

Stormbringer!
presents

CHAOS CULTS OF THE YOUNG KINGDOMS

by Charles Green

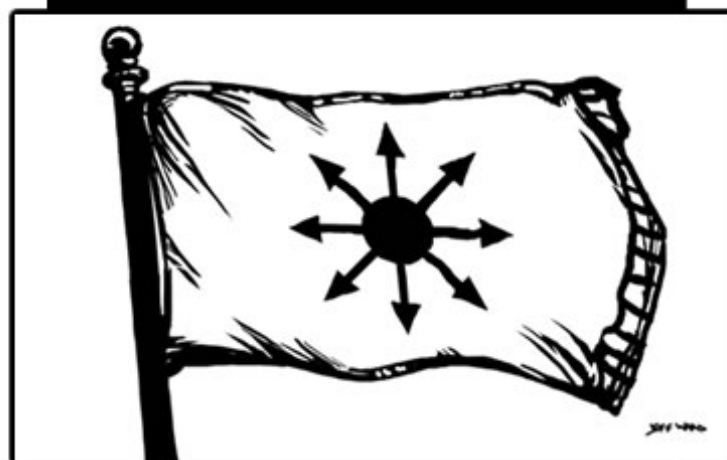


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Layout and additional editing by Marcus Bone.

This article was sourced from the Stormbringer! website (see <http://www.stormbringerpg.com>)

INTRODUCTION

The conflict between the Lords of Law and Chaos, and the mediating force of the Cosmic Balance, is the central pole around which all of the Eternal Champion stories revolve. These beings, while godlike in power and scope, are “gods” in much the same way as the Greeks saw their divinities, i.e. as entirely human in their workings, full of lust and wrath, and as political an animal as any in existence. It is the conflicts between these beings that drives the Multiverse ever onwards, inspiring human agents to feats of tremendous heroism and despicable depravity. They are, in short, the prime motivators of the Balance, at once separate from it and forever enmeshed in its boundaries.

The Lords of the Higher Worlds derive power from their human followers. This power feeds them, just as mortals eat food and drink wine. And, since the Balance binds the gods to not act directly in mortal affairs, the human followers are needed to spread their master’s influence in the world of the living. This text deals with those who put the needs of the gods before their own.

The first section is for players. It lists most of the cults of Chaos active in the Young Kingdoms, and the nature of the average cult member. It also gives detailed instructions for making and playing a member of that cult. There are new spells, demon breeds, and goals for new characters.

The second section is for the Gamemaster only. It has further background on the cults, plot hooks and assorted tools for integrating the cults of Chaos into an ongoing campaign. Players should stay away from this section, as the knowledge contained therein is only for minds that have undergone certain preparations. Gamemasters will also find new enchantments, spells, and demons for their own use, either as player-character rewards or new and terrible foes.

Remember that Chaos is a force of corruption and beguilement. The powers described inside seek to draw followers away from the peace offered by the Balance. Certainly the power is there for the taking, but the price can be terrible. Every point of Allegiance earned moves them farther away from humanity.

CULTS OF CHAOS

Progression through the Cults

For members of any cult, the primary reason for membership is to grow in power within the cult, thereby strengthening the power of the god associated with that cult. The progression of an individual through the cult is measured by the amount of Allegiance they have accumulated during the course of their careers. Not only does this serve as a measure for players to know their position with the cult relative to others, but it also allows the GM to keep track of the amount of devotion a player holds to his or her god.

Each cult has ranks associated with its membership. In the case of the Cults of Chaos, this uniformity stems from affiliation with the greater Church of Chaos from Pan Tang, which gives the rest of the Young Kingdom a template to follow. The cults of Law share uniformity in structure in reflection to the nature of that force; a uniform organization mirrors the perfection of Law.

The lowest rank in any cult is that of the initiate. As described in the Stormbringer rules, initiates provide the bulk of labor for the cult, as well as serving as the body from which the mass of higher ranked personnel are drawn. An initiate to a cult may or may not have any sorcerous ability or training. There are few entry requirements, beyond a simple Allegiance score of at least 3 higher in the force associated with the cult, and an at least passing devotion to the force or god the cult follows. The initiation rituals tend to be little more a swearing in and a statement of intent, although

some cults go a little bit further for drama. In all cases, however, a basic rank of initiate is a prerequisite for further development into the mysteries of the cult. While an initiate, however, a person does have limited access to the cult's resources, usually some skill instruction or emergency healing. If an initiate shows sorcerous ability, then a few minor spells might be available for learning. Characters with enough Allegiance can, at the GMs option, be considered already initiates of their cult during character creation.

After a period of time (during which time the initiate learns about the cult's beliefs) if the higher-ranking cult members feel that an initiate shows promise, that initiate may be tapped for a further initiation into the cult, moving on to the rank of novice. To successfully achieve the rank of novice, the initiate must demonstrate a sincere desire to progress through the ranks of the cult, have a good working knowledge of the dogma and precepts the cults holds, and undergo some sort of trial or test to measure their worth. This trial varies from cult to cult, but is often moderately challenging to the prospective novice. Also, an Allegiance score of at least 20 is needed. A novice has greater access to the cult's library, and may learn more difficult spells, as well as being allowed more advanced skill instruction. It is at this stage of a member's time in the cult that summoning spells are taught, and a certain amount of mastery over this part of their instruction must be obtained for serious consideration for further growth. Many novices are

weeded out at this point, either due to lack of ability or disastrous summoning results. Also, non-sorcerous members of the cult have trouble advancing past this point. Many strive to gain sufficient POW to learn magic, or work on gaining enough Chaos Allegiance to achieve rank outside the cult structure, as an agent of Chaos usually holds an unofficial rank of Prelate with cults associated with that god.

Should the novice prove hardy enough to survive until they have accumulated 50 points of Allegiance, they can request for consideration for further advancement. The next rank within the cult is that of acolyte. An acolyte is expected to be very well versed in cult dogma, as well as spend a year serving as a body slave to the sect's Bishop, or some other humiliating duty to teach them humanity's subservience to the Lords of Chaos. Very few potential acolytes survive this time. At this time, characters are taught increasingly complex spells and rituals, and a few are sent on missions in the Young Kingdoms. Those hardy enough to survive are made full acolytes, and given even greater access to the cult's libraries. Acolytes also oversee lesser initiates and novices, keeping an eye open for potential recruits for further advancement.

