

Michael Moorcock's

# SPARK OF MELNIBONÉ

Cults of the Young  
Kingdoms







Michael Moorcock's

# ELRIC OF MELNIBONÉ

## CULTS OF THE YOUNG KINGDOMS

### CREDITS

**AUTHOR**  
Lawrence Whitaker

**EDITOR**  
Charlotte Law

**LAYOUT**  
Will Chapman

**COVER ART**  
Pascal Quidault

**LOGO**  
Iordanis Lazaridis

**INTERIOR  
ILLUSTRATIONS**  
Chad Sergesketter,  
Furman, Leonardo  
Borazio and Phil  
Renne

**SPECIAL THANKS**  
Michael Moorcock &  
Richard Watts

**ADDITIONAL  
THANKS**  
Ian Kaufman & John  
White

### CONTENTS

Introduction	2
Law and Chaos	4
The Elementals	9
The Powers of Growth	13
Cult Nomenclature	15
Cults of Chaos	26
Cults of Law	74
Cults of the Elements	98
Ancestor and Personality Cults	117
Societies and Secrets	137
Grand Passions	150
Index	153

## COPYRIGHT INFORMATION

*Elric of Melniboné; Cults of the Young Kingdoms* ©2008 Mongoose Publishing. All rights reserved. Reproduction of of this work by any means without the written permission of the publisher is expressly forbidden. All art and text herein are copyrighted by Mongoose Publishing. All significant characters, names, places and items featured in *Elric of Melniboné; Cults of the Young Kingdoms* the distinctive likenesses thereof and related elements are trademarks of Michael Moorcock and Multiverse Inc.

This game product contains no Open Game Content. No portion of this work may be reproduced in any form without written permission. To learn more about the Open Game License, please go to [www.mongoosepublishing.com](http://www.mongoosepublishing.com).

This material is protected under the copyright laws of the United Kingdom. This product is a work of fiction. Any similarity to actual people, organisations, places or events is purely coincidental.

*RuneQuest* is a trademark (TM) of Issaries, Inc. Produced under license from Issaries. All rights reserved. Printed in the USA.





# INTRODUCTION

*'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!'*

*While the Gods Laugh*

Elric, most astute of the scholars of the Young Kingdoms, mires himself in hopelessness but shrieks the truth – perhaps to the mirth of the gods. There is no salvation in this world. Only malevolent doom. Aye, Elric understands the truth of it but his knowledge and understanding are unique. Around him, throughout the Young Kingdoms, humans search for what Elric knows can never exist: salvation; hope; a meaning for existence; a reason for why they struggle and toil.

To answer these questions, the most ardent searchers look to the higher powers; the Lords of Law and Entropy; the Elemental Lords and Lords of Beasts and Plants. Ancestors and demons are summoned from the abyss to offer hints and clues as to the meaning of existence. In his bid to understand – in his futile bid to gain some *control* – man places his faith in these higher powers believing that, through veneration, devotion and sacrifice, they will share some of their knowledge with his frail, mortal mind. In his folly man pledges his very soul to serve one Lord or another, attempting to surround their primeval, essential natures in ritual, oath and ceremony. The greater the mortal demonstration, it is hoped, then the greater the glory and recognition. The men of the Young Kingdoms continue to plough this futile furrow, blissfully ignorant of the fact that one man, Elric of Melniboné, has already deduced the answer – and it has driven him to despair.

This book expands upon the material found in the *Lord of the Million Spheres* chapter of the *Elric of Melniboné* rules. 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 characters 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 Michael Moorcock has created, allowing Games Masters and Players to become greater exponents of the higher powers as they characters struggle to make sense of the world around them.

## CONTENTS

### CHAPTER ONE - LAW AND CHAOS: THE ETERNAL STRUGGLE

This important chapter outlines the nature of the Eternal Struggle between Law and Chaos. It lays the foundations for the way the cults of the Young Kingdoms work and provides context for the philosophies that they embody.

### CHAPTER TWO - THE ELEMENTAL POWERS: BATTLE FOR THE FORM OF THE EARTH

The role of the Elemental Lords in the formation of the Young Kingdoms and politics of the Higher Planes

### CHAPTER THREE - THE POWERS OF GROWTH; BEAST LORDS AND PLANT LORDS

An overview of how the Lords of Nature are engaged in the Eternal Struggle.

### CHAPTER FOUR - CULT NOMENCLATURE AND STRUCTURE

Presenting the format used for the cult descriptions, advice on what makes for a Player Character cultist and a complete listing of Gifts and Compulsions along with how these can be used as part of cult benefits.

### CHAPTER FIVE - CULTS OF CHAOS

Expansions to the each of the cults of Chaos, with detailed myths, reasons for being and the agendas of the Lords of Chaos.

## Chapter Six - Cults of Law

Expanded descriptions of the cults of Order, with detailed myths for the Lords of Law and the addition of Pozz-man-Llyr, Lord of the Sea.

## Chapter Seven - Cults of the Elements

Expanded treatments of the Elemental Cults, their interactions and detail on their views of each other.

## Chapter Eight - Ancestor and Personality Cults

Several new cults of both Law and Chaos: Aubec, Terhali and the Ancestor Worship of Oin and Yu.

## Chapter Nine - Secret and Esoteric Societies

Introducing the Mereghn – spies and assassins of Ilmiora; and the Sorcerer Adventurers of Quarzhasaat. Not cults per se but useful new societies to help and hinder adventuring characters.

## Chapter Ten - Grand Passions

Love and Hate and how to use them as part of the *Elric of Melniboné* game mechanics.

### What Else Do I Need to Use This Book?

Aside from the *Elric of Melniboné* rulebook, the most useful supplementary book is *Magic of the Young Kingdoms*. The *Elric of Melniboné Companion* may also prove to be of use but is by no means essential.

However the chief adjunct is your own imagination – and the willingness of the characters to risk their souls in the pursuit of the veneration of the Higher Powers.





# LAW AND CHAOS: THE ETERNAL STRUGGLE

*'I seek in it the Truth,' Elric said guardedly.*

*'There is no Truth but that of Eternal struggle,' the scarlet-flamed giant said with conviction.*

*'What rules above the forces of Law and Chaos?' Elric asked. 'What controls your destinies as it controls mine?'*

*The giant frowned. 'That question, I cannot answer. I do not know, There is only the Balance.'*

*While the Gods Laugh*

The Multiverse is the province of two, diametrically opposed powers: Law, which seeks stability and rational progression, ultimately to stagnation; and Chaos, which perpetuates continual, incessant, ungovernable change. These two forces, represented and personified by the Lords of Law and Chaos, are locked in a perpetual battle for supremacy. The mortal worlds about them are the spoils; the ultimate prize the ability to manipulate, mould and assert their will over what has been and what can be, created.

Left unchecked, either of these powers results in destruction and doom. Chaos continually disassembles, mutates and corrupts. Law represses, codifies, machinates and strangles. Singularly, neither force ultimately sustains life but when held in equilibrium, life flourishes and prospers. A stable universe requires balanced amounts of Law and Chaos if it is to function. So it is that the Cosmic Balance stands above Law and Chaos, checking the sway and list of each across a million spheres, attempting to ensure that neither side fatally overbalances the scales.

In some realms one of the forces dominates completely and in such realms, life is secondary to the whims and natures of the Lord or Lords who rule. However, in worlds such as the Young Kingdoms, neither Law nor Chaos has the upper hand; and in worlds such as the Young Kingdoms, where minds, souls and beliefs are malleable, the plane becomes a battleground – a cosmic chessboard – where the Lord of the Higher Powers joust for position, influence and control.

For the Eternal Struggle is little more than an Eternal Game. Mortals are playing pieces and the rules are both fixed and uncertain. For most, the game is removed and remote from their lives. Things happen and people accept it. Across the Young Kingdoms countless individuals are born, live and die, completely ignorant of the cosmic game that goes on about them. However those who seek to understand the nature of the board, the pieces and the rules of the game mark themselves out as willing pawns to manipulated by the Higher Power they choose to favour. The Eternal Struggle is *never* to the advantage of the human condition. The Lords of Law and Chaos will argue passionately otherwise but they are lying (or merely playing the game). The Eternal Struggle serves only those supernatural entities that represent and personify the essential nature of the two forces. Human life – all life – is secondary, abstract and expendable.

## THE CHAOS PERSPECTIVE: FIGHTING, NOT WINNING

*'I have been told that the knowledge contained in the Book could swing the balance on the side of the forces of Law. This disturbs me - but, it appears, there is another possibility which disturbs me even more.'*

*'What is that?' Elric said.*

*'It could create such a tremendous impact on the Multiverse that complete entropy would result. My Masters do not desire that, for it could mean the destruction of all matter in the end. We exist only to fight - not to win, but to preserve the eternal struggle.'*

*While the Gods Laugh*

Orunlu the Keeper, the Guardian of a book that, so Elric is led to believe, defines the nature of the cosmic struggle, encapsulates the philosophy and game-plan of Chaos perfectly. Its true intention is not to defeat Law completely but to continue the game and preserve the



competition between the two forces. Chaos knows that for either side to win spells complete doom and its strategy is to perpetuate struggle and conflict, seeking its own advantage but never to advance to a stage where complete destruction is guaranteed.

Very, very few in the Young Kingdoms are party to such knowledge. For most followers of the Lords of Chaos – those in the rank and file – the express intention is to defeat Law. However, the few that reach the exalted levels of high priesthood learn, through grimoires and forbidden understanding, that the real aim of Chaos is to simply perpetuate the fight. It is for this reason that most cults of Chaos are relatively low-key, relying on disparate agents and isolated priests to maintain the profile of Chaos, rather than engaging in outright warfare. Only one nation, Pan Tang, dares to go against this unwritten tenet and its actions inevitably cause the destruction Orunlu the Keeper warns Elric about. Paradoxically, Pan Tang's goals in instigating the final battle are not, principally, to vanquish Law and institute a realm of supreme Chaos but to emulate Melniboné's Bright Empire. As Sepiriz tells Elric in Stormbringer: *'He [Jagreen Lern] still refuses to realise that he is a puppet of Chaos and thinks he can rule over such supernatural might as the Dukes represent. But it is a certainty that with these friends Jagreen Lern can defeat the Southlands with a minimum of expenditure in arms and men. Without them he could do it, but it would take more time and effort...'*

Thus, there are men, mostly in Pan Tang, who believe that the Lords of Chaos are guarantors of power and an elite weapon to be used in gaining it; a mistake that the Bright Emperors of Melniboné never made. For its part, the Lords of Chaos are delighted to indulge those foolish mortals who believe that the Eternal Struggle is purely of one doctrine over another because it allows the struggle to be perpetuated.

Only when the Cosmic Balance veers so decisively towards the skein of Chaos do the Lords of Chaos sense that, there is, perhaps, a case for achieving complete victory. Appearing with his brother dukes of Hell, Arioch himself wryly notes: *'We have forgotten this [the Cosmic Balance] for good reason, mortal. The balance has tipped to such an extent in our favour that it is no longer adjustable. We triumph!'* But, even in this moment of insane posturing, Arioch is prepared to make Elric a Lord of Chaos, seeking to perpetuate the battle against Law, rather than declare an ultimate triumph.



In the years before Pan Tang's rise and Jagreen Lern's machinations, then, Chaos's influence in the Young Kingdoms is deliberately limited and inconspicuous. Only Pan Tang maintains insane temples, filled with howling, maddened priests; elsewhere Chaos goes about its work subtly and through a careful choice of agents. It does not preach outright warfare and nor does it seek to unleash the contents of the many hells to further its agenda. Instead, Chaos seeks to provoke, to thwart and to antagonise. Its human adherents, ignorant of its true agenda, may attempt to wreak havoc against the obstinate churches of Law and some of the Chaos-aligned sorcerers do, indeed, manage to yank open the gates of some hell or other but ultimately Chaos has no need for massed ranks of vociferous proselytizers. A few, well chosen agents, quite often oblivious to their manipulation, are what Chaos requires to maintain its struggle. Subtlety and imagination mean more to the plans of Chaos than raving insanity and the raising of demons.





## THE PERSPECTIVE OF LAW: UNCONDITIONAL VICTORY

*'This was not unlike the dead world Miggea of Law had created. I asked Lobkowitz if anything had caused the withering of these worlds we crossed, and he smiled wryly. "Only the usual righteous wars," he said. "When all sides in the conflict claimed to represent Law! This is characteristically a land which has died of discipline. But that is Chaos's greatest trick, of course. It is how she weakens and confuses her rivals. Law will characteristically push forward in a predictable line and must always have a clear goal. Chaos knows how to circle and come from unexpected angles, take advantage of the moment, often avoiding direct confrontation altogether.'*

### *The Skrayling Tree*

Chaos seeks to sustain the fight; Law seeks to win it. Law cannot operate without a clear, unassailable goal. Its path is forthright and linear and all those who stand in its way are swept aside or crushed. It is Donblas, for instance, who tells Elric that the fate of the Young Kingdoms is to be destroyed when the Horn of Fate is blown for the third time. Such dissolution serves Law's ends – whereas, had Chaos prevailed in the final battle the Young Kingdoms, albeit damaged and warped, might still have continued to exist.

Naturally enough the Lords of Law do not reveal their ultimate intentions to their faithful. However they are overt in their desire: Chaos is to be crushed because it destroys sense and reason. Yet, whereas Chaos can contemplate some form of equilibrium between the two powers, Law is unable to do so. For all its tenets of progress, it is an intolerant, indivertible philosophy that is, ultimately, bent on achieving singular domination. If it cannot, then it destroys everything instead. As Lord Shoashooan remarks (in *The Skrayling Tree*): *'Mortals and immortals both, you face your end without dignity or grace. Accept the fact that the Balance is finished. Its central staff has been lost, its scales discarded. ... The regulator of the Multiverse has failed you. Law triumphs. The steady calm of complete stability awaits you. Time is abolished, and you can anticipate, as do I, a new order.'*

For Law, even the Cosmic Balance is unacceptable – an impediment to a singular way of being that cannot permit

any diversion from a sole, immutable path. The goal of Law is to end Time itself; because Time can accommodate change – indeed is its instigator. Not the unfettered change and mutation of Chaos but the steady natural change of age, history and diverse thought.

The cults of Law, then, are far more strident and visible than their Chaotic counterparts. Adherents of Law in the Young Kingdoms, particular within Vilmir, Lormyr and Argimiliar, enjoy grand gestures and demonstrations of superiority. Part of this is still a reaction to Melniboné's (now displaced) dominance and the Dragon Lords' clear alliance with the Lords of Chaos but underlying the gloss is the unshakeable belief that a war is coming and it is a war Law *must* win. What remains veiled to the rank and file is the extremes to which Law is prepared to go to succeed. All but a miniscule few ever suspect that Law would tolerate or advocate the eradication of the Young Kingdoms to gain victory over Chaos. Symbols that clearly oppose Law – the Elemental Lords and even, Tanelorn – are viewed as enemies. Noisy proselytization is a legitimate and daily act in cities such as Vilmiro and Jadmar, Cadsandria and Dhakos, with eager zealots decrying anything that appears to reject Law's perfect symmetry. For Law, the battle is clearly being fought on the streets. Not simply for hearts and minds but also for souls. Damnation awaits any who dare to worship anything but the golden arrow of Law and many of Law's more forceful adherents take it upon themselves to administer to the damned – not through solace but through persecution, fear and spite. Chaos circles and plays the angles, as Lobkowitz observes; Law ploughs a straight, unremitting furrow, taking no prisoners and permitting no escape.

Those who adhere to Law's precepts believe that the Lords of Law work *through* them, which contrasts with the view of those adhering to Chaos who believe that their Lords are essentially aloof and grant power in lieu of a direct channelling. Lawful agents thus believe in a more direct relationship, even though the Lords of Law are far less likely or inclined to manifest upon the Young Kingdoms. Lawful adherents therefore view themselves as tools and weapons in the Eternal Struggle rather than as adjuncts or accoutrements supporting it. This view allows the more extreme Lords of Law, such as Miggea, the insane Duchess of Dolwic, to recruit and indoctrinate fanatical supporters because a personal relationship is part of the reward.





# THE YOUNG KINGDOMS IN THE ETERNAL STRUGGLE

*'The warriors of half a world fought in the sea battle – to decide the fate of the Multiverse. It is – or will be – one of the decisive battles to determine the fate of Mankind, to fix man's destiny for the coming Cycle.'*

*'Who were the participants? Asked Elric, asking the question in spite of his resolve. 'What were the issues as they understood them?'*

*'You will know in time, I think.' The Captain's head faced the sea again.*

## Sailor on the Seas of Fate

Why are the Young Kingdoms so important to Law and Chaos in the Eternal Struggle? Why would the Lords of the Higher Worlds choose *this* plane to formulate the rules of the Eternal Struggle? It is, after all, just one in millions of parallel worlds yet it seems to be a focused battleground viewed with considerable importance by both sides. This is not an easy question to answer but clues to its strategic importance can be found in the world's turbulent history.

## Cycles of Time

The Young Kingdoms is just the latest of several cycles of time this particular plane has experienced. Before the Bright Empire and the Young Kingdoms, the world underwent climactic change at the hands of both the Elemental Lords and races such as the Doomed Folk and the Elder Ones. Each of these elder powers brought about fundamental change, either through a struggle for dominance, as with the Elements or through experimentation and personal loathing for their existence, as in the case of the Doomed Folk. The earth, before the Young Kingdoms arose, has therefore been reshaped to some extent several times before and displays a resilience that is no doubt attractive to both Law and Chaos. Humans reflect this resilience but are also malleable. They seek answers to the kinds of questions the Lords of Law and Chaos can, to a some extent, answer, and are all-too ready to place their faith in the powers of higher beings to gain understanding.

## Melniboné

The last of the elder races to hold sway over the world, Melniboné offers a curious paradox. Naturally skilled in

sorcery of both Chaotic and non-Chaotic types, Melniboné came to the world as proponents of the Cosmic Balance and, had they maintained this allegiance as a race, might have kept the world free from the interference of both Law and Chaos. However, some weakness in their considerable racial character – arrogance, curiosity or a flawed mixture of the two – led to the questioning and ultimate rejection, of the Cosmic Balance which, in its turn, weakened the natural protection of the world to interference by the Lords of the Higher Powers. Chaos gained an important foothold as a direct result of Melniboné's philosophical schism and thus gained an important strategic advantage over Law. For the Lords of Law this advantage must have been tantalisingly antagonistic although it took millennia, by human reckoning, for Law to decide to intervene. By that time Melniboné's empire was established and its powers of sorcery well-honed. Melniboné had the power to expand beyond its own plane which, quite obviously, posed a threat to Law and the planes where it held sway. It is unknown if Melniboné sought to expand its territories beyond the plane of the Bright Empire but its capability is clear enough and at its height, the Bright Empire would have been all but unstoppable.

## AN INTRIGUING QUESTION

The war with the Dharzi halted Melniboné's advance and effectively reversed it. Could the powers of Law have been behind the war or is at all coincidence and a cruel twist of fate?

## THE STUFF OF CHAOS

At the edges of the world the raw stuff of Chaos seethes. The world is therefore not fully formed. Law is naturally attracted to such a state so that it can impose order and in so doing, create and extend territories that will be sympathetic to it. Earl Aubec of Malador was the most famous of these pioneers, working in conjunction with Myshella of Kaneloon to carve the boundaries of the Young Kingdoms and extend them. The Young Kingdoms is still, therefore, a Work in Progress and attractive to both powers as a battle ground in the Eternal Struggle. That Law becomes peevish, and all too prepared to completely destroy something it has partly created, because Chaos has inflicted its taint, is part of the Young Kingdoms' and humankind's tragedy.



## The Malleability of Humans

Humans need answers. They do not easily accept their condition or the condition of the universe. In the quest for greater understanding they seek to change, manipulate and impose their own order on a state of existence that transcends their own, short span, on levels that ought to be inconceivable. Humans are restless, curious and meddlesome. Great good can be the result of the human condition, but so can great evil. The Road to Hell is, indeed, paved with Good Intentions and the Lords of the Higher Worlds know this and exploit it.

Humans manifest in one body the essential natures of the Lords of the Higher Worlds. To have this essential nature demonstrated and then either channelled or put at human disposal, makes humans malleable and ripe for exploitation. They become the perfect engines for the Eternal Struggle; compliant gaming pieces that struggle in some futile hope that they can prevail over powers that are infinitely more advanced than they are.

In the Young Kingdoms, a world newly freed from domination by a less malleable elder race, humans are asserting their natural curiosity and actively manipulating the world around them hurriedly. This quality intrigued Elric. His own people has spent 10,000 years achieving

what it achieved; mankind, on the other hand, sought to build empires and impose its will quickly and without due diligence. This rush to mould, rationalise, conquer and destroy can only be attractive to the Lords of Law and Chaos. Melniboné, whilst an excellent partner of Chaos, was able to easily dissolve the old partnership and slip into ennui, placing itself effectively beyond Chaos's control (and naturally enough, Law's). It simply *ceased to care* about the Eternal Struggle.

Mankind, on the other hand, never satisfies its curiosity. Despite humankind's innate resistance to domination, its character is to be manipulated and dominated – the very characteristics of pieces in a grand and epic game. Both Chaos and Law know this fundamental truth and exploit it, albeit in different ways. When Elric grows curious about humans and seeks to understand their ways, he, too, opens himself for exploitation on a grander, more catastrophic scale. By embracing humanity's frailties; by asking the kinds of questions that his ancestors cared little about, Elric creates both his own doom and that of humanity.

Those humans who embrace one or other of the Higher Powers contribute to that doom. Even though they will be completely oblivious to it. As Elric realises when he seeks out the truth, '*There is no salvation in this world - only malevolent doom!*'





# THE ELEMENTALS: STRUGGLE FOR THE SHAPE OF THE EARTH

*'Grome of the Land Below the Roots. Grome of the Ground and all that lives, under it. My brother. Grome. Long since, even as we elementals count time, Grome and I built that ship so that we could travel between the realms of Earth and Water whenever we chose. But we quarrelled (may we be cursed for such foolishness) and we fought. There were earthquakes, tidal waves, volcanic eruptions, typhoons and battles in which all the elementals joined, with the result that new continents were flung up and old ones drowned. It was not the first time we had fought each other, but it was the last. And finally, lest we destroy each other completely, we made a peace.'*

*Lord Straasha – Elric of Melniboné*

Ten thousand years before Melniboné forged its Bright Empire and following the cataclysm that the Doomed Folk initiated to obliterate themselves from the world, the Elemental Lords ruled the world. Supreme manifestations of the primeval, essential forces of nature, the building blocks of creation, the elementals have the power to shape and reshape the world without resorting to the extremes


of destruction, which threatens Time itself, of the Lords of Law and Chaos. Yet, as Straasha says, their powers are, in themselves, awesome enough, with the Elemental Lords possessing the ability to sink, raise, consume in flame or scour with wind, entire continents.

So it was that, in the wake of the Doomed Folk and with a new cycle of Time beginning, the Elemental Lords fought for supremacy of the earth and in so doing, shaped it into the form occupied by the Young Kingdoms. The battle between the elements was a four-fold struggle for complete domination. Straasha sought a world composed entirely of ocean and filled with the swimming creatures so dear to him. Grome sought a world entirely of earth, filled with plants and the creatures that walked, slithered and burrowed. Lassa desired a realm purely of air, where flying and gliding things would predominate and her unruly children, the hurricanes and typhoons, could play unadmonished. Kakatal, if he had had his way, would have turned the world into a brilliant ball of flame, so rivalling the sun and nothing, save his fiery salamanders, would have survived within it.

the elementals







Even the Elemental Lords cannot be certain how long they fought – not that they reckon time in any way recognisable to humans – but it became clear to each of them that their could be no clear winner; only their own, mutually assured destruction. The agreement reached allowed the earth to take shape with clear domains for each Elemental Lord. Straasha had the oceans, rivers and streams. Grome had the continents and islands, adrift in Straasha's watery domain. Lady Lassa clothed the world in air so that all life might benefit and brought cooling winds to temper Kakatal's tempestuous heat; and Kakatal occupied two realms: the blazing sun, which gives light and the furnace at the heart of the earth.

This is no mere creation myth, created by the primitive tribes to explain how the world came into being; this is the truth of it. How the world began.

The Elemental Lords, through their own struggle, attained balance. Yet whilst their accord emulates the Cosmic Balance, none of the Elemental Lords is a manifestation or representation of the Cosmic Balance. If a single Elemental Lord *could* (and indeed, in other spheres of the Multiverse they *do*) dominate, it would do so. What then, led to this accord being reached where the Young Kingdoms are concerned?

## Glimpses of the Future

*Elric raised himself into a sitting position. 'You spoke earlier of "intertwined destinies". Do you, then, know something of my destiny?'*

*'A little, I think. Our world grows old. Once the elementals were powerful on your plane and the people of Melniboné all shared that power. But now our power wanes, as does yours. Something is changing. There are intimations that the Lords of the Higher Worlds are again taking an interest in your world. Perhaps they fear that the folk of the Young Kingdoms have forgotten them. Perhaps the folk of the Young Kingdoms threaten to bring in a new age, where gods and beings such as myself no longer shall have a place. I suspect there is a certain unease upon the planes of the Higher Worlds.'*

*'You know no more?'*

*King Straasha raised his head and looked directly into Elric's eyes. 'There is no more I can tell you, son of my old friends, save that you would be happier if you gave yourself up entirely to your destiny when you understand it.'*

*Elric of Melniboné*

Lord Straasha's enigmatic exchange with Elric is telling. The Lords of the Elements, despite being constrained by their elemental natures, are not unaware of the workings of the Higher Planes. In this lies a clue as why, perhaps, the Elemental Lords chose to reach an agreement and fight no more, over the dominance of the Young Kingdoms. The Young Kingdoms' plane has considerable significance in the scheme of the Cosmic Balance and the Elemental Lords are aware of this and have some inkling of its greater destiny, even though they do not have any certainty and perhaps ultimately care little for its specifics. They do, however, understand enough to know that continued war will benefit neither themselves nor the ultimate agenda of fate and the Cosmic Balance. The Elemental Lords do not like any of the Lords of the Higher Powers but the unease they sense in the *planes of the Higher Worlds* is sufficient to bring the Elemental Lords into agreement that a world shared amongst them is the most – and only – way forward.

Just as the Lords of Law and Chaos met at R'lin K'ren A'a to agree the rules of engagement for the Eternal Struggle, so too did the Elemental Lords reach their own accord – and far earlier than that of the capricious lords of Entropy and Order.

In setting aside their elemental war, the Elemental Lords were content to relax their totality of power. It wanes gradually, taking many thousands of years to do so and in the time of the Young Kingdoms, the Elemental Lords are still capable of manifesting exerting their influence although they are only content do so when called upon directly – as Elric does so from time to time – as part of ancient pacts. Otherwise, the Elemental Lords refrain from exerting their power in demonstrable manifestations; clearly there is their own compromise at work here but also because to do so might attract the attentions of the Lords of either Law or Chaos who, given their different agendas and approaches to the Eternal Struggle, might seek to exploit the elements to their own advantage.



# PAWNS OF THE COSMIC BALANCE

Whilst unaligned specifically with the Cosmic Balance, the Elemental Lords of the Young Kingdoms have, in the earth's distant past, acted as its agents – principally in acting as custodians of the Black Sword and in helping to articulate the Balance's nature to Melniboné's early emperors.

Circa 9,800 years ago, Grome was the guardian of the Black Sword. Tricked from it by the Mernii, Grome, with the aid of his servants, the Pukwadjii tribe, seized valuable Mernii ships which were held hostage until the sword was returned. When this did not happen as the Mernii had promised, the Mernii nobleman, White Crow, was captured and almost sacrificed to Grome. White Crow pledged to find a way for the return of the Black Sword to Grome's custody and, when he was true to his word, forged the first of the pacts with the Elemental Lords that Melniboné, even when deeply allied with Chaos, continued to enjoy.

A thousand years later, the Black Sword was stolen once again but this time by Arioch. Prince Elric (an earlier incarnation of the Young Kingdoms emperor) learned of the theft from Sepiriz of Nihrain and the Lady of the Fire Elders (a consort of Kakatal, or even Kakatal himself, in female guise), plus the significance of the Black Blade as part of the fabric of the Cosmic Balance. The Black Blade found its way into the hands of an Armoured Warrior serving Chaos and the throne of the Mernii was usurped. Battling the black armoured Usurper, Prince Elric gained the sword and killed the creature he faced (who, tricked by Chaos, believed himself immune to the blade). When Elric unmasked his slain foe, he discovered his beloved sister to be the armour's wearer. Elric returned the Black Blade to the Fire Elder and bid her to remove it so that it could do further harm. He also pledged the Mernii to the service of Chaos – all part of Arioch's devious machinations.

The Black Blade was taken back into Lord Grome's custody and he, presumably, took it to the realm of Ameroon, beyond the Shade Gate, where it remained, untouched, until the Emperor Elric, in pursuit of Yyrkoon, retrieved as the sword Stormbringer.

Both Grome and Kakatal then, have had a hand in attempting to preserve the Cosmic Balance even though their knowledge of this service was limited and, to a certain extent, thwarted by Chaos. If the Elemental Lords have played the role of agents to the Cosmic Balance since, save for the times when Elric's life has been saved by their

intervention, then it has been in extremely subtle ways and on very rare occasions. Like Elric and those who pledge their souls to the Lords of the Higher Powers, the Elemental Lords have found themselves pawns to some extent, in the Eternal Struggle.

It is little wonder, then, that Lord Straasha cryptically tells Elric: *'We shall meet again before your life ends, Elric. I hope that I shall be able to aid you once more. And remember that our brothers of the air and of fire will try to aid you also. And remember the beasts - they, too, can be of service to you. There is no need to suspect their help. But beware of gods, Elric. Beware of the Lords of the Higher Worlds and remember that their aid and their gifts must always be paid for.'*

For he – and the other Elemental Lords – are all too aware that the Eternal Struggle and the equilibrium of the Cosmic Balance, relies on pawns. They, like Elric, have been used as pawns too.


