

Michael Moorcock's

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OF MELNIBONÉ



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CULTS OF THE YOUNG KINGDOMS

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SPARK

OF MELNIBONÉ

CULTS OF THE YOUNG KINGDOMS

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CULTS OF THE YOUNG KINGDOMS



This book concerns the cults of the Young Kingdoms: mankind's largely futile attempt to codify and venerate the various powers of the Multiverse in a bid to understand them, his own place in the world and find a means to explaining the larger questions of life, death and existence after death.

Futile? Almost certainly. Whilst the Lords of Law, Chaos and the Elements need and require veneration in order to sustain their continued existence, they care little for most mortals. The gods of the Young Kingdoms did not create man in their own image and nor do they seek to offer hope in eternal life beyond the veil of existence. At best the Lords of the Higher Planes are uncaring and distant. At worst they are manipulative, selfish and concerned only with how mortals can be used in the Eternal Struggle, as already outlined in the *Elric of Melniboné Core Rulebook*. Elric himself explains it best:

'Would that we'd never met, Shaarilla of the Dancing Mist. For a while, you gave me hope – I had thought to be at last at peace with myself. But, because of you. I am left more hopeless than before. There is no salvation in this world – only malevolent doom!'

This book expands upon the material found in the *Cults* chapter of the *Elric of Melniboné Core Rulebook*. Herein you will find more information concerning the natures of the Lords of the Higher Planes, new cults, new Gifts and Compulsions, new religious approaches and new professions related to them. Essentially, this book is for those *Elric* Games Masters and Adventurers who wish to immerse themselves in the ways of Law, Chaos, Elements and other supernatural forces abroad in the Young Kingdoms. It aims to extrapolate material from the *Elric* saga, adding depth to the intrigue that Michael Moorcock has created, allowing Games Masters and Players to become greater exponents of the higher powers as their Adventurers struggle to make sense of the world around them.

In the *Elric of Melniboné Core Rulebook* general approaches to the higher powers are presented and cults dedicated to one or

more patron lords. *Cults of the Young Kingdoms* focuses squarely on the latter: cults that venerate one or more specific gods or higher powers that encourage established relationships and Pacts. The benefits for mortals are clearly defined: access to knowledge, influence and power mirroring that of the patron served. The benefits for the god are more oblique. The Lords of the Higher Powers require worship and veneration to perpetuate their own existence to a large extent but they are not wholly reliant upon it. However, separated from the physical realms by compromises made in aeons past, they need mortal agents to enact their agendas on their behalf and their agendas are rarely explained. Arioeh himself articulates this on several occasions to Elric:

'It is impossible, sweetest of my slaves. There are other matters afoot in the Realm of Chaos. Matters of enormous moment to which I have already referred. I offer only my blessings.'

But this negligence does not prevent humans and other races from worship. It is a mortal need, it seems. Moreover it is a mortal need to codify and ritualise such behaviour in the hope of attaining greater insight and a closer relationship with the object of veneration.

This book, then, explains these codifications, these cults and offers them as tools for those *Elric of Melniboné* players and Games Masters who wish to see Pacts made with such beings.

NOTES CONCERNING THE EARLIER EDITION

This book is a considerable update of the earlier edition of *Cults of the Young Kingdoms*. Subtle changes have been made to the listed cults and each now has a myth associated with it.

Some cults included in the earlier edition have not been included in this edition simply due to reasons of space: these include the Mereghn and the societies of Quarzhasaat. It is envisioned that these will be covered in a separate supplement or in *Signs & Portents*. If you have the earlier edition, the cults that appear

there that do not appear here are by no means redundant and can continue to be used, although a little conversion work may be necessary to bring them into line with the cults in this volume.

NEW CULTS AND CANON

Certain new cults have been included in this edition. The names may not be instantly familiar but *are* referred to in the *Elric* saga albeit obscurely. Students of the Eternal Champion saga will also find references to the *Corum* saga here and there, where it is appropriate to intersect those stories and myths with the *Elric* cycle.

CULT STRUCTURE

The structure of the cults found in these pages is based on the structure described in the *RuneQuest Core Rulebook* and the Cults chapter of the *Elric of Melniboné Core Rulebook*. It is as follows:

Name

The name of the cult. This is often the same as the god venerated but not always.

Purpose and History

What the cult seeks to attain and its history in the Young Kingdoms.

Myths

At least one key myth held true by the cult, with its Mythic Resonance and any behavioural lessons that the myth enforces.

Beliefs

What the cult believes and how it acts, both towards its own members and the world in general.

Worshippers

The core worshippers of the cult.

Membership Requirements

Specific requirements for membership of the cult. An entry of 'Standard' indicates that the standard cult membership requirements, as described in the *RuneQuest Core Rulebook*, apply.

Benefits

What benefits the cult offers to its members and how these apply at different stages of membership.

About the Myths in *Elric of Melniboné*

Every cult in this book has a myth associated with it. Each is a subjective truth as the cult perceives it. Myths are contradictory in many cases and competing myths are often the source of cult tensions and enmities.

In a world where the Lords of Law and Chaos shape entire universes, each with a singular agenda, there can never be an objective truth save for the ones mortals create for themselves. Myths help shape and explain the current state of being and, in many cases, their origins can be traced to real events. In other cases they are no more than stories created to explain and reinforce behaviour.

Games Masters must decide whether or not a cult's myth is subjective and based on real events. Either way, the myths are bound to the psyche of the worshippers meaning that they can be experienced as DreamQuests with the right magic. However, the nature of the DreamQuest might be subtly or fundamentally different to the underlying myth, depending on whether or not the Games Master has decided on the nature of its subjectivity and core basis in tangible history.

Gifts and Compulsions

The Gifts and Compulsions specific to the cult. Both Gifts and Compulsions are given more detail in the Benefits chapter.

Cult Skills

Skills held important for membership by the cult and which are taught to its members.

Cult Runes and Magic

What Runes and Magic the cult has access to and teaches.

Heroic Abilities Available

The Heroic Abilities available to champions of the cult.

Retribution

What may happen to cult members who cede membership and choose to ally themselves with another force.

Politics and Relationships

How the cult relates to other cults, including alliances and enmities.

BENEFITS



This chapter offers details on the myriad Gifts, Compulsions, Heroic Abilities and other benefits membership of a cult confers.

WHAT MAKES A CULTIST?

The cults are by no means widespread. The Young Kingdoms' towns and cities are not filled with temples, churches or cathedrals dedicated to the Lords of the Higher Powers; dutiful worshippers do not flock to ceremonies and high holy days, following proscribed religious routines or ecumenical doctrine. Most of the Young Kingdoms' populace is blissfully unaware of the Eternal Struggle, going about their drab, daily lives ignorant of the higher powers waging war above, around and, sometimes, through them.

Cultists then, are the most ardent and enlightened. Something within them has been awakened, turning them towards a dedicated course of worship and service. Sometimes even the word 'worship' is too strong, because many cultists never utter so much as a prayer or offer anything approaching a sacrifice (whether physical or spiritual), save the portion of their own souls that are mortgaged in exchange for temporal power. Cultists, whether they follow Law, Chaos, the Elements or even a personality cult, such as Aubec or Terhali, are pursuing a specific agenda from an informed position. Following one of the Higher Powers is a matter of choice more than culture.

Any Adventurer deciding to join a cult is likely to make this choice based on one, or a combination of, several factors:

- **Cultural leanings.** Pan Tangians are indoctrinated into the worship of Chaos from an early age; Oinians and Yuites are aware of the Dhoz ancestors constantly; the people of Vilmir see the stagnancy of the Lawful church daily. Cultural background certainly shapes the likely disposition an individual has but does not necessarily guarantee it. There



will be Pan Tangians who observe Law or the Elementals; Vilmirians who sense the power of Chaos and feel drawn to it. Cultural leanings suggest the likely affiliation of a person but it is not an absolute dictate.

- **Demonstrations of power.** All the higher powers are capable of demonstrating their capabilities through supernatural manifestations and displays of magic. Those who witness

these demonstrations are more likely to be swayed into worship than those who have not. Has your Adventurer been exposed to the appearance of a Lord of Law or Chaos at sometime in his past? Is this what has contributed to your current affiliation?

- **Desperate circumstances.** The Young Kingdoms is a brutal place and everyone suffers some form of distress or crisis that appears to offer no hope or respite. Law and Chaos take advantage of such events, either directly, but usually through the timely presence of an existing cultist who explains and demonstrates how their affiliation can offer that much needed hope or redemption. This is how souls are snared and captured. The demonstration of the powers of a cult, to those who are in the most dire need of salvation, are often the most forceful and persuasive methods of recruitment.

If your Adventurer is going to join a cult before play begins, spend some time considering what factors have contributed to his decision. The three factors mentioned previously are the most common reasons but others exist and some will be specific to an event or circumstance. Joining a cult should not be a light undertaking; it needs context and a driving event: both are excellent contributors to defining your Adventurer's saga and development.

GIFTS AND COMPULSIONS

Each cult has a certain set of Gifts and Compulsions associated with its membership. These are the *typical*, most likely Gifts and Compulsions offered and imposed by that cult but by no means are they the only ones. If, as the Games Master, you feel a Gift or Compulsion from a different cult fits a particular Adventurer or set of circumstances, then by all means use it. The Lords of the Higher Planes are fickle and devious, taking a perverse pleasure in the things given to their mortal adherents.

This section lists all the Gifts and Compulsions available through the various cults. The table notes which cults are likely to offer the Gift or Compulsion; if a cult's initial (C for Chaos, L for Law, A for Air, E for Earth, F for Fire, W for Water and so on) is not listed, it indicates that the Gift or Compulsion is contrary to the cult's nature (a demon feature will never be offered as a Gift by a Lawful cult, for example).

Gifts

All Gifts are bought with Dedicated POW. In general one point of Dedicated POW buys one Gift, although it is possible to enhance that Gift with a further purchase. The Cost entry of the Cult Gifts table shows what the base and enhanced cost is for each Gift.

Cult Gifts

Gift	Effect	Cults	Cost
Abstinence	Exist without one requirement, for example air, food, water, sleep.	All	1 POW
Animal Familiar	The recipient receives the companionship of a <i>natural</i> animal (choose from the animals listed in either the Creatures of Law and Chaos chapter, or agree a creature from <i>RuneQuest Monsters</i>) with a SIZ in D6 no greater than the POW spent on this Gift. The familiar obeys simple commands but will not go against its nature. If a further point of POW is invested, the creature can speak with its master.	A, E, C, L	1 POW per D6 of SIZ; additional 1 POW for a talking creature.
Automaton	Gain a self powered automaton as a servant.	L	1 POW per 20 Characteristic/Armour Points invested in the automaton's assembly.
Change Gender	The Adventurer changes from male to female or vice-versa. All Characteristics and skills remain the same but the voice and physical functions of the new sex are gained.	C, L	1 POW to change gender once, 2 POW to change a second time, 3 POW to change a third and so forth.
Chaotic Blessing	Roll once on the demon features table.	C	1 POW for the first blessing, an additional 2 POW for a second, 3 for a third and so forth.
Combat Acuity	Increase Combat Actions by +1.	All	1 POW for the first, 2 POW for the second and so forth.
Divine Training	Raise a cult skill to 100%.	All	1 POW the first skill, 2 POW for the second, 3 for a third and so forth.
Elemental	Gain an elemental helper that may be called once per adventure.	All (element appropriate to the cult)	1 POW per metre of the elemental's size.

Gift	Effect	Cults	Cost
Endurance	Endure any pain. Never needs to check <i>Resilience</i> to prevent unconsciousness when wounded and immune to torture.	E, F, C, L	1 POW.
Enhanced Learning	Results of Improvement Rolls are doubled (thus, a failed Improvement roll means a skill advances by 2 points; successful Improvements improves skill by x2 1D4+1.	C, L	1 POW for one Improvement Roll; 2 POW for a second, 3 POW for the a third. Thus, an Adventurer who wants 3 enhanced Improvement Rolls must spend 6 POW on this Gift.
Eternal Life	The recipient will not die of natural causes during the lifetime of the Gift, although they are still vulnerable to death through violence.	C, L	1 POW.
Fate	The recipient is capable of appraising, with reasonable accuracy, the likely fate of someone he meets. He does not gain prophecy about the individual but gains a general impression as to whether the individual will be prosperous, lead a full life, die peacefully and so on.	All	1 POW.
Healing	The agent regenerates 1D3 Hit Points to a hit location of the players choice each Combat Round, whilst he is still alive. He need not be conscious for the regeneration to work but if a wound is sufficient to kill him, the regeneration ability will not restore him to life.	C, L	1 POW.
Heroic Ability	The Adventurer receives a Heroic Ability pertinent to the cult.	All	1 POW.
Horde	May at a future point, when summoning a demonic or elemental being, call forth an army of the same entities, equal in number to the sorcerer's remaining Magic Points, per POW invested in the Gift.	A, E, F, W, C	1 POW. One use. Once used, this Gift can only be regained if the cultist qualifies for a further Gift and if he has dedicated POW remaining. It costs 1 additional POW each time the Gift is taken again.
Increased Damage Modifier	Increased Damage Modifier. The agent's Damage Modifier is recalculated, based on the sum of STR, SIZ and POW.	All	1 POW.
Increased Health	Increased Health. The Adventurer's Hit Points are recalculated, based on the sum of CON, SIZ and POW.	All	1 POW.
Increased Reactions	The Adventurer adds his critical score in a weapon to his Strike Rank (for example, an Adventurer with a weapon skill of 60% would add +6 to his Strike Rank).	All	1 POW.
Innate Luck	When rolling for any Skill Test, the Adventurer can choose which way to read the D100 result. For example, a roll of 90 could be read as 09. Note: if double digits, such as 00, 11, 22 and so forth, are rolled, the result <i>cannot</i> be reinterpreted.	All	1 POW.
Invulnerability	Adventurer is invulnerable to damage from one, specified, sorcerously created or summoned creature.	A, E, F, L, W	1 POW for the first named creature, 2 POW for the second, 3 for the third and so forth.
Magical Recovery	Magic Points regenerated at twice usual rate.	C	1 POW.
Multiversal Polyglot	Understand any language <i>spoken</i> to you. You cannot, however, read or write the language and your replies are always in your own language but translated into the second tongue.	C, L	1 POW.

Gift	Effect	Cults	Cost
Perfection	Raise a Characteristic by 1d6 (any POW gained is automatically forfeit to that deity), up to the human maximum, including SIZ.	L	Costs 1 POW the first time, 2 the second and so on.
Physical Recovery	Hit Points healed at twice usual rate.	L	1 POW.
Return Loved One	A loved one is brought back from death. Their POW automatically belongs to the god and the resurrected person serves the patron's agenda completely.	C	1 POW the first time, 2 the second and so forth. The cost increases even if used on <i>different</i> loved ones.
Rune	Gain use of one rune as taught by the cult at its base percentage.	All	1 POW.
Rune Mastery	The cost to invoke a <i>specific</i> Rune is always 1MP, although the size of the effect is still limited by how many MPs they have remaining.	All	1 POW.
Sanctuary	The deity provides the recipient with a magical structure or plane as a residence. 1 POW buys a villa or manse; 2 POW buys a castle; 3 POW a city and so forth. The property always belongs to the deity and can be removed at any time if the deity so chooses. The residence may have further powers as desired.	C, L	Initial cost is variable. 1 POW for Hidden (residence itself cannot be perceived); 1 POW for Movement (flying, rolling, crawling and so on); 1 POW for Shifting (interdimensionally); 1 POW for Isolation (residents cannot be located magically); 1 POW for Impregnability (access cannot be forced, save at the deity level), 1 POW for Peacefulness (residents suffer no violence or insanity).
Second Life	Return from the dead once (all POW sacrificed to <i>other</i> entities and their Gifts are lost).	C	1 POW the first time, 2 the second and so forth.
Sense Enemies.	Sixth Sense. The Adventurer is immediately aware of the enemies of the cult and those who would directly harm him.	All	1 POW.
Sense Million Spheres	Aware of weaknesses in the fabric of reality. Can spot gates and portals to other planes on a successful Perception test.	C, L	1 POW.
Slave	Gain a demonic servant (available to the cult), which may be summoned for one task per adventure.	C	1 POW per Magic Point required to summon such a demon.
Summon	Some cults have a specific creature from the Creatures chapter that can be summoned. This Gift allows one creature of the particular type mentioned to be summoned. No summoning roll is necessary but the Command skill is still used to direct the creature's actions.	B, C, L	1 POW for the first summoning, 2 POW for the second and so forth.
Tireless	Never suffer the effects of fatigue.	All	1 POW.
Ward	Gain total invulnerability to one form of harm. Each time this Gift is taken a new form of harm is selected (for example: swords, spears, arrows, fire, poison, a <i>specific</i> rune and so forth).	C, L	1 POW the first time, 2 the second, 3 the third and so forth.
Weapon of the Faith	The Adventurer is Gifted a weapon that adds the POW invested in the Pact to its Damage. Thus, an Adventurer who has dedicated 6 POW to his patron gains +6 damage. If the weapon is broken or lost, then so is the Gift.	All	1 POW for every 2 points dedicated to the Pact. (Thus, if an Adventurer has 6 POW dedicated and wants to achieve the full bonus of +6 damage, it costs 3 POW to obtain this Gift).
Witch Sight	Develop Witch Sight ability (see page 54 of the <i>Elric of Melniboné Core Rulebook</i>).	C	1 POW.
Youth	Return to a young body, reversing all aging effects.	C, L	1 POW.

Compulsions

For every Gift there is a Compulsion. Accepting a Gift from a Cult means that a Compulsion comes with it; and, sometimes, a Compulsion is mandatory even without the benefit of a Gift. Compulsions are always tailored to reflect the nature of the cult, or its patron, in some way. The cult descriptions provide such specific examples and those that follow have been made slightly more generic for reference.

Compulsions, unlike Gifts, quite often do not have specific game mechanics dictating how they work. This is deliberate; Compulsions are often based on perception and motivation that require role-playing, not mechanics, to implement. An Adventurer might not be aware of the depth of a particular affliction, for example, or a Compulsion might skew his ideals.

Games Masters should always be aware of the Compulsions that Adventurers carry and use judgement to remind them when a Compulsion may dictate the way they act, feel or respond in a given situation. Penalties to skills are always a useful way of applying game mechanics to a Compulsion's manifestation and the depth of the Pact is always a guide to how deeply a progressive Compulsion affects skills.

Therefore, as a *general* rule a Compulsion, if used in this way, penalises an appropriate skill by -10% for every 20% of a Pact (round to the nearest). For example, an Adventurer who *Hates Pan Tang* and has a Pact of 60% can expect skills such as Courtesy and Influence to be subject to a -30% penalty whenever the Adventurer has to deal with Pan Tangians or those allied to them. Again, use judgement to modify the penalty if the circumstances warrant it; our Pan Tang Hater might suffer only a -15% penalty when dealing with Dharijorians, for example; or -60% when being forced to deal with his Pan Tangian arch-enemy.

Compulsions

Compulsion	Effect	Cults
Absolute Mercy	May not kill any enemy, no matter how hated.	A, L
Acute Depression	Become increasingly morose. As the Pact skill increases, behaviour becomes more depressive until it reaches the suicidal at the 95% level or greater.	C, L
Acute Hydrophobia	Develop fear of water (cannot approach large bodies of water; must make a Persistence test to avoid fleeing in fear or being rooted to the spot in terror).	E
Acute Insomnia	Unable to sleep for fear of never waking. Become gaunt-eyed, cadaverously thin and intensely paranoid of even one's closest associates.	C, L
Agoraphobia	Develop Agoraphobia. Cannot abide wide-open spaces where Lassa's spies can watch.	C, E, F, L
Armour Reduction	Never wear footwear or armour on the limbs.	E, C, L
Armour Rejection	Cannot wear armour of any kind; must always wear loose-fitting clothes or robes.	A, L
Asphyxiation	Foes must be killed by asphyxiation so they do not steal any more of Lassa's precious air. They may be brought to the point of death by other means.	A
Attention Deficit	Unable to concentrate for long periods. Tasks requiring periods of concentration take twice as long to complete.	A, C
Avian Veneration	Never eat the flesh of any bird or winged creature.	A
Black Widow	Develop the need to kill any male lover. Requires Persistence test to control the desire. Subtract the Pact percentage from the Persistence skill before the test is made.	(Females Only) C
Blood Sacrifice	Blood sacrifice to Chaos Lord every week.	C
Bone Collector	Collect, and constantly count, the bones of dead things. Wear prized bones around the body.	C
Brine Addiction	Desire to consume gallons of water at a time to slake an unquenchable thirst. +1 SIZ, -1 CON for every 20 points of the Pact skill.	C, W
Burial	Bury all foes alive, in sacrifice to Grome.	E
Carnal Murderer	Overwhelming desire to kill the person one has just enjoyed carnal relations with. Requires Persistence test to control the desire. Subtract the Pact percentage from the Persistence skill before the test is made.	C
Challenge Chaos	Become broodingly obsessed with carving new lands from Chaos, just as Aubec did.	L
Chaos Phobia	Become increasingly paranoid about the influence of Chaos, seeing it everywhere; in secret symbols, the way people talk; the things they do.	L
Chaotic Disdain	Develop an increasing disdain for the known Lords of Chaos, save your own patron.	C
Chaste	Undertake a vow of chastity.	A, L
Chivalrous	Refuse to act in any way that contradicts the laws of chivalry.	L

Compulsion	Effect	Cults
Chromophobia	Aversion to a particular colour in all its forms. Cannot wear that colour or stand to be in the company of any who does so.	C, L
Claustrophobia	Develop claustrophobia. Cannot enter any space of less than three times SIZ willingly; stricken with panic if forced into such a space.	A, L, W
Close Combat Pacificism	Never enter into hand-to-hand combat.	A, F, L
Collector	Collect and catalogue obscure objects constantly.	L
Colour Obsessed	Wear nothing but a specific colour or hue. The skin must be dyed completely to a shade of that colour. Lose 1D4 CHA.	C, L
Compulsive Swimmer	Unable to cross any stream or river via a bridge, must always wade or swim. Must swim or be immersed in water at least once a day.	W
Corpse-Like	Skin becomes cadaverously pale and suffers rapid weight-loss. Lose 1D4 CHA <i>and</i> 1D4 SIZ.	C, L
Curse of Maluk	Must put-out one eye (-1 DEX, -1 CHA).	C
Deck-Bound	Hatred of land. One cannot abide the solidity of the ground for any length of time and must return to the list and sway of the deck to gain comfort.	C
Dedicated Lover	Fall hopelessly in love with one particular individual. Pledge heart and soul to serve her.	All
Demonic Fervour	You know that it is your destiny to become one of Chaos's half-breed demonic courtiers.	C
Dread	Visions of terrible carnage that disturb the sleep and leave the dreamer feeling worthless and drained.	All
Drowning	Drown all foes in sacrifice to Straasha.	W
Empire Builder	Become obsessed with challenging an empire and replacing it with a regime that embodies your cult's qualities.	C, L
Eternal Flame	Donation of 1D4 points of permanent POW to sustain Kakatal's eternal flame; driven partially insane as a result.	F
Expose Skull	Expose a section of own skull (-1HP to Head Hit Location).	C
Fear of Death	Increasing fear of death. As the Pact skill increases the fear of death grows stronger until the individual is unable to act for fear of accident, murder or assassination.	C
Flaying	Flay or singe the skin from the body, leaving the flesh raw, -1HP to all locations.	C, F
Forbidden Knowledge	Increasing knowledge of Chaos or Law leads to insanity. Become increasingly more insane for every 20 points in the Pact.	C, L
Forgetful	Lose short-term memory (-1 INT).	C
Forgo Shield	Never use a shield.	C, L
Gluttony	Cannot stop eating or drinking. Becoming corpulently fat. +1 SIZ and -1 CON for every 20 points in Pact skill.	C
Hate Arioeh	Hatred of Arioeh. He has abandoned both Melniboné and the world. Those who venerate him must be killed.	C, L
Hate Armour	Never wear armour.	All
Hate Pan Tang	Hatred of Pan Tang. This upstart nation must be prevented from realising its own ambitions at all costs.	All
Healing	Must always offer healing to those who need it – even enemies.	A, L
Human Sacrifice	Human sacrifice to Chaos Lord every week.	C
Hydrophobic	Must never come into contact with water, save for drinking.	E
Hyperactive	Unable to remain still, save when asleep. Must make a successful Resilience test (reduced by the percentage of the Pact) whenever forced to remain motionless.	C, A
Immolation	Burn all foes in sacrifice to Kakatal.	F
Insect Phobia	Irrational fear of rodents, spiders and insects, believing them to be the spies of the male Lords of Chaos (which, of course, they may be).	C, L
Insomnia	Sleep is almost impossible; fatigue constantly builds.	All
Jealousy	Uncontrollable, irrational obsession over some trivial matter: a jealousy over a lover, or the tendency to find a slight where none occurred.	All
Kleptomania	Become compelled to steal – magical and sorcerous items, naturally but also mundane things that could very easily be bought.	C, L

Compulsion	Effect	Cults
Knowledge Eater	Overwhelming desire to consume brains, intent on the belief that the knowledge they contain can be absorbed.	C
Law Triumphant	Never surrender to Chaos but always accept the surrender of an unarmed opponent.	L
Lawyer	Quote laws and doctrines at people ad-nauseum. Constantly correct the use of grammar, pronunciation and so forth.	L
Lust for a Goddess	Lust for a goddess. Her sensuous beauty torments your every waking and sleeping moment. It is your destiny to become one of her lovers, regardless of your current gender.	A, C, L
Man Hater	Compelled to betray the plans and schemes of every man one encounters. Requires Persistence test to control the desire. Subtract the Pact percentage from the Persistence skill before the test is made.	(Females Only) C, L
Mechanical Fetish	Develop an unhealthy fascination with machinery, regardless of its origin. Doubly fascinated by implements of torture.	C, L
Melnibonéan Traits	Become as arrogant as any Melnibonéan, developing complete disdain for 'mere' humans. Develop Melnibonéan eccentricities, quirks and mannerisms.	C
Merciful	Show mercy to any defeated enemy, no matter what their crime, status of degree of enmity towards you.	A, E, F, L, W
Merciless	Never surrender or accept the surrender of any foe.	C, L
Murder Kin	Develop the overwhelming desire to slay loved ones.	C
Need to Kill	Kill once per week. Failure to do so results in the loss of one point of POW.	C
Never Ending Search	Obsessed with finding the ultimate location for something lost to your cult.	All
Nightmares	Experience terrifying dreams and sleepless nights. Awake suffering from one level of fatigue.	All
Obsessive Compulsive	Develop Obsessive Compulsive Disorder. Must check everything several times. Must complete simple, everyday tasks in a set order. Eat the same foods in the same places at the same times.	L
Paranoia	Become increasingly paranoid. Friends and colleagues are inferior beings jealous of your impending god-hood. As your Pact skill grows, so does your paranoia, eventually becoming murderous.	All
Pattern Obsessed	Becomes obsessed with the shapes and geometries of things, seeking to study and understand every nuance and every angle.	L
Pedantic	Obsessed with detail. Study every word and every letter without fail. Tasks involving study and concentration take twice as long to accomplish.	L
Perfectionist	Develop an uncontrollable anger and violent temper if things are not done perfectly – and they never are. No one can meet the cultist's impossibly high standards.	L
Phobia	Develop an irrational fear of three separate things: the dark, the cold, spiders, rats and so forth.	C, L
Piscine Diet	Eat only fish.	W, L
Piscine Sight	Develop fish eyes, -3 CHA, perfect underwater vision.	C, W
Piscine Transformation	Develop gills and vestigial fins, accompanied everywhere by the dreadful smell of rotting fish.	C, W
Piscophobic	Never eat fish or other creature of the water.	E
Pyaray's Call	Growing compulsion to join with the undead fleet. As the Pact skill rises, so the calling of Pyaray becomes ever stronger until, at 100%, it becomes irresistible and the individual throws himself into watery oblivion.	C
Pyaray's Curse	Sleep is disturbed by the moaning of the souls drifting down to Pyaray, calling for mercy and screaming as they are chained to the oars of the undead galleys. The sounds stay within the mind long after sleep has passed.	C
Pyarayic Phobia	Fear of Chaos and Pyaray's undead fleet.	W
Pyromania	Become obsessed with starting fires, opposed all those who try to extinguish them.	F
Pyrophobia	Fear of fire and naked flames. Unable to bear being close to controlled sources of fire; terrified to the point of fleeing any uncontrolled sources of fire.	A, C, L
Rancid	Develop foul body odour or unsightly sores and buboes (-1 CHA).	C, L, E
Rapist	Overwhelming desire to commit rape on either sex. Requires Persistence test to control the desire. Subtract the Pact percentage from the Persistence skill before the test is made.	C

Compulsion	Effect	Cults
Resurrection	Morbid fascination with bringing the dead back to life to question them on Chardros or Hionhurn's plans. Spends hours with corpses trying to revive them. As Pact skill increases, develop physical affection for one particular corpse.	C
Retributional	Notice every transgression of every law no matter how small or inconsequential. Seek the maximum punishment possible in every instance and develop an ongoing grudge against these law-breakers.	L
Ritual Scarring	Sacrifice one point of CHA (through ritual scarring).	All
Sadism	Can only be happy when inflicting physical pain on innocents. Revel and delight in their screams. But these screams haunt the dreams leading to development of fear of those tortured waiting in hell to inflict the same fate.	C
Scorching	Skin becomes cracked and broken, as though scorched, -1 CHA.	F
Sea-Drawn	Craves the seas or rivers. If confined to land for more than a few days, becomes panicked and sullen.	W
Secretive	Become intensely secretive and jealous of information gained. Takes unusual and risky measures to protect even the most trivial knowledge.	C, L
Self Harmer	Obsession with self-harm. Arms and legs constantly cut and sliced, hair pulled out at the roots, teeth self-extracted and so forth.	C
Self Mutilation	Driven to self-mutilation on a daily basis. Lose one CHA for every 10% of the Pact skill. Mutilations become more bizarre and extreme.	C, L
Self-Pitying	Destined to sorrow. Nothing brings comfort or pleasure. All dreams are nightmares, all experiences fleeting and unfulfilling. Life is futile. Retirement to the realm of the patron is the only solace.	C, L
Servant of Myshella	Become obsessed with becoming a Hero of Myshella, placing yourself completely at her service.	L
Sex Obsession	Unable to derive self-sexual gratification under any circumstances. Become enraged and over- more obsessed with sex and self-gratification as a result.	C
Silence of Maluk	Must stitch-shut the mouth (-1 CHA). Must communicate through half-audible mumbles, the written word and sign language.	C
Single Tongue	Refuse to speak in any language other than Low Speech, High Speech or Mong (which has no written form).	C
Skyclad	Never wear clothing - save for a loincloth to protect modesty.	E
Stalwart	Never dodge a blow.	C, L
Straasha's Suffering	Weeps almost constantly at the injustices Grome and Pyaray have heaped on Straasha by cutting-off lakes from the sea and haunting the depths of the oceans.	W
Sword Rule	The world is set to become a dominion of the male Sword Rulers. All adherents to the Sword	L, some C
Paranoia	Rulers must be destroyed.	
Target	Become a known and visible target to those who serve your enemies.	All
Tedious	Become an oppressive bore on one particular subject, imparting all knowledge about it in long, rambling, tedious eulogies.	L
Terraphobia	Develop a fear of dirt and the soil. Must bathe or wash regularly (every few hours).	W, L
Tic	Develop a nervous tic, mannerism or speech impediment.	All
Tovik's Armour	Wear only leather armour, as Tovik himself wore.	L
Unclean	Fear clean water.	C, E
Unkillable	Develop the overwhelming belief that one is invulnerable to mortal weapons.	C, L
Urban Vengeance	Gain an increasing desire to visit a certain city and destroy it. Imrryr, say, or Tanelorn.	C, L
Vegetarian	Eat only vegetables.	E, L
Vigil	Undergo a regular vigil of 3 days and 3 nights.	L
Violent Temper	Develop a vile, argumentative and violent temper threatening to destabilise all attempts to remain calm.	C, L
Water Consumer	Drink only water.	W
Waterlogged	Skin becomes bloated, blotched and translucent, as though submerged in brine for months. -2 CHA.	C
Whisperer's Beard	Tentacles form in place of a beard, -3 CHA.	C, W

HEROIC ABILITIES

Cults create champions: those who serve the cause and become favoured vassals of their patron Lord. Elric is Arioch's earthly champion, for example, and Gaynor the Damned is the champion of many different lords.

Adventurers in *Elric of Melniboné* can become champions through progress within a cult and, as heroes of that cult, may gain Heroic Abilities either as a benefit of their position or through specific quests or DreamQuests.

The Heroic Abilities detailed in the *RuneQuest Core Rulebook* are available and this section defines several more.

Advantage of Numbers

Requirements: DEX 15 or higher, Combat Style or Evade 70% or higher.

Hero Points: 5.

Duration: A number of Combat Rounds equal to DEX.

The Adventurer is adept at fighting large groups of enemies at once, using the press of foes to his advantage. Enemies fight themselves, getting in each other's way and blocking their own attacks as the Adventurer nimbly dances through the carnage. For the duration of the ability's effect, he gains an extra Combat Action each round that can only be spent on parrying and evading attacks. This extra Combat Action cannot be used to avoid attacks from the first foe to attack the Adventurer in a round.

Animal Ally

Requirements: POW 15 or higher, Lore (Regional) or Survival 70%.

Hero Points: 5.

Duration: Permanent.

The Adventurer has won the loyalty of an animal ally of some sort. Common animal allies include dogs, horses, crows and wolves. This animal is drawn to the Adventurer and will help him to the best of its ability. It might attack foes, carry a message, warn him of an ambush or track down lost allies. The animal is not necessarily trained in any way and may not always obey the Adventurer, nor is the animal obviously supernatural in any way. If the animal is attacked or mistreated, it may flee. By spending a Magic Point, the Adventurer can summon the animal ally at a distance (it knows its friend is in need). Magic Points can also be spent to protect the animal (each Magic Point spent reduces the damage suffered by the animal by one point).

Commanding Voice

Requirements: CHA 15+, Influence 70% or higher.

Hero Points: 5.

Duration: 1 round.

The Adventurer's voice has the ring of command and lesser men leap to attention when he speaks. The Adventurer gains a +40% bonus to Influence attempts when trying to take charge in a crisis or when ordering subordinates around (not necessarily his subordinates but anyone used to being part of a hierarchy).

Devilish Charm

Requirements: CHA 15 or higher, Influence 70% or higher.

Hero Points: 5.

Duration: 1 round.

The Adventurer has a roguish charm and daring that is irresistible and puts others off their guard. He may use the Influence skill even on his worst enemies – for example, trying to Influence someone just after trying to kill them, by spinning some specious and elaborate argument masking the true facts.

Dream Theft Immunity

Requirements: POW 15 or Higher, Persistence 70% or higher.

Hero Points: 5.

Duration: Permanent.

The Adventurer is immune to dream theft of any type and is also immune to the attacks of Dream Demons.

Eidetic Memory

Requirements: INT 15+, Persistence 70% or higher.

Hero Points: 5.

Duration: 1 round.

By spending a Magic Point, the Adventurer can recall perfectly anything he has ever seen, even if he only glimpsed it for a moment. More Magic Points are needed to recall especially subtle details. Just being able to perfectly recall an event does not mean the Adventurer automatically knows everything about it – he may have failed to spot some clue, or it may have been too dark to read all of a page of text, even if the Adventurer saw some of it. The GM has final authority over all uses of eidetic memory.

Forgettable

Requirements: CHA 15+, Stealth 50% or higher, Disguise 50% or higher.

Hero Points: 5.

Duration: 1 round.

You have a knack for blending into the crowd, so much so that others overlook you and forget you. Anyone who meets you must make a successful Insight test to remember anything more than the most basic details ('I think he was... average, really'). You may also vanish into a crowd as long as your appearance vaguely matches that of the people around you – you cannot hide in a crowd if you are the only one wearing plate armour, for example.

Madness of Purpose

Requirements: POW 15 or higher. Insight 70% or higher.

Hero Points: 5.

Duration: Once per day.

The Adventurer's utter disregard for the worth of all things, including his life and the lives of others, allows him to risk his life in an insane fashion if it furthers his goals. The Adventurer may succeed automatically at one Resilience or Persistence check per day, with the exception of checks made to resist sorcery.

Master of Own Fate

Requirements: CHA 15 or higher. Insight 70% or higher.

Hero Points: 5.

Duration: Once Per Day.

You have been handed your own fate. It is yours to determine. You cannot be manipulated by any god although the god that may have granted you this gift cannot be denied a service if he or she requests it of you. For you, nothing is predetermined; your doom is your own.

Once per day you may select the outcome of *any* skill used either by you or someone else. You determine if that skill is a critical success, success, failure or fumble. If you do not use this ability in one day, it is lost: one cannot stock-pile uses for later use.

Player of the Great Game

Requirements: CHA 15 or higher. Influence, Lore (Arioch) or Lore (Chaos) 70%.

Hero Points: 8.

Duration: Permanent.

Arioch has shared with you the secrets of the Eternal Struggle and you are now one of the privileged few to understand the complexities of the Multiverse and how Chaos and Law constantly battle for supremacy. This knowledge courses through you as an almost tangible aura, marking you out as special. You gain a bonus of +20% to the following skills:

- Lore (Million Spheres)
- Oratory
- Perception
- Seduction

Rune Immunity

Requirements: Magic Points 15 or higher. Persistence 70% or higher.

Hero Points: 5.

Duration: 1 Round.

The Adventurer is naturally resistant to the effects of one Rune used against him. The Rune must be specified, hence there are

many variations of this ability. Usually a hero with this ability will choose a Rune associated with his cult.

Scientific Genius

Requirements: INT 15 or higher, Mechanisms 50% or higher, Engineering 50% or higher and Rune of Law 50% or higher.

Hero Points: 3.

Duration: Special.

The Adventurer's research into the arts of Arkyn has allowed him to understand the basic principles behind mechanical science. The Adventurer can build automata in half the usual time, although the Magic Point cost to power it is still the same.



Sense Supernatural

Requirements: POW 15 or higher, Perception 70% or higher.

Hero Points: 3.

Duration: A number of rounds equal to the Adventurer's POW.

The Adventurer can sense the presence of the supernatural. He cannot discern its location and this ability does not allow him to infallibly tell who the evildoer is but for the duration of this ability, the Adventurer can smell evil. He may use his Perception score instead of Insight when trying to determine if someone is trustworthy and he can detect the presence of supernatural effects or creatures, even invisible ones.

Soul Sever

Requirements: POW dedicated to Pact must be 8 or higher; Weapon Skill 90% or higher.

Hero Points: 10.

Duration: Once per Day.

Your weapons strike for minimal damage against Hit Points. However, normal *rolled* damage is applied to the opponent's Magic Points. When these fall to -2 or below, the victim's soul is severed from the body and sent directly to the Hells of your Patron

If the body of the victim is still relatively uninjured, it continues to function, zombie-like, stumbling around aimlessly, moaning, shrieking and flailing, until it starves to death. The soul-less body *cannot* be commanded or manipulated by you.

Spirit Sight

Requirements: POW 15 or higher, Perception 90% or higher, Scent Evil.

Hero Points: 5.

Duration: 1 round.

The Adventurer is so attuned to the supernatural that they can project their senses onto the spirit plane. The Adventurer can see, and may even be able to communicate with, spirits within a range of metres equal to the Adventurer's POW. This ability functions much like the Spirit Walking skill but is limited to the Acolyte level actions (see RuneQuest Core Rulebook, Page 46). An Adventurer who possesses both Spirit Sight and the Spirit Walking skill gains a +20% bonus to his Spirit Walking rolls.

The Adventurer can also see where a soul has been hidden or currently resides.

Steely Glare

Requirements: CHA 15 or higher, Influence, Brawn or Insight 70% or higher.

Hero Points: 5.

Duration: 1 round.

The Adventurer can intimidate his opponent with a savage glare. Using Steely Glare is a free action. The opponent must make an opposed Persistence test against the Adventurer's Influence; if he fails, he suffers a -25% penalty to his attack rolls this round.

Sudden Strike

Requirements: DEX 15 or higher, any one melee Combat Style 90%.

Hero Points: 10.

Duration: 1 round.

The Adventurer explodes into action, attacking many foes at once. The Adventurer gets three extra Combat Actions, which can only be used for attacks. No foe may be attacked more than once with these bonus Combat Actions. The Adventurer also gains a +5 bonus to Strike Rank for this round only. Sudden Strike may only be activated in the first round of a combat.

Zeal

Requirements: CON 15 or higher, Resilience 90% or higher.

Hero Points: 5.

Duration: 1 Round.

You may ignore the effects of Serious or Major Wounds for the round; you do not need to drop weapons if your arm is incapacitated, your movement is not hindered by your maimed leg and you do not need to make Resilience tests to stay conscious if your chest, head or abdomen are wounded. The benefits of this Preternatural Gift only last for one turn; you will have to spend another Magic Point next round to keep fighting without penalties.

CULTS OF CHAOS



A war rages throughout the Multiverse and the forces of Chaos seek to perpetuate the struggle – not to win it. The cults of Chaos fight a steady battle of attrition against the forces of order, employing malice and subtlety to erode Law’s grasp on the Young Kingdoms. Before Pan Tang brings its own, unruly anarchy into the frame, ultimately signalling the world’s doom, Chaos is content to work at a steady pace, gnawing at Law’s power like a dog patiently worrying an ancient, unremitting, bone.

Chaos is not represented by grand temples and churches in the Young Kingdoms. Only two exceptions exist: the shrines to a variety of Chaos Lords in Imrryr and Hwamgaarl; elsewhere, Chaos is content with small, discreet shrines or none at all. Its adherents meet in secretive, out of the way places, conferring over a hastily scratched symbol of Chaos – eight arrows radiating from a central hub – or some other totem or relic of their cult. Worship and veneration is private and unostentatious. Agendas are hushed and discussed in oblique tones. Ceremonies and rituals are intense but not necessarily elaborate. Creativity and freedom from restraint are valued far more than the trappings of ritual and doctrine. Chaos has certain rules, guidelines, but the personal dedication to the cause is of far greater importance than robes, incense, idols and grovelling prayers.

Chaos is as much an ideal and a philosophy as it is a faith or religion. It perpetuates because ideas and philosophies constantly change and evolve. Rituals and accoutrements, such as temples, fixed shrines and monolithic relics, are immovable and stagnate. In time, such symbols rot or crumble. Ideas, on the other hand, change and are transferred.

As does Chaos.

THE WAR OF CHAOS

In the Young Kingdoms, certain Lords of Chaos are well known: Arioch, Chardhros, Mabelode, Xiombarg and so on. But Melniboné, Chaos’s strongest and oldest mortal ally, knows of several others whose names have been largely forgotten. The reason for the ascendancy of one set of Chaos Lords over another is due to, Melnibonéan scholars believe, a war in hell, fought before the compromise forged at R’lin K’ren A’a, which established the rules of the Cosmic Struggle.

Seven Lords of Chaos met their doom in this civil war: Aesma, Alastor, Haborym, Marthrim, Nizilf’km, Saebos and Verdelet. These, myths and DreamQuests tell, were the progenitors of Arioch and his brethren. They were forgers of universes and commanders of vast power. They represented the unchainable spirit of Chaos and could not be forced to enter into rules concerning the supremacy of the Multiverse. They sought total control. But some, like Slortar and Arioch, knew that, without Law, without a continual fight, neither Law nor Chaos could perpetuate. These elder Lords of Chaos would doom the entire cause of Chaos. They were confronted. War resulted. Arioch, the Sword Rulers and the other, now familiar Lords of Chaos prevailed and the likes of Aesma and Marthrim were deposed, although not killed. Their names were largely forgotten and their veneration confined to a few mad sorcerers of the Dragon Isle who sought-out their secrets and embraced the collective insanity of these deposed gods.

The cults of these gods are included in this chapter. They have little representation in the *Elric* saga, save as names Elric calls upon when battling the Mist Giant, Bellbane, but their very

names imply an existence, even one that is forgotten. These Elder Lords of Chaos can thus form part of the cult canon available to those Adventurers who choose to serve Chaos. And, who knows: as the forces of Law and Chaos prepare for their final battle, these Elder Lords may be preparing their own agents and battle-lines to stand with (or even oppose) the accepted Lords of Chaos as they wage war for the fate of the Multiverse.

TEMPLES, SHRINES AND OTHER ACCOUTREMENTS

It is possible to wander the streets of most major cities of the Young Kingdoms and be completely oblivious to the influence of Chaos. There will be no insanely designed, demon-raised temples; no hideous statues or idols. In cities such as Ilmar, Raschil or Andlermain, where Chaos most certainly enjoys representation, there is barely any evidence of its presence. Cultists know where to gather through discreet signs: a concealed symbol or rune; perhaps a pattern of clashing colours or a particular building's name ('Terhali's Refuge' for an inn; or 'The House of Crimson' for a merchant hall). Chaos gathers where subtlety has greater assurance. Its principal residence is in the souls of those who follow it.

Priests of Chaos are not to be found in garish robes or draped in obscene jewellery. Their rank is most likely represented by their Compulsions and habits. Ceremonies are hushed affairs – relatively simple but heavy with meaning – and always focused on the cult's agenda. When a sacrifice of some description is required (as it often is: Lords of Chaos demand Blood and Souls), it is conducted in a straight-forward, business-like manner. The Lords of Entropy do not demand hair-tearing exhortations; they demand the blood and the soul. Everything else is extraneous.

Pan Tang

The exception to all of the above is Pan Tang and its capital, Hwamgaarl. Here, the entire nation is devoted to Chaos. The Screaming Statues that watch over the harbour are an apt example of the ostentatious approach to worship. In the insane city of Hwamgaarl, where the worship of Chaos is no secret, the bizarre, disturbing temples, defying mortal geometry, are very much in evidence. Leering statues and idols peer down on the cramped streets, some of them moving as people pass beneath them and the screams and cries of the doomed (both reluctantly and voluntarily) echo long and hard around the grim buildings and narrow alleys.

In Pan Tang the accoutrements of Chaotic veneration are in abundance. Pan Tang is unconcerned with outside interference and has no desire to do anything but revel in its adoration of the Lords of Entropy. Blood clouds the sewers as voluminously as urine. The acrid scent of death, mingled with exotic herbs and narcotics, wafts over the city like a blasphemous perfume, heady and forbidden. Priests display their allegiances in their gaudy dress and personal disfigurements and mutilations. The

mad are celebrated as the ultimate examples of Chaotic devotion, their rabid, pained cries and moans encouraged by the half-mad populace that is eager to see how the gods they worship touch their most beloved adherents.

If an adherent of Chaos seeks accoutrements and overt demonstrations of Chaos's true energy, Hwamgaarl is the place to come.

The Hall of Many Ways – A Notable Chaos Temple of Hwamgaarl

Most Chaos temples in Hwamgaarl are dedicated to more than one god, housing shrines and altars for a variety of cults or simply for casual worship. The largest temples are complexes of many floors, usually built either with eight sides, or with eight wings radiating from a central hub in emulation of the symbol of Chaos. Smaller temples are dedicated to only one or two gods, or a single cult, and might be built to an aesthetic pleasing to the builder or some other design satisfying the nature of the cult.



Architectural styles and motifs are always bizarre and disturbing: eyeless, leering faces, hideous demonic representations and human indulgence suffering in all its forms. Human bone is a favoured incorporation and the Gate of Ivory, the main entrance into the grand Hall of Many Ways is composed of the fused skeletons of several hundred slaves, sacrifices and other unfortunates (many of them the original builders of the main structure).

Hall of Many Ways

Eight wings radiate from a central, circular tower of obsidian, each wing made from a different material and each dedicated to a different cult or god with shrines, offices and suites for the faithful. The Hall of Many Ways dominates the skyline close to the Theocrat's palace (which is, itself, a shrine of Chaos) and its countless rooms, chambers, dungeons and passages challenge the sanity of outsiders and locals alike.

Central Hub

Entered by the Gate of Ivory, an enormous arched affair made of human bone, one enters the Central Hub where acolytes wearing masks depicting distorted human features (some masks are made of human flesh; others of stone or metal), greet every entrant and demand a sacrifice. The sacrifice must be carried out there and then but must always be in blood. A sliced thumb is every bit agreeable as the sliced throat of a slave brought along for the purpose and the blood is collected in a vast central reservoir in the centre of the hall, causing the air to reek with its metallic stench. Once the sacrifice is made, visitors may take one of the eight staircases leading into the wings where veneration of the Lords of Chaos takes place.

Deathbringers

The Deathbringers' wing is a major shrine of the Deathbringer cult, a popular cult in Pan Tang and Dharijor. Scythes, gallows, gibbets and nooses decorate the dark, rough-hewn rock of the stairwell that leads up to the main worship hall. Here, an immense representation of Chardros dominates the room; a statue of sickly white marble showing the Chaos Lord as a grim-faced, but not unattractive, youth seated on a throne of human skulls, a scythe lying across his lap. Surrounding the statue are smaller rooms and galleries dedicated to Hionhurn and Chardros's lesser aspects: the Avenger, the General, the Gatekeeper of Hell, the Scythe, the Chain and the Axe.

Above the worship hall are rooms and suites occupied by the upper echelons of the cult and areas for personal sacrifice and training.

The whole wing echoes to soft moans, gasps and cries of pain. The scent and oppression of death hangs around it like a cloud and in some of the chambers and small, mausoleum-like shrines, the barriers between the Young Kingdoms and the planes governed by Chardros and those greater demons who act as his vassals are somewhat thin, aiding the sorcery of the Makers of Knots and Chains.

Halls of Indulgence

The many layers of this wing are home to those who revel in the pleasures Chaos has to offer: gluttony, abandon, creation... any pleasure one wishes to experience can be found in the Halls of Indulgence. Shrines to Slortar and Balaan, plus several minor barons and earls of Hell, proliferate and the whole wing is suffused with a vast array of enticing scents, from the headiest wines through the most hallucinatory narcotics (bought, or stolen, from dreaming Imrryr). At the centre of it all is the Nympharium, where a continual orgy is in progress and every gratification can be enjoyed. Some have not left this room for decades and their fate is sealed: a quivering, groaning, writhing mass of pale-pink flesh dominates one end of the Nympharium, where dozens of hedonistic Pan Tangians have spent so long together in sexual congress that their bodies have melded together into a single, orgasmic heap. One need not join the mass; other couplings are available but if one should be drawn to it (and judging by the sounds of pleasure it emits, the finest sensations are to be had), the indulger must make an opposed test with his Resilience against the mass's Persistence of 90%. If the test fails, then the Adventurer begins to bond with it; withdrawing incurs 1D4 points of damage to 1D3 random locations (but always including the Abdomen). If the test is fumbled, then the Adventurer becomes a permanent participant, forever joined to the orgiastic morass, sapped of intelligence and will and being steadily incorporated into its form, limb-by-limb, until it forms a permanent part of the whole.

The Halls of Indulgence are addictive in, and of, themselves. For every day that one spends in here a Persistence roll must be made, at a penalty of -10% for each day spent beyond the first. If the Persistence test is failed, then the Adventurer cannot leave the Halls for that day and, even if he does, their lure constantly plays on the mind as a Compulsion, beckoning the unfortunate back to its delights.

Scriptorium of Maluk

This wing is a single, mighty library where the one-eyed, mute, scribes of Hwamgaarl sit in silent rows – hundreds of them – creating scrolls and books of staggering beauty and complexity, extolling the rites and traditions of Chaos (accurate and contrived) as decreed by the current theocrat and dozens of predecessors. Each finished work is scrutinised by a separate scholar who frantically edits, approves or rejects the work and, once it reaches a stage of satisfaction, is filed away in one of thousands of slots or spaces in the shelves and racks that stretch between the floor and the roof.

Those who bear the current theocrat's seal may request a particular work for personal study, although, with no accurate cataloguing system, retrieving a work might take weeks, months or years. Frustrated scholars return daily to check on the progress of a search whilst others, successful recipients of a tome they require, squat in the dimly-lit reading cells, pouring over the words, attempting to glean meaning from the work they have requested.

Anyone spending time in study of a particular tome in the scriptorium must spend a week in study to gain a 1D6-1% increase

in a particular Lore that interests them. If the improvement roll is zero then the tome holds nothing of interest or use. Waiting for a written work to be traced requires a 1D100 roll to be made, the result indicating the number of days it takes to locate the work requested.

Maze of Hwarma'gaal

Chardros is Pan Tang's patron Lord of Chaos but it is the minor duke of Chaos, Hwarma'gaal, that is the city's guardian. It was his fiendish invention that created the screaming statues lining the city's walls and this twisted hall, filled with criss-crossing staircases, numerous mezzanines and landings, concealed nooks, crannies and alcoves, is his own particular temple. Negotiating the maze of stairs and rooms, one comes at last to the roof, which overlooks the whole of the city and Hwarma'gaal's statue; a vast, bronze eye, its pupil divided by the symbol of Chaos, gazing out over the twisted buildings. Hwarma'gaal has only a small cult led by the theocrat himself and it is dedicated to realising Hwarma'gaal's perpetual glory and ascension to the capital of an empire to rival that of the Bright Empire. Hwarma'gaal, according to Pan Tangian lore, controls several planes where the Mabden rule and his purpose in bringing the Mabden of Pan Tang to the Young Kingdoms was to find a seat for this empire and extend its rule. The various levels of the maze mirror the complexity of Hwarma'gaal's will in the planes he controls and climbing through them to reach the statue at the top symbolic of the Mabden's overall struggle to rule as far and as wide as they can. Climbing the maze is a pilgrimage of all adherents to the city cult of Hwarma'gaal and many lose their way in trying to negotiate the myriad passages. Guides and route maps are unreliable because the interior architecture changes in subtle ways from one to the next but those who succeed in making eight separate tests against their Pact (Hwarma'gaal) are considered successful in reaching the summit of the maze. Each failed test represents a day of being lost amongst the stairs, passages and shifting levels.

