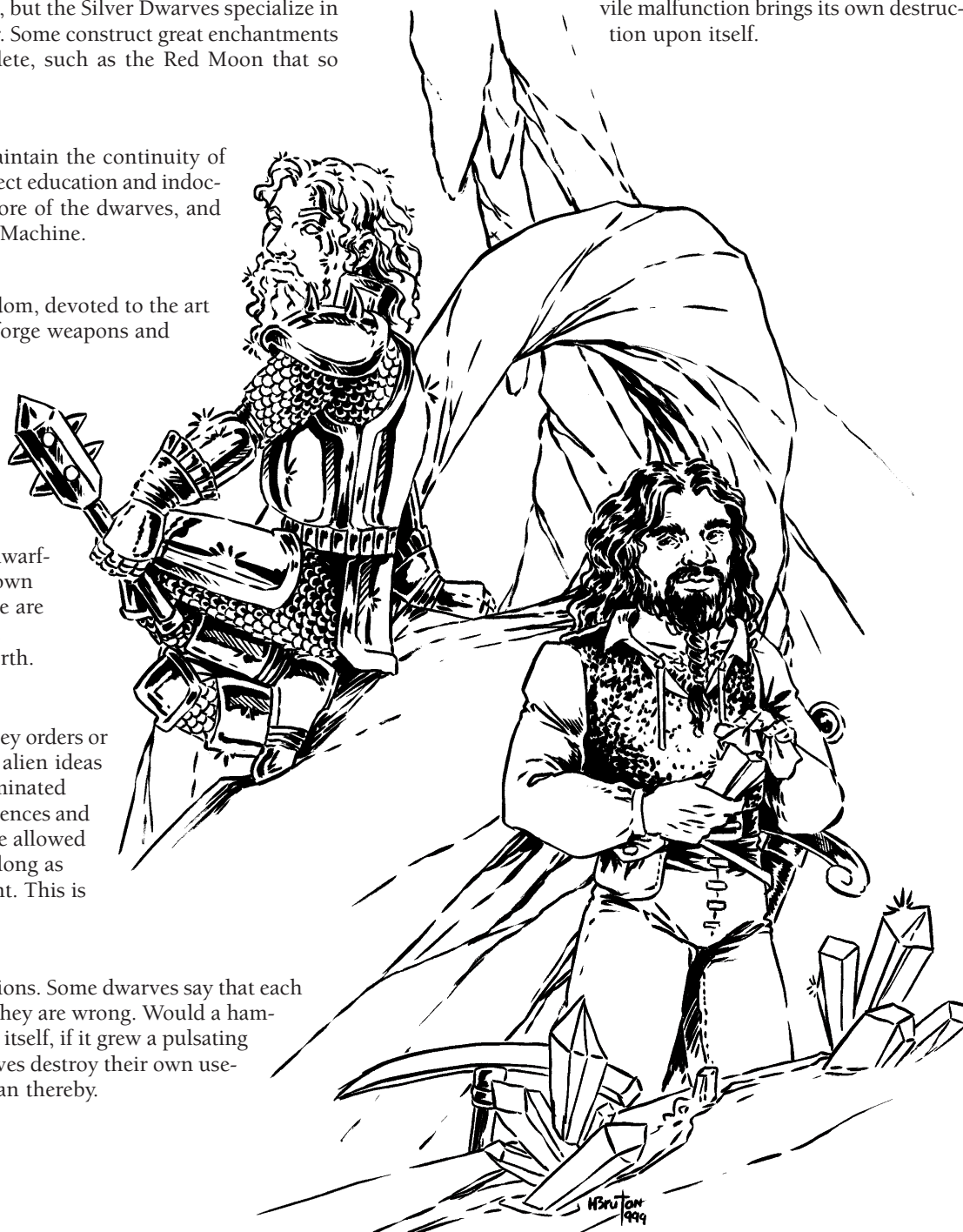
Some conservatives believe the invention of Iron and Diamond was evil. They deny their own creation. They seek to halt our progress on the World Machine.

Openhandism

This malfunction is one of the most dangerous. These dwarves claim that outsiders can and should be allowed access to our secret treasures. They say the benefit of such dealing outweighs the danger. They are fools. What can the surface world offer to surpass our secrets?

Vegetarianism

This belief is so far confined to Pamaltela. These dwarves are infected by the cancerous principle of Growth. They actually produce food by breeding plants. This vile malfunction brings its own destruction upon itself.