## ELEMENTAL CULTS IN THE YOUNG KINGDOMS

The Elemental Lords have always been drawn to simple, unsophisticated civilisations. They demand no overt veneration but when it is offered, they appear to prefer simplicity over complexity. This likely the reason why their power was greatest was the world was young and the civilisations of the day unfettered by the complexities maturity inevitably brings.

The Pukwadjii, primitive natives of the western continent, venerate Lord Grome and receive his direct aid in return. The Myrrhn and Karasim, old, yet uncomplicated cultures, venerate Lassa who grants certain powers and privileges in return. Each of the Elemental rulers enter into a willing pact with Melniboné at times in its distant history when it has not yet been complicated by Chaos.

In the time of Elric the old pacts established in the Bright Empire's formative years are forgotten in favour of more complex supernatural power and very few in the Young Kingdoms offer anything like the veneration the Elemental Lords once enjoyed. Yet, where such veneration still exists, it is within relatively primitive cultures such as the barbarians of the Weeping Waste, Dorel and Pikarayd. These cultures do not concern themselves with the Eternal Struggle between Law and Chaos; indeed, they are almost completely ignorant of it, although some, the most





devout shamans of the elemental cults, might have some inkling, although it is every bit as vague as Lord Straasha's articulation of it to Elric.

Every elemental cult understands how the world was formed; the *basic* truth differs little between cults venerating different elements. However each cult places its own element as the one that suggested and eventually brought about, the peace that now exists between the four elements; each cult makes its Elemental Lord the hero of the hour.

The elemental cults, however, are not constrained by the same compromise the Elemental Lords abide by. To them, there is a mythic need for the elements to remain in conflict because, ultimately, the human condition thrives on the energy produced by conflict or the promise of it. The cults venerating Straasha firmly believe that he fights still, albeit on a modest scale, with Lord Grome. The cults venerating Kakatal resent the dominance of Lady Lassa over the air. Despite the accord that exists at the highest level between the elements, the earth-bound cults prefer to maintain and perpetuate the ancient, unresolved hostilities because, at its most primitive heart, the state of humankind is one of war.

As scholars throughout the ages, beginning with the esoteric philosophical sects of Imrryr have noted, the elements form two distinct, diametrically opposing branches: the outwardly reaching elements, reaching up and out, as

personified by Fire and Air and those that turn inward and downward, as personified by Earth and Water. These natures further manifest into two contradictory states of being: *unification* and *strife*. Without unification, the world could not exist and so the elements are bound to exist in compromise. However, without strife, there could be no growth or progress. Philosophers who have studied the Elemental Lords are therefore able to deduce that an essential dichotomy exists where the elements and their worship are concerned. The Elemental Lords exist in a state of unification whilst below them acting in the world at large, their cults exist in a state of strife, perpetuating the natural conflict, at a human level, that the four elements are inherently engaged in.

The war between the elemental cults – the strife – is not one of armies, battles and conquests. It is one of primitive ideology, superstition and the fractious apportion of blame. The cults *do* clash, from time to time but their skirmishes are brief and do not (indeed cannot) seek to eradicate the enemy. Rather the battles that are fought reflect the inherent restlessness of the natural world: the turbulence of the winds, waves, flames and earth upon the natural landscape. Humans see and elemental war being waged around them but understand that the scale is small and little more than petulant quarrels. The elemental cults emulate these quarrels but mindful of the greater peace existing between all the elements, do not seek to drive themselves towards the complete destruction of their rivals or to attain domination over another elemental cult.





# THE POWERS OF GROWTH: THE LORDS OF NATURE

*'Centuries before, the Sorcerer Kings of Melniboné had struck this bargain with Fileet, Lady of the Birds: That any bird that settled in Imrryr's walls should be protected, that no bird would be shot by any of the Melnibonéan blood. This bargain had been kept and dreaming Imrryr had become a haven for all species of bird and at one time they had cloaked her towers in plumage.'*

## *The Vanishing Tower*

Of all the powers surrounding the Young Kingdoms, the Lords of Beasts and Plants are most remote, although their kin stalk and cloak the world with abandon. Only the Melnibonéan royal line maintains any affinity with the animal and plant rulers, that affinity assured through pledges made and oaths sworn in much the same way that Melniboné created its allegiances with the Elemental Lords.

The Beast and Plant Lords have almost no interest in either humankind or the Eternal Struggle. Their realms are archetypes of the conditions favoured by the fauna and flora they represent and to stir a Lord of Nature from its place of repose requires a mighty bargain and an exceptional cause. With the exception of Elric, no one in the saga summons the Lords of Nature – and with good reason. Few human sorcerers know of their existence and those that do simply lack the pacts through which to summon their aid. The Lords of Nature are viewed as minor gods with little to offer the sorcerer or desperate cultist and given that the Beast Lords and Plant Lords stir only if their kind are threatened or compelled to do so through a powerful pact, the division remains.

That Melniboné's emperors should possess such affinities with the Lords of Nature is, perhaps, unsurprising. The Dragon Isle, at the height of its power, explored all manner of sorcery and was careful (even though it was a cruel and conquering power) to cultivate allegiances on the best possible terms. Precisely how Melniboné's pacts came into being are unknown but some clues can be found scattered around the Elric saga.

- \* Each pact with an Elemental Lord was established through an ancient hero of Melniboné encountering the ruler and managing to fulfil a difficult pledge or task, usually with some cosmic significance for both.
- \* Whilst Melniboné might have treated humans with arrogance and disdain, it was less-so with animals. Perhaps the Dragon Lords sought out ways of contacting the gods of the animals they found beautiful and cemented their alliances (as with Fileet, quoted above).
- \* Melnibonéans have a deep empathic bond with the mightiest of all creatures, the dragons. The true depths of this bond are unknown but its existence might resonate intimately with other Beast Lords; kinship with dragons predisposed the Beast Lords to form similar ties.
- \* Whilst little is known of the Dharzi (save for a few scant references in the saga), the assumption is that the Dharzi were in league with beasts in some capacity. This may have been a rapacious relationship or one subsequently betrayed by them. In fighting a war against the Dharzi, Melniboné dedicated time and energy to turn the relationship against the invader, willingly entering into pacts with the Lords of Nature that helped them defeat their enemy.

## CULTS OF THE LORDS OF NATURE

Cults specifically venerating the Beast and Plant Lords are exceedingly rare in the Young Kingdoms. In the Unknown East, beast veneration is far more common amongst the Valni of Nishvalni-Oss and Bas'lk where each tribe worships a specific creature in a totemistic fashion with its shamans gaining the ability to commune with the Beast Lord; tribes quite often develop similar characteristics to the beast venerated, either consciously or unconsciously.

In the Young Kingdoms, the Beast Lords are virtually unknown outside of Melniboné (and even then, few within Imrryr recall the ancient pacts). This might be the result of a shared, unconscious rejection of ancient Dharzi practices or simply because the Beast Lords, uncaring for human mortal affairs receive a similar response from mankind.



If veneration of the Beast Lords is rare, then veneration of the Plant Lords is just about non-existent. Some elemental cultists revere a handful of nature deities as part of the general veneration of Lord Grome (Ish'ish'amaal, Lady of the Trees, for example) but even the most knowledgeable Young Kingdoms sorcerers realise that every genus of plant is governed by its own lord which, like the Beast Lords, epitomises that plant's key characteristics and inhabits a realm that reflects the perfect conditions for growth. The sub-cults of Grome that recognise the few nature deities are explored in greater detail on page 104.

The Lords of Nature are, however, concerned chiefly with the acts of nature and nurture. Growth, food and reproduction are all that really matter to them and as long as nothing interferes with the natural cycle, then they are content to leave the mortal world well alone. Even their own kind do not offer worship as such, although every living creature is aware of the existence of its respective lord and venerates it simply by acting according to its own nature. Even where predators are concerned, the Beast Lords of prey animals do nothing in particular to intervene; this is the natural cycle – birth, death and survival. Interfering in it would be to invite the destruction of the ecosystem that supports all life.

It is only in this regard that the Nature Lords concern themselves with the Eternal Struggle. Only if their own kind were perverted, en-masse, by some higher power would the Beast and Plant Lords rouse themselves and come seeking retribution, fighting until the threat is removed. Otherwise, the Lords of the Higher Powers do not concern them.





# CULT NOMENCLATURE

The cults of the Young Kingdoms rarely follow a set or typical hierarchy. Some cults have many ranks; others none at all. Advancement within a cult may depend on personal endeavour or in serving a cult's wider political ends – either within the realm of mundane politics or as an aspect of the Eternal Struggle.

To rationalise matters for game purposes, each cult described in the following chapters follows the below format

*Name* – the title(s) by which a cult is commonly known

*Gods/Pantheon* – the deities venerated through the cult

*Purpose and History* – detail regarding geography, history and purpose of the cult

*Beliefs* – An overview of the cult's values and beliefs

*Worshippers* – Those people who are welcomed into the cult, including the cult's hierarchy.

*Benefits* – The gifts available to cult devotees and benefits available to different ranks

*Duties* – The requirements of maintaining membership and the additional responsibilities for those of higher rank

*Retribution* – What happens to worshippers if they betray or leave the cult

*Politics* – The cult's objectives and internal politics

*Relationships* – The attitude of the faith towards other religions and cults

The chapters dealing with cults takes the opportunity to expand on background information presented in earlier books, mainly the *Elric of Melniboné* rules and so represents previously published cults revised to fit the above format. All the benefits, Gifts and Compulsions for previously published cults are there but in some cases additional benefits and hazards have been added to give both characters and Games Masters enhanced options and scope.



## 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 character 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 from the *Elric of Melniboné* rules and some of those provided for



## 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 which 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 character 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 of 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 character 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 character is going to join a cult before play begins, spend some time considering what factors have contributed to his decision. The three factors above 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 character's saga and development.



Agents of the Balance as presented in the *Elric of Melniboné Companion*, plus new gifts and compulsions created for this book. 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, etc) 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

### Cult Gifts

Gift	Effect	Cults	Cost
<b>Abstinence</b>	Exist without one requirement, for example air, food, water, sleep	All	1 POW
<b>Animal Familiar</b>	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.
<b>Automaton</b>	Gain a self powered automaton as a servant.	L	1 POW per 20 Characteristic/ Armour Points invested in the automaton's assembly
<b>Change Gender</b>	The character 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.
<b>Chaotic Blessing</b>	Roll once on the demon features table	C	1 POW for the first blessing, 2 POW for a second, 3 for a third, and so forth.
<b>Combat Acuity</b>	Increase Combat Actions by +1	All	1 POW for the first, 2 POW for the second, and so forth.
<b>Divine Training</b>	Raise a cult skill to 100%.	All	1 POW the first skill, 2 POW for the second, 3 for a third and so forth.
<b>Elemental</b>	Gain an elemental helper which may be called once per adventure	All (element appropriate to the cult)	1 POW per metre of the elemental's size
<b>Endurance</b>	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

Gift	Effect	Cults	Cost
<b>Enhanced Learning</b>	Result 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, a character who wants 3 enhanced Improvement Rolls must spend 6 POW on this Gift.
<b>Eternal Life</b>	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
<b>Healing.</b>	Healing. The agent 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.	C, L	1 POW
<b>Horde</b>	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	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.
<b>Increased Damage Modifier.</b>	Increased Damage Modifier. The agent's Damage Modifier is recalculated, based on the sum of STR, SIZ and POW	All	1 POW
<b>Increased Health.</b>	Increased Health. The character's Hit Points are recalculated, based on the sum of CON, SIZ and POW.	All	1 POW
<b>Increased Reactions.</b>	The character adds his critical score in a weapon to his Strike Rank (for example, a character with a weapon skill of 60% would add +6 his Strike Rank).	All	1 POW
<b>Innate Luck.</b>	When rolling for any Skill Test, the character 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
<b>Invulnerability</b>	Character 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.
<b>Legendary Ability.</b>	The character receives a Legendary Ability pertinent to the cult.	All	1 POW
<b>Magical Recovery</b>	MPs regenerated at twice usual rate	C	1 POW



Gift	Effect	Cults	Cost
<b>Multiversal Polyglot</b>	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
<b>Perfection</b>	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, etc.
<b>Physical Recovery</b>	Hit Points healed at twice usual rate	L	1 POW
<b>Return Loved One</b>	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.
<b>Rune</b>	Gain use of one rune as taught by the cult at its base %age	All	1 POW
<b>Rune Mastery</b>	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
<b>Sanctuary</b>	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, etc); 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)
<b>Second Life</b>	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.
<b>Sense Enemies.</b>	Sixth Sense. The character is immediately aware of the enemies of the cult and those who would directly harm him.	All	1 POW
<b>Sense Million Spheres</b>	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
<b>Slave</b>	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

Gift	Effect	Cults	Cost
<b>Summon</b>	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.
<b>Tireless</b>	Never suffer the effects of fatigue	All	1 POW
<b>Ward</b>	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.
<b>Weapon of the Faith</b>	The character is gifted a weapon that adds the POW invested in the Pact to its Damage. Thus, a character 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 a character has 6 POW dedicated, and wants to achieve the full bonus of +6 damage, it costs 3 POW to obtain this gift).
<b>Witch Sight</b>	Develop Witch Sight ability (see page 54 of the <i>Elric of Melniboné</i> rules)	C	1 POW
<b>Youth</b>	Return to a young body, reversing all aging effects	C, L	1 POW

## Compulsions

Compulsions tend to be far more cult-specific and 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 below 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. A character 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 characters 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, a character 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 character 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
<b>Absolute Mercy</b>	May not kill any enemy, no matter how hated	A, L
<b>Acute Depression</b>	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
<b>Acute Hydrophobia</b>	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
<b>Acute Insomnia</b>	Unable to sleep for fear of never waking. Become gaunt-eyed, cadaverously thin and intensely paranoid of even one's closest associates	C, L
<b>Agoraphobia</b>	Develop Agoraphobia. Cannot abide wide-open spaces where Lassa's spies can watch	C, E, F, L
<b>Armour Reduction</b>	Never wear footwear or armour on the limbs	E, C, L
<b>Armour Rejection</b>	Cannot wear armour of any kind; must always wear loose-fitting clothes or robes.	A, L
<b>Asphyxiation</b>	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
<b>Attention Deficit</b>	Unable to concentrate for long periods. Tasks requiring periods of concentration take twice as long to complete.	A, C
<b>Avian Veneration</b>	Never eat the flesh of any bird or winged creature	A
<b>Black Widow</b>	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
<b>Blood Sacrifice</b>	Blood sacrifice to Chaos Lord every week	C
<b>Bone Collector</b>	Collect and constantly count, the bones of dead things. Wear prized bones around the body.	C
<b>Brine Addiction</b>	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
<b>Burial</b>	Bury all foes alive, in sacrifice to Grome	E
<b>Carnal Murderer</b>	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
<b>Challenge Chaos</b>	Become broodingly obsessed with carving new lands from Chaos, just as Aubec did.	L
<b>Chaos Phobia</b>	Become increasingly paranoid about the influence of Chaos, seeing it everywhere; in secret symbols, the way people talk; the things they do.	L
<b>Chaotic Disdain</b>	Develop an increasing disdain for the known Lords of Chaos, save your own patron.	C
<b>Chaste</b>	Undertake a vow of chastity	A, L
<b>Chivalrous</b>	Refuse to act in any way that contradicts the laws of chivalry	L
<b>Chromophobia</b>	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
<b>Claustrophobia</b>	Develop claustrophobia. Cannot enter any space of less than 3 times SIZ willing; stricken with panic if forced into such a space.	A, L, W
<b>Close Combat Pacificism</b>	Never enter into hand-to-hand combat	A, F, L
<b>Collector</b>	Collect and catalogue obscure objects constantly	L
<b>Colour Obsessed</b>	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

Compulsion	Effect	Cults
<b>Compulsive Swimmer</b>	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
<b>Corpse-Like</b>	Skin becomes cadaverously pale and suffers rapid weight-loss. Lose 1D4 CHA and 1D4 SIZ	C, L
<b>Curse of Maluk</b>	Must put-out one eye (-1 DEX, -1 CHA)	C
<b>Deck-Bound</b>	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
<b>Dedicated Lover</b>	Fall hopelessly in love with one particular individual. Pledge heart and soul to serve her.	All
<b>Demonic Fervour</b>	Demonic fervour. You know that it is your destiny to become one of Chaos's half-breed demonic courtiers.	C
<b>Dread</b>	Visions of terrible carnage that disturb the sleep and leave the dreamer feeling worthless and drained	All
<b>Drowning</b>	Drown all foes in sacrifice to Straasha	W
<b>Empire Builder</b>	Become obsessed with challenging an empire and replacing it with a regime that embodies your cult's qualities.	C, L
<b>Eternal Flame</b>	Donation of 1D4 points of permanent POW to sustain Kakatal's eternal flame; driven partially insane as a result	F
<b>Expose Skull</b>	Expose a section of own skull (-1HP to Head Hit Location)	C
<b>Fear of Death</b>	A constant and gnawing fear of death – something no cultist could ever admit but one that drives the individual to distraction and growing anxiety	All
<b>Fear of Death</b>	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
<b>Flaying</b>	Flay or singe the skin from the body, leaving the flesh raw, -1HP to all locations	C, F
<b>Forbidden Knowledge</b>	Increasing knowledge of Chaos or Law leads to insanity. Gain 1 Insanity point for every 20 points in the Pact	C, L
<b>Forgetful</b>	Lose short-term memory (-1 INT)	C
<b>Forgo Shield</b>	Never use a shield	C, L
<b>Gluttony</b>	Cannot stop eating or drinking. Becoming corpulently fat. +1 SIZ and -1 CON for every 20 points in Pact skill	C
<b>Hate Arioch</b>	Hatred of Arioch. He has abandoned both Melniboné and the world. Those who venerate him must be killed.	C, L
<b>Hate Armour</b>	Never wear armour	All
<b>Hate Pan Tang</b>	Hatred of Pan Tang. This upstart nation must be prevented from realising its own ambitions at all costs.	All
<b>Healing</b>	Must always offer healing to those who need it – even enemies	A, L
<b>Human Sacrifice</b>	Human sacrifice to Chaos Lord every week	C
<b>Hydrophobic</b>	Must never come into contact with water, save for drinking	E
<b>Immolation</b>	Burn all foes in sacrifice to Kakatal	F
<b>Insect Phobia</b>	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
<b>Insomnia</b>	Insomnia. Sleep is almost impossible; fatigue constantly builds.	All
<b>Jealousy</b>	Uncontrollable, irrational obsession over some trivial matter: a jealousy over a lover or the tendency to find a slight where none occurred.	All
<b>Kleptomania</b>	Become compelled to steal – magical and sorcerous items, naturally but also mundane things that could very easily be bought	C, L



Compulsion	Effect	Cults
<b>Knowledge Eater</b>	Overwhelming desire to consume brains, intent on the belief that the knowledge they contain can be absorbed.	C
<b>Law Triumphant</b>	Never surrender to Chaos but always accept the surrender of an unarmed opponent	L
<b>Lawyer</b>	Quote laws and doctrines at people ad-nauseum. Constantly correct the use of grammar, pronunciation and so forth.	L
<b>Lust for a Goddess</b>	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
<b>Man Hater</b>	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
<b>Mechanical Fetish</b>	Develop an unhealthy fascination with machinery, regardless of its origin. Doubly fascinated by implements of torture.	C, L
<b>Melnibonéan Traits</b>	Become as arrogant as any Melnibonéan, developing complete disdain for 'mere' humans. Develop Melnibonéan eccentricities, quirks and mannerisms	C
<b>Merciful</b>	Show mercy to any defeated enemy, no matter what their crime, status of degree of enmity towards you.	A, E, F, L, W
<b>Merciless</b>	Never surrender or accept the surrender of any foe	C, L
<b>Murder Kin</b>	Develop the overwhelming desire to slay loved ones	C
<b>Need to Kill</b>	Kill once per week. Failure to do so results in loss of 1 point of POW	C
<b>Never Ending Search</b>	Obsessed with finding the ultimate location for something lost to your cult.	All
<b>Nightmares</b>	Experience terrifying dreams and sleepless nights. Awake suffering from one level of fatigue	All
<b>Obsessive Compulsive</b>	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
<b>Paranoia</b>	Become increasingly paranoid. Friends and colleagues are inferior beings jealous of your impending god-hood. As your Pact skill grows, so does your jealousy, eventually becoming murderous	All
<b>Pattern Obsessed</b>	Becomes obsessed with the shapes and geometries of things, seeking to study and understand every nuance and every angle.	L
<b>Pedantic</b>	Obsessed with detail. Study every word and every letter without fail. Tasks involving study and concentration take twice as long to accomplish	L
<b>Perfectionist</b>	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
<b>Phobia</b>	Develop an irrational fear of three separate things: the dark, the cold, spiders, rats and so forth	C, L
<b>Piscine Diet</b>	Eat only fish	W, L
<b>Piscine Sight</b>	Develop fish eyes, -3 CHA, perfect underwater vision	C, W
<b>Piscine Transformation</b>	Develop gills and vestigial fins, accompanied everywhere by the dreadful smell of rotting fish.	C, W
<b>Piscophobic</b>	Never eat fish or other creature of the water	E

<b>Compulsion</b>	<b>Effect</b>	<b>Cults</b>
<b>Pyaray's Call</b>	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
<b>Pyaray's Curse</b>	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 with in the mind long after sleep has passed.	C
<b>Pyarayic Phobia</b>	Fear of Chaos and Pyaray's undead fleet	W
<b>Pyromania</b>	Become obsessed with starting fires, opposed all those who try to extinguish them	F
<b>Pyrophobia</b>	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
<b>Rancid</b>	Develop foul body odour or unsightly sores and buboes (-1 CHA)	C, L, E
<b>Rapist</b>	Overwhelming desire to commit rape on any either sex. Requires Persistence test to control the desire. Subtract the Pact percentage from the Persistence skill before the test is made.	C
<b>Resurrection</b>	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
<b>Retributional</b>	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
<b>Ritual Scarring</b>	Sacrifice 1 point of CHA (through ritual scarring)	All
<b>Sadism</b>	Can only be happy when inflicting physical pain on innocents. Revel and delight in their screams. These screams haunt the dreams leading to development of fear of those tortured awaiting in hell to inflict the same fate	C
<b>Scorching</b>	Skin becomes cracked and broken, as though scorched, -1 CHA	F
<b>Sea-Drawn</b>	Craves the seas or rivers. If confined to land for more than a few days, becomes panicked and sullen	W
<b>Secretive</b>	Become intensely secretive and jealous of information gained. Takes unusual and risky measures to protect even the most trivial knowledge.	C, L
<b>Self Harmer</b>	Obsession with self-harm. Arms and legs constantly cut and sliced, hair pulled out at the roots, teeth self-extracted and so forth.	C
<b>Self Mutilation</b>	Driven to self-mutilation on a daily basis. Lose 1 CHA for every 10% of the Pact skill. Mutilations become more bizarre and extreme.	C, L
<b>Self-Pitying</b>	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
<b>Servant of Myshella</b>	Become obsessed with becoming a Hero of Myshella, placing yourself completely at her service	L
<b>Sex Obsession</b>	Unable to derive self-sexual gratification under any circumstances. Become enraged and over-more obsessed with sex and self-gratification as a result.	C
<b>Silence of Maluk</b>	Must stitch-shut the mouth (-1 CHA). Must communicate through half-audible mumbles, the written word and sign language	C
<b>Single Tongue</b>	Refuse to speak in any language other than Low Speech, High Speech or Mong (which has no written form)	C
<b>Stalwart</b>	Never dodge a blow	C, L



Compulsion	Effect	Cults
<b>Straasha's Suffering</b>	Weeps almost constantly at the injustices Grome and Pyaray has heaped on Straasha by cutting-off lakes from the sea and haunting the depths of the oceans	W
<b>Sword Rule Paranoia</b>	Paranoia. The world is set to become a dominion of the male Sword Rulers. All adherents to the Sword Rulers must be destroyed.	L, some C
<b>Target</b>	Become a known and visible target to those who serve your enemies.	All
<b>Tedious</b>	Become an oppressive bore on one particular subject, imparting all knowledge about it in long, rambling, tedious eulogies	L
<b>Terraphobia</b>	Develop a fear of dirt and the soil. Must bathe or wash regularly (every few hours)	W, L
<b>Tic</b>	Develop a nervous tic, mannerism or speech impediment	All
<b>Tovik's Armour</b>	Wear only leather armour, as Tovik himself wore	L
<b>Unclean</b>	Fear clean water	C, E
<b>Unkillable</b>	Develop the overwhelming belief that one is invulnerable to mortal weapons	C, L
<b>Urban Vengeance</b>	Gain an increasing desire to visit a certain city and destroy it. Imrryr, say or Tanelorn	C, L
<b>Vegetarian</b>	Eat only vegetables	E, L
<b>Vigil</b>	Undergo a regular vigil of 3 days and 3 nights	L
<b>Violent Temper</b>	Develop a vile, argumentative and violent temper threatening to destabilise all attempts to remain calm.	C, L
<b>Water Consumer</b>	Drink only water	W
<b>Waterlogged</b>	Skin becomes bloated, blotched and translucent, as though submerged in brine for months. -2 CHA	C
<b>Whisperer's Beard</b>	Tentacles form in place of a beard, -3 CHA	C, W





# CULTS OF CHAOS

*Arioch replied: 'When the Jade Man ceases to guard the place where the High Ones meet, then the great struggle of the Upper Worlds begins on this plane.'*

*Sailor on the Seas of Fate*

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, notions, change and are transferred.

As does Chaos.

## 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 straightforward, 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 aesthetic 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 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 take 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.

Cults of Chaos



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 in 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, orgasming 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 character 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 character 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 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 character 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 cross-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 Hwamgaarl'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 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 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 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.

## ARIOCH

### Gods/PANTHEON

Chaos, the Sword Rulers, Lord of the Seven Darks

### 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, Elrik, 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 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 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.

### 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 over-riding 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.

## **DUTIES**

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 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 Myshella 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

Gifts	Compulsions
Abstinence (any)	Blood sacrifice to Arioch once per week
Change Gender	Human sacrifice to Arioch once per week
Chaotic Blessing	Develop a fear of the simple. Only things possessed of complexity can be trusted.
Divine Training	Develop an irrational fear of three separate things: the dark, the cold, spiders, rats and so forth
Eternal Life	Become increasingly morose. As the Pact skill increases, behaviour becomes more depressive until it reaches the suicidal at the 95% level or greater
Rune Mastery	Develop a nervous tic, mannerism or speech impediment
Sanctuary	Develop the overwhelming desire to slay loved ones
Sense Enemy	Speak in convoluted, secretive, arch and knowing ways – always hinting at things you know but are forbidden to articulate
Slave	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.
Youth	

### Cult Skills

Arioch's adherents treat cult skills differently to other cults. Each cult skill listed below 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.

1H Sword, 2H Sword, Athletics, Dodge, Language (High Speech), Lore (Arioch), Lore (Chaos)

For example, Zhorzar the Hermit has 6 points of POW dedicated to Arioch. Each of the cult skills he has thus increases by 6%. If Zhorzar decided to sacrifice one of his slaves (POW 11), then he would be able to further increase all the cult skills he possesses by a further 11% for 6 Combat Rounds. If he chose to sacrifice a cat (POW 9), then he would gain a temporary increase of only 3%.

### Cult Summonings and Runes

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

### Legendary Abilities Available

The following Legendary Abilities are taught to Arioch's faithful on similar principles to Cult Summonings and Runes. The character must know *all* the Cult Skills (see above) to at least 50% and have dedicated at least 4 POW to his Pact. Otherwise he may only gain a Legendary Ability if he fulfils its criteria as outlined on page 131 of the *Elic of Melniboné* rules.

Devilish Charm, Heroic Aura, Madness of Purpose, *Player of the Great Game*, Slaying Touch

### 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

The perpetuation of the Eternal Struggle is foremost on Arioch's agenda and his worshippers are important pawns

### New Legendary Ability - Player of the Great Game

#### Requirements

- \* CHA 15+
- \* Influence, Lore (Arioch) or Lore (Chaos) 70%+
- \* Hero Points: 8

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)
- \* Perception
- \* Oratory
- \* Seduction

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.

## Relationships

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*

## Gods/Pantheon

Chaos. Eequor, Duchess of Chaos, the Blue Lady of Disdain

## 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.

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.

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 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 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.

### 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.

### Cult Ranks

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 below, 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 2 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 1 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 below.

### Sister of the Azure Sceptre

The priestesses of the cult, the Sceptered Sisters lead the cults 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 1 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 1 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, Sceptered 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 and 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

Sceptered 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* rules.

Crowned Sisters also gain one cult Legendary Ability.

### Gifts and Compulsions

Gift	Compulsion
Abstinence (Sleep)	Aversion to the colour red, in all its forms. Cannot wear red or stand to be in the company of any who does so.
Animal Familiar	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.
Extended Life	Destined to sorrow. Nothing brings comfort or pleasure. All dreams are nightmares, all experiences fleeting and unfulfilling. Life is futile. Retirement the Azure realm of Eequor is the only solace.
Perfection	Develop a vile, argumentative and violent temper threatening to destabilise all attempts to remain calm.
Return Loved One	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.
Rune Mastery (Woman, Man)	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)
Sanctuary	Uncontrollable, irrational obsession over some trivial matter: a jealousy over a lover or the tendency to find a slight where none occurred.
Youth	Undertake a vow of chastity. All carnal desires are eliminated.