After serving as an acolyte for several years, the cultist is examined to see if they are good candidates for further advancement. Should the acolyte's service record be relatively free from marring errors, and they have accumulated 75 points of Allegiance, he is moved up to the rank of disciple. A disciple of the cult sees to most of the day-to-day duty of the cult, and operates as the public face of the Church of Chaos. They oversee the construction of temples, perform religious rituals, collect tithes and offerings, and generally behave in a manner becoming to priests of that faith. Most cultists of Chaos peak when they reach this rank, seeking no more advancement in the cult.

If the cultist wishes to advance farther, the Bishop of his sect will task him with an arduous pilgrimage to a holy site of Chaos, such as the Temple of Chaos in Melnibone, or the Unholy Fortress in the East. Such a journey is filled with danger and peril, but, should the cultists survive

and accumulate 100 points in Chaos Allegiance, upon their return they will be raised to the lofty rank of Prelate of Chaos. There are very few of these individuals, since their contemporaries do their best to ensure that the individual does not survive their pilgrimage. The life of a prelate is one of privilege and power, as well as danger. Each prelate within a cult seeks to outdo his fellows, and to subvert and overthrow the Bishop of their sect. Being a prelate tends to be a short-lived rank, as the supplicant will either soon die or become the Bishop.

The position of Bishop is the highest rank to which a member of the cults of can aspire. The rank isn't based on Allegiance, or even proper progression through the ranks of the cult. Each cult has its own method for determining the next Bishop in succession. For some cults, this is a practical impossibility, as the current Bishop will not allow any upstarts to take the position. For example, the Theocrat in Pan Tang is also the Bishop of Chardros, so therefore is the head of both the political state of Pan Tang and the Church of Chaos. He allows none of his prelates to come close to rivaling him in power, and mercilessly squashes any attempts to take his position. In other cults, attaining the bishopric is a matter of killing the current bishop, and taking the position by force, while other cults simply wait for the current Bishop to die and appoint a successor from the number of prelates deemed worthy of the position. This is often a question of Allegiance, but other times will be determined by the current political situation facing the cult. In any event, Bishops of Chaos are amongst the most powerful people in the Young Kingdoms, perhaps even in other planes, as they mix great political and temporal influence with awesome sorcerous power.

It should also be noted that the rank progression isn't always absolute. In the cult of Mabelode, for example, rank is only relative to other members of your unit, with the squad leader being the member with the highest allegiance score. The cult of Chardros is more power-hungry than most, and positions are only open to someone who kills a current office-holder, and can keep from being killed by their fellow cultists long enough to take the position.

Also, Agents of Chaos are a special case. While they exist outside the hierarchy of the Church of Chaos, Agents are generally feared and respected by members of the official Church. As such, a recognized Agent of Chaos will hold the rank of Prelate for the cult associated with their god, and can even take over the bishopric should the position be available. Agents are wild cards in the cults of Chaos, since their existence outside the proper cult structure makes them unpredictable. It is not uncommon for initiates to leave the cult and pursue Agenthood on the own, only to return later after pre-empting most of their former contemporaries.

PLAYER'S SECTION

A Player's Guide to the Cults of Chaos

CULT OF ARIOCH

The Duke of Hell, Lord of the Seven Darks, and Knight of the Swords

It is said that Arioch is amongst the most conniving, manipulative of the Chaos gods, one whose plots and schemes reach throughout the Multiverse. Such plots are often beyond the understanding of his mortal servants, and any such servant who has the temerity to question the master's plans (such as Elric, as a notable example) should expect a terrible reprisal.

OBSERVATIONS

AFFILIATION

Independent. While not a member of the Church of Chaos, the cult of Arioch is wide spread, befitting with Arioch's meddlesome nature.

CHARACTER OF CULT MEMBERS/IDEOLOGY

In keeping with the character of Arioch, his human cult in the Young Kingdoms see themselves as master manipulators of the world, acting upon secret communication with their god in order to further His ends in this world and others. They use all tools at their disposal, from cast magic to powerful demonic summonings, to ensure that their role within their master's plans are fulfilled to His full pleasure. No corner of the Young

Kingdoms is immune to Arioch's influence, which is enacted via his mortal (and immortal) servants.

In addition to operating as a manipulating arm for Arioch's schemes, his cult also offers veneration and worship of Arioch in his form of Lord of Enlightened Bloodletting, a variant form of the Knight of the Swords. Blood features strongly in the rituals and art of this cult and they have developed a variety magical means to make use of the blood of themselves and others to help achieve power. Martial skills is still highly respected, but so is a sense of style, grace, sophistication and, above all, subtlety. The cult members see themselves as urbane, educated and powerful followers of Chaos in its most glorious form, and shy away from the unnecessary violence of other cults. To them, if a knife in the back will solve problems as easily as an extended siege or other forms of large-scale warfare, then the knife is the only choice.

The character and nature of individual cultist varies. Anyone who shows real devotion to Arioch and his goals will find a home within the cult, and this attracts a large number of people from all over the Young Kingdoms, for a variety of reasons. The cult hierarchy tries to direct members to activities that best suit their particular character, with varying degrees of success. Thus, the cult is a strange mixture of personalities, cultures, and outlooks. The cult thinks Arioch enjoys this mixing of idea, and that it gives the cult strength through

versatility. Of course, it is possible that the cult is just a massive joke for the Duke of Hell, but that remains to be seen.

CLERICAL VESTMENTS

In areas where the worship of Chaos is tolerated, Arioch's priests wear the colors associated with the cult, black with red trim and silver accents. The cut of these garments vary, from elaborate collections of fabric keeping with current style, to simple robes and cloaks, belted at the waist to aid movement. In times of worship, priests always wear an elaborately embroidered robe, with a deep hood. The color of ritual robes is always deep black with red and silver, just like other clothes. Black represents the mysterious aspects of Chaos, the red is symbolic power of blood, and silver the color of a sword, marking the wearer as a true servant of Chaos.

In area where the worship of Chaos is not allowed, cultists try to blend in with local dress. This is especially true if the cultist is on a mission for the cult, unless something can be gained by making a public spectacle of one's self.

COMMON METHODS OF WORSHIP/IMPORTANT RITUALS

As mentioned above, blood is a common motif in most rituals associated with Arioch. A blood sacrifice (not always a fatal one) is expected for any cultist seeking Arioch's intervention.