Roost of Vezhan

An enormous chamber without interior floors and given over to the worship of Vezhan, the King with Wings. Here, thousands of birds of all types, shapes, sizes and colours flap, glide, hop, squawk, peck and squabble, creating a barely tolerable cacophony. The floor is covered in their stinking droppings and a small army of slaves struggle with small, silver shovels, attempting to control the guano, which is burned on numerous small pyres circling the perimeter of the roost. The smoke is pungent and yellow-tinged, curling up to the single vent in the ceiling of the wing, hundreds of metres above the floor.

Vezhan is represented by a crudely formed statue made from gold, his features indistinct but his wings are finely detailed, stretched to their full, 20 metre span. The idol dominates the centre of the hall and is, inevitably, guano-covered although the slaves tend and polish it, doing their most to keep it free of the excrement.

Halls of the Sword Rulers

The final three wings of the Hall of Many Ways are dedicated to the Sword Rulers: Mabelode, Xiombarg and Arioch. Mabelode's is the largest; a majestic, steel and iron-wreathed edifice where every footfall clangs on floors and decks of metal. Those who venerate Mabelode the Faceless offer their worship and sacrifices here, praying before one of the countless squat, bulbous, faceless idols representing the King of the Swords that are scattered throughout this metal labyrinth.

Xiombarg's Hall is divided into eight levels, each being a shrine to one of the Queen of the Sword's representations.

- In the first she is represented in her male aspect – an armoured, eight-armed monstrosity with steel serpents for hair and swords wreathed in black flame.
- In the second she is the Queen Resplendent – a woman of incredible beauty, voluptuous and superior, her hair of black iron clothing her alabaster nakedness whilst her bejewelled feet trample her enemies beneath her.
- In the third she is the lion-faced demon fighting the forces of Order with her twin scimitars
- In her fourth, the Concubine of Chaos, wife of Mabelode, sculpted in blood-red marble preparing to accept the King of the Sword's embrace.
- In the fifth representation she is the leering, skull-faced demon with hair of fire, marauding through many worlds (each represented by a fist-sized pearl), her greatsword swinging pendulum-like as reality itself is severed and reformed.
- In her sixth aspect she is the seven-faced Tormentor of Time, causing it to flow in contorted ways and, spending any length of time in here, worshippers lose all track of time and may even emerge believing that they have travelled backwards through it.
- In the seventh aspect Xiombarg is the Begetter of Heroes, a pregnant, faceless sow spawning champions of Chaos in all their demonic splendour, each born from her capacious womb with a sword in hand.
- Finally, Xiombarg's most triumphant aspect is as the Empress of Swords, the entire Multiverse under her rule and the floor of the shrine is made up of one million tiles, each bearing a unique symbol said to name every plane of the Million Spheres. Above it, a statue of silver, marble and ivory, Empress Xiombarg rides in her chariot, Mabelode and Arioch as her sword carriers, a look of beautiful, grim superiority etched on her gorgeous face, as she surveys the conquered realms.

Arioch's Hall venerates Arioch as the Knight of the Swords, depicting him as Xiombarg's subservient champion. The representations of Arioch portray him as a handsome, armoured warrior bearing two huge runeswords as he carves new lands of Chaos out of the ordered realms of Law. In the frieze that runs the length of the southern wall of the wing, Arioch is shown in direct opposition to Earl Aubec, the two clearly being different aspects of the same person. Xiombarg in her Empress aspect

opposes Myshella and the symbolic dualism is calculating and deliberate. Portraying Duke Arioch as a Chaos version of Aubec is a clear challenge to those who still venerate the Lormyrian hero, whilst, at the same time, devaluing Arioch's role in the Chaotic dukedoms – a clear challenge to the position Arioch maintained in the Bright Empire.

Melniboné

Once, the vast and extensive towers of the Dreaming City hosted hundreds of temples and shrines to the Lords of Chaos, many of whom have been forgotten or even destroyed in the petulant wars that the Lords of Entropy fight amongst themselves. Indeed, such was the extent of the veneration for Chaos in Imrryr, the gods themselves often trod the streets of the city, feeling welcomed to walk amongst their faithful.

Chaos was worshipped with sophistication in Imrryr. All the cruelties and blasphemies one associates and expects from Pan Tang were present; in fact, Imrryr pioneered them but the approach Melniboné took to its rites and ceremonies were conducted with artistry, thoughtfulness, attention to detail and aimed to achieve something that was unique and highly cultured, whilst, at the same time, venerating and reflecting the wants, needs and desires of the Chaos Lord being worshipped.

Melnibonéan temples and shrines, then, were, and are, far removed from the edifices found in Pan Tang, which are gaudy and primitive in comparison. The temples dedicated to Arioch are sedate, relaxing affairs, almost like art galleries but hung with living works of art and works in progress. Indeed, some temples appear to be, and are, residential homes, where veneration and contemplation of Chaos is performed within the mind, aided by good wine, strong drugs and creative sexual congress. This is particularly so of those cults venerating Anara, the Six Breasted; her shrines are bedrooms, boudoirs and bordellos and worship is performed through the act of love (the more energetic, creative and sado-masochistic the better) – not through any particular set of prayers or rituals.

The worship of Chaos and hence the way it is represented throughout Imrryr, is based very much on creativity and the celebration of individual desires. Few are compelled to worship Arioch, Chardros, Anara or any of the other Dukes of Hell in any proscribed way. Temples and shrines are therefore a mixture of the innocuous and the awe-inspiring, depending on the whim of the worshipper. Like Chaos itself, consistency is irrelevant; personal expression is foremost.

AESMA

Aesma, Mother of Chaos, is believed to be the mother of all the Lords of Chaos and the driving force behind the Eternal War with Law. Known by a variety of names, including the Womb of Entropy, The Hag and Aesma The Seductress, Giver of Pleasures

and Tearer of Hearts. She is all things to all men and all women and all who gaze upon her are consumed by lust. Her promise is the Dark Orgy of the Kharonata Halls, where her faithful are transported during obscene mating rituals that provide unparalleled pleasure. Aesma's consort is Slortar.

Purpose and History

Revered primarily in Imrryr and Hwamgaarl, Aesma's small, devoted cult believes that the progeny of the ritual orgies held in her name are demons destined to rule the world. All children resulting from the orgies – and there are many – are born with a Demon Feature and frequently disappear taken, it is believed, in the Kharonata Halls to serve Aesma directly. The cult has little purpose but to indulge itself but is quite distinct from the cult of Ecstatic Indulgence as it serves Aesma only and not a slew of Chaos Lords.

This is also an old cult with its roots in primal fertility rituals practised by Melniboné when the empire was in its infancy. Aesma, then, was misunderstood and believed to be a benevolent goddess of grain and crop. It was only later, when the fertility rituals became more orgiastic and extreme, and the first demon children born, that Aesma's true nature was understood. Terhali, the Jade Empress of Melniboné, is believed to have been the result of the Dark Orgy although Terhali was a disciple of Xiombarg and not Aesma.

Myths

The Mother of Chaos (Mythic Resonance 70%): The Gratification of Chaos

From the stuff of Chaos Aesma arose, perfect and resolute. She needed no consort but desired one and so spawned Slortar with whom she mated. Each mating produced a Lord or Lady of Chaos and when they mated more were born. Aesma accepted any and all lovers. Her appetite could never be diminished. In each of her children she inculcated the nature of Chaos and gave each a role whilst she reserved for herself that of Mother and Sister.

She built for herself the Kharonata Halls: a city of immense size and beauty that occupied an entire realm. In its countless rooms Lords and Ladies of Chaos were born, given purpose and allowed to repose. At the heart of the Halls, attended by dancing pipers of insane intellect, Aesma writhed and birthed, 1,000 eager lovers clawing at her immense and welcoming body.

As her children developed their own roles and agendas Aesma became distant from them and ceased to care: only her lovers, dancers and demon children provided any form of amusement. As Aesma ceased the care, so did the Lords of Chaos. Slortar was first, because he was spurned first; but others followed in his wake and soon the Lords of Chaos deserted Kharonata and conquered realms elsewhere.

Kharonata squats at the heart of the Multiverse and is reached through the ecstatic writhings of the Dark Orgy. To undertake the orgy is to DreamQuest and dwell in the Kharonata Halls where the most faithful are chosen to service Aesma. From her, and for her, Chaos will fight and prevail over Law – even though Aesma herself has forgotten all about Law's existence, such is her focus on the pleasures she continually craves.

Beliefs

Cultists believe that the Dark Orgy connects them with Aesma and they are correct. Those who take part in it have a chance equal to their Persistence of DreamQuesting to Kharonata where they undergo congress with Aesma herself. Those who fail a subsequent Persistence roll against the Resonance of the DreamQuest (70%) remain in Kharonata whilst their bodies remain on the mortal plane, rutting idiotically and incessantly. Many never awake from the DreamQuest and starve to death. Few care.

Worshippers

Pleasure-seekers and demon-obsessives.

Membership

The cult has only Initiates and Priestesses, Aesma's Daughters. Initiates must pledge at least three points of POW to the Pact with Aesma, receiving a Gift and a Compulsion automatically.

Priestesses must have successfully conducted the Kharonata DreamQuest and emerged, and have given birth to a child from the Dark Orgy. Priestesses lead the Dark Orgy, determining when it starts, where it is held and when it ends – if ever.

Gifts and Compulsions

Every Initiate receives a Gift and must accept at least one Compulsion, the first always being the desire to partake in the Dark Orgy whenever summoned to do so.

Gifts

Abstinence
Change Gender
Chaotic Blessing
Endurance
Slave
Tireless
Youth

Compulsions

Acute Insomnia
Black Widow
Blood Sacrifice
Carnal Murderer
Dedicated Lover
Demonic Fervour
Gluttony

Lust for a Goddess
Nightmare
Paranoia
Rapist
Sadism
Sex Obsession

Cult Skills

Acrobatics, Athletics, Lore (Aesma), Lore (Chaos), Insight, Persistence, Resilience, Seduction.

Cult Runes and Magic

The cult teaches no Runes but does teach Command and Summon (Demon of Desire).

Heroic Abilities Available

None.

Retribution

None.

Politics and Relationships

Members of Aesma's cult may also be members of the Cult of Ecstatic Indulgence. It has no other relationships.

ALASTAR

Alastar is the weaver of the doom of mortals. On his loom he crafts the stuff of Chaos into realms and other forms, and on the same loom weaves the fate of men into a cloth that clothes them from birth. He knows, it is said, the path each and every mortal will take and the millions of cloths he has woven hang in his gloomy workshop, charting the fate of each and every man, woman and child.

Those who please Alastar are given their own cloth, which is to say, their fate is made their own. Alastar's devotees are wandering, half-mad prophets and sages who have glimpsed the millions of individual fates and wept their despair, only to be handed their own fate to make with it what they will.

Purpose and History

Mortals have always believed one of two things: that no one commands their fate, or that their fate is sealed from birth with all events being part of some greater tapestry. Alastar's followers believe that Alastar is the weaver of these tapestries and their unraveller. Through Alastar all things become clear and the only way to become the master of one's destiny is to venerate Alastar and gain control of the tapestry he has woven for them.

Alastar fulfils the need amongst mortals for answers and confirmation. That that confirmation may be of little comfort

is of no consequence: Alastar's existence is proof enough that a higher lord controls all destinies, spun out of the stuff of the Multiverse and unchangeable unless Alastar wills it.

As a Lord of Chaos, Alastar occupies a curious place. He has not, and cannot, weave the fate of the Lords of the Higher Planes but he can weave the destinies of those who serve them and so, obliquely, Alastar has control over them. Before the conclave at R'lin K'ren A'a, Arioch asked Alastar to weave the fate of the Eternal Struggle. He did so but would not reveal its pattern to Arioch. In rage Arioch condemned Alastar to become one with his loom, unable to cease weaving but always to weave destinies that would serve Arioch and those who shared his views. Alastar is thus doomed by his own hand to weave the fates of the Eternal Champions and other agents who serve the Higher Powers.

Myths

Alastar Weaves the Multiverse (Mythic Resonance 80%) – All Fates are Personal: The first cloth Alastar wove was his own. In its pattern he saw the nature of Chaos: to Fight Without Winning, and saw that for this to come to pass pawns would be necessary. In many realms surrounding his workshop were mortals who dwelt in blissful ignorance, without direction or purpose, existing sometimes in idylls and sometimes in states of war. For each Alastar wove a piece of cloth, which set a course for all of mortal kind. He offered the cloth to the mortals closest to his workshop and they accepted, forming clothes for themselves. These mortals were thus bound to the fates Alastar had woven even though they had no concept of what had befallen them.

The Lords of Chaos were pleased with Alastar's work because now mortals were forced to worship them. Arioch went to Alastar's workshop. 'You must weave the ultimate doom: that of the Eternal Struggle. We must know its outcome.'

'There is no outcome,' Alastar said, not looking up from his weaving.

'Even for the Lords of Law? Would you not weave their fate?'

'No. Not even for Law. It weaves its own.'

'Then how are we to prevail in the battles to come?' Arioch asked, peevishly.

'We cannot know. We can only guess. Only mortals can decide that outcome and each has his own cloth to follow.'

'Then weave for me cloth that will make mortals serve Chaos.' Arioch demanded.

'I weave what I weave. I do not question it or control it. The pattern is not of my design, only my assembly.'

'Then you will never leave here,' Arioch said. 'You will weave until All Things End, if they ever do. You have, by denying me, woven your own fate.' Alastar simply shrugged. From his loom he took a length of cloth, which was pure white. He held it up and regarded it. Arioch, still angry, was also curious. 'What is that?' He demanded to know.

'This, I think, is the cloth that will have an influence on many things, in many times, in many ways. Your own ways included.' He hung the cloth above his loom.

'But it is blank,' Arioch pointed out. Alastar smiled for the one and only time.

'No. It is white.' He said. 'It has the capacity to be all colours, all patterns, in all ways. You fear it, Arioch, I think.'

And Arioch said nothing.

Beliefs

Alastar's devotees believe that Chaos has control over the destiny over all mortals, no matter what their allegiance and only those who worship Alastar have any hope of gaining self-determination. Of course, as worshiping Alastar is part of destiny, cultists also believe that they have been selected by the Lords of Chaos to gain control over their own fate and are thus special in ways all other mortals are not.

The cult also believes that it is possible to determine the fate of an individual from their manner, habits, style of dress and so on. Alastar cultists therefore spend a great deal of time in noticing such things and a common habit is to subject all newly-met strangers to a lengthy appraisal (abstracted as an Insight roll) in a bid to determine their fate. Some, who have the Fate Gift, are more accurate than others in this regard.

Worshippers

Alastar's worshippers are those who believe they are in some way special to all others. Such people are born with this feeling and, indeed, it is woven into their fabric by Alastar himself. When such individuals learn of Alastar's existence it is something of an awakening – a realisation that one is truly different. Worshippers therefore tend to carry themselves with a somewhat superior attitude that grows stronger as the Pact deepens.

The cult also believes that, at some appropriate point, Alastar will give the faithful their own fate, removing it from the realm of the gods and creating true self-determination. This is the goal of all cultists.

Membership

Standard.

The cult has no temples; simply collections of like-minded individuals who are at different stages of 'awakening' as represented by their cult rank. It is common for Alastar cultists to congregate on an informal basis to exchange knowledge and information that will help them gain their own fate. High Lords/Priests of the cult are those who have DreamQuested to reach Alastar's workshop and be gifted their own destiny. Such individuals are feted indeed and carry with them an aura that sets them apart from the rank and file.

Benefits

Alastar's cult offers Gifts and Compulsions, plus Runes and a single Heroic Ability. The Heroic Ability is only available to those who complete the Workshop DreamQuest in which they must pass each of Alastar's eight challenges (which are always random; use the system found in the *Elric of Melniboné Core Rulebook* for DreamQuest challenges).

Gifts and Compulsions

Every Initiate to the cult must take one Gift and one Compulsion. Further Gifts and Compulsions are entirely optional.

Gifts

Combat Acuity
Divine Training
Enhanced Learning
Fate
Innate Luck
Sense Enemies
Witch Sight

Compulsions

Acute Depression
Demonic Fervour
Dread
Forbidden Knowledge
Forgetful
Hate Arioch
Never Ending Search
Nightmares
Phobia
Self-Pitying

Cult Skills

Insight, Lore (Alastar), Lore (Chaos), Lore (Million Spheres), Meditation, Perception.

Cult Runes and Magic

The cult teaches the following Runes: Bewilderment, Chaos, Contact and Sight.

Heroic Abilities Available

The cult has a single, unique, Heroic Ability: Master of Own Fate. Its description can be found on page 13 of the Benefits chapter.

The Heroic Ability is only available to those who complete the Workshop DreamQuest in which they must pass each of Alastar's eight challenges.

Retribution

The cult does not punish those who leave its path: this is, of course, all part of destiny. However, at initiation, part of the ritual is the appraisal ritual, which determines whether or not the candidate will leave. Those who will are simply not accepted.

Politics and Relationships

Alastar's cult despises Arioch but is sometimes called upon by other cults for insight and knowledge. It holds no formal alliances, however.

ARIOCH

Foremost of the Lords of Chaos, Arioch goes by many titles and has long been a patron demon of mortals, especially Melniboné where he inveigled his way into their psyche almost 10,000 years ago, as the Bright Empire began to form. It was he who seduced the Mernii towards Chaos and in return he acted as the direct patron of many emperors and sorcerers, ensuring his name and influence became synonymous with the people of the Dreaming City.

Purpose and History

Arioch is pre-eminent amongst the Lords of Chaos in the Young Kingdoms. He appears to command the nobles of Entropy and seems to be the most predisposed to taking an interest in mortal affairs. Certainly as the patron demon of Melniboné his position has been communicated far and wide so that many people, when thinking of Chaos, think only of Arioch and never of the many others who serve alongside him.

Herald of Chaos

If the myths of Melniboné are to be believed, Arioch brought the influence of Chaos into the world. It was Arioch that engineered the summit at R'lin K'ren A'a, where the terms of the Eternal Struggle were forged and he who negotiated the exodus of the Mernii from the city so that the summit could take place. Later, Arioch seduced various incarnations of the Mernii silverskin hero (White Crow, Eirik, and other variations) into using the swords Stormbringer and Mournblade to combat various enemies who plagued the earliest centuries of the Bright Empire. When Melniboné finally cleaved to Chaos, it was to Arioch that the first emperors pledged their allegiance, gaining the use of the Black Blades as part of the bargain, despite knowing their importance.

Patron of Melniboné

As the Bright Empire developed and Melniboné dedicated itself wholeheartedly to Chaos, Arioch's influence changed. He became an enabler and a tutor, assisting Melniboné in its pursuit of knowledge and power, helping them to become the

greatest race of sorcerers seen in any plane of existence. Arioch became almost a companion to the Ruby Emperors; an adviser and counsellor, rather than an aloof and omnipotent god. In this aspect Arioch guided Imrryr to the heights of its power and the love between him and the people of the Dragon Isle matured into a perpetual compact that has served subsequent emperors up to, and including, Elric himself.

Sword Ruler

The third aspect of Arioch is that of the Sword Ruler. This is his most commonly acknowledged aspect beyond Melniboné for the simple reason that the deep, loving, counselling aspect is reserved solely for Melnibonéans. Humankind cannot comprehend, or enjoy, anything like the love and comradeship Arioch offers to the elder race. Humans must content themselves with Arioch's role as one of the Blade Triumvirate; the Knight of the Swords, champion of Queen Xiombarg and King Mabelode. In this aspect Arioch is a subservient deity; a warrior and a champion of Chaos rather than an all-seeing, all-powerful ruler god. He is a war-chief and, since the decline of Melniboné and the rise of heroes like Earl Aubec, Arioch, Knight of the Swords has been depicted by the Chaotic faithful as the direct reflection of Aubec of Malador's Lawful allegiance. Those who worship Arioch as a Sword Ruler see him as a hero reclaiming what has been stolen – not as some scheming demon intent on wanton destruction. Arioch's worship in this aspect is dealt with more fully in the ***Knight of the Swords*** cult, later.

Messenger of the Court of Hell

The fourth aspect of Arioch is as the spokesman of Hell. Many isolated sorcerers and adherents of Chaos believe Arioch is not a ruler of any kind but a powerful messenger representing an altogether more powerful and dangerous authority (Slortar, perhaps, or even a Chaos Lord more ancient and, as yet, unknown). It is this aspect that most appeals to the isolated; those hungry for esoteric knowledge, obscure answers and an insight into the powers that Chaos can promise for those who cleave to its notions (if not necessarily its ideals). Here, Arioch delivers cryptic warnings, promises, hints and revelations of the nature of the Eternal Struggle, peppered with remnants of the kind of sorcery once so liberally scattered amongst the ruling elite of Melniboné.

Lord of the Seven Darks

A fifth aspect represents Arioch not as the beautiful, arch, knowledgeable noble of Chaos but as a leering, malevolent demon squatting on the edges of the reality, revelling in unrest and confusion. This is Arioch at his most base and raw – a demon of greater stature but essentially no different to the kinds of beasts residing in realms of pure Chaos that are conjured to harm, harry and hamper. This aspect has no temples or shrines save for carved idols secreted in caverns, ruins and overgrown, gloomy forests. The idols are typically hewn from blocks of dark stone and depict Arioch as a paunchy, leering, gap-mouthed being with many eyes and fat-fingered hands crossed over a distended belly. This is the Lord of the Seven Darks and an image rejected by Melnibonéans

but embraced by the simple and primitive such as the clans of Pikarayd and western Dorel. This Arioch offers nothing but a bleak assurance that Chaos is lurking at the edges of the world, awaiting a time when it will fully assert its power. Worshipping the Lord of the Seven Darks is to dabble in witchcraft and deep superstition, an essential ignorance of Chaos's true powers, potential and agenda.

Myths

The Coming of Arioch (Mythic Resonance 80%) – The Duplicity and Benevolence of Chaos; How Arioch Loves his Favoured: In those early days Arioch was a stray force upon the world, bending it subtly to his agenda – which was always secretive and always of great conceit. The Mernii, a malleable, intelligent, open people were special to him and foremost was White Crow, a renegade, like Arioch, who hungered for knowledge and power – although White Crow neither realised it nor would have acknowledged it.

To the Mernii Arioch brought knowledge of the Black Blades and the Actoriois – both treasures they would come to appreciate and loathe in equal measure. Later he brought knowledge in the form of sorcery and the arcane and, with long years of careful nurturing, the Mernii turned to Chaos as a source of power and faith, forging great alliances with many Lords of Chaos.

As the Melnibonéans came to rule the world, Arioch guided them and abetted them. Sometimes his influence was overt but, mostly, it was subtle and intricate; it was always Arioch's way.

As the Knight of the Swords he showed Melniboné the power of arms and battle. As the Lord of the Crimson Hells he showed them the paths to demons who would aid them in their conquest of many realms. As the Lord of the Seven Darks he corrupted seven emperors and so deepened Melniboné's reliance on Chaos.

He allowed the Dragon Folk to worship other gods: the elemental Lords and his cousins in the Court of Chaos. This suited his agenda and increased his control. Some fell from Arioch's grace, like Terhali the Jade Empress who usurped Arioch's standing and replaced it with that of the Empress Xiombarg. Arioch's vengeance made use of many mortal heroes who never knew what role they played in defeating those who came between Arioch and his schemes. His guises upon the earth were many too: the youth, the dark-skinned concubine, the blood-red raven and, occasionally, as White Crow himself.

When Melniboné battled the Dharzi Arioch stood aside and watched. This battle amused him and he sensed both a weakening and a defeat which, he decided, would work to his advantage. Heroes of Imrryr called for Arioch's help and found it wanting. After the battle Arioch removed himself entirely because he sensed new schemes would unfold that would require different agents and a different approach.

That time is Now. Melniboné's influence is in decay and Arioch returns to craft new champions with new deceits and new lies. He works in ways subtle and ingenious still and is ever receptive to those who love him and revere him, delivering him Blood and Souls, which are rewarded with inclusion in his grand scheme for the Eternal Battle.

Beliefs

Worshippers of Arioch in any of his aspects share a set of common beliefs.

- Arioch is a creature of rare power and wisdom, even though his place in the court of Chaos is never clearly defined.
- His province is disinformation and misdirection. His presence signifies trickery and guile, the playing of obscure games and the exploitation of his worshippers.
- Arioch is well-versed in the Eternal Struggle and knows far more than he can, or wants to, share.
- Arioch's chief desire is Blood and Souls. These feed him and bring him pleasure. It is the ultimate sacrifice and that is what he demands in return for his patronage.

The beliefs of the various aspects are:

Herald of Chaos

Arioch brought Chaos to the world to create purpose and difference. Before his arrival the world was simple and uncomplicated, unaware of its potential and thus prone to the predations of those who would exploit its simplicity. The world was a plaything of Law and the Elementals, who abused and neglected those who trusted them. Arioch saw through their schemes and, by cultivating an alliance with the Mernii, brought the world out of a Dark Age and into a world of light, rampant with possibility and creativity. Arioch broke the linear and freed the world from the simplistic desires of the Elemental Rulers and the grim slavery promised by those who championed Law. He brought magic and possibility, chance, risk and potential. Without him, the world would have stagnated and died.

Patron of Melniboné

Arioch is the pre-eminence of Chaos. The most powerful and capricious of the Dukes of Hell he loves deeply and with passion and, to those who pledge their allegiance, he offers untold knowledge and power, demanding only Blood and Souls in return. Arioch showed Melniboné the path to greatness and glory. He guided emperors and heroes. Without Arioch, there would have been no Bright Empire and no 10,000 year rule. Instead, the world would have fallen to the likes of the Karasim, the Falkryn and the stale precepts of Law that allow for no deviation and creativity.

Sword Ruler

The Knight of the Swords is the custodian of the Black Blades of Fate, wielded by Mabelode and Xiombarg against their enemies. He is the Champion of the Court of the Swords who rides out

in crusade against those who would impose their rule and inflict tedious conformity where diversity ought to exist. He is a warrior with a certain chivalry and charm but also a keeper of secrets who delights in his exclusive knowledge. He is not the most powerful of the Sword Rulers but is the weapon of their power, representing their energy and resolve in the face of many enemies.

Messenger of the Court of Hell

Arioch serves a higher court of many, many rulers. He is the custodian of arcane knowledge and chief sorcerer in a court of sorcerers. He teaches some of his secrets to those who are prepared to honour him with their own souls and lay down the souls of others in thankful sacrifice. He charms and beguiles but teaches others how to do the same. The raw power of magic flows through Arioch and he teaches sorcery as a way of manipulating magic for useful ends. He delivers the messages of the Higher Planes in abstract ways that no single mind is intended to master or understand. Through him, the secrets of Fate and Multiverse are knowable – but only to those prepared to bend their own wills beyond the bland capabilities of the mundane human intellect.

Lord of the Seven Darks

Arioch cares little for the world but watches it with wry amusement. Humans are his slaves; when he can be bothered to deal with them and if his slaves serve him well, he offers a few rewards to help alleviate the grimness of the world, which is ultimately hostile and unforgiving.

Worshippers

Arioch is only worshipped as a singular deity on Melniboné, either in the Herald or Patron aspects but sometimes as the Messenger aspect. Since the Bright Empire receded the Messenger aspect has come more to the fore and the Patron aspect has, like the empire, gone into decline, mirroring Melniboné's solipsism. When Elric takes the Ruby Throne worship of Arioch is almost forgotten and those who do worship Arioch do so in isolation and futility: as they have forgotten Arioch, *he* has forgotten *them*.

Elsewhere, a few isolated Arioch cultists and would-be sorcerers can be found around the Young Kingdoms, venerating the Messenger aspect in the hope of achieving sorcerous and arcane wisdom in the same way as the Melnibonéans. These worshippers tend to be isolated scholars leading hermetic existences that suit their arcane studies and rituals. Such worshippers tend to be feared and shunned by simpler people – understandably so when one considers that Arioch demands Blood and Souls if he is to part with any of his secrets.

Otherwise Arioch forms part of the Sword Ruler cult and his adherents model themselves on Arioch's role as the Knight of the Swords. The cult is not especially numerous but its adherents are more fanatical. The Knight of the Swords is dealt with in separate detail later.

The Lord of the Seven Darks is venerated by a few scattered clans and tribes of Pikarayd and Dorel but worship practices are not

extensive. Arioch's name is invoked to avert misfortune or as a general curse but there are few rites associated with his worship.

None of the aspects of Arioch have any specific ranks attached to them, with the exception of the Knight of the Swords. The overriding principle of Arioch's worship is individuality and creativity. Arioch has no interest in hierarchies, priests and other disciplined approaches to worship. As long as one pledges singular devotion and service and offers Blood and Souls, Arioch is satisfied.

Membership Requirements

Standard.

Arioch's worshippers must fulfil several key duties. Two are common to all aspects but the remainder depends on the aspect worshipped. The common duties are:

- Serve Arioch with singular devotion, proven through sacrificing Blood and Souls.
- Perpetuate the Eternal Struggle, preparing always for war.

Herald of Chaos

- Spread the wisdom and message of Chaos throughout the world, introducing its influence in subtle ways wherever possible.
- Subvert the simple and the ordinary; bend the linear. Introduce contradiction and complexity with every opportunity
- Operate with an easy smile and open nature but guard everything thought and felt; let no-one know the true agenda

Patron of Melniboné

- Acknowledge and venerate the Pact that Arioch established with the Dragon Isle 10,000 years ago. Allow no others to come between Arioch and that Pact.
- Promote the glory of the Bright Empire and Arioch as its patron. Reverse its stagnation so that the Golden Days of Imrryr will be returned.
- Manipulate lesser mortals to work for you and for the glory of Arioch and the Bright Empire. Cultivate greatness and awe.

Sword Ruler

- Prepare for the final battle with Law. Build an army to assist in the fight.
- Reclaim the Ordered Lands of the south for Chaos.
- Oppose the schemes of those who venerate the hero Aubec. Consider Myshellia an invader Empress and enemy.
- Trust only in the sword.

Messenger of the Court of Hell

- Be aware of the Great Game and the Eternal Struggle. Prepare to be used as an agent of the cause but do not try to understand your role.
- Study, learn and gain knowledge but share nothing. Every scrap of information contributes towards the Cosmic Game and furthers the Eternal Struggle.
- Act cryptically and with complexity. Understanding is irrelevant; only the accumulation of knowledge.

Lord of the Seven Darks

- Fear Arioch's power and the power of those who serve him.
- Erect a simple representation of Arioch in areas that strike fear, or have witnessed fearful events, so that Arioch might guard them.

Benefits

The benefits of worshipping Arioch come in the form of Gifts, Compulsions, skills, magical and arcane knowledge.

Gifts and Compulsions

A Gift can be taken at each rank but must also be accompanied by a Compulsion.

Gifts

Abstinence (any)
Change Gender
Chaotic Blessing
Divine Training
Eternal Life
Rune Mastery
Sanctuary
Sense Enemy
Slave
Youth

Compulsions

Blood sacrifice to Arioch once per week.
Human sacrifice to Arioch once per week.
Develop a fear of the simple. Only things possessed of complexity can be trusted.
Develop an irrational fear of three separate things: the dark, the cold, spiders, rats and so forth.
Become increasingly morose. As the Pact skill increases, behaviour becomes more depressive until it reaches the suicidal at the 95% level or greater.
Develop a nervous tic, mannerism or speech impediment.
Develop the overwhelming desire to slay loved ones.
Speak in convoluted, secretive, arch and knowing ways – always hinting at things you know but are forbidden to articulate.
Loathe and despise those you consider to be lesser in stature and importance than yourself. Become uninterested by the plight and suffering of such people.

Cult Skills

Arioch's adherents treat cult skills differently to other cults. Each cult skill listed here gains a permanent, automatic bonus equal to the amount of POW dedicated to the Pact with Arioch.

Additionally, each skill gains a *temporary* bonus if Blood and Souls are sacrificed to Arioch. The bonus is equal to the POW of any human/sapient creature sacrificed and a third of the POW of any warm-blooded animal. The bonus lasts for a number of Combat Rounds equal to the amount of POW dedicated to the pact.

Athletics, Evade, Language (High Speech), Lore (Arioch), Lore (Chaos), Sword Combat Styles.

Cult Runes and Magic

Arioch's faithful are able to learn the following sorcerous skills and Runes if they can find a suitable teacher. Any cultist who follows the Herald or Messenger aspects is duty-bound to teach these sorcerous skills to any fellow cultists who come seeking such knowledge.

Command, Summoning Ritual (Demon of Combat).

Runes of Alarm, Bewilderment, Chaos, Confinement, Darkness, Dissolution, Passing.

Heroic Abilities Available

The following Heroic Abilities must be achieved through DreamQuesting into the Coming of Arioch myth.

Devilish Charm, Heroic Aura, Madness of Purpose, Player of the Great Game.

Retribution

Arioch demands complete loyalty. If he does not receive it or if his patronage is rejected, he reacts with petulance, removing all help and benefits but ensuring that Compulsions remain in force and become heightened. Arioch may even manifest at opportune times to taunt the recalcitrant devotee or apostate with promises of how profitable the relationship could have been if only trust could have been maintained. It is not in Arioch's nature to take a straightforward, violent revenge; but revenge is always taken, is always prolonged, is usually devious and is always subtle.

Politics and Relationships

The perpetuation of the Eternal Struggle is foremost on Arioch's agenda and his worshippers are important pawns in its continuation. The cult aims to oppose and thwart Law at every possible turn but for the most part its aim is to provide Arioch with the Blood and Souls he craves so he can wage the war at the supernatural level.

As the cult is largely secretive and isolated in nature, there is little scope for internal dissent or disagreement. Those venerating Arioch get on with their business with no concern for others unless their own, particular, agendas are threatened.

There is a blanket acceptance that Arioch has many forms, many aspects and many natures. Being a Lord of Chaos this is his prerogative and it is futile to argue over Arioch's true meaning or purpose: mortals are destined only ever to guess at his motives, never to know the complete truth. Arioch is enigmatic and capricious; his worshippers accept this and do not try to impose one view or agenda on others who venerate him.

With the exception of the Sword Rulers the cult of Arioch does not concern itself with any of the other Chaos cults. Arioch's worshippers are assured and purposeful and do not need to rely on any other cults to fulfil their aims. Other Chaos cults are treated with a modicum of respect but, ultimately, with a certain disdain. Arioch represents the highest rank of nobility within Chaos and there is little need to fraternise with others.

The cults of Law and the Elementals are viewed with utter contempt. Law opposes Chaos and must be battled; the Elements are selfish and irrelevant in the face of the powers Arioch himself wields. In fact, the Elemental Lords only wield influence because Arioch tolerates them and permits them to do so. If he commanded that they be battled and destroyed, then his worshippers would seek to bring about his wish.

However there is a certain degree of resentment for Grome. The Earth King took and hid the Black Blades from Arioch, which inconvenienced him for quite a long time. Those who venerate Grome are not to be trusted and, perhaps, punished for opposing Arioch's plans and trying to hide Stormbringer and Mournblade from the emperors of the Bright Empire.

AZURE SISTERHOOD

Sorana spoke the necessary word which took her immediately into the blue half-world with which she was so familiar. There were no other colours in it, but many, many shades of blue. Here she waited until Eequor noticed her presence. In the timelessness, she could not tell how long she had waited.

— *The Bane of the Black Sword*

Eequor is a Duchess of Chaos, the Blue Lady of Disdain, the bitter and insular goddess who seeks power but is constantly denied it by her cousins such as Arioch and Mabelode. As a consequence of her embittered nature, Eequor hates all men and her worshippers are encouraged to do the same. Man is an imperfect creature, vain, brutal and blunt, and his domination of the female sex must be brought to an end. As creators and bearers of life, women are destined to inherit the Multiverse and Eequor is their champion. She is a supernatural focus for female rage and resentment but, as is typical with the Lords of Chaos, she employs guile and subtlety to achieve her ends.

Purpose and History

The Lady Eequor is an isolated duchess of Chaos, remote and aloof. For reasons unknown she is unconcerned with the Eternal Struggle, preferring to remain in her own, blue-seeped world, sorrowing, bitter and alone. Her hatred is not reserved for the Lords of Law but for the male Lords of Chaos and Eequor seeks revenge against them and dominance over them – particularly Arioch and Mabelode, with whom she maintains simmering feuds.



The cult is not widespread but its adherents are vociferous. In Melniboné the cult is viewed as an amusing diversion but Eequor is considered infinitely inferior to goddesses such as Xiombarg and her champion Terhali the Jade Empress. In Pan Tang, where women are treated as chattels, the worship of Eequor is illegal and punishable by death. However, that has not prevented a secret sect of the Azure Sisterhood from existing in Hwamgaarl and the draconian approach to the cult only reinforces the Sisterhood's beliefs that men seek only to repress women and treat them as slaves.

Elsewhere the cult is isolated to those women who are, themselves, lonely or embittered in some way. The city state of Karlaak is rumoured to support a sect of the Azure Sisterhood, which holds a dreadful grudge against the powerful Voashoon family. Similarly, sects have appeared in Cadsandria and Andlermaign where the disenfranchised women of the city feel aggrieved at the way Law disregards their contributions to Argimiliar's growing power.

The symbol and colour of the cult is blue, in all its forms. Eequor's realm is entirely blue and in her most common incarnation the goddess manifests as a terrifyingly beautiful, blue-skinned maiden. Her followers typically clad themselves in blue in Eequor's honour, abhorring the colour red which, to them, symbolises male arrogance and aggression. Blue Maidens are dedicated to Eequor's

dominance over the male Lords of the Chaos and, of course, the male Lords of Law. The earth is destined to be inherited by women, for they are the bearers of life.

Eequor is the one Chaos ruler who allows her faithful to step into her azure realm from time-to-time. Acolytes and above can, through a deep sleep achieved through inhaling the burned petals of the blue lotus, enter Eequor's house where they may seek her advice and be directed by her agenda.

Myths

Eequor's Lover (Mythic Resonance 70%) – The Untrustworthiness of Men:

Eequor found for herself a mortal lover; a man of outstanding beauty and intellect who kept her enthralled but, for all her demands and skill, refused to truly love her. Eequor tried everything in her power to make him return her love; she showered him with gifts, power and wealth. She made him a king in several worlds and an emperor in a whole universe of her own creation. Still he would not love her.

Eequor decided that her attentions were pushing him away and she retired to her azure realm to wait for him to come to her. But with each visit he seemed more distant and less enamoured of her and, one day, she could accept no more. She followed him back to his palace and hid in his chamber, to see what things he whispered in the night and if any of his dreams were of her.

That night a lover came to him; a long-haired figure who slid into his bed and caressed him, kissed him and loved him. Eequor's jealousy could not be contained; she burst from her hiding place and threw herself at his lover, digging her nails deep into her eyes, sinking her teeth into soft flesh and tearing. When she was finished she was covered in crimson blood – as was every surface of the chamber and her love. She looked at the figure she had torn asunder and saw it was a young man; long-haired, high cheek-boned, beautiful. Her lover stared at her, tears seeping down his cheeks and his eyes were filled with hatred. 'You have taken away from me all that you can take demon but you shall not have my soul!' And he took a dagger from beneath his pillow and plunged it into his neck, allowing his lifeblood to mingle with that of his dead paramour.

Eequor left the palace still covered in crimson. She hated its sight and hated all men who had played her for a fool and rejected her generosity, her loyalty, her love. She washed the blood from her body in a stream and returned to her blue world where she poured her hatred of men into everything she created. She surrounded herself with women – women lovers, women servants, women warriors. Man, she concluded, is weak and without trust; a twisted creature without the capacity to recognise what he is offered.

All men are doomed.

Beliefs

The Blue Maidens revel in the duplicity and deceit their goddess embodies and traditionally dress in nothing but the colours of Eequor. The core belief is that men are weak and malleable, there to be used and exploited whenever the opportunity arises. Worship is popular in all chaotically-aligned nations of the Young Kingdoms.

In Pan Tang, the cult believes that the Mabden empire seeks male domination of the Multiverse and must therefore be overthrown or, at the least, controlled by Eequor's faithful. Elsewhere, the cult seeks to undermine the schemes of men and uses guile and duplicity to manipulate male agendas so that Eequor's power can be extended stealthily and effectively.

Worshippers

Eequor's cult consists entirely of women. In Pan Tang the cult is outlawed but an illegal underground temple continues to venerate Eequor and the women of Pan Tang wear blue in ingenious and subtle ways to avoid the persecution of the theocracy. Any woman can join the cult but, when forming her Pact with Eequor, must swear to do everything in her power to subvert male dominance and refuse to let herself be any man's chattel, possession or plaything.

Membership

The cult is only open to female worshippers. The ranks of the cult go by the following names:

Azure Sister (Lay Member)
Sister of the Azure Veil (Initiate)
Sister of the Azure Robe (Acolyte)
Sister of the Azure Sceptre (Priestess)
Sister of the Azure Crown (Champion)

Azure Sister

Azure Sisters need not enter into a Pact with Eequor but are expected to do the cult's bidding and must wear blue as the primary colour. They must attend religious ceremonies and place themselves in positions where men can be influenced. No other benefits are accorded until they become Sisters of the Azure Veil.

Sister of the Azure Veil

Sisters of the Azure Veil must enter into a Pact with Eequor and swear the oath of allegiance to the cult whereby all men are considered the enemy, particularly those who follow the male Chaos Lords. Benefits, as described later, begin to accrue at this stage and every Veiled Sister is given a diaphanous veil of azure silk, which is to be worn at cult ceremonies and when performing cult magic.

When forming the Pact, at least two points of POW must be dedicated to Eequor.

Sister of the Azure Robe

Sisters of the Azure Robe are those adherents who have managed to work their way into a social position whereby the schemes of men can be readily influenced and affected. The following conditions apply:

- Dedication of a further point of POW to the Pact.
- Knowledge of six cult skills at 50% or greater.
- Lore (Eequor) 70% or greater.

Each Robed Sister is given a robe of brilliant azure silk, which must be worn, with the veil, at all cult ceremonies. Further cult benefits are described later.

Sister of the Azure Sceptre

The priestesses of the cult, the Sceptred Sisters, lead the cult's ceremonies and receive Eequor's wisdom directly so that the cult's agenda can be pursued effectively. They command Robed and Veiled sisters and are granted a white and blue sceptre as a mark of their rank. It is not necessary for Robed Sisters to immediately progress to the role of priestess; they may become Crowned Sisters if they do not wish to become ceremonial leaders.

To become a Sister of the Azure Sceptre the following conditions must be met:

- Dedication of a further point of POW to the Pact.
- Knowledge of six cult skills at 70% or greater.
- Knowledge of two Runes or one Summoning at 50% or greater.
- Lore (Eequor) 90% or greater.

Sister of the Azure Crown

Eequor's champions are skilled Adventurers who have proved themselves to be arch manipulators of men and have successfully thwarted or influenced male schemes to Eequor's complete advantage. Crowned Sisters conduct Eequor's most important work across the Multiverse and receive their direction directly from Eequor herself. Every Crowned Sister is given a diamond and sapphire tiara as a mark of their rank.

- Dedication of a further point of POW to the Pact.
- Knowledge of six cult skills at 90% or greater.
- Knowledge of two Runes or one Summoning at 70% or greater.
- Lore (Eequor) 100% or greater.

Duties

The general duties of all cult members are as follows:

- Be the lackey, chattel or plaything of no man, ever.
- Learn the schemes of men and disrupt them.
- Advance Eequor's agenda.
- Attend cult ceremonies.
- Discover the whereabouts of Tanelorn.

Specific duties, by Rank, are:

Azure Sister

To listen, watch and understand the activities of men so that their schemes can be influenced by the Veiled and Robed Sisters.

Sister of the Azure Veil

- Attain positions of influence within male societies.
- Work towards affecting their schemes or informing the Robed, Sceptred and Crowned Sisters of schemes that require deeper experience and manipulation.

Sister of the Azure Robe

The Robed Sisters are expected to support the Veiled Sisters and to specifically advance Eequor's power by recruiting more women to the cult, extolling its benefits and highlighting the exploitative nature of the male sex.

Sister of the Azure Sceptre

The cult's priestesses have the following specific ecumenical duties:

- Establish a shrine or temple dedicated to Eequor.
- Hold regular (monthly) ceremonies of worship. The ceremony should include prayers to Eequor, reports on the way the schemes of men have been manipulated and thwarted, and assignments dispensed for members to participate in.

Sister of the Azure Crown

The Crowned Sisters act directly on Eequor's behalf, venturing out to assure the supremacy of the Blue Lady of Disdain over her rival Lords of Chaos. Crowned Sisters are expected to have attained positions of significant power and influence, and to use all their abilities to further Eequor's desires.

Benefits

Benefits are given in the form of Gifts and Compulsions, Cult Skills, Runes, Summonings and access to Eequor's azure realm – there to shelter from male predation and to receive audience with the Blue Lady of Disdain directly.

Sister of the Azure Veil

Veiled Sisters receive a Gift and Compulsion, plus their diaphanous blue veil as a mark of their rank.

Sister of the Azure Robe

Robed sisters gain a further Gift and Compulsion and are taught a cult Rune to its starting percentage. They may also enter Eequor's realm and use it as a sanctuary although they cannot gain direct audience with the Blue Lady. It requires a successful Pact (Eequor) test to move into Eequor's dimension and the Sister can remain there for a number of days equal to her free Magic Points.

Sister of the Azure Sceptre

Sceptred Sisters gain a further Gift and Compulsion and are taught a further cult Rune and one of the cult Summonings. They may also enter Eequor's realm and use it as a sanctuary and gain direct audience with the Blue Lady. It requires a successful Pact (Eequor) test to move into Eequor's dimension and the Sister can remain there for a number of days equal to her free Magic Points. If an audience with Eequor is taken, then the Pact skill is increased by 1D4%.

Sister of the Azure Crown

Crowned sisters gain a further Gift and Compulsion and are taught a further cult Rune and one of the cult Summonings. They may also enter Eequor's realm and use it as a sanctuary and gain direct audience with the Blue Lady. It requires a successful Pact (Eequor) test to move into Eequor's dimension and the Sister can remain there indefinitely. If an audience with Eequor is taken, then the Pact skill is increased by 1D4%. If this takes the Pact above 100%, there is a chance that the Crowned Sister is required to remain within the Blue Realm indefinitely as one of Eequor's handmaidens. This is effectively apotheosis, as described on page 94 of the *Elric of Melniboné Core Rulebook*.

Crowned Sisters also gain one cult Heroic Ability.

Gifts and Compulsions

Gifts and Compulsions accrue as per rank, described earlier.

Gifts

Abstinence (Sleep)
Animal Familiar
Extended Life
Perfection
Return Loved One
Rune Mastery (Woman, Man)
Sanctuary
Youth

Compulsions

Black Widow.
Chastity.
Chromophobia – Colour Red.
Betray the plans and schemes of every man one encounters. Requires Persistence test to control the desire. Subtract the Pact percentage from the Persistence skill before the test is made.
Destined for sorrow – Nothing brings comfort or pleasure. All dreams are nightmares, all experiences fleeting and unfulfilling. Life is futile. Retirement to the Azure realm of Eequor is the only solace.
Irrational Fear – Rodents, Spiders and Insects.
Uncontrollable, irrational obsession over some trivial matter – a jealousy over a lover, or the tendency to find a slight where none occurred.

Cult Skills

Art (any), Evaluate, Influence, Language (High Speech), Lore (Chaos), Lore (Eequor), Lore (Regional), Seduction, Stealth, Sword and Dagger Combat Styles.

Cult Runes and Magic

The cult of the Azure Sisterhood teaches the following:

Runes of Air, Bewilderment, Chaos, Contact, Earth, Enhancement (CHA), Man, Passing, Sleep, Taste, Touch, Water, Woman.
Demons of Desire, Elementals (sylphs and gnomes)

Command, Summoning Ritual (Demon of Desire), Summoning Ritual (Gnomes), Summoning Ritual (Sylph)

Summon Elenoin

Heroic Abilities

Devilish Charm, Disease Immunity, Linguist, Madness of Purpose, Poison Immunity.

Retribution

Betraying Eequor is to betray womanhood. Once a member of the cult, one is tied for ever to its agenda. Any member is considered to have betrayed the cult if any of the following occurs:

- She allows herself to be *willingly* used by any man.
- She pledges allegiance to another Lord of Chaos.
- She breaks a Compulsion or cult vow.

Retribution takes the form of a concerted vendetta by three of Eequor's Crowned Sisters who make it their task to capture the traitor and deliver her to the Azure Realm. Here Eequor torment's the traitor's soul for eternity, subjecting it to every painful and sorrowful punishment imaginable, causing it to feel every injury womanhood has sustained throughout millennia of male domination.

Politics and Relationships

The Azure Sisterhood despises, and is despised by, the male dominated Chaos cults but occasionally the Sisterhood's talents are considered useful, resulting in temporary alliances. The cults of Xiombarg are most ready to forge such alliances, although the Azure Sisterhood views Xiombarg as a feckless god that cannot decide upon which gender to favour.

The cult of Miggea is, strangely, admired by the Azure Sisters. Although Miggea is a goddess of Law her uncompromising attitude reflects many of Eequor's own ideals and so, whilst the two cults are ostensibly enemies, a mutual respect exists between them.

BLOOD BROTHERS

Out of all this rose an island of dark blue rock. Upon the rock was a building, a great castle all colored scarlet. And the scarlet rippled as if water had somehow been molded into a permanent shape. A familiar, salty smell came from the scarlet castle.

...The figure was fat, about twice as broad as an ordinary man. It had a head which was essentially human but from which boar-like tusks sprouted. It moved over the rippling scarlet surface on bowed, thick legs, naked but for a tabard embroidered with a design not immediately recognizable. It was grinning at them. 'I have been short of guests,' it grunted. 'Are you mine?'

— *The King of the Swords*

Duke Teer, a minor noble of Chaos, is a vassal of Mabelode but all his efforts are consumed with the building of his dreadful castle of blood. The Eternal Struggle might rage around him but Teer's castle is all that matters to the boar-headed Chaos Lord. Even direct requests for aid by the Sword Rulers themselves are denied. All that matters is obtaining blood; more and more of it. And the Multiverse has blood in abundance.

Purpose and History

'You have not heard of Teer's Castle? How strange! Why, my pretty mortal, it is built of blood—it is built all of blood. Many thousands have died to make my castle. I must slay many thousands more before it is properly completed. Blood, my dear—blood and blood and blood! Can you not sniff its delicious tang? What you sniff is blood. What you see—it is all blood. Mortal blood — immortal blood — it all mingles. All blood is equal when it goes to build Teer's Castle, eh? Why, you have blood enough for part of a small wall of a tower. I could make a room from all three of you. You would be astonished to learn how far blood can be made to stretch as a building material. And it is tasty, eh?'

— *The King of the Swords*

Such is Teer's desire to improve his castle that he requires human agents to collect blood on his behalf. These are the Blood Brothers and Sisters; those who have pledged to help Teer build his castle and scour the Million Spheres for more blood to be transmitted to Teer's ghastly realm. Those who cleave to Teer find themselves becoming as obsessive as he is about the completion of the castle. The craving for blood strengthens as the Pact increases and Blood Brothers go to extraordinary lengths to obtain blood for their master.

What purpose the castle serves is unknown but clearly Mabelode finds Teer's dedication to it worthwhile and, perhaps, amusing because the King of the Swords chooses not to intervene in Teer's plans. Teer will provide his followers to Mabelode's service

whenever the need arises – just as long as he is not required to turn his attention away from his castle personally.

Myths

Teer Builds His Castle (Mythic Resonance 70%) – The Trust of Lord Mabelode; the Denial of Lady Xiombarg: Teer worked hard, labouring on the castles that each Lord of Chaos made for himself, directing the slaves who built these magnificent edifices in a myriad of different planes. When he had completed the castles for the Sword Rulers he was asked what he sought as a reward. ‘I wish to be a duke of hell,’ he said. And it was done.

He also asked for a castle of his own but Xiombarg refused: ‘You would build something so large and beautiful that it would dwarf the castles built for us.’

Teer was angered at this but could not rebel against the Lords of Chaos he loved above all others. Instead he asked to retire to a place where he might rest and this was granted. It was here that Teer decided he would build his own castle regardless but not of stones or bones, as the castles he had made for others, but of some new material that the Lords of Chaos would not expect. He chose blood.

Mabelode came one day whilst Teer flowed blood into moulds and raised the walls. ‘A fine defence, Duke Teer. Is this a bastion of Chaos?’

‘It is my lord.’ Teer said.