### Cult Skills

1H Sword, Dagger, Artistic Expression, Evaluate, Language (High Speech), Lore (Plant), Lore (World), Lore (Chaos), Lore (Eequor), Influence, Seduction, Stealth

### Legendary Abilities Available

Devilish Charm, Disease Immunity, Legendary Lover, Linguist, Poison Immunity

### Cult Runes

Runes of Chaos, Air, Bewilderment, Contact, Earth, Enhancement (CHA), Man, Passing, Sleep, Taste. Touch, Water, Woman

### Cult Summonings

Demons of Desire, Elementals (sylphs and gnomes) Command, Summoning Ritual (Demon of Desire), Summoning Ritual (Sylph), Summoning Ritual (Gnomes) Summon Elenoin

### 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 Equor'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*

## Gods/Pantheon

Chaos. Teer. Mabelode (Sword Rulers)

## 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*

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.

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 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.

## 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.

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 below.

## 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 1 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.

### Gifts

#### Gift

Animal Familiar (always a boar or pig)

Endurance

Increased Damage Modifier.

Increased Reactions

Poison Immunity

Rune Mastery (Cult Runes)

Sanctuary

Sense Million Spheres

### 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.

*For example, Vald of Dharijor enters into a Pact with Teer, investing 3 POW and gaining Pact (Teer) at 18%. He may choose 3 skills which will benefit from a +9% bonus from the Cult Skills list, along with 3 Gifts (or equivalent) from the Gifts table.*

Dagger, Dodge, Influence, Lore (Chaos), Lore (Teer), Seduction, Stealth, Unarmed

### Cult Runes

Instead of taking a bonus to Cult skills, as outlined above, 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*

### Legendary Abilities

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

Dead Eye, Madness of Purpose, Slaying Touch, Wall Leaping

## Retribution

Failure to deliver blood to Teer results in the disciple sustaining physical damage as described in Duties, above. 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 Hionburn 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*

## GODS/PANTHEON

Chardros and Hionburn

## Purpose and History

The Death Bringers venerate the two principal Lords of Death and desolation: Chardros the Reaper and Hionburn 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.

Grim-faced Chardros and the green giant Hionburn 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 Bringers 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 Hionburn 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. However 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 – see page 140 – for they are anything but religiously fanatical), executioners, those engaged on 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.

### **THE REVENGERS' TRAGEDY (An Optional Mechanism for Doom)**

Those with a need for bloody revenge are vulnerable to the predations of Hionhurn's children. Revenge is as potent as any cult-born Compulsion and at the Games Master's discretion, it can be treated as such. On those lonely nights when the character dreams of revenge, the Children of Hionhurn wander it these vulnerable dreams, assuming a dream as though of the Dream Realm of Imador and having an Intensity of 5D4 (with a Persistence of five times the Intensity – see page 126 of the *Elric of Melniboné* rules). The character must seek the help of a Dreamthief to rid himself of this awful, gnawing compulsion. If he does not, then a Persistence test, opposed by the Children's dream Persistence, is made and if the character fails, he feels compelled to dedicate himself to Hionhurn as he is seduced by the Children's promises of sweet revenge and all the delights it offers. If the character already has a Pact with another patron (Law, Chaos, Elemental or otherwise), he may substitute his Pact for his Persistence when resisting the Children's call.

The Compulsion to dedicate oneself to Hionhurn builds steadily, with each failed Persistence test representing 1 point of POW the character *must* dedicate to the Pact (Hionhurn). Only a Dreamthief can rid the character of the Children's predations. The character becomes obsessed with finding a way to make his dedication – seeking out a shrine or temple to the Death Bringers in either Dharjor or Hwangar! – and the longer he leaves it, or the longer he takes, the greater the chance of the Pact finally consuming his soul. Should a character find that the amount of POW that must be dedicated to Hionhurn exceeds his own, then, once the Pact is made, his soul is entirely owned by the Executioner. He will then stop at nothing to complete his revenge and at the very point it is complete, Hionhurn comes to claim him.

The Compulsion can only be alleviated in one of the following ways:

- \* If the dreams of revenge are stolen by a Dreamthief.
- \* If the character already has a Pact, by voluntarily dedicating the POW Hionhurn would otherwise benefit from to the character's existing Patron.



## 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 those who are seduced by both the nature of Chaos and satisfaction inflicting suffering and death brings.

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 (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 3 of his own 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 are described above. 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, Legendary 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 Legendary 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	Compulsions
Animal Familiar	Cannot wear armour of any kind; must always wear loose-fitting clothes or robes.
Chaotic Blessing	Collect and constantly count, the bones of dead things. Wear prized bones around the body.
Combat Acuity	Desire to murder a loved one
Divine Training (Cult Skills)	Expose a section of own skull (-1HP to Head Hit Location)
Endurance	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.
Horde	Kill once per week. Failure to do so results in loss of 1 point of POW
Increased Damage Modifier	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.
Poison Immunity	Obsession with self-harm. Arms and legs constantly cut and sliced, hair pulled out at the roots, teeth self-extracted and so forth.
Slave	Skin becomes cadaverously pale and suffers rapid weight-loss. Lose 1D4 CHA and 1D4 SIZ
Weapon of the Faith	Unable to sleep for fear of never waking. Become gaunt-eyed, cadaverously thin and intensely paranoid of even one's closest associates

### Cult Skills

1H Axe, 2H Axe, Dagger, 2H Flail, Garrotte/Strangle Cord, Dodge, Language (High Speech), Lore (Chaos), Law (Death Bringers), Perception, Resilience

### Cult Runes

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

### Cult Summonings

Demons of Combat, Demons of Knowledge, Demons of Protection

Command, Summoning Ritual (Demon of Combat), Summoning Ritual (Demon of Knowledge), Summoning Ritual (Demon of Protection)

### Legendary Abilities

Decapitating Swing, Disease Immunity, Loremaster, Madness of Purpose, Slaying Touch, Soul Sever (see boxed text)

### Soul Sever – New Legendary Ability

**Requirements:** Chaos only. POW dedicated to Pact must be 8 or higher; Weapon Skill 90% or higher  
**Hero Points:** 10

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.

### 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

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.

## Relationships

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?*

*Etric 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.

## Gods/Pantheon

Chaos. Slortar the Old, Balaan, Anara the Six-Breasted

## Purpose and History

Chaos is a selfish, hedonistic doctrine promoting self-satisfaction and interests ahead of a common good. In Melniboné this has been raised 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 Anara 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 a hundred times is not enough. Those who dedicate their souls 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.

### **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 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.

### **Anara the Six Breasted**

The Chaos Mother of erotic endeavour, Anara 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 Anara'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.

### **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 is 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.

## Duties

Pursue every pleasure and every pain to its fullest. To investigate the barriers between pleasure and pain and create new combinations of the two.

## 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 below:

- \* 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 Legendary Ability (the Pact must be 80% or greater)

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

### SIORTAR THE BEAUTIFUL

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

### SIORTAR THE OLD

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

### BALAN THE GRIM

The adherent learns the Torture skill (see page 146) at its base percentage. 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

Gift	Compulsion
Change Gender	Can only be happy when inflicting physical pain on innocents. Revel and delight in their screams. However these screams haunt the dreams leading to development of fear of those tortured awaiting in hell to inflict the same fate.
Chaotic Blessing	Cannot stop eating or drinking. Becoming corpulently fat. +1 SIZ and -1 CON for every 20 points in Pact skill.
Endurance	Demonic fervour. You know that it is your destiny to become one of Chaos's half-breed demonic courtiers.
Perfection	Driven to self-mutilation on a daily basis. Lose 1 CHA for every 10% of the Pact skill. Mutilations become more bizarre and extreme.
Sanctuary	Overwhelming desire to commit rape on any of either sex. Requires Persistence test to control the desire. Subtract the Pact percentage from the Persistence skill before the test is made.
Second Life	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.
Slave	Unable to concentrate for long periods. Tasks requiring periods of concentration take twice as long to complete.
Youth	Unable to derive self-sexual gratification under any circumstances. Become enraged and over-more obsessed with sex and self-gratification as a result.

## Cult Skills

Artistic Expression, Dagger, Evaluate, Influence, Language (High Speech), Language (Low Speech), Lore (Chaos), Lore (Balaan and Slortar), Seduction, Torture

## Legendary Abilities

Empathic Wound, Legendary Love, Madness of Purpose, Tireless

## Cult Runes

Runes of Chaos, Beast (choose one), Bewilderment, Confinement, Man, Reduction, Silence, Taste, Touch, Truth, Woman

## Cult Summonings

Demons of Desire

Command, Summoning Ritual (Demon of Desire)

## Retribution

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

## Politics

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.

## Relationships

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.

## Hwarma'gaal - City Cult of Pan Tang

## Gods/Pantheon

Chaos. Hwarma'gaal

## Purpose and History

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

## The House Of Indolent Gratification - A Temple Of Ecstatic Indulgence

A large, low building in the west of Imrry's Foreign Quarter, the House of Indolent Gratification provides a wide selection of decadent, sometimes sickening, enjoyments for Melnibonéans, half Melnibonéans and humans alike. It is an accessible temple for the Cult of Ecstatic Indulgence, filled with idolic representations of the cult's gods. Full blood Melnibonéans frequently come to the House to satiate certain desires and humans come here to experienced first-hand the pleasures that the people of Melniboné take for granted.

The House stands its own grounds, surrounded by a 15 foot high wall. Entrance is via a bronze gate depicting entwined lovers of indeterminate race – a signal of what waits within. Three huge slaves guard the entrance and only permit entry to those who are members of the cult of Ecstatic Indulgence or who have paid in advance for entry (3,000 Silvers).

### The House

The House of Indolent Gratification is a single-storey building and from without, seems rather small and cramped. It is built from a peculiar white stone, which, when closely examined, turns out to be human teeth, individually cemented together.

Entrance is via a set of plain, wooden double doors that lead straight into the main area of the House. It is here that the uninitiated receive their first shock. The outside of the House occupies the plane of the Young Kingdoms but the interior occupies a plane close to it; one of Arnara the Six Breasted's Amber Planes. This means that the inside of the House is much larger than the outside. Those unprepared for this must make Persistence test to cope with the shock. Failure results in the individual either fleeing outside in disbelief or curling into a ball and whimpering for several hours. Those who make the roll are still shocked by the experience: reduce all INT-based skills by half for 1D10 minutes.

### Main Area

This is an indoor garden, filled with bushes, trees, flowers and many exotic plants. The air is heady with an intense fragrance and the sound of the central fountain blends with a delicate music that wafts from elsewhere within the House. People of all descriptions mill around the main area but all, at some point, drift towards the many curtained archways that surround the garden. People talk, drink, make love and indulge in countless other pleasures without a care for who is around them. This is a very restful place and any violent tendencies are calmed by the atmosphere of the garden (and certain substances given off by the flowers).

### Curtained Areas


These are the main attraction of the House. Behind each curtain is a room, five metres square and with a ceiling four metres high. Each room holds within it a different kind of pleasure and anyone who enters the room is free to enjoy that pleasure for as long as they wish. If the same room is entered again, even within a few moments of having been left, the pleasure has changed. If the individual wishes to sample the same pleasure again, they must wander from room to room to see what lies within. Sometimes the same pleasure will be found and sometimes it will not. It depends purely on the roll made on the *Pleasures* table below.



### *Pleasures Table*

1D100	Pleasure
01-10	Drugs - the room is filled with large, comfortable cushions. Beside each cushion is a pipe and each pipe bums a different kind of drug. Several people are always in here smoking to their heart's content and in different states of intoxication. Effects range from a mild high through to intense, spiritual visions that last for several hours. None of the drugs used are life-threatening but many are addictive and some people never leave this room. The supply of drugs never diminishes - no one knows how they are replenished.
11-45	Sex - carnal pleasures are enjoyed in here, with members of the opposite sex. Upon entering, an extremely beautiful member of the appropriate gender escorts the individual to a large floor cushion and there performs whatever the individual desires, for as long as they desire it.
46-60	Sex - as above but with members of the same sex.
61-62	Sex - as above but an orgy is in progress, with at least 10 people involved at the same time. Partners change and interchange frequently and as the orgy reaches its height, everyone bonds into a single, fleshy mass, with limbs and organs protruding garishly from all parts of the quivering lump of skin. At once, the mass shudders and each participant undergoes the most intense gratification of their lives. The mass separates into individuals and then the whole business starts again.
63-64	Sex - deviancy. All perversions are catered for, no matter how extreme or repulsive to any sane, reasonable and sensible mind. Melnibonéans particularly enjoy this kind of room and actively seek it out.
65-75	Drink - slaves drift between the cushions, bearing huge flasks from which all manner of alcoholic beverages are dispensed. Every kind of wine, ale or spirit can be found and the flasks never run dry. Some drinks are potent enough to cause hallucinations or even unconsciousness. Others cause madness in all but the strongest minds. If asked what a flask contains, the slave answers honestly and describes the probable effects of the substance.
76	Drink- bodily fluids. As above but the drinks are made from natural fluids of humans and animals. Not for the faint hearted but adored by Melnibonéans.
77-90	Music - of all kinds. From gentle ballads, to a cacophony of screams and crashes. One room might be occupied by a single singer or performer, another by a whole orchestra. The music never ceases and tunes eventually merge into each other.
91-99	Stories - storytellers spin fantastic yarns to their enthralled audience. Any story can be told, from anywhere in the world. The storytellers never tire and their tales are vivid and entrancing. Sometimes characters from the stories materialise and act-out the tale whilst the storyteller narrates the action. At other times, the audience becomes a part of the story, taking on the roles of the major characters.
00	Dreams and Nightmares - upon entering this room, the individual finds they are actually within a recently experienced dream or nightmare. The experience is vivid and tangible but lasts no longer than the dream that inspired it. Once finished, another dream or nightmare begins and so on, until the individual leaves the room.

The dreams originate from one of the Seven Dream Realms and can be stolen by Dreamthieves as per the rules in the Elric of Melniboné rulebook. Dreamthieves may also come here to trade particular dreams with those who wish to experience them.



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.

Pan Tangian legend has it that Hwama found the Young Kingdoms and brought the Tang tribe of Mabden to them a thousand 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 city 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 Chalin in Pikarayd but other, more secretive shrines might be encountered in any of the Young Kingdoms' cities or city states.

## 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

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 1 POW to the Pact but outsiders must dedicate a minimum of 2 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 4 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 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

Gift	Compulsion
Divine Training	Develop Agoraphobia. Cannot abide wide-open spaces; must remain within the confines of a town or city.
Elemental	Cannot wear armour of any kind; must always wear loose-fitting clothes or robes.
Rune Mastery	Blood sacrifice to Chaos Lord every week.
Sanctuary	Develop an increasing disdain for the known Lords of Chaos, save your own patron.
Sense Enemies	Never enter into hand-to-hand combat.
Slave	Become obsessed with challenging an empire and replacing it with a regime that embodies your cult's qualities.

### Cult Skills

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

### Cult Runes

Runes of Alarm, Barring, Chaos, Confinement, Silence, Warding

### Cult Summonings

Demons of Desire and Knowledge

Command, Summoning Ritual (Demon of Desire), Summoning Ritual (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 Hwarma'gaal'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...



## 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*

### Games Masters Note

Narjhan's cult has undergone the most radical revision from that published in the Elric of Melniboné rules. It still exists as a beggars' cult and the version found in the main rules is still valid for beggar characters. However this version of the cult widens Narjhan's scope to make it more applicable to other characters – especially those who give way to hate and loathing...

## Gods/Pantheon

Chaos. Narjhan

## Purpose and History

The beggars of the Young Kingdoms, particularly those resident in 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 very 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.

## 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.

## Duties

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, below.

## 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 table below. A further Gift is granted for every additional point of POW invested in the Pact or for every 20% the Pact improves by.

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

Gift
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 2 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.

*For example, Nesthur the Beggar loathes Regneth of Jadmar, the merchant who ruined his life and forced him into the life of a beggar. Nesthur enters into a Pact with Narjhan, investing 3 POW and gaining Pact (Narjhan) at 18%. He may choose 3 skills which will benefit from a +9% bonus from the Cult Skills list, along with 3 Gifts (or equivalent) from the Gifts table.*

1H Sword, Club, Dagger, Staff, 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 without formal cult direction, other cults of Chaos are happy to make use of the hate-driven to achieve their own ends.

### Nadsokor and Narjhan

All 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've 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 compact, 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 their earnings to King Urish. In return they gain free training in the cult's skills of: Club, Staff, Evaluate, Influence, Language (Opish), Lore (Chaos), Lore (Nadsokor), Lore (World), Streetwise

## 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*

## Gods/Pantheon

Chaos: Maluk, Teshwan

## Purpose and History

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.

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 (see page 140) interests and intrigues Maluk and Teshwan.

Silent Watchers are often used as ambassadors and advisers to those Chaos wishes to corrupt. Cultists are adept in 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.

## 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.

## Cult Ranks

The sects have different names for their ranks:

	<b>Teshwan</b>	<b>Maluk</b>
Lay Member	Reader	Watcher
Initiate	Borrower	Maker
Acolyte	Understander	Refiner
Priest	Interpreter	Shaper
Champion	Grand Master	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 2 POW to the Pact with Maluk, and 3 POW id dedicating to Teshwan

## Understanders and Refiners

The acolytes of the cult study, codify and experiment with the knowledge the cult collects on behalf of its gods. This is sometimes with cult direction and sometimes with direction given directly 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, the following conditions need to be met:

- \* Know at least 6 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 6 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 6 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 are defined above. However, there are several additional duties 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 Legendary Abilities. In the case of Teshwan, there is also the Transfer to Kaneloon ability, described below.

### 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 Legendary Ability

## Gifts and Compulsions

Gifts	Compulsions
Divine Training (Cult Skills)	Become intensely secretive and jealous of information gained. Takes unusual and risky measures to protect even the most trivial knowledge.
Enhanced Learning (Cult Skills, Runes and Summonings)	Develops overwhelming desire for self-harm and mutilation, carving knowledge and secrets into the skin in High or Low Speech.
Extended Life	Fixate on a single individual, becoming increasingly obsessed about what they do or do not know. Jealous to the point of murder.
Multiversal Polyglot	Increasing knowledge of Chaos leads to insanity. Gain 1 Insanity Point for every 20 points in the Pact
Rune Mastery (Cult Runes)	Must put-out one eye (–1 DEX, –1 CHA) – Maluk Only
Sanctuary	Must stitch-shut the mouth (–1 CHA). Must communicate through half-audible mumbles, the written word and sign language - Maluk Only
Slave	Overwhelming desire to consume brains, intent on the belief that the knowledge they contain can be absorbed.
Tireless	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.

### Cult Skills

Artistic Expression, Courtesy, Evaluate, Influence, Language (High Speech), Language (Low Speech), Lore (Chaos), Lore (Cryptography), Lore (Maluk), Lore (Million Spheres), Lore (World), Perception, Stealth

### Legendary Abilities Available

Devilish Charm, Linguist, Loremaster, Madness of Purpose

### Cult Runes

Chaos, Bewilderment, Contact, Enhancement (INT),  
Hearing, Sight, Silence

### Cult Summonings

Demons of Desire, Demons of Knowledge, Demons of  
Transport

Command, Summoning Ritual (Demon of Desire),  
Summoning Ritual (Demon of Knowledge), Summoning  
Ritual (Demon of Transport)

### 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  
find 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 a 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.

### 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 character faced with Teshwan must do depends on the Lord of Chaos's particular whim. The table below determines the outcome.



## Teshwan's Trials

D8	Nature of Trial	Game Effects
1	Game of Creation	<p>The character must attempt to create something that the Lords of Chaos have been unable to create – something unique and imaginative. To represent this game, the character must make a 1D100 roll. If the roll is less than either his INT or his POW, he has successfully created something 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 character with one randomly chosen Gift from the Gifts table, above.</p> <p>If the test fails or fumbles, then the character must remain forever in Kaneloon as an immobilised statue – one of many Teshwan has collected over millennia.</p>
2	Surrender All Knowledge	Teshwan drains the character of <i>all</i> Lore skills, reducing the character's Lore percentages to their base values. The character is then returned to the Young Kingdoms, with only hazy memories of what has happened.
3	Surrender Specific Knowledge	Teshwan drains the character of a single Lore skill, reducing it to zero. The character is then returned to the Young Kingdoms, with only hazy memories of what has happened.
4	Undertake a Quest for Teshwan	Teshwan sets the character 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 character succeeds, he is returned to the Young Kingdoms. If he fails, then the character 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 character to many hideous experiments in Chaotic creativity. The experimentation ends with the character receiving 1D4-1 Demon Features, as described in the table on pages 119 – 120 of the <i>Elric of Melniboné</i> rules.
6	Remain a prisoner of Kaneloon	The character 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 character becomes a statue for eternity – unless a companion can effect 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 character must fight it to the death. If the character 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, above.
8	Entertain the Lords of Chaos	<p>The character 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 character with one randomly chosen Gift from the Gifts table, above.</p> <p>If the test fails or fumbles, then the character must remain forever in Kaneloon as an immobilised statue – one of many Teshwan has collected over millennia.</p>



## 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 Sword Rulers

### Gods/Pantheon

Chaos, the Sword Rulers (or the Blade Triumvirate).

### Purpose and History

The cult of the Sword Rulers came to the Young Kingdoms when the Mabden came to Pan Tang. The Mabden are not native to this plane of existence and in the realms where they proliferate, the Sword Rulers (who are believed to have created the Mabden for their own amusement) hold sway. Thus, the combination of Mabelode, Xiombarg and Arioch into a single, Chaotic pantheon, is relatively new. Moreover, it posits a very different power structure to that envisaged and understood by the Melnibonéans.

Within the Bright Empire's cosmology, Mabelode and Xiombarg are no more powerful than Arioch; within the Sword Rulers pantheon, Mabelode is the most powerful of the trio and a commander of dozens of dukes of hell, whilst Xiombarg and Arioch occupy places of lesser influence. Pan Tang, in promoting the Sword Rulers as a cult, maintains this relationship exists across the Multiverse. By relegating Arioch to a lesser role, the Mabden can still acknowledge

Arioch's undoubted power but also offer a deliberate snub to Melniboné. According to Mabden lore, the Sword Rulers despise the Elder Races of the Multiverse because they are not creations of Chaos; the fact that Melniboné embraced Chaos makes no difference to the Mabden of Pan Tang: the Sword Rulers hate all Elder Races and would see them destroyed.

The purpose of the Sword Rulers is to expand their empire. They already control a myriad of planes beyond that of the Young Kingdoms (including those of Corum's world), which are treated as breeding grounds and fiefdoms for their Mabden. The Sword Rulers are warlike and brutal, taking pleasure in the anarchy their presence ensures and which they believe is the natural order of the Multiverse. They seek, through their worshippers, to impose a similar state of anarchy in the Young Kingdoms, replacing Melniboné's tired and waning empire with one of Mabden design. In this sense the Sword Rulers' agenda is not merely the perpetuation of the Eternal Struggle but complete victory, driving the forces of Law either as far away as possible or preferably, to their doom and destruction, thereby paving the way for Chaos to reign supreme.

Despite sharing a common alliance, the three Sword Rulers are not in harmonious alliance. Each is selfish and each pursues its own agenda. They are deeply suspicious of each other and recognise a certain vulnerability – so much so that each Sword Ruler has opted to hide its heart in well-protected places. The Sword Rulers vie for power; Mabelode, despite his assumed superiority in the Blade Triumvirate, fears an alliance between Xiombarg and Arioch. Likewise, Xiombarg's fears Arioch's ambition and Arioch resents Mabelode's overall rulership. Such divisions can be exploited although, when the overall interests of the Sword Rulers are threatened, they are prepared to ally to face a common foe.

Each Sword Ruler employs different tactics in their pursuit and maintenance, of power. Mabelode prefers to employ many agents, both human and demon in nature, to work his business. He is therefore keen to secure the services of those who pursue personal power and to reward them amply for their efforts. He favours strong warriors and expert sorcerers, finding many amongst the greedy Mabden, jealous magicians and those few who are so morally and spiritually bankrupt that they have no option but to pledge their souls in their entirety to Mabelode's service. The King of the Swords has employed some infamous names as part of this strategy – both Gaynor the Damned and Yyrkoon of



Imrryr have entered Pacts with the King of the Swords and whilst their *personal* agendas may differ to Mabelode's, the rewards he offers are tantalising enough for them to pledge their allegiance.

Xiombarg also works through agents but prefers to make her influence felt through cruel and perverse jokes that exploit the essentially simple nature of the Mabden and humankind. In one of her realms, for example, she has effectively abolished time; in another, caused the sun to stop. All her jokes inflict pain and suffering in some shape or form but often in subtle ways that might take months or years to manifest their full effects. A perversion she inflicts might appear to be a blessing or gift but eventually its true nature becomes apparent and suffering and anarchy follow in its wake.

Arioch is the most suspicious and capricious of the Sword Rulers. He prefers guile and charm to act for him, engaging agents in innocuous ways that eventually lead to their own doom. Arioch prefers subterfuge, lies and misdirection to achieve his ends. He revels in concocting complex emotional situations that trap mortals into bringing about their own downfall so that he, Arioch, can reject all blame. In the Young Kingdoms Arioch plainly has many aspects and the Knight of the Swords is simply one of those. Despite enjoying considerable influence as the patron of Melniboné it suits Arioch, sometimes, to play the foil to his sister, Xiombarg, and brother, Mabelode, masking the true extent of his power (or perhaps masking a real lack of influence).

Whatever their plans and stratagems, the Sword Rulers are undoubtedly a dangerous and unholy trio. Their combined influence in the Young Kingdoms is relatively weak but if Pan Tang has its own way and never forget that it seeks to emulate and destroy the Bright Empire, the Sword Rulers' influence will be extended without regard for consequence.

## Beliefs

The beliefs of the Sword Rulers cult are straightforward:

- \* The natural state of the Multiverse is anarchy, not order
- \* All races exist in a state of perpetual war
- \* The Sword Rulers are the rightful rulers of the Multiverse
- \* The Sword Rulers created humankind; the Mabden are pre-eminent amongst all human species
- \* The time of the Elder Races - the *shefanhow* - is over: they must be destroyed

- \* It is the duty of all who follow the Sword Rulers to destroy the *shefanhow*
- \* Champion of the cult are the reincarnated agents of the Sword Rulers – elite warriors in the battle for the control of the Multiverse.

## Worshippers

The cult has a strong and popular following in Pan Tang, since the people of that isle are of the Mabden. The cult also appeals to warriors who revel in the anarchy of battle and enjoy taking arms against anything that is ordered and secure. It also appeals to those who fear and loathe the Melnibonéans – either because they fear them as an Elder Race or because they seek revenge for Melniboné's 10,000 years of domination. This is a cult of war, rage and ethnic cleansing. It appeals strongly to Dharijorians, who, as vassals of Pan Tang pursue an agenda of superiority in the west and see the veneration of the Sword Rulers as appropriate to their aims.


Devotees of the cult can choose to follow the Sword Rulers as a single pantheon, choosing no single Lord of Chaos as a patron. In this case, the Pact made is Pact (Sword Rulers) and any calls for Divine Intervention attract whichever of the three Sword Rulers seems most appropriate to the situation.

However, it is also common for adherents to choose either the King, Queen or Knight of the Swords as a specific allegiance. Adherents of Mabelode must be male; adherents of Xiombarg and Arioch may be either male or female. The beliefs are the same for whichever sect is chosen but with the additional belief that one's sect is naturally superior to the others.

Despite its love of anarchy, the cult maintains a loose hierarchy:

Sword Son/Daughter (Lay Member)  
Sword Brother/Sister (Initiate)  
Sword Singer (Acolyte)  
Sword Blesser (Priest)  
Sword Master (Champion)

Where an adherent follow a particular sect, then their patron's name is used as a suffix to their rank (so a Sword Sister of Xiombarg is a female initiate of the Xiombarg sect).



### Sword Sons and Daughters

Lay Members of the cult need only adhere to the beliefs of the cult. They are not required to undertake any assigned duties or enter into a Pact but unless they are prepared to show such commitment, they can never progress to the initiate rank.

### Sword Brothers and Sisters

Initiates are expected to cleave wholly to the beliefs of the cult. They are the rank and file warriors serving the wider aims of the Sword Rulers. A Pact is essential but there is no minimum POW dedication required save for the mandatory 1 point of POW. However, initiates who are prepared to dedicate more in their service of the Sword Rulers tend to be favoured by the higher ranks when it comes to matters of privilege and recognition.

### Sword Singers

To rise from being a Sword Brother to a Sword Singer, the following conditions must be met:

- \* Minimum of 3 points of POW dedicated to the Pact
- \* Pact of 50% or higher
- \* Have completed two missions assigned by a Sword Blesser or Sword Master

Sword Singers have proved their dedication to the cult and are actively engaged in furthering the Sword Rulers' agenda. Benefits include the learning of cult sorcery.

### Sword Blesser

Priests are actively engaged in leading the worship rites of the Sword Rulers. Demonstrative veneration is important to the cult as it helps, it is believed, to strengthen the Sword Rulers' influence in the Young Kingdoms. Naturally enough the rituals concern the sacrificing of blood and souls but they also concern heart-felt prayers celebrating the gods' supremacy in the Multiverse and requesting that the Mabden, so far from their ancestral planes, are not forgotten or abandoned.

It is not necessary for Sword Singers to become Sword Blessers before moving to the Sword Master rank. Those that do intend to become Sword Blessers need to fulfil the below requirements:

- \* Know: Language (High Speech), Language (Low Speech), Language (Mabden) at 50% or higher
- \* Know Lore (Sword Rulers) at 70% or higher (or the Lore for a specific Sword Ruler sect)

- \* Sacrifice a further 1D4 POW to their Pact
- \* Donate 50% of their wealth to the cult, and 50% of all earnings.

To be accepted as a Sword Blesser, the adherent must succeed in a Lore (Sword Rulers) or Lore (Sect) test.