Worship services are generally held every night at midnight, but can be held off if situation warrants. Such services are generally held in a temple dedicated to Arioch, with a statue depicting one of the several forms the god takes used as the focal point of the attended priest's devotion. After a reading or recitation by the high priest (sometimes in Melnibonean,) each member present steps forward and inflicts a wound on their hand or arm. The blood resulting from the wound is allowed to drip into a chalice at the base of the statue. (Cultists of Arioch are sometimes easy to pick out by the scars along their hands and wrists from this activity.) Members are only expected to squeeze out a single drop of blood, since this sacrifice is symbolic in nature, although those

wishing more direct aid from Arioch will often donate a larger amount.

After a period of silent meditation, the high priest then takes a large silver goblet around. This contains a deep purple wine (which particular wine varies; it is considered a bad omen if an appropriate wine is unavailable.) Each member of the cult who sacrificed blood drinks from the cup, while the high priest intones, "So given, so returned." This wine is consecrated as the powerful chaotic blood of Arioch, and affirms the cultist's link to the cult and each other. In a symbolic since, they all become Arioch's Children, i.e. they all share His divine blood via this daily ritual.

After this, the high priest makes a ritual lamentation for Arioch, stressing that the faithful serve their Lord in this realm, since he himself is forbidden from acting directly in mortal affairs. The cultists then file out of the ritual chamber, and the high priest (or his attendants) takes the goblet full of blood to a large fountain in the temple. This fountain flows with blood instead of water, and is maintain by several bound demons to keep it from clotting. The size of a particular fountain's spray is indicative of Arioch's pleasure with that temple.

Solitary cultists, and those operating on a mission, can go for days without performing this ritual, although to do this for long risks Arioch's temper. Most will perform an abbreviated version if time and situation permits. The collected blood from such a ritual is often trivial (usually little more than a drop, unless the cultist seeks aid, guidance or favor from the Duke of Hell), easily disposed of. Characters seeking evidence of an Arioch cultist's presence could, for example, look for spots of blood where none should be, like on walls, in pantries, or other out of the way places.

SIZE OF CULT

Small to moderate. Since the cult of Arioch exists outside the standard Church of Chaos, it does not have the resources needed to maintain a large body of followers. However, in places where nobility worship Chaos out of a fashionable sense of hedonism, the cult might have a number of wealthy and influential members to help fill its coffers.

MAJOR WORSHIP CENTERS/PLACES OF POWER

The main temple for the Cult of Arioch is in the university town of Cadsandria in Argimiliar. The temple recruits promising priest/agents from likely candidates amongst the University student body. Many faculty members at this school are cultists, as are a number of Argimiliar's nobility. This temple coordinates cult activity all over the Young Kingdoms, and oversees the largest collection of active worshippers of Arioch in the Young Kingdoms. The temple's fountain is enormous; the elaborate device takes up a huge room in the largely underground temple, which is situated near Cadsandria's waterfront. The temple is built largely of white marble and red brick. The fountain itself was once white marble as well, but the dragon and demon mouthpieces that constantly spew the blood of faithful followers has stained it a permanent deep crimson.

The faithful of Arioch, when they are not enacting His will, are encouraged to visit both the Palace –Temple of the Theocrat in Hwamgaarl and the Temple of Chaos in Melnibone. These examples serve to illustrate for the discriminating cultist two things; the barbarity of the official Church of Chaos, and what happens to those who place their own desires before that of the Lord of the Seven Darks. Both of these pilgrimages are fraught with peril, though, since neither nation is friendly towards human followers of Arioch.

CURRENT GOALS & ACTIVITIES

In cult doctrine, Arioch whispers His desires to the individual cultist. Most often, these instructions deal with the slaying or disruption of the means of Lawful groups and individuals, tempting others towards the worship of Chaos in general, and Arioch in particular, and the summoning and binding of powerful demons. Cultists are given a great deal of leeway as far as activities are concerned, and the high priests only rarely hand assignments down to lower-level priests. There are, however, three guidelines cultists are expected to follow:

- Act in ways that further the worship of Chaos, or stymie the designs of the Lords of Law.
- Be mindful of changing situations; they are

often signs of Arioch moving you to a place where He wishes.

- Do not quick to act; a slow and subtle hand can act longer than a quick one. A secret follower is worth a dozen known ones.

FOLLOWERS OF ARIOCH

Members of the cult of Arioch come in two forms: priests and lay members. Players wishing to play a priest should use the Priest occupation template on page 73 of the *Stormbringer* rulebook. Lay members may be from any occupation listed on pages 72-73, but may pick their 3 spells from the list below. Priests may also pick from the following spell list, but may pick up to 1d8. Note also that priests of Arioch generally pick a single class of weapon as their skill of personal specialty.

ALLEGIANCE

Members of the cult of Arioch gain points of Chaos Allegiance like normal, but will also gain additional points for performing the following actions:

- Summoning a demon, leaving it unbound to run amok in the area. Worth 2d6 points each time.
- Summoning and binding a demon, and leaving the binding object where someone can find it. Worth 1d6 points.
- Slaying a companion or friend during an adventure. Worth 1d4 points.

SPELLS

Followers of Arioch can select spells from the following list, in addition to the ones available to their occupation.

Blood Song (5)*, Blessings from Arioch (1-3)**, Brazier of Power (4), Candle Stripling (1)**, Chain of Being (4), Cloak of Clan Liret (1-4), Demon's Ear (1), Demon's Eye (1), Demon's Legs (1-4)*, Hell's Razor (1-4), Liken Shape (4), Speed of Vezhan (1-3), Summon Demon (varies), Visage of Arioch (1-3), Witch Sight (3).

*=new spell; **=Spell from The Bronze Grimoire.

New Spells

These are new spells for followers of the cult of Arioch.

BLOOD SONG (5)

Range is self. Chaotic. This wailing ululation takes five rounds to cast, during which time the caster must sing, chant or scream the verbal components to the spell. The magic points are lost at the end of the fifth round.

During the spell's duration, for every point of damage the caster inflicts with an edged weapon, he or she gains an additional magic point. These magic points can be spent normally, but disappear at the end of the spell's duration. IF the caster commits a fatal blood sacrifice for this spell, he or she gains all of the victim's magic points.

This spells, combined with *Chain of Being*, is used to pool up a large supply of MP for use in demon summoning.