A Personal View of Ludoch Life

What the Storyteller Told Me

Who are you?

I am Olah Ealash, daughter of Ahaela Esiash. I am of the Green Damsel family of the Eacheshia Eeasi pod, which two-legs call the Scarlet Crown Coral Clan. I am an *oeluro*, one of those who speaks to the gods and tells their stories to the pod.

Who are we?

We are the Eelaishviaru, the Guardians of the Sacred Amethyst Sea Anemone. We are the descendants of Diendimos, son of Mirintha the Nymph and Phargon the Founder. We are the children of Mother Ocean.

What makes us great?

We are the offspring of Triolina. We are the keepers of the Life of the Ocean, part of the never-ending Current of Life. It begins with the smallest ripples of the newborns through the surges and turbulence of adults to the churning depths of death. We do not bind ourselves with needless rules or separate ourselves from the currents of Mother Ocean. We are strong of both mind and body, we know what is right, and that is what makes us the greatest of the kindreds. The secrets of the Sacred Amethyst Sea Anemone make us greater than any other ludoch tribes.

Where do we live?

This is our realm: we live in the never-ending ebb and flow of Father Ocean. Where the waters flow is our home. We live in Eashailaseaool, which the two-legs call Mournsea.

How do we live?

We live on the bounty of Triolina, Mother and Giver of Life. We are one with her, one inside of her. She gives us everything we need, and she takes us back to become one again with the One Waters when we die. We follow the surging rhythm of the tides and the swirling cadence of the currents in our search for the bounty of Triolina.

We live in family pods and follow the seasons, as we have always done. We herd fish, gather crabs and shellfish from where the waves lap, track the lobster marches, and harvest kelp fronds. Sometimes young bachelors form their own pods and go exploring or hunt dangerous monsters in the depths. They are both foolish and brave, or are renegades from our peaceful life.

We follow the ways Shoanariis taught us after his father, great Magasta, left the currents. We are all hunters, and kill many different animals for our food. Soon, when you are adult, you will hunt on your own instead of with a guide.

When you were very young you swam with your mother and never left her side. Your brothers and sisters swam nearby until the age of seven, after which they swam with a nursery pod and were cared for by an aunt while their mothers fed. When you reached the right age you joined the mixed swim, which is where you live today, yet like all good children you and your mother keep regular contact.

What is important in my life?

The Ocean is important like nothing else in your life. We all live to maintain Mother Ocean and all creatures and plants within her protection. She gave you life so you could protect her children.

You were born during the fan-coral spawning, and bear the mark of Hiyoei, the fan-coral. When you are older, you will find that the fan-coral will guide you and allow you to eat its eggs for food.

At the next Great Surging, you will undergo the initiation rites. Once you have done this, the ancestors will know you for an equal, and we will know you are ready to take your place as an adult. You will become part of our waters in the worship of the Great Magasta. When all know your worth, you will court a female from another pod.





What is the difference between males and females?

The main difference, of course, is physical. You have already had much pleasure in those physical differences with the young females of other pods, so I need not speak further on that matter.

Females are the nurturers, who carry children within the womb and suckle young; they are one with the cycles of Triolina. This gives them a sacred bond with Mother Ocean and her bounty. Males are fine hunters and brave warriors; they protect the females and our waters. They find new secrets in our waters and new places for worshipping Mother Ocean, they command the two-legs to give us Dry Food, and they fight the horrible sea trolls.

Who rules us?

The Shoal rules us. Heiye Heiyii is the leader of us all. He is guided by the will of great Magasta. We all owe our lives and deaths to Magasta the Churner. He is the moving force of life in the waters and made the great whirlpool in the center of the world to destroy the Stagnation.

Oolanate is the Natea of the great pod of the Choralinthor ludoch. She sends forth her representatives to move amongst the two-legs, who serve her. Her people live a sedentary lifestyle in the peaceful sea. Some even have permanent sleeping-places in the city they call Deeper! We are not part of this great pod, but we respect Oolanate, for she serves Mother Ocean.

What makes someone great?

Obedience to the words of your mother and father, the words of Heiye Heiyii, and the ways of Triolina makes you great. To fulfill our destiny with Mother Ocean makes us great. We are born to serve her, we swim our lives in her currents, we hunt in her reefs and open waters, and we die to be one with her currents.