### Sword Master

Sword Masters are the cult's champions. These are the most faithful who may be called upon by the Sword Rulers to act as their direct agents in whatever grand schemes they are hatching. Sword Masters believe that they are nothing less than the reincarnated champions of the cult from elsewhere in the Multiverse and act with grandiose self importance and arrogance accordingly.

To be considered as a Sword Master one must fulfil the following criteria:

- \* Know all the Cult Skills at a minimum of 50%
- \* Know 1H or 2H Sword at a minimum of 90%
- \* Have engaged on at least six cult-specific missions in the past
- \* Sacrifice a further 1D4 POW to their Pact
- \* Donate 90% of their wealth to the cult, and 90% of all earnings

To be accepted as a Sword Master, the adherent must succeed in a Lore (Sword Rulers) or Lore (Sect) test, and must offer a blood sacrifice of a known enemy of the Mabden or Sword Rulers as part of the rite.

### Duties

All Sword Ruler adherents must advance the interests of the Sword Rulers, the interests of the Mabden as a race (and all humans are Mabden), defeat the shefanhov and work to restore the natural state of anarchy that is the essential nature of the Multiverse.

Only the Sword Blessers have any specific duties and that is to lead the veneration of the Sword Rulers and offer prayers of defiance against those who would object to their rule. The remaining ranks in the cult are expected to spend time abroad in the world promulgating and enacting the beginnings of the greater Mabden empire.

Sword Singers and Sword Masters can also be expected to undertake specific tasks, quests and missions on behalf of the Sword Rulers and the cult at large. Sword Masters are empowered to interpret and carry-out cult policy, although, where specifically Mabden concerns are involved, the orders of Pan Tang's theocrat take precedence over any ad-hoc policy or goals.



Other general duties include:

- \* Die Bravely.
- \* Seek-out and kill agents and champions of Lord Tovik and Earl Aubec
- \* Vanquish Law
- \* Victory in battle



Members of the cult are forbidden to use any weapons but swords. However, if the event of a sword being denied to the cultist, any weapon that advances the Sword Rulers' agenda is considered acceptable; there are no *direct* punishments for using other weapons.

## Benefits

Benefits come in the form of Gifts and Compulsions, Cult Skills, Runes and Summonings, Legendary Abilities and Cult Secrets. Benefits begin at the Sword Brother or Sister rank.

### Sword Brothers and Sisters

- \* One Compulsion and One Gift, if one wishes to take it.
- \* Training in one Cult Skill, either establishing the skill at its base percentage or improving it by 1D4+1

### Sword Singers

- \* One Compulsion and One Gift, if one wishes to take it.
- \* Training in one Cult Skill, conferring an improvement roll of 1D6+1

### Sword Blessers

- \* One Compulsion and One Gift, if one wishes to take it.
- \* Training in one Cult Skill, either establishing the skill at its base percentage or improving it by 1D6+1
- \* Training in one Rune or Summoning, either establishing it at its base percentage or improving it by 1D6+1
- \* Given knowledge of one Cult or Sect secret
- \* May command Sword Singers and Sword Brothers and Sisters

### Sword Master

- \* One Compulsion and One Gift, if one wishes to take it.
- \* Training in one Cult Skill, either establishing the skill at its base percentage or improving it by 1D8+1
- \* Training in one Rune or Summoning, either establishing it at its base percentage or improving it by 1D8+1
- \* Given knowledge of one Cult or Sect secret
- \* Gain one cult Legendary Ability
- \* May command Sword Singers and Sword Brothers and Sisters
- \* May be summoned by the Sword Rulers across the Multiverse to take part in whatever struggles concern them.

### Cult Skills

*1H Sword, 2H Sword, Dagger, Athletics, Dodge, Language (High Speech), Language (Low Speech), Language (Mabden), Lore (Sword Rulers), Resilience, Throwing*

Training and instruction in the Cult skills can be obtained at the Hall of Many Ways in Hwamgaarl and at the Temple of the Swords in Nargesser (Dharijor).

### Cult Runes

Runes of Chaos, Darkness, Enhancement (STR and DEX), Man, Protection, Woman

### Cult Summonings

Training and instruction in the Cult skills can be obtained at the Hall of Many Ways in Hwamgaarl and at the Temple of the Swords in Nargesser (Dharijor).

Demons of Combat, Protection and Transport.

Command, Summoning Ritual (Demon of Combat), Summoning Ritual (Demon of Protection), Summoning Ritual (Demon of Transport), Summon Hunting Dog of the Dharzi, Summon Elenoin



## Gifts and Compulsions

Gifts and Compulsions are available according to whether or not the adherent follows the general cult of the Sword Rulers or has joined one of the cult's sects (see *Special Notes*, below). Members of a Sect can use both tables; those outside a sect use the General Table.

### General Gifts and Compulsions

Gifts	Compulsions
Abstinence (Sleep)	A constant and gnawing fear of death – something no Sword cultist could ever admit but one that drives the individual to distraction and growing anxiety.
Chaotic Blessing	Develop a vile, argumentative and violent temper threatening to destabilise all attempts to remain calm.
Divine Training (Cult Skills)	Develop the overwhelming belief that one is invulnerable to mortal weapons.
Enchantment	Never wear armour. Uncontrollable, irrational obsession over some trivial matter: a jealousy over a lover or the tendency to find a slight where none occurred.
Sanctuary	Visions of terrible carnage that disturb the sleep and leave the dreamer feeling worthless and drained.
Slave	Never use a shield.
Ward (Swords)	Never dodge a blow. Develop a nervous tic, twitch, mannerism or other physical condition (constant blinking; a stammer, an inability to leave any door unlocked, for instance).

### King of the Swords (Mabelode) Gifts and Compulsions

Gifts	Compulsions
Combat Acuity	Blood sacrifice to Mabelode every week.
Endurance	Develop an increasing disdain for the known Lords of Chaos, save for Mabelode.

### Queen of the Swords (Xiombarg) Gifts and Compulsions

Gifts	Compulsions
Change Gender	Empire Builder: Become obsessed with making Xiombarg the Empress of the Swords.
Sense Million Spheres	Develop an increasing disdain for the known Lords of Chaos, save for Xiombarg.

### Knight of the Swords (Arioch) Gifts and Compulsions

Gifts	Compulsions
Weapon of the Faith (always a sword)	Blood sacrifice to Arioch every week.
Youth	Develop an increasing disdain for the known Lords of Chaos, save for Arioch.



## Legendary Abilities

Armoured Titan, Battle Fury, Decapitating Swing, Tireless, Skin of the Bear

## Cult Secrets

- \* The Sword Rulers hold dominion over three planes close to this world, where Mabelode is undisputed king and Xiombarg his queen. A hero is emerging to challenge their power, guided by the Lords of Law and equipped with the dreadful weapons of The Hand and The Eye.
- \* Prince Yyrkoon of Imrryr serves Lord Mabelode from time to time – yet he is shefanhow and must be destroyed.
- \* Although Mabelode and Xiombarg are believed to be more powerful than Arioch, this is not the case in the Young Kingdoms; the three gods are of equal power – a situation that cannot be allowed to endure.
- \* The race known as the Kelmain of the world known as Kelm'a are fierce allies of the Sword Rulers and seek to expand their territories as the Kelmain Empire. They are, however, shefanhow and whilst useful as temporary allies, should ultimately be treated as enemies of the Mabden.
- \* The Sword Rulers have each forged a sword for use by their heroes. Mabelode's sword is known as *Fierce Swiftness* but was stolen by the shefanhow Prince Dyvim Estox and used against the Sword Rulers in the Battle of Torment Ridge. The weapon was lost but is still to be found in the kingdom of Ilmiora.

## Retribution

Leaving or betraying the cult or sect results in Sword Masters concentrating their hunt for the traitor or apostate. The victim's soul will be sacrificed to the Sword Ruler the Sword Master most favours.

All Gifts are rescinded. All Runes and Summonings cease to be effective.

## Politics

The Sword Rulers cult is rife with internal tension. Whilst the status of the three Lords of Chaos is understood, it is not universally accepted. The Sect of Xiombarg holds that the Queen of the Swords is more powerful than Mabelode; the Sect of Mabelode holds that, in some planes where the Sword Rulers held sway, Xiombarg and Arioch are dead; and the Sect of Arioch holds that the Knight of the Swords is the rightful inheritor of the Sword Ruler empire in the Young Kingdoms. Each sect informs against the others

## Fierce Swiftness


This weapon features in Magic of the Young Kingdoms. Its details are repeated here for convenience.

Fierce Swiftness is a finely bladed longsword designed to maximize its wielder's grace and speed. If not for the demon bound into the weapon, its very lightness would reduce its damage potential. It is rumoured that demon was once known as R'gun'oxia, a vassal of one of the Sword Rulers. Never a smart creature, R'gun'oxia betrayed its Lord and was punished with eternal imprisonment within the blade of its own sword. The demon has learned to love its home, although its temper does get the better of it from time to time.

When wielded, Fierce Swiftness has the following effects:

- \* The user may make a single extra free attack at the very beginning of every Combat Round. If the target's Strike Rank is not higher than the Fierce Swiftness's wielder, the target may neither Dodge nor Parry the attack, as it moves too fast for him to counter.
- \* The user's own Strike Rank is increased by +5.
- \* Damage done by a successful attack is increased by 1.
- \* The sword moves in the user's grip, allowing him an extra Parry reaction, which is made at a skill of 100%.
- \* The user may make a precise attack, targeting any Hit Location. If the attack inflicts damage, the location will continue to bleed for an additional point of damage at the end of every Combat Round. This bleeding continues until the target is dead or it receives a successful First Aid roll. If the precise attack does enough damage to produce a serious wound, the location takes a Major wound and is automatically severed.
- \* If the user ever fumbles a close combat attack, Fierce Swiftness will vent its anger on the nearest of the user's companions. This attack is assumed to automatically hit, although the target may make a reaction as usual.

Cults of Chaos



and occasionally feuds between sect members break-out, particularly where small points of detail concerning status are involved.

Whilst it is also agreed that the Mabden are the creation of the Sword Rulers, some cult adherents find it difficult to accept that pure-strain Mabden (i.e., those of Pan Tangian blood) are superior to the indigenous humans of the Young Kingdoms. The belief amongst some, non-Mabden adherents is that Mabden is simply another word for human, and that Pan Tang is mistaken in believing itself a superior version of humanity.

## Relationships

The cult does not enjoy especially harmonious relations with any other cults. Law is, naturally, detested but its attitudes to certain other cults are as follows:

### Arioch

As long as Arioch is acknowledged as a Sword Ruler and as long as disciples of the cult do not conflict with the Sword Rulers' agenda, then worship of Arioch outside the cult is tolerated.

### Blood Brothers

This is an upstart cult. Teer is a vassal of Mabelode and does not know his place. The Blood Brothers are held in contempt.

### Terhali

This is a shefanhow cult and one that promotes Xiombarg and a Melnibonéan Empress as its champion. Some of the Sects of Xiombarg are sympathetic to the Terhali cult, but not all. The Sects of Mabelode and Arioch believe the cult of Terhali should be destroyed completely.

## Special Notes - Sword Ruler Sects

Each sect venerates one Sword Ruler above the others. Mabelode's sect is male only, whilst Xiombarg and Arioch's sects accept both genders.

The sects do not differ in terms of their ranks and rank requirements but as previously noted they offer certain variations on Gifts and Compulsions. The first Gift and Compulsion an adherent takes must always be from the sect-specific table; all subsequent Gifts and Compulsions may come from either table.

Also, as previously noted, the sects are not a single, unified force. Each seeks to further its own status above the others – an anarchic situation reflecting the warring nature of the cult and the innate nature of the Sword Rulers themselves. Alliances, schisms, enmities and feuds are a common characteristic of the sects' internal relations and whilst a common goal is sought – the expansion of the Sword Rulers' influence – individual sect interests often dominate and control the cult's more general aims.

## 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*

## Gods/Pantheon

Chaos. Pyaray, Lord of the Fleets of Hell; Artigkern, Devourer of Oceans; Vetein, King of the Mermen

## Purpose and History

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.

For Melniboné, Pyaray was once a patron demon, his blessing carved into the mighty battle barges, the marines of the Immryrian 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 nine thousand 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 Tentacles 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 find for them a ship to crew.

## 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 oceans 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.

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, below.



## Duties

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 below.

### 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 Legendary Ability

### Cult Skills

1H Axe, 2H Axe, Spear, Athletics, Boating, Language (High Speech), Lore (Artigkern), Lore (Chaos), Lore (Deep Water), (Pyaray), Lore (Vetehin), Shiphandling, Survival

### Legendary Abilities Available

Heroic Aura, Skin of the Bear, Wall Leaping

### Cult Runes

Runes of Chaos, Beasts (Fish and Sea Serpents), Cold, Passing, Protection, Raising, Speed, Warding and Water

### Cult Summonings

Demons of Combat, Protection and Transport

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



## Gifts and Compulsions

Gift	Compulsion
Abstinence (Water)	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.
Chaotic Blessing (the feature obtained always relates to the patron deity – so tentacles for Pyaray, fish features for Artigkern, an merman features for Veteihin)	Develop a nervous tic, twitch, mannerism or other physical condition (constant blinking; a stammer, an inability to leave any door unlocked, for instance).
Combat Acuity	Develop claustrophobia. Cannot enter any space of less than 3 times SIZ willing; stricken with panic if forced into such a space.
Divine Training	Develop fish eyes, -3 CHA, perfect underwater vision.
Enchantment	Develop gills and vestigial fins, accompanied everywhere by the dreadful smell of rotting fish.
Endurance	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.
Horde	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.
Rune Mastery (Water)	Skin becomes bloated, blotched and translucent, as though submerged in brine for months. -2 CHA
Sense Million Spheres	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 with in the mind long after sleep has passed.
Ward	Tentacles form in place of a beard, -3 CHA.

## 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 merman in the case of Veteihin, 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 retributinal attacks are relentless and targeted against the treacherous soul.

## Politics

The Whisperers is a powerful cult within Dharijor and Pan Tang, acknowledged at the highest levels of government. The cult acts in both 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!

## Relationships

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.

## 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.

### Characteristics

STR	6D8+40	(67)
CON	12D8+16	(70)
DEX	2D8+8	(17)
SIZ	10D8+24	(69)
INT	2D8	(9)
POW	3D8	(14)

### Sea Serpent Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Tail	7/28
4	Right Hind Flipper	7/28
5	Left Hind Flipper	7/28
6-9	Hind quarters	7/29
10-14	Fore quarters	7/30
15	Right Front Flipper	7/28
16	Left Front Flipper	7/28
17-20	Head/Neck	7/28

### Weapons

Type	Weapon skill	Damage	AP/HP
Bite	55%	1D10+3D12	/ 4
Tail	30%	1D10+3D12	/ 8

### Special Rules

*Combat Actions:* 3

*Strike Rank:* +13

*Movement:* 10m when swimming

*Traits:* Excellent Swimmer, Formidable Natural Weapons

*Skills:* Athletics 120%, Persistence 80%, Resilience 80%, Tracking 90%,

*Typical Armour:* Scales (AP 7, no Skill Penalty)



## Mermen

Mermen infest the waters known as the Straits of Chaos and all around Pan Tang. Why they display such an affinity for that island is unknown but an affinity clearly exists as the merman is Pan Tang's emblem. Once creatures of Straasha the mermen defected to Pyaray's service long ago. These are not innocents of the ocean; they are every bit as oppressive and aggressive as their land-based kinsmen of Pan Tang. They delight in dragging living souls to Pyaray's depths and go to great lengths to cause havoc on the surface waters.

Large and roughly humanoid but with ugly, barnacled faces and livid red gills in the sides of their necks, they have a serrated dorsal fin running the length of their spine and a long, shark-like tail in place of legs. Their teeth are small and sharp, their eyes slitted and malicious. Their hair is tangled with weed and writhing, dark green tendrils. They speak a version of Mabden and Pyaray's whispered, watery language reserved normally for the dead crews of his fleets.

### Characteristics

STR	5D8+6	(29)
CON	3D8+6	(20)
DEX	5D8	(23)
SIZ	3D8+6	(20)
INT	3D8	(14)
POW	3D8	(14)
CHA	1D8	(5)

### Mermen Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-6	Tail	1/8
7-10	Abdomen	1/9
11-12	Chest	1/10
13-15	Right Arm	1/7
16-18	Left Arm	1/7
19-20	Head	1/8

### Weapons

Type	Weapon skill	Damage	AP/HP
Spear	55%	1D10+1D10	2/10
Grapple	45%	1D4+1D10	

### Special Rules

*Combat Actions:* 4  
*Strike Rank:* +19  
*Movement:* 6m  
*Traits:* Excellent swimmer  
*Skills:* Acrobatics 50%, Athletics 65%, Dodge 70%, Perception 45%, Persistence 60%, Resilience 50%, Pact (Pyaray) 80%  
*Typical Armour:* Scales (AP 1, no Skill Penalty)

### Runes and Summonings

Rune of Chaos 45%, Rune of Water 40%, Command 35%, Summon Sea Serpent 30%



# 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*.

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.

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. Yet across the Young Kingdoms Law's influence has caused the Cosmic



Balance to tip sufficiently 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 of 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 that 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.

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 listened to. But Jharkor is still a Lawful monarchy and the great cities of Bakshaan and Ilmar 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. However, 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 too 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 Aflitain 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 strives 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 nation's 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.

### 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 proselytizers, 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 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

### Gods/Pantheon

Law. Arkyn, Shalod

### Purpose and History

Lord Arkyn of Law has many guises, 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 oppose the Sword Rulers and the rise of the brutal Mabden.

### Arkyn the Meticulous

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 Aflitain 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. However 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

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.

## 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

- \* The Mabden are Arkyn's enemy and the enemy of human kind.
- \* 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.

### 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 3 of the cult's skills are 70% and a further 5 at 50%.

### ARKYN THE WHITE

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, above. 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 either 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 proselytizing 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 and 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

Gift	Compulsion
Automaton	Become an oppressive bore on one particular subject, imparting all knowledge about it in long, rambling, tedious eulogies.
Combat Acuity (Arkyn the White only)	Becomes obsessed with the shapes and geometries of things, seeking to study and understand every nuance and every angle.
Enchantment	Collect and catalogue obscure objects constantly.
Extended Life	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.
Perfection	Develop nervous tics and mannerisms which grow steadily more pronounced with the increase of the Pact skill.
Sanctuary	Increasing knowledge of Arkyn's theory leads to insanity. Gain 1 Insanity point for every 20 points in the Pact.
Youth	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.

## Cult Skills

Craft, Engineering, Evaluate, Healing, First Aid, Language (High Speech), Language (Low Speech), Lore (all basic Lores), Lore (Arkyn), Lore (Logic), Lore (Mathematics),





Lore (Million Spheres), Lore (Philosophy), Lore (Physics), Martial Arts (White Lord sect only) Mechanisms

### Cult Runes

All runes with the exceptions of Chaos, Darkness, Raising and Reduction

### Legendary Abilities Available

Loremaster, Madness of Purpose, Scientific Genius, Tireless

## 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 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. Vilimirian 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 Elric 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 Elric saw the shining Lords of Law advance towards their dark opponents.*

*Stormbringer*

## Gods/Pantheon

Law. Donblas

## Purpose and History

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 above quotation).

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

Gifts of Law

## 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.

### Birch

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 do 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.



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 some 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, trial and punishments may be carried through according to Donblas's doctrines.

## 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 on 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.

However, 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, trial 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.

### Cult Ranks

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 initiate 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 acolyte 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 acolyte 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, both 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**

<b>Gift</b>	
Abstinence (Sleep)	Become increasingly paranoid about the influence of Chaos, seeing it everywhere; in secret symbols, the way people talk; the things they do.
Animal Familiar	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.
Automata	Develop nervous tics and mannerisms which grow steadily more pronounced with the increase of the Pact skill.
Divine Training (Cult Skills)	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.
Enhanced Learning	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.
Extended Life	Obsessed with detail. Study every word and every letter without fail. Tasks involving study and concentration take twice as long to accomplish.
	Quote laws and doctrines at people ad-nauseum. Constantly correct the use of grammar, pronunciation and so forth.

#### **Cult Skills**


1H Sword, 2H Sword, Bow, Influence, Language (High Speech), Language (Low Speech), Lore (Donblas), Lore (Law), Oratory, Perception

#### **Cult Runes**

Law, Alarm, Confinement, Hearing, Light, Man, Passing, Protection, Purity, Sight, Truth, Woman

#### **Cult Summonings**

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 just to 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 feel 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*

## Gods/Pantheon

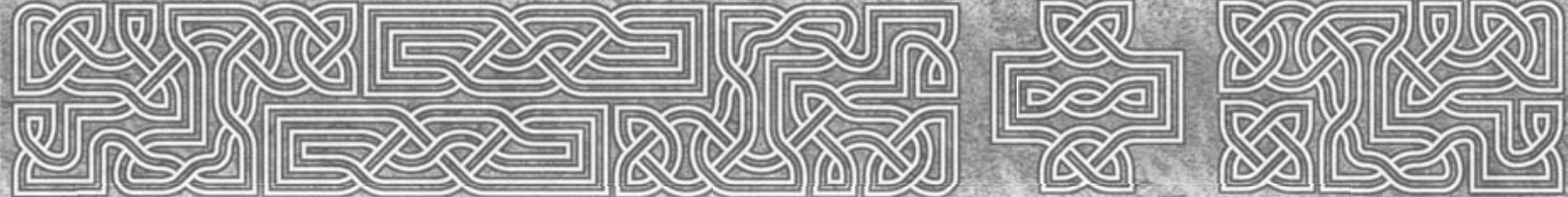
Law. Miggea

## 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 her 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.





Yet, 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 if 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, a thousand 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 desire 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.

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.

## 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 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 unexactng. 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.

### Cult Ranks

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 initiate 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 4 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. Initiates 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 Lay Members and Initiates 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% of 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 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 below.

## Duties

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 Dreamchief'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 character 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.

### Cult Skills

1H Sword, 2H Sword, Dagger, 1H Flail, 2H Flail, Polearm, 2H Hammer, Athletics, Influence, Language (High Speech), Lore (Law), Lore (Miggea), Lore (Million Spheres), Resilience, Unarmed

### Cult Runes

Law, Beast (Wolf), Enhancement (STR, CON, DEX), Confinement, Heat, Man, Passing, Protection, Reflection, Truth, Warding, Woman

### Cult Summonings

Control, Summon Oonai

### Legendary 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.

### Gifts and Compulsions

Gift	Compulsion
Abstinence (choose)	Become a known and visible target to those who serve your enemies.
Animal Familiar	Become increasingly paranoid about the influence of Chaos, seeing it everywhere; in secret symbols, the way people talk; the things they do.
Perfection	Develop a hatred for Tanelorn and any other symbol of the Cosmic Balance.
Return Loved One	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.
Sanctuary	Develop nervous tics and mannerisms, which grow steadily more pronounced with the increase of the Pact skill.
Second Life	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.
Ward	Lust for Miggea. 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.
Weapon of the Faith	Never surrender, or accept the surrender, of any foe.

- \* 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 Mirenburg, 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.



## 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 1 Magic Point allows a transformation into a wolf of 2D6+6, 2 Magic Points 2D6+9, 3 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 1 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 below 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 1 Combat Round per Magic Point for the transformation to take effect and the adherent remains in wolf form for 1 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.

### Characteristics

STR 3D6+3 (14)  
CON 3D6+3 (14)  
DEX 3D6+3 (14)  
SIZ 2D6+3 (10)

### Wolf Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-2	Right Hind Leg	2/5
3-4	Left Hind Leg	2/5
5-7	Hindquarters	2/6
8-10	Forequarters	2/6
11-13	Right Front Leg	2/5
14-16	Left Front Leg	2/5
17-20	Head	2/5

### Weapons

Type	Weapon skill	Damage
Bite	60%+STR	1D8 + Damage Modifier
Claw	60%+STR+DEX	1D6 + Damage Modifier

### Special Rules

*Combat Actions:* 3  
*Strike Rank:* +9  
*Movement:* 5m  
*Traits:* Night Sight  
*Skills:* Athletics 80%, Dodge 50 + DEX%, Resilience 40+CON%, Perception 60+POW%, Stealth 50+DEX%, Survival 40+CON%, Tracking 60%  
*Typical Armour:* Hide (AP 2, no Skill Penalty)



Gifts of Ilaw



## 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...

## 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 Myshella and championed her cause."*

*The Vanishing Tower*

## Gods/Pantheon

Law, Tovik, Myshella, Aubec and Arkyn

## 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 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 and 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 was hinting at 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.’

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. Every night, until her death, Merizhandt stood on the balcony of her tower in the city of R’lin K’reu A’a and prayed to the Cosmic Balance for her fair prince’s return.

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 Myshella 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.

## 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.

However 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 (see page 121).

## 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).

### Cult Ranks

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 initiates 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. Initiates 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 initiates 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.

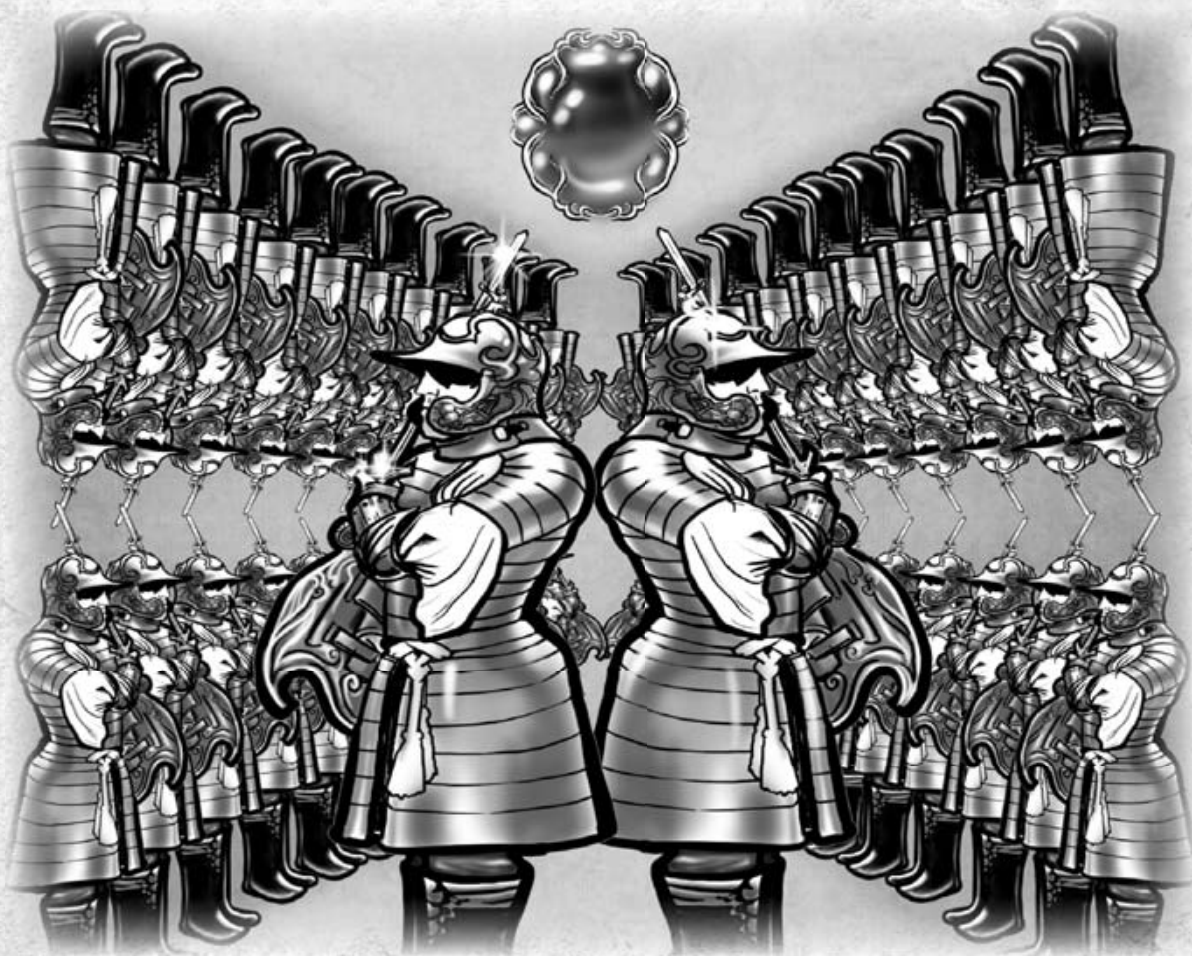
- \* Pact (Tovik) 90%
- \* Six Cult Skills at 90%
- \* Have served as a Battle Priest for at least 3 years
- \* Know at least 2 cult Runes at 50%

### 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 Compulsion
- \* Training in cult skills at half normal cost

### Hammer of Tovik

- \* One Gift and Compulsion
- \* Training in cult skills at half normal cost
- \* May start to learn cult Runes

### Battle Priest of Tovik

- \* One Gift and Compulsion
- \* Training in cult skills at half normal cost
- \* One Rune at base percentage

### Knight of Tovik

- \* One Gift and Compulsion
- \* Training in cult skills at half normal cost
- \* One Legendary Ability

### Gifts and Compulsions

Gift	Compulsion
Automaton	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.
Combat Acuity	Develop nervous tics and mannerisms which grow steadily more pronounced with the increase of the Pact skill.
Divine Training (Cult Skills)	Fall hopelessly in love with one particular individual. Pledge heart and soul to serve her.
Enchantment	Never surrender to Chaos but always accept the surrender of an unarmed opponent.
Innate Luck	Undergo a regular vigil of 3 days and 3 nights.
Perfection	Undertake a vow of chastity.
Weapon of the Faith	Wear only leather armour, as Tovik himself wore.