‘And if my armies are beset by foes they can climb behind its walls for safety?’

‘Undoubtedly, my lord.’

‘And you would never use such a fine, fine edifice against us, my beloved Duke Teer?’

‘Never, my lord!’

And so Teer was left to raise his red castle, watched slyly by Mabelode who chose not to interfere and kept the Castle of Blood secret from Lady Xiombarg who would, undoubtedly, have destroyed it. Thus were Mabelode and Teer made allies.

Beliefs

Blood is the ultimate building material. Teer needs every ounce of blood available – mortal and immortal. When the castle is complete, every Blood Brother shall have a suite within its walls and be entertained for eternity in most opulent ways conceivable.

Worshippers

Members of the cult are likely to have been introduced to it via the Sword Rulers cult. Any Initiate of Mabelode’s sect of the

Sword Rulers cult can opt for immediate initiation into the Blood Brothers and, likewise, agents of Teer may be co-opted into the Sword Rulers’ sect of Mabelode.

Blood Brothers tend to work in isolation and do not gather in groups. Their grisly work is frequently viewed with disdain by other cults because Teer’s obsession with his castle detracts from the overall struggle with Law. Teer’s worshippers are therefore secretive and spread far and wide across the Young Kingdoms. Their activities are often mistaken for those of the Death Bringers or other Chaos cults. Teer’s promise to his worshippers is that they will join him when his castle is complete and spend eternity revelling at his side, indulging in every available pleasure.

Membership

The cult maintains no ranks or hierarchy and requires no ceremonies. Any blood taken by a Blood Brother is sent immediately to Teer and that is sufficient. The benefits of cult membership are outlined here.

Duties

The duty is to provide blood; it is also the only Compulsion the cult levies. The stronger the Pact becomes, the stronger the desire for blood. Initiates must enter into a Pact with Teer and once they have done so, they crave blood themselves and drinking it is the purest way to send it across the Multiverse to their boar-headed master. One must drink the blood of a creature a number of times per week for every 20 points (or fraction thereof) in the Pact skill. If this is not achieved the cultist starts to lose one Hit Point from every location for each day of abstinence. When all Hit Points reach zero the cultist is too weak to move and Teer comes personally to take the last of *their* blood for use in his castle.

Benefits

Blood Brothers gain Gifts according to the POW dedicated to the cult. Heroic Abilities are also granted as described later.

Gifts and Compulsions

Gifts

- Animal Familiar (always a boar or pig)
- Endurance
- Increased Damage Modifier
- Increased Reactions
- Poison Immunity
- Rune Mastery (Cult Runes)
- Sanctuary
- Sense Million Spheres

Compulsions

- Armour Rejection
- Attention Deficit
- Blood Sacrifice
- Carnal Murderer

Corpse-Like
Demoniac Fervour
Dread
Empire Builder

Cult Skills

For every 2 points in the Pact with Teer, the adherent gains a bonus of +1% to one of the following cult skills for every point of POW invested in the Pact. This is an automatic bonus and reflects the strength of kinsmanship the disciple feels with Teer.

Dagger, Evade, Influence, Lore (Chaos), Lore (Teer), Seduction, Stealth, Unarmed.

Cult Runes and Magic

Instead of taking a bonus to Cult skills, as outlined previously, Blood Brothers can instead opt to learn one Cult Rune for every point of POW dedicated to the Pact, at its base percentage. The cult's Runes are:

Chaos, Hearing, Sight, Silence and Speed.

The cult does not know any Summonings but these can be learned through alliances with the Sword Rulers cult.

Heroic Abilities

Instead of taking a bonus to skills or learning Runes, the adherent may instead choose one of the following Heroic Abilities.

Dead Eye, Madness of Purpose, Wall Leaping.

Retribution

Failure to deliver blood to Teer results in the disciple sustaining physical damage as described in Duties. If the Blood Brother actively betrays the cult in some way, Teer sends agents to drain every drop of the traitor's blood, along with that of his friends, family and loved ones.

Politics and Relationships

Most cults are suspicious of the Blood Brothers' agenda although the Sword Rulers are generally more sympathetic due to Teer's past allegiances. Favours offered to the Sword Rulers by Blood Brothers are always repaid in access to fresh blood.

DEATH BRINGERS

Then there emerged from the huge forest a great figure, naked and gnarled like the trunk of a tree, green as lime, but the face was jovial. 'Greetings, unhappy renegades,' it said.

The giant advanced carelessly towards them, unhurried. 'It will please me to exact the price of your crimes from you,' it

said, 'for I am Hionhurn the Executioner. You will find your death pleasant - but your fate unbearable.' And he came closer, his clawed hands outstretched.

— The Bane of the Black Sword

The Death Bringers venerate the two principal Lords of Death and desolation: Chardros the Reaper and Hionhurn the Executioner. Its members revel not just in the heat of battle but casual violence for its own sake, retribution, revenge, cold-blooded murder, execution and, in a twisted way, the ultimate justice death offers. To the Death Bringers, death is a release from the confines of the mortal world and a passage into the dreadful, exhilarating realms of Chaos where souls are used to create the armies of Hell as much as they provide sustenance for the Lords of Chaos.

Purpose and History

Grim-faced Chardros and the green giant Hionhurn received little recognition during the Bright Empire's height. Certainly the Melnibonéans viewed death as part of a passage into the glittering realms of Chaos but sought no reason to celebrate it in the veneration of such dismal gods. Melniboné's sophisticated tastes favour artistry, complexity and erudition; not the finality and doom offered by both the Reaper and Executioner. To this extent, both were – and are – considered minor Lords of Chaos by the Melnibonéan nobility. It took the vindictive, savage and simple mindset of the Mabden to elevate both Lords of Chaos into a more major role.

The cult of the Death Bringer cult has its roots in Pan Tang. Here, death is commonplace and not just the death of the body. Pan Tang seeks to kill the remnants of the Bright Empire so that it can be replaced by one of Mabden sensibilities. The Death Bringers fulfil this hankering with their unswerving commitment to delivering death. The cult is far from noble; it does not recognise any right to a good, clean and noble death. Death is a process that must be entrained as expediently as possible. Notions of nobility and honour do not enter into the equation.

As Lords of Chaos, Chardros and Hionhurn are very different in nature, although they concern themselves with the same ultimate goal: the reaping and despatch of mortal souls.

Chardros the Reaper

Portrayed as a reaper of souls, bearing an immense, soul-severing scythe, Chardros is the unrelenting harbinger of Life's End. Chaos is concerned with unfettered creation and mutability but Chardros's province is in using the death of the mortal form to free the soul, which is the raw material for achieving creation and change. Souls, separated from the physical form, are malleable and delicious. They sustain the Lords of Chaos as food sustains the mortal form but are also pliable models to be reshaped and reconditioned. All souls taken are dedicated to Chardros with the blood-curdling battle cry, or soul-chilling whisper 'The Scythe!

The Scythe' the moment before the killing starts. The undisputed aim of the sect is to damn as many souls as possible to Chardros' grim realms where they will be tortured and twisted into demonic servants, to serve in the Army of Chaos.

When Chardros receives a soul that has been dedicated to him, he judges it by eye, deciding on whether or not the soul should be consumed or sent to one of the Grey Hells that form his dominion, to be there transformed into a warrior of Entropy. Chardros does not understand mercy and hears no appeals. He is single-minded of purpose and impossible to placate. He demands souls and if he is refused them, comes in person with his scythe to claim what he has been promised. Chardros cannot be bargained with or evaded. He relishes the opportunity to hunt for a soul himself and gains the greatest satisfaction from severing it from its wretched body, dangling the doomed spirit before his cracked, bony, expressionless face and judging its fate with an unerring eye.

Members of the Chardros sect view life with complete disdain, even their own, considering mortal existence to be nothing more than a transitory state and that death is the ultimate fulfilment. Their mission on earth is to speed that transition for as many as possible, before, finally, offering their own soul to Chardros as the greatest personal sacrifice. This is not to say that members of this sect of the Death Bringers are suicidal; they want to live as long as possible so that more death can be delivered. However they do understand, and welcome, the fact that one day Chardros will require *their* souls.

Hionhurn the Executioner

Hionhurn punishes and executes. He exacts revenge and demands retribution. The souls he claims are as damned as any but not to the Armies of Chaos. Those slain by Hionhurn, or slain in his name, are thrown into the Green Hells where Hionhurn's children writhe and strain, demanding fresh souls to torment and torture. Hionhurn views death as pure punishment with no noble purpose save for the satisfaction it brings to the Children of the Green Hells.

He values the souls of the guilty above the souls of the innocent but in essence there is little difference once a damned soul reaches the Green Hells. Hionhurn likes to have a basis for inflicting punishment – and even the smallest, most innocuous of misdemeanours warrants the fullest of punishments. But then Hionhurn does not believe that anyone is free of guilt; no life is blameless.

To this end Hionhurn's sect appeals to those who make death their living. He is patron to some assassins (although, curiously, not always the Mereghn for they are anything but religiously fanatical), executioners, those engaged in blood-vendettas and those for whom revenge has become a personal, all-consuming crusade. In fact, Hionhurn's children, stretching their languid minds out from the Green Hells, have a keen sense for those who are being consumed by the need for revenge. They enter the dreams of the tormented and whisper sweet thoughts encouraging

vengeance and retribution, offering hints as to how their father can, for a small piece of the soul, assist the Revenger to enact their Tragedy. Many who serve Hionhurn are snared in this way, pledging allegiance in return for short-term satisfaction, only to find themselves duped into becoming guilty parties, ripe for Hionhurn's own punishment.

Myths

Chardros Creates Death (Mythic Resonance 80%) – The True Nature of Death:

It is known that the Lords of Chaos are immortal but ever-changing. To them, death is another state of existence and, until Lord Chardros came into being, it never existed.

Chardros discovered death through his hatred for life. All things, when he came into being, were immortal and he sensed in some a yearning for respite, the ultimate change. Thus he created Scythe, with which to part the soul from the body, because that is what perpetuates the state of life: the continued marriage of spirit of flesh. Scythe was forged from the stuff of Chaos and was sharp enough to sever entire worlds from their life-force.

To test Scythe he created a world and populated it with things of flesh and soul. They served him and revered him and he watched this veneration with detachment. Then, when the time was right, he appeared to them as the Shrouded Man, carrying Scythe, his vassal, Lord Hionhurn, at his side. He called the race he had created Mortals although, at that time, had no clear meaning for the word.

He severed, one-by-one, the souls of each Mortal he encountered, sending their souls to his halls of Hell and leaving their bodies limp and lifeless. Lord Hionhurn severed the head of each mortal with his axe, as proof that the soul could not be returned. When every Mortal was dead, Chardros descended to his halls and gathered the souls unto him as his cloak of grey and spoke to them.

'Life is a gift from us. It is not your right. I give and I take away. Know this, and accept it, and I grant you an afterlife of pleasure in service only to me. You will never know hunger and you will never know pain.'

And Mortals knew the sense of it and accepted it. And let their world die with them.

Then, to the Mortal world, came a new force that was known as Law. Law looked around it, at the million corpses and tried to reattach the severed souls. Sometimes it was successful but mostly it was not: with the unsuccessful ones it created dreadful ghouls that wailed because they had been taken from Hell and rejoined with bodies that were useless to them for they were rotten and hungry. Eventually Lord Chardros was forced to lead his faithful from the Dead Halls to confront Law on the Plains of Weeping, where the first massacre had occurred. Two great armies ranked

against each other. At the head of the army of Law, was Mirath, Lord of Life. At the head of the other was Chardhros, Lord of Death.

'I come to challenge this knew power and misery you have brought, Lord Chardhros,' Mirath proclaimed.

'Then your soul will join the ranks of my faithful,' Chardhros replied, because he was certain that Scythe would sever even the soul of a Lord of Chaos.

When the two armies met and battled, the army of Chardhros could fight without respite but the army of Law soon tired and was slaughtered. Mirath retreated in fear as Chardhros challenged him with Scythe.

So was Law driven from Chardhros's realm and Chardhros brought Death to all other realms ruled by Chaos. He taught the other Lords the power of Blood and Souls and all were grateful. Truly was Chardhros the greatest of all Chaos Lords!

Beliefs

Whichever sect the Death Bringer follows, the same beliefs are shared.

- Life is an illusion. Death, and what lies beyond, is the only truth.
- The physical body is a prison; the soul must be freed.
- Souls are the raw material of creation and possibility. Only through death can they realise their potential.
- The only true and just punishment is death.
- Revenge, and the need for it, is the gateway to redemption.
- Death cannot be avoided. It should be welcomed.
- The Eternal Struggle is the struggle between Life and Death. Death, in its permanence, will prevail.

Worshippers

The cult attracts those who enjoy casual violence and death for its own sake. It offers a righteous excuse for visiting violence and appeals to those who are seduced by both the nature of Chaos and satisfaction inflicting suffering and death brings.

Membership

Standard.

All Death Bringers must choose either the sect of Chardros or the sect of Hionhurn. The two cannot be followed together because they have separate agendas.

Cult Ranks

Stalker (Lay member)

Stealer of Life (Initiate)

Maker of Knots (Acolyte)

Maker of Chains (Priest)

Lord of Death (High Lord/Champion)

Stalker

As Lay Members, Stalkers have not yet made a Pact and so, whilst they follow the cult, their own souls are not yet doomed.

Stealer of Life

To become a Stealer of Life, the Initiate needs to kill one *person* and dedicate that kill to either Chardros or Hionhurn. The strength of their Pact, made at the moment of the kill, is based on their CHA and personally dedicated POW but also on the POW of the person killed. Thus, a warrior with a CHA of 10 who dedicates three of his own points of POW to the Pact and kills an opponent with POW 12, establishes a Pact of 25%. Only the POW he dedicates personally can be used for Gifts. All further kills increase the Pact by only 1%, irrespective of the POW of the victim.

Maker of Knots

The Makers of Knots actively engage in the cult's business at a more sophisticated level than simply bringing death to worthy individuals. They literally weave the strands of fate and doom, directing their efforts at groups and associations that require the attention of Chardros's scythe or Hionhurn's axe and noose.

Knot Makers must fulfil the following criteria:

- A Pact of 50% or greater.
- Have made, and dedicated, at least five kills to their Patron.

Maker of Chains

The Death Bringers cult does not maintain a formal priest hierarchy; it has no proscribed rituals, ceremonies or holy days. Instead, Chain Makers are those who actively seek and recruit new followers for the Death Bringers, sowing the seeds of revenge, engineering death through Knot Makers and Life Stealers, and ensuring a steady supply of souls for Chardros and Hionhurn.

Chain Makers must fulfil the following criteria:

- A Pact of 70% or greater.
- Know at least five of the Cult Skills at 50% or higher (including one weapon skill).

Lord of Death

The champions of the cult are almost the personification of their patrons; grim-faced, wreathed in shadow and consumed by the need to reap souls for their lord. Lords of Death prepare for the day when the Armies of Hell are theirs to command and the reaping of the world – bringing about its very end – will begin.

Death Lords must fulfil the following criteria:

- Pact of 90% or greater.
- Know *all* the cult skills at 50% of higher.
- Have brought about the demise of one influential or important figure.

Duties

The key duties have been described previously. However, in addition to bringing death, cult adherents have several other duties to fulfil, irrespective of their rank.

- Send souls to Hell. Kill all who oppose Chaos.
- Find and murder the agents and champions of Arkyn and Donblas and all those who aid them.
- Prepare for the Final Battle when Hell itself shall be unleashed into the world.

Every Death Bringer cultist is aware of the importance of the Eternal Struggle and is keen to play his part in Chaos's name. For them, the Eternal Struggle is triumph, not merely perpetuation and triumph results in death in all its glory being loosed upon the world and especially upon the forces of Order. It is the duty of every Death Bringer to prepare for his role in the final battle and to strengthen Hell's armies with souls in readiness for it.

Benefits

Cult benefits come in the form of Gifts and Compulsions, Cult Skills, Runes and Summonings, Heroic Abilities and Cult Secrets.

Stealer of Life

- Life Stealers gain a Compulsion and a Gift.
- Training in all cult skills is at half the normal cost.

Maker of Knots

- Knot Makers gain a further Gift and Compulsion.
- The cult also teaches one Rune to its starting percentage.
- Further training in sorcery skills is available at half the usual cost.

Maker of Chains

- Chain Makers gain a further Gift and Compulsion.
- The cult teaches a second Rune to its starting percentage.
- The cult teaches a Summoning to its starting percentage.
- Further training in sorcery skills is available at half the usual cost.
- Learn one Cult Secret.

Lord of Death

- Death Lords gain a further Gift and Compulsion.
- The cult teaches a third Rune to its starting percentage.
- The cult teaches a second Summoning to its starting percentage.
- Further training in sorcery skills is available at half the usual cost.
- The Death Lord may choose a Heroic Ability.
- Learn one Cult secret.

Gifts and Compulsions

Although the cult is divided into two sects, Gifts and Compulsions are common to both Chardros and Hionhurn.

Gifts

Animal Familiar
Chaotic Blessing
Combat Acuity

Divine Training (Cult Skills)
Endurance
Horde
Increased Damage Modifier
Poison Immunity
Slave
Weapon of the Faith

Compulsions

Acute Insomnia.
Armour Rejection.
Bone Collector and constantly count, the bones of dead things.
Wear prized bones around the body.
Corpse-like.
Desire to murder a loved one.
Expose a section of own skull (-1HP to Head Hit Location).
Fear of Death.
Kill once per week. Failure to do so results in the loss of one point of POW.
Resurrection.

Cult Skills

All Axe Combat Styles, Evade, Garrote/Strangle Cord, Language (High Speech), Lore (Chaos), Lore (Death Bringers), Perception, Resilience.

Cult Runes and Magic

Runes of Alarm, Animate, Chaos, Cold, Confinement, Darkness, Dissolution, Passing, Raising and Silence.

The cult also teaches Command and Summon (Demons of Combat, Demons of Knowledge, Demons of Protection).

Heroic Abilities

Disease Immunity, Loremaster, Madness of Purpose, Slaying Touch, Soul Sever.

Cult Secrets

- The horrors visited upon dead souls in the torture chambers of Chardros and Hionhurn are beyond compare. All demons are the twisted souls of those slaughtered in the name of Chaos. There is no escape from eternal agony. Hell spills-over and soon the demons will seek a way to earth.
- At the northern edge of the world, hidden amongst the mountains overlooking the Weeping Waste, is a hidden valley. Within that valley is a temple of death, made from the skull of a slain god. Walking into that temple leads one to the very mouth of Hell where Chardros himself waits, scythe in hand, guarding and judging the souls delivered to him. His faithful may pass beyond and into Hell itself and may return, if they are prepared to dedicate their souls utterly to him.
- Hionhurn knows the guilt of every mortal on earth. For the right price – which is always blood or souls – he will divulge

what he knows about a single mortal. Even the deepest secret is within his knowledge and he keeps every ounce of guilt as a mouthful of wine that he stores in a vast chalice of obsidian deep within his realm.

- The souls of those who follow Law are as damned as the souls of those who follow Chaos. The Lords of Law know this and keep it from their adherents; they fear the power within the soul because souls are malleable and filled with potential. This is why they seek bodily perfection, because the body must obey certain laws. However, the unfettered soul is a threat to Law and so they seek to damn every soul that comes into their possession, so that they can perpetuate their power over mortals.

Retribution

Crossing the cult through betrayal or apostation can result in only one outcome. It falls to the Chain Makers to hunt down, and deliver unto their patron, those who turn against Chaos. Naturally enough the full resources of the cult (Summonings, the dreadful dreams of Hionhurn's children...) are employed in such a service and doubly damned are those who would betray the Bringers of Death.

Politics and Relationships

The sects of Chardros and Hionhurn have little to do with each other directly but in the shared pursuit of souls and death, they work together when needs dictate and neither sect is antagonistic to the other.

The Death Bringers are a dark and shadowy institution within the legions of Chaos. In Pan Tang the cult is an essential tool of Mabden policy but in the wider Young Kingdoms few understand its nature and would not wish to comprehend it. The other cults of Chaos steer clear of the Death Bringers because, even though they share an allegiance to Chaos, no one, not even devout adherents of the Lords of Entropy, are above the calling and concern of the Reaper and Executioner.

Amongst the cults of Law, the Death Bringers are targets for the righteous knights of Arkyn, Donblas and Tovik who, on the face of it, oppose the callous contempt for life that the Death Bringers espouse. Yet in truth, it is fear that drives them – fear that the Death Bringers offer

clandestine strength within the boundaries of Hell that Law is unable to counter easily. The Death Bringers understand too well, though, that the Lords of Law know that death is a betrayal of Law and that is why they oppose it.

Curiously the Lady Miggea, that insane mistress of Law, does not view Chardros and Hionhurn with the same fear and hatred. Of all the Lords of Law she understands death is a part of a process that must, in all truth, be embraced by Law. Even the most perfect things have an end point and so she directs her attentions elsewhere, allowing the Death Bringers to do what they must.

ECSTATIC INDULGENCE

From the galleries, the music grows louder and more complex as the slaves; specially trained and surgically operated upon to sing but one perfect note each, are stimulated to more passionate efforts. Even the young emperor is moved by the sinister harmony of their song which in few ways resembles anything previously uttered by the human voice. Why should their pain produce such marvellous beauty? he wonders. Or is all beauty created through pain? Is that the secret of great art, both human and Melnibonéan?

— *Elric of Melniboné*

The cult of Balaan and Slortar the Old. Worshipped enthusiastically on Melniboné and Pan Tang, this cult views Slortar as the master of unearthly, ecstatically painful delights and Balaan his apprentice, although in some sects the two are equals and aspects of the same being where Balaan is the lord of pain and torture and Slortar the bringer of all indulgences. No perversion,



predation or sado-masochistic act is too extreme and in Pan Tang cult members seek to outdo each other in what they can endure or inflict on others (usually slaves) without the subject dying.

Prayers are always offered to either Balaan or Slortar before acts of indulgence are committed. Blood sacrifices are frequent and ceremonies venerating either god frequently descend into orgies of dreadful sexual depravity.

Purpose and History

Chaos is a hedonistic doctrine promoting self-satisfaction and interests ahead of a common good. In Melniboné this has been raised to a form of high art, utterly inventive, amorally complex and fixated on the realisation of pleasures that should be beyond the limitations of the mortal frame. The Cult of Ecstatic Indulgence has its roots firmly buried in Imrryr and, as the Bright Empire controlled the known world, the cult followed in the empire's wake.

The cult's purpose is to pursue every conceivable pleasure and indulgence, and to create new ones when the old become boring. Its patrons are Slortar (in both his Old and Beautiful aspects), Balaan the Grim, Six-Breasted Arnara of Unmatched Eroticism and a host of specialised demon lords and princes who grant untold pleasures to the faithful. Manifestations of the cult can be found across the Young Kingdoms, even in those regions now ostensibly under the aegis of Law. Many brothels and gambling dens have some form of shrine to one or other of these deities since they symbolise the possibilities of pleasure and signal a devotion to its attainment.

Yet it is in Imrryr, Hwamgaarl and Gromoorva where the cult thrives. Its temples are pleasure houses where every conceivable indulgence can be manifest. In Imrryr, Demons of Desire are summoned to add spice to erotic encounters; in the laboratories and torture chambers Balaan's name is invoked before the tools of the trade are employed so that the experience for the torturer and the victim can be heightened. In Hwamgaarl, orgiastic festivals dedicated to the patrons of the cult fill the vast Pleasure Domes and the delights to be found in these days-long affairs are enough to drive men past the brink of sanity. In Gromoorva, where, it is said, the best brothels are to be found, the acts of physical love are enshrined as re-enactments of divine couplings.

This is a cult of hedonists, thrill-seekers, sadists, masochists, prostitutes, gigolos, depravity and insane curiosity. It panders to, and encourages, the basest desires and whilst it offers temporary fulfilment and gratification, is essentially an ungratifying and unfulfilling institution: one is always left wanting more, wanting something different. Once is too much and 100 times is not enough. Those who dedicate their souls to the gods of Ecstatic Indulgence find that the promises of the ultimate pleasure are easily offered but never attained. Only the gods themselves can ever know the ultimate in fulfilment.

The cult is separate to that of Aesma, even though there is a common theme. Those rejected by Aesma are frequently drawn to the cult of Ecstatic Indulgence instead.

Slortar the Beautiful

To Melnibonéans, Slortar is a manifestation of brilliance and physical beauty. His raw aspect is that of Chaos's scintillating luminescence and is reflected in Imrryr's gleaming and wondrous spires. Those who venerate him seek to emulate his presence in their fashions, styles and countenance. Many undergo constant surgical and sorcerous transformation to render themselves more comely, elegant and radiant. To them, imperfections, no matter how small, are ugly and they must surround themselves at all times with things that are as beautiful as themselves.

Slortar the Old

Adherents of Slortar's aspect as Slortar the Old venerate Slortar as the master of unearthly, ecstatically painful delights. Pain derives from beauty and beauty from pain. They will endure any deliberate agony (and inflict it) in pursuit of the blessed pleasures such suffering achieves either through its eventual alleviation or through transcendence of physical pain into a spiritual ecstasy of the kind only the Lords of Chaos themselves must experience. Drugs of all kinds figure in their experimentation, as do methods and modes of torture and self-harm.

Balaan the Grim

As the apprentice to Slortar the Old, Balaan is the master torturer; the Lord of Chaos who, through the delicate and skilled infliction of agony achieves self-realisation and undeniable ecstasy as pain gives way to the divine truths of the Multiverse. In Melnibonéan myth, Balaan developed the Chaos Wheels – the huge golden wheels of torture – to entertain Slortar. He gave the gift to the early Bright Emperors and they experimented enthusiastically with the devices, gaining pleasure both from observing the results of those subjected to its breakings and from being broken upon it themselves.

Arnara the Six Breasted

The Chaos Mother of erotic endeavour, Arnara is a large Melnibonéan cult, even now, and her veneration extends across the Young Kingdoms into the brothels, bordellos and bed chambers of those who delight in fornication in all its myriad incarnations. Those who dedicate their souls to her experience Arnara's own caress at the height of the physical act of love and are, momentarily, transported to her Halls of Eroticism in the Amber Planes where every waking moment is one of sheer orgasm.

Myths

The Dream of Oom-Mju (Mythic Resonance 75%) – What Awaits the Faithful:

On a bleak moorland, on a bleak plane, beyond the edge of the Sea of Time, stands the Great Hall of Oom-Mju. It is shaped as a great dome, or breast, surrounded by slender minarets that mimic the male member. To reach Oom-Mju requires deep dreaming and a regard only for personal pleasure.

Slortar built Oom-Mju and many live within its halls, feasting, gorging, rutting and killing. Slortar's servants deliver every indulgence and grant every whim – wish for it and it is yours! To visit Oom-Mju is to remain for 1,000 days, even though, through dreaming, one emerges after hours. In that time, every experience will be satiated, presided over by lion-faced Slortar and his Eternal Concubines, tattooed and accepting, especially of mortals for whom they lust.

Beneath Oom-Mju are the Amber Planes, where Arnara the Six Breasted reclines, attended by her immortal servants who take her milk and empty it into the rivers that flow through Slortar's grand halls. Bathing in the milk of the Amber Plane grants eternal life but one always considers Arnara mother thereafter, forsaking all other family.

Within the minarets of Oom-Mju are the chambers of Lord Balaan, dark places where the foes of Chaos are tortured for eternity in a variety of inventive ways. Lord Balaan constantly seeks new ways to inflict pain and is keen to demonstrate his arts to those who dream their way into his halls and chambers. All the foes one has slain can be found here, shackled and ready for further tortures to be visited upon them and Lord Balaan watches with intent, rewarding the most inventive uses of the many tools he provides – flenses, needles, scalpels, knives, brands and every other tool of the torturers heart.

To DreamQuest to Oom-Mju is to surrender to despair and emerge gratified.

Beliefs

The cult of Ecstatic Indulgence has many beliefs – because every individual has their own ideas of what constitutes pleasure and fulfilment. However the common beliefs of the cult are:

- Only Chaos can bring true pleasure. Law denies it.
- Pleasure and pain are irrevocably linked. One cannot be achieved without the other.
- Personal desires should be unfettered and encouraged. One should not deny oneself pleasure of any form.
- Extremes of experience bring one closer to the gods. Mundane experiences are a mere shadow of what can be attained.
- One can *never* have too much of a Good Thing.

Worshippers

The cult appeals to anyone who seeks pleasure for its own sake and sees personal gratification as the over-riding priority of life. It attracts those who seek physical perfection, the ultimate in sexual gratification, sadists, masochists (and combinations of the two), dominatrix, those who desire only to be dominated, gluttons, drunkards, drug addicts, thrill-seekers, whores, gigolos and those who delight in the suffering of others.

The cult has no ranks but countless temples – for every boudoir, whorehouse and torture chamber is a shrine or temple to ecstatic indulgence. The true temple lies within the pleasures one experiences through veneration of the cult and so every man and woman is a personal shrine to the sublime.

Becoming a member of the cult involves forming a Pact with one of the cult's gods. The only duties adherents need to perform are to pursue pleasure, as represented by the patron deity, to the fullest and to always surrender to whatever pleasure is on offer, irrespective of the circumstances.

Benefits

Every new adherent to the cult receives a Gift and a Compulsion. For every 20% the Pact develops by, adherents choose one from the following:

- A further Gift and Compulsion.
- A Cult Skill, learned at its base value, or improved by 10%.
- A Cult Rune or Summoning, learned at its base value, or improved by 10% (the Pact must be 50% or greater).
- A Heroic Ability (the Pact must be 80% or greater).

In addition, the different gods provide their faithful with the following benefit once and once only.

Slortar the Beautiful

Every point of POW dedicated to the Pact is also added to the adherent's CHA.

Slortar the Old

Every point of POW dedicated to the Pact is also added to the adherent's Resilience skill.

Balaan the Grim

The adherent learns the skill Lore (Torture) at its base percentage of INT x2. If he already has the skill, it increases by 10% plus the amount of POW dedicated to the Pact.

Arnara the Six Breasted

The adherent learns the Seduction skill at its base percentage. If he already has the skill, it increases by 10% plus the amount of POW dedicated to the Pact.

Gifts and Compulsions

Gifts

Change Gender
Chaotic Blessing
Endurance
Perfection
Sanctuary
Second Life
Slave
Youth

Compulsions

Carnal Murderer
Close Combat Pacifism
Demonic Fervour
Flaying
Gluttony
Human Sacrifice
Insomnia
Jealousy
Kleptomania
Lust for a Goddess
Rapist
Sadism
Self Harmer
Self Mutilation
Self-Pitying
Sex Obsession

Cult Skills

Art(any), Dagger, Evaluate, Influence, Language (High Speech), Language (Low Speech), Lore (Balaan and Slortar), Lore (Chaos), Lore (Torture), Seduction.

Heroic Abilities

Heroic Abilities are granted as described and to those who undertake the Oom-Mju DreamQuest. One must fulfil the requirements of the ability.

Empathic Wound, Madness of Purpose, Tireless.

Cult Runes and Magic

The cult teaches the Runes of Beast (choose one), Bewilderment, Chaos, Confinement, Man, Reduction, Silence, Taste, Touch, Truth, Woman.

The cult also teaches Command, Summoning Ritual (Demon of Desire).

Retribution

The cult reserves no special punishments for those who lapse from its ranks.

Politics and Relationships

The cult does not involve itself in any political agenda. It has no interest in the Eternal Struggle and is focused solely on obtaining pleasure. All other issues are irrelevant.

The cult of Ecstatic Indulgence has no significant relations with any of the other Chaos cults and due to its self-centred nature, has no inclinations towards developing them. The cults of Law despise the cult, naturally enough, because its practices embody everything that Law detests. The shrines and temples of the cult are frequent targets for Lawful extremists even though the cult of

Ecstatic Indulgence poses no direct threat to any of the Lawful cults. However, some adherents of the sects of Slortar the Old and Balaan take great pleasure in the capture and slow, hedonist corruption of Lawful agents, introducing them gleefully to the delights of Chaotic pleasure.

HABORYM

Haborym of the Fires That Destroy is a Lord of Chaos that challenged the Sword Rulers for control of their empire. The Lord of Flame has no relation to Kakatal, Elemental Lord of Fire, and is, instead, a brutal higher demon that controls the very fires of Hell unleashing them upon the surface world as a means of cleansing his foes.

Purpose and History

Haborym serves no purpose other than to destroy. He occupies a fiery realm of Hell where all conflagrations serve him directly. In the Earth's earliest days Haborym scoured the surface with his uncontrollable flames destroying all that other Lords of Chaos created or held dear. When challenged by the Sword Rulers he turned his wrath upon them, scouring their worlds with flame until Lord Mabelode defeated Haborym and encased him in a coffin of obsidian that was then cast back into hell to languish amongst the fires Haborym had previously controlled.

The cult appeals to those who enjoy the destruction of flame – not its ability to create and nurture. Its worship is restricted, being confined to a small minority of insane priests in Imrryr and a larger group in Pan Tang and Pikarayd.

Terarn Gashtek, the Flamebringer, is an eastern worshipper of Haborym and used the eastland sorcerer, Drinij Bara, to bring to bear the powers of Dag Gadden the Destroyer, a favoured demon of Haborym's creation.

Myths

Haborym Challenges the Sword Rulers (Mythic Resonance 60%) – The Cleansing of All Foes: Haborym hated the world because all within it did not belong to him. He controlled the secret of fire, having stolen it from Lord Kakatal, and he kept the secret to himself, creating a realm of hell where fire swept across every surface and devoured everything that went before it. Having nothing but a wrathful nature Haborym caused a great gash in the earth and let his hell-fires spill forth, scorching the land and turning forests to cinders and rivers to boiling flows of lava. He even caused the sea to boil and the Boiling Ocean is of his creation.

Presently the Sword Rulers saw this destruction and ordered a halt. Haborym would not attend to reason and, when Lord Mabelode sent demons of the depths to devour the flaming monsters that scorched the earth and sky, Haborym turned his wrath upon the planes of the Sword Rulers.

In the first battle Dag Gadden rose up and liquefied the citadel sacred to Lady Xiombarg. Next Haborym himself incinerated the many temples of Chaos that worshiped Lord Arioch. Finally Haborym confronted Lord Mabelode and demanded surrender. Lord Mabelode refused and they battled upon the Planes of Glass, sword against whip of fire; shield against spears of flame. When Haborym prepared to send his howling demons of hell against Lord Mabelode's position, Mabelode tricked Haborym with sorcery and encased him in a coffin of obsidian, along with Dag Gadden and the rest of his Hell Men. The coffin was thrown into hell and left there, amongst the eternal flames Haborym had once commanded but, trapped in obsidian, Haborym was powerless to call for aid. And he remains thus: and flames rage around him constantly.

Beliefs

Those who worship Haborym believe wholeheartedly in wanton destruction through the use of fire. To reduce something to ash and cinder is the ultimate expression of Chaotic destruction. All other forms are mere shadows and weaknesses perpetrated by weak gods.

The cult seeks tirelessly to find a way of freeing Haborym from his obsidian prison so that he can cleanse the world in the name of Chaos.

Worshippers

Insane pyromaniacs, arsonists and those who loathe the world.

Membership

Standard.

Haborym's small cults are scattered and insular but take the same approach to worship. Initiates must submit to having the skin singed from their bodies in rites that take a dreadful toll. To pass the initiation rite the applicant must endure 1D8+1 points of damage to each and every Hit Location. The damage sustained is permanent and cannot be healed naturally; such is the extent of the burning and the subsequent agony. However, every point of POW dedicated to Haborym as part of the Pact restores one Hit Point of damage to each location, ameliorating the pain but leaving behind the scars. The initiation rite also applies 1D8+1 damage to CHA (to a minimum of one point) although the Pact Skill will always be based on the pre-rite CHA score.

When an Initiate reaches the rank of Acolyte he is allowed to don the flame-red armour permitted of Haborym's faithful. This is a suit of red platemail that is worn constantly.

At High Priest and High Lord level the armour is engraved with the Rune of Fire and the wearer becomes impervious to all fire damage regardless of the strength of the blaze. Plate-clad champions of the cult can wade through lava unscathed and are utterly impervious to salamanders and other creatures using flame as a weapon.

Gifts and Compulsions

A Gift may be taken at each rank, from Initiate onwards. A Compulsion accompanies every Gift.

Gifts

Abstinence (Water)
Combat Acuity
Divine Training
Invulnerability (Salamanders)
Rune (Fire)
Rune Mastery
Ward (Fire and Flame)

Compulsions

Acute Depression
Blood Sacrifice
Hydrophobic
Immolation
Nightmares
Sword Rule Paranoia
Urban Vengeance

Cult Skills

Sword and Whip Combat Style; Mace and Whip Combat Style. Athletics, Brawn, Lore (Chaos), Lore (Haborym), Resilience, Persistence.

Cult Runes and Magic

The cult teaches the Runes of Chaos, Dissolution and Fire.

The cult also teaches Command and the special summoning of Summon Hellmen (starting percentage as per any Summoning Ritual).

Summon Hellmen

Magic Point Cost: 8 per Hellman

Requisites/Components: Rune of Fire (minimum 50%)

The Hellmen of Haborym are a terrifying sight. Those truly dead souls claimed by Haborym are remade into human-shaped beings composed entirely of cinders and ash, their forms held together by the fires of Haborym's hells.

Hellmen obey the commands of the summoner, carrying out their orders tirelessly, ruthlessly and to the letter. Their bodies grind, hiss and spit as they move, flame spilling through the cracks and fissures in their cinder and ash skin. Their eyes and mouths are gaping holes filled with the fires of hell and the air around them crackles with the unholy heat.

All Hellmen are immune to attacks based on fire. However they sustain half damage from mundane weapons and normal damage from attacks based on water or ice.

Hellmen

	Dice	Average	1D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
STR	2D8+14	23	1-3	Right Leg	2/6
CON	2D8+2	11	4-6	Left Leg	2/6
SIZ	2D8+6	15	7-9	Abdomen	2/7
INT	2	2	10-12	Chest	2/8
POW	2D8+2	11	13-15	Right Arm	2/5
DEX	2D8+5	14	16-18	Left Arm	2/5
CHA	—	—	19-20	Head	2/6

Combat Actions	2
Damage Modifier	+1D6
Magic Points	11

Movement	6m
Strike Rank	+9

Typical Armour: Ash. No Armour Penalty

Traits: Breathe Flame, Dark Sight, Formidable Natural Weapons, Night Sight, Poison Immunity

Skills: Athletics 35%, Brawn 75%, Persistence 100%, Resilience 65%, Unarmed 50%

Weapons

Type	SIZ	Reach	Damage	AP/HP
Shortspear	M	L	1D8+1+1D6	4/5
Target Shield	L	S	1D6+1D6	4/10

Combat Styles

Spear and Shield 75%, Spit Fire 40%, Unarmed 50%.

Hellmen spit fire up to their POW in metres. The fire causes 1D6 points of damage. If a Hellman succeeds in a successful Unarmed attack, it can try to use its Grasp of Fire attack on its next Combat Action. The Hellman expels fire through the fissures in its hands attempting to ignite the flammable areas of the opponent's clothing or armour. If successful, the Grasp attack sets light to the victim and 1D3 locations adjacent to the one struck by the initial Unarmed attack suffer 1D6 points of damage per Combat Round until the fire can be extinguished. Armour offers no protection.

Heroic Abilities Available

None.

Retribution

Once one has committed to Haborym's worship, it cannot be undone. Those who turn away from Haborym immediately regain all the damage inflicted during their initiation, the POW dedicated to the Pact ceasing to provide any protection. Apostates live out what is left of their miserable lives in a state of perpetual agony.

Politics and Relationships

The cult of Kakatal loathes the existence of Haborym's cult. So do the Sword Rulers who seek-out Haborym cultists in order to exterminate them. Thus enclaves are insular and try to remove

themselves from contact with their enemies. Temples to Haborym are thus located in isolated places well away from civilisation (mountains, caves, desolate valleys, and so forth).

HWARMA'GAAL - CITY CULT OF PAN TANG

The Mabden people of Pan Tang are not native to the Young Kingdoms. They hail, originally, from a distant plane where the barbarian culture of the brutal Mabden dominates, having overthrown the gentler, more sophisticated elder race that once ruled wisely and justly. In those distant realms the Mabden worship all manner of Chaos gods, including the Sword Rulers and the god known as Hwarma'gaal, a minor vassal of both Mabelode and Xiombarg, but powerful nonetheless and the Duke of Hell charged with helping the Mabden to expand their empire and that of the Sword Rulers.

Purpose and History

Pan Tangian legend has it that Hwama found the Young Kingdoms and brought the Tang tribe of Mabden to them 1,000 years ago. Here, the dominant elder race, the Melnibonéans, fought for their survival against the Lords of Dharzi and ignored the arrival of this strange, swarthy race of humans who, to them, were simply another tribe of barbarians. The Mabden settled the island off the

coast of present day Dharijor and named it Pan Tang ('Place of the Tang Tribe', in the Mabden language). Hwama's powers were accentuated here and the Lord of Chaos helped raise the first of the Mabden cities, which was named Hwamgaarl in his honour. The city invests all Hwama'gaarl's ancient cruelty and barbarity but coats it in a veneer of twisted civility. Whatever the trappings, Hwamgaarl is still a city of Chaos and its people are but one step removed from their barbarian ancestors.

The city cult of Hwarma'gaal venerates the Chaos god as both an ancestor of the Mabden people and the founder of the Mabden Empire in the Young Kingdoms. It is Hwama'gaarl's will that the Mabden spread across the world and dominate it in the name of the Sword Rulers and Chaos. All cities, particularly those of Melniboné, should be made into a likeness of Hwamgaarl, and Hwarma'gaal should become their city god. It is therefore a stated aim of Pan Tang's theocracy to establish a temple or shrine to Hwarma'gaal in each and every city of the Young Kingdoms, thereby demonstrating the dominance of the Mabden over both Young Kingdoms humans and Melniboné.

The cult's specific purpose is the defence and protection of Hwamgaarl and to establish the city as the capital of the Mabden Empire. Hwarma'gaal can be invoked to defend the city if it is attacked and much of the magic that has been used to raise the city's grotesque buildings and create its infamous Screaming Statues is Hwama'gaarl's own sorcery. Hwama's presence pervades every street and shadow of Hwamgaarl; countless shrines (blank-eyed, leering-mouthed faces) are found amongst its buildings and the theocrat of Pan Tang is considered as his High Priest, communing regularly with the Chaos Lord.

Hwama's power is drawn directly from every inhabitant of Pan Tang. Everyone born in the city is a Lay Member of the cult and expected to offer veneration to Lord Hwarma'gaal. He draws ample power from this ambient veneration to protect the city and lend sorcerous power to the theocrat but those who worship him directly, pledging part of their own souls, are the sweetest of his worshippers and may, eventually, draw upon some of Hwama'gaarl's latent power for their own ends.

Hwama's influence is felt in any city where he has at least a shrine and eight worshippers. *Known* shrines and temples are found in each of Dharijor's cities, and also within Ryfel and Chalal in Pikarayd but other, more secretive, shrines might be encountered in any of the Young Kingdoms' cities or city states.

Myths

Hwama and the Eight Tribes (Mythic Resonance 70%) – The Treachery of Law:

The Mabden lived in peace with the Lords of Chaos until Law came to seize what it could.

The glades were plentiful and peaceful, with a myriad of creatures amongst them. Lord T'aargano of Law came and made all the creatures the same. Then he turned his attentions to the myriad

tribes of the Mabden and tried to make them alike, too, but Lord Hwama, who was revered by all the tribes, challenged him and war was made far and wide across the Mabden isles.

As war was a new state, Lord Hwama, who had little experience of it and was peaceful, called upon the Dukes of Hell to help create an army to repel T'aargano's treachery. The Sword Rulers answered the call and each took a tribe from the original eight tribes of the Mabden and made them into warriors who could fight Law. These were fierce men and women who fought side-by-side with the demons that the Sword Rulers also sent. Together they waged a terrible war against Law, laying waste to their camps and driving the soldiers of T'aargano, who could not think for themselves, into the sea.

When all was finished, the lands of the Mabden were doomed. T'aargano had been defeated but his work was done. All things were the same and the remaining tribes of the Mabden, which had not been made warriors, were dead. Even the corpses looked alike. Hwama wept for his people.

He took the last three tribes and made one tribe, which was the Tang. Even Hwama could not restore the Mabden lands to what they had been and so he scoured the Multiverse for a new home. He found one upon a lonely, mist-shrouded isle on a young world. He raised the city of Gaarl in one night, so the Tang would have a place to live, and took some of the bodies of the fallen tribes and made of them sentries that would scream if T'aargano ever returned to take vengeance. Then he brought the Tang to the isle and they named it Pan Tang and the city Hwama had built as Hwamgaarl. Here they remain, as warriors and magicians still, ever watchful for T'aargano's treachery.

Beliefs

Hwarma'gaal guards the capital of the great Mabden Empire. Whilst Hwama lives, Hwamgaarl will never fall and the empire of the Mabden shall expand throughout every city of every plane. By pledging allegiance to Lord Hwama, the greater glory of Pan Tang is assured.

Worshippers

Standard.

Anyone born within the walls of Hwamgaarl is automatically a Lay Member of Hwarma'gaal and is eligible to join the cult as an Initiate. Outsiders may still join the cult but must be prepared to offer a minimum of 2 POW to form the Pact (Hwarma'gaal).

The cult has only four ranks: Lay Members, Initiates, Priests and High Priest. The High Priest is always the current theocrat and he chooses the Priests who serve under him. There are never more and never less than eight Priests.

Lay members

Those born in Hwamgaarl's walls, whether Pan Tangian or not.

Initiates

Those who dedicate part of their soul to Pan Tang's glory. Native Hwamgaarlans need only dedicate one point of POW to the Pact but outsiders must dedicate a minimum of two POW.

Priests

The active clergy of Hwarma'gaal, the Priests number eight in total and are chosen by the theocrat himself. To be eligible as a Priest of Hwarma'gaal the Pact must be 70% or higher and with at least four POW dedicated to it. The Priest must also have served Pan Tang faithfully, and Hwarma'gaal specifically, for eight years and must have assisted in establishing a shrine to the god in one city that is considered as an enemy of Pan Tang.

High Priest

The theocrat himself. This is currently Jagreen Lern and he has the right to appoint Priests, remove them from office (a grisly affair, usually involving the sacked Priests becoming one of Hwamgaarl's Screaming Statues) and commune directly with both Hwarma'gaal and the other Lords of Chaos.

Duties

Initiates of Hwarma'gaal are expected to visit Hwamgaarl once a year and reside in its walls for at least eight days. There is no additional duty, save to maintain the belief that Hwamgaarl is a holy city and centre of the glorious Mabden Empire.

If an Initiate wants to be considered for the Priesthood, then he must set-up a shrine to Hwarma'gaal in an enemy city, thereby extending the god's influence. The shrine must be protected and undiscovered for at least a year.

Priests of Hwarma'gaal are expected to devote their lives completely to the city god, spending the rest of their days in Hwamgaarl's walls and assisting the theocrat in planning Pan Tang's expansion. Travel outside Hwamgaarl is possible but only on errands and assignments commanded by the theocrat personally.

Benefits

Only Initiates and Priests gain direct benefits from venerating Hwarma'gaal.

Initiates

- One Gift and one Compulsion.
- Training in the cult's skills free of charge.
- Learning either two of the cult's Runes or one Summoning at the base percentage.

Priests

- One Gift and one Compulsion.
- Training in the cult's skills free of charge.
- Training in all of the cult's Runes and Summonings to their base percentage.

- All sorcerous skills cast used within Hwamgaarl's walls benefit from a bonus equal to half the Priest's Pact (Hwarma'gaal). Sorcerous skills cast outside Hwamgaarl but in a city where a shrine to the god has been established gain a bonus equal to a quarter of the Pact.

Gifts and Compulsions

Gifts and Compulsion are gained as per cult rank.

Gifts

Divine Training
Elemental
Rune Mastery
Sanctuary
Sense Enemies
Slave

Compulsions

Agoraphobia
Armour Rejection
Blood Sacrifice to Hwama
Chaotic Disdain
Close Combat Pacifism
Empire Builder

Cult Skills

Influence, Language (High Speech), Language (Low Speech), Language (Mabden), Lore (Chaos), Lore (Hwarma'gaal), Lore (Mabden), Streetwise.

Cult Runes and Magic

The cult teaches the Runes of Alarm, Barring, Chaos, Confinement, Silence and Warding.

It also teaches: Command, Summoning (Demon of Desire), Summoning (Demon of Knowledge).

Retribution

Those who betray the cult are hunted down by agents hand-picked for the task by the theocrat. They are hauled back to Hwamgaarl where they face Hwama'gaarl's personal wrath and are transformed into one of the city's infamous Screaming Statues, spending the rest of eternity in immobile agony atop Hwamgaarl's walls, where they may reflect on their treachery at leisure.

Politics and Relationships

Whilst the cult of Hwarma'gaal is an important cult in Pan Tang and the theocrat is its High Priest, other cults have far greater importance and significance. There are some who believe that Hwarma'gaal should be placed in a position of higher importance, above the other Lords of Chaos but would be very careful in voicing such opinions...

MARTHTRIM

Lord Marthrim is an Elder Lord of Chaos, deposed aeons ago but still known to certain scholars of Chaos in Melniboné, Pan Tang and Phum.

Purpose and History

Lord Marthrim is known as The Shaper. Myths tell that he defined the Shapes of all life but could settle on no fixed form for any of his creations. From him are born the Oonai and other chimera; changing, mutating things that grow to despise even themselves. So too did Marthrim despise his own form – so much so that The Shaper became the Denier and he so hated his own malleability that he sought complete destruction of all things so that, as a formless consciousness, he could begin again.

Marthrim was imprisoned by Slortar the Old. His imprisonment was that which he most abhorred: a fixed, unchanging form so hateful in appearance and so despairing in mind that Marthrim's power would be curbed. Marthrim became so mired in self-loathing that he dared not exercise his powers. Slortar's strategy worked for long ages; until, that is, mortals discovered for themselves self-loathing and despair at their own limitations. Through the weakened barriers such emotions create, Marthrim's power is free to influence those who share his pain and are a part of the same prison he occupies. Those who loathe themselves, who yearn for change and transcendence, are the ones who find solace in Marthrim's patronage – for he represents the cruelty of the Multiverse; the cruelty of the Balance and such cruelty must be battled, even if it leads to further despair and self-hatred.

Myths

The Eight Forms of Marthrim (Mythic Resonance 75%) – The Cruelty of the Multiverse: Marthrim created eight shapes and abhorred them all. He melded them together and reformed them. Every permutation was more hateful than the last. In some Marthrim gave the power to change continually, never remaining in the same form for more than a few minutes before becoming something else. Even this was loathsome and the creatures that arose from his actions hated even themselves.

Marthrim took each of the eight original forms and imposed them upon himself. He combined mammal and fish; humanoid and bird; spirit and plant; reptile and insect. He was composed of all these things and his appearance and nature drove him mad. He thus blamed all around him for the lack of sympathy and found only the laughter of his fellow gods. This created hate and rage, and Marthrim used these powers to tear at the nature of the Court of Chaos. Many things died. Many realms were torn asunder. When, finally, Slortar subdued him with trickery and sorcery, Marthrim could fight no more.

Slortar made Marthrim's form stay in its final configuration, which was so dreadful to behold even the Lords of Chaos could not gaze upon it. Marthrim skulked to the final plane of Hell where he



had shaped his original eight forms and sank into a silent, eternal loathing. In time he was forgotten and even forgot himself.

Marthrim was awakened by the mortal Oorum of Melniboné, the depressive cousin of the emperor. Deformed from birth he was mocked and loathed by the specimens of perfection that walked the Court of the Ruby Throne. Oorum, hunchbacked and hate-filled, retired to the halls of Ool'nag'nagn and consoled himself with the grimoires found within. There he discovered Marthrim and summoned him. Marthrim came reluctantly but saw in Oorum a mortal that shared his own self-loathing. Marthrim gifted Oorum knowledge and Oorum took that knowledge and left Imrryr, finding a new home for himself in distant ruins at the edge of the Bright Empire. There he gathered the similarly disfigured, the similarly dispossessed. Worship of Marthrim intensified and solace was found. A family of Chaos was formed and, although small, it perpetuates to this day, with the immortal mad King Oorum, High Priest of Marthrim, as its leader.

Beliefs

The physical form is hateful. The Multiverse is cruel. All must be destroyed so that Marthrim can reshape it. The eight forms must become the One Form. From it will spring new creations that

bear no resemblance to the things that walk, crawl, fly, swim or ooze. Until that time, self-change is the only expression possible.

Worshippers

The depressed; the self-loathers; the dissatisfied and disaffected; those whom the Multiverse does not understand. Marthrim is also the Lord of the Change and those creatures such as the chimerical oonai are part of his original shaping. King Oorum is the High Priest of the cult and communes directly with Marthrim. Oorum resides in the ziggurat of Qyroon, a temple made of ruins somewhere in the far south of the world close to where all turns to Chaos. Qyroon merges with the plane of hell Marthrim himself occupies and Oorum and Marthrim are almost as one being – a hint of what will emerge when Marthrim forces all things to reform.