What is evil?

The stagnation of the waters is evil. The Storm Gods of the Far World are evil, for they stole our gods to be their slaves. Two-leg fishermen who don't follow the proper rituals, ships that spew things into our realm that is not dry food, these are evil. You and your friends whisper among yourselves that sharks are evil. They are not, for even these dangerous fish are the children of Mother Ocean.

What is my lot in life?

You can spend your days right now in games of breaching, somersaulting, flipper slapping, wave surfing, twisting, turning, and swimming upside down. The most trusted young like you help to gather food and herd fish, and your sisters even care for the infants.

You will grow to be a strong ludoch and join one of the many pods to fight and care for the clan and Mother Ocean. You will learn to face the things that can destroy us and grow courage to fight the things that are not-ocean. You will understand the way of Magasta.

How do we deal with others?

When you see an outsider you should swim away and find us, calling out so that the current ripples and the fish flit with your fears. This way you will contact the Watchers and they will investigate. Even if you do not feel fear you should not hide and observe the outsider, for you are not old enough to make such decisions. Swim quickly to the adults, and they will send an oeluro like me to deal with it correctly.

Who are our enemies?

The vicious sea trolls are our most dangerous enemy, for they lurk in the kelp forests to ambush unsuspecting gatherers. Two-leg fishermen can be enemies, too, when they steal our fish. Dry folk can be enemies when they send out ships to hunt our dolphin friends, or when their hulls break the delicate corals.

Those who break the laws of the sea and defile the bounty of Triolina or disturb the creatures of Tholaina are our enemies. In our memories one among them, Pharaoh, defiled our realm and rose to claim rule over the people of the Choralinthor. If we had been stronger we would have done more to resist him, but even so we always remained true to our own leaders and to Mother Ocean.

Who are the kindreds?

All creatures of the seas are children of Mother Ocean, but some are closer to us than others. Although we have a great friendship with the dolphins and porpoises, we are not related to them as the foolish two-legs think. However, though we look different in many ways, we are kin to the ouori and hreekeen, for we are all together one of the great kindreds of the merhendssh, the merfolk. We all descend from the same founder, though he took a different shape and name when he sired each of us.

There are other kindreds, and they also come from Phargon and Mirintha, but they are not like us. The fish-like malasps, ysabbau, and gnydron hunt us for food. You should beware of them, and hide or flee if you see them.

Who do we worship?

We worship the Ancestors, who gave us life: Mirintha, Phargon, and Diendimos. We worship the Currents, who give us life: great Rozgali, peaceful Choralinthor, Eashailaseaool of the Growing Reef. We worship the Triarchs, who rule the oceans so we might live: Endaralath the Great Manthi and Ermanthver the Great Natea. But our greatest reverence is reserved for Triolina and Magasta, for they are Mother Ocean and Father Ocean. They give us all, and we could not live without them and their children: bountiful Tholaina, Fanadoimonora the Sacred Amethyst Sea Anemone, skillful Shoanariis, and dark Wachaza.

A Prophecy of the Hero Wars

*Once was water, dark and bottomless,
primal spawn-place and primal sea.*

Current of Life, flow and birth me!

*Land-growth irrupted, driving back the waves,
harsh and jagged scales of lifeless rock tearing
Mother Ocean's water-womb.*

Current of Life, flow and lift me!

*Father Ocean batters and rages, mighty yet impotent,
Land-growth squats unmoved and unliving.*

Current of Life, flow and save me!

*Neither Father nor Mother, born of both yet
spawned by neither, the New Ocean rolls,
unstoppable and unforgiving from the six sides,
and Land-growth is swamped and shattered,
drowned and gone.*

Current of Life, flow and take me!

Inner Knowledge of the Sea Gods

The Voice of the Deep

Where did the world come from?

In the beginning, the whole world was empty, dry, and motionless. No fish swam, no coral grew, and no hard krill drilled the depths. In that place was Zaramaka, the Source of Waters, the Deep from which flows all life. Zaramaka moved, and from within that Great Elder came Sramake, Framanthe, and Daliath. First Ocean moved once more, and the Elder Three met and mingled, as the waters of a river mingle with those of the sea, washing salt inland or silt far out to sea.

Where did I come from?