Note also that flowing blood is mandatory for the spell to work, so damage inflicted with a blunt weapon will not grant additional magic points.

At the end of the spell's duration, the caster must make current MPx5 test. Failure indicates the he or she passes out for an hour, until another magic point regenerates.

DEMON'S LEGS (1-4)

Range is touch. Chaotic. For every magic point spent, the distance a target can jump is increased 100%. So, if a person could leap forward five feet normally, this spell would allow them to jump 10, 50, 75, or 100 feet, depending on their magic point expenditure. Vertical jumping distance is increased by the same factors, but unless a Jump roll is made, the jumper will suffer damage as if he or she had fallen from the maximum height.

Spells from *The Bronze Grimoire*

These are adapted spells from the previously published Stormbringer supplement *The Bronze Grimoire*.

BLESSINGS FROM ARIOCH (1-3)

Range is touch. Chaotic. For each magic point spent, the spell temporarily decreases the effect of the APP characteristic by three points. Decreasing APP decreases the Charisma roll. If the target is unwilling, match MP:MP on the Resistance tale to determine the spell's success. A decrease of APP to zero provokes disgust in every beholder.

If decreasing APP by nine points, the target's player also rolls a D100. On a result of 00, the Lords of Chaos laugh, and make the change permanent. After that the spell does not affect the victim, nor may he or she cast it. In recompense, the victim gets three points to add to characteristics other than APP.

If of equal or greater magic points, this spell and Visage of Arioch can cancel each other. If of greater magic points, the survivor spell takes full effect.

CANDLE STRIPLING (1)

Range is touch. Chaotic. The caster is able to appraise the possible worth of children and youths younger than 15 years. The spell shows that only one in ten will possibly be important as an adult, and of those life shows that only one in ten more actually accomplishes something. Nonetheless, if the caster has befriended the right youngsters, they will return favors when they can. Over decades, the caster may become influential in a town or district without doing much.

At some point, though, the caster notices that no youngster is shown to be even potentially important, nor does he or she ever see another of whom the spell marks as special. This result is a prophetic shadow of the doom of the world, in which all must die.

(Note: the version of this spell known in Cadsandria can be used on people up to the age of 18. It's normally used on entering university Students to gauge their fit for initiation into the cult.)

CULT OF BALAN

The Grim - Lord of Pain and Ecstatic Agony

To a follower of Balan, the sensation of pain is what allows us to be aware of our own existence. Without the sensation of cold or heat, we wouldn't know to clothe ourselves against the elements, and we would die from exposure. Without the pain of an empty belly, we wouldn't know to eat, and we'd starve. It is other, sharper, sensations of pain that let us know we still live, and can still act upon the world. The dead feel no pain, therefore, to feel pain is to be alive.

OBSERVATIONS

AFFILIATION

Church of Chaos: Pan Tang and Young Kingdoms. The cult of Balan is also worshipped in Melnibone.

CHARACTER OF CULT MEMBERS/IDEOLOGY

Followers of Balan come in two fairly specific groups: those who see the god as the patron of torturers (i.e., Melnibone and Pan Tang,) and those who worship him in his form of Lord of Ecstatic Agony. This latter form is the most common PC's are likely to see (or play,) outside of Pan Tang. While the people of Pan Tang share a common ancestry with the humans of the Young Kingdoms, the character of the Pan Tangian "race" differs so markedly to make the bulk of the Young Kingdoms

Chaos worshippers to be less cruel and domineering, and this is the case with the Cult of Balan.

The schism between these two groups isn't a formal one; they don't exist as separate sects, nor is there any real tension between the two separate groups. The difference is really only one of focus. Where the priests of the Lord of Pain direct their worship using the bodies of others, followers of the Lord of Ecstatic Agony have a more personal bent to their devotion. Also, there is significant overlap between the two groups, as there are rituals every priest must perform that involve both the torture and mutilation of another, and self-mutilation, scarring, and other assorted activities that allow the priest to test the measure of their faith.

Committed members of the clergy and Agents of Balan are easy to recognize. Taking a cue from the Pan Tangian Church of Chaos, members of the faith often wear the heavy iron masks that are so often associated with the cult, in addition to a variety of heavy robes and cloaks to cover their scared bodies. However, the priestly garb is really only required for ceremonial purposes, and it isn't until fairly far along into the priest's career that the infamous bolting of the mask to their face becomes mandatory. Many priests do wear their masks often, sometimes constantly, but it is permissible to remove it at any time outside that of ceremony and worship. There are not many lay worshippers of this god, as his worship is such that involves a fair

degree of personal attunement to the precepts of the faith, which is something a lay follower may not be able to perform. As such, this cult is rather small, although not nearly as small of the cult of other gods in the Young Kingdoms.

Worshippers are taught that Balan reminds humanity that to feel pain is to be alive, and wishes for all to know the pain of life to better our chances of survival. To a follower, Balan *is* pain himself, and every stab wound and every stinging slap is their god making his presence known. And the more intense the pain, the closer one is to Balan. To die an agonizing, painful death is a blessing, as it allows a priest to fill his or her last moments with total and complete awareness of his or her god's presence. Therefore, the character of a priest of Balan is a strange mixture of a lust for life, and a zealous wish to receive and inflict pain.

Outsiders do not truly appreciate the subtlety of the torturer's art, and devotees of Balan look upon those they practice on with a certain amount of envy. Many priests despair over the idea that they may never find someone to bring them as close to their god as they can themselves. This desire for self-torture often leads priests into outlandish and wild attempts to hurt themselves, dancing along a terribly thin line between a painful death and the transitory union with their god.

COMMON METHODS OF WORSHIP/IMPORTANT RITUALS

Most worship services are little more than group sessions of self-mutilation and flagellation. Often, groups gather to pursue some singular goal, and these meetings usually devolve into an orgy of violence and pain, usually after the meetings goal has been met.

Two important rituals are performed every month, one on the night of the full moon and one on the night of a new moon. All worshippers in a given area are expected to participate in both rituals, unless extenuating circumstances apply.

The full moon ritual is an informal gathering for worship and divination. Torture victims are either chosen at random the night before, taken from a prepared stock, or taken from amongst the clergy, should a suitable victim not be found before then. Many older priests choose such a

night to die at the hands of their pupils, with the hopes that they might go on to serve Balan in a large way after their death. Mass tortures are often performed, and the future is read in the spilled entrails of a specially prepared victim. How long it takes said victim to cry out indicates how well the cult will fare in the next month; the longer it takes, the better the month bodes. However, it bodes extremely ill should said victim not cry out before death. The particulars of the cult's fate are then sought in the entrails of the victim. Afterwards, cult members inflict upon them selves a minor wound, and retire to an evening of quiet meditation on the nature of their pain.