Membership

The cult has only two ranks: Initiates and Priests. Priests must have dedicated at least half of their POW to Marthrim's worship. Initiates can dedicate any amount they wish but can seek no advancement or favour from Oorum unless they are prepared to accept the inevitability of change.

Gifts and Compulsions

Gifts can be taken in exchange for the usual POW costs. Whether a Gift is taken or not, all members of the cult gain a Compulsion and an additional Compulsion accompanies each Gift.

Gifts

Change Gender
Chaotic Blessing
Endurance
Eternal Life
Rune
Sanctuary

Compulsions

Acute Depression
Acute Insomnia
Agoraphobia
Attention Deficit
Corpse-Like
Demonic Fervour
Flaying
Gluttony
Jealousy
Nightmares
Paranoia
Ritual Scarring
Sadism
Self Harmer
Self Mutilation

Cult Skills

Lore (Chaos), Lore (Marthrim), Persistence, Resilience, Streetwise.

Cult Runes and Magic

The following Runes are taught by the cult – or may be taken at the base percentage as a Gift:

Animate
Beasts
Chaos
Domination
Melding

The cult also teaches Command and Summon (Demon of Desire, Demon of Knowledge).

Heroic Abilities Available

None.

Retribution

The cult is too fragmented and self-loathing to maintain any serious retribution against those who leave the cult. However all Gifts are lost whilst all Compulsions remain.

Politics and Relationships

The cult of Marthrim has no alliances with any known cults. It is insular and concerned only with its own agenda.

MASHABAK

A lesser known Lord of Chaos but, in Melniboné at least, a significant one. For thousands of years Lord Mashabak has been a patron demon of the royal line particularly amongst those bearing the name Sadric; and, indeed, Elric's own father took Mashabak as his own, patron, Lord of Chaos.

Purpose and History

Mashabak is a shadowy figure amongst the Lords of Hell. Once a protégé of Arioch, Mashabak rose in greatness by inculcating allegiances amongst the inhuman races of the Multiverse finding favour within Melniboné. As Mashabak's power grew, so he challenged Arioch for dominance in certain affairs and fell out of favour with the Lord of the Crimson Hells.

The cult of Mashabak is a niche one in the Young Kingdoms. A few Melnibonéans know of it as do various students of Chaos scattered across the world (he is revered in Phum, for instance) but in general the cult is little regarded. This makes it peevish. Mashabak has been denied his true role in the Eternal Struggle and is its most able general. Mashabak is a master of deception,

Oorum

The deformed son of a Melnibonéan nobleman, Oorum is extremely old, extremely twisted and extremely bitter. His body is a cruel, hulking parody of a human form: his back is massively hunched, forcing him to walk with a peculiar, sideways gait and a large goitre formed at the juncture of neck and shoulder on his right hand side has developed narrow, slatted eyes and a small, unspeaking gash of a mouth. Oorum consults it in High Speech often and claims it to be an avatar of Marthrim himself – or a Demon of Knowledge that has melded itself with Oorum's misshapen body.

Oorum is centuries old. His Gift of Eternal Life keeps him forever from natural death although the experience of continued existence has deepened his insanity and bitterness. He is attracted to the ugly and deformed and he hates beauty and symmetry with a murderous passion. As a Melnibonéan he is a skilled sorcerer and, as Priest of Marthrim, is representative of his Lord's insane despair.

Oorum rarely leaves the isolated, sprawling ziggurat of Qyroom in the ruins of a forgotten Bright Empire city, Ool'nag'nagn, in the far south of the Young Kingdoms. Here he surrounds himself with sinister, deformed courtiers and demonic servants sent by Marthrim as gifts. His days are spent in melding together different forms in search of a 'One Form' that will replace his own, tortured body.

	Value	1D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
STR	13	1–3	Right Leg	–/7
CON	16	4–6	Left Leg	–/7
SIZ	16	7–9	Abdomen	–/8
INT	13	10–12	Chest	–/9
POW	19 (10 dedicated)	13–15	Right Arm	–/6
DEX	11	16–18	Left Arm	–/6
CHA	1	19–20	Head	3/7

Combat Actions	2
Damage Modifier	+1D2
Magic Points	9
Movement	5m
Strike Rank	+12

Typical Armour: None.

Traits: Intensely deformed. Demonic feature (head-like goitre).

Skills: Athletics 39%, Brawn 90%, Culture (Melniboné) 75%, Evade 40%, Language (Common) 85%, Language (High Speech) 95%, Language (Low Speech) 100%, Lore (Chaos) 80%, Lore (Marthrim) 100%, Perception 112%, Persistence 95%, Resilience 85%, Sleight 45%, Stealth 15%, Survival 40%, Tracking 25%

Runes (all at 90%): Animate, Beasts, Chaos, Domination, Melding

Command 80%, Summon (Demons of Desire and Knowledge) 80%.

Weapons

Type	SIZ	Reach	Damage	AP/HP
Battleaxe	M	M	1D8+1+1D2	4/8
Head Butt	S	T	1D6+1D2	As for Head
Target Shield	L	S	1D6+1D2	4/10

Combat Styles

Axe and Shield 112%, Head Butt 60%.

duplicity and cunning and these qualities are fostered in the few members of the cult. Mashabak hides, lurks, plots and schemes. Those loyal to him are made party to them and Mashabak retains a close relationship with his adherents.

Myths

The Disciple of Arioch (Mythic Resonance 70%) – Subtlety and Patience: When Arioch required a spy he sent for Mashabak. He needed to scour many realms and many hells, because Mashabak was hidden but eventually Arioch found him amongst the Mernii and brought him to the Crimson Hells so that his tuition might begin.

Mashabak learned the Three Subterfuges: Concealment of the Mind, Concealment of the Body and Concealment of the Soul. Next Arioch taught him the secret of Patience – something lost to all of the Lords of Chaos, save Arioch and now Mashabak. Finally, Arioch laid bare his plans for the Eternal Struggle so that Mashabak might gather intelligence from across the Multiverse that would place Chaos at an advantage wherever Law held strength.

‘Give me an army and I will conquer them,’ Mashabak demanded.

‘Ah, sweet Mashabak, most prized of my students, I have another general in mind for that task and he is not yet prepared. Of you, I ask the greatest thing: to know the Mind of Law.’

‘I have hidden and listened for too long,’ Mashabak said. ‘I wish to fight. To lead the armies of Chaos against the armies of Law. Am I not ready?’

‘No.’ Said Arioch and banished Mashabak for his insolence.

Mashabak turned his hatred towards his former master and went into hiding again but this time amongst those realms held dear to Arioch. He gathered followers and turned them against Arioch and gathered kings and emperors to his service. Mashabak used Patience and the Three Subterfuges to steal away realms from Arioch, challenging him to oppose. But Arioch had other concerns and did not trust to Mashabak’s capabilities. So it was that Mashabak gained in power and influence but in subtle ways and subtle means.

Beliefs

Mashabak’s followers believe that Lord Mashabak and Arioch are engaged in a war of wits and subtleties. Mashabak will win and lead the armies of Chaos, subverting Arioch’s own schemes. They believe in stealth and secrets. They believe in patiently waiting for the right moment, weighing-up causes, effects and consequences, acting judiciously and never betraying what they are thinking. Most of all they seek to challenge and subvert Arioch’s supremacy in the Multiverse and, for that, are willing to take many calculated risks.

Worshippers

Certain families in the Melnibonéan royal bloodline; disaffected worshippers of Arioch; travellers of the Multiverse who have been seduced by Mashabak’s stealth.

Membership

Standard.

The cult has no ranks, no Priests and no Acolytes. All are Initiates although those who develop their Pact to at least 80% become Champions of Mashabak and gain a personal and intimate relationship with their patron lord.

Benefits

All Initiates gain Gifts and at least one Compulsion. Champions of Mashabak gain visitations in dream form from Mashabak himself who directs their actions and quests.

Gifts and Compulsions

Cultists may take Gifts but must take a Compulsion to accompany each Gift. Available Gifts and Compulsions are as follows:

Gifts

Abstinence
Divine Training
Endurance
Increased Damage Modifier.
Heroic Ability.
Rune (choosing from either the Rune of Concealment, Darkness or Deception)
Rune Mastery

Compulsions

Chaotic Disdain
Dedicated Lover
Empire Builder
Fear of Death
Hate Arioch
Human Sacrifice

Cult Skills

Sword Combat Styles, Dagger and Knife Combat Styles, Archery.

Evade, Insight, Lore (Chaos), Lore (Mashabak), Meditation, Stealth.

Cult Runes and Magic

The cult teaches the Runes of Concealment, Darkness and Deception. To learn one or more Runes, they must be taken as Gifts. The Rune skill begins at the base Rune Casting percentage.

The cult also teaches Command and Summon (Demon of Knowledge).

Heroic Abilities Available

Champions of Mashabak may take one Heroic Ability from the following without needing to meet the ability's requirements. However, it costs one point of Dedicated POW for the first ability, two for the second and three for the third.

Sense Supernatural
Steely Glare
Zeal

Retribution

Mashabak always claims the souls of those who betray him. Every year there is a chance equal to the Pact score that Mashabak attempts to claim the apostate cultist as though he was undergoing apotheosis. Alternatively active champions will seek-out the apostate to kill him or Mashabak's behalf.

Politics and Relationships

The cult works singularly and has no alliances with any of the other Chaos cults. All cults venerating Arioch are hated and disdained. Likewise, Mashabak's cult is disdained by other cults and is hated by Arioch.

NARJHAN

Now, most of these troubled travellers who dwelt in peaceful Tanelorn had thrown off earlier allegiances to the Lords of Chaos who, as gods, took more than a mild interest in the affairs of men. It happened, therefore, that these same Lords grew to resent the unlikely city of Tanelorn and, not for the first time decided to act against it.

They instructed one of their number (more they could not, then, send) Lord Narjhan, to journey to Nadsokor, the City of Beggars, which had an old grudge against Tanelorn and raise an army that would attack undefended Tanelorn and destroy it and its inhabitants. So he did this, arming his ragged army and promising them many things.

— To Rescue Tanelorn

Narjhan is a Chaos Lord of Hatred and Manipulation. He is associated with Nadsokor, the beggar city, but is not its patron – merely its manipulator. To hate and to continue hating is the only duty a follower of Narjhan needs to fulfil. If that hatred can, in some way, be neutralised, or turned to forgiveness, then Narjhan's hold is weakened or broken – but see Benefits.

Purpose and History

The beggars of the Young Kingdoms, particularly residents of the ghastly city of Nadsokor, have had little need for gods in their history. Gods have forsaken them, cursed them and driven them to the depths of degenerative despair. What use is a god to a beggar? Will he put coin in the begging bowl? Will he cure addled

limbs and broken minds? Will he lift leprosy or simply spread its contagion? No. Gods are remote and uncaring for any save those strong enough to enact their will – particularly the Lords of Chaos.

It is strange, then, that the beggars of Nadsokor are so easily rallied by Lord Narjhan, who comes to them with the sole purpose of leading an army to destroy Tanelorn and punish those who had turned away from the path of Chaos. Narjhan's power lies in his ability to create hatred in the heart and exploit it for the ends of Chaos. As a god, he is, himself, insubstantial, requiring the guise of a black armoured and helmeted warrior to sustain a physical presence but his personality and ethereal form is that of pure hatred. Any who pledge their souls to Narjhan succumb to this pure, unadulterated hatred: for Law, for the Cosmic Balance, for reason itself. Narjhan is Chaos's Herald of Hatred and it is his duty to create fanatics who will, when the Lords of Chaos demand it, rise against the object of the hatred Narjhan has inculcated.

Thus, whilst Narjhan's chief worshippers in the Young Kingdoms have been beggars, any who give way to hate, or wish to gain strength from hatred, can worship him. Nadsokor's beggars, already wretched and seething, welcome hate readily, especially for those who have not succumbed to their own, wretched existence. Narjhan's influence amongst beggars is therefore half-way assured but by no means guaranteed and Narjhan himself had to spend time fostering and fanning the existing hatred to create the beggar army that he then used to assault Tanelorn.

Myths

Narjhan and Tanelorn (Mythic Resonance 60%) – Why Tanelorn Must Fall:

Narjhan took to journeying, sometimes in the guise of a warrior and sometimes in the guise of a beggar. It mattered little. Crossing a blasted desert one day he saw in the distance a great and beautiful city. 'Ho! This must be a refuge of Arioch or Xiombarg,' he said to himself, 'I will find here welcome, warmth and wenchies.' He anticipated his rest there with a glad heart.

As he neared the city's walls he observed guards on the battlements and many colourful standards flying. Not one of them displayed the symbol of Chaos and now Narjhan was wary but sought rest any way, even if this was not a city of Chaos. The gate keepers watched the approach of this black-armoured warrior and called down to him.

'Tanelorn greets you, traveller.'

'Tanelorn? This is not, then, the great city of Verneron-Hu, built by Arioch? Or wondrous Gomorrah?' Narjhan replied. At this the gatekeeper became restless.

'We know of these places. They are the work of Chaos and Chaos is not welcome here – no gods are. This is Tanelorn, a city of peace. If you seek the attentions of Chaos, look elsewhere traveller.'

Narjhan glared at the walls of the city, understanding it a little more. And he rode on.

In another time Narjhan took the form of a beggar and was forced to flee when Lady Miggea's wolves sought his soul. He hobbled through a thick forest but came eventually to a clearing and saw the walls of the great city and knew it to be Tanelorn. 'Perhaps,' Narjhan speculated to himself, 'Chaos now owns this place, because it should not be here.'

As he approached the walls, the wolves of Miggea baying in the distance, the guards closed the gates to him. 'I need refuge!' Narjhan cried. 'Take pity on a poor beggar.'

'Beggar or not,' the guards replied, 'you bring Miggea in your wake. She hates this place and needs little excuse to raise force against it. We would give you shelter but have not the might to withstand Miggea's armies!'

And the wolves of Miggea caught up with Narjhan and tore him to shreds before the walls of Tanelorn whilst Miggea watched and laughed.

Ending his travels Narjhan looked back on his experiences. He had encountered no love, no charity. He had experienced only selfishness and disdain. Tanelorn had the worst of it. He expelled all notions of love and tolerance from his heart and replaced them with hatred so intense that he was consumed by it – and it felt good. His vengeance on Tanelorn would be slow but it would be painful. The city would not reject him again.

Beliefs

There is only the belief in the power of hatred within Narjhan's cult. Hatred takes many forms but always has a single, defined object. The overwhelming direction of hate is against Law and the Cosmic Balance but those who venerate Narjhan direct their hatred against whatever target they have chosen with absolute intensity. There is no concept of an Eternal Struggle amongst Narjhan's followers; only the need to vent their hatred to its fullest. Bereft of Narjhan's guidance, those who follow him quickly fall into complete despair.

Worshippers

Any with hatred in their hearts, or who wish to gain strength from hatred, worship Narjhan. This includes most beggars and often includes those who have suffered at the hands of society.

The cult has no ranks or orders; individuals pursue their hatred unswervingly once a Pact has been made with Narjhan.

Nadsokor and Narjhan

All of Nadsokor's beggars worship Narjhan, who promises many things: freedom from drudgery, disease and servitude, the riches of Tanelorn and a dozen other cities; beggars to become princes in the new empire arising from Chaos. Beggars, seeking whatever

scraps they can, fall for Narjhan's promises heavily but rarely, if ever, will they be held true.

Narjhan is viewed as the one god who can, and will, alleviate misery. He is considered a god of righteousness where many others have failed. He is a faint beacon of hope in a city and world where little exists. Beggars bless their bowls in his name and offer 'Narjhan's blessings' to all those who deposit a coin but their worship is typically fair-weather, since all beggars seek proof above reassurances (of which they have had plenty).

All those who wish to reside in Nadsokor must pledge allegiance to Narjhan, in Urish's name, but that is the extent of their Pact, usually. Urish hand-picks those he wants to progress in the cult and, as a selfish king, the one person he wants to progress the most is himself.

Members of the cult of Narjhan are expected to give half of their earnings to King Urish. In return they gain free training in the cult's skills of: Club, Evaluate, Influence, Language (Opish), Lore (Chaos), Lore (Nadsokor), Lore (World), Staff, Streetwise

Benefits

Anyone who chooses to worship Narjhan must state, specifically, what it is they hate. This can be a person, a place, an ideal or something else altogether. POW is dedicated to the Pact and one Gift is automatically granted from the following table. A further Gift is granted for every additional point of POW invested in the Pact, or for every 20% the Pact improves by.

Gifts and Compulsions

The only Compulsion Narjhan imposes is that of Single Minded Obsession with the object of the hatred. The adherent is committed to destroying whatever it is he hates and pursues his obsession regardless of all other duties, feelings or commitments. The longer it takes to destroy the object of the hatred, the stronger the Compulsion grows until the adherent is completely consumed by the desire to destroy. Sleep, food, family, comfort; all become irrelevant whilst the object of the hatred persists. The adherent becomes increasingly dishevelled, crazed, ugly and wretched. Life ceases to have meaning beyond destroying that which is hated. Anyone or anything that gets in the way is an enemy to be destroyed.

Gifts

Abstinence
Chaotic Blessing
Combat Acuity
Endurance
Eternal Life (the object of the hatred becomes an eternal quest, requiring immortality to pursue)
Second Life (even death cannot overcome the burning hatred in the adherent's soul)
Tireless

Cult Skills

For every two points in the Pact with Narjhan, the adherent gains a bonus of +1% to one of the following cult skills for every point of POW invested in the Pact. This is an automatic bonus and reflects the strength of hatred those who worship Narjhan feel.

Sword, Club, Dagger, and Staff Combat Styles, Evaluate, Influence, Lore (Chaos), Lore (Nadsokor), Lore (Narjhan), Lore (World), Streetwise.

Retribution

If the hatred a Narjhan worshipper feels is neutralised or removed, Narjhan himself inculcates a hatred of the traitor in a number of other worshippers equal to the POW the traitor had devoted to his Pact. These new enemies make the traitor the focus of their loathing, hunting him down with the intent of murder to appease Narjhan's wrath.

Hatred can be removed or neutralised by a Dreamthief. Treat the hatred as a dream from Imador – the Land of New Ambition (intensity of 5D4).

Politics and Relationships

Hatred is always useful to Chaos and whilst Narjhan is a singular god and his worshippers are without formal cult direction, other cults of Chaos are happy to make use of the hate-driven to achieve their own ends.

SAEBOS

Saebos is the Watcher of All Realms. The moon is thought to be his baleful eye, watching over the Earth and all other realms where Chaos rules. In this way he can see the outcome of the Eternal Struggle across a million different planes but has no influence, directly, over any of them. That he refuses to intervene led to his exile, above the Earth, forever watching, by other Lords of Chaos.

Purpose and History

This is a moon-worshipping cult. It is popular in Pikarayd, Dharijor, Phum and some more primitive cultures who do not realise that Saebos is a Lord of Chaos. Saebos's purpose is to witness the outcome of the Eternal Struggle but never to reveal it. Through this knowledge, one can become a traveller of the Million Spheres working on Saebos's behalf, gathering information and knowledge.

Saebos is present only in those realms where there is also a moon. If a moon is absent, then so is Saebos.

Myths

Saebos becomes Lord of the Night (Mythic Resonance 75%): When the Earth was formed, Saebos was formed with it but pulled

away so that he would be apart from what happened beneath. His form took that of an orb, pale and ever watchful, closing once every 30 days so that the Lord might rest.

Lord Kakatal of the Flaming Eye was jealous of this new presence and condemned Saebos to appear only when Kakatal was not present: this is why the sun and moon are rarely seen in the sky together. As a result, Saebos also became the Lord of the Night, just as Kakatal is the Lord of the Day. All things that walk or crawl in the darkness hours are sacred to Saebos and are his watchers.

Lord Saebos watches many places, many realms, at once. His eye stretches across the Million Spheres and illuminates the Moonbeam Roads. His presence in a place symbolises the presence of Chaos and its ability to see all things no matter how obscure.

Conscious that Saebos sees all, the Lords of Law decided to attack him. They made spells and machines that would cause him to fall from the sky and into the sun, burning to nothingness. Saebos watched their great spell machine being built and appeared to do nothing. Then, on the eve of their launch, he caused the tides to swell and come crashing down on the shores of the island where the Lords of Law had built their weapons. The island was drowned and with it those who served Law. Law never again sought to challenge Lord Saebos's position in the sky.

Later a Lord of Chaos blamed Lord Saebos for not intervening when Law attacked and conquered realms of Chaos in another sphere. Saebos was called to account. 'I watch,' he said. 'I do not interfere.'

'We lost much,' protested the Court of Hell.

'Then conquer more of what belongs to Law,' Saebos suggested. 'But do not hold me responsible for your lack of preparation and protection.'

The Lords of Chaos decided to leave Saebos well alone and not rely upon him for anything. So it has always been and so Saebos watches eternally as the moon, confined to the sphere of the Night.

Beliefs

The cult of Saebos believes that his light creates the Moonbeam Roads that connect the Million Spheres. Those faithful to him gain the power to walk these pathways, traversing many worlds as easily as traversing their own. To serve Saebos is to become a wanderer and a watcher but never to interfere – even if Chaos would benefit. Worshippers of Saebos revere the moon as a symbol of Chaos hanging over the world, and many others, and consider it a source of their powers. Contained within the moon are many additional worlds, which may be hells, populated with creatures Saebos has created to keep him entertained during his eternal vigil.

Worshippers

Moon-fanatics, itinerants, certain travellers of the Million Spheres.

Membership

Standard.

The cult has several ranks, named as follows:

Initiates – Pilgrims
Acolytes – Wanderers
High Priests – Missionaries
High Lords – Emissaries

All ranks must pledge POW to the Pact (Saebos) as per the standard *RuneQuest* limitations.

Benefits

Pilgrims – A walking staff carved from ash and topped with a crescent moon of red iron. The staff acts as a quarterstaff weapon.

Wanderers – An amulet carved with the Rune of Contact. The Rune is activated at the Wanderer's Pact percentage although Magic Points must be invested as normal.

Missionaries – A crystal which, when placed to the eye, reveals the presence of gates and portals leading to other realms and the Moonbeam Roads. It costs one Magic Point to use the crystal but no skill roll is needed.

Emissaries – A bracelet or torque engraved with the Rune of Speed. The Rune is activated at the Emissary's Pact percentage although Magic Points must be invested as normal.

Gifts and Compulsions

Each rank receives a Compulsion and may also receive a Gift, if desired. All Pilgrims must take a Gift, as must Emissaries.

Gifts

Animal Familiar
Divine Training
Enhanced Learning
Eternal Life
Multiversal Polyglot
Sanctuary

Compulsions

Attention Deficit
Forgetful
Kleptomania
Never Ending Search
Secretive

Cult Skills

Quarterstaff Combat Style. Evaluate, Insight, Lore (Chaos), Lore (Million Spheres), Lore (Saebos), Navigate.

Cult Runes and Magic

The cult teaches the Runes of Contact and Transfer.

It also teaches Command and Summon (Demon of Transport).

Heroic Abilities Available

Emissaries and Missionaries may perform the Saebos DreamQuest, recreating the creation of the moon in order to gain the Heroic Aura or Commanding Voice Heroic Abilities, if they meet the ability's requirements.

Retribution

Saebos cannot take action against followers who become apostate. However all Gifts are lost although Compulsions remain.

Politics and Relationships

The cult of Kakatal is antagonistic towards Saebos although this antagonism means that the cult of Lassa is sympathetic towards Saebos cultists. As the cult is one of the more peaceful and ambivalent amongst the chaos cults, it tends to go unopposed by all but the most ardent worshippers of Law.

SILENT WATCHERS

At last Teshwan spoke. 'Now,' he said decisively. 'Here's the situation in which we have decided to place you. You may leave only if you can create something which it has never occurred to us to create.'

'But you, surely, are the Masters of Creation?' said Elric in puzzlement. 'How may I do this?'

'Your first statement is not strictly true and in qualifying it I can give you a hint of the answer to your question. We of Chaos cannot make anything new — we may only experiment with combinations of that already created. Do you understand?'

'I do,' said Elric.

'Only the Greatest Power, of which we know little more than do humans, can create fresh conceptions. The Greatest Power holds both Law and Chaos in perpetual balance, making us war only so that the scale will not be tilted too far to one side. We wish not for power—only for variety. Thus every time we weary of our domain and let our old creations fade and conceive new ones. If you can bring a fresh element to our domain, we shall free you. We create jokes and

paradoxes. Conceive a better joke and a better paradox for our entertainment and you may leave here.'

— *The Last Enchantment*

For eternity, and across the Multiverse, Chaos continually strives to understand the true nature of the Cosmic Struggle – to interpret its rules, unfold its secrets and to gain an edge in the Eternal Battle that must, through the Cosmic Balance's decree, be fought between the two powers. Of all the Lords of Chaos two strive the hardest to underpin the understanding of the plans of the Balance and the Lords of Law; Maluk and Teshwan, who, together, are known as the Silent Watchers.

Purpose and History

Maluk is a grim, secretive god concerning himself with arcane knowledge and esoterica. Teshwan is more affable, *likable* even, and concerned with putting that knowledge to creative use. Between them they accumulate knowledge on behalf of the Lords of Chaos and then use it to gain an advantage over the Lords of Law. Maluk is in charge of gathering information and detail and is obsessed with it; Teshwan, on the other hand, is responsible for the creative use of knowledge to consolidate power – both for Chaos and for himself and Maluk, his brother.



The Silent Watchers are therefore very much concerned with what happens in the mortal world. Disciples of the cult receive their instruction through Teshwan although Maluk generally decides what needs to be discovered. Teshwan aids his worshippers with the ability to transport anyone they mark directly into the Silent Watchers' realm: a vast and lonely expanse of flat, grey stone, sunless but with a bright, white sky above. Here Maluk and Teshwan accompanied, sometimes, by other Lords of Chaos, rest in preparation for the time when the world will be reformed into a fresh variety of patterns. This is known as the Time of the Changes and the history of the Young Kingdoms occupies part of this strange time. Maluk obsessively gathers knowledge and studies it, seeking new answers, new permutations and new ways of perpetuating the Eternal Struggle, whilst Teshwan experiments with the knowledge, creating new lands, new creatures and new thoughts from those that already exist. The Silent Watchers watch, experiment, study and prepare. That is their role and mortals, for all their frailty and lack of imagination, are a key to it.

This is thus a cult of arcane secrets, forbidden research and attempting to understand the agenda of Chaos and its true nature. The cult predominates in Pan Tang, Pikarayd and is gaining ground in Argimiliar, especially in Cadsandria where the university offers fertile conditions for pursuing such knowledge and gaining new adherents, and in Ilmiora, where the work of the Mereghn interests and intrigues Maluk and Teshwan.

Silent Watchers are often used as ambassadors and advisers to those who Chaos wishes to corrupt. Cultists are adept at handling knowledge and misinformation in the pursuit and exercise of power. They tend to be shadowy, unseen manipulators, the quiet whisper in the ear of a noble at a crucial time, or the source of a decision that appears beneficial but serves to further only Chaos. Silent Watchers love to gather secrets and information from other cults, including Chaos, and to place their own people in influential positions to secretly manipulate the agendas of even their supposed allies.

Of particular interest is the knowledge being compiled by the cults of Arkyn and Donblas and how these lawful secrets can be perverted to the services of Chaos. Agents of the Silent Watchers are abroad in Vilmir and Ilmiora, quietly observing and, where possible, corrupting those who handle such knowledge.

Those who join the Silent Watchers pledge their souls to serve either Maluk or Teshwan. The two sects share similar beliefs but have different agendas, reflecting their separate natures. However for all intents and purposes the members of the two sects within the Silent Watchers are co-operative.

Myths

Balo's Riddle (Mythic Resonance 55%) – the Patience of Teshwan:

Balo, that twisted jester that comes and goes between Chaos and Law, loyal to neither but meddling in both agendas, visited

Teshwan and Maluk and gave them a riddle: 'What is possessed by Chaos and Law but understood by neither?' Balo asked. Maluk could not answer, his mouth stitched shut so that he would not give away any of his secrets. Teshwan, though, pondered the question.

'There is much common ground between us. More than either of us would care to admit,' he replied. 'But what is beyond the understanding of either of us? It is an inconceivable notion. We know and understand all things. Are we not gods?'

'There is an answer but I feel it is beyond you,' Balo said in a mocking tone. At this, Teshwan grew angry.

'Do not question my faculties, you worm. No one in the Court of Hell would complain if I flayed your soul.'

Balo shrugged and smiled. 'Very well, I retract the accusation. But the question remains, nonetheless.'

Teshwan pondered this. He pondered for so long that Balo left and returned each year to await an answer. It was many centuries in coming.

'The answer,' Teshwan said, finally, 'is simple.'

'Then what is it?' Balo asked impatiently, hopping from one foot to the other.

'The answer is: 'Each Other.'

'Bravo,' Balo said, for Teshwan was correct. 'But why did it take you so long?'

'Oh, I knew the answer straight away,' Teshwan said. 'But I also knew that you would immediately return to the Lords of Law and use the answer against me. I needed the time.'

'I bow to your insight,' Balo said, because Teshwan was correct: he had, indeed, flitted back to the Lords of Law and bragged that there was a riddle beyond the Lords of Chaos, who delighted in them.

'Indeed. And now Law will continue to underestimate us, which is a necessary part of the Eternal Struggle,' Teshwan said. 'And thwarts your own prank. Besides, I needed time for something else.'

'What would that be?' Balo asked in a mocking tone. Teshwan smiled.

'A spell. But it has been cast now. Look down.'

And Balo looked to his feet which, in the time they had spent talking, had merged with the ground, so that it was impossible to tell what was the earth and what was the flesh of the god. 'I think I have ensured that you will not be returning so eagerly to the Lords

of Law to gloat and posture,' Teshwan said. 'And you will make an *excellent* companion for the rest of my statues.'

And all the statues surrounding Balo laughed, as one. Balo, though, could only seethe.

Beliefs

The common beliefs of the cult are as follows:

- All knowledge is power.
- All knowledge can be recreated, reframed or fashioned to reflect the goals of Chaos.
- Knowledge is essential to the Eternal Struggle.
- In these times, Chaos must rest and conserve its energies; the time for definitive struggle is not yet at hand.

Maluk

- There is nothing that cannot be known.
- Once something is known, it cannot be unknown.
- No one knows everything but within the realm of Chaos, knowledge of everything is an attainable goal.

Teshwan

- Chaos cannot create something entirely new but new creations can be shaped through changing what already exists.
- Variety is desirable; permanence is a threat.
- Beauty lies in change; ugliness in conformity.

Worshippers

The Silent Watchers cult appeals to Students of Chaos, archivists, spies, agitators and those who seek, desire and covet knowledge for its own sake and for selfish ends. The sect of Teshwan especially appeals to those who delight in experimentation and the creation of new hybrids from existing things. Therefore this is very much a cult that appeals to sorcerers and those who aspire to be sorcerers.

Membership

Standard.

The sects have different names for their ranks:

Rank	Maluk	Teshwan
Lay Member	Reader	Watcher
Initiate	Borrower	Maker
Acolyte	Understander	Refiner
Priest	Interpreter	Shaper
Champion	Grand Master of Whispered Knowledge	Changer

Readers and Watchers

The Lay Members of both sects need only specify their desire to venerate either Maluk or Teshwan to be accepted as Lay Members of the cult. Lay Members are expected to report any information

of potential interest to higher ranks of the cult but have no specific duties otherwise.

Borrowers and Makers

The Initiates of the cult, Borrowers (Maluk) and Makers (Teshwan) are considered the foot soldiers in the acquisition of knowledge and its use to further the Silent Watchers' agendas. The following are requirements for Initiate status

- One Lore skill of 50% or greater.
- Dedicate at least two points of POW to the Pact with Maluk and three points of POW if dedicating to Teshwan.

Understanders and Refiners

The Acolytes of the cult study, codify and experiment with the knowledge that the cult collects on behalf of its gods. This is sometimes with cult direction and sometimes with direction given by either Maluk or Teshwan. Understanders and Refiners are responsible for checking facts, seeing what new combinations can be produced and retrieving certain commodities (tomes, texts, scrolls, experiments and so forth) from the cults of Law, Chaos and elsewhere.

To become an Understander or Refiner, the following conditions need to be met:

- Know at least six cult skills at 50% or higher.
- Pact skills (Maluk or Teshwan) at 50% or higher.
- Have been a Borrower or Maker for at least two years.

Interpreters and Shapers

The equivalent of the Priest rank, Interpreters and Shapers are responsible for interpreting Maluk and Teshwan's desires and translating these into cult policy and agenda. It is up to these ranks to identify where crucial information is located, what guards it and to arrange for its retrieval to be added to the cult's archives.

- Know at least six cult skills at 60% or higher OR two cult Runes and a cult Summoning at 60% or higher.
- Pact skills (Maluk or Teshwan) at 60% or higher.
- Have been an Understander or Refiner for at least two years.

Grand Master of Whispered Knowledge and Changer

The cult champions have attained a considerable understanding of Maluk and Teshwan's agendas and are in a position to act with the full authority of their patron.

- Know at least six cult skills at 70% or higher OR two cult Runes and a cult Summoning at 70% or higher.
- Pact skills (Maluk or Teshwan) at 70% or higher.
- Have been an Interpreter or Shaper for at least two years.

Duties

The general duties of each rank within the cult have been defined. However, there are several additional duties that all ranks within the Silent Watchers are expected to perform.

- Watch, listen to and, if possible, infiltrate other cults to learn their secrets and plans. *Any* cult is a target for such intrigue.
- Be wary of the Mereghn and their agenda. Sometimes it will be useful to supply them with information; at other times to withhold it; and at others, to steal it.
- Learn and understand everything about the Lawful Precepts upheld by the cults of Arkyn and Donblas.
- Discover the precise nature of the Twelve Symbols of Reason; determine how these can be shaped to the advantage of the Eternal Struggle.

Benefits

Benefits offered are in the form of Gifts, Compulsions, Cult Skills, Runes, Summonings and Heroic Abilities. In the case of Teshwan, there is also the Transfer to Kaneloon ability, described later.

Borrowers and Makers

- One Gift and Compulsion.
- Training in cult skills is also offered free where the skill(s) support a specific mission or objective.

Understanders and Refiners

- One Gift and Compulsion.
- Training in cult skills is also offered free where the skill(s) support a specific mission or objective.
- Understanders and Refiners may also learn cult Runes and Summonings and are taught one Rune or Summoning to its base percentage – if the adherent has Language (High Speech) with which to use it.

Interpreters and Shapers

- One Gift and Compulsion.
- Training in cult skills is also offered free where the skill(s) support a specific mission or objective.
- Understanders and Refiners may also develop a cult Rune or Summoning by 1D4+1%, or learn another to its base percentage.
- Shapers are also granted the Transfer to Kaneloon ability as part of their Pact (Teshwan).

Grand Master of Whispered Knowledge and Changer

- One Gift and Compulsion.
- Training in cult skills is also offered free where the skill(s) support a specific mission or objective.
- Understanders and Refiners may also develop a cult Rune or Summoning by 1D4+1%, or learn another to its base percentage.
- One cult Heroic Ability.

Transfer to Kaneloon

Shapers and above are granted this unique ability. It enables them to transport one individual, themselves included, to Teshwan's bleak and featureless realm and his cryptically named fortress of Kaneloon (see Boxed Text, nearby). The chance of success requires the cultist to pit his Pact (Teshwan) skill against the opponent's Persistence or, if he has one, Pact skill. If the Silent Watcher is successful, then the opponent finds himself within Teshwan's realm, ultimately to wander into Teshwan's fortress. If the opposed test fails, the ability has no effect. It costs no Magic Points to use the ability but the Silent Watcher's Pact (Teshwan) increases by a number of percentiles equal to the available Magic Points of the victim transferred. So, sending people to Kaneloon increases the disciple's standing but also hastens potential apotheosis – so the ability must be used shrewdly.

If the cultist wishes to transfer himself, it requires a simple test against his Pact (Teshwan). If the attempt fails, it cannot be made again until 24 hours have passed.

Gifts and Compulsions

Gifts and Compulsion are accrued as per cult rank.

Gifts

Divine Training (Cult Skills)
Enhanced Learning (Cult Skills, Runes and Summonings)
Extended Life
Multiversal Polyglot
Rune Mastery (Cult Runes)
Sanctuary
Slave
Tireless

Compulsions

Curse of Maluk – Must put-out one eye (–1 DEX, –1 CHA) – Maluk Only; or, must stitch-shut the mouth (–1 CHA). Must communicate through half-audible mumbles, the written word, and sign language – Maluk Only
Insanity.
Knowledge Eater.
Obsessive/Compulsive – Become intensely secretive and jealous of information gained. Take unusual and risky measures to protect even the most trivial knowledge.
Refuse to speak in any language other than High Speech.
Refuse to speak in any language other than Low Speech.
Refuse to speak in any language other than Mong.
Secretive.
Self Harmer.

Cult Skills

Art (any), Courtesy, Evaluate, Influence, Language (High Speech), Language (Low Speech), Lore (Chaos), Lore (Cryptography), Lore (Maluk), Lore (Million Spheres), Lore (World), Perception, Stealth.

Heroic Abilities Available

Devilish Charm, Linguist, Loremaster, Madness of Purpose.

Cult Magic

The cult teaches: Bewilderment, Chaos, Contact, Enhancement (INT), Hearing, Sight, Silence.

The cult also teaches: Command, Summoning (Demon of Desire), Summoning (Demon of Knowledge), Summoning (Demon of Transport).

Retribution

Betraying the cult brings straightforward retribution.

Adherents of Maluk are automatically struck deaf, dumb and blind with their faces becoming sealed inside a blank, fleshy shell.

Adherents of Teshwan are transported to Kaneloon and subjected to each one of Teshwan's trials.

Politics and Relationships

Most Chaos cults are wary of the Silent Watchers because the cult attempts to manipulate others for Maluk and Teshwan's somewhat obscure ends. Few people, if any, understand what Teshwan, in particular, is attempting to do, except experiment for its own sake and both his and Maluk's, agendas are often at odds with the wider, higher, Lords of Chaos.

Yet the Silent Watchers have their undoubted uses against the cults of Law. Their tenacity in discovering the true nature of Law's precepts is valuable to many and so the Silent Watchers are tolerated, if not precisely trusted.

THE WHISPERERS

'We must continue to strive, until we are conquered. I remember that Straasha the Sea King, said, if Lord Pyaray, commander of the Ships of Hell, is slain, the ships themselves will no longer be able to exist I have a mind to put that to the test...'

— *Stormbringer*

The oceans of the Young Kingdoms are commanded by two powers: Lord Straasha, who controls the upper waters and Lord Pyaray who controls the depths. The two maintain an uneasy distance but Pyaray claims as his own all those doomed sailors who meet their deaths at sea, taking their bodies and souls into the murky, tumultuous depths to act as the crew for the Fleet of Hell. Pyaray's dread rule is long-known to the mariners of the Young Kingdoms and most humans are fearful of his powers and intentions.

Kaneloon?

'The Lords of Chaos are fickle. If you wished to stay they might not let you. Now that you are resolved to leave, they might keep you here. Farewell. You will find me therein!' He lifted his sword and pointed. A great palace of greenstone appeared at once. The man vanished.

'This, at least, will save me from boredom,' Elric said philosophically, and rode towards the palace. The many-pinnacled building towered above him, its highest points hazy and seeming to possess many forms, shifting as if blown by a wind. At the great arch of the entrance a huge giant, semi-transparent, with a red, scintillating skin, blocked his way. Over the archway, as if hanging in the air above the giant's proud head, was the Symbol of Chaos, a circle which produced many arrows pointing in all directions.

'Who visits the Palace of Kaneloon at the Time of the Change?' enquired the giant in a voice like limbo's music.

— The Last Enchantment

Teshwan's enigmatic fortress on his bleak, flat plane is called Kaneloon, a name it shares with Myshella's own fortress at the edge of the world. This is one of Teshwan's many perverse jokes; indeed, his fortress is a representation of Kaneloon but has been altered so that it fits the creative urges of Chaos and is merely a simulacrum of the real castle, which belongs, obviously, to Law.

Those who are brought to Kaneloon are faced with a conference of the Lords of Chaos, led by Teshwan himself. The other Lords present vary but they do not identify themselves, leaving the talking to Lord Teshwan. Teshwan, forever experimenting, seeks several things from those sent to him. What any Adventurer faced with Teshwan must do depends on the Lord of Chaos's particular whim. The table on page 57 will determine the outcome.

Purpose and History

For Melniboné, Pyaray was once a patron demon, his blessing carved into the mighty battle barges, the marines of the Imrryrian navy and their stern captains and admirals, devotees of Pyaray's dreadful aquatic cult. With the Bright Empire's demise, Pyaray's worship is less forceful than it once was but the battle barges are still living representations of the grim Chaos fleet and their crews still offer veneration to the Tentacled Whisperer.

Pan Tang maintains its veneration and the cult of the Whisperer is active in two ways. First, every ship in the Pan Tangian fleet is dedicated to Pyaray's service and it is the doom of all those who sail in the Pan Tangian navy to continue their service in the Fleet of Hell upon their death. In the second way, Pan Tang venerates Vetehin, the Chaotic patron of the mermen who frequent the coasts of Pan Tang and the Straits of Chaos. Vetehin is one of Pyaray's vassals and the mermen do his bidding. The veneration of Vetehin secures an alliance between the Mabden and the mermen and one of Pan Tang's standards is Vetehin's merman crest.

The third sect of the Whisperers' cult venerates Artigkern. This monstrous Lord of Chaos is the Drinker of Oceans and it is within his capacity to drain life from worlds. Artigkern maintains enmity with Straasha, for the Chaos Lord covets Straasha's unnamed sister, mistress of the upper currents and favourable tides. Artigkern was denied Straasha's sister in the early years of the Bright Empire but still he seeks to capture her soul and although he has not

manifested upon the Young Kingdoms in almost 9,000 years, his yearning is still as strong. Pyaray, master of the depths, encourages Artigkern's insane desire, since it would place Straasha in his direct power and so the Tentacled One sends forth whispers to encourage devotion to Artigkern, finding willing devotees on the shores of the Young Kingdoms.

Until the Chaos Fleet is summoned to support the Armies of Hell, Pyaray has no overt interest in perpetuating the Eternal Struggle. His main concern is dominance over Straasha so that the oceans of the world become part of his watery empire. In several planes Pyaray has already achieved this dominance, creating boiling, ever-changing oceans where his fleet prowls the waves in search of new souls, the lands eroded away until the entire plane is one, vast, ocean of Chaos. In those planes where Straasha has achieved complete domination of the waters, Pyaray seeks to gain a foothold, sending his agents, both living and dead, to corrupt the waters and seize control of the murky depths. This battle is played-out across the Multiverse, with Pyaray having little concern for the Lords of Law which (Pyaray knows), if they had their way, would turn every place into an arid world of never changing, featureless dry land.

Those who join the cult of the Whisperers, whether they favour Artigkern, Vetehin, or Pyaray himself, effectively pledge their souls to the Chaos Fleet. In life they can venerate any of the aquatic Chaos gods but in death, Pyaray always claims their souls and finds for them a ship to crew.

Teshwan's Trials

1D8	Nature of Trial	Game Effects
1	Game of Creation	The Adventurer must attempt to create something that the Lords of Chaos have been unable to create – something unique and imaginative. To represent this game, the Adventurer must make a 1D100 roll. If the roll is less than either his INT or his POW, he has successfully created something that the Lords of Chaos have not conceived and is allowed to return to the Young Kingdoms. If the roll is a critical success, then the Lords of Chaos are impressed and reward the Adventurer with one randomly chosen Gift from the Gifts table. If the test fails or fumbles, then the Adventurer must remain forever in Kaneloon as an immobilised statue – one of many Teshwan has collected over millennia.
2	Surrender All Knowledge	Teshwan drains the Adventurer of <i>all</i> Lore skills, reducing the Adventurer's Lore percentages to their base values. The Adventurer is then returned to the Young Kingdoms, with only hazy memories of what has happened.
3	Surrender Specific Knowledge	Teshwan drains the Adventurer of a single Lore skill, reducing it to zero. The Adventurer is then returned to the Young Kingdoms, with only hazy memories of what has happened.
4	Undertake a Quest for Teshwan	Teshwan sets the Adventurer a quest to complete. The quest is usually hazardous and usually involves retrieving information that he and Maluk cannot obtain through other means. The quest may take place on any plane of the Multiverse; if the Adventurer succeeds, he is returned to the Young Kingdoms. If he fails, then the Adventurer must remain forever in Kaneloon as an immobilised statue – one of many Teshwan has collected over millennia.
5	Undergo Experimentation	The Lords of Chaos subject the Adventurer to many hideous experiments in Chaotic creativity. The experimentation ends with the Adventurer receiving 1D4-1 Demon Features, as described in the table on pages 119–120 of <i>Elic of Melniboné</i> .
6	Remain a prisoner of Kaneloon	The Adventurer must remain forever in Kaneloon as an immobilised statue – one of many Teshwan has collected over millennia. There is no resisting Teshwan's will and the Adventurer becomes a statue for eternity – unless a companion can affect a rescue or bargain with Teshwan in some way.
7	Fight a Duel	The Lords of Chaos summon a Demon of Combat with a value of 2D4 Magic Points. The Adventurer must fight it to the death. If the Adventurer fails, his soul is consumed by the demon. If he succeeds, he is returned to the Young Kingdoms and rewarded with one randomly chosen Gift from the Gifts table.
8	Entertain the Lords of Chaos	The Adventurer must perform some creative act: a song, a dance, recount a story. He must make a test against one appropriate skill (Sing, Artistic Expression and so forth). If he succeeds, he is allowed to return to the Young Kingdoms. If the roll is a critical success, then the Lords of Chaos are impressed and reward the Adventurer with one randomly chosen Gift from the Gifts table. If the test fails or fumbles, then the Adventurer must remain forever in Kaneloon as an immobilised statue – one of many Teshwan has collected over millennia.

Myths

How Pyaray Came to Rule (Mythic Resonance 80%) – The Power of Pyaray:

It followed that, in a great war between Law and Chaos, certain Lords of Entropy fell. One such as Pyaray. He fell with his immense and dreadful city and crashed into the waters of the world, where he sank to the depths. Far from being a doom for Pyaray, this was a blessing, because he could not be reached by his foes of Law and he found a new realm to conquer: that of the ocean depths.

Lord Straasha, ruling the waves above, tried to fight Pyaray but Pyaray created the mermen, who are merciless fighters, to wage war against the undines. And, safe in his undersea city, Pyaray could not be touched by the angered Lord of the Elements.

But the fall to the oceans did take some toll upon Lord Pyaray. His soul was split from his physical form and Pyaray had no way of rejoining the two. Instead Pyaray found a gem at the bottom of the ocean and placed his soul into it and then attached the gem to his body at the head. Thus is Pyaray's soul visible to all but protected behind an unbreakable gem that may once have been the property of Straasha or Grome.

From his nameless city Pyaray sent Artigkern abroad in the Multiverse to devour more oceans to add to Pyaray's realm. And, as mortals took to the seas and inevitably drowned, Pyaray took their souls to crew his dread fleet, which moors at the bottom of the ocean close to the Nameless City that is Pyaray's home. Lord Vetehin and his mermen scour the oceans for secrets and knowledge, which they whisper to Pyaray in dread rituals that mortals sometimes imitate. All that happens

in, and through, the waters of the world, returns, in time, to Pyaray's ears.

Beliefs

The Whisperers share the following beliefs:

- Pyaray is the true master of the oceans. Straasha is his enemy.
- The infinite variety found in the sea is the result of Pyaray's glory – not Straasha's grace.
- The seas of the world are simply parts of a greater ocean that flows through the Million Spheres – and Pyaray's empire will dominate this single vast ocean; only then will the Eternal Struggle be won.
- If Straasha and Pyaray have any common belief it is that Law would turn every world into a waterless desert, devoid of life.
- It is Artigkern's right to drain oceans so that the Elemental Lords can be denied: Straasha's realms will be drunk and Kakatal's eye – the sun – extinguished when the Drinker of Oceans spits out what it has consumed.
- Every ocean consumed by Artigkern flows into Pyaray's greater empire, the upper currents cleansed of Straasha's simplistic influence.
- Lord Vetehin commands the mermen as the auxiliary for the Chaos Fleet. They are foremost in the battle for the control of the oceans.

Worshippers

The sign of the Whisperer is the many tentacled octopus associated with Pyaray and worshippers' ships carry the symbol as their figurehead. Human sacrifice is common – captured sailors or slaves – with drowning and keel-hauling the favoured forms of execution. Worshippers nevertheless fear their god, knowing that their souls are damned to crew the war galleys of Chaos on these seas or others where Pyaray holds dominance.

The cult of the Whisperers is strong amongst the sailors of Dharijor and dominates the entire Pan Tangian navy. Rogue pirates and slavers, forever chasing temporal power, find easy means of dominating the waves by venerating the Whisperer and his vassals. Every ship they pledge to Pyaray makes them stronger, faster and richer.

Membership

The cult has no special ranks. The three sects of Pyaray, Vetehin and Artigkern do not differentiate between their worshippers although the captains of ships are considered to act as priests for the cult, deciding when, and what, to sacrifice to their patron. Lay Members are any who choose to sail with a doomed ship and its captain but those who choose to form a Pact are immediately doomed to become part of the crews of Hell's fleet.

Benefits of the cult of the Whisperers depend on the sect and the degree of the Pact. See Benefits.

The key duty of every Whisperer is to oppose Straasha and send as many souls to join the Chaos Fleet as possible. Additional duties by sect are described here.

Artigkern

Search for Straasha's sister and identify her whereabouts to Artigkern. Sacrifice souls so that the Devourer of Oceans can rise up and claim her as his bride.

Pyaray

Extend Pyaray's reach by sending ships and souls to the murky depths of the world's oceans. Find gateways to other planes where Pyaray has not yet achieved dominance so that he can engage Straasha's power across the Multiverse.

Vetehin

Vetehin's sect consists almost completely of mermen and their duty is to bring souls down into the depths of the Straits of Chaos for sacrifice at Vetehin's undersea temple. A few human worshippers who have the capability to adopt a merman form take this as their principle duty and actively seek small boats to attack for fresh souls.

Benefits

Adherents of the cult gain a Gift and Compulsion when they form a Pact with one of the Chaos Lords of the cult. Further benefits accrue at the following points:

- Pact is 50% or greater: one further Gift and Compulsion; one cult Rune.
- Pact is 70% or greater: one further Gift and Compulsion; one cult Summoning.
- Pact is 90% or greater: one further Gift and Compulsion; one cult Rune; one cult Summoning; one Heroic Ability.

Gifts and Compulsions

Gifts and Compulsions accrue as per Benefits, earlier.

Gift

Abstinence (Water)

Chaotic Blessing (the feature obtained always relates to the patron deity – so tentacles for Pyaray, fish features for Artigkern, an merman features for Vetehin)

Combat Acuity

Divine Training

Enchantment

Endurance

Horde

Rune Mastery (Water)

Sense Million Spheres

Ward

Compulsion

Claustrophobia
Compulsive Swimmer
Corpse-Like
Deck-Bound
Need to Kill
Piscine Diet
Piscine Sight
Piscine Transformation
Pyaray's Call
Pyaray's Curse
Rancid

Cult Skills

All Axe, Spear and Shield Combat Styles. Athletics, Boating, Language (High Speech), Lore (Artigkern), Lore (Chaos), Lore (Deep Water), Lore (Pyaray), Lore (Vetehin), Shiphandling, Survival, Swim.

Heroic Abilities Available

Heroic Abilities require the Champion to quest to Pyaray's Nameless City and return alive, having delivered to Pyaray a secret hitherto unknown.

Heroic Aura, Madness of Purpose, Wall Leaping.

Cult Runes

The Whisperers teach: Runes of Beasts (Fish and Sea Serpents), Chaos, Cold, Passing, Protection, Raising, Speed, Warding and Water.

Command, Summoning (Demon of Combat), Summoning (Demon of Protection), Summoning (Demon of Transport).

Summon Merman (Vetehin Whisperers only), Summon Sea Serpent (Artigkern and Pyaray Whisperers only).

Cult Secrets

Pyaray's soul is held in one of the jewel-like eyes covering his squid-like body. Location of the major ship graveyards, although these may only be reached with Pyaray's blessing.

Retribution

Once one has pledged allegiance to Pyaray or one of his vassals, there is no escape. Anyone attempting to leave the cult, or who betrays it, is not immediately pursued but as soon as he takes to the open ocean for any reason, attacks are sent by the patron deity who has been betrayed. Such attacks therefore involve mermen in the case of Vetehin, sea-serpents in the case of Artigkern (or even Artigkern himself, who attempts to swallow whole any boat the traitor sails on) or, in the case of Pyaray, a ship specifically raised

from the Chaos Fleet, which pursues the traitor and any who aid him, tirelessly until he is caught and dragged to the murky depths.

All such retribitional attacks are relentless and targeted against the treacherous soul.

Politics and Relationships

The Whisperers is a powerful cult within Dharijor and Pan Tang, acknowledged at the highest levels of government. The cult acts in the interests of the gods of the cult and executes policy on behalf of Dharijor's king and Pan Tang's theocrat. Other cults know better than to obstruct the work of the Whisperers!