Triolina flows from Daliath and Sramake, who flow from Zaramaka. She is the Mother of Life, and from her stem all the creatures of the waters. Two of her children flowed together in the warm eastern waters to make our race: Mirintha, Gentle Mother, and Phargon, Son of Man. From the Mother and Father were born the tritons, terrible and powerful beings of the deep.

All was well in the waters with our ancestors until the coming of Dez. Dez and the other Dry Gods rejected their place in the currents of the world, and some of them attacked the waters that bore them. They kidnapped, seduced, or raped the niads, and from those acts of deceit and violence we were born, the merhendssh, children of the waters doomed by the part of us that comes from the Far World.

Why do we die?

When the world was perfect, everyone was content. As the waters and the world grew ever larger, encompassing all life, the Dry Gods grew jealous and thought that only they should be happy. They murdered Seolinthur, Father of Life, and the waters ceased to expand. This began a period of warfare that ended with the wounding of Bab, the Food Goddess. She was only saved from destruction by Magasta, who sacrificed everything so that the Waters could live.

Since then, the tides of eternity sweep our ranks, and the wisdom of Magasta preserves us. Fearful death is, yet it is the only choice set against the nothingness of stagnation.

What happens after we die?

There is nothing for us after death. When you are old, you will be called by Mother Ocean, and you will sink into her depths to become part of the Eternal Swell. Dying, your body and spirit will be dissolved by Magasta's Pool before they attain the unknowable Primal Waters. Eventually, your life source will be recycled from that secret place, and you will be born again in the Inner Sea as something new. Thus do you serve the Deep.

Why are we here?

While you are here, your duty is to make your own current, to shape the flow of your life, to serve your world. Some say you should seek your Third Portion of Being, and seek to become complete, like Magasta and Seolinthur before him. But I say that you need only be yourself, and serve the waters, allowing Magasta to send you along the currents of your life.

How do we do magic?

The Ocean ebbs and flows with moving currents. Two-legs know only physical flows, while we sip from hidden spiritual currents to work magic. Magasta knows the name of every one of these secret flows, for they end in his pool, and he makes their names

and locations known to us all. You can join them to yourself like a tributary, and thus control their flow. This is the only magic that flows within the currents of life.

I have heard of other worlds. Can you tell me the truth about the Far World?

The Waters came to feed, so the Still Ocean brought forth Seruvar to feed them. Seruvar fed well from the Waters, and birthed the Titans so they could feed the waters in return. The Titans each created one of the sides of Bab. Then Seolinthur flowed into the space below, and Uoshalma blew into the space above, and the Far World was complete.

The Far World teems with two-legs. They are hostile, invading the Waters in their ships to steal the bounty of the Sea. Their wasteful fishermen kill many more of our fish than they can ever eat. Their priests send dangerous winds against our waters and us and they kill many Sea beings, creating more evil spirits and demons.

The two-legs are weak and foolish, and must pay tribute for their ships to pass unobstructed and their folk to live on the shores of the Waters. They feed us even as they resist us.

I have heard of other powers. Can you tell me the truth about the Dry Gods?

Earth was good until it failed. Then Sea had to rescue its child. The gods of the Far World are called the Dry Gods, created by Seruvar to provide food for the children of Zaramaka. However, some of the Dry Gods forgot their purpose, disagreed with it, or thought that they could become something different. They fell victim to their emotions, and through their wrong actions destroyed the world. For their failures, the Dry Gods suffered a terrible doom, were condemned to a waterless existence, were trapped and forced to provide us with their gifts. I will tell you now about the greatest of them.

Chaos

Dez is the Void that appears when Chaos destroys life. The Void evaporates the seas, stagnates the movement of the currents, and devours the souls of the waters. Only Magasta can defeat Chaos, and he shows us the way to victory. Chaos seeps in when Stagnation traps the currents of life and prevents them from moving. The spawn of Dez look like life, but they are empty, soulless, evil. We must not tolerate them in any form, especially when something alive is taken over by Chaos.

Darkness Gods

Ooshosopesh the Dark Titan was a compassionate force, the source of without-light food. But the ancient powers of the abyssal Deep lurk in each being, looming and glowering within, ever ready to seep out. Ooshosopesh allowed them to burst out unimpeded, and they destroyed her body, leaving her an insubstantial shadow, easily controlled by Magasta.

Fire God

Eshalosash the Hot Titan was a powerful force, source of hot food. But he grew fearful after the death of Seolinthur, and moved mountains to build a wall along the edge of Ishash. Some of his people continue to deny the waters that give them life, and so they cannot create new flows even when they mix together.