### Cult Skills

All weapons, Dodge, Language (High Speech), Lore (Chivalry), Lore (Law), Lore (Tovik), Martial Arts

### Lore (Chivalry) (INT+CHA)

Those who ascribe to the code of Chivalry understand the importance of love, honesty, honour, mercy, devotion to a cause, obligation and attaining personal nobility. The skill is used in two ways. First, as the skill develops, the character finds himself acting in a chivalrous way more and more unconsciously. Secondly, Lore (Chivalry) can be used in place of skills such as Courtesy and Influence where the personality is used to influence some form of social outcome or discourse.

### Cult Runes

Law, Alarm, Bewilderment, Contact, Light, Protection, Purity, Reflection, Truth

### Legendary Abilities

Armoured Titan, 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*

## Gods/Pantheon

Law. Pozz-man-Llyr

## 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. However 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.

## 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 Aflitain. 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, below.

## 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 3 POW dedicated to the Pact could add a +30% to 3 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***

<b>Gift</b>	<b>Compulsion</b>
Divine Training	May not kill any enemy, no matter how hated.
Enhanced Learning	Cannot wear armour of any kind; must always wear loose-fitting clothes or robes.
Increased Health	Become broodingly obsessed with carving new lands from Chaos, just as Aubec did.
Sense Enemies	Become increasingly paranoid about the influence of Chaos, seeing it everywhere; in secret symbols, the way people talk; the things they do.
Sense Million Spheres	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.
Tireless	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 take 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.





# 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 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 below.

## 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 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 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.

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 Imrry, 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 Chahal peninsular, Straasha is worshipped in the 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 Heirophant 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's the Life Giving sun who's 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. 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 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 Grome

*And then, slowly, the heaving earth subsided and the ship was still and a huge, brown figure stood looking down at the ship. The figure was the colour of earth and looked like a vast, old oak. His hair and his beard were the colour of leaves and his eyes were the colour of gold ore and his teeth were the colour of granite and his feet were like roots and his skin seemed covered in tiny green shoots in place of hair and he smelled rich and musty and good and he was King Grome of the Earth Elementals. He sniffed and he frowned and he said in a soft, mighty voice that was yet coarse and grumpy: 'I want my ship.'*

*'Then you must kill us to obtain it,' Elric said.*

*'Kill? Grome does not kill mortals. He kills nothing. Grome builds. Grome brings to life.'*

*'You have already killed three of our company,' Elric pointed out. 'Three are dead, King Grome, because you made the land-storm.'*

*Grome's great brows drew together and he scratched his great head, causing an immense rustling noise to sound. 'Grome does not kill,' he said again.*

*'King Grome has killed,' said Elric reasonably. 'Three lives lost.'*

*'Grome grunted. 'But I want my ship...'*

*Elric of Melniboné*

## Gods/Pantheon

Elemental. Grome of the Roots, Grome of the Land Below, Grome Earth Father. Ish'ish'a'maal, Lady of the Trees.

## Purpose and History


The land is Grome's kingdom: all above it and all beneath it. Grome guards his territory jealously, because he believes his brother, Straasha, would steal it and flood it if he had the opportunity.

By and large Grome is a benevolent, if sullen, god. He adores life and seeks its promotion. When provoked to wrath, Grome brings destruction in great quakes and upheavals of the earth but any death caused is regretted – an unfortunate tragedy the result of petulance and King Grome both sulks and mourns any loss of life he has caused.

The struggle between Grome and Straasha, whilst perpetuated by his mortal worshippers to some extent, has long since abated. Grome and his brother maintain a certain peace, secure in their own realms, although Grome occasional manifests the odd tantrum over disputed territory, as he does concerning 'his ship' – the Ship That Sails Over Sea and Land. For the most part, Grome is happy with the shape of the world and has cause to quarrel with the Lord of the Waves any longer.

One of Grome's duties in this cycle of Time has been as custodian of the Black Blades, Stormbringer and Mournblade. How he came to be their guardian, even Grome will not tell, because it would be to breach a trust of cosmic proportions but ever-dutiful, Grome guarded the Black Swords diligently and levelled his furious temper when the Mernii obtained one of them and refused to return it. Later, Arioch himself tricked Grome from the possession of the Black Sword and when Grome finally took charge of it again, the Earth King decided to remove it to another plane of existence altogether, where Arioch's deceptions would be to little avail.

As a current ruler Grome prefers to remain in his realm of roots and rock. His manifestations occur seldom and usually only if called upon by the emperors of Melniboné or the Pukwadjii, the strange, ancient folk of the Silent Lands – although even they know better than to test revered Grome's patience too often. It takes a great effort of will for Grome to rise and only when his realm is under direct threat. Calls for his aid usually result in Grome sending a proxy – an elemental or a subtle demonstration of his power, such as an earth tremor or landslide.



Grome considers all life to be within his province although he does not take credit for the creation of human (or Elder Race) life; still, he has the utmost respect for it and treats all life with same importance. He does, however, retain considerable love for trees and plants and his consort, the Lady Ish'ish'a'maal, Lady of the Trees, acts as a manifestation of this devotion.

### **Ish'ish'a'maal**

Grome needed to clothe the world, for it was naked. So he created the lady Ish'ish'a'maal and charged Her with creating the trees and plants that would cover the world's nakedness and protect its soils. Ish'ish'a'maal thus gave birth to the trees and plants and foremost of these were the trees, for they followed Her form. The flowers and other plants she created so that the clothes of the world would know beauty and grace. Ish'ish'a'maal continues to protect Her creations, for the world cannot be allowed to go naked. She communicates with the world through the whistling of the wind through the branches of the trees and through the colours and scents of the flowers. In all these things can be seen Her beauty and in understanding their forms, so one can divine Ish'ish'a'maal's will.

Ish'ish'a'maal's cult has a small, particularly devout sect of worshippers, found mostly in the Unknown East but with a few adherents scattered here and there amongst the western Young Kingdoms. The Branch Wise are individuals who have dedicated their lives to the study of Ish'ish'a'maal's teachings and the way she communicates with the world. The Branch Wise do not preach or attempt to make converts. They protect the forest in Her name and in return for their devotion, receive particular gifts and knowledge. The Branch Wise do not distinguish themselves from commoners for certain reasons (see *Perils of Branch Wisdom*, below) but are marked by Ish'ish'a'maal as being true to her. If the fingernails of a Branch Wise are examined closely, the observer may notice a greenish-tinge to the skin beneath the nail. This tinge grows deeper the longer one has been Branch Wise. The eldest Branch Wise have fingernails that are the colour of pale oak leaves.

## **Beliefs**

Those who worship Grome have simple, straightforward beliefs:

- \* Grome is the ruler of the earth and determines its shape
- \* His enemy is Straasha
- \* Grome protects all life and when life ends, it must be returned to him for renewal

More specific beliefs according to culture are as follows:

### **Dorel**

- \* Grome is the husband of Queen Lashaar and submits to her will
- \* Ish'ish'a'maal is banished from Dorel due to Queen Lashaar's jealousy
- \* Grome requires regular sacrifice to keep him from displaying his wrath.

### **Melniboné**

- \* Grome is the bedrock of all things; the foundation of all that grows or can be built
- \* His munificence is exhibited in the pacts only Melniboné enjoys.

### **Shazar**

- \* Grome is a benevolent father and Giver of the Harvest. Thanks must be given to him at every harvest time.

### **Pikarabyd and the Weeping Waste**

- \* Grome still wars with Straasha. He is beset by enemies to the south and north (the stuff of Chaos and the Oceans)
- \* By burying the dead, the wisdom of the ancestors returns through Grome's continued worship

### **Pukwadji**

- \* Grome is the father of all things. His wrath is dreadful
- \* The Pukwadji are the most beloved of his mortal children
- \* Grome is the Guardian of the Swords. Those who wield them defy Grome's authority

## **Worshippers**

The worship of Grome is still found mainly in the barbarian regions of the Young Kingdoms and rarely in the cities and towns. Cult practices are standard across different cults: respect for the land, protection of Grome's interests and the disruption of Straasha's.

Dedicated cultists – initiate and above – mark themselves with ritual scars and tattoos, wear their hair long and matted, often with twigs, pebbles or iron rings woven in or daubed with mud to form imposing coxcombs and spikes.

Temples are little more than caves adapted to the purpose or simple shrines of heaped stones. In civilised areas temples are always in basements or constructed underground.



Ish'ish'a'maal is treated as a sub-cult of Grome and the duties and benefits are outlined in the sections below.

### **Grome's Cult Ranks**

Despite the rank names, Grome's cult, like all the Elemental cults, is not nearly so formalised or rigidly structured. Quite often there is little to differentiate between initiates and acolytes and the priest-rank is shamanic, occupied by a single individual in a clan or tribe who is responsible for the direct veneration of Grome.

Dust-Son/Dust-Daughter (Lay Members)  
Earth-Son/Earth-Daughter (Initiates)  
Earth-Brother/Earth-Sister (Acolytes)  
Earth Father/Earth-Mother (Priest/Shaman)  
Earth Shaker (Champion/Clan or Tribal chief)

### **Dust-Son/Dust-Daughter**

Anyone belonging to a clan or tribe venerating Grome is automatically a Dust Son, although the name is rarely used by anyone save the cult's shaman. Aside from joining-in any special rites of worship, Dust Sons have no specific cult duties.

### **Earth-Son/Earth-Daughter**

Earth Sons have undergone some form of baptism or initiation to become active servants of Grome. Usually their requirement is simply to observe the traditions of the clan or tribe, acting as warriors or other functionaries but if the cult has specific business – such as a raid against an enemy cult or clan – then Earth Sons comprise the core of the force.

Becoming an Earth Son requires only that a Pact (Grome) be established as part of the initiation rite.

### **Earth-Brother/Earth-Sister**

Earth Brothers are simply senior initiates and the name is used rarely and only by the shaman. Like Earth Sons, they form the core of any warrior duty needed by the cult. To be considered as an Earth Brother, the following conditions must be met:

- \* Pact (Grome) 50% or higher
- \* One cult skill 50% or higher

### **Earth Father/Earth-Mother**

The shamans of the cult are the mouthpieces of Grome. They speak with his authority and lead all ceremonies and

rites conducted in his name. The Earth Father typically controls all policy relating to the cult, even in the presence of a clan or tribal chieftain, who must defer to their authority on such matters.

- \* Pact (Grome) 70% or higher
- \* Lore (Grome) 70% or higher

### **Earth Shaker**

The chieftain of a clan or tribe is often the cult's champion – but not always. A separate champion can be raised from the ranks, although it is rare for a cult to have more than one at a time.

- \* Pact (Grome) 90% or higher
- \* Four cult skills 70% or higher

## **Duties**

Cult duties are simple: to maintain the land taking only what is needed for survival, herd Grome's creatures (cattle, goats, sheep and so forth) and restrict the activities of Lord Straasha. Raid tribes and clans loyal to Straasha or the cult's enemies.



## **Benefits**

Cult benefits are in the form of Gifts, Compulsions, Cult Skills, Cult Runes and Summonings and Legendary Abilities.

### **EARTH-SON/EARTH-DAUGHTER**

- \* One Gift and one Compulsion.
- \* Cult skills are taught at no cost.

### **EARTH-BROTHER/EARTH-SISTER**

- \* One Gift and one Compulsion.
- \* Cult skills are taught at no cost.
- \* Earth Brothers may be taught cult Runes and Summonings if the Earth Father considers them worthy of the honour.

### **EARTH FATHER/EARTH-MOTHER**

- \* 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

### **EARTH SHAKER**

- \* One Gift and one Compulsion.
- \* Cult skills are taught at no cost.
- \* Earth Brothers may be taught cult Runes and Summonings if the Earth Father considers them worthy of the honour.
- \* One Legendary Ability

### **Gifts and Compulsions**

Gift	Compulsion
Animal Familiar	Bury all foes alive, in sacrifice to Grome.
Divine Training (Cult skills)	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).
Elemental (Gnome)	Eat only vegetables.
Endurance	Must never come into contact with water, save for drinking.
Healing	Never eat fish or other creature of the water.
Perfection	Never wear footwear or armour on the limbs.
Rune Mastery (Earth)	Never wear armour.
Sanctuary (Must be a sanctuary appropriate to the culture)	Sacrifice 1 point of CHA (through ritual scarring).

### **Cult Skills**

1H Spear, 2H Spear, Engineering (civilised regions only), Language (High Speech\*), Lore (Animal), Lore (Plant), Lore (Grome), Stealth, Survival, Tracking

### **Cult Runes**

Runes of Beast (choose a specific herd or hunting beast), Contact, Dissolution, Earth, Enhancement (CON and STR), Heat, Sight, Silence

### **Cult Summonings**

Command, Summoning Ritual (Gnome)

### **Legendary Abilities Available**

Battle Fury, Decapitating Swing, Disease Immunity, Heroic Aura, Skin of the Bear.

### **Cult Secrets**

King Grome was the custodian of the Black Blade, which he bartered with the Mernii people before the reign of the Bright Empire. When the Mernii refused to return the Black Blade Grome threatened to destroy their ships. The Mernii hero, White Crow, kept his oath to Grome Earth King and returned the Black Blade so that Grome could re-entomb it, keeping its evil isolated. For keeping the Mernii oath, Grome entered into the compact that remains with Melniboné to this day.

### **Retribution**

Grome seeks no retribution against those who leave or betray his cult; he has little concern for mortal affairs. However, a vengeful shaman might arrange for a traitor be sacrificed to Grome as punishment for his transgression.

### **Politics and Relationships**

Naturally enough the cult of Straasha is hated by the mortal worshippers of Grome. However the cult of Lassa is generally considered to be an ally and Kakatal's cult is viewed with ambivalence.



## Branch Wise - the Sect of Ish'ish'a'maal

Ish'ish'a'maal's form is that of a huge but incredibly beautiful woman with smooth skin the colour of silver birch, her hair formed from a vast mane of golden oak leaves and her body covered in ivy, moss and clematis, which climbs around her in a shimmering girdle of orange and gold. Ish'ish'a'maal is, like most manifestations of gods, immune to any physical attack and can only be harmed or injured by either another god. Ish'ish'a'maal can destroy physical objects but not being a goddess of destruction tries to refrain from destructive acts. Nor will she take any action that would offend Lord Grome or aid either Lord Straasha or the Lords of Chaos. If a Branch Wise attempts to invoke Ish'ish'a'maal to do any of these things, the summoning fails automatically.

### Becoming Branch Wise

First, one must locate someone with Branch Wisdom; then, one must persuade the Branch Wise of one's serious intentions to attain Branch Wisdom. This requires three successful Influence tests or one Influence test with a critical success. Before Branch Wisdom is taught, the individual must prove one's devotion to Ish'ish'a'maal. In game terms this is summarised as follows:

- \* 90% or greater in Athletics, Lore (Grome), and Lore (Plant)
- \* To have lived exclusively within a forest for at least 1 year
- \* To form a Pact with Ish'ish'a'maal, dedicating at least 5 points of POW to it
- \* Reject worship of all other gods, with the exception of Grome Earth Father

Those accepted into the ranks of the Branch Wise receive the following gifts and knowledge.

- \* Teaching of the *Bark Speech* and *Wind Song* languages, initially at the character's INT but with a further increase in both of 1D6% each year.
- \* The cult teaches the Runes of Contact, Plant, Passing and Purity. It has no summonings. Branch Wise must serve a full year before they can learn any of these Runes from the cult.
- \* The secrets of Ish'ish'a'maal are told to the Branch Wise, with one secret being revealed to them every three years of service. Revealing these secrets to anyone without either Ish'ish'a'maal's direct permission or the unanimous agreement of all other Branch Wise, is punishable by death.

### Gifts

Abstinence (Water), Change Gender, Second Life

### Compulsions:

- \* Never wear clothes – all body coverings must be of bark, ferns and other produce of the forest
- \* Eat only wild foods of the forest
- \* Never use metal
- \* Speak only in whispers. Never raise one's voice
- \* Extinguish all fires
- \* Kill all enemies of the forest

### THE SECRETS OF ISH'ISH'A'MAAL (KNOWN TO BRANCH WISE ONLY)

- \* The trees, being long-lived, know many things. Through the winds, they can communicate over great distances and the information they discover is given to Ish'ish'a'maal. So it is that Ish'ish'a'maal knows things forgotten by mankind or known by only a very few. Of the things she knows, these secrets hold great importance for the world and so that the Branch Wise might work on Her behalf, she teaches these secrets to them.
- \* *The location of the Dragons of Menastree:* When Melniboné left Menastree, it did so in a hurry and was unable to wake several of its dragons from their slumber. Melniboné has now forgotten these dragons, who still slumber in caves beneath the Shenh Mountains. Ish'ish'a'maal knows their whereabouts and how to wake them.
- \* *The location of the Lost City of Spharain:* Spharain was the greatest of the Menastrai cities but was besieged when Melniboné conquered Menastree. Rather than surrender its secrets, of which it has many, Yragael, last Prince of the Menastrai, hide the city using complex magics. Many have sought, in vain, for Spharain but Ish'ish'a'maal knows where it is and how to reach it.
- \* *The location of the four treasures of the Menastrai:* Granted to the Menastrai by the Balance, these are the Globe of Future Nations (held by Anakhazan), the Greatsword of Yragael (in the lost city of Spharain), the Crucible of Fate (in a deserted city at the bottom of the Tears of the Land), and the Scales of Equity (held by the Valedorian senate, although they do not know the importance of this treasure). The four treasures of the Menastrai, when brought together into the hands of a Champion of the Balance, provide a gateway to the world depicted by the Globe of Future Nations. It is believed that, come the End of the World, those loyal to the Balance can leave this world and move safely into the next.

## 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*

### GODS/PANTHEON

Elementals. Kakatal

### 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.

The greatest pyromancer of the Young Kingdoms' age and perhaps the one who trained Theleb K'aarna, is the man called Kloster H'yim, the infamous Red Redemptionist of Pan Tang. A century old when Theleb K'aarna studied under him, Kloster H'yim had bartered his entire soul for the flame of eternal life. So terrible was the physical cost that H'yim no longer had the flesh and bones of a mortal man but instead the raw and scorched cadaver of an immolation victim. His blood was replaced with lava and his breath was that of pure flame. Unable to exist in the outside world without disguise, H'yim had a suit of flame-red armour fashioned from the strongest metals imaginable and encased himself within it. Even then, hidden behind layers of demon-forged steel, H'yim was too hot to even approach and so took himself into exile, far to the west of Dharijor, finding refuge somewhere in the mountains between Lashmar and the Vale of Xanyaw. There, Kloster H'yim raised a temple to Kakatal so that he might worship him in singular veneration – his one, immortal, high priest.

Kloster H'yim still lives, deep in his fiery temple, locked in pursuits that would drive most men, the sorcerers of Melniboné included, insane.

## 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. However, 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.

### Cult Ranks

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 and 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 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 Breachers

- \* 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 shaman 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

Gift	Compulsion
Divine Training (Cult Skills)	A constant and gnawing fear of death – something no cultist could ever admit but one that drives the individual to distraction and growing anxiety.
Elemental (salamander)	Become obsessed with starting fires; oppose all those who try to extinguish them.
Enchantment	Develop Agoraphobia. Cannot abide wide-open spaces where Lassa's spies can watch.
Extended Life	Donation of 1D4 points of permanent POW to sustain Kakatal's eternal flame; driven partially insane as a result.
Increased Health	Never enter into hand-to-hand combat.
Invulnerability (Fire)	Singe the skin from the body, leaving the flesh raw, -1HP to all locations.
Rune Mastery (Fire, Light)	Skin becomes cracked and broken, as though scorched, -1 CHA.
Youth	Visions of terrible carnage that disturb the sleep and leave the dreamer feeling worthless and drained.

## Cult Skills

1H Spear, Bow, Craft (Blacksmith), Influence, Language (High Speech\*), Lore (Kakatal), Lore (Haborym), 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 Runes

Runes of Fire, Heat, Light, Protection and Purity



## Cult Summonings

Command, Summoning Ritual (Salamander)

## Legendary Abilities Available

Empathic Wound, Heroic Aura, Madness of Purpose, Slaying Touch

## 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, Elric 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*

## Gods/Pantheon

Elementals. Lassa, Queen Lashaar.

## Purpose and History

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 Brotherhood of the Red Redemption


When Kloster H'yim fled Hwamgaarl, he made his way across Dharijor preaching as he went. Those who listened to the ominous words echoing from behind his flame-red mask were beguiled and chose to follow H'yim on his pilgrimage to find the Heart of the World.

The sect of the Red Redemption still exists, hidden in the depths of the mountains west of Lashmar. Utterly devoted to Kakatal and Kloster H'yim as his High Priest and Champion, the Brotherhood venerates fire in all its forms and, in honour of H'yim, ritually scorch their flesh and dress in red plate armour.

The cult is secretive and vindictive. So close to the kingdom of the Myrrhn, beyond the mountains where they hide, they plan to deliver Kakatal's vengeance to the realm of Lassa and scour the Wind Queen raw with redemptive flame. The cult is dangerous and forbidding; so much so that even Dharijor, a pawn of Chaos, abhors its existence. Yet the cult still attracts members: the mad of Pan Tang who, learning that eternal life can be granted through devotion to the sacred fire, sometimes seek it out and undergo the agonies of initiation. Certain Melnibonéans, too, delighting in the dreadful pain of flame-scouring, seek out membership of the Brotherhood as an amusing diversion.

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. However, 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.

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*

#### **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 rules) 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 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.



*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.

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.

## **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's tempered by a gentleness not normally associated with Entropy. Worshippers 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 (Anderlmaign) 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.

### **Cult Ranks**

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 take 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 an initiate 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 initiates.

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, of they wish, 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 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

Gift	Compulsion
Abstinence (Air)	Cannot wear armour of any kind; must always wear loose-fitting clothes or robes.
Divine Training (Cult Skills)	Desire to wear no clothing at all, save for a loin-cloth when circumstances require modesty.
Elemental (Sylph)	Develop claustrophobia. Cannot enter any space of less than 3 times SIZ willing; stricken with panic if forced into such a space.
Perfection	May not kill any enemy, no matter how hated.
Rune Mastery (Air)	Must always offer healing to those who need it.
Sanctuary	Never eat the flesh of any animal.
Ward (Fire)	Unable to concentrate for long periods. Tasks requiring periods of concentration take twice as long to complete.
Youth	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.

### Cult Skills

1H Spear, 1H Sword, Bow, Acrobatics, Athletics, Boating, First Aid, Healing, Language (High Speech\*), Lore (Lassa), Lore (Weather), Shiphandling, Throwing, Dance, Play Instrument

*\*Only the High Speech necessary to casting cult runes and summonings is taught. It cannot be used to cast magic of other runes.*

### Cult Runes

Runes of Air, Beast (Birds), Contact, Enhancement (DEX), Purity, Sight and Speed

### Cult Summonings

Command, Summoning Ritual (Sylph), Summoning Ritual (Sharma), Summoning Ritual (h'Haar'shann), Summon Boatmen of Xerxelenes.

### Legendary 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*


## Gods/Pantheon

Elementals. Straasha

## Purpose and History

Of all of 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. 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 and 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 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. 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.

## 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 that the might of Straasha 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:

### Cult Ranks

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

Acolytes 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.

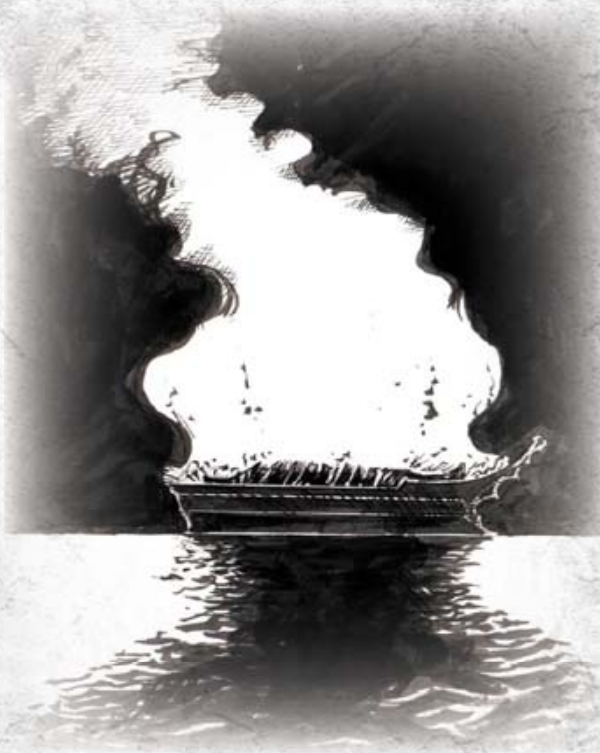
- \* Pact (Straasha) 90% or higher
- \* Lore (Straasha) 90% or higher
- \* Two cult skills at 90% or higher
- \* Summon Undine at 50% or higher

### 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

Gift	Compulsion
Abstinence (Water)	Craves the seas or rivers. If confined to land for more than a few days, becomes panicked and sullen.
Elemental (Undine)	Develop a fear of dirt and the soil. Must bathe or wash regularly (every few hours).
Enchantment	Drink only water.
One use of the Ship That Sails Over Sea and Land (3 POW)	Eat only fish.
Poison Immunity	Fear of Chaos and Pyaray's undead fleet.
Return Loved One	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.
Rune Mastery (Water),	Unable to cross any stream or river via a bridge, must always wade or swim.
Second Life	Weeps almost constantly at the injustices Grome has heaped on Straasha by cutting-off lakes from the sea.

### Cult Skills

1H Spear, 1H Sword, Bow, Boating, Dodge, Language (High Speech\*), Lore (Straasha), Lore (Sea and Tides), Lore (Fish), 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 Runes

Runes of Water, Beast (Fish), Passing, Purity, Silence and Speed

### Cult Summonings

Command, Summoning Ritual (Undine)

### Legendary 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.



# ANCESTOR AND PERSONALITY CULTS

Worship in the Young Kingdoms is not confined to the combatants in the Eternal Struggle. Traditions of worship that do *not* involve the recognised Lords of the Higher Planes can be found in those cults venerating ancestors and revered heroes or personalities; this chapter concerns them. The cults in this chapter are characterised by the adherents' belief and need, for the return of something that has been lost from the world. The cult of Aubec seeks the return of its hero; the cult of the Dhoz seeks the return and maintenance of simplicity of its ancestors; the cult of Terhali seeks the return of its infamous empress; and the Spell Thieves, Cran Liret's cult, seeks a return of the vengeful sorcerer imprisoned in his own machinery. These are cults that are tangential to the Eternal Struggle and concerned with particularly selfish ends. To this extent they appeal to those who seek former glories and personal causes that are not necessarily concerned with the greater affairs of the Cosmic Struggle and the wider agendas of the Lords of the Higher Planes.

Ancestor and personality cults may differ little from the larger cults in terms of the fervour displayed by their adherents but they do differ in their scale. Such cults are usually localised, may be confined to primitive regions or involve individuals who had, perhaps, a highly personal and singular agenda that has little to do with the Cosmic Struggle. Even so, these cults are still conduits for power – in terms of maintaining a memory and therefore a presence (quite literally, in the case of Cran Liret) and for others to seek and attain power within a much smaller sphere of influence.

*Ancestral veneration* centres on the belief that the founders of a culture, although long-dead, still maintain a watching spiritual presence that guides and advises, sometimes mystically and sometimes simply through cultural tradition. The ideals of the society stem from the ancestors' actions, many of them mythical or semi-mythical and will retain their power as long as the ancestors continue to be recognised. Such cults generally describe these actions in mythical terms and may involve dealings with the larger pantheons of Law, Chaos and the Elemental Lords. The deeds and actions of the ancestors may not have been

supernatural *per se* but were strong enough to have forged an identity or tradition that persists down the ages and both explains and defines the world-view of the descendants to a greater or lesser degree.

Ancestor worship is common in the primitive societies of Oin, Org, Pikarayd and Yu but is not confined to them: Melniboné has a certain ancestral tradition (largely displaced – first in favour of Chaos, and later in favour of solipsism and drug-induced apathy) as does Pan Tang (which reveres its theocrats as embodiments of the will of the Lords of Chaos). Despite the very different levels of civilisation found in this group of nations, their ancestral veneration displays certain key themes that unites them: reverence for the actions of a particular person, now described in mythical terms; and the strongly held belief that their presence, even though it may not manifest overtly, continues to permeate the society to some degree and will persist for as long as veneration continues.

Personality cults share similar characteristics but 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.



## Cult of Aubec

*The Champion was traditionally her lover - and it was unthinkable to Earl Aubec that any other condition should exist. It was his place, as Champion of Klant, to obey and go forth from her palace to seek Castle Kaneloon alone and conquer it and declare it part of her Empire, so that it could be said Queen Eloarde's domain stretched from the Dragon Sea to World's Edge.*

*The Dream of Earl Aubec*

## Gods/Pantheon

Personality cult. Earl Aubec of Malador, Champion of Klant.

## Purpose and History

The cult venerates Earl Aubec of Malador, the champion and lover of Queen Eloarde of Klant who, in the very earliest days of the Young Kingdoms, when Lormyr governed a third of the world, commanded armies and ventured to the very edge of the world in order to extend Queen Eloarde's empire.

If Aubec had expanded Eloarde's kingdom just through military action, his fame would have been guaranteed. Yet he achieved more. In going to the edge of the world, at Eloarde's behest, Aubec came to Castle Kaneloon and its beautiful, enigmatic resident, Myshellia, Empress of the Dawn. Earl Aubec, beguiled by Myshellia, went forth into the miasma of Chaos at world's edge, to challenge the Lords of Chaos and create new lands of Order. In this respect he succeeded and the southern boundaries of the world were extended, Castle Kaneloon transferring itself to the new edge of the world.