The Whisperers need no alliances with the other cults of Chaos. Pyaray has a clear agenda and his worshippers know that, ultimately, they are doomed to join his undead fleet. Other cults are respected but their agendas, and even the agenda of the Eternal Struggle, is secondary to Pyaray's dominance over Straasha.

VERDELET

Verdelet is the Lord of Chaos associated with insects. His popular representation is of a being composed of maggots, flies, beetles and other crawling things and the giant insects found in the Young Kingdoms and elsewhere are said to be his creations.



Sea Serpents

Sea serpents and sea monsters are mentioned in the saga but never described. As creatures of Pyaray they are undoubtedly Chaotic in origin and may even exhibit intelligence, like dragons. Large, scaly and serpentine, they cruise the depths of the oceans feeding on lesser marine creatures and awaiting either the command of Pyaray or the tell-tale thump of galley-oars on water, or the distant crack and swish of sail canvas, as a sign to seek surface prey.

The first sign of any sea serpent attack is likely to be a single hump slicing the water as the beast circles the ship. Then a glimpse of a spined tail slipping back into the water. When the attack comes it is an explosion of water and the roaring of the monster as it crunches timber, intending to sink the ship and pick-off the crew a mouthful at a time as they swim for their lives.

	Dice	Average	1D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
STR	6D8+40	67	1-3	Tail	7/26
CON	12D8+6	60	4	Right Hind Flipper	7/26
SIZ	10D8+24	69	5	Left Hind Flipper	7/26
INT	2D8	9	6-9	Hind quarters	7/27
POW	3D8	14	10-14	Fore quarters	7/28
DEX	2D8+8	17	15	Right Front Flipper	7/26
CHA	3D8	14	16	Left Front Flipper	7/26
			17-20	Head/Neck	7/26

Combat Actions	3
Damage Modifier	+3D12
Magic Points	14
Movement	20m
Strike Rank	+13

Typical Armour: Tough scales. No Armour Penalty.

Traits: Formidable Natural Weapons

Skills: Athletics 120%, Brawn 90%, Persistence 80%, Resilience 80%, Swim 120%, Tracking 90%, Unarmed 55%

Weapons

Type	Size	Reach	Damage AP/HP	
Bite	E	VL	1D10+3D12	As for Head
Tail	E	VL	1D20+3D12	As for Tail

Combat Styles

Unarmed 55%

Verdelet's cult is unpopular in civilised nations and found, predominantly, amongst certain primitive and barbarian tribes in Pikarayd and Dorel – although Pan Tang has a smattering of Verdelet worshippers who keep all manner of insects as pets and familiars.

Purpose and History

Verdelet's purpose is nothing more than the representation of insects and crawling and flying creatures that so often disgust and repel. His history is obscure: the existence of the Beast Lords that govern each species of insect suggest that Verdelet commands only demonic forms and that natural insects are outside of his influence. That insectile forms are often found in demons and creatures of the various hells suggests that the arrangement is somewhat more complex and Verdelet may have corrupted the nature of insects to some extent.

When the world was very young, and all mortals were of a primitive nature, Verdelet's influence was widespread. As the world aged, and mortals came to proliferate, it has become less so. Nevertheless, the Lord of the Flies is still found in many representations across the world even though his cults are confined to more primitive regions.

Myths

The Infestation (Mythic Resonance 60%) – The Supremacy of Insects:

The first things to move upon the earth were the insects. They obeyed Verdelet unquestioningly and Verdelet saw to it that they conquered and ruled. Later, when other Lords of Chaos educated mortals and gave them many gifts, Verdelet's insect realms were

Features of Verdelet

1D8	Feature of Verdelet.
1	Insectile wings. These do not provide flight but cannot be hidden easily.
2	Compound eyes. CHA is reduced automatically to 3 but Perception increases by 20%.
3	Feelers/antennae. These sprout from the forehead. CHA is reduced by half but the recipient becomes receptive to wind, vibration, heat, changes in air density and so forth. Perception increases by 30%.
4	Chitinous Shell. The recipient develops a chitin coating across 1D6+1 Hit Locations. The chitin offers 2 points of natural armour, at no Armour Penalty.
5	Insectile limbs. The arms or legs (determine randomly: an odd dice roll indicates arms; even indicates legs) transform into the segmented limbs of an insect such as an ant or fly. DEX is reduced by half but the recipient grows an additional 1D4 of the same limb, with Hit Points to match the existing, transformed limb. If extra arms are grown then the recipient retains whatever Combat Actions he had before the reduction in DEX (but cannot gain more). If legs are grown, then the recipient's Movement increases by +2.
6	Segmented body. The chest and abdomen become segmented and highly flexible. Hit Points remain as before but SIZ increases by +1 and Resilience increases by +20%.
7	Proboscis. The mouth and nose transform into a proboscis. The recipient can only feed on liquefied foods. CHA drops to 1.
8	Hive Mind. The recipient becomes part of the massive hive mind intellect of Verdelet. He can communicate with (but not necessarily command) all insects and is aware of any knowledge they might gather on Verdelet's behalf.

forced into retreat and then underground. The champions of each insect came to Verdelet and pleaded for him to murder the two-legged mortals. Verdelet refused. 'Feast on their bodies; lay your eggs in their rotting corpses. You disgust them. There is no need for murder.'

Some were unhappy with this decision and went their own ways. Others stayed true to Verdelet and remain so. Verdelet showed them how both the living and the dead could be exploited by crawling kind and they set about their work of infestation – tents, houses, towns, cities, cemeteries, living and dead bodies – with zeal. For every insect killed, Verdelet creates 1,000 more and all are tied to Verdelet through their communal minds and many-faceted eyes.

When the Earth lies broken and rotten, Verdelet will come again to claim the world and once more insects shall rule unopposed!

Beliefs

Worshippers of Verdelet believe that all insects are aspects of Verdelet himself and killing them is forbidden. The Beast Lords of Insects are denied and considered betrayers of Verdelet's gifts. Insects are considered a high form of life – resistant to most disasters and survivors to the last, Verdelet's human worshippers seek to become like the insects they venerate.

Worshippers

Primitives, entomologists.

Membership

Standard.

The cult has no ranks as such but advancing within the cult is still measured although the benefits of doing so are unorthodox.

Benefits

Initiates take a Gift and a Compulsion. However, as they progress in terms of development, moving to the equivalent of Acolyte, Priest and so on, they become increasingly like the insects Verdelet commands. As the Pact deepens, so does the behaviour: Verdelet worshippers feed on carrion, faeces, rotten flesh, rotten vegetation and so on.

By the time the cultist has reached the equivalent of High Lord he takes on physical Characteristics also. Roll on the table above to determine how.

Gifts and Compulsions

Initiates gain a Gift(s) and a Compulsion. Each additional Gift also attracts a Compulsion.

Gifts

Abstinence
Animal Familiar
Chaotic Blessing
Endurance
Healing
Horde
Increased Health
Increased Reactions.
Invulnerability
Sense Enemies

Compulsions

Acute Depression
Agoraphobia
Armour Reduction
Carnal Murderer
Empire Builder

Knowledge Eater
Merciless
Murder Kin
Stalwart
Unclean

Cult Skills

Athletics, Evade, Lore (Chaos), Lore (Insects), Lore (Verdelet), Persistence, Resilience, Unarmed.

Cult Runes and Magic

The cult does not teach any Runes. It does teach Command and Summon (Demon of Combat and Demon of Protection). Any demons summoned are of an insectile nature.

Heroic Abilities Available

None.

Retribution

Those who leave the cult feel Verdelet's wrath. First, regardless of rank, the apostate gains one of Verdelet's features. Then, over the course of the next year, if he does not return to the fold, he starts to transform completely into an insect. The final act of transformation takes place eight days before the year is up: the apostate creates a cocoon for himself and lies, motionless. On the eighth day the cocoon breaks open and 1,000, tiny, scuttling, ants, beetles, flies or other insects burst forth. Each, if examined closely, has the human head of the apostate rather than an insectile head.

Politics and Relationships

The cult has no relationships with any other Chaos cults.

VEZHAN, LORD OF THE WINGS

They pressed on through the bounding, blossoming scenery as it erupted and changed around them. Once they saw a huge winged figure in the sky, smoky yellow, and roughly man-shaped.

'Vežhan,' Lamsar said, 'let's hope he did not see us.'

'Vežhan!' Rackbir whispered the name - for it was to Vežhan that he had once been loyal.

— *To Save Tanelorn*

Vežhan is not a Lord of Chaos that occupies the central hierarchy but is potent nonetheless. He rules several planes close to that of

the Earth but carries little direct influence in the Young Kingdoms himself. He is venerated in Phum and certain parts of Argimiliar but few know his name.

Purpose and History

Vežhan is the enemy of Lassa, Lady of the Air. He considers the skies of the Multiverse as his domain and his favourite incarnation is as a winged man, vast in size and often viewed as a semi-corporeal mist. In the planes where he rules, the sylphs and other elementals have been captured and tortured, twisted into terrifying demons of combat that serve Vežhan utterly but remembering their old allegiance to Lassa Air Mother. In response, Lassa hates Vežhan and has, in the past, waged successful war against him in the Young Kingdoms. The Myyrhn and the Karasim, both followers of Lassa, have fought Vežhan in the Bright Empire's dim and distant history before, even, the rise of Imrryr.

In the Young Kingdoms, and particularly amongst the warrior priests of Phum, Vežhan's war against Lassa is now resurging again. Shifts in the Million Spheres are helping Vežhan gain power and he senses a time when war will be waged again and, this time, to his own advantage. He thus attempts to recruit human agents to his cause, charging them with subverting Lassa and killing the hated Myyrhn whenever the opportunity arises.

Myths

The War With Lassa (Mythic Resonance 60%) – The Ingratitude of the Air:

In Vežhan's realms all is within the sky. Landmasses float and even rivers and lakes occupy a place in the air. There is no wind, unless Vežhan wishes it, and the sky is the colour of honey.

To Lassa this is abhorrent. Vežhan offered to share his realm with the Lady of the Air but she chose to reject Vežhan's generosity and so incurred his enmity. First he enslaved the birds, creating from them fearful creatures like the Iqari. Next he enslaved the breezes, the sylphs, and twisted them into small, hopping, biting demons that skulk amongst the airborne hills. When Lassa sent the h'haarshaan to free the sylphs, Vežhan enslaved them and created the fighting demons that resemble tornadoes but which are filled with teeth and claws. He sent all his demons against Lassa and drove her sobbing from all the realms he ruled.

And now Vežhan sees before him many worlds where Lassa continues to challenge his generosity. She will not share. Even the great fire demon, known as The Kakatal, has been made an enemy. Vežhan went to Kakatal and proposed an alliance, which has been fruitful and so now Vežhan commands demons of the air and demons of fire with which to purge Lassa's insouciance.

Beliefs

Worshippers of Vezhan believe that he creates new worlds unconstrained by the traditional rules that keep the earth and the sky separate. They believe in his war with the Elemental Lady of the Air and that she should be conquered so that she will become Vezhan's slave. Lassa, it is believed, ultimately serves Law and Law is the enemy. Others will fight those battles; Vezhan's concern is with Lassa, those who serve her and those who revere her.

Worshippers

Warrior Priests of Phum, obscure cultists in the southern continent, those who hate the elements.

Membership

Standard.

The cult has no special names for its ranks and no special considerations beyond the standard membership requirements for a rank. Champions of the cult as known as Wing Lords and High Priests (which are very few in number) direct general worship amongst the small numbers of cultists who follow Vezhan ardently.

Benefits

No special benefits accrue, save for Gifts and Compulsions.

Gifts and Compulsions

Although POW must be dedicated to a Pact, there is no requirement to take either a Gift or a Compulsion. If one chooses to, the following are available:

Gifts

Abstinence (Air).

Animal Familiar – This is always a malevolent bird such as a crow, vulture and so forth.

Elemental – This is always a Salamander; part of the alliance with Kakatal.

Horde – This may be applied to either an elemental, animal familiar or a slave.

Sense Enemies – Those allied with Lassa.

Slave – This is always a demon of combat. Moreover, the demon is always winged.

Compulsions

Acute Depression

Agoraphobia

Armour Rejection

Colour Obsessed

Dread

Immolation

Cult Skills

Archery and Ranged Combat Styles. Athletics, Evade, Language (High Speech), Lore (Chaos), Lore (Vezhan), Perception, Resilience.

Cult Runes and Magic

The cult teaches the Runes of Barring, Reduction (DEX) and Speed. High Priests of Vezhan's cult provide the necessary teaching to Initiates and higher.

The cult also teaches Command and Summon (Demon of Combat).

Heroic Abilities Available

High Lords of the cult may be gifted a Heroic Ability if they fulfil a quest that directly damages Lassa and her servants. The recipient must also fulfil the ability's requirements. Abilities available are:

Dead Eye

Madness of Purpose

Rune Immunity (Air) or Rune Immunity (Fire)

Retribution

Those who leave the cult earn Vezhan's hatred. He sends winged demons in pursuit of apostates and, of course, cult champions.

Politics and Relationships

The cult shares an alliance with Kakatal. This is informal at best but Vezhan's worshippers are usually viewed with some friendship and may be able to learn fire cult magic and skills.

CULTS OF THE ELEMENTS



Worship of the Elemental and Nature Lords is limited in the Young Kingdoms. Out of the civilised races only Melniboné chose to forge affiliations with these gods and the human worship has remained limited to the more primitive, barbarian cultures of the world, such as the tribes of the Weeping Waste, Dorel and southern Pikarayd.

Elsewhere Elemental veneration is the province of isolated sorcerers and shamans who understand the true power that these supernatural nobles represent and, preferring to have no truck with the forces of Law and Chaos, offer their allegiance to the Lords of Nature instead. Within the cities and towns of the Young Kingdoms, the Elementals are sadly neglected; only Tarkesh, and its veneration of Lord Straasha, comes close to retaining any spiritual unity with the Elemental Lords.

The structure of the Elemental Cults is therefore highly fluid. Worship practices of Grome, say, vary hugely between the Weeping Waste and Dorel. Straasha's veneration in Tarkesh is far more structured than his treatment in Pikarayd. The ways in which Elemental veneration differ are explored here.

THE ELEMENTS IN DOREL

The brooding Dorelites venerate Queen Lashaar the Air Mother and her consort King Grome the Earth Father. Under Dorel's wide, grey skies, Lashaar is mistress of all and from the way her unruly children, the gales, howl around the moorlands it is clear to all that she is a harsh mistress.

Grome, her husband, does his wife's bidding. His territory, the land, is shaped by Lashaar's fierce tongue and rasping grasp. The land is fully subordinate to the air and whereas Queen Lashaar is wild and tempestuous, King Grome is sluggish and docile; a battered husband afraid of upsetting or offending his demanding wife.

Dorelites do not raise temples to either of their gods. The shamans find that wide-open spaces, hill-tops, valleys and ravines suffice. Animal sacrifices to both gods are common but structured rituals and ceremonies infrequent and brief. Lashaar is entreated not to make the rains too hard, the winds too strong or the snows too deep. Grome is urged to send fresh, green shoots that the people and livestock can eat and the blood of the sacrificial animals is poured into holes bored into the ground so as to raise Grome from his sluggish repose.

Kakatal and Straasha are not venerated in Dorel, although Dorelite myths cast them as forgotten lovers of Queen Lashaar and the occasional prayer is offered to Kakatal as a way of acknowledging the frail light that he manages to shed across Grome's gloomy landscape.

THE ELEMENTS IN MELNIBONÉ

Despite the Dragon Isle's allegiance with Chaos the Elemental Lords are given high regard and veneration, particularly within the imperial court.

When Melniboné was young, it faced a variety of threats that involved the Elemental Rulers in some way. In those days of youthful empire, the influence of both Chaos and Law was weak but the Elemental Lords were as strong as they always had been and watched this strange race grow in power and curiosity.

The Mernii were forced to barter with Lord Grome in order to gain the release of their ships when the emperor refused to return the Black Sword to the Earth King's protection. It took the ingenuity of the hero, White Crow, to placate the god but in so doing the first of the Elemental Pacts was forged.

When the Chaos monstrosity Artigkern threatened to drain the world's oceans, besotted with Straasha's sister, Prince Elrik found a way to free the Elemental Princess and so gained Straasha's

friendship. Of all the Elemental Pacts forged, Straasha's has been the most enduring and the Melnibonéans have long venerated Straasha above the other Elemental Lords.

When the winds of the Lady Lassa were captured and imprisoned, it was the silverskin prince who freed them and so gained the enduring friendship of the goddess of the air, even though he had to battle the fierce Karasim.

And, when the Black Blade's presence was felt once again in the world, the blade stolen by the Mernii's enemies, it was the Fire Lords who showed Melniboné's hero the relationship between the forces of Law, Chaos and the Cosmic Balance and, once again, entered into an enduring pact with the Dragon Isle.

So the history of the Elemental Lords and Melniboné is indelibly linked. Whilst Chaos became the force of choice for Imrryr, the pacts with the Elementals were never forgotten and every emperor has, as part of his training, undertaken the four dreamquests, which re-enact the forging of these special relationships. Through the emperors' knowledge and appreciation of the Elemental Powers, the old pacts have endured, even whilst the worship of Chaos became more ardent.

THE ELEMENTS IN PIKARAYD

Chaos's worship gains in popularity in impoverished, strife-torn Pikarayd but Grome and Straasha are still venerated by the warring clans. Along the coast of the Chalal peninsular, Straasha is worshipped in astounding cliff-top temples whereas inland the caves and sink-holes of the rugged landscape are home to the Grome-worshipping hermits who rail against the sea-worshippers with a spitting, venom-filled hatred.

Straasha is considered the god of storms that batter Pikarayd's sullen coasts. He is not the restful sea god of other cultures but a lord of violent waves sent to attack and erode Grome's kingdom of earth and rock, bruising the land into submission. Some consider that Straasha is losing this elemental battle and these nay-sayers are the ones who now turn to the veneration of the Whisperers, the Chaos gods of the sea, swayed by the prophecies of Pan Tangian emissaries and the mysterious Heiropant who rallies a variety of tribes in the interior.

The tribes of the central plains consider Grome as Pikarayd's father; a strong, gruff voice that gives the warriors strength and purpose. Blood sacrifices to Grome are frequent – usually the blood of enemy clans as they are butchered in the frequent tribal wars afflicting this barbaric country. Warriors daub themselves in the red earth in a bid to channel Grome's Earth-Blood, taking-on some of the Elemental Lord's direct strength in a bid to subdue their enemies. Here, Grome is a god of vengeance and might, not the tamed, subdued lackey of Dorel's beloved Queen Lashaar.

THE ELEMENTS IN SHAZAR AND THE SILENT LANDS

Whilst civilised Shazar worships Law these days, its original allegiance was to all the elements. Kakatal is the Life Giving sun whose fire brings warmth and comfort, encouraging the crops of the western plains. Lassa sweeps the world clean with her gentle winds, calming King Kakatal's occasional tantrums with her cool breeze. Grome is the steadfast Earth-Father, stoic but yielding, loving life but somehow sorrowful. And mighty Straasha, threading the land with his rivers and streams, becomes the tempestuous Dragon Sea, throwing his strength against Grome's defiant Serpents' Teeth.

As Law's influence has spread, the veneration of the Elemental Lords has retreated, becoming the province of the peasants and farmers of the Shazarian hinterland. Law is coming to dominate but the simpler cultures of Shazar still readily venerate the Elements dutifully and diligently, needing little in the way of Law's explanation that the land, sea, wind and sun exist through the application of order and conditional progress.

Further south, in the primitive Silent Lands, the ancient (and now threatened) Pukwadji still venerate Grome's glory. This diminutive race of people have always occupied a special place in the Earth Father's heart and they still make their homes close to the hills and cliffs that are threaded with caverns and tunnels. These natural fissures, the Pukwadji know, lead into Grome's great Earth Hall where he guards the secrets of the world. The few remaining Pukwadji hail Grome personally in everything they do and are rewarded still by his manifestation from time-to-time. For them, there is no other god worth venerating; Grome is alive and vital, looking after his poor Pukwadji children just as he has always done for the past 10,000 years.

THE ELEMENTS IN THE SIGHING DESERT AND THE WEeping WASTE

The vast Sighing Desert welcomes few gods and the nomadic tribes of the desert lands maintain a curious mix of religion that combines the veneration of the Star Gods, ancestral spirits and Lords Kakatal and Lassa. Kakatal holds a special place for the desert nomads, because his single, fierce eye watches them daily, scrutinising everything they do. At night he hands his duties to the Elithior – the Star Gods – and they, with access to the Dream Realms, send the dreams that are so valued by the Dream Thieves who come from the east and other places. Kakatal, they believe, is still trying to seduce the Lady of the Air, mistress Lassa, who has eluded his advances since the world was young. She toys with his affections and skitters across the desert, sighing and moaning with

every clumsy pass the Sun Lord makes, attempting to entice her to his great Sky Yurt. She is a sensual goddess and, when excited, whips the sand into a scouring frenzy in a coy bid to conceal her desires for the Lord Kakatal.

Further south, beyond the mountains, the rain-soaked plateau of the Weeping Waste, the barbarian tribes believe that Straasha and Grome are still locked in battle to define the shape of the world. The Weeping Waste is their last battleground and beyond its borders is nothing but hell-warped chaos and doom. Grome holds steadfast, refusing to allow Straasha, who weeps constantly in desperation, to shape the plateau into a vast and glistening lake. Grome takes strength from the people and, in reward for their loyalty, channels his power through the Ancestors. Heroes of the Wastelander tribes are buried with great reverence and their spirits taken into Grome's great, ancestral halls where their wisdom can still benefit the tribes.

Those tribes that venerate Straasha believe that Grome mocks and cheats their Lord and this is why Straasha weeps constant tears for the lands he is denied. The Wastelanders placate Straasha not because he is considered the rightful ruler of the Weeping Waste but because they want to avert his undoubted wrath at Grome's continual dominance of the ground below. They would see the two great Elemental Lords at peace, so that the lands of the plateau will be spared the incessant tears and bring an end to the feuds that beset the nomadic tribes.



TEMPLES OF THE ELEMENTALS

The Elemental Lords have no requirement for churches, temples or shrines. The elements serving them are the only temples needed and those who worship them have no desire to erect buildings in order to edify their worship.

When worship is undertaken, the elements in question are brought to the fore. Grome worshippers choose caves, ravines and tunnels, the natural entrances to Grome's kingdom. Rites include the bathing in soil, mud or dust and the prayers and chants are sombre, low and repetitive.

Fire worshippers light braziers or build huge pyres, sometimes in the form of wicker men, which are filled with sacrifices to the Lord of Flames. The more ardent worshippers willingly scorch and char their flesh but for most, the heat of the fires is enough to show their devotion to Kakatal.

Air worshippers gather beneath the wide-open skies, often finding wind-chastened hill-tops so that Lassa and her children can whirl around them as their songs lift to her billowing domain. Adherents of Lassa's cults cannot bear the confines of buildings or structures and value freedom of movement and expression to the constricting nature of permanent dwellings.

Straasha's worshippers fill chalices and cauldrons with water, or conduct their rituals waist-deep in streams or rivers, or with the surf of the sea tugging at their thighs. Submerging the head is a common ritual amongst Straasha's faithful, an act which identifies the adherent to the Lord of the Water and brings the soul of man and Elemental Lord closer together.

CULT OF KAKATAL

Quickly, Theleb K'aarna marshalled his thoughts and, with trembling hands, began to make strange passes in the air and promise unhealthy pacts with whichever of the powerful fire elementals would help him this once. He promised himself to eternal death for the sake of a few more years of life.

— *The Stealer of Souls*

Kakatal is the elemental lord of fire. His domain is the sun but he is present in all flames and also at the centre of the world, which boils and seethes, occasionally demonstrating its power through the eruption of volcanoes.

Purpose and History

The Lord of the Fire is aloof from the world but alive within and above it. His power is the sun and the molten rock at the world's heart. His spirit is the flame that burns within men's hearts for temporal power and the incendiary lusts they can barely control. Kakatal is a free and restless spirit, given to both random destruction and the infectious joy of life itself.

Kakatal is not widely worshipped in the Young Kingdoms. Some tribes of the Sighing Desert and the Weeping Waste offer worship and tribute but they are small in number. There is an isolated cult in Yu that believes the Boiling Sea is the result of Kakatal fighting a battle for control of the earth with Straasha but worship has not spread far. He has been worshipped primarily in Melniboné but even now, that worship has been mostly forgotten.

Where he is worshipped his symbol is often considered to be sun, the great eye of Kakatal that watches over the earth and gives it life. Most temples or shrines are filled with braziers burning night and day, creating a barely endurable heat. Worshipers are often burned or scorched across their bodies and must undergo some form of trial by fire to advance within the cult.

In truth, then, Kakatal's worship is confined to a few pyromancers, like Theleb K'aarna, who know that, when harnessed, Kakatal's power is great and grim indeed. Theleb K'aarna, though, is not a dedicated student of Lord Kakatal and even Elric himself never calls upon the Lord of Flames to aid him, wary of Kakatal's ability for, and delight in, random destruction.

Myths

The Two Natures of Kakatal (Mythic Resonance 80%):

The sun was first and had two natures. One nature wished to be bright and witnessed by all and the other wished to be hidden and secretive, guarding its powers from sight. Thus Kakatal became two beings. The gregarious god blazed at the centre of the universe and the reclusive god was swallowed by Grome and burned within the earth, occasionally coming to the surface through certain, scared mountains or when Grome himself demanded that Inner Kakatal demonstrate his power.

Kakatal of the Sky is the giver of life and light. Inner Kakatal is the lord of the sacred fires and the salamanders; his gift was the gift of fire to mortals.

Now it happened that Grome sought a consort and that consort was a thing of winds called Lassa. The two coupled and Lassa wreathed the world in her winds, which extinguished the flames of Inner Kakatal. This enraged the Fire God and he took retribution by burning the sylphs that Lassa allowed to roam free across Grome's surface. From then onwards Kakatal and Lassa were enemies and remain so. Kakatal's salamanders need air to survive and this consumes the sylphs. Sylphs seek to extinguish all flames, which are the birth stages of salamanders and so they kill Kakatal's young.

Beliefs

Like all elementals, the beliefs of the Kakatal cult are simple enough.

- Kakatal is the Heart of the Sun and the Heart of the Earth.
- Lassa is his enemy, though he has battled Grome and Straasha too.

- Eternal life and eternal damnation are Kakatal's gifts. But when placated he sends warmth and comfort to those who give him thanks.

Worshippers

There are few dedicated cults to Kakatal, although in primitive communities, like Yu, and nomadic ones, like the nomads of the Sighing Desert, Kakatal is venerated in a casual fashion as both a giver and taker of life.

Membership

Standard. The cult ranks are as follows:

- Brand (Lay Member)
- Fire Starter (Initiate)
- Flame Breather (Acolyte)
- Sun Mover (Priest)
- Fire-Son (Champion)

Brand

Brands need only recognise and offer basic worship to Kakatal. No other duties are expected of them.

Fire Starter

Fire Starters take part in active rituals to Kakatal, usually acting as torch-bearers and pyre-lighters. Where the cult must act in Kakatal's name, Fire Starters form the core of the group.

Becoming a Fire Starter requires only the dedication of POW to form a Pact (Kakatal) with the Fire Lord.

Flame Breather

Flame Breathers lead certain ceremonies in veneration of Kakatal. They are also active agents on Kakatal's behalf.

Requirements to become a Fire Breather are:

- Pact (Kakatal) 50% or higher.
- One cult skill 50% or higher.

Sun Mover

In those primitive cultures where Kakatal is worshipped, the Sun Mover is the priest/shaman of the cult and there is usually no more than one. He leads the key ceremonies of the cult, typically on the solstice days where the days lengthen and shorten as Kakatal's influence waxes and wanes.

- Pact (Kakatal) 70% or higher.
- Lore (Kakatal) 70% or higher.
- Summon (Salamander) 50% or higher.

Fire-Son

The Fire Sons are Kakatal's radiant champions. They are few in number and often actively engaged on quests to bring Kakatal's

light, truth and flame to the darkest areas of the world. Their devotion leaves them scarred and burned, so often disturbing to look upon.

- Pact (Kakatal) 90% or higher.
- Lore (Kakatal) 70% or higher.
- Four Cult Skills 50% or higher.
- Summon (Salamander) 50% or higher.

Duties

The key duty of all of Kakatal's adherents is to maintain the flame of the world alive and vital. Kakatal does not require live sacrifices but is never one to complain when they are made, because the eternal fire always requires fuel. Additional duties for all active worshippers include:

- Let all fires extinguish themselves through natural causes.
- Never venerate Lassa, who would deny Kakatal the oxygen of life.

Benefits

Benefits accrue as follows:

Fire Starters

- One Gift and one Compulsion.
- Cult skills are taught at no cost.

Flame Breathers

- One Gift and one Compulsion.
- Cult skills are taught at no cost.
- May be taught cult Runes and Summonings if the Sun Mover considers them worthy of the honour.

Sun Movers

- One Gift and one Compulsion.
- Cult skills are taught at no cost.
- A new Sun Mover is always taught two cult Runes and the cult's summonings to the base percentage.

Fire Sons

- One Gift and one Compulsion.
- Cult skills are taught at no cost.
- Fire Sons may be taught cult Runes and Summonings if the Sun Mover considers them worthy of the honour.
- One Legendary Ability.

Gifts and Compulsions

Gifts and Compulsions accrue as per cult rank.

Gifts

Divine Training (Cult Skills)
Elemental (salamander)
Enchantment
Extended Life
Increased Health

Invulnerability (Fire)
Rune Mastery (Fire, Light)
Youth

Compulsion

Agoraphobia
Close Combat Pacifism
Donation of 1D4 points of permanent POW to sustain Kakatal's eternal flame; driven partially insane as a result
Fear of Death
Firestarter
Immolation
Scorching

Cult Skills

All Spear and Bow Combat Styles, Craft (Blacksmith), Influence, Language (High Speech*), Lore (Haborym), Lore (Kakatal), Mechanisms, Resilience.

**Only the High Speech necessary to casting cult runes and summonings is taught. It cannot be used to cast magic of other runes.*

Cult Magic

Runes of Fire, Heat, Light, Protection and Purity.

The cult also teaches Command, Summoning Ritual (Salamander).

Heroic Abilities Available

Empathic Wound, Heroic Aura, Madness of Purpose.

Retribution

Dedicated cults of Kakatal are vengeful towards those who leave the cult or betray its nature. Fire Sons are generally despatched to immolate the traitor or, at the very least, bring him back to the cult so that his soul can be cleansed with fire and sent screaming unto Kakatal's fiery realm.

Politics and Relationships

The cult is isolated with little in the way of meaningful relationships with the other Elemental cults. Only Grome, who seems to understand the need for fire's cleansing properties (but is wary of the destruction it can bring), appears to offer anything approaching sympathy for the cult. The cults of Lassa, on the contrary, see Kakatal as a thief and destroyer and consider the cult its enemy.

CULT OF LASSA

Then a great wave erupted out of the placid sea, rising higher and higher until it towered over the vessel. With a surging crash, the water smashed down on the boat, lifted it and bore it out to sea. Sitting blank-eyed in the stem, Elic still crooned his hideous song of sorcery as the spirits of the air plucked at

the sail and sent the boat flying over the water faster than any mortal ship could speed. And all the while, the deafening, unholy shriek of the released elementals filled the air about the boat as the shore vanished and open sea was all that was visible.

— *The Weird of the White Wolf*

The crackling blaze of fire, the strength of rock and stone, the crash of waves against a floundering ship's timbers; these things seem immediate and overwhelming, and so they are, but Lassa's power – that of the air, that of the wind; the gales, hurricanes and tornadoes – is every bit as immediate and destructive as that of her brothers.

Everything on the earth revolves around Lassa. The air she moves provides oxygen for life; if she so desired it, the air could be removed from a region, suffocating all within. When Lassa decides to release her unruly sons and brothers – Misha and Graoll – or her errant husband, Lord Shoashooan, her power is direct and devastating. Lassa is a goddess of great gentleness and comfort; a healer and refresher of the soul. But, when moved to anger, her powers can uproot trees and buildings, propel huge blocks of debris like missiles and sap the strength from even the strongest lungs.

Those who venerate Lassa know her power and respect it. The fair race of Myrrhn, winged and gentle, take great care to placate her. The barbarians of Dorel consider her to be the most powerful of all the Elemental Lords – as does Elric – and all who come into contact with her power know of its capabilities and tread lightly around them.

Purpose and History

Lassa is the goddess of wide-open spaces. She is the goddess of cooling breezes and ferocious storms. She represents life, freedom and ferocity. She is as capricious as any Lord of Chaos but is loving and joyful too, neither revelling in what her power can do, nor denying it.

Just as Grome and Straasha are engaged in rivalry for the surface world, Lassa is engaged in rivalry with Lord Kakatal. Kakatal's fire consumes Lassa's beloved air and scorches life. The fumes of his fires polluted the sylphs and choke the breezes, which he uses to fan the flames of his casual destruction. Their enmity is less vocal than that between earth and water but perhaps, like Kakatal's blazing heart, more intense. There is little evidence of a grudging accord between the two Elemental Lords and Lassa has far more in common with Straasha and Grome than with the Lord of Flames. She distrusts abuse and both Grome and Straasha rely on Lassa's constant breath to promote life – whereas Kakatal needs it only to bring about destruction and pollution.

Lassa has long been an ally of Melniboné. Their Pact was formed when Prince Elric released Shaarnasaa, the Southern Wind and one of Lassa's beloved daughters from the grasp of the Karasim

horde. That act of kindness (a well-trodden DreamQuest for Melniboné's emperors) sealed the alliance between the Air Lord and the Dragon Lords. The Pact has endured and so it is that Lassa is still venerated on the Dragon Isle and celebrated in Melniboné's open spaces, air-powered musical instruments and in the freedom brought by the wind.

Lassa has many children and many consorts. Some are worshipped in place of her; others are considered aspects of her divine being, which are called upon by aeromancers for specific reasons. The air gods associated with Lassa are as follows:

Lord Shoashooan

Shoashooan, the Demon Wind, the Son Stealer, the Lord of the Tornadoes, the undisputed ruler of the prairie, before whom all spirits and creatures of the plains were powerless. Lord Shoashooan in all his writhing, twisting, shouting forms, his bestial features glaring out of his swirling body.

— *The Skrayling Tree*

Also known as Misha by some, and considered Lassa's consort in certain quarters (and her anarchic brother in others), Shoashooan is the rasping devil-wind that haunts prairies such as the Sighing Desert and the Weeping Waste. His form is a whirling, mutating, almost bestial whirlwind that displays Shoashooan's contorted, malevolent face. Despite the Elemental Lords' distance from Chaos, Lord Shoashooan is the one Elemental prepared to form an allegiance with the Lords of Entropy. His nature is chaotic at heart and as petulantly destructive as many of the Chaos Lords.

He is feared by the tribes of the desert and the prairie, rather than worshipped, although those who understand the Elementals know that Shoashooan is better placated than enraged. So it is that prayers and offerings are made to him, in a bid to divert the dreadful destruction he can inflict.

Shoashooan's sibling is the growling, equally temperamental, Graoll, who afflicts the waves as Shoashooan afflicts the land.

Lady Shaarnasaa, Queen of the South Wind

As powerful as Lord Shoashooan, her brother, but with Lassa's benevolence, Shaarnasaa is the queen of the southern winds that bring cold but gentle winds to calm Kakatal's heat when it reaches its summer heights. Captured and imprisoned by the sorcerer Ederic, a prince of the Mernii, who sought to replace his brother as the emperor, she was freed by Prince Elric and the Myrrhn and so pledged to assist the emperors of Melniboné whenever the need arose.

Shaarnasaa is a queen of healing and blessing. She is neither petulant nor capricious and, unlike her brother, cares for life and will not take it senselessly.

She is venerated in the southern continent and on the Isle of Purple Towns, where her power is strongest.

Game Mechanics for Lord Shoashooan

Lord Shoashooan can be summoned as per any other sylph. However, he is always treated as a 12 Magic Point sylph summoning (see the *Elric of Melniboné Core Rulebook*) with the following additional abilities:

Physical Manifestation

Shoashooan can assume a whirling, changing, physical form, always with a bestial face and 'keen, excited eyes'. No mortal can command him to assume such a form and when he chooses to do so it takes 1D4 Combat Rounds for it to take effect. However, when he does physically manifest he has the Characteristics of a 12 Magic Point Demon of Combat.

Pact (Chaos) 50+3D10%

Lord Shoashooan makes and breaks Pacts with Chaos according to his own agenda. He makes a Pact with the principles of Chaos rather than any particular Lord but when engaged in such a Pact, he manifests the following Gifts and Compulsions:

- Endure any pain. Never needs to check *Resilience* to prevent unconsciousness when wounded and immune to torture.
- Regenerates 1D3 Hit Points each Combat Round, whilst he is still alive. He need not be conscious for the regeneration to work but if a wound is sufficient to kill him, the regeneration ability will not restore him to life.
- Requires a Blood Sacrifice for each manifestation.
- Consumed with dominating an entire region or realm. Shoashooan must test against his Pact every round. If he fails, Lassa herself manifests to rein-in her unruly consort – and her power *far* exceeds his.

Lord Graoll, Shoashooan's brother, should be treated similarly, although his province is the sea.

If game mechanics for Shaarnasaa are required, she is, like Shoashooan, a 12 Magic Point air elemental. She has, however, the power of Healing with which she can heal up to 1D6 Hit Points of damage to all locations per summoning.

Myths

The War Between Lassa and Kakatal (Mythic Resonance 75%) – Fire Can Never be Controlled: Lassa was born on the day that the world began to turn. With its rotation she came into life first as the breeze, then as the wind and finally as the

hurricane. When she returned to rest the world was made and she had breathed life into and across it. Lord Grome loved her and Lord Straasha respected her. But one lord, Kakatal, did not like this soothing presence upon the world and made Lassa his enemy – even though she offered words of kindness and friendship to the violent Lord of Fire.

When Grome and Straasha went to war in a bid to reshape the earth, Lassa sided with Lord Grome, her consort and protector, and Lord Kakatal sided with Straasha. Grome and Straasha fought for the shape of the world; Lassa and Kakatal fought for the world's spirit and heart. Lassa countered the fierce fire demons with her sons and daughters who, unruly and boisterous, revelled in the war between all the lords of the elements.

Finally the world had it shaped and Grome and Straasha settled into a reluctant peace; but Kakatal would have none of this and continued his war with Lassa, seeking to burn her from the earth. Both lords are matched in power and neither can prevail but the ancient enmity persists because Kakatal both above and within the world seeks complete dominance from Lassa's cooling, soothing winds.

Beliefs

Lassa's adherents believe in freedom – of expression, of action, of belief. In this sense they reflect some of the nature of Chaos but their belief is tempered by a gentleness not normally associated with Entropy. Worshipers of Lassa avoid constricting ceremonies and rituals, preferring individual expression to show their devotion to Queen Lassa.

In Pikarayd, Dorel and the Weeping Waste, Lord Shoashooan is venerated and it is believed that placating him prevents the destruction of the air from afflicting the land. Similar veneration is offered in the Isle of Purple Towns to Lord Graoll who, in his fury, antagonises Straasha and creates the howling, destructive storms that wreck ships and condemn innocent sailors to Pyaray's watery depths.

Adherents espouse the following core beliefs:

- All life is free and should remain thus.
- Detail constrains – life is a big picture for living!
- Kakatal denies life with flames and smoke but is still essential to it.
- The feud between Grome and Straasha should be assuaged by Lassa's healing touch.

Worshippers

Worship is most common amongst the barbarian cultures of the Young Kingdoms but sects are found in the Isle of Purple Towns, western Jharkor, southern Argimiliar (Andlermaign) and

the more remote edges of Lormyr. She is a goddess of nomads, sailors, hunters and all who value freedom. Lassa is also the lady of healing and healers. Physicians and chirurgeons venerate her as a healing goddess.

Sub-cults emphasising Shoashooan, Shaarnasaa and Graoll often accompany cults of Lassa, especially in those regions where whirlwinds strike the scrubland, or where warfare is seen as a legitimate expression of freedom.

Membership

Standard. Cult ranks are as follows:

Breath of Lassa (Lay Member)
Wind Bearer (Initiate)
Wind Holder (Acolyte)
Wind Singer (Priest or Shaman)
Wind Dancer (Champion)

Breath of Lassa

Lay Members follow the core beliefs of the cult but have no obligation to undertake any special veneration.

Wind Bearer

As with other Elemental cults, Wind Bearers are active in pursuing their veneration, seeking out freedom and using open spaces, wind-swept peaks and the like to open themselves to Lassa's blessing.

Becoming a Wind Bearer requires the worshipper to dedicated POW and enter a Pact (Lassa).

Wind Holder

Wind Holders are more devout than Wind Bearers believing that Lassa's very own breath is within them. Some claim to have had personal visions or visitations of Lassa but otherwise their duties are as for Wind Bearers.

To be able to claim the title of Wind Holder, the following requirements are needed:

- Pact (Lassa) 50% or greater.
- One cult skill at 50% or greater.

Wind Singer

Lassa's priests are certain that Lassa's divine breath fills their lungs. They are often distracted, save for when channelling Lassa's blessings and urge others to venerate the Lady of the Winds. Wind Singers can, establish separate Pacts with Shoashooan and Shaarnasaa, if they wish, calling on either for Divine Intervention just as they might call upon Lassa.

- Pact (Lassa) 70% or greater.
- Lore (Lassa) 70% or greater.
- One cult skill at 50% or greater.
- Summon Sylph at 50% or greater.

Wind Dancer

Wind Dancers have dedicated themselves almost wholly to either Lassa, Shoashooan or Shaarnasaa. They are genuine free-spirits, unwilling and unable to be confined or controlled. Their wind god is the only one who can direct their actions.

- Pact (appropriate wind god) 90% or higher.
- Lore (appropriate wind god) 70% or higher.
- Four Cult Skills 50% or higher.
- Summon Sylph 50% or higher.

Duties

The duties for all who venerate Lassa are straightforward. Core duties for all are:

- Preserve freedom.
- Heal the sick.
- Eat no creature of the air.
- Free any birds from captivity.
- Root-out worshippers of Kakatal and convert them to a path of life.
- Extinguish all fires which threaten life.

Wind Singers and Dancers are expected to offer thanks to Lassa at any available opportunity and especially when entering a new area or region where her influence is plainly strong. Additionally both ranks are expected to oppose captivity of any kind, freeing anyone or anything that has been incarcerated.

Benefits

Benefits accrue in the form of Gifts, Compulsions, Cult Skills, Runes, Summonings and Legendary Abilities.

Wind Bearer

- One Gift and one Compulsion.
- Cult skills are taught at no cost.

Wind Holder

- One Gift and one Compulsion.
- Cult skills are taught at no cost.
- May be taught cult Runes and Summonings if the Wind Singer considers them worthy of the honour.

Wind Singer

- One Gift and one Compulsion.
- Cult skills are taught at no cost.
- A new shaman is always taught two cult Runes and the cult's summonings to the base percentage.

Wind Dancer

- One Gift and one Compulsion.
- Cult skills are taught at no cost.
- Wind Dancers may be taught cult Runes and Summonings if the Wind Singer considers them worthy of the honour.
- One Legendary Ability.

Gifts and Compulsions

Gifts and Compulsions accrue as per cult rank.

Gift

Abstinence (Air)
Divine Training (Cult Skills)
Elemental (Sylph)
Perfection
Rune Mastery (Air)
Sanctuary
Ward (Fire)
Youth

Compulsions

Armour Rejection
Attention Deficit
Claustrophobia
Healing
Hyperactive
Merciful
Skyclad
Vegetarian

Cult Skills

Spear, Sword and Bow Combat Styles, Acrobatics, Athletics, Boating, Dance, First Aid, Healing, Language (High Speech*), Lore (Lassa), Lore (Weather), Play Instrument, Shiphandling.

**Only the High Speech necessary to casting cult runes and summonings is taught. It cannot be used to cast magic of other runes.*

Cult Magic

Runes of Air, Beast (Birds), Contact, Enhancement (DEX), Purity, Sight and Speed.

Lassa and her subcults also teach: Command, Summoning Ritual (Sylph), Summoning Ritual (Sharma), Summoning Ritual (h'Haar'shann), Summon Boatmen of Xerxelenes.

Heroic Abilities Available

Dead Eye, Devilish Charm, Empathic Wound, Heroic Aura, Tireless.

Retribution

Lassa take no retribution against those who lapse from her veneration, although she is always greatly saddened. Shoashooan

and Graoll, however, are not so merciful. They send a h'Haar'shann – a 10 Magic Point sylph – to attack anyone who has made, and broken, a Pact with them.

Politics and Relationships

Grome and Straasha are considered allied cults. In Dorel, Grome is considered subservient to Lassa. The cult of Kakatal is feared and reviled but viewed with sorrow and pity as much as anger.

CULT OF STRAASHA

Gaynor's followers fell back screaming for orders. Gaynor knew he could not possibly begin to fight King Straasha. A heavy, wet movement brought water running around our feet. King Straasha stepped ashore. His huge body walked, step by liquid step, up the great prospect towards us. If that weight of water should lose its form, it would drown us entirely.

— *The Dreamthief's Daughter*

Purpose and History

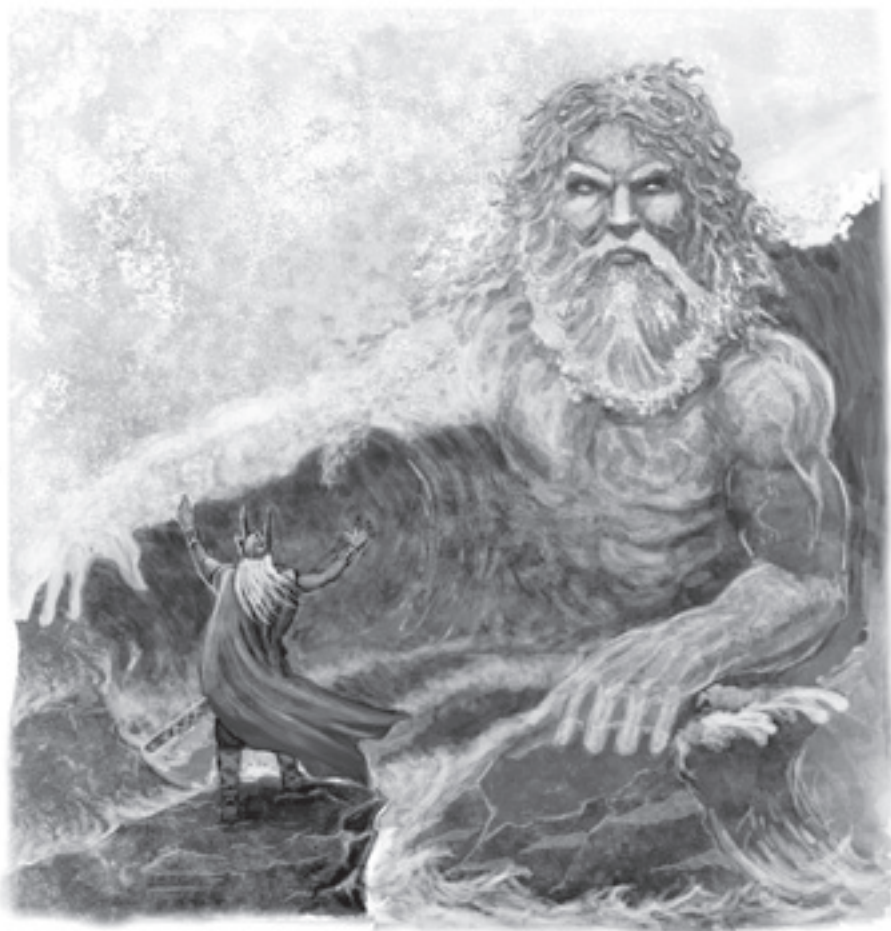
Of all the Elemental Lords, King Straasha is the most beset. His ocean is plagued by Pyaray's intentions and the threat of the doomed fleet at the seabed. Pyaray's brother, Artigkern, lurks as a shadow, threatening to consume Straasha's realms, ever lusting for the Elemental Lord's sister. And, where the land meets the sea, petulant, obstinate Grome, moss-bearded lord of the earth, broods over how the brothers have quarrelled and what Grome has lost in the process.

Yet for all these travails, Straasha is a benevolent god. The sea, his realm, fills the world and laps over and out of it, gushing through the Multiverse in an endless ocean that, whilst intangible to most, is still Straasha's realm. Straasha flows through the Multiverse in a steady, constant current, watching the progress of mortals as they make their tender ways through life, beset by the likes of Pyaray on the one hand and Pozz-man-Llyr (sometimes a friend, sometimes an enemy) on the other. Straasha cares for mortals in ways the other Elemental Lords do not. The sea is all-wise and all-spanning. Land, fire and air are seemingly finite commodities but the sea – the sea is like fate itself and Straasha is the source of its wisdom and kindness. Straasha is all-powerful; he can shape the land, if he chooses; he does not need air or wind and fire is of little concern to him. Straasha spreads where land cannot and his streams are like arteries through Grome's great world. Here, then, lies the secret behind Pyaray's jealousy: Straasha is a masterful element and he encompasses the Multiverse beyond the scope of his brothers and sister. If Pyaray and other Lords of Chaos could wrest control of the oceans from Straasha, then the spread of Chaos would be insidious and complete.

Law knows this and whilst unconcerned, for now, with Straasha's dominion, there are some planes where Law rules that have had their seas and oceans turned to controllable, predictable dust. Straasha is as wary of Law as he is of Chaos. He trusts only the

other Elements because, whilst they have had their battles, they are, ultimately, predictable and know their limitations. Law and Chaos do not – or if they do, choose not to accept them. Mighty Straasha, in his wisdom, instils this into those who dedicate themselves to him: trust neither power, for, ultimately, it has no use for you. I, on the other hand, see all, am everywhere and *care*.

Straasha considers himself to be a generous god. His waters provide bounty and the storms that rock the waves are usually the doing of the unruly Air Elementals whom Lassa has failed to control; or Grome's grumblings, far beneath the sea-bed, causing the waves to rise and devastate his own coasts. Straasha welcomes mortals onto his surface, wishes them safe passage but rarely interferes – unless Pyaray decides to seize those who have pledged their souls to Straasha. And when Straasha is moved to wrath, his power is formidable. The sea is like a weapon and Straasha wields it with ferocity when pressed to do so. Yet it takes much to move Straasha so. These days mortals are unwilling to make the old pacts, like those established by the Mernii, and it saddens him somewhat. Although Straasha cannot foretell the future, he has some inkling of it, because fate flows through him and he knows that, soon, a time will come when mortals will wish they had paid Good King Straasha more attention.



Myths

Straasha Makes the World (Mythic Resonance 80%) –

Straasha's Grace and Bounty: In the beginning the world was water and Lord Straasha commanded all. He brought life to his vast oceans and all was at peace.

Then a new god came into the realm of Straasha who called himself Grome. From the seabed he raised an island, which Straasha allowed but then he raised more and soon had formed a continent. Lord Grome enticed things from the sea to come to live upon this place, which he called Land and Lord Straasha allowed this because he could cause his rivers and lakes to form upon Land.

But Lord Grome became greedy. He wanted Land to fill the entire world and for Straasha to have dominion only through the rivers and lakes: this Lord Straasha could not allow and so the two Lords of the Elements went to war in a bid to determine the final shape of the earth.

Their war caused many changes. Continents rose and fell; seas grew and ebbed. Then, a balance became between them: there was an equal amount of land and sea and Lord Straasha called a truce with his enemy. Grudgingly Grome agreed and so the current shape of the world is fixed and will not change until some other form or force chooses to reshape it. Lord Straasha's compact with Lord Grome ensures stability and peace, even though Grome would command all to be turned to earth and rock if he could manage it.

Beliefs

Straasha is the Lord of all water. It obeys his laws and those who venerate Straasha respect the same laws. Straasha is the king of all Elementals; his power flows around and beneath the world, perhaps even Time itself is part of Straasha's domain. Grome is his enemy but he has been defeated and now the two are reconciled as brothers. Lassa is Straasha's sister and Kakatal is Straasha's estranged brother, forced into exile after attempting to burn the ocean in the south west.

Straasha preserves life through his bounty and grace for those who take to the sea. Now that he has become King of the Elements his chief enemy is Pyaray who attempts to pervert Straasha's realm with

his vile Chaos Fleet and aquatic sorcery. Sea monsters and fish demons battle Straasha's emissaries – the whales – whilst the mermen of Chaos battle both men and Straasha's children, the dolphins. Straasha's soldiers are the sharks and eels, fierce battlers of the deep, but they are prone to Chaos's influence and some have turned upon Straasha, becoming cunning demons in their own right.

Straasha's worshippers know that a battle rages in the depths of the ocean. They hope Straasha's might will prevail to prevent the dead from rising in their sunken ships; they hope Straasha will save them from a similar doom.

Worshippers

Straasha is worshipped throughout the Young Kingdoms, including civilised ports and trading centres, as well as the river traders of Lormyr. The cult has no particular sects or subdivisions; King Straasha is present wherever there is water and his worship is wherever water is important to the people.