The Glacier

Osserelta the North Titan was a caring force, source of cold food. But he grew frigid after the death of Seolinthur and refused to accept his place in the world. When he stopped sending food it inspired other Food Gods in the north to rebel, and so began the Time of struggles. Desperate to protect himself, Osserelta froze the waters of Seolinthur, hoping to preserve himself from destruction. A great glacier flowed into Ooma from the north, and Osserelta froze to death along with everything else.

When Magasta called the waters, the ouori licked the ice, which melted enough to answer the call. A small stream flowed under the Glacier, releasing the waters from their icy prison. Now Osserelta once again sends food into the Seventh World.

The Moon Goddess

Secret powers move the universe, and the cyclic powers of the Moon were ours alone until revealed by the upstart goddess the two-legs call the Red Moon. Stealing and revealing our ancient lore is not bad enough, for Desashema also controls Chaos. She has taken up part of Ooma, the Earth, wounding her. She seeks to 'liberate' the entire world from being Food, but Nestentos will rise again and heal the wound in Ooma, making the north whole again.

Sorcerers

Moroga the West Titan was a generous force, source of salt food. But he became greedy after the death of Seolinthur and refused to accept his place in the world. He claimed knowledge greater than Zaramaka, and made laws to contain and command the waters. He created artificial beings to dig holes in the world. The two-legs who worship Moroga share his ignorance and arrogance. They see magic and matter as separate things, and continue to use Moroga's corrupt secrets to abuse the world.

Spirits

The world is full of lost, meaningless entities who are not moved by the currents. They do not know their place in the order of the spiritual oceans. Beings called shamans control the broken remnants of the Dry Gods and their victims, which are trapped in the place the two-legs call the Spirit World. Until the ebb of the Deep reaches all turgid recesses, these mindless entities will remain lost, will stay trapped, will cling to false memories of life. They will not willingly return to the cycle of life, for they try to be feeders instead of food. They cannot feed the Deep, but we can feed on them, and so return them to Zaramaka.

Storm Gods

The raging storms of the Far World bring us much food, but only after fighting us. This monstrous god was once a gentle force, a current that moved food from Bab to the Deep, but he became filled with anger, violence, and lust. He pounded seas into submission and imprisoned legions of life within ice. He carried off our gods as slaves. He brought Death to us, and although Magasta took its secrets and used them to save the world, Uoshalma first used it to trouble all watery beings.

Uoshalma thinks he is free, but he is now directed by the waters, moved where Eeshalmera directs him. He rages against her, but his storms do not harm the Deep.

The Sun God

Eamei was a humble force, source of light and other dry food. But he grew proud after the death of Seolinthur. He tried to raise himself above the Dry Gods to rule them, but he was cast down by the Waters. The light he tried to keep hidden is seen by all, and brings new growth to the Far World. So he feeds the Deep.

Currents of the Deep

Of the spiritual flows in the Ocean, many are weak, mindless, or peaceful currents that anybody can use. A fearsome few torrents are not, demanding worship from those that seek to drink from them. We know the names and greetings for many such entities, and call on them to serve us when the time requires it, even as we serve them when they call to us in turn.

Drenamoro

Drenamoro is the Old Man of the Sea, a lusty figure with many children and lovers. He is individuality, the yearning for the deep oceans, the yearning for a connection with other beings. He taught mermen to swim into the Spirit World, to integrate the lost ones so that they can be recycled again, and to protect themselves from hostile spirits.

Drenamoro is mutable, flowing into any form he desires: male or female, fish or man, water or stone, even fire or wind. His best known forms are Phargon the First Triton, ancestor of all mermen; Golod Fish-Father, favored lover of Tholaina; and Easharthlu, who first caused Murthdrya to sprout with life.

Endaralath and Ermanthver

Endaralath and Ermanthver are our Manthi and Natea. They are the Life of the Seas, and maintain order and justice throughout all of the Togaro Ocean and its tributary seas, including our own Rozgali. Together with Togaro herself, they form the Triarchy of the Eastern Waters.

Magasta

Magasta is the source of Life and Death, the One Water. His body is the ocean, his spirit the animus of the world, and his soul the current of the cosmos. With Manthi and Natea he forms the Triarchy of All Waters.