However the lands Aubec forged and claimed in Eloarde's name, were not lands populated with willing subjects. Aubec created a set of desolate, dust-blown wastes that merely extended the world's edge but did not bring them the spoils of an enlarged empire. Using Aubec as its pawn, Law took from Chaos and extended its territory. Aubec was duped and returned to Klant disillusioned and sceptical of Law's promise and patronage.

At that time, the Bright Empire was beginning to wane and Aubec's successes against its armies and in expanding the territories of the south, fascinated the Dragon Lords. Aubec, a mere human, had demonstrated qualities considered admirable in Melnibonéans. Law had duped him and even though he had sought to increase Law's province by

challenging Chaos, he had demonstrated the raw bravery and creativity that all true Melnibonéans hold in high regard. Aubec's capital in Imrryr increased and although he was still viewed as an enemy of the Bright Empire and still continued to wage war against the Dragon Lords of the southern lands, he was a noble and worthy enemy – a man to be respected and not disdained. This was not a unanimous view amongst the people of Melniboné but it was held in the Imperial Court and most crucially, by the occupant of the Ruby Throne himself.

The cult of Aubec began in Imrryr. The emperor of the time, Amuric IV, also known as the Lonely Emperor, commanded that Aubec's history and deeds be researched and told as stories to the members of the Imperial Court. Eager to please the Lonely Emperor, the tales of Aubec's exploits were embellished and exaggerated to a degree but still his name was honoured amongst those who followed the Lonely Emperor's lead. People took to dressing in the barbarian style of Queen Eloarde and Earl Aubec. Their names became popular as names for Melnibonéan children. The cult around Aubec grew and, when the Bright Empire retreated completely from the southern continent, some 400 or more years ago, it was hoped that Aubec and Eloarde would, perhaps, become allies of the dragon isle.

That was not to be. Aubec remained as Eloarde's champion for perhaps a decade, consolidating Lormyr's rule over the emerging nations of Argimiliar and Filkhar. Then, when Eloarde fell to a sickness and lay close to death, Aubec went forth once more in search of a cure for his queen and lover. He never returned. No one knows what happened to him – or to Eloarde. It is believed she died from her illness and grief stricken, Aubec could not face returning to his homelands. But Eloarde was not buried or burned. Her brother took the throne and settled into the subjugation of the southern kingdoms without a champion.

Aubec and Eloarde's disappearance, far from bringing the cult to an end, strengthened it and now many myths and mysteries surround the Champion of Klant that have become beliefs held by those within the cult's ranks.

## Beliefs

The cult has two sets of beliefs. The central beliefs - those common to all cultists and then those pertinent to a particular allegiance. The common beliefs are based on what is known of Aubec's life and character. The central beliefs are:



- \* The belief in righteous war and conquest
- \* The belief in abiding love
- \* The belief in singular purpose
- \* The belief in duty and honour
- \* The belief in personal regret

On these, all cultists are agreed and every cultist tries to emulate Aubec's devotion to each belief, usually taking one or two that are especially resonant and placing them at the forefront of their personal actions.

The next set of beliefs are founded in interpretation of Aubec's motives, disappearance and either continued life or absolute death.

#### **Chaos Believes...**

- \* Aubec was a pawn of Law and came to realise this. His faith in Law was so shaken that he renounced it and turned to Chaos instead.
- \* Aubec still lives but is in the service of a Lord of the Higher Planes. Chaos has promised to provide a cure for Eloarde's sickness, once Aubec has served Chaos adequately.
- \* Chaos tends to the sickened Eloarde. She resides in a palace of diamond, tended by sweet nurses who look after her until a cure can be found.

#### **Law Believes...**

- \* Aubec was slain by Melnibonéan assassins. His soul resides with the Lords Donblas and Tovik where he prepares to assist in the Final Battle with Chaos.
- \* Eloarde was poisoned by Melniboné, that master of unnatural sicknesses, as punishment for her crusades against them. Her body was hidden by those loyal to Aubec so that Melniboné could not make a repulsive slave of her.
- \* Aubec can be called upon, like any Lord of Law, if the conditions are right. He appears on a black charger, clad in armour of Jet and Gold and bearing a mighty runesword capable of slaying gods.

#### **The Non-Aligned Believe...**

- \* Aubec is not dead. He roams the Moonbeam Roads in search of Eloarde. One day his search will bring him back to the Young Kingdoms where he will require the help of his faithful to find his Queen and Lover.
- \* Eloarde is held prisoner in a sorcerous slumber by either a Lord of Law or Chaos – no one can be sure. Aubec's questing will help him find a way to reach her but those loyal to must also find ways of discovering where the

good Queen of ancient Klant might be held, and prepare for Aubec's return.

- \* Aubec wages righteous war on those who are unjust, cruel and selfish. He abhors these things and seeks redemption through destroying those who prey on the weak. Those faithful to him must follow the same example.

## **Worshippers**

Such is Aubec's reputation and mystery, his cult appeals to those who support Law, Chaos and the unaligned. This is truly a hero cult and even Melniboné, so scornful of the human race, recognises that Aubec was a mighty and noble hero and deserved that honour. Naturally enough, Law claims Aubec as one of its own champions but as the Purpose, History and Belief sections, above, show, the truth is far more complex.

Thus, the cult of Aubec attracts those who see him as either a champion of Law or Chaos and those who, preferring to direct their faith away from the Higher Powers, seek to venerate someone embodying ideals close to their own.

As a hero cult, Aubec appeals to warriors, would-be-warriors and would-be-heroes. His veneration is strong in the old Lormyrian province of Klant (in the south east of the country, bordering Filkhar) and the earldom of Malador (a region of rolling fields and sleepy towns, in the north of Klant province).

His veneration extends across the southern continent and even reaches up to Jharkor and Tarkesh. On Melniboné his veneration is limited a handful of nobles who have not succumbed to the drug-induced comas enjoyed by much of the populace but is nevertheless a cult of influence in the court. Emperor Sadric maintained a shrine to Aubec and his son, Elric, was trained in certain dreamquests linked to Aubec's exploits.

The structure of the cult lacks any form of priest rank; veneration of Aubec is unshrouded in ritual and not marked by holy days or ceremonies of worship. Lay membership requires nothing more than remembering Aubec and ascribing to the core beliefs of the faith. The formal ranks that do exist are as follows:

#### **Cult Ranks**

Squires of Malador (Initiates)  
Earls of Klant (Acolytes)  
Knights of Eloarde (Champions)

### Squires of Malador

A new Squire of Malador can only be accepted into the cult at a shrine to Aubec. The largest and most famous is Aubec's ruined castle in the Malador region of Klant province in Lormyr. However, other, simpler shrines are scattered around the Young Kingdoms, usually found as part of a temple or shrine to Lord Tovik of Law.

Squires (and all subsequent ranks) are required to form a Pact (Aubec) by dedicating themselves to following and upholding the central beliefs of the cult and selecting one of the central beliefs as their personal Guiding Principle. Only a single point of POW needs to be dedicated to establishing the Pact although more can be dedicated if the new Squire wishes. At this stage the Squire gains a single Gift (see Benefits) and a single Compulsion. However, to progress within the cult he must dedicated time to studying and developing one skill related to the central belief he has chosen as his Guiding Principle:

#### Guiding Principle Skill

The belief in righteous war and conquest

One sword skill

The belief in abiding love

Lore (Chivalry)\*

The belief in singular purpose

Influence

The belief in duty and honour

Courtesy, Lore (Chivalry)\*

The belief in personal regret

Insight\*

*\* New Advanced skill. See boxed text*

If the Squire does not already possess the skill symbolising the Guiding Principle he has chosen, he learns it as part of his initiation into the cult at its base percentage.

### Earls of Klant

To become an Earl of Klant, a Squire must have achieved the following:

- \* Developed the skill linked with his Guiding Principle to 50% or greater
- \* Developed his Pact (Aubec) to 50% or greater
- \* Must be able to recount a deed conducted whilst a Squire that demonstrates his pursuit of his Guiding Principle

Again, the initiation into Earldom is conducted at a shrine to Aubec. Further POW can be dedicated to the

### New Skills for the Cult of Aubec

#### Insight (INT+POW)

Insight is the ability to read a person's verbal and non-verbal behaviours and signals to determine their motives and state of mind. Insight is used to determine if someone is telling you a lie or to determine how someone feels about a particular situation. It is distinct from the Perception skill, since it is used to detect subtle expressions of character and attitude, rather than tangible effects that can be assessed through general observation alone.

#### Lore (Chivalry) (INT+CHA)

Those who ascribe to the code of Chivalry understand the importance of love, honesty, honour, mercy, devotion to a cause, obligation and attaining personal nobility. The skill is used in two ways. First, as the skill develops, the character finds himself acting in a chivalrous way more and more unconsciously. Secondly, Lore (Chivalry) can be used in place of skills such as Courtesy and Influence where the personality is used to influence some form of social outcome or discourse.

Pact and, whilst this is not mandatory, it is traditional. A Compulsion is chosen irrespective of a POW dedication; a Gift is forthcoming only if additional POW is dedicated to the Pact.

Every Earl of Klant is expected to choose a quest, which must fulfil two objectives: first, it must embody the Earl's chosen Guiding Principle but it must also embody a second Guiding Principle selected from the central beliefs. Secondly, the quest must become a focal point for the cultist's subsequent career. The quest undertaken is decided by the new Earl but it is common for it to concern the general conundrums concerning Aubec and Eloarde's fate or Aubec's personal endeavours during his active life in the Young Kingdoms. Sample quests are provided in Duties, below.

### Knights of Eloarde

The Knights of Eloarde are the cult's heroes. They are considered to embody Aubec's spirit and to become a knight the following conditions must be fulfilled:



- \* Develop two skills associated with the Guiding Principles to 80% or higher
- \* Develop the Pact (Aubec) to 80% or higher
- \* Dedicate at least an additional 1 POW to the Pact
- \* Have evidence of the progress of their personal quest, begun as an Earl of Klant

All Knights of Eloarde gain the benefits listed in Benefits below. They must also dedicate themselves fully to the cause of Aubec by making their personal quest the complete focus of their career, henceforth.

## Duties

Followers of the cult are expected to evince Aubec's qualities in everything that they do, as described in the central beliefs and adopted by the Guiding Principle chosen as a Squire. Specific duties for each rank are as follows:



### Squire

- \* Act in a chivalrous manner.
- \* Seek a cause to serve, be that a country, king, comrade or ideal

### Earl

- \* Engage upon a quest that embodies Aubec's qualities.
- \* Make the central beliefs his own.
- \* Continue to maintain the duties ascribed to as a Squire.

### Knight

- \* Maintain and continue the qualities of Squires and Earls.
- \* Serve Aubec's memory through making the personal quest central to their life.
- \* Prepare for Aubec's return and to serve at his side.

## Benefits

Benefits of becoming a follower of the cult of Aubec come in the form of skills training, the Gifts and Compulsions listed below, revelations of secrets and certain entitlements according to rank.

### Cult Skills

The following skills are taught to cult members, usually free of charge, as long as the cultist dedicates the time to training and study to the exclusion of other activities.


*1H Sword, 2H Sword, Shield, Artistic Expression (Poetry), Courtesy, Influence, Insight, Lore (Chaos), Lore (Chivalry), Lore (Law), Lore (Million Spheres), Lore (World), Martial Arts, Riding, Survival*

### Gifts and Compulsions

Gifts tend not to be of a sorcerous or magical nature. Aubec is not, after all, a god or demi-god. However the power of his memory and personality has a presence that infuses and enthuses his faithful.

Gifts	Compulsions
Combat Acuity	Become broodingly obsessed with carving new lands from Chaos, just as Aubec did.
Increased Damage Modifier.	Fall hopelessly in love with one particular individual. Pledge heart and soul to serve her.
Increased Health.	Become obsessed with becoming a Hero of Myshella, placing yourself completely at her service.
Increased Reactions.	Become obsessed with challenging an empire and replacing it with a regime that embodies Aubec's qualities.
Innate Luck.	Become obsessed with locating Queen Eloarde – in addition to the quest engaged upon. Eloarde's love and grace fills your dreams and daydreams. No other woman can possibly measure up to her.
Sixth Sense	Refuse to act in any way that contradicts the laws of chivalry.
Weapon*	Show mercy to any defeated enemy, no matter what their crime, status of degree of enmity towards you.

*\*The weapon gifted is considered a cult heirloom and was once used either by Aubec, someone he commanded, or a fallen hero*



*of the cult. The weapon is always a one or two handed sword. The person using it may add the POW dedicated to the Pact (Aubec) to its damage rating (so, for example, someone with 4 POW dedicated to the Pact and receiving a War Sword, would inflict 1D8+4 damage).*

### Legendary Abilities

The cult teaches the following Legendary Abilities. Knights of Eloarde are taught one ability as a benefit of rank and do not need the ability's pre-requisites to learn it. Other ranks can learn an ability if they fulfil the criteria.

*Duellist*

*Empathic Wound*

*Heroic Aura*

### Benefits of Rank

**Earls of Klant** are allowed to call themselves Earl (insert name) of Klant. They are entitled to command Squires and lay-members of the cult.

**Knights of Eloarde** are allowed the title of 'Sir' and may carry Eloarde's device (a single, white rose) on their shield, tabard, banner or elsewhere. They are also entitled to command Squires and Earls.

Knights of Eloarde may also come to the attention of Myshella, Empress of the Dawn. She is in constant need of heroes and those who exhibit Aubec's qualities attract her. If Myshella summons a Knight, usually via a dream or another servant, such as her jewelled bird, the Knight is honour-bound to serve her, regardless of his allegiances and in regardless of the Hero of Myshella compulsion.

Knights are also taught one cult secret and one Legendary Ability.

### Cult Secrets

The following secrets represent the truths of Aubec's myth. They are revealed only to Knights of Eloarde and may fundamentally contradict any beliefs the follower of the cult currently holds about Aubec.

- \* Aubec serves neither Law nor Chaos. He is an incarnation of the Eternal Champion and destined to serve the Cosmic Balance. He currently wanders the Multiverse in search of a cure for Queen Eloarde's illness, which traps her in a sorcerous coma.
- \* Chaos punished Aubec by placing Eloarde in a magical coma. A sorcerer from the world known as Culoon-Aa, a plane disrupted by Aubec's forging of the stuff of Chaos

into new, ordered lands, came into the Young Kingdoms and enchanted Queen Eloarde, posing as Aubec himself. This sorcerer has not been found, although Aubec searches for him. Meanwhile, Eloarde's inert body has been taken into the custody of three Knights of Eloarde who have been responsible for guarding her. Her body rests in a secret location known only to those knights who are tasked with guarding her but the location is not within the Young Kingdoms and is a place where time has no meaning.

- \* Aubec's sword and armour was taken by Melniboné and is revered there as part of the cult of Aubec. Only Imrryr's emperors are permitted to use these items but by rights they should be brought back to the Ruins of Malador so they can be held safe for Aubec's return.
- \* A great war between Law and Chaos looms and the Knights of Eloarde will command an army supporting one side. Only Aubec knows which side will be supported – but it is by no means a foregone conclusion that it will be Law.
- \* Emperor Elric and his cousin, Cymoril, may be incarnations of Aubec and Eloarde. Parallels exist between their relationships.
- \* Myshella used Aubec as a pawn of Law, as she has used many heroes and will continue to do so. Something binds the fates of Myshella and the cult of Aubec together meaning that no Knight can resist the Empress's summons. However his selfishness has cost the lives and sanity of many Knights and ultimately trust in her is misplaced.
- \* Two enemies seek to destroy Aubec and those faithful to him: on one side, the Sword Rulers of Chaos; on the other, Miggea of Law. Aubec refused to serve either of them directly and has thwarted their schemes in the past. Agents of either side are considered enemies and must be destroyed, before they wreck Aubec's legacy.

### Retribution

Leaving the cult of Aubec is viewed with sadness by other followers but the cult does not enact any form of overt retribution. The follower does not lose any Compulsions developed as part of his membership and if anything, they intensify.

However, if a follower betrays the cult to its enemies in any way, the Knights of Eloarde take it upon themselves to hunt for the traitor and kill him, irrespective of their own notions of chivalry. Betraying the cult s to betray Aubec himself and the cult's higher echelons know that there is too much at stake for that to happen.



## Politics

Members of the cult of Aubec tend to be like-minded and relatively close-knit. There are, however, schisms of interpretation, clearly between those who cleave towards Law and those who cleave towards Chaos. The honourable thing to do when such opinions meet is to avoid fractious debate on concentrate on the central beliefs. Only Aubec and Eloarde know the full truth of their allegiances and until they are restored to the world, followers of the cult can only speculate. It is therefore considered polite for differing views and opinions to be withheld when followers of the cult meet or work together, although, being human, differences of views naturally surface and can cause tension.

The human members of the cult view Melnibonéan adherents with scepticism. If a Melnibonéan supporter of Aubec seeks to work with other cultists, he has to work doubly hard to win their confidence and trust – although the codes of honour and chivalry most followers of the cult adhere to make this task a little easier.

## Relationships

The cults of Miggea and the Sword Rulers hate the cult of Aubec with a passion. Miggea hates it because the belief in chivalry and honour, plus the cult's acceptance of a Chaotic viewpoint, fundamentally opposes Miggea's insane quest for ultimate Law. The cult of Aubec is seen as a heresy that must be stamped out.

The Sword Rulers see the cult as a threat because Aubec has always been associated with Law. Their preference is for the cult of Aubec to be extinguished, although the Sword Rulers cult is not above manipulating Aubec cultists for their own ends, whenever the need or opportunity arises.

The Knights of Tovik view the Lawful aspects of the cult of Aubec with considerable favour. Indeed, the Tovik cult considers itself an ally with the cult of Aubec in general and some warriors allied with Law are members of both cults simultaneously.

## Cult of the Dhoz - Ancestor Cult of Oin and Yu

*'As for the rest of Oin and Yu - it is inhabited by peasants who are for the most part so ill-educated and superstition-ridden that they are poverty-stricken.'*

*Elric of Melniboné*

### Divine Intervention for the Cult of Aubec

As Aubec is not a god, calling to him for divine intervention as described on page 94 of the *Elric of Melniboné* rules does not produce a manifestation or other form of supernatural intervention. However, followers of the cult may try to channel Aubec's wisdom and experience, which is known through the histories and myths surrounding his life. If a Divine Intervention test is successful (i.e., a successful test against the Pact), then the cultist either recalls how Aubec handled a similar situation, or receives some insight into what to do, in the form of a Games Master hint or suggestion). As with standard Divine Intervention, this can only happen once for any situation but the strength of the Pact does *not* decline if it is called upon in this way.


## Gods/Pantheon

The Dhoz – Ancestral founders of Oin and Yu.

## Purpose and History

Isolated from even the greater influence of the Bright Empire, Oin and Yu, tucked away in the south west of the Young Kingdoms, where the Boiling Sea skirts the land, have ignored – and been ignored by – the powers of the Eternal Struggle. The primitive, simple-minded folk of these meagre lands have their own stories to explain the world and the Lords of Law and Chaos mean nothing to them.

Their joint nations were created the people known as the *Dhoz*, who came from out of the west thousands of years ago, at a time when the Elemental Lords were just finishing their war over the shape of the earth. The Dhoz encountered Kakatal and Straasha locked in a great battle and through some simple questions, showed the two elemental lords that, if they continued to fight, the sun would be extinguished and oceans would turn to steam and the world would be barren save for the scouring of Lassa's winds and the tempestuous temper of Grome's earthquakes. Kakatal and Straasha agreed to end their quarrel but the sea still boils, such was the strength of their argument.



The Dhoz were wise and fleeing because their wisdom had inadvertently invited demons into the world. Settling at the mouth of the Ar River, the Dhoz decided that, if cleverness and wisdom attracted the likes of the demons they had encountered, then it was better to reject such lofty thoughts and maintain as simple existence as possible. They made but one city – Dhoz-Kam (meaning *Home of the Dhoz*) and decreed that no more cities or towns should be built because, in likelihood, demons would be attracted to them.

To ensure that demons are kept at bay, the Dhoz created a set of basic principles, their last act of wisdom, through which life should be led:

*Ask no questions  
Speak few thoughts  
Celebrate the simple  
Reject the complex*

Everything the Dhoz did followed these principles and so, when the rest of the world fell to the Dragon Princes, the lands of the Dhoz, which were named Oin and Yu (meaning ‘Here’ and ‘There’), were ignored by the conquerors – because the Dhoz had nothing to offer and wanted still less from anyone else.

## Beliefs

The people of Oin and Yu do not believe that the Dhoz were gods or anything like gods. They were certainly wise, once and it hurt them. The demons that drove them east were probably gods and they demonstrated that worshipping anything other than gods that can be seen (such as the Elemental Lords) is unwise.

However the Dhoz did set-out, through a series of complex traditions and superstitions, how Oinish and Yuish society should behave. Venerating the Dhoz and maintaining these traditions perpetuates the protection and guidance of the Dhoz ancestors. Furthermore, the best adherents to the traditions of the Dhoz become, on death, part of the Dhoz provenance and so are worthy of veneration.

The Dhoz, upon death, were mummified and their mummies taken to a simple underground tomb, lined with stones, deep in the jungles of Oin where they rest to this day. Before burial the hand of one of each of the Dhoz was cut from the corpse and divided into still smaller fragments. These fragments were then dispersed amongst the populace to act as reminders and physical representations of the purity and grace of the ancestors. These relics (knuckles, finger-

tips, the skin of the palm and so forth) are greatly prized by the Oinish and Yuish and are protected as reverentially and securely as any major religion's totems or relics. Through the Hands of the Dhoz, certain powers are conferred upon those who adhere to the Dhoz's teachings and unerringly uphold the traditions and superstitions of the ancestors.

## Worshippers

All Oinish and Yuish are considered lay members of the Dhoz. Worship is simple; remember the ancestors, venerate their name, maintain the superstitions and on the Ancestors' Day, spend one entire day fasting and reflecting on the simplicity of the world.

The cult of the Dhoz has no priests as such but it does have those who, through study and adherence to the superstitions and traditions are considered closer to the Dhoz than lay members. The loose ranks within the cult are as follows:

### Cult Ranks

Dhoz-True (initiates)  
Dhoz-Seers (acolytes)  
Hand-Touched (priests/champions)

### DHOZ-TRUE

The Dhoz-True are highly superstitious, easily scared by the inexplicable and certain that the spirits of the Dhoz are all around them. Becoming an initiate involves swearing on the relic owned by the community and forming a Pact (Dhoz) with the usually dedication of POW. The Gift the initiate gains varies but the compulsion is always the same: to become gravely superstitious and almost paranoid about doing anything that will bring about bad luck. Bad luck is present in everything, and so every action has a ritual or tradition that must be followed to the letter to avoid bad luck from manifesting itself. Dhoz-True are thus fretful, furtive creatures forever spitting, urinating on door thresholds, making mystical signs and burning hair and nail clippings in a bid to avoid misfortune.

### DHOZ-SEERS

When the Pact (Dhoz) reaches 50% the Dhoz-True automatically experiences an intense dream where the ancestors visit him and one of them declares himself the initiate's Ancestor Guide. The initiate awakes and is now a Dhoz-Seer. He is even more superstitious and highly strung than before but this time the spirit of the Dhoz ancestor walks at his side (invisible to everyone else but all Oinish and Yuish know that the ancestor is present) and offers specific advice and guidance that the acolyte must abide by.



The spirit guide provides a single Gift and no Compulsion other than all actions *must* be approved by the ancestor. If the Dhoz-Seer goes against the spirit guide's advice, then spirit goes away, leaving the acolyte distraught, withdrawn and unable to act. It requires a sacrifice of 1D4 POW to placate the petulant ancestor and re-engage its guidance.

To simulate the reliance Dhoz-Seers have on their ancestor guides, every decision that requires some kind of thought or conscious deliberation is decided on the roll of the dice. The acolyte must make a test against his Pact (Dhoz). If the test is successful, then the ancestor advises the Dhoz-Seer to act in a way that is beneficial to himself and others. If the test is a failure, then the spirit guide advises in ways that benefit only itself and are against common sense and altruism.

*For example, Chnuga-Cha is a Dhoz-Seer guided by Abnucha-Dhoz. Chnuga-Cha must decide whether to rush into the burning hut to save his cousin. He consults Abnucha-Dhoz. His Pact (Dhoz) is 57% and the test results in a 74 – a failure. 'It is simpler and safer to let the hut burn,' Abnucha-Dhoz advises. 'You can build another hut and you have sixteen other cousins.' Chnuga-Cha sits down to watch the hut burn and to venerate Abnucha's wisdom and its flawless simplicity.*

### Hand Touched

When the Pact (Dhoz) reaches 80% the acolyte's spirit guide takes him to the place where the relic is kept and allows him to kiss it and contemplate it. The acolyte undergoes a feverish dream but emerges from as Hand-Touched. The Hand-Touched will, upon death, become ancestors themselves and may be buried in the vaults of the Dhoz deep in the Oinish jungle.

The spirit guardian remains with the Hand Touched and provides him with a single gift. In return, the Hand-Touched must cut-off one of his own hands which will then be prepared, sliced and on the Hand-Touched's death, be distributed just as the pieces of the hands of the Dhoz were distributed. The Hand Touched must decide which hand is sacrificed and he loses 1D3 points of DEX as a result.

The Hand-Touched act as magistrates and arbiters for Oinish and Yuish society, travelling far and wide bringing the simple wisdom of the Dhoz to the isolated, backward clans. All judgements are based on the advice of the ancestral guide, as for Dhoz-Seers, but Hand-Touched are permitted to formulate their own rituals, traditions and superstitions that others must observe if bad fortune is to be avoided.

## Duties

The duties of the cult of Dhoz are simple and based remembering the ancestors and venerating their name through simple living and observance of tradition. The specific duties of the ranks are described above.

The only ceremonial requirements of the cult are on Dhoz-Day which is the longest day of the year. The night before every dwelling must be swept and cleaned from top to bottom. All food must be consumed and an offering left out for the ancestors. From midnight to midnight everyone fasts. The ancestors are remembered in quiet contemplation and the Dhoz-Seers and Hand-Touched spend the entire day in a state of meditative ecstasy as the spirit guides reward them for the year's service. At the end of the fasting (midnight of the next day), a feast is held where too much is eaten and drunk (although the most devout of the cult must, naturally, abide by whatever advice their ancestral guide gives them).



## Benefits

Benefits come in two forms; a limited number of Gifts and the presence of the ancestral spirit guide who attaches itself to the Dhoz-Seers and Hand-Touched.

### Gifts

Gift
Abstinence
Healing.
Innate Luck.
Sixth Sense.
Tireless

### Ancestral Spirit Guide

The guide provides advice, sometimes for selfish ends. It is visible only to the Dhoz-Seer or Hand-Touched and appears as a shadowy, indistinct presence occupying the peripheral vision. It is there on waking and when the cultist sleeps, it either inflicts nightmares or the sweetest dreams possible, depending on whether or not the cultist makes a successful Pact (Dhoz) test before settling down for the night.

The ancestral guide always has a name that is suffixed by 'Dhoz'. It has no Characteristics of its own and is immune to spells and magical attacks. It does, however, possess a number of skills that it uses to either help or hinder the cultist. Every spirit has Persistence at 50+5D10%, plus a further 2D3 skills, each rated at 50+5D10%. Roll randomly.

#### 1D10 Ancestral Spirit's Skills

1	Artistic Expression (Poetry)
2	Influence
3	Language (High Speech)
4	Language (Low Speech)
5	Lore (Animal)
6	Lore (Million Spheres)
7	Lore (Plant)
8	Lore (World)
9	Rune (choose a Rune from any listed in Magic of the Young Kingdoms)*
10	Seduction

*\*If one of the skills is a Rune, then the Magic Points of the cultist are used for casting the Rune but the cultist has no say in how the Rune is cast (although he may try to petition his spirit by matching his Pact (Dhoz) against the spirit's Persistence in an opposed contest. If he wins, then the spirit uses the Rune in the way suggested by the cultist).*

### Retribution

Anyone of initiate rank or higher that denies the existence of the Dhoz and rejects their guidance finds that the protection and good luck of the ancestors deserts him. Every time he makes a skill roll of any kind, he must also roll against his Pact (Dhoz). For once, he must roll over the Pact's value rather than under it. If he rolls over the Pact, the skill he is attempting to use is successful. If he rolls under, then the skill he is attempting to use is *dowgraded* by one level (so a critical success becomes a success, a success a failure and a failure a fumble). In this way, the most devout Dhoz adherents have the hardest time if they desert the cult.

The only way to negate this misfortune is to return to the cult and make a sacrifice of a further 1D8+2 POW to re-establish the Pact.

### Politics

The cult of the Dhoz is mired in ritual and superstition. Usually, everyone knows what these superstitions are and what rituals are needed to avert bad luck. However, when two Dhoz-Seers or two Hand-Touched are called upon to lead or advise on a ritual, tradition or superstition, whether they agree or not is purely down to the advice given by their respective ancestral guardians. It is therefore possible for Dhoz cultists to argue bitterly amongst themselves over whose idea or interpretation is the best. Rows rarely become physical, but jealous, simmering feuds are not uncommon as rival cultists try to gain the upper-hand over those who have thwarted them in the past.

### Relationships

Dhoz cultists are free to join any other cults they wish, although few choose to do so. As long as the Dhoz ancestors are not forgotten or rejected as a result, they do not interfere with ancillary beliefs. However, as every acolyte and champion must seek the advice of his ancestral spirit guardian, the business of any other cult may find itself being compromised by the Dhoz's own whims and selfish agendas.

## 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*

#### 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.



## Gods/Pantheon

Chaos. 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.

## 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 forced to act in clandestine ways. For three hundred 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 these 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 4 POW dedication 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 Arioch 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

Acolytes 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 the 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 Sorcerer and Warrior Priests are the enforcers of the cult. Sorcerer Priests lead initiate and acolyte worship and Warrior Priests 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, above. 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.