Where an organised temple to Straasha exists (in the Isle of Purple Towns, say, or in the City of the Yellow Coast), the cult ranks are as follows:

Membership

Standard. Cult ranks are:

Stream Son/Daughter (Lay Member)
River Son/Daughter (Initiate)
Lake Son/Daughter (Acolyte)
Ocean Son/Daughter (Priest)
Straasha Son/Daughter (Champion)

Stream Son/Daughter

Lay Members acknowledge Straasha's supremacy over the other elements and partake in rites and festivals arranged or decreed by the priests but otherwise have no specific obligations towards the cult.

River Son/Daughter

River Sons pledge allegiance to Straasha as King of the Oceans. They focus on developing their knowledge of Straasha's laws and undertake to serve Straasha in his battles against Pyaray and the Whisperer gods.

Requirements for initiation are simply to make a Pact (Straasha) with a dedication of POW.

Lake Son/Daughter

Lake Sons take an active part in furthering Straasha's agenda. They are frequently explorers or boat/ship captains or officers. To them falls the duty of observing Straasha's law over the waters of the world and they must lead their crews in respecting Straasha's place as King of the Elements.

- Pact (Straasha) 50% or higher.
- Lore (Straasha) 50% or higher.
- Three cult skills at 50% or higher.

Ocean Son/Daughter

Ocean Sons lead the followers of the cult in worship. This mostly involves prayers before a ship dedicated to Straasha sets sail, or giving thanks for a bountiful catch. Priests believe that they are the earthly representatives of Straasha and, if they serve dutifully, will be preserved in his realm upon death.

- Pact (Straasha) 70% or higher.
- Lore (Straasha) 70% or higher.
- Three cult skills at 70% or higher.
- Summon Undine at 50% or higher.

Straasha Son/Daughter

Straasha's Sons have pledged to battle the forces that beset the Lord of the Waves at every turn. They make it their business to oppose Chaos and, occasionally, Law, where it conflicts with Straasha's will and needs. These are Adventurers who believe in Straasha's presence throughout the Million Spheres and recognised their own place in furthering the eternal battle that plagues the oceans of the Multiverse.

- Pact (Straasha) 90% or higher.
- Lore (Straasha) 90% or higher.
- Two cult skills at 90% or higher.
- Summon Undine at 50% or higher.

Duties

Duties are common to all who venerate Straasha:

- Respect the sea.
- Consider Straasha the father of all life and King of the Elements.
- Give thanks for his mercy every time one places one's trust in the water.
- Consign the dead to Straasha's bosom; do not surrender them to Grome.

Priests and Champions are charged with actively opposing Straasha's enemies – whatever form these take. In the case of priests, ensuring that the faithful give thanks to Straasha is enough but for Champions, Straasha's Sons, this means involving themselves in danger to prevent Chaos and Law from gaining dominion over the oceans.

Benefits

Benefits accrue by rank and take the form of Gifts, Compulsions, Cult Skills, Runes and Summonings and Legendary Abilities.

River Son/Daughter

- One Gift and one Compulsion.
- Cult skills are taught at no cost.

Lake Son/Daughter

- One Gift and one Compulsion.
- Cult skills are taught at no cost.
- May be taught cult Runes and Summonings if the Ocean Son considers them worthy of the honour.

Ocean Son/Daughter

- One Gift and one Compulsion.
- Cult skills are taught at no cost.
- A new priest is always taught two cult Runes and the cult's summonings to the base percentage.

Straasha Son/Daughter

- One Gift and one Compulsion.
- Cult skills are taught at no cost.
- Sons of Straasha may be taught cult Runes and Summonings if the Ocean Son considers them worthy of the honour.
- One Legendary Ability.

Gifts and Compulsions

Gifts and Compulsion accrue through cult ranks.

Gifts

Abstinence (Water)
Elemental (Undine)
Enchantment
One use of the Ship That Sails Over Sea and Land (3 POW)
Poison Immunity
Return Loved One
Rune Mastery (Water),
Second Life

Compulsions

Compulsive Swimmer
Deck Bound
Piscine Diet
Pyarayic Phobia
Sea Drawn
Terra Phobia
Water Consumer
Weeps almost constantly at the injustices Grome has heaped on Straasha by cutting-off lakes from the sea

Cult Skills

Spear, Sword and Bow Combat Styles, Boating, Dodge, Language (High Speech*), Lore (Fish), Lore (Sea and Tides), Lore (Straasha), Shiphandling.

**Only the High Speech necessary to casting cult runes and summonings is taught. It cannot be used to cast magic of other runes.*

Cult Magic

Runes of Beast (Fish), Passing, Purity, Silence, Speed and Water.

The cult also teaches Command, Summoning Ritual (Undine)

Heroic Abilities Available

Disease Immunity, Heroic Aura, Poison Immunity.

Retribution

Straasha is merciful and those who betray the cult are not pursued. However, leaving Straasha's service dooms the soul to the Undead Fleet of Pyaray, regardless of where death occurs.

Politics and Relationships

The cult is undeniably arrogant, considering itself above the other Elemental Cults. The cults of Grome are typically antagonistic although those of Lassa and Kakatal take a more ambivalent stance to Straasha's arrogance. This, they believe, is a quarrel between the Land and Sea.

The cult of the Whisperers is the undisputed enemy, since they bring death to the waves and challenge for the supremacy of the oceans. It is the duty of every high-ranking water cultist to oppose the Whisperers' influence at every opportunity.

The cult of Pozz-man-Llyr, in Tarkesh, is viewed as an allied cult. Whilst Straasha claims no allegiance with Pozz-man-Llyr, it is recognised that this particular Lord of Law also opposes the enemy Pyaray and so his agents should be treated with respect and, sometimes, friendship. However this does not hold true for the remaining cults of Law, which the cult of Straasha believes neglects the sea and have no place for the King of the Elements in their grandiose plans.

CULTS OF LAW



The White Lords of the Higher Worlds, enemies of Chaos, were marvelously beautiful, with bodies of such symmetry that they could not be earthly. Only Law could create such perfection and, Elric thought, such perfection defeated progress. That the twin forces complemented one another was now plainer than ever before, and for either to gain complete ascendancy over the other meant entropy or stagnation for the cosmos. Even though Law might dominate the earth, Chaos must be present, and vice versa.

'The Lords of Law were accoutered for war. They had made this apparent in their choice of earth-like garb. Fine metals and silks — or their like on this plane — gleamed on their perfect bodies. Slender weapons were at their sides and their overpoweringly beautiful faces seemed to glow with purpose. The tallest stepped forward. 'So, Sepiriz, you have brought the one whose destiny it is to aid us. Greetings. Elric of Melniboné. Though spawn of Chaos you be, we have cause to welcome you. Do you recognise me? The one whom your earthly mythology calls Donblas the Justice Maker.

— Stormbringer

LAW IN THE YOUNG KINGDOMS

Law does not represent 'good', 'evil', 'right' or 'wrong'. It represents a way of being, an ideal. As Chaos represents unfettered creativity and change, Law represents a linear, unbending path leading, ultimately, to stagnation — a doom as sure as any invited by Chaos.

After 10,000 years of largely Chaotic domination it was inevitable that the Young Kingdoms would embrace Law when they finally broke free from Melnibonéan imperialism. Champions of Law, like Aubec and Myshella, helped pave the way for a more general acceptance of Law's intent and, as the southern continent turned to Law's veneration, so would others follow. Once Chaos's grip on the world was fractured, so it became easier for Law to slip between the cracks.

It achieved a certain dominance in the Young Kingdoms not through showing that humankind could progress through peace, love and harmony but by demonstrating that Chaos led to decadence and insouciance, as Melniboné conveniently proved, and that humankind could find its own prosperity through ordered progress, pursuit of the physical laws governing the plane of the earth and imposing systems and processes where, previously, none had existed, in order to secure *control*.

And control is what Law strives to do. Control is power and might; something that is uncontrolled is reckless and destructive. Control involves the application of logic, the anticipation of consequences, the eradication of spontaneity and the single-minded pursuit of perfection. Of course, Law being Law, the Young Kingdom's realisation of precisely what Law means has been a centuries-long process and, Law being Law, careful control has been exercised over what the people of the Young Kingdoms understand about Law's true nature. The process went like this:

First, Law showed *possibility* — by engaging Earl Aubec to carve new lands from Chaos.

Next, Law demonstrated *capability* — by assisting Lormyr and Queen Eloarde of Klant to challenge and defeat Melniboné.

After that, it demonstrated *consistency* — by introducing the worship of Law as a system that could be applied across the merging nations.

And after that, Law demonstrated *control* — by giving to the proponents of Law the strength and knowledge to control those who were weaker and imperfect.

Law is now at the beginning of *stagnation*. Melniboné is impotent; there are no great empires in the Young Kingdoms; Pan Tang is a lurking threat but considered inconsequential — after all, if Law could triumph over Melniboné, what kind of challenge would some upstart Mabden pose?

Law has, in some quarters, become complacent. In others it has become overbearing and intolerant. But across the Young Kingdoms Law's influence has caused the Cosmic Balance to tip sufficiently enough to trigger an essential need for equilibrium. This comes in the re-emergence of Chaos – in the shape of Elric and the form of imperialistic, barbaric Pan Tang. Just as Chaos was challenged by Law, at the dawn of the Young Kingdoms, so Law must be challenged by Chaos. This is a time of change and a time of war. The allegiances are shifting and the battle-lines being drawn.

Law In... Argimiliar and Vilmir

Law has its strongest influence in Argimiliar and Vilmir. In the cities of Cadsandria, Jadmar, Vilmiro and Old Hrolmar, the worship of Law is enshrined in its churches and cathedrals, supported by a bureaucratic state that works to precisely defined principles, systems, processes, permits, licenses and rules. Books and scrolls codify knowledge and learning but an equal number govern the rules to be abided by to access that knowledge. Councillors and senators argue for days on trivial points or order, citing complex legislative codes that are as arcane as any spell or rune of Chaos. Permission is required for any activity that the state believes requires regulation and taxes are levied on the number of windows a house has, how many hearths burn beneath its chimneys, how many wheels a cart has and how many horses pull it. Physical beauty, perfection and ostentation are prized over the plain, the uneven and the disadvantaged. Wealth finances grand schemes and public monuments but rarely the poorest who scabble for a living amongst the wealthy patriarchs and their concubines. Art, science and culture are the province of the monied and the high born – considered beyond the understanding of the humble countrymen. Arrogance, pomposity and pedantry are treated more highly than hard work and plain speaking.

And such is the happiness that Law creates in these nations, its militias must work hard to contain the populace, with ever more draconian punishments for non-compliance and restlessness. Privateers from Vilmir roam the eastern sea-ways in search of plunder that is taken back to swell the coffers of the church, state, merchants and property owners. Argimilian private armies seek ways of extending their country's influence over neighbouring Filkhar and sleepy Lormyr.

In these two nations Law exhibits its capability, consistency and control with ruthless efficiency and little concern for justice.

Law In... Filkhar and the Purple Towns

In Filkhar and the Isle of Purple Towns, only Law's possibility and capability have been allowed to prevail. As a result, these two nations are hard-working, prosperous, tolerant and adaptable. The church of Law is very much in evidence but its control is not total and the people of Raschil and Menii enjoy freedoms denied to their compatriots in Vilmir and Argimiliar. Markets and trade are regulated but not strangled by bureaucracy; laws

and punishments exist but are tempered with justice and mercy. Creativity and enterprise are encouraged within individuals and are not dismissed as evidence of recklessness or insanity; nor does the state consider itself to be responsible for controlling creativity and enterprise. People may come and go; the plain and ugly run shoulders with the wealthy and beautiful. Filkhar and Menii are lands of promise and opportunity.

Law In... Jharkor and Ilmiora

Here, Law's influence is almost as relaxed as in Filkhar and the Purple Towns but exhibits some of the control found in Vilmir and Argimiliar. The Church of Law holds definite sway with its priests and prelates offering profound advice to the monarch and city-state rulers. Rules and regulations govern trade and profit, with a healthy tax supporting church and state alike, but neither producing the absolute burden of Vilmir's labyrinthine systems, or the Purple Town's notorious free markets. The church of Law advises but does not control; Jharkor's king and Ilmiora's city princes and senators still hold the balance of power and are careful not to follow Vilmir's example of state imposition.

Both nations are havens for entrepreneurs and free-thinkers. Individual excellence is valued and those with something worthwhile to say are listened to. But Jharkor is still a Lawful monarchy and the great cities of Bakshaan and Ilmar are ordered, structured metropolises. The influence of Chaos is tolerated to a small degree (witness Nikorn of Ilmar's ability to recruit Theleb K'aarna to protect his interests; note the same sorcerer's presence in Princess Yishana's bed-chamber) but both nations are confident enough in Law's strength to believe that Chaos cannot seize hold.

Law In... Lormyr and Shazar

Elric nodded. 'Lormyr's years of turbulence ended when she cast off Melniboné's shackles and was first to proclaim herself a free nation. I have a liking for this restful landscape. It soothes me. Now we have another reason for finding the sorcerer before he begins to stir his brew of corruption.'

— *The Vanishing Tower*

In Lormyr and Shazar – nations that were the first to establish independence from Melniboné, Law's power has slipped into comfortable complacency. Here, in these regions, Law demonstrated possibility and capability, allowing Lormyr to carve for itself an empire in the south and to turn Shazar from a sleepy backwater province into a respected state of man. But, with time, that capability and possibility has lapsed into quiet reserve. Lormyr's imperial ambitions died with those monarchs who first held them and Shazar has seen no need to expand beyond its southern, marshy border or its northerly frontier with the larger, more ambitious Jharkor. Law's influence has created order, and limited prosperity also, but its principles have not been pursued beyond these boundaries. In both nations the church of Law is represented but is neither ambitious nor completely solipsistic. The cities of Iosaz, Ramasaz and Afitain are gracious and almost

genteel but hint at glories long-past and are now relatively comfortable, fading places where the everyday pace of life has lapsed into a comfortable equilibrium – hinting at the steady hand of the Cosmic Balance. Both Lormyr and Shazar strive to maintain ideals of chivalry and nobility, as evinced by the great hero Aubec.

Here, Law's dominance has resulted in relative harmony and peaceful existence. Its power has clearly stagnated, as have both nations' old glories, but neither Lormyr nor Shazar actively pursued consistency and control to the degrees practiced in Argimiliar and Vilmir. Hence, they have become nations of *sense* and *reason*.

Law In... Tarkesh

Northerly Tarkesh, home to the swarthy, dark-skinned, silk-clad ship lords, pay lip service to Law, recognising only Pozz-mann-Llyr, a minor Lawful Duke who considers the sea his realm and seeks to keep it ordered (naturally becoming an enemy of Pyaray and, occasionally, Straasha). However, Straasha too is equally recognised and so the church of Law and the temples of Straasha are found side-by-side in Banarva and Nio, with Tarkeshites offering prayers and homage at one before flocking next door to redress the balance. In Tarkesh, Law exercises only possibility; given time, it might take hold as it has done in Vilmir but, for now, the pragmatic and straightforward people of Tarkesh have little time for the vagaries of gods and struggles: living in the shadow of Dharijor and Pan Tang, life is hard enough without the need for further complications and regulations to diminish their stretched reserves.

THE CHURCH OF LAW

The Church of Law is a structured organisation but is uncentralised; that is, there is no cardinal prelate or other singular individual who controls the entire church from an exalted position. The church in each region is autonomous and, whilst the structure is broadly the same, local variations are inevitably found.

Law does not require complex rituals, prayers and ceremonies for its veneration; where these exist they are human inventions and subject to local variety. What Law does require is compliance and consistency. What this means in practice is that anyone can nominally say they follow Law and accept what it stands for but for any form of power to be derived from the Lords of Law, one must be consistent in one's beliefs and practices and comply with the structures of the local church. Lay Members are therefore numerous but only Initiates – those who have pledged themselves to Law's service – gain any direct benefits from a church or patron deity.

Law adores grand gestures, so its shrines, temples, churches and cathedrals are frequently ostentatious, impressive affairs, making their mark on the local landscape. The symbols of Law, the arrow and triangle, are found in abundance. Law's buildings are frequently pyramids, ziggurats, arrow-like towers, or towers with

arrow-shaped spires. Ceremonial carvings of intricate, geometric designs adorn the walls inside and out, and huge, sweeping entrances, reached by many stairs, welcome the faithful into the cavernous halls that echo loudly and resonantly (for all halls of Law are blessed with perfect acoustics).

The Halls of Law Defined

Shrine – A small place of veneration, a room or single storey building dedicated to a single Lord of Law. Often maintained by a single priest but sometimes with no one at all in attendance.

Church – A larger, symmetrical structure containing shrines to different aspects of the same Lord of Law but still dedicated to just one deity.

Temple – A large, multi-storey structure with a permanent staff and containing several shrines to different Lawful Lords in a variety of aspects. The temple staff may also include monks; those who have chosen a life of permanent dedication to the Lawful ideal and do not leave the temple's confines.

Cathedral – A huge, imposing building acting as the focal point for Lawful veneration and served by a full-time retinue of priests (but not monks). Cathedrals contain many shrines and generally house bureaucratic institutions.

If a Hall of Law is required in a hurry, the table on the following page can be used to quickly determine the composition of the hall, its staff and additional facilities.

The Priesthood

Initiates are not priests. That accolade is reserved for Acolytes and the Priest rank itself. Monks are always Acolytes, having dedicated themselves to Law's service and the abbot is always of the Priest rank.

Most Lawful cults have their own names for ranks; there is no single naming structure found throughout the province of Law although rites and ceremonies are consistent from one place to another. Priestly duties vary between cults but essentially revolve around research, advising the local ruler (or, in the case of Vilmir, controlling the local ruler) and bureaucratic administration such as book keeping and tax reconciliation. Some Lawful priests, usually Acolytes, are active proselytisers, abroad in the community converting those lost souls who have been tinged with Chaos or diverted by the 'pagan' religions of the Elements.

The field work of the cults – assignments targeting Chaos and others enemies of Law – is handled by the Initiates and champions of the cult. Many Initiates have no interest in becoming priests but it is the given process that, to become a champion of the cult, one must have spent time in priestly service before one can be considered for the champion rank. So, Acolytes are allowed to choose between advancing to the Priest rank or concentrating

Random Halls of Law

	Shrine	Church	Temple	Cathedral
Usual Staff	0 or 1	1D3	1D6+2	2D6+6
Cult Rank and Cult Skill Levels	Acolyte Lore (Law), Lore (Deity) 50+2D10%	1 x High Priest, Lore (Law), Lore (Deity) 75+2D10% 1 x Acolyte Lore (Law), Lore (Deity) 50+2D10% 1 x Initiate, Lore (Law), Lore (Deity) 30+2D10%	1 x Champion or Lord, Lore (Law), Lore (Deity) 80+2D10% OR 1 x High Priest, Lore (Law), Lore (Deity) 75+2D10% 1 x Acolyte Lore (Law), Lore (Deity) 50+2D10% 1 x Initiate, Lore (Law), Lore (Deity) 30+2D10%	1 x Champion or Lord, Lore (Law), Lore (Deity) 80+2D10%, 1 x High Priest, Lore (Law), Lore (Deity) 75+2D10% 3 x Acolytes Lore (Law), Lore (Deity) 50+2D10% 4x Initiates, Lore (Law), Lore (Deity) 30+2D10%
Shrines	—	1D3	1D3+1	1D6+2
Training Facilities?	No	No	Yes	Yes
Library/Scriptorium	No	40% chance, but small (10+1D20 scrolls and books)	Yes, medium (50+2D20 scrolls and books)	Yes, large (100+2D100 scrolls and books)
Lodgings/Sanctuary	No	No	Yes – 2D3 beds	Yes – 10+1D20 beds
Stables	No	Yes – 1D4 mounts	Yes – 1D6+6 mounts	Yes – 2D6+12 mounts
Infirmary	No	No	Yes – 1 member of general staff with First Aid at 50+2D10% and Healing at 30+2D10%	Yes – 1 member of general staff with First Aid at 50+2D10% and Healing at 30+2D10%, plus 1D4+1 Nurses or equivalent with First Aid at 60+2D10% and Healing at 40+2D10%

their energies on becoming a champion. Most Acolytes who choose to become Priests stay as Priests, serving Law dutifully within the confines of a community and building of Law but some Priests, those with outgoing and adventurous natures, do manage to progress to the status of champion.

The Priest ranks, however, command the cults of Law. Not the champions. Champions are trouble-shooters and devout knights of the White Lords. Although the Priest rank has no separate internal delineations, there is a clear hierarchy based on length of service and the value of the Lore (specific Lord of Law) and Lore (Law). The higher the sum of the two Lore skills, then the more senior the priest, with length of priestly service further increasing seniority.

ARKYN

The cult of Arkyn venerates two gods; Arkyn himself, in one of two aspects, and Shalod, a deposed Lord of Law who fled those realms conquered by the Sword Rulers.

Purpose and History

Lord Arkyn of Law has many guises and many aspects but in the Young Kingdoms only two are recognised and venerated: Arkyn the Meticulous, who views the world through the beauty of

symmetry and geometry, and is patron of those who study the mathematical arts, and Arkyn the White, who actively opposes the Sword Rulers and the rise of the brutal Mabden.

Shalod has but one aspect: Shalod the Deposed. A ruler of a plane conquered by Xiombarg, Shalod was a general with many allies from many planes but none of these were sufficient to withstand the might of Xiombarg's armies which drove Shalod from his realm and forced him to take sanctuary within the halls of Arkyn.

Myths

Arkyn the Meticulous (Mythic Resonance 75%) – The Birth of the Young Kingdoms: When Arkyn first revealed himself to humankind, the Young Kingdoms were not fully established. War raged in the south, where Queen Eloarde of Klant fought against both Melniboné and the barbarian Filks to Lormyr's east. Elsewhere, Melniboné still held sway although the great war they had fought with the Dharzi had left them weakened.

Arkyn travelled the world in the guise of an old philosopher, accompanied by three disciples: Shalod, Tovik and Miggea. He began in the Lormyrian province of Klant, where he taught mathematics and geometry to the sage of Queen Eloarde's court, so that they could make sense of the Melnibonéan cities and

buildings that confounded their logic. He showed how they could be rebuilt in sensible, symmetrical ways and gave them the sacred tools of the ruler, the set-square, the level and the weighted line.

Next he travelled to Afitain and helped devise the building of a new palace for Queen Oanash and her two sisters. Here, he used pyramids to construct a building of such grandeur and equilibrium that the queen and her two fractious sisters immediately ceased their squabbling and became rulers-in-common. Arkyn and his disciples then travelled into the land of the Jharks and found Mabelode in residence at the city of Dhakos, which was still ruled by Melniboné. Arkyn recognised Mabelode as his old enemy who ruled over 15 planes that had once been Arkyn's dominion before Chaos usurped him. Arkyn thus made weapons of perfect symmetry and balance for Tovik, his champion, and sent him to battle Mabelode, whilst Miggea diverted the Melnibonéan consul who had summoned the Sword Ruler. Tovik prevailed in his battle against Mabelode and so Dhakos bay was formed. But Miggea found that the Melnibonéan consul was a powerful sorcerer who had mighty allies from many planes and although her diversion was successful, the experience drove her mad.

Arkyn could travel no further in the west and so he, Shalod and Tovik sailed east in a golden ship that skimmed above the waves. Miggea returned to Dolwic, her home realm, to try to regain her sanity. Arkyn brought reason, logic and symmetry to the Vilm, who had suffered terribly in the war against the Dharzi and were being tormented by their Melnibonéan overlords. In Jadmar Shalod went to speak with the Melnibonéan governor and the two found common ground: Shalod learned that, thousands of years before, the Melnibonéans had followed the Cosmic Balance and, the governor believed, might once have followed Law before they arrived on this plane of existence. Shalod recorded these discussions and bound the first book, which is now a sacred treasure of the Church of Law although much of its wisdom is difficult to define since it is written in a language of numbers, rather than words.

Arkyn's work in the world was done and he gave to the Vilm, just as he had gifted the Lormyrians, the basics of symmetry, geometry and mathematics. He taught them how to counter Chaos with order and sense and, confident that Law's will had now been established here, sailed with Tovik and Shalod on the golden boat into the sunset, returning to the planes and realms where Law holds permanent sway.

Arkyn the White Lord (Mythic Resonance 75%) – Arrival of the Mabden:

Arkyn ruled 15 distant planes where he was a just and good Lord. The planes were ordered and cultured, and several races, perfect in their beauty and symmetry, co-existed without the need for conquest or domination. Everyone had a place and understood what that was.

The Mabden came from some other plane and brought with them their gods of Chaos: Arioch, Xiombarg and Mabelode. The Mabden were ugly and barbaric, and did not want to learn or

understand the principles of Arkyn's great realms and so set about destroying everything they could find. The Sword Rulers aided these battles and although Lord Arkyn and his disciples fought magnificently, all was reduced to ruin and Lord Arkyn, the White Lord, was forced into exile. The Mabden conquered all and laid waste to everything.

Somehow the Mabden found a way to reach the Young Kingdoms and arrived here during the great war that eventually crippled the demon-worshipping Melnibonéans. The Mabden brought the Sword Rulers but Lord Arkyn the White arrived before them and fought a secret war that still continues, limiting the Sword Rulers' power. It grows more difficult for Arkyn to exist in the Young Kingdoms but his wisdom and strategy guides the minds and hands of the faithful. It is the duty of those who worship Arkyn the White to battle the Mabden and the Sword Rulers on his behalf, containing their presence to the blasphemous isle of Pan Tang, which is a reflection of the ruin they have engineered in Lord Arkyn's original realms.

Shalod the Defeated (Mythic Resonance 80%) – Triumph of the Sword Rulers:

Lord Shalod the Wise ruled over a just and fair plane with many allies amongst mortal races who both counselled and venerated him: a god and an equal. So secure in his position was Shalod, so secure in his own wisdom, he ignored the warnings of others that the Sword Rulers, in particular Xiombarg, Queen of the Swords, were coming to claim Shalod's world.

Realms fell to the Sword Rulers: the warnings intensified. Still Shalod would not prepare for war. Now, even his allies counselled him to ready the armies. Shalod believed that the army of Chaos would run foul of certain defences that had protected the realm's borders for an aeon but his confidence was misplaced. Queen Xiombarg's chariots broke down the barriers as easily as swatting aside a troublesome insect and surged into Shalod's realm, killing and mutating everything they encountered.

Finally Shalod readied his army and rallied his allies and met the invaders on a broad, wide plain, confident of victory. Shalod's army was well trained, well-armoured and fought to a style and formation of Shalod's own devising.

His army fell. And was slaughtered.

His army fell because Shalod did not prepare for sheer weight of numbers – which Chaos had, and which Chaos continued to have as it mutated the fallen of Shalod's allies. Shalod also did not prepare for the ferocity of Chaos. Chaos fought to no pattern, with little order and with utterly no restraint. Shalod's patterns and formations were useless against such a massive, ferocious horde and soon his troops were surrounded, fallen upon and torn to ribbons.

The place of this battle became known as the Plane of Blood, because so much blood was spilled that it covered, entirely, the whole of the region.

Shalod was forced to flee for his life. Queen Xiombarg's war chariot, the Empress of Chaos herself at the reins of the fell beasts that drew it, came looking for Shalod. He hid amongst corpses and then hid amongst refugees and, at last, recovered to his temple palace where he used certain spells to vacate his plane, leaving it to the mercy of Xiombarg.

Shalod found sanctuary with Arkyn and became his general and companion. The two planned a way to liberate the fallen territories of Law from the Sword Rulers and so there is common cause between the two Lords of Law. Even though Shalod is little known in the Young Kingdoms, tales of his struggle and valiant stand against Xiombarg are recounted throughout the temples and churches, bringing more and more worshippers to his cause.

Beliefs

The beliefs of Arkyn's cult differ between the two sects but hold several tenets at their core:

- Arkyn was deposed by the Sword Rulers.
- He created symmetry, mathematics and geometry.
- His worshippers must work to restore Arkyn to his realms, ending his exile.

Arkyn the Meticulous

- All can be explained mathematically. Numbers are the language of the Multiverse; formulae and equations the divine music of truth. Mathematics cannot lie or be corrupted.
- The true way is the four-fold way: Method, Observations, Results and Conclusions.
- All things should be viewed from the four-fold way. Conclusions determine action.
- Every structure must conform to the principles of mathematics and bear the imprint of Arkyn's divine numbers: 1, 7, 21 and 49.
- Shalod, Tovik and Miggea are Arkyn's disciples. Their wisdom is his wisdom but none are as great or as powerful as Lord Arkyn.

Arkyn the White Lord and Shalod

- The Mabden are Arkyn's enemy and the enemy of humankind.
- The Sword Rulers must be destroyed. There can be no other outcome.
- Arkyn prepares for a great and final battle. When he is victorious, the lands of the Young Kingdoms will be absorbed into the realms taken from him by the Sword Rulers. The 15 planes shall become one plane and the Mabden will be eradicated. The new plane will be a plane of perfection.
- All worshippers of Arkyn must fight the war against Chaos. It must be fought with stealth and guile. The Sword Rulers are cunning; Arkyn's faithful must be more cunning still.

Worshippers

The cult of Arkyn is found across the Young Kingdoms. Larger temples support both sects of the cult and include laboratories

where priests experiment with their latest discoveries whilst smaller ones are dedicated to more bibliographic study. As Lord Arkyn embodies symmetry, his temples are built to strict symmetrical and geometric templates, wonders of engineering and architecture.

Membership

Standard for all sects of the cult.

Arkyn the Meticulous

Arkyn's worshippers are mathematicians, scientists and philosophers. They seek to understand the underlying principles of the Multiverse and put them to practice in the every day. This cult embodies thinkers and doers, numbering scholars, philosophers, mathematicians and engineers amongst its ranks. It offers a rational, considered approach based on the Four Fold Way with conjecture being either proved or disproved.

The sect has specific titles for its ranks: members are Initiates, Acolytes, Priests and champions.

- Initiates must enter into a Pact (Arkyn) but have no other requirements for entry.
- Acolytes must have Pact (Arkyn) at 50% or greater and 50% or greater in one of the cult's skills.
- Priests must have Pact (Arkyn) at 70% and know 7 of the cult's skills (including Lore (Arkyn)) at 50% or higher.
- Champions must have Pact (Arkyn) at 90% or greater and know three of the cult's skills at 70% and a further 5 at 50%.

Arkyn the White and Shalod

The sect of Arkyn the White venerates Arkyn the general who will defeat the Sword Rulers. It is a martial sect but one that still acknowledges Arkyn's talents for mathematics and geometry. It is their belief that a single, grand theorem can be applied to any battle in order to determine its outcome.

Cult Ranks

White Pages (Initiates)
White Squires (Acolytes)
White Priests (Priests)
White Knights (Champions)

A monastic branch of the White Squires, the White Brothers, exists in Vilmir. These warrior-monks spend their days in contemplation and martial training, preparing for the final battle. Their studies concentrate on cracking Arkyn's Theorem of Strategic Battle.

The entry requirements for each rank mirror those for Arkyn the Meticulous. However, for the White Squires, one of the cult skills must be Martial Arts.

Duties

The duties per rank apply to both sects within the Cult of Arkyn.

All

Venerate Arkyn weekly, attending worship privately or at a public ceremony at a shrine, temple or cathedral.

Initiates

Follow all orders or commands issued by Champions, Priests and Acolytes.

Donate 10% of all income to the cult of Arkyn.

Acolytes

Follow all orders or commands issued by Champions and Priests.

Donate 50% of all income to the cult of Arkyn.

Spread Arkyn's glory through proselytising and making new converts to the faith.

Priests

Follow all orders or commands issued by higher ranking Priests.

Donate 90% of all income to the cult of Arkyn.

Lead ceremonies in veneration of Arkyn.

Champions

Donate 90% of all income to the cult of Arkyn.

Undertake Arkyn's work as dictated by the Priests of the cult.

Benefits

Benefits accrue in the form of Gifts, Compulsions, Cult Skills, Runes and Legendary Abilities.

Initiates

- One Gift and one Compulsion.
- Training in cult skills at 50% of the usual rate.

Acolytes

- One Gift and one Compulsion.
- Training in cult skills at 25% of the usual rate.
- May learn cult Runes.

Priests

- One Gift and one Compulsion.
- Free training in cult skills.
- May learn cult Runes.

Champions

- As for Priests, plus the Champion may take one Legendary Ability.

Gifts and Compulsions

Gifts and Compulsion accrue as per cult ranks.

Gifts

Automaton

Combat Acuity (Arkyn the White and Shalod only)

Enchantment

Extended Life

Perfection

Sanctuary

Youth

Compulsion

Collector

Insanity

Nervous Tic

Obsessed with numbers, formulae and equations. Fascinated by the numerical values of things, spending hours trying to work out how they fit into Arkyn's universal theorems.

Pattern Obsessed

Perfectionist

Tedious

Cult Skills

Craft, Engineering, Evaluate, First Aid, Healing, Language (High Speech), Language (Low Speech), Lore (all basic Lores), Lore (Arkyn), Lore (Logic), Lore (Mathematics), Lore (Million Spheres), Lore (Philosophy), Lore (Physics), Mechanisms, Unarmed (White Lord sect only).

Cult Magic

The cult teaches all Runes with the exceptions of Chaos, Darkness, Raising and Reduction.

Heroic Abilities Available

Loremaster, Madness of Purpose, Scientific Genius, Tireless.

Only Champions are able to attain Heroic Abilities and they must complete a quest against a Chaos of the devising of the High Priest of the cult.

Retribution

The cult does not exact specific retribution from those who stray from Arkyn's path. However, all cult Gifts (but not Compulsions) cease if the adherent leaves the cult.

Politics and Relationships

The two sects of the cult are complementary and co-operative, although the different interpretations of Arkyn's purpose occasionally leads to schisms between the sects. The principal bone of contention being Arkyn's eventual wish to absorb the Young Kingdoms into a single realm; this is not always a popular theory and the White Brothers hold that the realms will remain separate but accessible by the White Gates that will allow all of Arkyn's faithful to roam the planes where he rules.

What is not in dispute is that the Sword Rulers are the enemy and the Mabden of Pan Tang their emissaries. The cult of Arkyn despises the King, Queen and Knight of the Swords vehemently and considers Pan Tang a canker on the world. Vilmirian privateers are financed by the cult of Arkyn to raid Pan Tangian

vessels that stray from their home waters – taking piracy back to the pirates. Elsewhere, champions of the White Lord undertake dangerous quests to exterminate the agents of the Sword Rulers, thereby preventing the spread of the Mabden.

JUSTICE MAKERS – DONBLAS

The Lords of Law reached the spot where their ancient enemies were assembled and Elic heard Lord Donblas's voice carry up to him. 'You of Chaos have defied the edict of the Cosmic Balance and sought complete dominance of this planet. Destiny denies you this — for the earth's life is over and it must be resurrected in a new form where your influence will be weak.

A sweet, mocking voice came from the ranks of Chaos. It was the voice of Slortar the Old. 'You presume too much, brother. The fate of the earth has not yet been finally decided. Our meeting will result in that decision — nothing else. If we win. Chaos shall rule. If you succeed in banishing us, then paltry Law bereft of possibility will gain ascendancy. But we shall win—though Fate herself complains!

'Then let this thing be settled.' replied Lord Donblas. And Elic saw the shining Lords of Law advance towards their dark opponents.

— *Stormbringer*

Arkyn's power might be revered but for many, Lord Donblas of the White Lords, the Justice Maker, is *the* Lord of Law and his power exemplifies all that Law stands for.

An aloof deity for the most part, Donblas concerns himself with the nature of the Eternal Struggle and calculating the way true justice should prevail upon the plane of the earth. He is certainly the enemy of Chaos and he certainly embodies perfection but Donblas has never considered himself above negotiating and reasoning with the Lords of Chaos (note, for example, how Slortar refers to Donblas as 'brother' in their brief exchange in the previous quotation).

Purpose and History

It was Donblas who represented Law at the summit of R'lin K'ren A'a. Here, along with Arioch and others, Donblas agreed that the Eternal Struggle would be waged above and around the world and not through the affairs of men. His justice and skills in negotiation secured certain agreements from Chaos that, for a while, held firm. Throughout the reign of the Bright Empire and then the more recent history of the Young Kingdoms Donblas has kept to his side of the bargain, refusing to directly manifest in the world despite pleas and prayers from his many faithful. Instead, Donblas has sent soothing words through dreams, visions and images, all the while conveying his prescription of Lawful



justice so that mankind might be guided by the Twelve Symbols of Reason – the essential precepts of Law.

Donblas's worshippers are concerned with law, doctrine and applying the Twelve Symbols of Reason specifically and precisely. They are advisers, counsellors, magistrates and judges. Frequently they are the power behind the throne and, at their most extreme, proponents of expulsions, purges and, sometimes, executions in the course of achieving purity and perfection. The cult is widespread across the Young Kingdoms. Every lawful nation has at least one temple to Donblas that also serves as a courthouse. Guilds are regulated by the cult, with permits for trade and practise granted only to those who meet the stringent codes and guidelines it has decreed.

As advisers and counsellors, the cult of Donblas is expert in inveigling itself into positions of influence within courts, senates and guild chambers. In this way it ensures that Donblas's doctrines are threaded, silk-like, through all manner of domestic and foreign policy. In the most extreme cases (Vilmir, primarily, but also in Argimiliar), the Church of Donblas and the state are so inextricably intertwined that the cult is the state. The cult is adept at marrying its members into titled families, securing influential positions for its own members and offering to shoulder the burden of state whilst supplying some feckless king or prince with

a handsome enough annuity so that he need not concern himself with the day-to-day running of his country.

The cult is also concerned with rooting-out Chaos in all its forms. In Argimiliar's later years it is the cult of Donblas that leads the pogroms against anyone considered to be Chaotically tainted. At such extremes the cult maintains networks of spies and informers to bring all pertinent information to the cult's leaders, so that confessions, trials and punishments may be carried through according to Donblas's doctrines.

The Twelve Symbols of Reason

Acceptance

The acceptance that the Twelve Symbols of Reason represent the fundamental truth of the Multiverse is the first step towards understanding Law.

Birth

All things are born; not all things die. Birth is an act of creation and is the second step towards understanding Law.

Consistency

All things conform to fundamental rules that describe what they are. These rules are consistent and anything that shifts from consistency is intolerable, for it has received the stamp of Chaos.

Despair

All things despair in the face of Chaos, for Chaos encourages it. To face one's despair and overcome it, is the third step towards understanding Law.

Hate

Hatred drives but does not always destroy. Hatred has a place in the heart, as does love. Without hatred, nothing would be challenged and some things, such as Chaos, require hatred to be challenged with effectiveness.

Hope

With hope comes progress. Without hope, only uncontrolled change can prevail.

Justice

Without justice there is only anarchy. Man cannot create justice for himself because he exists in a natural state of war. Justice must be imposed so that understanding can take root. Justice is the fourth step towards understanding Law.

Life

Life exists within physical confines and conforms to certain rules. The act of living reinforces the rules all mortal life should conform to. Those beings that flout the rules are not truly alive and are things of Chaos.

Love

As hatred drives, so does love. One cannot exist without the other but both are equally destructive. Love and Hate, in a Just world, find balance.

Perfection

Everyone and everything must strive to be the best it can be. Perfection in all things is the essence of Law. The pursuit of perfection drives men to learn, to create, to improve and thus establish progress. There can be no progress without perfection and no perfection without progress.

Permanence

When a thing is made, it is made in permanence. To remove permanence is to break down the tenets of Law. All things must be made permanent; temporal existence has no value. Change for change's sake is the essence of anarchy.

Rejection

Rejection of all that does not conform to the Twelve Symbols of Reason. Reject anarchy, falsehood and unfettered change. Learning to reject all that is not just is the sixth step towards understanding Law.

Myths

The Negotiations of Donblas (Mythic Resonance 90%) – The Power of the Twelve Symbols of Reason: When the First Lord created the other lords he required a speaker on his behalf. A new power, which called itself Chaos, was arising and challenging wherever Law had its realms. This new power sought war, not reason, but Law did not want to raise its armies until reason had been exhausted. Thus was Lord Donblas created: to be the reason of Law.

His first act was to create the Symbol of Law, which was a single, unwavering arrow. Then he took the symbol and divided it into the Twelve Symbols, which became the foundation of reason and being. Armed with these, Lord Donblas travelled to the meeting place where Chaos had assembled, to discuss the terms of the Cosmic Struggle.

Chaos suggested first a war to decide the victor of the Cosmic Struggle. Donblas countered this with Acceptance, proving that Law accepted the Lords of Chaos as a power in the multiverse. Next the Lords of Chaos suggested death, because this was a power they had created. Donblas countered with life, because he knew that was a power Chaos also understood.

So the Lords of Chaos proposed change, because they believed that the Lords of Law could not abide it. Lord Donblas proposed permanence – that the outcome of the Cosmic Struggle would be stability. At this the Lords of Chaos balked and proposed beauty

– because that would pander to Law’s desire for beauty. Lord Donblas produced perfection, which was something the Lords of Chaos could not attain in their ever-changing state.

And so the debate continued with Donblas countering every weapon the Lords of Chaos produced until the Twelve Symbols of Reason had been placed in the open and Chaos had no means left to argue.

‘Then we have reached an impasse,’ Lord Arioch declared. ‘We must both retreat and find a new way of reaching an outcome.’ To this Donblas agreed and both Law and Chaos retreated but Lord Donblas left behind the Twelve Symbols of Reason as a barrier to either power returning and claiming complete victory over the other.

So it is that the world is stable but around it swirls Chaos and entropy. It is the Twelve Symbols of Reason that keep all in check, all in its rightful state and the power of Law is guaranteed in the world.

Beliefs

Donblas’s followers believe in the faithful and accurate application of the Twelve Symbols of Reason in all things. Law’s dominance is paramount and there is no room for any power upon the earth that varies from the Twelve Symbols in any shape or form.

The Elemental Lords are a primitive, pagan pantheon that inhibits progress and rational thought. Their deals are selfish and thus inherently Chaotic. If the Lords of the Elements have any form of allegiance, it is more to Chaos than to Law.

But Chaos itself is the true enemy. Chaos is the enemy of reason, consistency, justice and honour. Its sole purpose is to warp and mutate for its own ends and it cannot, therefore, abide by any of the Twelve Symbols even for an instant. Chaos is the enemy of permanence and life; it is the enemy of stability and order. It enslaves through the perversion of reason and destroys through the scorning of injustice. Chaos cannot be tolerated, no matter what the Cosmic Balance decrees.

The worshippers believe that, whilst balance and equilibrium are fine ideals, the ultimate justice of Donblas, and the application of the Twelve Symbols of Reason, are better substitutes. Through them, the world can exist *without* the need for tolerating the selfish, pagan ways of the Elementals or the perversions of Chaos. Donblas on his own, as the Justice Maker, brings balance – but balance through the complete application of Law.

Worshippers

The cult is concerned with rooting-out Chaos and opponents of the Twelve Symbols of Reason. In Argimiliar’s later years it is the cult of Donblas that leads the pogroms against anyone considered

to be Chaotically tainted. At such extremes the cult maintains networks of spies and informers to bring all pertinent information to the cult’s leaders, so that confessions, trials and punishments may be carried through according to Donblas’s doctrines.

Worshippers are therefore a wide mix of people: those who simply believe in the power and rule of Law; those who enjoy the pursuit of, and exercise of power; philosophers, academics, righteous warriors and religious zealots who know that control to the surest route to influence.

Membership

Standard. The cult ranks are:

Fellows (Lay Members)
Brothers (Initiates)
Magistrates (Acolytes)
Judges/Priests (Priests)
Grand Masters of Justice

Fellows

Anyone who believes in the Twelve Symbols and Donblas’s general principles is considered a Fellow of the Church of Donblas. Most of Donblas’s worshippers are fellows who simply concern themselves with observing the general tenets of Law, attending ceremonies but otherwise play no active role in the workings of the cult.

Brothers

Brothers swear an oath and make a Pact to serve Donblas and the Twelve Symbols of Reason. Those who consider themselves particularly devout take monastic orders and spend their entire lives in study of the Twelve Symbols and how they should be applied. These Brothers of Reason strive to draft the ultimate, single expression of the relationship between the Twelve Symbols and are certain that, from this expression, a Rune will emerge that fully embodies the complete power of Law.

Becoming a Brother requires the Fellow to make a Pact (Donblas) and to place himself at the service of the church.

Magistrate

Magistrates have spent several years as Brothers and have developed a fine understanding of justice. They are advisers and counsellors at a low to middle level, acting as arbitrators and justices to dispense legislation and adjudicate disputes.

A Magistrate has spent at least five years as a Brother and has developed the following skills to at least 50%: Influence, Lore (Donblas), Lore (Law), Pact (Donblas).

If the Magistrate is part of the monastic Brothers of Reason, his title is simply Acolyte and in place of Influence he must have Lore (Twelve Symbols of Reason) at 50% or greater.

Judges/Priests

To progress from the Magistrate stage, the adherent must choose his path. Judges become full-time counsellors, advisers and legal judges, responsible for administering legal and political power. Priests concern themselves with religious doctrine, particularly in fighting Chaos and the other enemies of Law.

To become either a Judge or Priest, the following conditions need to be met:

- Pact (Donblas) 70% or higher.
- Influence, Lore (Donblas), Lore (Law) 70% or higher.
- Perception 50% or higher.

Grand Masters of Justice

Grand Masters are the heads of temples, churches and judiciaries. They make and dictate laws and policies; politically, legally and religiously. They are essentially theocrats but always stop short of wielding supreme executive authority, preferring to have either a monarch, regent or other ceremonial figurehead in place to represent the will and spirit of the country. True power, however, lies with the Grand Masters.

Grand Masters meet the following conditions:

- Pact (Donblas) 90% or higher.
- Influence, Lore (Donblas), Lore (Law) 90% or higher.
- Perception 70% or higher.
- At least two Runes at the starting percentage.

Duties

All members of the cult are expected to oppose Chaos and the influence of any of the 'pagan' faiths (anything not rooted in the veneration of Law...) in all its forms. One must live an ordered and 'just' life, although precisely what defines a 'just' life is often at the interpretation of the cult's upper echelons. Every member of the cult should also abide by the Twelve Symbols of Reason although only the Brothers of Reason are every tested on their ability to adhere to the principles and demonstrate their duty to them.

Duties at other ranks are as follows:

Brothers (Initiates)

- Attend weekly rituals and sermons.
- Study the Twelve Symbols and understand how they define the path of Law.
- Obey the commands of Magistrates and Judges.
- Watch for, and Report, all transgressions against Law. Hold back no information and spare no heretic.

Magistrates (Acolytes)

- Uphold Donblas's teachings via the Twelve Symbols of Reason.
- Uphold the Law as proscribed by the cult and ratified by the state.

- Act as an arbitrator and agent of the Church as so directed by the Church.
- Identify and punish all heretics as proscribed by the cult and ratified by the state.

Judges/Priests (Priests)

- Offer counsel and guidance to the rulers of the region.
- Formulate laws and edicts to be ratified by the ruler and church council.
- Preside over courts of justice in order to advise the ruler and dispense justice.
- Preside over courts of duty where heretics are questioned and punished.
- Espouse the Twelve Symbols of Reasons in all actions.

Grand Masters of Justice

- Serve of the Ruling Council of the Church.
- Advise and direct the ruler of the nation according to Donblas's will and tenets.
- Prepare for the final struggle, which will see Donblas and justice triumph over Chaos and anarchy.

Benefits

Benefits occur in the form of Gifts, Compulsions, Cult Skills, Runes and Legendary Abilities.

Brothers (Initiates)

- One Gift and one Compulsion.
- Training in Cult Skills at half normal rates.

Magistrates (Acolytes)

- One Gift and one Compulsion.
- Training in Cult Skills at half normal rates.
- May learn Cult Runes with training at normal costs.

Judges/Priests (Priests)

- One Gift and one Compulsion.
- Training in Cult Skills at half normal rates.
- May learn Cult Runes with training at half normal costs.

Grand Masters of Justice

- One Gift and one Compulsion.
- Training in Cult Skills at half normal rates.
- May learn Cult Runes with training at normal costs.
- One Legendary Ability OR learn Command and Summon (Oonai) at the starting percentage.

Gifts and Compulsions

Gifts and Compulsions accrue as per cult rank.

Gifts

Abstinence (Sleep)
Animal Familiar
Automata

Divine Training (Cult Skills)
Enhanced Learning
Extended Life

Compulsions

Chaos Phobia
Detail Obsessed
Lawyer
Nervous Tic
Obsessive Compulsive
Perfection
Retributional

Cult Skills

All Sword Combat Styles, Bow, Influence, Language (High Speech), Language (Low Speech), Lore (Donblas), Lore (Law), Oratory, Perception.

Cult Magic

Alarm, Confinement, Hearing, Law, Light, Man, Passing, Protection, Purity, Sight, Truth, Woman.

The cult also teaches Command, Summon Oonai (Law Speakers and Champions only).

Legendary Abilities Available

Devilish Charm, Linguist, Loremaster.

Retribution

Leaving or betraying the cult is heresy and punishable by a trial and then death. Champions of the cult of Donblas are mobilised to find and capture all such traitors with long, elaborate show-trials being staged to show, in intricate detail, how the accused has fallen foul of Chaos and betrayed the Twelve Symbols of Reason. Death takes a variety of forms, which include hanging, flogging, drowning and crushing.

Politics and Relationships

This cult specialises in politics. Its highest members are astute politicians with an eye for the main chance and a keen taste for power and influence. The cult makes it its business to infiltrate the major and minor functions of state, attempting to ensure that the will of Donblas is threaded into every walk of life.

The cult does not restrict itself to just political institutions. Schools, academies and universities are part of the framework of Law and serve to both educate generally whilst, at the same time, establish faithful servants of Donblas who will, one day, become fully-fledged Brothers of the cult.

The cult of Donblas views itself as superior to the cult of Arkyn, which it views as somewhat mired in esotericism and a pre-occupation with Arkyn's battle to re-establish his old regimes in some obscure corner of the Multiverse. Donblas's Twelve Symbols of Reason are all that is needed to guide the true rule of Law and so whilst the sects of Arkyn are certainly considered as allies, they are viewed with a degree of disdain by the Donblasians.

The cult of Miggea is viewed as dangerous and almost heretical. Miggea clearly fell from the path of the Twelve Symbols aeons ago and her madness is, to the most ardent adherents of Donblas, a taint of Chaos. The cult of Tovik, however, is viewed with pride and good-will; these stalwart knights are needed by the Justice Makers to take the fight to Chaos and the cult of Donblas is careful to maintain good relations.

MIGGEA

Lord Blare uttered an unruly laugh. 'The famous Duchess Miggea of Dolwic. One of the most ancient of Law's aristocrats.'

'Law? Surely Law resists such injustice?'

'Aggressive senility isn't only a characteristic of Chaos in its decline. Both forces obey the laws of the Multiverse. They grow strong and virile, then decline and die. And, in their dying, they are often desperate for life. At any price. All past loyalties and understanding disappear, and they become little more than appetites, preying upon the living in order to sustain their own corrupted souls. Even the noblest Lords and Ladies of Law can suffer this corruption, often when Chaos is at her most vigorous and dynamic.'

— *The Dreamthief's Daughter*

Purpose and History

Lady Miggea, Duchess of Dolwic, is one of the most ancient Lords of Law. In her youth she was possessed of an insightful, virile intellect, easily the equal of Arkyn and Donblas, whom she names as brothers. Her purpose, her crusade, was to bring the rule of Law into those realms where Chaos had always held sway, freeing the people from the tyranny of the numinous and wretchedness of uncertainty.

She fought with cunning and guile, charm and an easy ability to attract loyalty and devotion. Miggea was successful in her work: across the Multiverse she established an empire of reason where he banners fluttered and where the supreme anarchy of Chaos was relegated to background noise, creating peace, prosperity and kindness. Entire realms served her, venerating her name; indeed they still do. The love for Miggea was unbounded and for many cycles of time her name, more than the names of Arkyn and Donblas, echoed as the word of Law.

But, Time erodes all things, even the Lords of the higher Worlds. Miggea established consistency and constancy in her realms, unifying Time itself, but at an unexpected cost. Miggea herself aged. Her body, of course, changed little, save becoming more like the she-wolf she has always used as her standard, but her mind became steadily more senile and, as the Time cycle she had created advanced, so her sanity was eroded by it. Eventually, Miggea became mad. A single purpose replaced reasoned thought. Order was no longer the order found in life; the only acceptable order to Miggea is the order found in death. She began with her home realm of Dolwic, once vibrant and filled with natural life. She cleansed Dolwic of all nature, transforming her once beautiful, bounteous realm into a barren land of crumbling limestone and cinder. All life, save her own, perished and Miggea established the kind of empty, desolate order that only Law can produce when its aims achieve a single, dreadful focus.

She turned her gaze to the other worlds of her realm, having made Dolwic into the image of perfect order. Selecting her champions, her knights, she moved through each world, one-by-one, cleansing it of any taint. Those who had pledged loyalty to Miggea had no choice but to assist; they would not and could not refuse to aid her. Miggea has moved through, perhaps, 1,000 planes draining them of everything life needs to perpetuate: plants, animals, water... her quest is to bring similar order throughout the Multiverse, to challenge life itself and replace it with the true order of death.