Magasta is Father Ocean, so great that mortals who touch him are lost, pulled into the Maelstrom. We worship Magasta through his children, who are closer to us, though still deeper than the Ancestors.

Sshalorgesh is the Terror of the Deeps, who led the watery armies that reclaimed the Far World. He leads an army of tides and waves that seek to reclaim the land still.

Ooaliralia is the Deep Diving Messenger, who bears our prayers to the Deep.

Uumaferios is our Shielding Current, who defends the pod from predators, two-legs, and the spawn of Dez.

Eeshalmera is the Great Storm, who moves the wayward winds of the world as if they were currents.

Shoanariis is the Deep Feeder, who taught us how to hunt and gather after Magasta left us.

Wachaza is the Fang of Magasta, who brings death to the seas. He is the dark demon, who hunts down the spawn of Dez. He is the Maelstrom, who recycles the living and dead through the Black Waters of Edzaroun.

Triolina

Our Great Ancestress, Mother Ocean, Source of Life. All mortal beings that live in the waters can trace their ancestry to her, whether merhendssh, animal, or plant. She mixed her essence with many waters, and each time bore one of the Deep Mothers who is the source of one form of life.

Mirintha is our Mother, for her triton and niid children bore all triolini, including us. Tholaina is the Mother of all sea animals, from plankton to whales, sea eagles to dragonfish, and the profusion of fish. Murthdrya is the Mother of plants, whose children grow from the deepest oceans to the shallow, sunlit seas.

Homeland: Teshnos

Sun shine upon you, here is my hand, there is my life flame. It would transform my dull and unproductive day if you would take dates and water with me, however meager and stolid the fare.

Teshnos basks in tropical listlessness. It is an ancient civilization half lost in its jungle and dreams. Cities languish happily, surrounded by natural orchards and forest plots that practically farm themselves. Castes dominate society, but life is so easy no one cares. Temples, however, are meticulously kept by busy priests and priestesses, and when they conduct their ancient rites the ceremonies are attended by humans and several other races. Slaves are forbidden.

The Foot Soldier occupation indicates employment as a private guard. Petty nobles often learn “the ancient arts of violence” along with their guards.

Teshnos Homeland Keyword

Occupations Available: Entertainer (Dancer, Drummer, Flautist, Singer, Sitarist, Snake-Piper), Farmer, Foot Soldier (Regular, Skirmisher), Healer, Hunter, Merchant, Petty Noble, Scholar, Thief.

Native Abilities: Chalite Teachings, Dancing (socially), Enjoy Food, Know Jungle Ways or Urban Survival, Sit Quietly, Speak Teshnan, Teshnos Customs, Teshnos Geography.

Typical Personality Traits: Clean, Fear Dragons, Open-Minded and Accepting of All Peoples, Peaceful and Unexcitable, Pious towards All Forms of Worship, Suspicious of Kralori.

Typical Relationships: to Ancestors; to Family; to Temple.

Magic: Common magic, Teshnos Pantheon (common and specialized magic).

Common Names:

Men—Amadhara, Bhindish, Ganeshi, Garusharp, Kamakshi, Kshatralal, Pubnashap, Sandhya, Sudevi, Vasu, Vasudev.

Women—Aichit, Bhirapati, Chanaya, Lishina, Madhuri, Nirupama, Nita, Primiralna, Taravati, Uma, Vishakhri.

Origin

First was Endi Varo, the Great Emperor and Father Sun, the self-contained Creator who made the universe out of mystical origins. Primeval powers lived here first, and a hundred dynasties of gods after them. The latest dynasty began with Chal the Wise who instructed the king, who ordered the people and made sacrifices to Somash.

Common Religions

The Book of Well-Being

Most people in Teshnos know and use this little volume, a synopsis of the *Works of Chal*. Only a few can read it, but almost everyone follows its regimen of exercises, dietary restrictions, prayers and meditation exercises, and virtues, represented in *HeroQuest* by the *Chalite Teachings* ability. As a result, almost everyone can perform the *Spell of Health*.

R Spell: Spell of Health.

The Service and Comfort Society

An organization of service employees who serve whomever can pay them.

R Charms: Five Special Wine Spirits, Grow Food on Trees, Grow Ten Noble Spice Plants, Nap Pillow Spirit, Self-Moving Fan.