The new moon ritual is when the bulk of the cult's initiations take place. An aspiring cultist is taken to a prepared place and given a draught of medication to keep them conscious and aware of themselves and their surroundings. They are then subjected to a relatively minor torture, one that causes a negligible amount of pain. The exact nature of this torture is left up to the GM, bearing in mind that nothing too elaborate should be used. (More complicated tortures are used for later initiations.) During the initiation torture, the recipient is asked to describe the nature of the sensations he or she is experiencing. These feelings are slightly altered by the decoction taken earlier, but are mostly a curious mixture of pain and pleasure. If at any time, the recipient cries out in pain, they are considered unfit for membership, and append the remainder of their short lives feeling the extent of the pain that particular torture can deliver. If, however, they can remain calm during the procedure, upon passing out, (i.e. reduced to 2 or fewer hit points) they are removed from the torture and given a hot iron brand or scar in the shape of the device used in their first torture. This scar or brand will often burn or sting in the future, especially when the cultist is being led to some goal of the Lord of Pain.

SIZE OF CULT

Small to moderate. The Lord of Pain's worship has never really had the kind of mass appeal as that of other gods. However, the few devotees of Balan that exist are often quite zealous in their veneration.

MAJOR WORSHIP CENTERS/PLACES OF POWER

Most of the places of power important to the cult are found on Pan Tang, with a few sights on Melnibone seen as a sort of elusive myth. Many followers of the Lord of Pain make a pilgrimage to the Garden of Pain in Hwamgaarl at least once in their lives. And many human followers spend their lives braving the Dragon Isle to steal a glimpse at the tomes stored in Monshanjik Tower, where Dr. Jest performs his grisly work. However, there are also minor temples in other places in the Young Kingdoms that have born witness to great acts of cruelty or pain. These places are thankfully rare, but they do attract large groups of worshippers, often to the detriment of the locals.

CURRENT GOALS & ACTIVITIES

In addition to their own pursuit of pain, individual priests are also made aware of a number of tomes and artifacts, which, should they happen upon an opportunity to procure, they should do so.

FOLLOWERS OF BALAN

Players wishing to play a priest of Balan should follow the normal steps for character creation in the Stormbringer rules book. They will, naturally, use the Shaman/Priest/Cultist entry for determining initial skills, with a few differences, which will be discussed below. This process assumes that the newly created character is a freshly initiated priest, and, as such, will have little standing within the cult. Alternatively, the GM may decide that the character must perform some sort of act of deliberate pain or torture on a specific person before allowing the character to be a fully initiated member of the cult. Common tasks include making a follower of Law scream in agony, performing a successful torture on a randomly determined person (sometimes a relative,) or locating and returning with a treatise on anatomy, sorcery, or the art of torture.

ALLEGIANCE

Assuming a successful attainment of full initiation, the priest will grow within the cult based upon his or her Chaos Allegiance score. Learning and

casting spells is the quickest way to accumulate Allegiance, but some high-ranking cult members are incapable of sorcery. There are, therefore, many ways to grow within the ranks of the cult. In addition to the normal Allegiance points given in the Stormbringer rules, committed followers of Balan gain Allegiance for the following acts:

- Each act of torture performed by you - 2 points
- Deliberately branding or maiming another - 1 point
- Scaring, branding or tattooing yourself - 1 point for each tattoo
- Bolting your iron mask to your face - 1D8 points
- Undergoing initiation into the cult - 1 point
- Attaining Novice rank - 2 points
- Attaining Acolyte rank - 3 points
- Attaining Disciple rank - 4 points
- Attaining Prelate rank - 5 points
- Attaining Bishop rank - 6 points

SKILLS

The skills associated with the Priests of Balan are.

Fast Talk, Insight, Natural World, Oratory, Physic, Art (Torture), one class of weapon (usually a knife or scalpel,) and any one other skill as a personal specialty.

SPELLS

Priests of Balan with sorcerous ability may pick up to 1d8 of the following spells.

Soul of Chardros (1-3), Witch Sight (3), Agony (2), Itch (2)*, Sharing Hell (1-3)*, Summon Demon (varies), Hell's Razor (1-4), Pain Divine (4)**, Break the Will (1)**, Ecstatic Agony (1-3)**, or Blessed Enervation (3)**.*

*=spell found in The Bronze Grimoire, **=new spell. See below.

ADDITIONAL BENEFITS

Priests of Balan have 300 bronzes in discretionary cash at the start of play.

New Spells

These are new spells for followers of the cult of Balan.

PAIN DIVINE (4)

Range is self. Chaotic. Caster must be a committed follower of Balan. When cast, this spells sets all of the nerve endings in the caster's body alight with eldritch energy. The sensation makes the sorcerer jumpy, jittery, and full of energy. While in combat, every time the sorcerer is injured (that is, a hit that isn't parried or dodged, and damage gets past armor,) he or she may immediately make an extra attack at the party responsible for the injury, as though he or she was riposting with a critical parry. Also, more than one extra attack may be made this way. Note that this spell takes precedence over any actual ripostes, and the sorcerer can only make extra melee attacks (e.g. no missile weapons) at the party responsible for the injury. While under the effects of this spell, sorcerers find the sensation of the injury wonderfully exhilarating, and will often howl or laugh with glee when struck.

BREAK THE WILL (1)

Range is touch. Chaotic. Caster must be a committed follower of Balan. This spells fills the target with a terrible apprehension and dread of the caster, and must fight with themselves to keep from telling the caster whatever they want. Caster and target must make a POW vs. POW roll on the resistance table. If the caster wins, the target suffers an additional -20% penalty when resisting a torture session. For more details, see the section

labeled, "Torture: The Gentle Art of Persuasion" below.

ECSTATIC AGONY (1-3)

Range is self. Chaotic. Caster must be a committed

TORTURE - THE GENTLE ART OF PERSUASION

When a PC or NPC has an opportunity to use the Art (Torture) skill on someone, it is important for the Gm to have a good understanding of what the target knows, and what the torturer is looking for. With this understanding in mind, the GM can use the following process to determine whether or not the torturer is successful, and what information the target divulges.