Several symbols exist in the Multiverse, which challenge Miggea's crusade. The first is Tanelorn, the Eternal City, the City of the Balance. Tanelorn celebrates life, peace and free will. To Miggea's demented old mind it is a threat to her plans and must be eradicated. Her goal is to destroy Tanelorn – either by razing it, or by starving it to death. She cares not which. Only that the city falls.

The next symbol that has become a focus of her obsession is the Black Sword, in whatever shape or form it takes. The Black Sword feeds on souls and thus is the perfect weapon to create order, because whatever it leaves behind is cleansed of every trace of life. Miggea desires the Black Sword as much as she desires the destruction of Tanelorn. She can construct replicas, or *farun*, but they have not the same qualities as the true Black Blade (they are, for a start, the colour of diseased ivory, etched with black runes). Attaining an incarnation of the Black Sword, by whatever name it possesses – Stormbringer, Mournblade, Ravenbrand – is the next of her insane goals.

And third is the pursuit of the cup, the chalice or the grail. This vessel, which can heal all life, restoring it, replenishing it, can only be destroyed by the Black Sword. The grail, like the Black Sword, is elusive, skittering throughout the Multiverse leaving myths and legends in its wake. Its form changes, as does its name, but the grail is real and, as a creation of the Cosmic Balance, the only thing capable of true creation – the creation of life. Miggea demands it and the sword, so that the former can be sundered by the latter.

Miggea, like all Lords of the Higher Powers, works through human agents. She demands total loyalty and those who pledge themselves to her service bind their souls to her irrevocably. Miggea never releases from the pact, save through death and she finds a need for each and every one of her servants. There are thousands of planes to be cleansed of life and, although only her most determined knights know of Miggea's true agenda (and, perhaps, fear it), any who Pact with Miggea are immediately swamped with the fullest devotion to her.

In the Young Kingdoms Miggea's cultists are responsible for initiating crusades against those who reject Law. Purges of barbarian lands have seen elemental-aligned tribes crushed or scattered for defying the White Lords. Suicidal attacks against Pan Tangian and Dharijorian pirates might have been attributed to Donblas but Miggea's fanatics have been the motivators. Her agitators and insurgents are everywhere, watching, waiting and striking without mercy.

A sect of Miggea is growing steadily in Argimiliar under the direction of Duke (later to be King) Hozel. As fanatical as Miggea's own madness, this sect, under Hozel's control, is attuned to Miggea's deepest desire to cleanse the world of all life. Hozel's knights have focused their attention on the Elemental and Plant Lords, plotting to destroy the Elemental cults before taking holy war to those who follow Chaos.

Myths

The Hated Eternal City (Mythic Resonance 80%) – Why Tanelorn Must Perish:

Miggea listened to the posturings of Arkyn, the weepings of Shalod, the mercies of Mirath, her sister and the tedious principles of Donblas. None made sense to her. All were concerned with aspects of Law and not its true form. This concerned Miggea. If her brothers and sisters could not understand what the true nature of Law was, then how was the Eternal Struggle to be won?

She retired to her manse at Dolwic and cleaned herself. This was the Purging. She purged from herself all notions of morality, virtue and emotion. She emerged clear-minded: true Law, she understood, was an absence of all things that introduced diversity and deviation. The source of diversity and deviation was life itself, which could never be controlled. True Law, she knew, was the province of only one being: herself. Others might come to realise the same state of being but mortals would also introduce change and diversity, which cannot be tolerated. Life itself must be eradicated.

She began with Dolwic. This she cleansed with blasting winds. Then she turned her attention to other, nearby realms. One-by-one she reduced them to barren and sterile environments where nothing stirred. Then she came across one realm that refused to be so cleansed. Everything in this realm fell to her powers save

for one place, a city, which called itself Tanelorn. Her magic could not destroy it and it defied her plans for absolute Law. She raged against it and Tanelorn resisted. She sent armies and they perished because Tanelorn consisted of many champions, from many times, many realms, with many weapons that were part of the Cosmic Balance. While Tanelorn had these champions and their weapons – many of which were strange swords that intrigued her – Miggea could not realise her senile dream of complete and utter Law.

She decided that she needed a champion of her own. First came the Doomed Prince who served many powers: Law and Chaos. He saw the truth of Miggea's scheme and served her willingly. Next came Brother Wolf, who also believed in the destruction of all things for the sake of his pack. Miggea took Brother Wolf into her fold and made him part of her army. Brother Wolf went far and wide and brought other champions to supplement the Doomed Prince. Miggea armed each one with a sword to counter the black blades of Tanelorn's champions. These were the farun and they numbered as many as necessary, with each champion being gifted one.

Her army of champions assembled and armed, Miggea moves now to destroy the Eternal City, wherever it places itself in the Multiverse.

Beliefs

The most ardent of Miggea's faithful have come to believe that life itself is an aberration. Whilst life persists, Law cannot be achieved – and that is surely the prize of the Eternal Struggle. This is an uncomfortable belief for many of Miggea's adherents but the Duchess of Dolwic has promised that her knights shall be exempt from this ultimate state of affairs, being raised, inevitably, to immortality, as nobles of the Court of Law, so that Miggea's work can be extended and her single ideal of perfect Law pursued.

Further beliefs of Miggea's worshippers include:

- Tanelorn must be destroyed. It is the most potent symbol of the Cosmic Balance and is thus the enemy of all that Law stands for.
- The Black Swords, Stormbringer and Mournblade, long the tools of Chaos, are much more complex weapons that can be wielded equally by Law. Two champions of Miggea will arise who are capable of using these mighty swords and with them Miggea will be able to hunt down, and destroy, the eternal chalice known as the Grail.
- The Grail is the bowl of all life. Whilst it exists, Law cannot rule unchallenged. It is therefore the duty of every disciple of Miggea to hunt for the Grail and bring it to her realm of Dolwic so that it can be readied for destruction by the Black Blades.
- Arkyn and Donblas are weak and ineffectual. The myth that Miggea served Arkyn is a lie; he served her and surrendered his 15 realms to the Sword Rulers, thereby demonstrating his inability to serve the cause of Law. His worshippers are

misguided fools. Donblas, on the other hand, is of more noble purpose but his insistence on justice through the pathetic Twelve Symbols of Reason is misguided. Absolute Law requires absolute sacrifice!

Worshippers

Miggea's worship has dwindled in the Young Kingdoms but her cult still exists in remote places. Her worshippers are fanatics and zealots, often finding Arkyn and Donblas's cults too lenient or unexacting. They seek the absolute imposition of Law, its complete dominance of the Multiverse and the eradication of all opposition to Law's aims. There can be no exceptions; all beliefs are heretical in Miggea's eyes and there can be no surrender in the fight against Chaos. Even the Cosmic Balance is irrelevant.

Membership

Standard. Cult ranks are known by the following names:

Son/Daughter of Dolwic (Lay Member)
Brother/Sister of Dolwic (Initiate)
Magistrate of Dolwic (Acolyte)
Law Speaker of Dolwic (Warrior Priest)
Knight of Dolwic (Champion)

Son/Daughter of Dolwic

The cult accepts Lay Members, who are considered Sons or Daughters of Dolwic but only the rank of Brother of Dolwic and above carries any real weight and recognition. Miggea demands complete loyalty from her supporters and a true supporter is prepared to pledge his soul to Miggea.

Brother/Sister of Dolwic

Brothers of Dolwic have entered into a Pact with Miggea, pledging at least four points of POW to it. From the moment of initiation, the Brother or Sister is expected to challenge every enemy of Miggea's aims, including other supporters of Law. Brothers of Dolwic are the foot soldiers of Miggea's army and expected to unquestioningly lay-down their lives in her name.

Magistrate of Dolwic

Those achieving the rank of Magistrate do not arbitrate matters of justice; they are focused instead on finding the true location of the Black Blades, the Grail and the city of Tanelorn. Everything they do must be directed towards these three goals. Magistrates may draw upon Sons of Dolwic and Brothers as needs see fit to assist their work and it is common for a Magistrate to focus on one, particular, goal, assisted by a loyal cadre of Sons and Brothers of Dolwic.

To become a Magistrate the following conditions need to be met:

- Pact (Miggea) 50% or higher, with at least 5 POW dedicated to the Pact.
- At least three Cult skills at 50% or higher, including one Lore.
- Active service as a Brother of Dolwic for 3 years.

Law Speaker of Dolwic

The Law Speakers are the officers of Miggea's army. These are warrior priests who will help lead Miggea's Holy War. They are tacticians and strategists, trouble-shooters and evangelists. Their loyalty to Miggea must be absolute and they are key to delivering the ultimate voice of Law to the Multiverse.

To become a Law Speaker the following conditions need to be met:

- Pact (Miggea) 70% or higher, with at least 6 POW dedicated to the Pact.
- At least three Cult skills at 70% of higher, including one Lore.
- One Cult Rune at 50%.
- Active service as a Magistrate of Dolwic for 3 years.

Knight of Dolwic

The Knights of Dolwic are Miggea's truest, loyalist champions. They are selected by Miggea herself from amongst the Law Speakers and the only requirement to become a Knight is the dedication of *all* remaining POW to the Pact, thereby demonstrating complete loyalty. The Knights serve Miggea directly, moving across the Multiverse in pursuit of the Swords, the Grail and the City, as well as enforcing Miggea's cleansing of those worlds under her control.

As the requirement is for all POW to be dedicated to the Pact, this does, in effect, curtail the use of the Runes that Miggea's faithful might know and use. Knights of Dolwic are therefore gifted a small, finite source of Magic Points that can be used in their endeavours. See Benefits.

Duty is everything to Miggea's cult. Miggea's will is absolute and every member of the cult is honour and soul-bound to serve it. Specific duties pertain to each rank of the cult, as follows:

Brother/Sister of Dolwic

- Discover and disrupt the activities of any who are Miggea's enemies.
- Watch and listen for signs relating to the Sword, the Chalice and the City.

Magistrate of Dolwic

- Dedicated all time to finding the Sword, the Chalice and the City. Concentration on one of these is permissible.
- Use all means available and necessary in pursuit of these quests.

Law Speaker of Dolwic

- Prepare the Army of Miggea for war.
- Seek out and destroy the opposing agents of Chaos, the Elements and any other enemy of Miggea.

Knight of Dolwic

- Serve Miggea directly.
- Scour the Multiverse for her enemies.

- Deliver Miggea's ultimate force of Law to those realms that have lapsed from her true vision.

Benefits

Benefits accrue in the form of Gifts, Compulsions, Cult Skills, Runes, Summonings and Legendary Abilities.

Brother/Sister of Dolwic

- One Gift and one Compulsion.
- Training in Cult Skills at half normal cost.

The Damnation of the Knights of Miggea

Dry wind whispered through a palace built of bones. Many of those bones still had rotting flesh clinging to them: The bones of horses. The bones of men. From the evidence, the bones of all those Knights of Law who had so recently threatened us. Who had thundered so forcefully past us in pursuit of the little white hare. Their silver armour was scattered around the building, thousands of breastplates, helmets, greaves, gauntlets. Their lances and swords lay half-buried in the pale ash. Miggea had expected the ultimate sacrifice from her loyal followers, and she had received it.

Keeps and domes and battlements and buttresses were shaped from the recently living bodies of men and horses from which strips of flesh and fur and linen fluttered like banners in the erratic wind. And the terrible howling continued. All the grief in all the realms of the Multiverse. All the frustration. All the despair. All the wounded ambition.'

— The Dreamthief's Daughter

The reward for serving Miggea so loyally is death. Even her most beloved knights are not to be spared Miggea's senile version of Law. Miggea's castle of bones is made from her most faithful servants who, once they have fulfilled their purpose (or failed it), are brought to the barren realm of Dolwic to be grafted into the castle.

No knight can resist this fate; he has already given his soul unto Miggea. Most tragically, he will never likely *know* his fate. At the Games Master's discretion, any Knight of Dolwic Adventurer can be allowed an occasional test against his Pact (Miggea). If the test is a *critical* success, then he is allowed a fleeting, horror-filled glimpse of the castle of bones he will one day join. This dreadful premonition might come in the form of a dream, or a waking flashback when the knight encounters a fortress, a skeleton, or some other object that might trigger a brief, grievous insight into his doom...

Magistrate of Dolwic

- One Gift and one Compulsion.
- Training in Cult Skills at half normal cost.
- Training in one Rune to its base percentage at no cost. Other Runes can be learned at half normal cost.

Law Speaker of Dolwic

- One Gift and one Compulsion.
- Training in Cult Skills at half normal cost.
- Training in a second Rune to its base percentage at no cost.
- Learn Summon Oonai at its base percentage, OR Become Wolf Warrior, OR choose one Legendary Ability.

Knight of Dolwic

- One Gift and one Compulsion.
- Learn Become Wolf Warrior.
- Choose one Legendary Ability.
- Amulet of Miggea. Every Knight of Dolwic, in return for pledging his soul, is given an amulet blessed by Miggea herself. This amulet must be worn at all times and is charged with 10+1D10 Magic Points, which can be used to power Runes, Summonings and other magical abilities. Once the amulet's reserves are depleted, they cannot be replenished.

Gifts and Compulsions

Gifts and Compulsions accrue as per cult rank.

Gifts

Abstinence (choose)
Animal Familiar
Perfection
Return Loved One
Sanctuary
Second Life
Ward
Weapon of the Faith

Compulsions

Chaos Phobia
Hate Tanelorn
Lust for Miggea
Nervous Tic
Never surrender, or accept the surrender, of any foe
Obsessive Compulsive
Perfection
Target

Cult Skills

All Sword Combat Styles, Dagger, Flail of Law (all flails, maces and bludgeoning weapons), Polearms; Athletics, Influence, Language (High Speech), Lore (Law), Lore (Miggea), Lore (Million Spheres), Resilience, Unarmed.

Cult Magic

Miggea's cult teaches the Runes of Beast (Wolf), Confinement, Enhancement (CON, DEX, STR), Heat, Law, Man, Passing, Protection, Reflection, Truth, Warding, Woman.

The cult also teaches: Control, Summon Oonai

Heroic Abilities Available

Battle Fury, Heroic Aura, Madness of Purpose.

Cult Secrets

The secrets of the cult are known only by Miggea's champions and they are sworn not to reveal them to the lower orders.

- Knights of Dolwic can be summoned to any plane of the Multiverse where Miggea has influence, to fight in her crusades.
- The Grail is rumoured to be in the possession or safekeeping of the Von Bek family – humans inhabiting a different plane of existence.
- Prince Gaynor of Mirenborg, also known as the Damned, is one of Miggea's most beloved Champions.
- Miggea is not just senile but also insane – so much so that the other Lords of Law have nothing to do with her.

Retribution

It is forbidden to leave the cult. Any who do so, or betray Miggea in any form, pay with their souls. Miggea herself claims the adherent, sending her pure-white She Wolves to drag the traitor back to Dolwic where his body is used to strengthen her castle.

Politics and Relationships

Miggea's madness is held in contempt by many worshippers of Law because it is quite plain to them that Miggea is deranged. Her single minded purpose is Law at its absolute extreme and her plans threaten everything the other cults of Law seek to achieve in the Young Kingdoms. However, the cult of Donblas finds the stridency of the Miggea cult useful from time-to-time, especially in those situations where unyielding brutality is necessary and it would be better for Donblas not to be involved.

The cult of Arkyn distances itself from Miggea's cult, believing that, until Arkyn has returned and defeated the Sword Rulers, Miggea's senility can never be cured. Miggea's adherents reject this arrogance, often reminding the sects of Arkyn that *he* was the one deposed by Chaos; never Miggea...

MIRATH

Lady Mirath is the Lawful deity of life, death and time. She decrees how long each creature lives and all paths eventually end

Become Wolf Warrior

This magical ability allows the adherent to transform himself into a wolf, Miggea's sacred creature. The transformation requires Magic Points to effect, with each Magic Point invested in the spell contributing +3 to the base SIZ of the final transformation. (for example, investing one Magic Point allows a transformation into a wolf of 2D6+6, two Magic Points 2D6+9, three Magic Points 2D6+12 and so forth). For the spell to be successful, the adherent must make a successful Pact (Miggea) test. If the test fails, the adherent loses one Magic Point; if the test is fumbled the adherent loses all the Magic Points that he intended to devote to the transformation.

The adherent takes on the physical Characteristics of the wolf as outlined but retains his own INT and POW and the ability to speak. The skills listed for the wolf below temporarily replace those of the adherent.

It takes one Combat Round per Magic Point for the transformation to take effect and the adherent remains in wolf form for one hour per Magic Point thereafter. The adherent must be naked for the transformation to occur; if clothed or wearing armour the spell will not work.

	Dice	Average	1D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
STR	3D6+3	14	1-2	Right Hind Leg	2/5
CON	3D6+3	14	3-4	Left Hind Leg	2/5
SIZ	2D6+3	10	5-7	Hindquarters	2/6
DEX	3D6+3	14	8-10	Forequarters	2/6
			11-13	Right Front Leg	2/5
			14-16	Left Front Leg	2/5
			17-20	Head	2/5

Combat Actions	3
Damage Modifier	0
Magic Points	As per human
Movement	10m
Strike Rank	+3 to human form

Typical Armour: Fur and Hide (AP 2)

Traits: Night Sight

Skills: Athletics 80%, Evade 55%, Perception 60%, Persistence 43%, Resilience 52%, Stealth 55%, Survival 40%, Tracking 60%.

Weapons

Type	Size	Reach	Weapon Skill	Damage	AP/HP
Bite	M	T	60%+STR	1D8	As for Head
Claw	M	M	60%+STR and DEX	1D3	As for Leg

at the gate of her twilight kingdom. Mirath can be compassionate as well as cruel, for she ends suffering and sorrow as well as bringing joy. Her priests are present at weddings, births, deaths and funerals. They also practice the arts of healing, knowing that no intervention slows Mirath from claiming a destined soul.

Purpose and History

Mirath is said to be the sister of Miggea and there may be truth behind this belief. Where Miggea seeks destruction alone, Mirath seeks control over life and the span allotted to it. Mirath, it is said, knows the precise time of death of each individual although she never reveals what she knows. She knows, also, the precise span of the Multiverse and this is her greatest secret.

As a deity she is worshipped as a goddess of the healing arts and all arts associated with both life and death. Her rituals are used at the birthing of infants and the interring of the dead. As most Lords of Law are sterile and distant, Mirath's presence is necessary as she represents the proximity of Law as a healing and nurturing force – even though she also symbolises natural death and the limitations of time.

Myths

Mirath and the Priest (Mythic Resonance 80%) – Mirath Sees All Things: A priest of Law entered the glittering plane where the Lords of Law dwell, intent on discovering answers. Dreams had



own world. Tell me, what do you see?’

‘I see a place of beauty and peace,’ the priest said. ‘I would want to live in such a place.’

‘It is beautiful indeed,’ Mirath said. ‘It is a world of Law. Chaos has no influence there. All things are perfect.’

‘What is my span of life?’ Asked the priest. Mirath sighed.

‘I will not answer that. It is not right for you to know.’

The priest felt cheated at this. It was the answer he had come to seek. He asked to be alone with the Globe of Nations to Come and Mirath permitted

plagued him and he sought release through Mirath’s wisdom. He came to her palace: a brilliant ziggurat of white and gold marble and was welcomed to her halls.

Mirath sent servants to bathe him, feed him and give him clean clothes. Then she welcomed the priest to her chamber and there they conversed. The priest had to avert his eyes, such was Mirath’s brilliance and beauty. ‘I dream terrible dreams oh Lady of Life,’ he sobbed.

‘Tell me of them,’ Mirath said, soothingly. The priest told her that he dreamed of an immense and dreadful battle that would result in the world taking on a new shape. Mirath listened until he had finished. ‘What you dream is what will happen,’ Mirath said. ‘It is my duty to give all things a span of time and determine what shape they will take when that span of time is exhausted. What you see is what I wanted you to see.’

‘Then my world will be destroyed?’ The priest wailed. Mirath offered a sad smile.

‘It will progress. It will improve. That is the way of Law.’

‘Will I die?’ He asked. Mirath did not answer. Instead she took the priest’s hand and led him through bright corridors to the summit of the temple and a chamber that was open to the cloudless sky above. Here was a globe of crystal and upon its surface were many continents and islands, surrounded by a brilliant sea of blue. Clouds skitted across the surface.

‘This is the Globe of Nations to Come,’ Mirath said. ‘There are many worlds and the beholder always sees the future of his

it. When she had left, he took the globe and hid it in his robe and then chanted his spells to return him to his home, taking the globe with him. There, he gave it to his queen as a gift and, the very next day, he died, alone, in his bed.

In her ziggurat of white marble and gold, Mirath sighed as she felt the priest’s death. She went to the chamber where they had gazed upon the globe. From around her neck she took her string of pearls and separated one from the string. She pressed it to her lips and it grew until it resembled the Globe of Nations to Come in size and its surface changed to show whatever form the world of the beholder would take. She set it down on its plinth and returned to her chamber to wait for the next thief to arrive.

Beliefs

Worshippers of Mirath believe that the Pale Lady controls all aspects of life and death. Upon death the soul is transported to her realm where a paradise awaits and there is no suffering, no pain and eternal life. They also believe that Mirath can, at will, reincarnate any soul that she deems needs to lead a mortal life again and therefore one must lead a good and just life, to achieve paradise without delay.

She is also viewed as a patron of the healing arts. She taught mortals the skills of first aid and healing and taught them to make medicines from herbs and plants, which, naturally, she placed upon the earth for this purpose.

Worshippers

Healers, carers and those who crave an afterlife of goodness and freedom from suffering.

Her cult is open to both males and females but tend to attract the latter more than the former. The cult is especially strong in Gorjhan, Old Hrolmar, Vilmiro, Karlaak and the eastern land of Anakhazan (where the priest of the myth is said to have come from).

Membership Requirements

Standard.

The cult's ranks are as follows:

Blessed of Mirath (Lay Members)
Disciples of Mirath (Initiates)
Priest/Priestess of Mirath (Acolytes)
Father/Mother of Mirath (High Priest)
Brother/Sister of Mirath (Champion)

Benefits

Ranks receive no special benefits save for the Gift that is automatically conferred upon attaining a new rank. A Compulsion always accompanies the Gift.

High Priests and Champions can DreamQuest for Heroic Abilities, if they fulfil the requirements.

Gifts and Compulsions

Gifts

Divine Training
Endurance
Enhanced Learning
Eternal Life
Fate
Healing
Increased Health

Compulsions

Absolute Mercy
Armour Rejection
Chaste
Chivalrous
Close Combat Pacifism
Dedicated Lover
Forgo Shield
Law Triumphant
Merciful

Cult Skills

Athletics, First Aid, Healing, Lore (Herbs), Lore (Law), Lore (Mirath).

Cult Runes and Magic

Mirath's cult teaches the following Runes: Contact, Enhancement, Law, Man, Purity, Sleep, Woman.

Heroic Abilities Available

Disease Immunity, Empathic Wound, Loremaster, Poison Immunity, Reincarnation, Tireless.

Retribution

Mirath's cult never takes retribution against those who fall from its path. Saddened, yes; vengeful – never.

Politics and Relationships

The cult abhors and is abhorred by, cultists of Chardhros. The two Lords are believed to have warred once and Mirath lost the battle, which weakened her influence on the world.

The cult is also cool in its relations with that of Miggea, which seeks doom and destruction as the absolute expression of lawful progress.

THE UNRELENTING KNIGHTS OF TOVIK

Tovik does not appear in the Elric saga as a named Lord of Law, but is one of the many minor Lords of Law who are known to exist in addition to those so named.

'Now I understand why these arms decorate her chamber,' Moonglum said. 'According to legend, these are the shields and weapons of all those who loved Mysbella and championed her cause.'

— *The Vanishing Tower*

Purpose and History

Law has ever had need of exemplary warriors and Tovik of Law is one such example. His history predates the Young Kingdoms; in fact it almost predates this entire cycle of Time and begins in those early, early days when the race that would become the Melnibonéans, the Mernii, had newly arrived on this plane of the earth, mere refugees from some greater calamity abroad in the Million Spheres.

Tovik is a purely martial cult of Law. Its members follow strict codes of honour and chivalry but train and fight with fervour in the name of the White Lords. The cult serves as guards for the cults of Arkyn and Donblas and carries out missions and quests on their behalf. In Lormyr this cult is known as the Knights of Malador and Aubec is considered to be an aspect of Tovik, for both men served Mysbella and it is possible, they believe, that Aubec was Tovik, reincarnated.

Knights of Tovik believe in rigour and discipline. The anarchy of Chaos is abhorrent to them and they see the forces of the Chaotic cults as an undisciplined, but dangerous, rabble. The codes of warfare and valour instilled into the Knights of Tovik convince

them that any Chaos foe cannot possibly be a match for their righteousness.

Members of the cult are expected to fight Chaos wherever it arises. Initiates are often hired out as bodyguards, mercenaries, explorers, trouble-shooters and men-at-arms. This is an adventurous cult that honours its members and trains them well.

Myths

Tovik and Myshella (Mythic Resonance 75%) – The Need to Fight for Law: Tovik was a prince of the Mernii. Young, idealistic and a servant of the Cosmic Balance. He had, it was claimed, liberated the Runestaff from one Vhanasdasriak, an inhuman sorcerer who threatened a race where the Eldren and the Vadhagh ruled as allies. Amongst his own people, Tovik was a hero; proud, cultured, chivalrous, handsome and betrothed to his beloved Merizhandt, a Mernii princess.

To the Mernii the world was young and full of promise. Tovik left R'lin K'ren A'a (and this was centuries before the Lords of Law and Chaos sequestered it for their own ends) and travelled east in search of the indigenous peoples. He came across many settlements inhabited by those who were friendly, ambivalent and openly hostile. Prince Tovik fought for his life, the life of others and risked his soul against fierce, confused monsters and benevolent but ultimately untrustworthy, sorcerers who, like him, had fled some Multiversal catastrophe. As Tovik travelled, he learned much.

Presently he came to a castle on the coast of the southern continent. Tired, hungry and wounded, after having escaped the trickery of a trio of well-meaning but somewhat deranged, magicians, Tovik stumbled into the castle, finding it already outfitted to greet him. A banqueting table stood ready, laden with fine foods and jugs of good, sweet wine; a fire roared in the hearth and, waiting for him, a woman of incandescent beauty, dressed in diaphanous robes of scarlet: Myshella, Empress of the Dawn, welcomed Tovik to her castle, Kaneloon. She fed him, bathed him, laughed with him and, in time, made love to him. All the while, fair Merizhandt awaited Tovik's return but in Myshella's embrace, Tovik forgot his betrothal.

Tovik was one of the first of Myshella seduced champions to go forth from Kaneloon and to forge new lands from the stuff of Chaos. Tovik's strength and courage was so great, his efforts so successful, that, when he returned to Kaneloon, he was radiant with power and possibility. Myshella offered herself to him once more but even she could not satisfy him. 'You are ceasing to be mortal, Prince Tovik,' Myshella said. 'Your soul is transcending, just as you have caused Chaos to transcend its primal state and become ordered.'

Tovik understood what Myshella meant and wept. His mortality was no more; he was becoming immortal, having undergone a

strange and unique alteration. He no longer had any place on the earth. 'You shall become a mighty warrior of Law,' Myshella said, without emotion. 'Your place is amongst the Champions of Order – not with the Cosmic Balance and no longer with your own people.'

'Or,' Tovik remarked, bitterly, 'With you, enchantress.'

And Myshella could not answer. They slept together for one last, desperate time and, when Tovik awoke, another woman, accompanied by a she-wolf with pure white fur and crimson eyes, greeted him. 'Come with me, Tovik,' the Duchess of Law said, 'and I will train you to lead the armies of Law in the Eternal Struggle. Myshella prepared you well; now it is time for Miggea to take control.'

And so Tovik, once a prince of the Mernii, left the mortal realm altogether and became a Duke of the Lords of Law, a leader of its armies against Chaos. And every night, until her death, Merizhandt stood on the balcony of her tower in the city of R'lin K'ren A'a and prayed to the Cosmic Balance for her fair prince's return.

Beliefs

The cult believes firmly that Tovik was once mortal and became a god through his bravery and chivalry. He was Myshella's one, true love and Miggea tutored him in the ways of the Lords of the Higher Worlds, loving him like a son, before she grew senile with age. Even now Miggea loves Tovik, even though Tovik cannot comprehend her own, tragic, spiral into madness.

The cult also believes that Tovik, Aubec and all the other heroes who served Myshella are but one aspect of the same hero. Through serving Tovik, it is believed by all members of the cult that, they, too, might be called upon to serve Myshella and so prove themselves to be part of that same Champion of Law.

But their key belief is in the Eternal Struggle. This is a warrior's cult dedicated to vanquishing Chaos and bringing reasoned order to the world. The codes of chivalry are followed closely by the Knight of Tovik and they share much in common with those who follow Aubec's cult.

Worshippers

Righteous warriors from across the Young Kingdoms but with concentrations in Ilmiora, Jharkor, Lormyr and Filkhar. Jharkorians believe that Tovik bested Mabelode at the battle of Dhakos and created Dhakos Bay.

In these countries the cult of Tovik maintains barracks attached to either one of the churches of Arkyn or Donblas, or as part of the regional militia or army. In Lormyr and Filkhar, where Aubec is venerated, barracks to Tovik often contain a shrine to Aubec (and vice versa).

Membership

Standard. Cult ranks are as follows:

Shield of Tovik (Lay Member)
Sword of Tovik (Initiate)
Hammer of Tovik (Acolyte)
Battle Priest of Tovik (Warrior Priest)
Knight of Tovik (Champion)

Shield of Tovik

Shields of Tovik are those young warriors who wish to prove themselves worthy of serving as Swords within the cult. They train in the cult's barracks and spend around a year preparing for entry into the cult.

Sword of Tovik

Swords are the rank-and-file of the Unrelenting Knights; the lowest rank of Tovik's serving army.

Swords of Tovik are required to undergo a vigil of three days and three nights, wherein they fast and do nothing but contemplate the reason of Law. For some, the vigil becomes a Compulsion; but all Swords must undergo it. A Pact is then made with Tovik but only a single POW is required to make it binding.

Hammer of Tovik

Hammers of Tovik are the non-commissioned officers of the cult, responsible for co-ordinating the Swords and maintaining discipline. To become a Hammer, a Sword must meet the following requirements:

- Pact (Tovik) 50%.
- Six Cult Skills at 50%.
- Have served as a Sword for at least three years.

Battle Priest of Tovik

Battle Priests are the officers of the cult, operating with both military and religious power. Highly chivalrous, disciplined and dedicated to the cause of Law. To become a Battle Priest, the following requirements must be met:

- Pact (Tovik) 70%.
- Six Cult Skills at 70%.
- Have served as a Hammer for at least three years.
- Know at least two cult Runes.

Knight of Tovik

The Knights of Tovik are the epitome of the Lawful knight: chivalrous, resplendent, brave and cunning warriors. They are commanders of men and leaders of the righteous crusades against Chaos.

- Pact (Tovik) 90%.
- Six Cult Skills at 90%.
- Have served as a Battle Priest for at least 3 years.
- Know at least 2 cult Runes at 50%.

Duties

The principal duties of the cult are to protect the churches and temples of Law and to serve the cults of Arkyn and Donblas. The Knights of Tovik have no other specific duties except to serve as the loyal soldiers of Law.

Benefits

Cult benefits accrue by rank in the form of Gifts, Compulsions, Cult Skills, Runes and Legendary Abilities.

Sword of Tovik

- One Gift and one Compulsion.
- Training in cult skills at half normal cost.

Hammer of Tovik

- One Gift and one Compulsion.
- Training in cult skills at half normal cost.
- May start to learn cult Runes.

Battle Priest of Tovik

- One Gift and one Compulsion.
- Training in cult skills at half normal cost.
- One Rune at base percentage.

Knight of Tovik

- One Gift and one Compulsion.
- Training in cult skills at half normal cost.
- One Legendary Ability.

Gifts and Compulsions

Gifts and Compulsions accrue as per cult rank.

Gifts

Automaton
Combat Acuity
Divine Training (Cult Skills)
Enchantment
Innate Luck
Perfection
Weapon of the Faith

Compulsion

Chastity
Eternal Love
Nervous Tic
Never surrender to Chaos but always accept the surrender of an unarmed opponent
Perfection
Vigil
Wear only leather armour, as Tovik himself wore

Cult Skills

All weapons, Evade, Language (High Speech), Lore (Chivalry), Lore (Law), Lore (Tovik), Unarmed.

Cult Runes

The cult teaches the Runes of: Alarm, Bewilderment, Contact, Law, Light, Protection, Purity, Reflection, Truth.

Heroic Abilities

Arrow Cutting, Born to the Saddle, Duellist, Heroic Aura, Tireless.

Retribution

The cult does not seek retribution against those who leave its ranks but traitors are hunted down to be tried by the courts of Donblas.

Politics and Relationships

The Knights of Tovik are held in high regard across the church of Law. As a warrior force they are effective and, being devout to Law, the ideal protectors of the other cults. These are fervent warriors of the cause but they lack the single-minded obsession of the cult of Miggea and are therefore considered to be more trustworthy.

POZZ-MAN-LLYR

Pozz-man-Llyr does not appear in the Elric saga as a named Lord of Law, but is one of the many minor Lords of Law who are known to exist in addition to those so named.

'We sail on a supernatural sea,' said another, holding out a gloved hand for the jug. Elric passed it to him. 'In Hasghan, where I come from, we have a legend of a Bewitched Sea. If a mariner finds himself sailing in those waters he may never return and will be lost for eternity.'

— *Sailor on the Sea of Fate*

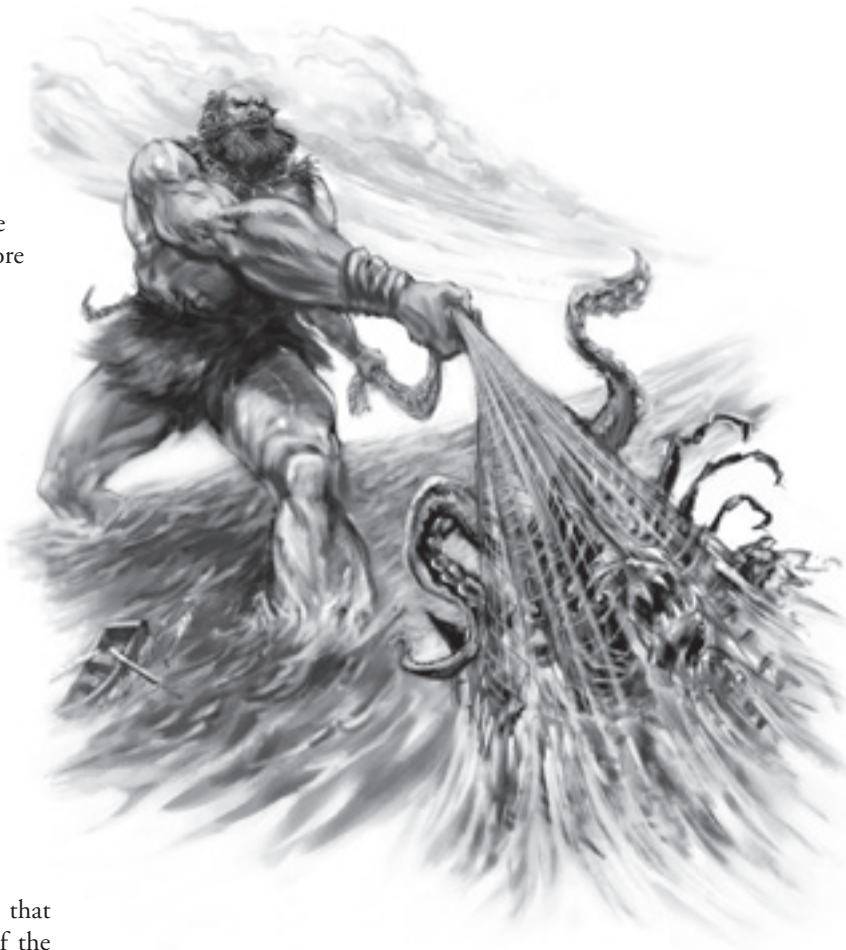
Purpose and History

The sailors of Tarkesh are a superstitious lot who believe that the oceans of the world mirror precisely the complexity of the Multiverse. Within the oceans an eternal struggle is being waged between the Elements and the forces of Law and Chaos for the control of the water. The Elements are represented by Lord Straasha, Chaos by Pyaray and the Whisperers and Law by Pozz-man-Llyr. As a result of this eternal battle the seas are tempestuous and treacherous; Straasha rules the upper currents but Pyaray and Pozz-man-Llyr struggle for the depths and their war causes the mighty tides and turbulence that create huge, ferocious waves, squalls and the other hazards that must be braved by the Young Kingdoms' mariners.

Law itself, they believe, is not overly concerned with the oceans. Water is an unruly element that cannot be readily shaped or

ordered. The major Lords of Law are therefore fearful of Lord Straasha's domain and have little to do with it. But Pozz-man-Llyr is different. A minor Duke of Order who is the eternal sailor and his golden boat plies the ocean that exists between worlds, using his vast nets of silk and iron to capture the creatures of Chaos and haul them to a vast whirlpool leading directly into the many hells. Pozz-man-Llyr therefore cleanses the oceans of the Multiverse but cannot impose order upon the water, for it is Straasha's domain.

Pozz-man-Llyr is also the god of boat-builders. As a Lord of Law he understands the requirements for building the perfect boat; light, robust, water-tight and capable of hauling cargo at speed.



Tarkesh's boat builders regularly make a dedication to Pozz-man-Llyr before beginning a new build, in the hope that his wisdom will make the vessel as good as it possibly can be.

Myths

The Warrior, the Ship and the Net (Mythic Resonance 70%)
— **The Fight Against Chaos on the Sea:** Pozz-Man-Llyr lived in peace by a grey sea, which stretched for eternity. He had no desire to sail its waters because he had all he needed on the land. His wife was the fair lady of the waves, a gift from Lord Straasha, whom Pozz-Man-Llyr had once honoured.

One morning as Pozz-Man-Llyr wandered the beach, finding shells to fashion into a necklace for his wife, a great disturbance came upon the calm waves and a monster reared from the ocean, it had many heads and many mouths. It struck the beach where Pozz-Man-Llyr walked and stalked towards him. Pozz-Man-Llyr had no sword because he had never needed one. He had only the shells he carried in his pouch. 'Someone must help me,' he cried, fearing for his fair wife. 'This thing of Chaos is too strong!'

A man of great beauty and a perfect face appeared beside Pozz-Man-Llyr, walking from the dunes. His armour was of white and his shield gleamed in the sun. 'I am Shalod,' the man said. 'We will face this thing together.'

Shalod of Law handed Pozz-Man-Llyr an axe and together they engaged the monster, hacking and slicing at its many heads, many mouths, many tentacles and many arms. After a day and a night the monster was dead and Pozz-Man-Llyr thanked the golden haired man who had come to his aid. 'What service can I perform for you?' He asked.

'I am a traveller recently deposed from my own lands,' Shalod said. 'I am seeking the Hall of Great Arkyn, my brother, but I cannot cross this ocean. Can you help me in that regard?'

Now Pozz-Man-Llyr had seen this Arkyn once before and the two had enjoyed an agreeable meeting. 'I was given wisdom by Lord Straasha of the waves,' Pozz-Man-Llyr said. 'He showed me how to build a chariot that will cross the waves.' And so together the men cut wood, shaped it, fastened it and made it fast against the water. Pozz-Man-Llyr's wife fed them and entertained them and blessed the hull of the ship with her water magic. The next day, Pozz-Man-Llyr sailed with Shalod across the gloomy waters to the island where the Hall of Great Arkyn arose.

Arkyn welcomed both men and was saddened to learn of Shalod's defeat at the hands of Chaos and the attack upon Pozz-Man-Llyr's beach. He gave Pozz-Man-Llyr a net, woven of gold. 'This net will ensnare any creature that Pyaray of Chaos sends against you. Dredge it into the waves and you will catch many of these monsters. Take them to the whirlpool that lies south of here and open the net above it. Then will your beaches be safe.'

And so Pozz-Man-Llyr did as Arkyn commanded and rid the ocean of many monsters. In time he had many sons with his wife and he taught them the secret of the Ship and the Boat and together they continued to clear the sea of monsters.

Beliefs

The oceans of the Young Kingdoms are an extension of the vast ocean that flows between the worlds. Like the surface world the ocean has many aspects, many dimensions, and is a battle-ground between Law and Chaos.

Pozz-man-Llyr, in his golden boat, sweeps the oceans clean of the taint of Chaos, restoring it to Lord Straasha. Pyaray is Pozz-man-Llyr's enemy and it is Pozz-man-Llyr's aim to scupper the Fleet of Chaos so that it can never seize control of the surface ocean, or bring piracy to the ocean between the worlds.

Worshippers

The cult of Pozz-man-Llyr is confined to Tarkesh although small shrines can be found in Dhakos and Affitain. Worship is informal; there are no priests and the cult has no defined hierarchy. Pozz-man-Llyr is seen as a travelling god who has no need for structured rituals. His temple is the ocean itself and worshippers demonstrate their veneration by placing their trust in him when they set sail.

For boat-builders and shipwrights, it is traditional for a brace of fresh fish to be placed at Pozz-man-Llyr's shrine as an offering, in exchange for the blessing of a boat about to be built.

Anyone can worship Pozz-man-Llyr and dedicate themselves to his service through establishing a Pact. As there are no ranks or priests within the cult, benefits are handled slightly differently. See Benefits.

Duties

- Build good, sturdy boats according to the principles of woodworking, mathematics and physics.
- Keep the seas swept of Chaos.
- Be the enemy of the Whisperers.
- Consider Straasha an ally. The sea is his realm.

Benefits

Worshippers of Pozz-man-Llyr gain a Gift and Compulsion from venerating Pozz-man-Llyr when the Pact is established but only gain a further Gift and Compulsion when the value of the Pact exceeds 70%.

For every point of POW dedicated to the Pact, the adherent may add half his Pact skill as a bonus to one Cult Skill.

So, a Tarkeshite sea captain with Pact (Pozz-man-Llyr) 60% and three points of POW dedicated to the Pact could add a +30% to three cult skills.

The cult has no runes or summonings but Pozz-man-Llyr seems to be a very active god and if called with Divine Intervention has been known to offer direct aid.

Gifts and Compulsions

As per Benefits.

Gifts

Divine Training
Enhanced Learning
Increased Health
Sense Enemies
Sense Million Spheres
Tireless

Compulsions

Armour Rejection
Challenge Chaos
Chaos Phobia
Deck-Bound
Merciful
Never use a shield

Cult Skills

Athletics, Boating, Craft (Boat/Ship Building), Lore (Law), Lore (Pozz-man-Llyr), Lore (Sea), Shiphandling, Survival.

Retribution

The cult takes no retribution against those who betray its ways, although Tarkeshite superstition hold that traitors are doomed to forever sail the Million Spheres, never knowing land and never knowing fresh water.

Politics and Relationships

The cult is naturally the sworn enemy of the Whisperers but given the Whisperers' power and influence through its veneration in Pan Tang and Dharijor, the cult of Pozz-man-Llyr is somewhat ineffectual in comparison. The cult has no great navies to oppose the pirate vessels of Pan Tang but Tarkesh does build ships that can out-run the war galleys of the Pan Tangian fleets.

As a cult of Law, Pozz-man-Llyr stands almost alone. He is unrecognised much outside of Tarkesh, although some of the legends concerning Arkyn do refer to the boat builder who created Arkyn's golden boat and this is taken to mean Pozz-man-Llyr. The other cults of Law have only feelings of ambivalence to this Tarkeshite cult.

The alliance with Straasha is strong, however. Many Tarkeshites worship both Straasha and Pozz-man-Llyr and there is no antagonism between the two cults.

T'AARGANO

T'aargano is the Lord of Nature and Spirits. His worship is limited as those who venerate nature and tend to follow the elemental cults. However amongst many primitive and nomadic cultures that follow Law, he is a frequently venerated lord as he is believed to be the guardian of the spirit world, acting as the gatekeeper between the realms of Law, the spirit plane (or Grey Planes) and the mundane world.

Purpose and History

T'aargano is the guardian of the natural world and the spirit world. Sacred to him are flora, fauna and spirits – because all living things and many non-living things, possess a spirit or soul. His purpose is to guard their safety against the perversions of Chaos even though this role brings him into conflict with the elemental rulers and the Beast Lords, both of whom lay similar claims.

T'aargano is an old Lord of Law, forgotten by many but greatly revered by those who know of his presence. It is possible that he predates gods such as Arkyn and Donblas and he may even be the first Lord of Law. Whatever his age or status with the hierarchy of the Lawful Lords, T'aargano is a fierce but aloof deity who cares more for animals, plants and what becomes of the mortal spirit than he does for mortals themselves.

In the earliest days of the Bright Empire, before the Mernii turned to Chaos, T'aargano was revered more widely although, at that time, it was not known which of the powers he represented. The Mernii made Pacts with T'aargano as readily as they made Pacts with the elemental and beast rulers and this granted them their earliest form of magic: Spirit Magic; powers that fell into grave disuse when Chaos introduced sorcery to their ways.

T'aargano's realm is that strange, timeless world where all spirits reside. He sees the Multiverse through the eyes of the spirits and

can inhabit each spirit to gain access to the material world. Flesh and blood that is knowing and corruptible is abhorrent to him. Sapiient species hold little interest unless they are in a spirit form or divorced from their physical bodies where he can see into their true natures and where their true natures cannot be interfered with by other forces.

T'aargano did not create the spirit world but became its guardian when the Lords of Chaos came to plunder it so that more souls could be condemned to their many hells. He led the great battles that established the boundaries between the spirit plane and the underworlds and he was known then as the Great Spirit Walker or Grandfather Shaman. He taught the primitive mortals of the world how to revere the spirits and communicate with them in the hope that they would learn and grow.

Myths

T'aargano Summons Great Ancestor (Mythic Resonance 77%): T'aargano was in his castle of sand when the first demons invaded the spirit realm. They came in an army that butchered first the nature spirits and then turned their claws on the animal spirits. The spirits had no defence against the demons and, on the mundane world, plague, pestilence and death struck all at once, creating a decaying wilderness.

This was before men came to exist. It is before we can recall.

The animal spirits fled to their lodges and hides and the demon army congregated at T'aargano's castle. At their head was a Lord of Chaos with no face. He demanded that T'aargano surrender his realm unto Chaos and it would become a part of hell. 'Hell is not to be feared,' the Faceless God said. 'It offers unbridled possibilities.'

T'aargano did not listen to such sweet beguiling words. Already he was summoning the Great Ancestor, the One Spirit from which all spirits emerged and which is all things to all forms of life. Great Ancestor is the Great Tree, the Lord of Beasts and the ancestor, even, of human kind. Only Great Ancestor could defeat the Faceless God and his minions.

T'aargano sang the ancient songs that brought into existence the cosmos and even himself. He chanted and swayed as around him the demon army began to destroy his castle of sand grain-by-grain. Around him and within him Great Ancestor heeded the call. He came first as the whirlwind, which blasted the demons far and wide. Next he came as the firestorm, which scorched them and turned them to ashes. Then he came as the Hammer of Life and smashed them. Finally he came as the Wave and washed their repellent remains from the spirit world, plunging them back to their hells.

The Faceless God stood his ground and, when Great Ancestor was done, he was forced to surrender at T'aargano's feet, chained and shackled so that he dark bladed swords were beyond use.

'There shall always be distance between the world of spirits and the world of demons,' T'aargano said. 'The natural path of the soul is to come here. You seek to deny them that. I cannot kill you for you are a god and thus immortal. I also know that it is in your nature to crave the power that spirits bring. Your doom will be to fight for the fate of every spirit and every soul. No living thing shall ever be condemned to hell unless it has made a willing pact with you and your kind. All things of freedom shall come here and be protected by me. Go now, or Great Ancestor shall bind you into eternity and you shall never deliver this message to your brethren.'

And so the Faceless God left, chastised and beaten, and it became the way of things that certain gods will try to barter for souls when all of T'aargano's realm awaits them naturally.

Beliefs

Worshippers of T'aargano believe that the mortal form is but a shell. True reality lies in the spirit realm. Life is but a proving ground. Those who fail are those who bond themselves to one god or another, including the Lords of Law. Thus, T'aargano's worshippers do not enter into any Pact with their deity but await a natural passage into his domain upon death. In the meantime, those who remain true to T'aargano's calling are permitted access to the spirit world and to call upon the spirits to aid them when the time is right to do so.

Worshippers

The cult of T'aargano is a shamanic cult but one that, through the original veneration of the Mernii, is found in more civilised societies than the traditional spirit and ancestor cults. T'aargano's worshippers are more mystics than shaman, although they command similar magics and hold similar beliefs.

Membership Requirements

Membership is only open to those who demonstrate a natural affinity with the spirit world, represented by a minimum POW of 15 or some other symbol (such as a Background Event) or demonstration. Those with POW 15 or higher may join the cult as Followers. The ranks are as follows:

- Follower (Initiate)
- Mystic (Fervent Member)
- Seer (High Lord/Priest)

Benefits

No Pact is made. Progression through the ranks is as per the *RuneQuest Core Rulebook* and the benefits of each rank for a spirit cult are accrued. However the following additional benefits accrue with each rank.

Follower

- One Gift and one Compulsion.
- Skill of Spirit Walking at the base value.

Mystic

- One Gift.
- Skill of Spirit Binding at the base value.

Seer

- One Gift and one Compulsion.
- One Heroic Ability.

The duties of T'aargano's worshippers are simple: venerate all spirits, refrain from the injury of wildlife and enter into no Pact or relationship save that of T'aargano

Gifts and Compulsions

Gifts and Compulsions accrue as per cult rank.

Gifts

Abstinence
Animal Familiar
Divine Training
Fate
Innate Luck
Perfection
Sense Enemies
Tireless

Compulsions

Absolute Mercy
Armour Rejection
Challenge Chaos
Chaste
Close Combat Pacificism
Collector
Healing
Merciful
Pedantic
Secretive

Cult Skills

Insight, Lore (Law), Lore (T'aargano), Meditation, Spirit Binding, Spirit Walking, Survival.

Cult Runes and Magic

The cult teaches no Runes; only its Spirit Magic.

Heroic Abilities Available

Defiant Leap, Disease Immunity, Empathic Wound, Loremaster, Poison Immunity, Wall Leaping.

Retribution

None. However, those who lapse from T'aargano's path lose their Spirit Walking and Binding abilities and are denied access to the spirit plane. They are doomed to reincarnate throughout eternity, forever saddled with the knowledge of what could have been theirs.

Politics and Relationships

This is a solitary cult with no closer ties with any of the other cults of Law. T'aargano mystics are seen as eccentric, lesser-cousins to other cultists of Law and they do nothing to dispel that impression, often leading hermetic existences or keeping themselves aloof from the more orthodox practises of Law.

PERSONALITY CULTS



This chapter provides cults that do not fall into the Eternal Struggle and reflect personalities, ideals and so forth. As some of these cults do not focus on a deity per se, Divine Intervention is often not possible but this does not diminish the necessity or existence of such cults. Belonging to a cause or venerating a particular person is common in the Young Kingdoms.

Personality cults tend to be based on specific, remarkable individuals who, in some way, challenged the existing order and shaped a new one. One curious example is that of Earl Aubec of Malador. An enemy of the Bright Empire and Chaos, he is, nevertheless, revered amongst some sections of Melnibonéan society simply because he displayed the kind of bravery that, irrespective of its allegiance, deserves recognition and honour. Elric himself is noted as entering battle against pirates with *'a five-foot broadsword which, it was said, had belonged to a human hero called Aubec.'* And with the same weapon he faces his cousin, Yyrkoon. Even Melniboné, so ancient that it views humans as upstarts, can recognise individual bravery and heroism to the point where it makes a lasting impression (even if Aubec's own beliefs and allegiances were contrary to the Bright Empire's own).

Personality cults, then, do not necessarily believe that the spirit of the individual guides and advises but his deeds demonstrate ideals that are worthy of the commemoration and his personality was strong enough to warrant continued reverence and devotion to similar causes.

These cults are not supported by myths. However, anyone who joins a personality cult gains the Passion Love (Cult) at its base percentage as described in the *Elric of Melniboné Core Rulebook*. This passion can be used to enforce cult behaviour and offer insight in a similar way to Mythic Resonance.

CULT OF TERHALI

'...Terhali, the Green Empress, who had ruled the Bright Empire from the year 8406 after its foundation until 9011. Her longevity and green-tinged skin and hair had marked her out. She had been a powerful sorceress, even by Melnibonéan

standards. She was also reputed the daughter of a union between Emperor Iuntric X and a demon.'

— *Stormbringer*

Terhali's cult is specifically an ancestor/personality cult but is also considered to be a sorcerers' cult and a sub-cult of both Xiombarg in her incarnations as a single Lord of Chaos and as one of the Sword Rulers.

Melnibonéan Ancestor Cults

The Dragon Lords have several ancestor cults, including Terhali, the 'black ringletted' Rondar IV and 'horror-burdened' Kahan Vn. Terhali is described here and her description forms a useful template for the similar ancestor cults of the Dragon Isle.