### Cult Skills

The cult teaches the following skills

*1H Sword, 2H Sword, Language (High Speech), Lore (Chaos), Lore (Million Spheres), Lore (Sword Rulers), Lore (Terhali), Seduction*

### Runes

The cult of Terhali teaches the following Runes

Chaos, Contact, Man, Protection, Raising, Woman,

### Summonings

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 8 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.



## Gifts and Compulsions

Gift	Compulsion
Chaotic Blessing	Demonic fervour. You know that it is your destiny to become one of Terhali's half-breed demonic courtiers.
Divine Training	Develop the overwhelming belief that one is invulnerable to mortal weapons.
Elemental	Hatred of Arioch. He is Terhali's enemy and has abandoned both Melniboné and the world. Those he venerate him must be killed.
Magical Recovery	Hatred of Pan Tang. This upstart nation must be prevented from realising its own ambitions at all costs.
Neutralise Rune	Insomnia. Sleep is almost impossible; fatigue constantly builds. Only when Terhali returns can you sleep soundly – or at all.
Resurrection.	Lust for Terhali. 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.
Rune	Never wear armour.
Sanctuary	Obsessed with finding the ultimate location for the city of Yagala when it returns. This may or may not be within Melniboné's borders.
Sense Million Spheres	Paranoia. The world is set to become a dominion of the male Sword Rulers, led by Arioch. All adherents to Arioch must be destroyed.
Slave	Uncontrollable, irrational obsession over some trivial matter: a jealousy over a lover or the tendency to find a slight where none occurred.
Summon	Visions of terrible carnage that disturb the sleep and leave the dreamer feeling worthless and drained.
Witch Sight	Wear nothing but green. The skin must be dyed completely to a shade of jade.

## 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*

## Gods/Pantheon

Chaotic. A personality cult based on the veneration of Cran Liret, the Thief of Spells and the Chaos Engineer

## 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 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

Ancestor and Personality Traits



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.

Yet 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 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 (see page 84 of the *Elric of Melniboné Companion*), 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)  
Revengeurs (champions)

The cult has only one priest – Maligaunt (see below).

## Spell Thieves

Initiates into the cult arise in one of three ways.

- \* They have either 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 5 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 the following conditions:

- \* Pact (Cran Liret) 50% or greater
- \* Have sacrificed 8 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' descendants 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 (10MP 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.

### CHARACTERISTICS

STR 15  
CON 23  
DEX 31  
SIZ 19  
INT 38  
POW 34  
CHA 16

### HIT LOCATIONS

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	-/8
4-6	Left Leg	-/8
7-9	Abdomen	-/9
10-12	Chest	-/10
13-15	Right Arm	-/7
16-18	Left Arm	-/7
19-20	Head	-/8

### WEAPONS

Type	Weapon Skill	Damage	AP/HP
None			

### SPECIAL RULES

Combat Actions	4
Damage Modifier:	+1D4
Magic Points:	34
Movement:	5m
Strike Rank:	+34
Traits:	None

### SKILLS

Athletics 46%, Influence 48%, Language (High Speech) 114%, Language (Low Speech) 114%, Lore (Bright Empire) 114%, Lore (Chaos Engines) 114%, Lore (Chaos) 114%, Lore (Cran Liret) 114%, Lore (Krettii) 114%, Persistence 102%, Resilience 69%

### TYPICAL ARMOUR

None.

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

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%

## Pacts, Runes and Summonings

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

## 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* the following conditions must be fulfilled:

- \* Pact (Cran Liret) 70% or greater
- \* Have sacrificed 10 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 below.

## 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 above

## Engineers

- \* As above 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 above 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	Compulsion
Animal Familiar	Become a known and visible target to those who serve both Law and oppose Cran Liret (whatever their allegiance).
Chaotic Blessing	Become as arrogant as any Melnibonéan, developing complete disdain for 'mere' humans. Develop Melnibonéan eccentricities, quirks and mannerisms.
Divine Training	Become compelled to steal – magical and sorcerous items, naturally but also mundane things that could very easily be bought.
Eternal Life	Become increasingly paranoid. Friends and colleagues are inferior beings jealous of your impending god-hood. As your Pact skill grows, so does your jealousy, eventually becoming murderous.
Second Life	Develop an increasing disdain for the known Lords of Chaos; they are nothing when compared with Cran Liret.
Slave	Develop an unhealthy fascination with machinery, regardless of its origin. Doubly fascinated by implements of torture.
Rune	Experience terrifying dreams and sleepless nights awake suffering from one level of fatigue.
Sense Million Spheres	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.
Neutralise Rune	Gain an increasing desire to visit Imrryr and inflict upon it the same damage – or worse – inflicted upon Cran Liret's home.
Witch Sight	Skin becomes cadaverously pale and suffers rapid weight-loss. Lose 1D4 CHA and 1D4 SIZ.

### 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*

### Runes and Summonings

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 5 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.

### 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.

## Secrets of Cran Liret

1D8	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 which are held in glass bottles. Their magic was 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 good-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.

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 Maligaunt 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.



# SOCIETIES AND SECRETS

This chapter specifically examines two societies that, whilst they cannot be classed as religions as such, embody certain cult-like elements to frame their practices

## MEREHGN

*'Common assassins are easily employed, particularly in Bakshaan,' Elric pointed out softly.*

### *The Stealer of Souls*

The 'most dispensable members of the community' is Elric's view of assassins and, whilst it is easy for any man with a predilection for murder to set himself up as an assassin, there are those who consider what they do to be not only *essential* but *indispensable*. The Mereghn are one such group; but this is not mere guild of hired murderers but an entire network, secretive and manipulative, brokering information and dealing in death when the price is right.

The Mereghn flourish throughout the city states of Ilmiora. Originating in Bakshaan they are influential in Ilmar and Karlaak and have even extended their operations into Vilmir. Overseas the Mereghn's influence is not as extensive but the Mereghn has spies and agents everywhere, meaning that an assassination contract that needs to be fulfilled in Aflitain can be administered as easily as in Bakshaan.

## GODS/PANTHEON

The Mereghn are unaligned with any Higher Power, although individuals may belong to any cult they choose. If the Mereghn have any particular leanings, it is towards Chaos, although they will equally serve Law, if the price is paid.


## PURPOSE AND HISTORY

The name, Mereghn, comes from the Low Speech word for information: *mereghn'iagn*. Ultimately, information is what the Mereghn deal in, because knowledge and information is power. The Mereghn make it their business to absorb gossip, rumour, secrets, contracts, political deals and machinations, treachery and any kind of news that can be

traded. They do this through maintaining a large network of informants, spies and eavesdroppers who are paid to feed what they see, hear and learn up through the network to the Mereghn's shadowy Council of Nine. The Council of Nine then takes great care to check and verify what it learns so that the information can be priced and then sold to those who would pay to have it. Because the Mereghn's network is so extensive, people approach it with the specific aim of both finding specific news or disseminating it. As long as it is paid, and its terms met, the Mereghn is happy to collect, share and spread information.

An inevitable part of the Mereghn's work is assassination. Its assassins range from the lowly hired thugs Elric alludes to as haunting Bakshaan; simple daggers-for-hire with little wit and absolutely no social capital, through to cunning, clever, incredibly competent killers who spend weeks, months and sometimes, years planning a particular assassination. The Mereghn can supply an assassin of any level of competence; it all depends on who is to be killed and how much one is prepared to pay for it. Such is the Mereghn's reputation for secrecy, discretion and excellence, kings, queens, generals and high priests contract for its services. The Mereghn *never* betray who has contracted them; and they always complete a job. If they cannot, then the full fee is refunded, with no questions asked.

The Mereghn's roots are in the failing Bright Empire, when the Young Kingdoms began to truly assert themselves in the northern continent. Bakshaan and Ilmar were under Melnibonéan rule and these Dragon Princes and Ruby Throne Prefects subjugated and terrorised the humans under their control in a bid to avert the wars and rebellions being witnessed in the south, under the direction of Queen Eloarde and Earl Aubec of Lormyr. Galvanised by what was happening in the south, the Ilmiorans knew that attempting to overtly rebel would be met with apocalyptic force by the Melnibonéans. Instead, a slow, crafty war needed to be waged – one that would undermine Melnibonéan rule as well as challenge its confidence. The Ilmioran rebels, centre in Bakshaan, thus began to build information that could be used against Melniboné; the rebels colluded with and then



informed against their Imrryrian masters, sowing seeds of discontent in sometimes innocuous ways but all the time eroding Melnibonéan belief that it needed to hold onto its northern territories whilst, in the south, its empire was melting away.

The tactic succeeded and although battles were fought against the Dragon Lords, the rebel forces were well informed about every aspect of their enemy's habits. When Melniboné finally retreated from the northern continent it was a victory not for arms but for mis-information, dis-information, mis-direction and the application of subtle intelligence to undermine confidence and commitment. As the Bright Empire retreated to Imrryr, those who had led this battle decided that they did not want to relinquish the power they had accumulated. In those turbulent days of the early Young Kingdoms, humans warred with each other in a bid for supremacy. The Mereghn emerged as key players in these city-state wars, being able to control the political outcome to their own advantage through the self-same tactics employed against Melniboné.

The Mereghn developed self-sufficiency in this period, known as the War of Words and Tongues and the organisation as it is known today came into being. Informants, spies and assassins were organised according to usefulness, connections, ability and discretion. The Council of Nine developed a complex code to ensure secrecy amongst those members privileged to know who they really worked for and to create the labyrinthine hierarchy that ensures information moves freely but no one truly knows where it goes and how it is used. The Mereghn is therefore as much an ideal and a *modus-operandi* as it is a physical group. It is exceedingly wealthy but its wealth is distributed, hidden and often invested in legitimate enterprises. Its members may or may not know that they form part of the Mereghn network. It has safe-houses, meeting places and training facilities but all carefully hidden or masked so that legitimate, day to day activities can run alongside the true purpose of the Mereghn's physical assets.

The leaders of the Mereghn, the Council of Nine, never meet together. They are known to each other and to no one else. Those who work for the Council are most likely unaware of who it is that they serve, even though they might know they are, themselves, Mereghn. Not that anyone would be foolish enough to try to unmask the Council of Nine: the Mereghn's roots are so deep, its abilities so finely honed, that anyone wanting to unravel the nature of the

Mereghn would simply disappear, with nothing – not even a corpse – being left as a tantalising strand for someone else to pick at.

In a twisted way the Mereghn are honest and honourable. All services are open to negotiation and a central tenet of the organisation is a fair service at a fair rate. If a prized agent is captured, the Mereghn offer a fair ransom for his return – or the promise of sinister retribution if he is not. If a commission cannot be completed in a specific time, then the contract is cancelled and monies refunded (although the Mereghn are scrupulously thorough and realistic in their logistics: if they say a job cannot be done, then they are usually right). If one of their number is murdered or tortured, the perpetrators are made to pay with their own blood and usually in grisly and inventive ways, thereby reinforcing the message that the Mereghn *will not be messed with*. Conversely, those who assist the Mereghn, even unwittingly, are rewarded well and in ways that ensure the Mereghn cannot be readily identified as being behind the reward.

## Beliefs

Whilst individual beliefs are impossible to quantify, the general guiding principles of the Mereghn are:

- \* Knowledge is power
- \* All information has a purpose
- \* All information has value
- \* Everyone can be manipulated
- \* Everyone has a price
- \* All prices are negotiable
- \* Life, like knowledge, is a commodity

Mereghn are unsentimental about what they do. Political and religious boundaries mean nothing to them and no single power, be in mortal or supernatural, is unassailable. If contracted to do something, the Mereghn inevitably find a way. If they cannot, they do not take the contract, and give their reasons why.

Note that the Mereghn do not control organised crime – although assassination and some forms of extortion are clearly within their province. The Mereghn do not control prostitution or gambling and take no cut of the earnings of those who serve the Mereghn but are involved in organised crime. Indeed, the Mereghn broker information that might be of value to the few organised crime syndicates that operate in the Young Kingdoms but the Mereghn are more akin to an independent secret service rather than the Mafia.



## MEMBERS

The Mereghn are extensive but support five ranks:

- \* Invisibles
- \* Signatures
- \* Journeymen
- \* Savants
- \* Councillors

### Invisibles

One cannot apply to join the Mereghn. If the Mereghn wants someone, they will approach him. Very often recruitment is *invisible*; that is, a Mereghn agent is completely unaware of whom he works for. These invisible members form the vast bulk of the Mereghn network and include most of the informants supplying the Mereghn with information. Invisible informants come in all shapes and sizes; street-beggars, drunks, prostitutes, orphans, petty-criminals, thugs, small-time blackmailers, gamblers and so forth. Such agents equate to the lay-members of the Mereghn.

Invisibles are unaware of their status or presence within the Mereghn organisation. Despite this, they do receive certain benefits: see *Benefits* below.

### Signatures

*Signature* members are those who know that they work for the Mereghn and are aware of the level they occupy in the organisation. These tend to be skilled individuals who have displayed competence and loyalty in their given area. Signature members may have been promoted from the ranks of the Invisible members or recruited directly. Signature members also include administration and support functions, such as trainers, armourers, quartermasters, transportation providers and so forth. They equate to the Mereghn's initiates.

Signature members are invited to become a formal part of the Mereghn if they fulfil the following conditions:

- \* One Mereghn skill at 90%+, a second at 70%+ and a third at 50%+.
- \* Have contributed information or services unknowingly at least twice in the last two years
- \* Occupy a social position or move in social circles, deemed of interest to the Mereghn (high society; upper ranks of a cult; high-ranking guilds, and so on)
- \* Are prepared to swear a blood-oath to the Mereghn and receive the Mereghn Rune.

The blood-oath and receipt of the Mereghn Rune are fundamental and compromise of the two parts of the signature. The blood oath is simple: an agreement to keep all work and activities of the Mereghn an absolute secret and to accept death as a just punishment for betrayal.

The Mereghn Rune is a compact sealing the oath. The rune is nothing more than the word *mereghn'iagn* written on a small sliver of parchment which must be swallowed. Swallowing the rune is the act of 'Taking the Signature'. It has no magical significance and does not initiate any form of Pact but it does seal the person into the formal membership of the Mereghn.

### Journeymen

*Journeymen* are the acolytes of the Mereghn. They are responsible for recruiting Invisibles and Signatures and are thus expected to have built-up their own network of contacts and informants. Journeymen both carry out assignments and issue assignments to others. They are always responsible and accountable for their actions and the actions of their network. Thus, Journeymen must verify information supplied to them, when it needs verifying and if someone they have chosen for a contract fails, then the Journeyman is held accountable.

To become a Journeyman, the following conditions need to be met:

- \* One Mereghn skill at 110%+, a second at 90%+ and a third at 70%+
- \* Low Speech at 20%+
- \* Have developed a network consisting of at least 8 Invisibles
- \* Have completed a major assignment successfully for the Mereghn
- \* Demonstrated complete loyalty to the Mereghn (abstracted through making a successful Influence test at -40% to the roll)

Journeymen receive a stipend from the Mereghn in recognition for their services. See *Benefits*, below.

### Savants

*Savants* are the captains of the Mereghn. They are responsible for a network of Journeymen and are expected to co-ordinate the flow of information and the fulfilling of contracts but are not expected to undertake the work personally. A city usually contains three or four Savants

and they are usually known to each other but do not meet. Savants report to the Councillors.

Becoming a Savant requires the following conditions to be met:

- \* One Mereghn skill at 130%+, a second at 110%+ and a third at 90%+
- \* Low Speech at 50%+
- \* Have completed four major assignments as a Journeyman successfully for the Mereghn
- \* Have achieved a position of social status useful to the Mereghn in a legitimate capacity
- \* Demonstrated *continued* loyalty to the Mereghn (abstracted through making a successful Influence test at -40% to the roll)

Savants receive a stipend from the Mereghn in recognition for their services. See *Benefits*, below.

### Councillors

*Council of Nine.* The Nine Councillors control all Mereghn activity. There is one Councillor for each of the nine city bases of operation: Aflitain, Bakshaan, Dhakos, Gromoorva, Ilmar, Jadmar, Karlaak, Old Hrolmar and Raschil. They are known to each other but do not meet. Communication is conducted using messages transported through Savants and Journeymen and occasionally, magical or sorcerous means. Despite being names for cities, the Councillors co-ordinate the work of the Mereghn for a whole country or region. All information comes to them and they decide how it will be used and what price is set against it. Assassinations must always be ratified by a Councillor who then chooses the Savant who will then co-ordinate the resources with his Journeymen and their Signatures.

Becoming a Councillor is purely dependent on a vacancy becoming available. A new Councillor is chosen from the very best Savants by the remaining Councillors. Candidates must travel to meet with each remaining Councillor, passing through a variety of Journeymen and Savants who each assess the potential new Councillor, before the face to face meeting with each Councillor. The process can take months to complete but once the candidate has met with the Councillors (perhaps the only time he will ever do so, face to face), the Council meets and decides on the new Councillor. Naturally, the unsuccessful candidates are sworn to absolute secrecy regarding their meetings and are rewarded financially for their efforts.

The new Councillor, once appointed, must move to the region for which he is responsible. He is then in full control of that region's activities and receives income equal to 25% of all revenue his region generates from contracts and so forth. He is expected to communicate constantly with the other Councillors, especially when he comes into possession of information that will be of particular interest to the whole Mereghn network and if a contract he is responsible for needs to be actioned in another Councillor's territory.

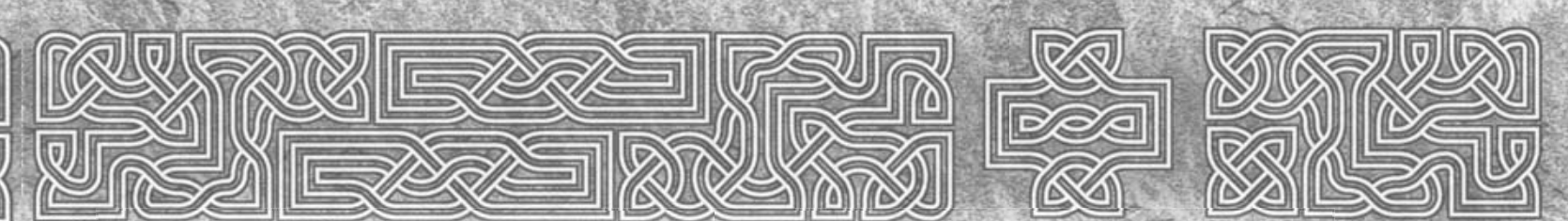
Councillors are all, without a fault, dedicated to the Mereghn utterly. They occupy positions of incredible influence and power and are party to secrets that may be of Multiversal importance. A Councillor has to demonstrate constant tact and subtlety in his dealings and be capable of administering the network of Mereghn operatives within his region firmly and capably.

### Duties

The principal duty of all Mereghn is to gain and broker, knowledge. All additional activities are considered secondary. Knowledge is the lifeblood of the Young Kingdoms and with it, used in the right way, the Mereghn can make kings and cause the fall of empires. All Mereghn are on the lookout for information, no matter how small or insignificant it seems. Much of what they hear and see is never used but when information is put to work, the Mereghn ensure it reaps the maximum profit.







Every Mereghn agent is expected to watch and listen. Memory techniques are taught to enable perfect recall of conversations, faces and actions. Every detail is observed; from clothing worn through to small skin imperfections and particular mannerisms. When a Mereghn Journeyman recounts something he has seen, it is possible to see the self-same scenario in the mind's eye exactly as the Journeyman witnessed it.

### Invisibles

Invisibles are expected to just report what they see and hear, nothing more. Perfect clarity is not expected but honesty is. Those who control Invisibles – Signatures and Journeymen – are trained to detect lying. Invisibles are visited regularly by the Mereghn agents who control them and are coached, rather than instructed, to find out something in particular or simply questioned, subtly, on what they know. They receive a generous payment in coin or something that is important to them but it is never ostentatious or over-generous. A starving beggar might receive a handful of coins and a flask of wine; a young serving lad or lass might receive a generous tip when they serve food or ale. Their presence and ubiquity is their key strength; their anonymity and invisibility a purposeful asset.

### Signatures

Once brought into the fold, Signatures are expected to do whatever is asked of them: spying, blackmail, extortion, seduction, kidnapping, assassination. They are expected to follow instructions explicitly, having committed them to memory. They are not expected to question or deviate from a plan. Signatures are doers. They receive the support of the Mereghn network through the Journeyman and other Signatures who are brought in to assist.

If a task fails, they are expected to make a fast, invisible escape. If they are caught, they are expected to remain silent and betray nothing.

Signatures are also expected to build-up and cultivate a network of Invisibles to support the Mereghn network. If they receive information that requires verification, they are expected to do that checking. Every Signature must liaise, discreetly, with his Journeyman, on a regular basis, to exchange information and receive instructions. Some Signatures spend years doing nothing except leading a normal life; but if, one day, they are ordered to take part in something momentous, there must be no argument.

### Journeymen

Journeymen both co-ordinate Signature activities and lead special assignments. They are expected to act as the mid-level conduit for information, resources and activities, helping to plan and execute Mereghn business as required.

Journeymen meet with their controlling Savant regularly, if only to facilitate information transfer. Journeymen also take responsibility for finding trainers and experts to assist Mereghn activities, even if these people are completely unaware of their role in training Mereghn agents.

### Savants

Savants act as counsel to the Councillor for their region. They also assist in creating and executing Mereghn policy, assessing special mission feasibility and co-ordinating local resources (including Journeymen) for executing Mereghn business. Savants handle all high-level Mereghn communications and are responsible for ensuring the tightest possible security for Mereghn activities in a particular area. Where the Mereghn need to make their presence felt in an overt way, Savants act as the ambassadors and mouthpieces for the Council of Nine.

### Benefits


The benefits of Mereghn membership can be vast although the risks are considerable. No Gifts or Compulsions are attached to Mereghn membership but the benefits available at each active rank are as follows:

#### Invisibles

- \* Regular payments, in small sums, and usually paid through the expected channels (a handful of coins into a begging bowl; a generous tip to a servant or inn-keeper, for instance) of up to 500 Bronze per year
- \* Clandestine protection from those who might abuse or threaten the Invisible. If a Signature or Journeyman learns that one of his Invisibles is being exploited or mal-treated, he makes arrangements for the offender to be punished...

#### Signatures

- \* Annual stipend of 1,000 Bronze
- \* 1% share of the value of any assassination contract they take part in
- \* Cost of equipment and mission expenses met by Mereghn exchequer
- \* Training in three Mereghn skills (see below) provided free of charge (skills begin at base value), and training in other skills at half normal rates



## Journeyman

- \* Annual stipend of 5,000 Bronze
- \* 5% share of the value of any assassination contract they take part in
- \* Decent, discreet property in an appropriate location
- \* Cost of equipment and mission expenses met by Mereghn exchequer
- \* Training in a further Mereghn skill (see below) provided free of charge (skills begin at base value), and training in other skills at half normal rates
- \* Access to Mereghn-financed legal advice, where required

## Savants

- \* Annual stipend of 10,000 Bronze
- \* 10% share of the value of any assassination contract they take part in
- \* Excellent, discreet property in an appropriate location, equipped with household staff
- \* Cost of equipment and mission expenses met by Mereghn exchequer
- \* Training in a further Mereghn skill (see below) provided free of charge (skills begin at base value), and training in other skills at half normal rates
- \* Access to Mereghn-financed legal advice, where required

The rank of Councillor is likely to be beyond most adventurers but benefits are double to triple those of Savants (depending on the Councillor's expertise).

## Retribution

One cannot choose to leave the Mereghn. Anyone who decides to leave the organisation without the approval of a Councillor will be hunted under an assassination contract by their old colleagues. All Mereghn benefits are, of course, forfeit and the Mereghn will do everything in its power to advise against and silence, any members who turn rogue.

## Politics

The Mereghn refrain from involving themselves directly in politics unless there is a clear agenda that needs pursuing – in which case, they pursue it ruthlessly and to their own advantage. The Mereghn's key aim is maintain and perpetuate its position (and knowledge) but without becoming the sole agency of any one state. It has no interest in the Eternal Struggle unless such forces pose a direct threat to its own position – in which case it adopts an appropriate strategy of allegiance.

Internally, Mereghn politics are confined to the Council of Nine. It has been known for Councillors to disagree on a

strategy and for an internal feud to arise, with local Mereghn agents used to fight the battle; however such a situation has not arisen for at least 30 years. Generally, the Mereghn refrains from placing those with entirely selfish interests in positions of internal power and influence, relying on those who cherish the key Mereghn cause above individual gain.

## Relationships

The Mereghn maintain all manner of affiliations with those who can serve their cause. It has connections with most of the major cults and of course, in courts and governments, although these connections are always discrete and deployed with subtlety. Curiously, it is Chaos that has the greatest suspicion of the Mereghn, whereas Law sees the value of maintaining the Mereghn on their side; thus, the Lawful cults and churches are more predisposed towards the Mereghn's activities and do, when the need arises, make use of their particular skills and knowledge.

## Special Notes: Mereghn Skills

The following special, Advanced skills are available to Mereghn agents as part of their rank benefits.

### Forgery (INT+DEX)

The skill of producing expert replicas of documents and texts. Time and materials are the two crucial elements of the Forgery skill and penalties to the test are imposed according to the complexity of the document in question. However, a successful Forgery test results and a replica that will pass for the real thing if no detailed scrutiny is applied to it. A critical success renders a copy that is virtually indistinguishable from the real thing.

### Gambling (INT)

The ability to understand and play games of chance, including calculating odds, keeping one's composure under high stakes and noticing when someone is cheating or when a game has been rigged.

### Impersonation (INT+CHA)

The ability to replicate the voice, accent and mannerisms of someone else which, when coupled with Disguise, allows the Mereghn to impersonate another person accurately. For someone else to see through the impersonation, they must make a successful Perception test, opposed by the Impersonation skill. However, that person must have some underlying suspicion before the opposed test is called for.



### Insight (INC+POW)

Insight is the ability to read a person's verbal and non-verbal behaviours and signals to determine their motives and state of mind. Insight is used to determine if someone is telling you a lie or to determine how someone feels about a particular situation. It is distinct from the Perception skill, since it is used to detect subtle expressions of character and attitude, rather than tangible effects that can be assessed through general observation alone.

### Lore (Ciphers) (INC)

The Mereghn use many different codes and ciphers to protect their communications from prying eyes. This skill tutors the character in the codes used by the Mereghn so that they can render information – be it written or verbal – into a code that can only be understood by a fellow Mereghn. The skill also allows the user to attempt to decipher intercepted codes from others.

### Memorise (INC)

The ability to use a variety of memory tricks and approaches to commit names, faces, events, sequences and process to memory perfectly. If the Memorise skill is failed when a Mereghn agent is observing something, it requires a second, successful Memorise test to recall it in adequate detail. Otherwise, recall is always accurate.

### Torture (INC+DEX)

This skill is used to torture victims into parting with information. Torture need not be physical; it can be emotional and psychological. To resist the torturer's efforts, the victim needs to succeed in an opposed Resilience test, if the torture is physical and Persistence if the torture is psychological or emotional.

The following skills are taught to Mereghn agents through approved trainers and mentors:

*Acrobatics, Athletics, Courtesy, Influence, Lore (Plant), Lore(World), Mechanisms, Perception, Seduction, Stealth, Streetwise, Survival, Dagger, Garrotte, 1H Sword, Sling, Bow, Blowgun, Throwing Star.*

## SORCERER-ADVENTURERS OF QUARZHASAAT

*Then the impatient rage which was a mark of his ancient blood took hold of Elric and he drew Stormbringer without further ado. "I am tired of these little bargains," he said. "I would ask you to stand aside from me, Manag Iss, for I mean to do battle."*

*"There are too many!" Oled Alesham was shocked. "You'll be butchered. These are skilled killers!"*

*"Oh, so am I, Master Sorcerer Adventurer. So am I!" And with that Elric drove his horse forward, through the startled ranks of Yellow and Foxglove Sects, directly at the leader of the Moth Brotherhood. The runesword began to howl in unison with its master and the white-face glowed with the energy of the damned while the red eyes blazed and the Sorcerer Adventurers realised for the first time that an extraordinary creature had come amongst them and that they had underestimated him.*

## Purpose and History

When the Bright Empire was at its height, only one other human empire dared rival it: the northern empire of Quarzhasaat and its guild-like sects of the Sorcerer Adventurers. The empire died when it warred with Melniboné was cut-off from the world by a spell that created the choking sands of the Sighing Desert but the city prevailed, its traditions and structures knowing no progress but considerable, incestuous, development. The Sorcerer Adventurers are at its heart and they control Quarzhasaat still.

Quarzhasaat has always been ruled by the Council of Six and One Other (the mysterious, nameless, Seventh) and the Council is comprised of the six leaders of the Sorcerer Adventurer sects. The sects are extended families run on guild-like principles, with each having a particular specialisation as well as that of military prowess and meddling in the sorcerous arts. There are dozens, if not 100 or more, sects, of varying sizes and agendas. They do not trust each other and often, not even themselves. Every sect seeks a place on the Council of Six and with so many sects, tensions, rivalries and inter-sect feuds are common and an accepted part of diplomacy.

The sects arose from the military elite that governed the ancient Quarzhasaat Empire. Naming themselves for flowers, colours, animals and other totems, the sects were once, simply, regiments led by intelligent, ambitious and charismatic commanders. However when the empire fell and Quarzhasaat was cut off from the world, the sects took to consolidating their own positions and became political units in their own right. Regiments turned into families and inter-family marriages yielded larger, more bloated, more devious political entities. These, then, are the sects of the Sorcerer Adventurers. They seek to maintain their own power, thwart their rivals, dabble in the sorcery that they

## New Profession: Assassin

Assassins are killers for hire. They make their living through the amoral task of murdering for money. A good assassin does not care who he kills and never questions why the contract has been placed. He dispassionately assesses the risks, clarifies the opportunities and then carries out the contract emotionlessly before disappearing into the night or the crowd, perhaps taking pride in a difficult job well-done.