The pertinent information needed for a torture session is the victim's ability to resist the torture, which is demonstrated as the average of their CON, POW and APP characteristics. This number is used as the passive value on the Resistance Table to resist giving into what the torturer wants.

On the torturers part, there are several factors that influence how much they can influence their target. Initially, the torturer should make a roll on their Art (Torture) skill, and compare their results to the following chart.

<u>Skill Result</u>	<u>Active Value</u>
<i>Impale (a result of 01)</i>	20
<i>Critical</i>	15
<i>Success</i>	10
<i>Failure</i>	00
<i>Fumble</i>	-10

For each successive torture roll, the torturer's active characteristic is increased by 1. This active characteristic is then compared to the victim's passive characteristic on the Resistance table, with the following results:

<u>Resistance Table roll</u>	<u>Result</u>
<i>Impale (result of 01)</i>	<i>Victim tells everything</i>
<i>Critical</i>	<i>Victim tells one vital fact</i>
<i>Success</i>	<i>Victim tells one minor fact</i>
<i>Failure</i>	<i>Victim refuses to talk</i>
<i>Fumble</i>	<i>Victim laughs. Pathetic</i>

The GM may wish to set a limit as to the number of times during a particular session a torturer can attempt skill rolls. Given enough time, anyone will break, but a torturer might become weary of consistently trying to pry someone open. A torturer might be limited to three total rolls, or possible one roll for every full ten percents of the Art (Torture) skill he or she possesses.

This system is mainly used for the GM to be able to fairly adjudicate what is told during a session. It is too easy for a PC to say, "My character is tough; I'll never talk!" For a PC torturer, this system will allow the GM to easily determine what they are able to get from NPC's (or even other PC's.)

Note also that any person possessing the Art (Torture) skill can use the above process, not just Priests of Balan, although the followers of the Lord of Pain have a number of methods that help them truly be the best at what they do.

follower of Balan. Pain allows the follower of Balan to focus his or her attention. For every magic point spent on this spell, the caster takes 1d4 points of damage through self-inflicted wounds. For every point of damage taken, the caster can add a bonus of 2% per point on his or her next three skills checks, so long as they fall within the spell duration. There is no risk of taking a major wound; the hit points are assumed to be inflicted by numerous small cuts or burns. Armor does not protect against this damage, nor can it be parried or dodged.

BLESSED ENERVATION (3)

Range is touch. Chaotic. Caster must be a committed follower of Balan. By increasing his or her awareness of painful sensation, the caster can retain consciousness and truly experience the sensation, even when the pain would overwhelm his or her senses. While under the effects of this spell, the caster takes one less point of damage from any source (even magic, poisons, and other effects), and ignores the effects of major wounds. However, after the spells duration ends, any major wound effects will happen, and the caster will need to make a Luck roll to dodge the effects of the wound, as per the normal rules.

Demon Pacts

There are a few individuals and breeds of demons that are in thrall to the Lord of Pain, and these demons often make themselves available to the followers of the Lord of Pain, so that they are better equipped to perform the duties their dark god expects of them. Of these, the most common are tiny demons called *D'Khan*. D'Khan demons are commonly bound for those priests who have no sorcerous skills of their own. Game Masters should see the GM section of this book for more information on this process.

AVERAGE D'KHAN, LESSER DEMON

NON-HUMANOID, OBSEQUIOUS ASSISTANT

These demons are distantly related to the infamous dhazuntnes demons, and are superficially similar in appearance. They rest of the hand of their user, and their wrap their long tail around the forearm, and rest their four limbs and head along each of the user's fingers. Common d'khan demons have the following attributes.

CHARACTERISTICS	ROLLS	AVERAGES
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STR	1D8	4-5
CON	1D8	4-5
INT	3D8	13-14
POW	3D8	13-14
DEX	3D8	13-14

HIT POINTS: AV 4-5 MOVE: 1D8, MAX 10

AV DAMAGE BONUS: -1D4

ABILITIES:

- *Stinger*, 1d8 damage, 40% chance to hit.
(Note that, unlike other demons with the stinger ability, the D'khan's poison doesn't cause further damage. Match the potency of the venom (which equals the demon's con) against the con of the victim. Should the demon win, the victim will take the venom's potency as a penalty too any resistance table rolls or skill check s for the demon's con in rounds. Should the target win, the venom has no additional effect against this person for 1 day.
- *Manipulate* 30%.
In addition to the normal use of this ability, anyone using a D'khan to augment his or her torture skills can add the demon's manipulate ability to any art (torture) rolls made while the demon is involved in the procedure.

NEED: A D'khan must use its stinger on a living target each day. If such a target is not presented by it's user during any given day, the demon will sting the user. Followers of Balan often allow this to happen as a matter of course; some even feel envious when the demon stings a non-willing victim, and sometimes coerce the demon into stinging them anyway.

SKILLS: Art (Torture) 35%, Dodge 30%, Hide 40%, Own Plane 15%, Pick Lock 60% Scribe 30%, Summoner's Language Int X2.

MAGIC POINTS TO SUMMON: 38

Note that any follower of Balan who knows the spell *summon demon* can gain access to a long list of names and other ritual implements that make summoning a D'khan substantially easier. When using these tools, a summoner may gain an additional +10% to his luck roll to determine if the summon is a success (this applies to summoning only this particular breed of demon.) Also, the summoner may also be granted access to the true names of specific D'khan demons who have worked with the cult in the past. These demons will have additional abilities and needs beyond what the average demon of the breed might need, and will be correspondingly more expensive to summon. Game masters should see the gm section of this book for more examples of these advanced demons.

CULT OF CHARDROS

The Reaper - Chaos Lord of Death and Darkness

To the members of the Cult of Chardros, their cult is the only “real” cult within the Church. All of the others only participate in the worship of other Chaos Gods simply because they can’t cut the mustard in the Cult of Chardros. They have an arrogance that is almost certainly limitless. Each cult member feels, with absolute certainty, that they, and they alone, can one day become Theocrat, and may even achieve immortality and rule Pan Tang and serve Chaos for a glorious eternity. The only thing in the way is a tremendous body of fellow cultists that all feel the same way. And most cultists feel this way even after an assassin puts a knife in their back.

OBSERVATIONS

AFFILIATION

Church of Chaos, Pan Tang and Young Kingdoms.