Purpose and History

An empress of the Bright Empire for 605 years, Terhali was a notorious leader of her people, a devout worshipper of Xiombarg and owed her remarkable lifespan to both the natural longevity of the Melnibonéans and her half demon ancestry.

She was born into the royal line as the only daughter of her father, Iuntric X, and the demon-queen Vah'ah'nessa. Terhali possessed the noble bearing and physique of her father but the green skin, phenomenal intellect and duplicitous personality of her mother. She was not destined to be empress; her three brothers stood before in line for the Ruby Throne but one-by-one her siblings met with unfortunate fates leaving the way clear for her to ascend upon her father's death (which was similarly unfortunate and untimely).

As empress, she supplanted Arioch's role as patron demon of Melniboné with Xiombarg, an action that alienated many nobles and the Lord of the Seven Darks himself. Arioch became Terhali's direct enemy but, as this meant going against one of his equals in

the realms of the Higher Powers, and a fellow Sword Ruler, he was formed to act in clandestine ways. For 300 years an internecine struggle between the cults of Arioch and Xiombarg was waged, with Terhali revelling in the infamy.

During her reign Terhali decided that Imrryr was not grand enough for her rule and so she built a new capital, Yagala, which overlooked the wide bay leading into the Meadows of Lassitude on Melniboné's western coast. Yagala was built of solid gold by demon consorts and its streets glittered with jewels and slabs of silver. Terhali's inner court was filled with demon lovers, lackeys and servants. The outer court was populated by the obsequious sorcerers and flunkies who sought personal gain by pledging allegiance to Terhali's rule. Only Xiombarg could be worshipped in Yagala's golden streets and her image was everywhere. Those who opposed Terhali or denied Xiombarg found themselves in the gold and silver dungeons and torture chambers, the playthings and meals of her demonic and human followers. Melniboné, under Terhali's six century rule, was a dark and terrible place. That terror spilled across the Bright Empire and, during this period, Melniboné was arguably at the height of its cruelty.

Terhali encouraged the study of sorcery and was an accomplished sorceress herself. She sought to establish the earth and all planes close to it as worlds loyal to the Sword Rulers and her crusades in the name of Xiombarg crossed – and destroyed – worlds.

Eventually though, Terhali's reign was brought to an end. An exiled Melnibonéan nobleman, a silverskin known as the White Raven, led a band of sorcerers and Dragon Princes against Terhali, Lord Arioch aiding their schemes. White Raven sought not to destroy Terhali herself but rather to attack her city, Yagala. The sorcerers he led sealed the city from the outside and White Raven called upon Arioch and the army of the Seven Darks to rid the world of Terhali's influence. Yagala disappeared. Terhali's reign was no more and the Bright Empire returned its allegiance to Arioch.

The cult of Terhali persisted but was outlawed for centuries. Its followers, in the distant years, hid all across the Bright Empire and so Terhali's veneration spread with them. Shrines to the Jade Empress are found in secret places all over the Young Kingdoms, not least in temples dedicated to Xiombarg and the Sword Rulers. As memory of Terhali faded, so did the hatred of the cult and in time veneration of Terhali became acceptable again, with the Jade Empress being worshipped as an ancestral demi-god who advanced the Bright Empire's influence far and wide in the Multiverse.

Beliefs

The cult has several core beliefs:

- Terhali was Xiombarg's earth-bound representation and a Princess of the Sword Rulers.
- Her half-Melnibonéan and half-demon lineage signalled the birth of a new race that was cruelly curtailed.

- Melniboné was at the height of its powers under her rule. If she could be returned, the Bright Empire would rise again.
- Arioch and the remaining Lords of Chaos were lesser beings when faced with Xiombarg's might; Xiombarg should be the ascendant goddess of Chaos in the world, not Arioch.

The cult therefore seeks to return Terhali to the plane (for they do not believe she is dead) of the Young Kingdoms, so that the Bright Empire can be restored with Yagala as its capital. They wish to see the earth become a Sword World under Xiombarg's control and all other Lords of Chaos to become mere vassals to her glory.

Worshippers

In the age of the Young Kingdoms, veneration of Terhali is confined to sorcerers who seek to advance their pacts with Xiombarg and those Melnibonéans who claim descent from Terhali's line. Terhali birthed some 80 children during her lifetime, not all of them pure Melnibonéan and the Jade Empress's lineage is still present in the bloodlines of the Dragon Isle.

The cult has no Lay Members; one is either an adherent of Terhali or one is not. The hierarchy within the cult is as follows:

Cult Ranks

Initiate of Jade (Initiate)

Citizen of Yagala (Acolyte)

Jade Sorcerer (Sorcerer-Priest) or Jade Sword (Warrior-Priest)

Duke/Duchess of Yagala (Champion)

It is common for worshippers of Terhali to either have a jade representation of her in a private, home shrine, or to carry a small figurine, made of jade or opal, on their person.

Initiate of Jade

Jade Initiates must have a minimum of four points of POW dedicated to Terhali. Alternatively, if they are already in a Pact with Xiombarg, then a lower POW dedication to the Terhali Pact is permissible as long as the balancing amount comes from the Xiombarg Pact.

Initiation into the cult confers a Gift and a Compulsion (see Benefits). Initiates are also eligible to learn magic – both Runes and Summonings – taught by the cult.

Citizen of Yagala

To become a Citizen of Yagala the following conditions must be satisfied:

- Pact (Terhali) of 50% or greater.
- Development of one Rune to 50% or greater.
- Development of one demon Summoning to 50% or greater.
- High Speech at 70% or greater.

Citizens receive a further Compulsion but may also take a further Gift. Any points of CHA sacrificed through tattooing counts towards the POW value of the Gift.

Jade Sorcerer (Sorcerer-Priest) or Jade Sword (Warrior-Priest)

Jade Sorcerers and Swords must fulfil the following conditions:

- Pact (Terhali) of 70% or greater.
- Development of one Rune to 70% or greater, or one sword skill to 90% or greater.
- Development of one demon Summoning to 70% or greater.
- High Speech at 90% or greater.

Jade Sorcerers and Swords receive a Compulsion and a Gift.

Duke/Duchess of Yagala

No more than four Dukes or Duchesses exist at any one time.

Becoming a Duke of Yagala requires the following:

- Pact (Terhali) of 90% or greater.
- Development of one Rune to 90% or greater and one sword skill to 100% or greater.
- Development of one demon Summoning to 90% or greater and a second at 70%.
- High Speech at 100% or greater.

The Dukes of Yagala are the targets of many enemies – usually champions of Arioach and Mabelode – and so they travel incognito, often spending a great deal of time abroad in the Multiverse searching for Yagala's whereabouts. They convene, once per year, on the Silent Lands, where, for 24 hours, an illusion of Yagala is conjured as a reminder of what they seek to return.

Dukes of Yagala receive a Gift and Compulsion.

Duties

Regular worship is expected of all ranks, with Terhali being offered gifts, promises, exhortations, prayers and, occasionally, sacrifices. At the ceremonies the Jade Sorcerers summon demons and demand news of where Terhali is kept prisoner and engage in the kinds of orgiastic rites that made Terhali's city of Yagala (in)famous.

Jade Initiates

Initiates are expected to offer regular worship, eight times a year, to Terhali through ceremonies performed at a temple dedicated solely to her or at a shrine within a Xiombarg temple. Temples are found in Imrryr, Dharijor (once a major province of the Bright Empire during Terhali's reign), northern Ilmiora (though they are well-hidden from the prying eyes of Law) and Pikarayd.

All Initiates must wear green in their dress and some form of jade jewellery, usually a ring or pendant.

Citizens of Yagala

Citizens are expected to spread the news of Terhali's continued greatness and expected return to the masses. Opposition to the male Sword Rulers is mandatory and the aim is to propagate

the rising of the Jade Empire Terhali will bring when Yagala is returned from its exile.

Citizens of Yagala are expected to dye parts of their skin jade green, or adorn themselves with jade green tattoos. The more fanatical adherents of the cult have their entire bodies tattooed green in commemoration of the Jade Empress. If a Citizen of Yagala does this, then they lose 1D3 points of CHA but may add the points lost to their Pact (Terhali) value as though dedicating further POW.

Jade Sorcerers and Jade Swords

Jade Sorcerers and Swords are the enforcers of the cult. Sorcerers lead Initiate and Citizen worship and Swords are expected to actively battle for the cult. Both are expected to advance the cult's aims through specific quests and missions – usually against the male Sword Ruler cults and others who oppose Terhali's memory and glory.

Jade Sorcerers and Swords are expected to communicate only in High Speech, disdaining even the Low Speech of Melniboné. Everything they do should honour Terhali and pave the way for her return, including dedicating time and energy to the location of Yagala and discovering how the city of gold can be brought back to the Young Kingdoms.

Dukes of Yagala

The Dukes of Yagala are the driving forces behind the cult. Their soul purpose is to find and bring back Terhali so that the Jade Empire can be forged. They believe her return will result in civil war between the Sword Rulers and so the world must be prepared for a battle of the like unseen since the height of the Bright Empire.

Benefits

The benefits of cult membership are listed for each rank, previously. The overwhelming benefit that all adherents to the cult expect is to become courtiers to Empress Terhali when she returns to the Young Kingdoms and reclaims her empire, forging a new age of Melnibonéan and sorcery-led domination of the world.

Gifts and Compulsions

These accrue as per cult ranks.

Gift

Chaotic Blessing
Divine Training
Elemental
Magical Recovery
Neutralise Rune
Resurrection
Rune
Sanctuary
Sense Million Spheres
Slave
Summon
Witch Sight

Compulsions

Armour Rejection
Demonic fervour
Dread
Hatred of Arioch
Hatred of Pan Tang
Jealousy
Lust for Terhali
Obsessed with finding the ultimate location for the city of Yagala when it returns; this may or may not be within Melniboné's borders
Paranoia
Unkillable
Wear nothing but green; the skin must be dyed completely to a shade of jade

Cult Skills

The cult teaches the following skills

All Sword Combat Styles, Language (High Speech), Lore (Chaos), Lore (Million Spheres), Lore (Sword Rulers), Lore (Terhali), Seduction.

Cult Magic

The cult of Terhali teaches the following Runes: Chaos, Contact, Man, Protection, Raising, Woman.

The cult teaches the following summonings: Command (Demon of Combat, Demon of Desire, Demon of Transport), Summon Creatures of Matik.

Retribution

Leaving the cult is considered an act of betrayal. All acts of betrayal result in the traitor being hunted by a Demon of either Combat or Desire invested with eight Magic Points. The demon does not seek to kill the traitor, only to capture. However, the captured traitor is taken by the demon to one of Xiombarg's prison hells where all Terhali's enemies, when she was present, were sent for torture and worse. When Terhali's rule is restored, all traitors will be presented to her for judgement and punishment.

Politics

The cult clearly holds the remains of the Bright Empire in contempt. Terhali might rule still, and the Bright Empire would never have fallen, if her glorious empire had continued. Melnibonéans who engage in their selfish ennui are weak and unworthy of further life. Only those who seek the return of Empire are worthy of respect. The key political aim of the cult is therefore to replace what Melniboné has become with the vitality it experienced under Terhali and then to completely subjugate the Young Kingdoms, instituting a world ruled by the Jade Empress and Lady Xiombarg of Chaos. Then, the Jade Empire will turn its attentions to Law and destroy it once and for all.

Relationships

The cult is at the heart of an essential schism between the Sword Rulers. Not all who venerate Xiombarg are sympathetic to the cult of Terhali's aims, but those venerating Arioch and Mabelode despise Terhali's cult and would have it stamped out.

In Imrryr, the cult is tolerated as long as it remains a cult venerating a glorious ancestor; certainly the desire for Yagala to be brought back from wherever it has been consigned is seen as dangerous, threatening the Dreaming City's position but the emperors of Melniboné are confident that Yagala and Terhali, are so far beyond reach that the cult's objectives are ultimately futile.

So, Where is Terhali and Yagala?

When Yagala was attacked and banished from the Bright Empire, the entire city was moved to a version of the earth very different to that of the Young Kingdoms. The city now resides in a world dominated by the Hyperboreans and is submerged in a lake outside a country known as Koth. The world of the Hyperboreans is primitive and violent – reflecting the world Terhali knew when she reigned. For now, the Jade Empress is entombed in her city and held within the Sighing Lake but in that world there are sorcerers who are drawn to the legends of the sunken city and may release Terhali from her doom. If that happens, she would be free to contact her faithful across the Million Spheres and set in motion sorcery of her own that would return Yagala to the Young Kingdoms.

SPELL THIEVES

'Human? I, human? I am not human, madam — though I be a mortal, 'tis true. I am of older blood, the blood of the Bright Empire itself, the blood of R'lin K'ren A'a which Cran Liret mocked, not understanding what it was he laughed at.'

— *Elric at the End of Time*

Purpose and History

Cran Liret was one of the Bright Empire's most eminent sorcerers. As his power grew, so did his arrogance until he rashly believed that he was above the Emperor and occupied an equal status with the Lords of Chaos. His early career was spent in assisting the Bright Empire's expansion and administration through the powerful manipulation of the raw stuff of Chaos, harvested from the edge of the world. His natural nemesis was Myshella, Empress of the Dawn and, for a time, they were even lovers.

As his sorcerous skills developed over the course of centuries, Cran Liret learned to project his essence across the Multiverse and, in so doing, discovered planes of existence where certain machineries had been employed to specifically shape Chaotic energy. Cran Liret stole those secrets and brought them back

to the Young Kingdoms and his base on Sorcerers' Isle. Here, he crafted his infamous Chaos Engines which he used to warp, mutate, enhance and complicate all manner of life without regard for its consequences: only the results mattered. His powers over creation expanded and as his arrogance increased he believed he was truly untouchable. He used his capabilities to steal the closely guarded secrets of Melniboné's other powerful sorcerers, as well as the energies and secrets of sorcerers from across the Million Spheres. If he had not have been stopped, Cran Liret would, undoubtedly, have become the greatest sorcerer in the Multiverse and, quite possibly, achieved ascension to the Higher Realms as a Lord of Chaos.

His arrogance and his theft was his undoing. Melniboné tired of his growing power and sent battle barges and dragons to halt his progress. The might of Melniboné engaged the demonic might of the Chaos Engines at Sorcerers' Isle and the battle was terrible in its form. Demons and elementals captured and enhanced by Cran Liret's Chaos machinery clashed with the dragons and elite forces of the Bright Empire which, naturally, brought its own sorcery to bear. The outcome was by no means inevitable and it is thought by the historians of Imrryr that the Lords of Chaos themselves were petitioned to end the Spell Thief's reign. Eventually, Cran Liret was defeated and his body discovered in front of the Chaos Engine known as The Forge.

From that point on, Sorcerers' Isle became a misty, moody, derelict island and Cran Liret's name became simply another name in Melniboné's illustrious history.

Yet Cran Liret is not dead. His body was destroyed, yes, but the Thief of Spells used his own machines to capture his soul and hold it in suspension, conscious and scheming, an arrogant wraith of the Moonbeam Roads. Cran Liret cries out for physical form so that he may stride the earth once again and visit all manner of doom on the descendents of those who took arms against him. His conscience is still active and it sends forth messages, carried as dreams, to lure the perfect, unwitting body, to Sorcerers' Isle. Cran Liret seeks a worthy body to carry his fabulous essence; something young, strong, virile and attractive. He cares little if the body is human or Melnibonéan – only that it is worthy in his own, twisted schemes. The messages he sends, in the form of dreams, weave through the Multiverse, infecting the sleep of random individuals who, night after night, feel compelled to seek-out Sorcerers' Isle and present themselves to The Forge, where their bodies might merge with Cran Liret's soul. To date, Cran Liret has failed to find a body that meets his requirements, but all those who have failed to impress the imprisoned sorcerer have become his devotees, treating Cran Liret like a god. Despite having failed to offer him their bodies, they have still forfeited their souls and become disciples of the Spell Thief cult. So now they search the Young Kingdoms and other planes, looking for the perfect vessel for their demi-god's soul and stealing all manner of sorcerous magic and power both in honour of their master and to add to his already immense libraries.

Cran Liret's singular influence might be trapped but his doomed disciples wander the earth in his stead, seeking ways to release him – and if they succeed, his power and crazed ambition is such that he will claim his place alongside the Lords of Chaos and become a god.



Beliefs

The Spell Thieves believe that Cran Liret is a Chaos Lord in waiting. He is proof-positive that a mortal being can become a god and the disciples of the cult therefore have two aims: to bring Cran Liret physically back to the world and then to follow in his footsteps and become gods too, vassals of their Lord in Waiting.

Through this belief the cult has understood that immortality is attainable, that power need not be transient and that the Lords of Chaos can be met with, and challenged by, ambition and knowledge. Cran Liret is therefore worshipped both as an example of transcendence and transformation as well as a fledgling Chaos Lord. The cult believes that faithfulness to Cran Liret will result in their own transformation into minor dukes of Chaos, rewarded with their own worlds and hells to rule over.

But before that reward, cult members know that Cran Liret has a revenge to enact. The royal line of Melniboné and many

of its nobles, moved against the Spell Thief – and they must be punished. The cult therefore makes it its business to scour the world in search of the descendents of those who took part in the Battle of Sorcerers' Isle so that they can be identified accurately once Cran Liret achieves physical form once again.

Worshippers

Anyone can become one of Cran Liret's worshippers. The cult is a mixture of those unfortunates who have been infected by Cran Liret's dream messages, those who have stumbled upon the Spell Thief's teachings and actively sought-out the cult and those who have been seduced into joining the cult by existing cultists who spread the insolent promise of transformation and transcendence to the ranks of the Lords of Entropy.

Cultists therefore come from across the Young Kingdoms and planes of existence beyond it. Those unaffected by dreams (see 'The Spell Thief's Dreams', nearby) are likely to be individuals drawn naturally to the promise of Chaos who desire immediate power followed by transcendence to godhood. Thus, worshippers tend to be ambitious, sometimes crazed, and lured by all that Chaos has to offer. The Spell Thief cult is attractive to Pan Tangians, Dharijorians, some Melnibonéans and anyone who craves personal advancement and the potential for immortality.

The krettii, those bestial savages of Sorcerers' Isle, are also Cran Liret worshippers but only in the most barbaric sense and none of them ever reach the active stages of the cult, although cultists do gain immunity from their aggression and champions of the cult can even command them.

Cult Ranks

Worshippers (Krettii)
Spell Thieves (Initiates)
Engineers (Acolytes)
Revengers (Champions)

The cult has only one priest – Maligaunt.

Spell Thieves

Initiates into the cult arise in one of three ways.

- They have successfully sought-out the cult and visited Sorcerers' Isle of their own volition.
- They have been recruited into the cult by an existing cultist who has taken them (willingly or otherwise) to Sorcerers' Isle.
- Cran Liret's incessant searching for the perfect vessel for his mighty intellect and soul have visited the potential Initiate as disturbing dreams, culminating in an overwhelming desire to travel to Sorcerers' Isle.

The initiation process/ritual is the same regardless of the way in which the cultist has reached the extensive ruins of Cran Liret's fortress on Sorcerers' Isle.

- The candidate is greeted by Maligaunt, Cran Liret's demonic servant who is also the High Priest of the cult.
- The candidate is placed, willingly or otherwise, into the Chaos Engine known as the *Savant*. This engine is linked to the Forge, which holds Cran Liret's soul.
- Cran Liret assesses the body and mind of the candidate. Irrespective of the candidate's qualities, it *will* be found wanting (Cran Liret is a most demanding sorcerer).
- The mind of the candidate, if it is resistant, is broken by the Savant. This involves the candidate resisting the Savant's Break Mind and Soul ability of 150% with their Persistence in an opposed contest. If the candidate resists, then Maligaunt releases them and tries to kill them physically.
- If the candidate is receptive, or has his mind and soul broken, then the purpose of the cult is communicated by Cran Liret himself. A *minimum* of five points of POW is taken to form the Pact (Cran Liret) – more, if the candidate is willing and wills it, to prove dedication.
- The Savant imposes the Gifts and Compulsion.

Once the initiation is complete, the candidate emerges from the Savant as Cran Liret's servant. A tearful Maligaunt welcomes the new Initiate and he is instructed to go forth into the world to find the perfect vessel for Cran Liret's vast intellect and to steal spells, magical knowledge and other information that will enable Cran Liret to take revenge against those who imprisoned him.

Engineers

The Acolytes of the cult are inculcated into the true nature of Cran Liret's power by Maligaunt. To become an Engineer (or Chaos Engineer), the cultist must satisfy all of the following conditions:

- Pact (Cran Liret) 50% or greater.
- Have sacrificed eight points of POW to the Pact, or be prepared to do so.
- Have brought back at least four potential vessels for Cran Liret's consideration (which may or may not have become Initiates into the cult).
- Obtained, or assisted in obtaining, information relating to Cran Liret's enemies' descendents and where they can be found.

Engineers are taught some of Cran Liret's sorcerous knowledge in return for their continued devotion to the Pact. They must also accept a further Compulsion and may take a further Gift.

Priest

The cult of the Spell Thieves has only one priest: the demon Maligaunt, a cadaverous, devious, knowledge demon that, through powerful pacts, is chained to the Young Kingdoms until Cran Liret chooses to release him. Maligaunt is devoted to Cran Liret's cause, being both a loving disciple and resentful prisoner. Maligaunt, like Cran Liret, cannot leave Sorcerers' Isle but most likely would not even if the power was granted to him. The faithful demon loves Cran Liret like a father.

Maligaunt, Demon (Knowledge)

High Priest of the Spell Thieves (ICMP summoning)

Maligaunt is tall and spindle-thin. His head is almost bald, save for a few wisps of pale hair that flutter behind his scalp whether a breeze exists or not. His face borders on the skeletal and his eyes shine with a golden light. As demons go, he is human enough to gaze upon but he possesses incredible strength and reflexes, making him a fearsome opponent in combat. His Need is to consume his weight in excrement each month and he has cleverly worked the collection of Krettii waste into the religious rituals conducted in Cran Liret's name. He feasts in private when he has precisely the right quantity and, as a result, the scent of faeces always accompanies him.

	Value	1D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
STR	15	1-3	Right Leg	-/9
CON	23	4-6	Left Leg	-/9
SIZ	19	7-9	Abdomen	-/10
INT	38	10-12	Chest	-/11
POW	34	13-15	Right Arm	-/8
DEX	31	16-18	Left Arm	-/8
CHA	16	19-20	Head	-/9

Combat Actions	6
Damage Modifier	+1D4
Magic Points	34

Typical Armour: None

Traits: Nerveless – Maligaunt feels no pain and is unaffected by Serious Wounds

Maligaunt can see 4 years into the past and 4 days into the future with an accuracy of 114%

Movement	8m
Strike Rank	+35

Skills: Athletics 46%, Influence 48%, Language (High Speech) 114%, Language (Low Speech) 114%, Lore (Bright Empire) 114%, Lore (Chaos) 114%, Lore (Chaos Engines) 114%, Lore (Cran Liret) 114%, Lore (Krettii) 114%, Persistence 102%, Resilience 69%.

Pact (Cran Liret) 100%
Rune of Dissolution 102%
Command (Krettii only) 102%

Gifts and Compulsions

Immortal
Serve Cran Liret for eternity
Must consume faeces every day as sustenance

Combat Styles

None

Revenger (Champion)

Revengers are expected to act as Cran Liret's direct representatives abroad in the Multiverse. Cran Liret himself commands them and their escapades take them across many planes as they actively hunt-down and destroy all those who are descended from the Melnibonéan forces (and those who colluded with them – which includes petulant and victimised sorcerers from other planes of existence) responsible for ending Cran Liret's reign.

To become a Revenger, *all* of the following conditions must be fulfilled:

- Pact (Cran Liret) 70% or greater.
- Have sacrificed 10 points of POW to the Pact or be prepared to do so.
- Have brought back at least 10 potential vessels for Cran Liret's consideration (which may or may not have become Initiates into the cult).
- Obtained, or assisted in obtaining, information relating to Cran Liret's enemies' descendents and where they can be found.
- Have developed one sorcery skill (a Rune or Summoning) to 90% or greater.
- Know all the skills of the Spell Thief cult.

Revengers must accept another Compulsion and may take a further Gift if they so wish. Further benefits are discussed later.

Duties

Members of the Spell Thief cult are expected to perform the following duties:

All

- Make a pilgrimage to Sorcerers' Isle once per year and give grovelling thanks to Cran Liret.
- Identify, and bring to Sorcerers' Isle, potential bodies for Cran Liret's soul to inhabit. Male or female; he cares little. Those unsuitable for possession may become new Initiates or be killed and fed to the krettii.
- Actively engage in learning everything possible about Cran Liret's enemies and their descendents.
- Prepare for waging war (covert, overt and sorcerous) against the ungrateful idiots who caused Cran Liret's demise.

Spell Thieves

As previous.

Engineers

- As for previous but to also actively seek-out those with sorcerous knowledge, understand their capabilities and return with this information to Cran Liret so that he can make a judgement on whether or not what they know is worth stealing.
- Seek out, and understand, devices, artefacts or machines that have been used in the manipulation of Chaos and its energies.

Revengers

- As for previous but to undertake all tasks as directly ordered by Cran Liret himself, including the murder/assassination of specific individuals.
- Actively work to undermine the efforts of rival sorcerers, including murder, if necessary.
- Actively work to undermine any attempts made by Melniboné or its inhabitants to rebuild the Bright Empire.

Benefits

Benefits come in several forms: Gifts (and, correspondingly, Compulsions); training in mundane skills Cran Liret values; magical instruction; secrets known only to Cran Liret and imparted only to his most loyal and faithful servants.

Gifts and Compulsions

Available on attaining a new rank, or on a further dedication of POW to the Pact.

Gift

Animal Familiar
Chaotic Blessing
Divine Training
Eternal Life
Rune
Second Life
Sense Million Spheres
Slave
Neutralise Rune
Witch Sight

Compulsions

Chaotic Disdain
Corpse-Like
Hate Imrryr
Insomnia
Kleptomania
Mechanical Fetish
Melnibonéan Traits
Paranoid
Pyrophobia
Target (Law and Cran Liret's enemies)

Cult Skills

Skills are taught by Maligaunt and other (Non-Player Character) agents of the cult. The favoured skills of the cult are:

Language (High Speech), Language (Low Speech), Lore (Million Spheres), Lore (World), Stealth.

Cult Magic

Cran Liret is capable of casting *all* Runes and Summonings at 90%. However, trapped in his Forge, he is able to provide sorcerous training via the Savant in the following disciplines:

Runes: Chaos, Contact, Darkness, Deception, Leeching, Passing, Raising.

Summonings: Demon of Desire, Demon of Knowledge; Control.

Secrets

When a cultist reaches the rank of Revenger, he receives knowledge of one secret for every five points of POW dedicated to his Pact with Cran Liret. Secrets are rolled randomly. Whether the secrets are true or not is entirely within the province of the Games Master.

Retribution

Betraying or leaving the cult of the Spell Thieves results in the apostate becoming the immediate target of every single one of Cran Liret's loyal agents. They stop at nothing to hunt-down and kill (slowly and painfully) traitors. In addition Cran Liret sends tortuous nightmares to haunt those who betray him – dreams of such potency that have their dreadful birthplaces in the seventh, unnamed Dream Realm.

Secrets of Cran Liret

1D10	Secret
1	Only a Melnibonéan of the direct royal line is good enough to become the vessel of Cran Liret's soul.
2	The Lords of Law seek the destruction of the Young Kingdoms and intend to use Melniboné to achieve this goal. Melniboné must therefore be destroyed and its populace put to death.
3	Cran Liret has scattered eight Chaos Engines throughout the Multiverse. Three are in the Young Kingdoms but others are hidden in planes close by. If brought together in one place, their combined power will transform those faithful to Cran Liret into a Duke of Chaos with the powers of creation and ability to commune with the Lords of Hell directly.
4	Cran Liret's treasure hoard, buried deep below the ruins, was untouched by Melniboné's destruction. Amongst the treasures are Cran Liret's Chaos Engine grimoires and a Dragon Horn, stolen from the Dyvim dragon masters of Imrryr.
5	Cran Liret knows the location of the Dead Gods' Book, along with the incantations necessary to open it without the pages crumbling to dust. He will teach it to a worthy student.
6	One of Cran Liret's pacts was with Pyaray. When Melniboné attacked him, he called upon Pyaray to assist and the Whisperer of Impossible Secrets sank an entire battle barge off the coast of Sorcerers' Isle. It is intact, albeit crewed by the doomed souls of its sailors and can be raised if Pyaray is appeased in the right ways.
7	On the plane known to Melnibonéans as Anorashoon there lives a race of sorcerer-hermits who have the ability to create miniature worlds that are held in glass bottles. Their magic is too strong to steal but they are worshipped like gods in Anorashoon, by the bestial race not unlike the krettii.
8	Within Cran Liret's hidden treasure hoard, below the ruins of the island, is a Dream Couch taken from Imrryr. Those who use it gain access to the Three Year Dream of Emerald, which the Empress Terhali used to tame three minor dukes of Chaos who threatened rebellion against the Bright Empire. Taking the dreamquest prepares the sleeper for god-hood.
9	Six planes close to that of the Young Kingdoms are ruled by senile Lords of Law who are wavering in their conviction to their cause. These are the planes Cran Liret intends to conquer once he is free and he intends to place one of his Champions on each plane as its demi-god ruler of Chaos. But first, each of the senile Lords of Law must be destroyed – which can only be accomplished with the weapon known as the Spear of Miggea.
10	The Dharzi Overlord Angh-an-Nagha lives still, his body encased in a sarcophagus of jet buried somewhere on the Isle of Purple Towns. Cran Liret used the same principles of the sarcophagus for designing the Forge, his own tomb, so he knows that Angh-an-Nagha is alive but sleeping. If awakened, he would seek revenge on Melniboné.

Politics

Cran Liret was an arrogant sorcerer and his cult reflects his arrogance. Its members believe that Cran Liret is a living god, the equal of the Lords of Chaos, and that they will be made into living gods through helping Cran Liret achieve his grand ambition – to rule the Multiverse.

For this reason the cult of the Spell Thieves is abhorred by most other cults of Chaos and is viewed as being especially dangerous by the very few Melnibonéans who are sober enough to consider such things. Yet despite its arrogance, the cult is still considered a potent force because Cran Liret was such a remarkable sorcerer and scholar of the Multiverse. For all their hatred and disdain of the Spell Thieves, the other cults of Chaos tolerate its practices and, from time-to-time, seek the help of its agents in their own agendas.

Internally the cult is a fractured mess. Members of the cult vie with each other for the attentions of Maligant and Cran Liret, always

seeking to advance their personal standing at the expense of the other worshippers. Cran Liret delights in such petty jealousies and, through Maligaunt, plays groups of worshippers off against each other as a form of bizarre entertainment or game. Spell Thief cultists find it difficult to co-operate in anything but very small, tightly-knit groups and it is common to find several such groups sent independently in pursuit of the same prize, just for Cran Liret's personal amusement.

Relationships

The Spell Thieves treat the other cults of Chaos with disdain but regard them as valuable sources of information and potential theft.

Law is hated but only slightly more than the other Chaos cults. Curiously, Cran Liret has grudging respect for the cult of Miggea – a Duchess of Law who is every bit as power-hungry, arrogant and selfish as himself.

Of the elemental cults, Cran Liret is unconcerned. He knows that the elementals refrain from becoming involved in the grand schemes of the Eternal Struggle and he has decided that, once he has achieved apotheosis, he will strike bargains with the Elemental Lords that will force them to renege their age-old pacts with Imrryr.

DRAGON CULTS

'Melnibonéans claimed direct kinship with the Phoorn dragons. In another age they had shared the same names, the same quarters, the same power. In ancient history, it was said dragons had ruled Melniboné as kings. Whatever the truth, Elic and his kind could drink dragon venom, which killed most other creatures. The venom was so powerful that it ignited in the air as soon as it spewed from the dragons' mouths. I knew all this, because Elic knew it.'

— *The Dreamthief's Daughter*

To the people of Melniboné the dragons are far more than simply a race of mighty creatures that helped Imrryr build an empire: they are blood-kin, ancestors even, that are revered as strongly as any god. The affix 'Dyvim' means Dragonlord and all who bear that title – emperors and nobles of the court of Melniboné – are all members of that most elite of Melnibonéan cults: the Cult of the Dragon, or Dragon-Kin.



Purpose and History

The dragons of Melniboné are older than the race who reveres them and wiser too. In the earliest days of the Mernii, before the people migrated to the island that would be named Melniboné, there was a sense amongst many that the Mernii were separated from a race that, inhuman, like them, was both alien and brother. Their migration to Melniboné was no accident: seers of the Mernii detected an ancient calling that spoke to the residual kinship and directed them to the island where the dragons slumbered – as though waiting for their smaller, mortal brothers to arrive.

The dragons reached out in dreams to the awe-struck Mernii and there, in dreams, the first bond between dragons and mortals was born. This was a unique relationship: no other race but the Mernii could have melded minds and souls so eloquently with the dragons. This was a bond that not even the Lords of Chaos, who watched, curiously, could break. This was a bond that the Lords of Chaos could not even share with the dragons. The dragons, the *phoorn*, were aloof from all such matters and scornful of gods. But, the Mernii, they loved.

The Mernii learned DreamQuesting from the phoorn and, through it, developed the ability to control and rouse the dragons from their long slumbers. Those first riders, the first Dyvim (a word which means Dragon-Kin more than it does Dragonlord)

took the dragons out across the world to explore – not to plunder or destroy. The primitives they encountered were dumbfounded and even worshipped the Dyvim as gods. The legends of dragons had always been strong but no one had ever contemplated that the dragons could be controlled. This reverence for the Dyvim sowed strong seeds for the peaceful empire that the Mernii created.

Foes from the east attacked the Mernii and forced them into the defence of their fledgling empire. At first the Dyvim flew out to scare and deter but the barbarians who came to destroy were not so primitive or superstitious. The Falkryn, as they were known, were battle-hardened and commanded their own sorcery and this is what faced the Dyvim as they sought to protect their lands. It was then that the dragons unleashed their most potent weapon: the dreadful venom that ignited on contact with the air and scorched the Falkryn ranks so badly that the army was forced to retreat. Their empire defended, the Dyvim returned but also found that using the dragons in this way forced them to sleep for many years so that venom reserves could be rebuilt.

In time the Dragonlords learned how to use the might of the dragons tactically, allowing some to sleep and some to wake so that a reserve of battle-ready dragons was always to hand. When the Mernii warred amongst themselves, the Melnibonéans arose, allied with Chaos and the Dyvim sided with them. This meant that Chaos itself – and it may have been part of their agenda from the start – gained the dragons as one of their tools in the Eternal Struggle.

In the era of the Young Kingdoms the power of the Dragonlords is still potent but following the war with the Dharzi the dragons have been left all but spent. Only a handful are wakeful enough to call upon and the sight of Imrryr's dragons soaring across the skies is but a distant memory. The cult exists to tend to the slumbering dragons, engaging in DreamQuests with them and remain prepared for when Melniboné will next need to call upon the *phoorn*.

Myths

The dragons are a race more ancient than any in the myriad worlds. The Great Dragon, First Phoorn, may even have created the Multiverse as part of a vast and complex dream and all mortals live within that dream. In some realms the dragons are masters, needing never to sleep to regain their powers and ruling all things with an intellect that cannot be comprehended.

The dragons of the original realm at the heart of the Multiverse grew restless and needed to explore. They flew the Moonbeam Roads between the Millions Spheres and found new lands where new eggs were laid and new territories commanded. In one such realm they came across a tall, proud, fair race that did not fear them and treated them as they would any sentient species. This drew the phoorn to this strange, small, bipedal people and a kinship developed. The mortals watched the eggs of the dragons and guarded them whilst the dragons slept or dreamed themselves into new realms.

Something caused the races of mortals and dragons to flee this idyll: a great and terrible power that sought to corrupt both. The dragons were forced to flee in one direction and the mortals in another. They became lost, a million worlds and ages between them, but that old and primitive kinship grew stronger rather than weaker.

When the mortals settled a new realm they faced many trials alone and began to forget the kinship with the phoorn – although it always tugged at their hearts and souls. Finally, in dreams, one dragon called out to the prophet of the mortals and showed that the phoorn occupied the same reality and only geography now divided them. The people, calling themselves the Mernii, crossed an ocean to find the secluded island where the phoorn had taken to their caves and slept.

Mortal and dragon were united again.

Beliefs

The philosophy of the dragon cult is simple: to protect and honour their kin, sharing experiences and growing as brothers and sisters. The Dragonlords believe that they and the dragons are all part of the same consciousness and, perhaps, even the same species. This strength of belief creates the emotional and intellectual bond that allows the Dyvim to control and ride the dragons and the dragons are happy to be commanded – gently, lovingly – by their riders.

It is believed that, when a Dragonlord dies, his soul merges with that of the dragon in an eternal DreamQuest known as the Dream of All Ages. The soul becomes one with the dragon and is reborn as a dragon, albeit in a separate reality. Thus, all dragons, wherever they exist, are united through their dreaming and all races who are kin of the Mernii and the Melnibonéans are united through their draconic bond.

Worshippers

Only nobles of Imrryr can join the Dragon Cult and there are certain conditions.

- The candidate must have a minimum POW and CHA of 15.
- The trust of a dragon must first be won.
- It requires an opposed roll of the candidate's Persistence against that of a dragon to gain the dragon's trust. If the roll fails, it cannot be reattempted.
- The candidate must spend a number of months of patient training, meditation and interaction with the dragon's dreams (using a dream couch) equal to the dragon's POW. Once this has been accomplished a Pact is formed between rider and dragon; treat this as a Pact skill equal to POW+CHA as its starting value.
- The candidate must then try to awaken his dragon. Attempting to awaken a dragon from sleep requires an opposed roll between the Pact and the dragon's Persistence.

If all these conditions are met or succeed, then the candidate is inducted into the elite ranks of the Dyvim. When his Pact skill

with his dragon reaches 70% or more, he may use Dyvim as a suffix to his own name.

The cult has no ranks other than Initiates and Dyvim. The Dyvim are the lords of the dragon caves and only Initiates and Dyvim are allowed to enter them. All ranks are permitted to DreamQuest with their chosen dragon and, through such DreamQuests, Melniboné's knowledge and power has grown and matured.

Duties

All members of the cult are sworn to protect the dragons and consider them kin in all ways. As the dragons sleep for many years there is little for the cult's members to do save visit the caves frequently and dream, from time-to-time, with their chosen dragon. However, in a time of threat, the Dyvims of the cult meet to decide how the dragons – and which dragons in particular – should be roused for battle. Foremost of the Dragonlords, Dyvim Tvar, acts as personal counsel on draconic matters to the emperor and he, in consultation with the emperor, takes all final decisions.

When the dragons are roused and ready to fly, members of the cult are the riders and they are expected to fly into battle – and to die – with their dragons as directed by the cult and the emperor.

Benefits

Members of the cult gain the prestige of having a direct kinship with a dragon. The Pact allows cult members to DreamQuest with the dragon and this practice is expected to happen once per year.

The nature of the DreamQuest follows the general rules for DreamQuesting found in the *Elric of Melniboné* Core Rules on page 74 but the nature of the dream that the cultist participates in can be randomly determined if necessary.

Gifts and Compulsions

Forming a Pact with a dragon brings with it one Gift and one Compulsion. DreamQuesting may bring additional Gifts or Compulsions but these are always at the Games Master's discretion and depend on the nature of the DreamQuest.

Dragon's Dreams

1D100	Dream Type
01–10	Visiting the Young Kingdoms' distant past, before the arrival of mortals. DreamQuests of this nature may involve races that pre-date humans and Melnibonéans, such as the Doomed Folk.
11–20	Visiting Other Planes of Existence where dragons are dominant and, perhaps, more active.
21–40	Reliving old victories from the glory days of the Bright Empire.
41–60	Reliving and reshaping old defeats and struggles, to learn from the experience.
61–65	Visiting the future, when the world has changed considerably and is unrecognisable to the cultist. The future may even seem to be another plane.
66–90	General dreams of an alien, draconic nature, where the dragon simply muses and collects its thoughts.
91–95	Dreams of the current world, where the dragon's consciousness extends through the fabric of the present so that the dreamer gains a perspective of things happening now and in distant lands.
96–00	Nightmarish dreams where the dragons destroy and run rampant. This may inculcate similar, cruel, amoral feelings in the dreamer.

Gifts

Combat Acuity
Enhanced Learning
Fate
Increased Reactions
Rune
Sense Enemies

Compulsions

Acute Insomnia
Dedicated Lover
Forbidden Knowledge
Forgetful
Hyperactive
Merciless
Never Ending Search
Nightmares

Cult Skills

Lance and Spear Combat Styles, Athletics, Insight, Lore (Dragons), Lore (Million Spheres), Meditation.

Cult Magic

None.

Retribution

The bond between cultist and dragon is unique and permanent. It cannot be severed and no Melnibonéan would ever renege on the relationship. Those who are separated from their dragons for any extended period become morose and taciturn, yearning to seek their beloved phoorn once more. There is, however, no other retribution.

Politics

The cult holds high standing in the Imrryrian Court and the Dragonlords are held as paragons of the Melnibonéan ideal. This causes some tension with other factions in Imrry's fractious politics, especially amongst those who have tried – and failed – to become dragon masters.

Cult Secrets: Imenthi'er — The Dragon Graves of Melniboné

'What happens when they die?'

'They do not die. They are immortal, perhaps. No dragon prince of Imrryr has yet seen a dragon die.'

'Then what happens when they are killed? I know they can be killed, because several dragons were mortally wounded in the war with the Dharzi.'

'Ah — yes. That is a different proposition altogether. When a dragon is killed, or when it is injured and cannot be healed through sleep, then it is taken to Imenthi'er. But that is a secret that only the Dragon Lords know.'

— A discussion between Dyvim Tvar and the young Prince Elric, concerning the fate of dragons.

The dragons of Imrryr are thought to be immortal; certainly they are long-lived, existing long before the Melnibonéans settled their island and their lifespans may therefore be unending. But, on occasion, dragons can be mortally injured (as Prince Elric notes, the last such occasion was during the war with the Dharzi, long centuries before) and, when these occasions fall, the dragon is taken to Imenthi'er.

Imenthi'er is a Melnibonéan High Tongue word referring to both a ceremony and a place. The ceremony is the preparation and transportation of the dragon's body for burial and the place is the secret valley, known only to the Dragon Lords of Imrryr, where the vast graves of slain dragons are located. This section details *Imenthi'er* as both ritual and location.

The Ritual

The death of a dragon is a time of great mourning for all Melnibonéans but especially the Dragon Lords — those who carry the Dyvim prefix to their name — and the Dragon Lord who rode the dead dragon. It is traditional for the dragon's rider to take his own life, using a ceremonial blade, carved from the claw of the dead dragon, to slit his own belly and throat, and then for his corpse, clad in the war gear of a Dragon Lord, to accompany the procession to *Imenthi'er* itself. Even though Melnibonéans are an unsentimental race, the bond between them and the dragons is powerful enough to provoke such grief in the ones who ride the dragons into battle.

The bodies of dragon and rider are placed on matching plinths in the Square of the Scale and Claw in the northern quarter of the city and here the nobles of Melniboné parade in solemn silence before the fallen, paying their respects with a bow of the head and the scattering of chrysanthemum petals at the feet of the plinths of dragon and rider. Once the last noble has passed the twin catafalques, 12 slaves are ritually killed at the base of the dragon's plinth and then dressed in fine robes of samite and silk. These 12

will be the servants of the dragon and rider in whatever afterlife exists beyond the mortal realm. The act is symbolic more than being a genuine belief in any form of afterlife but being chosen as one of the slaves to die in the *Imenthi'er* ritual is considered a great honour.

Hundreds more slaves carry the bodies of dragon and rider to the harbour, where, resplendent in the colours of the dragon's livery, a specially prepared battle barge waits to accept the cargo. The barge's decks have been cleared so that the body of the dragon can be easily accommodated and the barge's crew lines the hind decks as the dragon and its rider are lowered, reverentially, onto the waiting ship.

From Imrryr, the ship sails through the Sea Maze and out into the Dragon Sea, sailing first east for a day and then turning and sailing up towards the coastline of the northern continent. The barge passes Vilmir and Ilmiora, sailing for precisely eight days until a mist-shrouded, rocky isle, rises into view. This is the island of Guladd'rin; no more than 10 kilometres in width but densely forested and protected by a sea mist that keeps it obscured from all but the most knowledgeable sea captains. Those who know of the island steer clear of it; the mists hide powerful currents and treacherous rocks that tear away keels and hole boats below the waterline. Guladd'rin is an island of ghosts, the mariners believe, and to land there is to perish.

But the battle barge bearing the body of the dragon lands there; it circles the coast until the harbour is reached — a long, wide, stone jetty designed to accommodate a single battle barge, the jetty wide enough to accommodate the body of a dragon. On the jetty waits the immense, ornately carved wagon, decorated with runes and images of dragons and covered in gold leaf. The barge docks and the dragon's body is transferred to the wagon. Slaves, brought to Guladd'rin for this purpose, then pull the wagon inland, following the road of marble that winds into the interior of the island, the land rising steadily around it, until the *Imenthi'er* Valley is reached. This is the final resting place of the dragon; the place where it will join its kin in death, its body placed, with all reverence, in a mausoleum prepared specifically for dragons.

The valley is filled with mausoleums: vast ziggurats that stretch in lines on either side of the marble road, shadowed by the steep valley sides, for six kilometres. There are 30 ziggurats and it is believed that no more than 30 dragons can ever die. Only six of the ziggurats are occupied and once the bodies of dragon and rider have been taken into the ziggurat and placed on the waiting catafalque, the ziggurat is sealed (the slaves who brought the dragon on this final journey are entombed with it) from within. The Melnibonéans then return to their barge and sail for home.

The Ziggurats of Imenthi'er

Each ziggurat is a stepped pyramid with many steps, made from the gleaming white marble found on the island and every single stone ornately carved with leering faces, draconic motifs and, on the very apex of the pyramid, a marble representation of the

Typical Imenthi'er Dragon Mausoleum Ziggurat



dragon that the ziggurat holds or is destined to hold. Although the ziggurats conform to a similar design, they are unique in their carvings and accoutrements.

Neither are the ziggurats of Melnibonéan design: this is obvious to any Melnibonéan, or any Adventurer succeeding in a Lore (World) roll. Melniboné did not prepare the Imenthi'er Valley for the dragons but it was clearly taught that, when a dragon dies, this is where it should be brought. The race that built Imenthi'er may well have been the race that forged Stormbringer and Mournblade and the runes that decorate the carved walls of the ziggurats bear some resemblance to the runes that grace those treacherous runeswords. But other than this, the architects of Imenthi'er remain a mystery. The Dragon Lords of Imrryr believe that the Emperors of Melniboné have a particular DreamQuest involving Imenthi'er but as the nature of the DreamQuest is known only to the emperors, none can be sure.

A typical mausoleum ziggurat is 60 metres high and 50 metres at the base. Only one set of doors is built into the structure, at ground level, and is 10 metres high and five metres wide. If a ziggurat is occupied, then the doorway is sealed by a massive slab of carved marble. The carvings are more of the leering faces and swirling runes which, whilst reminiscent of the Melnibonéan High Tongue is a different language altogether. The runes articulate the dragon's full, true name – a name that is unpronounceable to humans and one that, if studied to any degree, drives even the strongest mind insane.

It is possible to walk inside an unoccupied ziggurat. Strategically carved slits in the stone of the upper steps of the ziggurat allow light to flood in, illuminating the catafalque reserved for the dragon. This plinth is made of yet more marble inlaid with gold and its upper surface can be reached via a series of wide steps

on the east side of the plinth. The catafalque is 10 metres high and in its base is a single door of stone that can be opened on a successful Athletics (Brute Force) roll. Within is a chamber running the full length of the catafalque and in an unoccupied ziggurat is empty; but, if a dragon has been entombed, then the catafalque crypt contains the saddle, spurs, lance and other regalia of a dragon rider. The rider is also buried in here, in a stone sarcophagus located at the head end of the catafalque. This sarcophagus is inscribed, in the High Tongue of Melniboné, with the Dragon Lord's name and an Imrryrian haiku summarising his deeds.

Around the outside of the catafalque are statues of dragons. Every ziggurat has precisely 12 such statues and each is a

representation of the dragon at different stages in its life; from egg through the death. Intricately, perfectly carved, the statues are several metres high and exquisite in their beauty. Collectors of such things would pay hundreds of thousands of silver for a single statue and an entire set is priceless. Such statues would be popular in Hwamgaarl and the courts of certain kings where Melnibonéan artefacts are both revered and reviled but draconic imagery is valued above all else.

If a ziggurat is closed, then within are also the bodies of the slaves who brought the dragon on its final journey, and laid it to rest on the catafalque, and its rider within. The final act of the slaves is to activate the great stone levers that bring down the closing slab, sealing them within the catafalque forever. These slaves starve to death and whilst some lie down to accept their fate, the remains of others, desiccated by the dryness of the ziggurat's interior, can be found in dreadfully contorted positions, having died in agony.

Who Would Rob a Dragon Tomb?

Few know of the secrets of Imenthi'er and few human sea captains would approach the island. But some might and rumours persist of a dragon's graveyard somewhere outside Imrryr. The temptations for persistent collectors, curious sorcerers and greedy grave robbers will eventually lead people to Imenthi'er Valley.

Unsealed Ziggurats

Unsealed ziggurats contain the statues of the dragon that may, one day, be held in the mausoleum. Each statue weighs in the region of 24,000 kg, making them difficult to move but not impossible. Moving a statue triggers a random effect – all part of the master plan of the ziggurat's master builders to deter theft. Roll on the following table to determine what happens if one of

the statues is moved as much as a fraction of an inch from its resting place.

1D6	Trap
1-2	The door slab starts to close. People inside the ziggurat have 2d4 rounds to get out before they are entombed within.
3-4	A slab of rock, anchored eight metres above the floor of the ziggurat, is dislodged and tumbles down, inflicting 6D6 damage on anyone beneath who fails to make an Athletics roll to get clear.
5-6	The floor beneath the statue suddenly tilts. Those standing on the tilting rock must make Athletics rolls to leap clear or fall into the 10 metre deep pit, sustaining falling damage. The stone above swings back into place and locks, trapping the prisoners beneath: it requires a combined STR of 100 to unlock the stone and tilt it so that the prisoners can be rescued.

Dragon's Dream

If a statue is successfully removed from the ziggurat and brought back to the Young Kingdoms, it fetches easily 1D6 x 100,000 silvers, if sold to the right collector (which would include any number of Young Kingdoms cults, serving both Law and Chaos). However, the statue comes with the curse of its makers. Whoever possesses a dragon statue is fine for 1D6 months – the amount of time it takes for his soul to come to the attention of the slumbering dragons of Imrryr. Gradually, the dreams of the statue's owner become sucked into the dreams of the dragons and the collector is trapped inside the dreamscape of dragons – the equivalent of a dream of the Seventh, un-named Dream Realm. The Dragon Dream has an Intensity of 7D4, making it a risky proposition for all but the strongest Dream Thieves to tackle.

Inside the dream, the dreamer is trapped in a hellish, draconian world where the great wyrms rule and the lesser races of the multiverse are playthings and prey, treated like animals, and subjected to the inhuman, unsympathetic whims of the dragons. The dragons create micro-realities to torment the lesser races, which dissolve and reform as the dragons see fit, and, indeed, the dragons are every bit as powerful of the Lords and Law and Chaos (so powerful, in fact, that even the Lords of Chaos dare not enter the dream realm of dragons).

Any human mind trapped for a number of days greater than the dreamer's undedicated POW is driven permanently insane, even if it can be rescued. If the mind remains in the dream scape for more than twice the number of undedicated POW in days, then the dreamer dies as his soul is devoured by the slumbering dragons of Imrryr's dragon caves.

Once the dragon dream has been activated, there is no way of stopping it. Even returning a stolen statue to its ziggurat is no release: only a powerful and experienced Dream Thief has any hope of saving the entrapped soul.

Sealed Ziggurats

Breaking into a sealed ziggurat is no easy feat. The enormous slabs of marble that bar the entrance must be moved with sorcery or a combined STR of 300 or more. Inside, the tomb robbers find the bodies of the slaves, plus the body of the dragon and, within the catafalque, the body of the rider – along with the riches of the regalia of a Dragon Lord, which, again, to a collector, are worth 1D6 x 10,000 silver.

The sarcophagus of the Dragon Lord is Imrryr-made and protected with the rune of Bewilderment, which is charged with 10 Magic Points and affects all five senses. If the sarcophagus is opened, whoever opened it has all five senses scrambled and immediately forgets where, and who, he is. His memory returns only when he leaves the island but he is also left with a fear of what the island holds and cannot return there, having gained a deep paranoia of the ghosts the place contains.

If the remains of the dragon are disturbed, there are no immediate repercussions. However, if any part of the remains – scale, hide, bones and so forth – are removed from the ziggurat, then whoever does the removing is subjected to the Dragon's Dream punishment, as outlined earlier. Dragons should be left to rest in peace – tampering with the body of a dragon brings about the magical wrath of all living dragons.



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