Some assassins are simply thugs for hire who genuinely enjoy dealing in death. They employ little finesse and constantly take the kind of risks that invite capture or retribution. These common murderers can be found in any of the dingy inns and taverns lining the shadier harbour quarters of cities like Ilmar, Bakshaan and Raschil.

Others, the true masters of the art, view each contract as a challenge in its own right. Care is taken to assess all the risks, plan the killing down to the last detail and use every trick available to avoid detection and capture. The best assassins take weeks in painstaking preparation and leave no evidence of their presence (unless they wish to). Killing may or may not give them pleasure but ultimately the entire enterprise is viewed as a complex project that must be approached with the same critical and clinical eye as the best general preparing to win his next battle.

### Cultural Backgrounds

Civilised, Mariner, Noble

### Regions

Ilmioran City States, Dharijor, Jharkor, Filkhar, Pan Tang, S'aleem (Unknown East – see the *Elric of Melniboné Companion*)

### Basic Skills

Dagger +10%, 1H weapon +10%, missile weapon (bow, blowgun, sling, for instance) +10%, Stealth +5%, Perception +5%

### Advanced Skills

Choose one from: Craft (Poisons), Disguise, Mechanisms, Streetwise, Survival

### Optional Rule: Mereghn Assassin

If the character is from one of the Ilmioran City States there is a chance he is part of the Mereghn. Use the following process to determine if he is and if so, to what degree.

- \* Roll 1D100. If the result is equal to or less than INT+CHA, then the character is a Mereghn assassin. A normal success means he is a relatively low-level operative, being handed relatively straightforward, unglamorous contracts. He is an Invisible but may be approached to become a Signature. He generally has one Contact and one Informer (see below)
- \* If the 1D100 roll was a critical success, then the character is one of the Mereghn's Signature Assassins; that is, he is part of the Mereghn elite and is *automatically* an initiate of the organisation.
- \* Mereghn assassins are permitted to take one additional Mereghn skill from those provided in the Mereghn Skills section on page 145. If the skill chosen is a Basic or Weapon skill, then it is at a +10% bonus. If the skill is an Advanced skill, it is at its base starting percentage
- \* The Mereghn character must decide on the names of three Contacts – the people who regularly brief him and provide him with details of his next job. These contacts *always* operate under a code name and may come from any walk of life. The character should agree with the Games Master how each contact makes contact and where meetings take place.
- \* The Mereghn character can also choose 1D3 Informers. Informers are lower-ranking Mereghn informants operating at street level. These informers provide rumours and information on a wide variety of areas. Contact with the informer is always discreet and the Mereghn character must pay for the information he needs. The Informer always has a Streetwise skill of 30+3D20%. The character must always protect the safety of his Informers, especially where information they provide is used in a sensitive contract.



believe they are natural masters of and perpetuate the petty, but nonetheless dangerous, power struggles that have mired Quarzhasaat firmly into the sand for a thousand years.

Each sect is headed by a patriarch or matriarch; the head of the sect who can trace his or her lineage many generations back to the time of the Quarzhasaat Empire. Breeding and blood lineage determines rank in the sect, which then comprises of brothers, sisters, sons, daughters, uncles, aunts, nephews, nieces, cousins, half-cousins, second cousins and all manner of hangers-on and in-laws who, to serve their own needs, find it advantageous to associated themselves with a sect. Some relationships are wholly invented but come to be considered legitimate because no one can either determine the true legitimacy or because no one especially cares. Sects can number hundreds of people; some number a few dozen. Size of the sect does not determine its power and influence necessarily; power tends to be more a matter of the patriarch's force of will. If a small sect needs support or muscle; there are plenty who can be hired or allied with temporarily.

The power structure within a sect is determined by its head. He or she assigns positions, titles, duties and wealth according to either sect traditions or personal whim. There is little consistency. Sect members must accept the 'family way' or risk ostracism. If the power structures are challenged from within, then the challenger had better be assured of considerable support, because if the challenge fails, then the sects tend to show little mercy.

As the name Sorcerer Adventurer suggests, the sects like to deceive themselves into the belief that they are great and powerful questing magicians. In truth, they are no more than insular, petty conjurors at best and outright charlatans at worst. The Sorcerer Adventurers know a handful of Runes but no summonings. They have never allied themselves with any of the Lords of Law or Chaos, which is where real sorcerous power lies and in fact, are oblivious to their existence. As to adventuring; all that happened long ago, before the city was closed by the desert. Perhaps a few Sorcerer Adventurers did traverse the world and other planes in pursuit of arcane knowledge but in the past thousand years the only real adventuring any of the sects engage in is the fruitless pursuit of the Pearl at the Heart of the World.

### Using the Sorcerer Adventurers in Elric of Melniboné Campaigns

The Sorcerer Adventurers offer great scope for those

who enjoy political shenanigans, Borgia-esque intrigue, backstabbing, clandestine deals and betrayals of the most operatic kind. Not all people in Quarzhasaat are members of a sect; but the majority are, including all nobles and most of the civilised background. Non-members are peasants, serfs and slaves – those too poor to be of use to the sects.

Some sample sects are provided below, but Quarzhasaat characters may design their own. As the sects are extended families, the position within the family determines Status, which is, like a Pact or skill, rated between 1 and 100 or more. The higher the Status score, the higher the status in the family. Status is used to indicated relative positions of authority and as a skill in its own right in place of Influence or other social-based skills or to augment these skills: the critical range of the Status score can be used as a bonus to, say, Oratory.

A sect member's Base Status is INT+CHA, reflecting the wits required to move into and maintain position and personal charisma which is naturally of value. Next, determined the relationship with the sect's patriarch or matriarch, randomly:

### Sorcerer Adventurer Sect Relationship Table

1D20	Relationship to Sect's Head...	Status Bonus
1	Brother/Sister	+30
2	Son/.Daughter	+35
3	Aunt/Uncle	+25
4	Half Brother/Sister	+20
5	Father/Mother	+30
6	Father-in-Law/Mother-in-Law	+10
7	Brother-in-Law/Sister-in-Law	+15
8	Son-in-Law/.Daughter-in-Law	+25
9	Nephew/Niece	+30
10	Grandson/Granddaughter	+25
11	Cousin	+25
12	Half-Cousin	+20
13	Quarter-Cousin	+15
14	Highly Trusted Friend	+20
15	Lucky Outsider with Good Connections	+10
16	Well-Regarded Retainer	+5
17	Distant, distant Relation	0
18	Bogus Relation	0
19	Rank and File Retainer	-5
20	Lackey or Lickspittle	-10

The benefits of Status are listed within the Benefits section, below.

## Beliefs

Every sect has the following beliefs:

- \* Your sect is better than everyone else's. It is stronger, cleverer, richer and more powerful.
- \* Every sect is a potential rival for power and influence. Trust no one.
- \* Every lower member of your sect seeks your position. Do not let them have it.
- \* The Sorcerer Adventurers are the best warriors and sorcerers the world has seen.
- \* It is the duty of every sect to secure wealth and riches to impress the Council of Six and One Other
- \* It is the duty of every sect to find and return the Pearl at the Heart of the World
- \* Personal power and wealth is worth any cost.

Every sect has a specialisation, reflected in the promotion of a certain set of skills. What is your sect's specialisation? Its area of expertise helps shape any individual beliefs for the sect.

If a skill listed is an Advanced Skill the character does not have, he gains it at the starting percentage.

Each sect also has a particular symbol or design to identify itself to others. There are myriad combinations, but some examples follow:

- Clothes of a single colour*
- Conspicuous jewellery*
- Deliberate bodily mutilation (missing finger, scars, and so forth)*
- Distinctive perfume or aroma (pleasant or otherwise)*
- Ear-rings, nose-rings or other piercings*
- Mode or manner of speech (highly inflected, whispered, loud and screeching...)*
- Shoes or sandals of a particular cut*
- Subtle designs reflecting the name of the sect, stitched onto clothing*
- Tattoos or painted skin-designs in prominent places*
- Weaponry openly displayed (a sword or axe, or a peculiar shaped dagger)*
- Well-cut clothes of a unique design*

1D20	Specialisation	+10% Bonus to...
1	Art	Artistic Expression
2	Assassination	Stealth
3	Bribery/Extortion	Influence
4	Combat/War	One Weapon Skill
5	Commerce	Evaluate
6	Craft (choose one)	Craft (Choose One)
7	Diplomacy	Influence or Oratory
8	Drug Dealing and Procurement	Lore (Plant)
9	Education and Erudition	Lore or Language (Choose one)
10	Forgery	Craft (Forgery)
11	Gambling	Lore (Gambling)
12	Money-Lending	Evaluate or Influence
13	Potions, Pills, Salves and Healing	Lore (Plant) or First Aid or Healing
14	Property Trading and Development	Evaluate or Engineering
15	Prostitution	Influence or Seduction
16	Slave/Servant Training and Trading	Evaluate or Influence
17	Smuggling	Stealth or Perception
18	Sorcery and Mysticism	Rune Casting
19	Spying	Stealth or Perception, or Streetwise
20	Stealing	Stealth, or Perception, or Streetwise



## Sample Sects

Sect	Patriarch/Matriarch	Symbol or Design	Specialisation
Yellow Sect	Lady Iss	Tattooed fingernails, hands and arms	Assassination
Blue Sect	Councillor Varag Knol	Blue and azure robes, trimmed with gold	Education, especially in the natural sciences
Indigo Sect	Baroness Norfis of Kuwai'r	The silver necklace of the Kuwai'r dynasty	Jewel and goldsmiths
Nightingale Sect	Lady Andhul Glayn	Twin daggers, worn on the waists, wrought from silver	Commerce and fine arts
Cat Brotherhood	Mons Pelarch, the Grave	Clothes of grey and black, meticulously cut	Spying and theft
Mosquito Sect	Baron Ytens Ytens	Ritual scarring of the palms	Sorcery
Eagle Sect	Councillor Chru Vess	Cloaks and capes of eagle fathers. Turbans of red silk for men, veils for women	Forgery and diplomacy. Often both together
Midnight Sect	Duchess Uchar n'Kromis	Clothes of deep black. Hair dyed black, and black kohl worn around the eyes	Prostitution and herbal remedies. Some spying and extortion
Ochre Lords of Q sect	Lord Q of Q'q	Vambraces of bronze etched with the letter Q	War and Combat
Illustrious Sect of Hasq	Baron Vledimah Hasq	A jade green mortarboard or other similarly coloured headgear.	History and Law of Quarzhasaat and its Mighty Empire

## Duties

The members of a sect are expected to carry out the duties – and these can be anything – assigned to them by someone with a higher Status. Failure to comply or challenging the order, results in either physical punishment or chastisement or at the very least, a reduction in Status of 1D10% (or higher, depending on the infraction).

Carrying out duties to a particular satisfaction results in an increase in the Status score. At its lowest this is 1%; for specific duties any sect member is expected to do then the increase is 1D3%. For duties completed with special aplomb or highly favourable outcome, then the increase is 1D4+1%.

## Heirlooms

These are physical things the character has inherited or been gifted by a grateful relative for services rendered. The Games Master should decide on the precise nature of the heirloom, its value and its history but some suggestions are as follows:

- \* A small, well appointed house in a good district
- \* A fine, lavish house in a good district
- \* A grand, palatial villa in the best district
- \* Jewellery worth 1D10 x 1000 Bronze
- \* A fine antique weapon

- \* A set of beautiful war armour (Full Plate)
- \* The family shield, battered and dented but an item of pride nonetheless
- \* A grimoire detailing poisons and their antidotes (+20% to Lore (Plant))
- \* A clue to finding the Fortress of the Pearl

## Cult Skills

Sects always teach the skill related to their specialisation, plus five others related to the specialisation, including one or two weapon skills. For instance, a sect specialising in Commerce may teach Evaluate, plus Artistic Expression, Influence, Oratory, Streetwise, Dagger and 1H Sword. When designing a sect, Games Masters should consider the skills displayed by that sect, which may differ from others with a similar specialisation.

## Cult Runes

As sorcerers, the Sorcerer Adventurers are nowhere near as adept at the magical arts as others in the Young Kingdoms or naturally, Melniboné. However they do understand a little of Runes, scraped together from old grimoires, ancient teachings and half-forgotten cantrips. Runes taught depend not on specialisation but the simple luck of the sect. A sect knows 1D4 runes, determined randomly:

## Benefits

Benefits depend on Status and come in the form of Heirlooms, Cult Skills, Runes and Legendary Abilities.

The below table indicates what benefits accrue at different levels of Status

Status	Heirloom	Cult Skill	Rune	Legendary Ability
1 - 10	-	Training at half cost	-	-
11 - 20	-	Training at half cost	-	-
21 - 30	-	Training at half cost	-	-
31 - 40	-	Training at half cost	-	-
41 - 50	-	Training at half cost	-	-
51 - 60	First Heirloom	Training at quarter cost	-	-
61 - 70	-	Training at quarter cost	First Rune at starting percentage	-
71 - 80	Second Heirloom	Training at quarter cost	-	-
81 - 90	-	Training at quarter cost	Second Rune at starting percentage	One Legendary Ability
91 - 00	Third Heirloom	Free training	-	Second Legendary Ability

1D100	Rune
01-03	Alarm
04-06	Barring
07-10	Bewilderment
11-13	Cold
14-16	Concealment
17-20	Confinement
21-23	Contact
24-26	Darkness
27-30	Deception
31-33	Enhancement (specific characteristic)
34-37	Hearing
38-40	Heat
41-43	<b>Leeching</b>
44-46	Light
47-50	Man
51-55	Passing
56-60	Plants
61-64	Protection
65-70	Purity
71-74	Reduction
75-77	Sight
78-81	Silence
82-83	Sleep
84-87	Speed
88-92	Taste
92-94	Touch
95-97	Truth
98-00	Woman

### Legendary Abilities

The following Legendary Abilities are taught within a sect. Again, Legendary Abilities known are dependent more on sect history than current specialisation, having being first developed as techniques by the military aristocracy from which the sects developed.

*Battle Fury*  
*Born to the Saddle*  
*Dead Eye*  
*Decapitating Swing*  
*Devilish Charm*  
*Duellist*  
*Heroic Aura*  
*Loremaster*  
*Madness of Purpose*  
*Poison Immunity*  
*Tireless*  
*Wall Leaping*

### Politics and Relationships

The sects hate each other. Feuds are commonplace and may be as simple as social one-upmanship, snobbery, polite disdain and banter or be more vigorous such as legal disputes, political opposition and in the most extreme cases,



blood vendettas, where no member of a sect is free from the threat of physical violence by the enemy sect.

The Council of Six and One Other never intervenes in sect feuds. Indeed, it may even encourage them as they are now such a part of Quarzhasaat society as to have become the norm. Yet, just as sects feud, so do they ally. Often alliances are for temporary gain but some can be long-standing, especially when cemented through inter-marriage, gifts or shared territory within the city.

The ultimate prize is to serve on the Council of Six and One Other. Every seven years six places on the council are up for election. Elections are not democratic; rather, it is up to the mysterious, unseen, One Other to elect who will sit on the Council for the next seven years. Therefore, impressing and placating the One Other is of paramount importance.

Gaining a seat on the Council gives a sect the right to make laws and policies that all other sects are honour-bound to obey. Furthermore, any sect joining the Council is free from having to pay any form of tax for the duration of its tenure and enjoys significant financial benefits, including sumptuous properties in the city, prestige and the ultimate prize of being able to laud over rivals and enemies.

Thus, everything is geared towards securing favour with those sects on the Council (so they might put-in a good word with the One Other) and doing everything they can to impress the One Other directly. The one assured way is to find and retrieve the Pearl at the Heart of the World, which guarantees not just a place on the council but a place for life. Not one Sorcerer Adventurer has ever succeeded in finding the Pearl at the Heart of the World, and most die or go mad, trying.



# GRAND PASSIONS

*'She laughed. 'You begin to sound like my brother. Are you testing my love for you, my lord?'*

*He began to remount his horse. 'No, Cymoril, but I would advise you to test your love yourself, for I sense there is tragedy implicit in our love.'*

*As she swung herself back into her saddle she smiled and shook her head. 'You see doom in all things, Can you not accept the good gifts granted you? They are few enough, my lord.'*

*Elric of Melniboné*

Grand passions are a central theme of the Eternal Champion saga: tragically doomed love; unrequited love; passionate love; love across the Million Spheres; lost loves, slaughtered loves and love regained. So too does Hatred figure: Yyrkoon and Theleb K'aarna's hatred for Elric, motivated by greed and jealousy; Elric's hatred of his own fate; the beggars of Nadsokor's hatred for Tanelorn.

Just as the game mechanics for *Elric of Melniboné* provide a way of dedicating one's soul to a god (the Pact), so too can Love and Hate be quantified. This section provides an **optional** set of mechanics for Games Masters to use to simulate the effects of love and hate in their *Elric of Melniboné* campaigns (and, equally, in *Hawkmoon* and the forthcoming *Corum* game).

## PACTS OF LOVE AND HATE

A character's Love or Hatred for a thing is measured like any other skill or Pact – on a scale of 1 to 100 and above and should be recorded as an Advanced Skill on the character sheet. The object of Love or Hate can be anything – a person, a group of people, a country, an object, an ideal. Love or Hate can be established at any point – either during character creation or and perhaps most interestingly and appropriately, during game play. All a character needs to do is stipulate that he intends to Love or Hate something. If this is stated during character creation, there is no cost: the Love or Hate skill is not counted as either a cultural, professional or freely chosen skill, it simply comes into being.

If the Love or Hate is established during play, then it costs 1 Hero Point to establish it at its base value. If the circumstances warrant it, then the Games Master can choose to waive the Hero Point cost.

The starting value of the Love or Hate varies according to the type of Love or Hate being declared:

### Love and Hate Starting Percentages

Loving or Hating...	Starting Percentage
A person, in a romantic context	Character's POW+CHA, <i>plus</i> , Loved one's POW+CHA
A person in a platonic context (a friendship, for example)	Character's POW+CHA, <i>plus</i> , Loved one's CHA
A group of people	Character's POW+CHA, <i>plus</i> 10+1D10
A country	Character's POW+CHA, <i>plus</i> 10+1D10
An object (The Ruby Throne, for example)	Character's POW+CHA, <i>plus</i> 10+1D10
An Ideal (Tanelorn, for example)	Character's POW+CHA, <i>plus</i> 10+1D10

All the Starting Percentages may be modified by the Games Master to reflect deeper or lesser devotion; thus, Love (Tanelorn) might begin for a character at 35%, using the above Starting Percentage calculation but because the character is so devoted to finding Tanelorn, knowing that his long-lost father was also seeking the Eternal City, the Games Master decides to increase the Starting Percentage to 45%, taking into account the familial devotion.

Where a person or people are concerned, the love *does not need* to be reciprocated. It is up to the Games Master to decide if it is or not and the Player must decide if unreciprocated love will strengthen his character's Love/Hate or weaken it. If the decision is made to strengthen the depth of feeling (unrequited love often drives the heart to *deeper* fondness or infatuation), then the Love/Hate value can be increased (or decreased, if the depth of feeling is diminished) by 1D10%.



### Example: Farric's Saga

Farric, through his adventuring in Pikarayd, has fallen in love with the daughter of the local chieftain. Farric's POW and CHA total 22, and the chieftain's daughter, El'nassa, has POW and CHA totalling 32. Thus, Farric's Love (El'nassa) is at 54%. However, because Farric has to keep his love a secret from the over-protective chieftain, the Games Master decides to increase this by 5%, so Love (El'nassa) is now 59%. Pete, Farric's player, also decides that El'nassa has never declared her love for Farric, and Farric knows that the sorcerer, Malagan, has also been courting her. Because Farric's love is unrequited, Pete reasons that Farric's infatuation for the Pikaraydian princess is deeper and so it is increased by a further 1D10% - resulting in 8%. Therefore, Farric's Love (El'nassa) is now at 67%.

Because Farric hates the sorcerer Malagan, who is his rival for El'nassa's affections, the Games Master gives Farric Hate (Malagan) at 52% (Farric's POW+CHA, plus Malagan's POW+CHA of 30). He also declares that, because Malagan has caused Farric's exile from Pikarayd, following the revelation of his feelings towards El'nassa, Hate (Malagan) increases by 20%, so it is now 72%.

Farric loves El'nassa – but he hates Malagan more...

## INCREASING AND DECREASING LOVE AND HATE

Like any skill or Pact, Love and Hate can increase through Skill Improvement rolls, as described in the main *Elric* rules, if the Player wishes to spend a roll on the relationship. However, if, during play, something that happens that would deepen the Love/Hate or diminish it, the Games Master can either impose an immediate increase or reduction of up to 20%, depending on the circumstances; or he can call for the character to roll for the increase (or diminishment) himself. If the character rolls, then

1D10 For a minor deepening or diminishment (She says 'I love you!' unexpectedly)

1D10+5

For a substantial deepening or diminishment (Malagan slaps Farric in the face, following an argument over El'nassa's future, intensifying Farric's hatred for Malagan)

1D10+10

For a major deepening or diminishment (El'nassa stays by Farric's bedside, comforting him, after he has fought a duel and been wounded, defending her honour)

Once a Love or Hate has been established, it can fall below its starting value but can never be reduced to zero or less. Once established, Love and Hate are permanent fixtures on the character sheet.


## Love and Hate; Gifts and Compulsions

If a character has a Gift or Compulsion that concerns Love and Hate, then, depending on the nature of the Gift or Compulsion, a Love or Hate is either *increased* or *decreased*, depending on the context, by an amount equal to half the governing Pact. For example, Lady Sathril with a Pact (Eequor) at 64% has, as one of her Compulsions, a hatred of men. The depth of her Pact means that she will have Hate (Men) at a bonus of +22% to any starting or existing value for the Hatred.

## Using Love and Hate

Love and Hate are used in several ways.

- \* As a *comparative value* to demonstrate strength of feeling (Farric, for example, hates Malagan *more* than he loves El'nassa). If the value of the Love or Hate exceeds 100%, then it is an all-consuming passion – at the kind of intense levels seen in Elric for his love for Cymoril, Theleb K'aarna in his love for Yishana – or his jealousy of Elric. An intense Love or Hate is likely to drive the character to extraordinary lengths in pursuit or defence of whatever he loves or loathes.
- \* As a *bonus* to any skill that might be used to help, defend or influence in the name of the object Loved or Hated. The bonus is equal to the Love or Hate's critical range. So, if Farric was fighting a duel with Malagan, following a slight about El'nassa, Farric could gain a bonus to his combat skill of +6% for his Love (El'nassa) of 67% *and* a bonus of +7% for his Hate (Malagan), for a total bonus of +13%. The Games Master is always the arbiter



of when Love and Hate can be used as an augmentation in this way and to which skills any augmentation should apply.

\* As the *skill in an opposed test* that concerns the object of the Love or Hate. For example, Lady Sathril's Hate (Tanelorn) 75% could be used in an opposed test (instead of Persistence, say) where Jurgan, an Agent of the Balance, is trying to use his Influence of 80% to persuade her to fight in Tanelorn's defence against Miggea's wolf army. Whether or not the Love or Hate is used as a skill outright in this way or used as an augmentation to, for instance, Influence or Persistence, is dependent on the circumstances and the strength of feeling. If Sathril's Persistence was higher than her Hate (Tanelorn), then an augmentation would serve her better. If Persistence was lower, then Hate (Tanelorn) can be used as the active, resisting skill.

\* As a *skill in its own right* where the character is wrestling with his conscience over some matter concerning the object of his Love or Hate. *For example, Farric and Malagan have fought a bitter duel over El'nassa. Malagan, through trickery and sorcery, has badly injured Farric and is about to deliver the killing blow. El'nassa begs Malagan to spare Farric's life. Malagan has Love (El'nassa) 66% and Hate (Farric) 75%. He is torn between his love for the chieftain's daughter and his hatred for his enemy but decides that he hates Farric enough to kill him anyway. The Games Master decides to make a test against Malagan's Hate (Farric) to see what happens. The roll is 86 – a failure. Despite his hatred for the Filkharian, Malagan cannot,*

*for some reason, bring himself to deliver the coup de grace. He spits on Farric's prone body and walks arrogantly away. Had the Hate(Farric) test succeeded, then Malagan would have killed him. Conversely, had Malagan tested against Love (El'nassa) and succeeded, he would have heeded her pleas and spared Farric – but would have killed him had the test failed.*

Whenever Love or Hate are used as game mechanics, it is worth remembering how love and hate are central themes in Michael Moorcock's writing: that, grand, operatic tragedy and all consuming passion. Love drives Elric to destroy his own kingdom and Erekošë to destroy an entire world. Hatred drives Theleb K'aarna to kill Myshella and attempt to murder Elric, but his love for Yishana also keeps him as a love-lorn lackey to her personal whim. The mechanics for Love and Hate should be used to drive grand intentions and gestures, fuel desperate battles for survival (and not just with weapons – the love for Tanelorn might be the clinching factor for a lost traveller to crawl across the Sighing Desert to reach the fabled city); and to inform future schemes and agendas. Theleb K'aarna's hatred for Elric drove him to extreme lengths but what if Elric had done something to reduce that hatred? Might Theleb K'aarna's actions – and therefore the destiny of the Young Kingdoms – have radically altered?

Love and Hate are powerful emotions and should be exploited to the fullest in an authentic Eternal Champion campaign.



# INDEX

## A

Argimiliar 78  
Arioch 33  
Arkyn 80  
Arkyn the Meticulous 80, 82  
Arkyn the White Lord 82  
Assassin 147  
Azure Sister 39  
Azure Sisterhood 38

## B

Blood Brothers 42  
Brothers 86

## C

Central Hub 30  
Chardros the Reaper 44  
Cult of Aubec 121  
Cult of Grome 104  
Cult of Kakatal 109  
Cult of Lassa 112  
Cult of Straasha 116  
Cult of Terhali 129  
Cult of the Dhoz – Ancestor Cult  
of Oin and Yu 126  
Cycles of Time 7

## D

Deathbringers 30  
Death Bringers 44

## E

Ecstatic Indulgence 49  
Elemental Cults 14

## F

Fellows 86  
Filkharr 78

## G

Glimpses of the Future 13

## H

Halls of Indulgence 31  
Hall of Many Ways 30  
Herald of Chaos 33, 34  
Hionhum the Executioner 45

## I

Ilmiora 78

## J

Jharkor 78  
Judges/Priests 87  
Justice Makers - Donblas 84

## K

Kaneloon? 63  
Key Events 9, 10, 11  
King of the Swords 69  
Knight of the Swords 69

## L

Lord of the Seven Darks 34, 35  
Lormyr 79

## M

Magistrate 87  
Maluk 60  
Maze of Hwarma'gaal 31  
Melniboné 7, 32  
Mereghn 140  
Mermen 76  
Messenger of the Court of Hell 34,  
35  
Miggea 89

## N

Nadsokor 59  
Narjhan 57, 59

## P

Pan Tang 29  
Patron of Melniboné 33, 35  
Pawns of the Cosmic Balance 14

Player of the Great Game 37  
Pozz-man-Llyr 98

## Q

Queen of the Swords 69

## R

Roost of Vezhan 32

## S

Scriptorium of Maluk 31  
Sea Serpents 75  
Shazar 79  
Silent Watchers 59  
Sister of the Azure Robe 39  
Sister of the Azure Sceptre 39  
Sister of the Azure Veil 39  
Sorcerer-Adventurers of  
Quarzhasaat 146  
Soul Sever 48  
Spell Thieves 134  
Sword Blessor 67  
Sword Master 67  
Sword Ruler 34, 35  
Sword Singers 67  
Sword Sons and Daughters 67

## T

Tarkesh 79  
Teshwan 60  
The Priesthood 80  
The Revengers' Tragedy 45  
The Sword Rulers 65  
The Twelve Symbols of Reason 85  
The Unrelenting Knights of Tovik  
95  
The Whisperers 71

## V

Vilmir 78

## W

What Makes a Cultist? 19



Michael Moorcock's

# ELRIC

## OF MELNIBONÉ

### Cults of the Young Kingdoms

Watching over the events of Elric, the Lords of Law and Chaos pursue their eternal struggle with scant regard for the lives of mortals. To them, supremacy is all; the Cosmic Balance must tilt in their favour and all compromise must be sacrificed – irrespective of the consequences their selfish whims create.

Yet for all their mercurial arrogance the Lords of the Higher Planes require the devotion of mortals if their power-games are to have effect. Human souls are the currency of their games and humans, in their naivety, believe that, through devotion to the gods, untold power and riches will be theirs. They do not ask the price; they do not count the cost. In pursuit of temporal power, in pursuit of arcane knowledge and the patronage of powerful demons, humans readily surrender their souls.

Cults of the Young Kingdoms details the cults offering pacts with the Lords of Law, Chaos and the Elements. Expanding on the cults presented in the *Elric of Melniboné* rules, characters have greater scope for worship, more Gifts and Compulsions, and additional powers – if they are prepared to enter into a Pact with the Higher Forces. The Elemental Lords and several new, personality and ancestor cults are also detailed, deepening and widening the scope for worship and dedication, and fuelling the need for adventure.

Each cult is provided complete history, purpose, religious rites, forbidden knowledge and special notes regarding their place in the cosmic hierarchy and in relation to each other. This is the most detailed treatment of Young Kingdoms religions ever presented, and offers a treasure-trove of possibilities for characters and Game Masters alike.

To use this supplement, you will require *Elric of Melniboné*.  
Add to the experience with *Bright Shadows* and the *Elric Companion*.



**MONGOOSE  
PUBLISHING**



RuneQuest is a trademark (TM) of Issaries Inc.  
Produced under license from Issaries Inc. All rights reserved.

U.S. \$29.95

MGP8151

ISBN 978-1-905103-61-3