We All Know This

Teshnos has been home to a vast collection of cults, spirits, and churches, which have left behind some common magic. They say they know a million magic, but here are just a few of the popular ones that make Teshnos life so pleasant.

R Talents: Brewing, Clean Clothes, Cook Better, Drop Food from Trees, Grow Food on Trees, Look Great, Make Tasty Drink, Nurture Banana, Nurture Breadfruit, Nurture Coconut, Nurture Plantain, Talk Smooth.



Common Religion—Teshnos Pantheon

Five hundred religions are practiced in Teshnos. These all hold loosely together by a casual mystical overview of the esoteric Chalite Practices. For most people the important god is Somash, the sun with many faces. He is worshipped at sunrise as Creator, at mid-morning as Healer, at noon as Great Emperor and Father, at mid-afternoon as Merchant, and at sunset as Scholar. His consort and rival is Kab Vanarana Sa, whose nine hundred daughters are the local goddesses of farming, food, and family.

Unusually among major religions, the Teshnos “pantheon” does not specialize in one form of magic, and is separated from the common religions above only for convenience. Your hero is probably a communal worshipper of the religion, and thus gains the benefit of the Teshnos Pantheon keyword, below. Some Teshnans initiate or devote themselves to a specific deity; see the listing below for sample cults, some of which are actually common religions (using mixed magic) rather than pure theist cults.

Teshnos Pantheon Keyword

Abilities: Know Teshnos Pantheon Myths, Worship Teshnos Pantheon.

Virtues: Eclectic, Enjoy Life.

Magic: *The Book of Well-Being*.

Other Side: The Fire Realms are vivid and blazing lands in which golden palaces look down from mountains of light.

Sample Cults of the Teshnos Pantheon

Any: Calyz Mandar, the Ancestor God

Affinity—Talk to Ancestors.

Entertainer: Somash Veren, the Beauty Sun

Affinity—Entertainment.

Farmer: Kab Vanarana Sa and her Nine Hundred Daughters

Affinity—Farm.

Foot Soldier or Petty Noble: Alen Somash Sa, the Warrior Sun, one of the Moving Gods
Affinity—Horsemanship.
Spells—*Chal's Rules, Part 3* (Deity Detection, Fight Theistic Beings, Heal Before Combat, Magic Protection, Spirit Combat, Spirit Detection).

Foot Soldier or Petty Noble: Kab Tolat Solf, the Great Destroying Warrior Planet, one of the Moving Gods
Worshippers of Kab Tolat Solf do not use *The Book of Well-Being*.
Affinity—Combat, Fight Against Gods or Spirits.

Foot Soldier or Petty Noble: Vai Madar Sa, the Great Star Archer, one of the Moving Gods
Common Magic—"The Bow of the Heavens Chants":
feat: Sacred Archery.
charm: Hand-Archery.
spell: Farshooting Multiarrow.

Want to Discover More? See "Vai Madar Sa" in the Basic Magic chapter, page 113.

Healer: Mairnali Har, Mother of Mankind and Source of Compassion
Affinities—Healing, Meditation.
Talents—Calm Madness, Comfort Song, Sleep, Soothe Invisible Parts.

Hunter: Velit Maniz, the Invisible Leopard
Affinity—Hunting.
Talents—Leap into Treetop, Motionlessness, Quick Kill, Scentlessness, Send away Ghost, Soundlessness, Stalk, Trueshot.

Merchant: Somash Mimi, Who Makes Us All Rich
Affinity—Trade.

Petty Noble: Somash Edi Varo the Judge, and a Moving Deity (see "Reasons to Have Left Home," below)
Affinity—Adjudication.

Scholar: Somash Hero Madoro, the Dutiful Archivist
Affinity—Preserve Manuscripts.

Thief: Besdi Solf Du, the Seventh Little Destroyer, the "Taker of Things"
Affinities—Excess, Stealth.

Talents—Conceal Item, Leap into Treetop, Leap onto Roof, Motionlessness, Scentlessness, Send away Guard, Soundlessness.

Reasons to Have Left Home

Many people have the chance to leave their sleepy jungle or city homes in Teshnos. In particular, the Three Moving Gods (Alen Somash Sa, Kab Tolat Solf, and Vai Madar Sa) allow people from any caste to join in them and leave home. These deities are known to outsiders because their worshippers often depart from their own homeland. They are all associated with celestial bodies, hence "moving deities." All are worshipped both inside and outside of Teshnos in different ways.