CHARACTER OF CULT MEMBERS/IDEOLOGY

To fully understand the psychology of a member of the Cult of Chardros, it must be understood that the cult, more so than any other cult within the Church of Chaos, is forged out of the peculiarities of the Mabden mindset.

To the early Mabden people, brought to the Young Kingdoms during Melniboné’s war with the

Dharzi, the bleak island that would eventually be called Pan Tang offered little in the way of resources. The fledgling Pan Anginas had to swiftly learn that, if they wanted something (or, more to the point, needed it for their survival,) they had to take it. And, while it is still difficult to reconcile the nature of the people of Pan Tang with these humble beginnings, it can be easily understood why they seemed so eager to give their allegiance to the Lords of Chaos.

What Chaos offered the determined Mabden was likely not only the tools to survive (and even thrive) in the harsh, alien environment, but also the Chaos gods wanted the Mabden to spread Chaos throughout the Young Kingdoms. This the Mabden where all too happy to do; they saw Chaos as a wonderful tool, a set of beings who seemed to be legitimately concerned with their survival. It’s easy to see now that they were likely duped into this arrangement, and were likely not told what the introduction of Chaos would do to their sanity. In a manner similar to the Melnibonians, Chaos made everything too easy for the Mabden. When they wanted something, it was easier to rely on demons and magic to achieve it. So, this instant gratification made the Mabden, over the centuries, both lazy and reliant on supernatural power to achieve their desires.

Slowly, as their minds were corrupted by Chaos, the Mabden began to see power, in any form, as the only possession worth having. Wealth

is fine, comfort and fine clothes are wonderful, but most Mabden would gladly give up anything they possess if it would give them power over another. This is partly the reason why slavery is so common in Pan Tang; not only is it better to make someone work for you (as the Mabden are lazy,) but to have power over other human beings is only right and proper. To the people of Pan Tang, they already rule the Young Kingdoms, as they are superior creatures. It's only a matter of time before the rest of the world learns this fact.

Power is the prime motivating force for members of the Cult of Chardros. The Cult has a tremendous number of adherents. However, there are only so many positions available within the upper echelons on the organization, and these slots only go to the most intelligent, cunning, and capable of all of the candidates. So, in order to progress through the ranks of the cult, a priest must be able to convince his superiors that he is the only possible person who can take the slot. More often than not, this comes out in as being the only person alive for the position; assassinations within the cult are so common as to be the standard operating procedure amongst those wishing to gain the power the cult offers.

The Cult of Chardros is magically oriented. They feel that, with Chaos as a patron, it is important to make use of all of the tools at their disposal. Any fool with a knife can put an end to a troublesome rival, but since anyone can do that, it befalls the cultist of Chardros to do something even worse. It is not out of the ordinary for a cultist of Chardros to slay a rival, and then use foul magicks to bring that person back as an undead servitor. This is the perfect expression of power-to turn a hated rival into a willing, tireless servant.

This sort of power is attractive to many in the Young Kingdoms, not just men of Pan Tang. Outside the Demon Isle, the Cult of Chardros is still the most numerous of the cults, and the backstabbing, infighting, and politicking is just as harsh (if not more so,) than it is in the main branch of the Cult. For non Pan Tangians, the climb into the upper ranks of the cult is much more difficult. Positions are always given to a native Pan Tangian over any other applicants, so, to ensure a position, the non-native cultist must assure that no other

Pan Tangian cultists are around and vying for that spot. Thus far, no non Pan Tangian has ever gotten farther than Disciple rank, and most cultists scoff at the idea of a non Pan Tangian Theocrat, but if such an individual were to exist, there would be no laws to prevent him from achieving the throne of the most powerful office in the Young Kingdoms.

All of these elements combine to produce a large, dedicated group of power-hungry sorcerers with a lust for domination and the skills to see themselves raise over all others. There is a reason that the "mad Pan Tangian sorcerer" is such a common villain in the Stormbringer game; there are so bloody many of them, and each is trying to gain some edge over his fellows. Sometime, priests will congregate in small cabals, usually to pool their resources to topple a powerful priest whose position they covet, or to pursue some obscure bit of arcane lore. These groups rarely last, as each person in the group will be naturally following up their own leads, and working to undermine those in the cabal with him. At times, they can actually achieve something before collapsing, but the norm is that the group violently self-destructs before their ends are met. And the poor adventurers caught in the crossfire...

The catchphrase that embodies the cult of Chardros is, "The strong are strongest alone."

COMMON METHODS OF WORSHIP/IMPORTANT RITUALS

Morning and evening prayers to Chardros are common. In these prayers, the cultist asks for Chardros to place him above all other fellow cult members, or asks for aid in some other endeavor. Actual organized worship of the Lord of the Grave is rare, as the members cannot trust each other enough to be in the same room together.

Instead, acts committed in Chardros' name are considered the purest form of worship a cultist can offer.

SIZE OF CULT

Huge. The Church of Chaos has a prominent place in nearly every country in the Young Kingdoms, and the cult of Chardros is the primary cult of the Church. Also, most people who practice sorcery

do so with Chardros as a patron, even those not normally aligned with the Church of Chaos or the Chardros cult. Theleb K'arna was a powerful sorcerer, but was not likely a devoted member of the cult. Still, he often referred to Chardros by name, even swearing by the god's name.

MAJOR WORSHIP CENTERS/PLACES OF POWER

The Palace-Temple of Chaos in Pan Tang is the largest center of Chardros worship in the Young Kingdoms, but there are doubtless other places where cultists offer secret praise to the Lord of Death.

CURRENT GOALS & ACTIVITIES

Given the size of this cult, and the nature of its members, there are numerous plots and schemes going on at once, so many that the central body of the cult in Pan Tang can't possibly keep track of them all. In general, though, the tasks a cultist of Chardros is expected to perform is to serve the Church of Chaos, the Theocrat, and increase your personal power and that of the Church. Quests for specific items are often handed out as tests for lower level priests, and higher level priests often pursue their own goals.

FOLLOWERS OF CHARDROS

Players wishing to play a follower of Chardros have many options. The most likely would be using the Shaman/Priest/Cultist occupation, with the exceptions note below. Also, any other occupation can be used to generate of follower of Chardros, with the understanding that spellcasting ability is mandatory for anyone wishing to belong to the cult. Non-spellcasters are sometime admitted to the cult, but are quickly outpaced by their colleges who can use magick. Priestly characters are made with the normal rules, except as noted below.

Since the cult is deeply entrenched with the Pan Tangian mindset, it is also restrictive about membership. As an outgrowth of the patriarchal society from which it sprang, the cult of Chardros admits only males. This differs from other cults of Chaos within the Church, but the cult of Chardros

sees themselves as better than these cults, and is certainly above any sort of ecumenicalism or equality. Therefore, only male characters can be members of this cult.

ALLEGIANCE

Advancement through the ranks of the cult is primarily based on Chaos Allegiance, and spellcasting is the swiftest way to earn this. However, given the ideology of the cult, there exist numerous ways of earning Allegiance points, some of which are listed below:

- Using magick to resurrect the dead - 1d8 (per spell, not per body.)
- Besting a rival – 2 points
- Each year spent serving the Church (and therefore the Theocrat) – 1 point
- For each person made to serve you against their will - 1 point (for one year's time)
- Killing someone who is defenseless or helpless (including slaves) – 1 point

SKILLS

Fast Talk, Insight, Natural World, Oratory, Physic, one class of weapon, and any two other skills as a personal specialty. These priests serve the Church in a variety of ways, from executioners to bookkeepers, and their skills will therefore vary in this respect.

SPELLS

Followers of Chardros can select spells from the following list, in addition to the ones available to their occupation.

Animate Limb (2), Animate Skeleton*, Brazier of Power (4), Buzzard Eyes (1), Chain of Being (4), Domination (1-3)**, Life in Death (5)**, Raise Zombie*, Soul of Chardros (1-3), Summon Demon (1), Void from Chardros (1-3)*or Witch Sight (3).*

*=Spell from the Bronze Grimoire. **=New Spell.

ADDITIONAL BENEFITS

Given the power and prestige associated with Cult, members are usually wealthy. Players start with 500 bronze tigers in discretionary funds.

New Spells

These are new spells for followers of the cult of Chardros.

DOMINATION (1-3)

Range is hearing. Chaotic. The caster must be able to communicate with the intended target, in a language the target understands. If this is not the case, the spell fails automatically. The caster must choose the level of influence he wishes to impart with this spell, based on the magic points spent:

- *Suggestion* - The caster can make a simple request, and expect it to be fulfilled. This is a relatively minor thing, and the target will not do something that is either illegal or what they consider unethical. An appropriate use of this level of the spell would be, "Excuse me, may I see that book you are reading?" or "Take this box to Harkon, and do not open it." This spell is often used on slaves to ensure that important errands will not be fumbled.
- *Command* - The caster can make a command of someone who may or may not be normally willing to acquiesce, and expect it to be fulfilled. This is usually performed to make sure that a recalcitrant clerk or guard doesn't hamper official Church business. An appropriate use if this spell would be, "I command you to let me speak to the prisoner!" or "Drop your weapon, and come quietly."
- *Dominate* - The caster can make a dominated person perform any action, even one that the person would normally never do (like jump from a window or drink something they new to be poisonous.) This spell is often used for ready-made assassins, "Take this sword, kill Harkon before dawn, and then use it on yourself."

The caster must succeed in a MP vs. MP test to affect the spell. Failure means the spell hasn't worked, and the magic points spent are lost. The spell lasts 1d8 hours, and at the end of each hour, the target is allowed a POWx3 roll to shake off the effects. Also, if the caster or anyone on his side attacks the target, the spell immediately ends, and cannot be used on the same target for 24 hours.

The *Witch Sight* spell can detect *Domination* on a body, so long as the *Domination* spell is still in its active duration. Each caster that knows the *Domination* spell imbues the spell with a small bit of themselves. If *Witch Sight* is cast on a body with the *Domination* spell on it, the *Witch Sight* caster can tell who is responsible for the *Domination* spell, if they cast *Witch Sight* on the actual *Domination* caster.

LIFE IN DEATH (5)

Range is sight. Chaotic. By casting this spell, a recently slain body can be brought to a temporary unlife. The body must still be warm (usually this means it has just been slain.) If the target is not dead, then the spell fails and the magic points are lost. The caster casts the spell, and the body rises at the beginning of the next combat round, and will follow any commands spoken by the caster. Treat this necromant as a zombie, with its original characteristics (expect it now has an INT and POW of one each,) equipment, and half percentages of any weapon skills the body had before raising. The mind is too far gone for any other skills to survive.

At the end of the spell's duration (the caster's POW in combat rounds,) the body collapses and begins to dissolve into noxious, bubbling ooze. The body cannot be used for any other necromantic spells, nor can it be raised from the dead by any means, short of a divine invocation. Note also that any equipment will likely survive, and be useable, (although smelly and slimy.) Any demons bound to the target of this spell are lost when he or she dies, unless they were eternally bound.

Priests of Chardros use this spell to gain more use out of their bodyguards, or to give a group of enemies a nasty surprise, should one of their number fall in battle.

Spells from *The Bronze Grimoire*

These are adapted spells from the previously published Stormbringer supplement *The Bronze Grimoire*.

ANIMATE LIMB (2)

Range is 15 yards. Chaotic. This gruesome spell animates one severed limb, usually an arm and hand per casting. The thing attacks whoever the sorcerer designates with his or her eyes, so the target must be visible and identifiable at the time of casting.

An arm and hand can make Claw attacks at 50%, 1d4 damage, and Grapple attacks to strangle at 25%. See the Spot Rules for drowning. A foot or leg might attack with a kick or stomp (for 1d3 damage) but would probably make a better diversion. A limb cannot attack with weapons. The animation lasts for the caster's POW in combat rounds, though the duration may be extended with additional castings. Sacrificing on point of POW animates the horror permanently and makes it immune to decay.

Limbs move normally at MOV 6 and because of their small size allow Hide checks at 80%. Scuttling hands and arms get 80% Move Quietly, but drop this to 20% for feet and legs.

ANIMATE SKELETON (VARIES+1 POW)

Range is touch. Chaotic. This spell allows the caster to permanently animate a complete skeleton. Quickening the skeleton costs one POW, plus the magic points needed to define it. Any sort of skeleton can be animated. The bones must be connected by ruby-hued knotted cords to maintain the articulation.

All ready, the sorcerer receives a Luck roll. Failure requires another roll, this time on the Necromantic Mishaps table. All skeletons have an INT of 3 and are capable only of following their creator's commands.

SKELETON GRISLY SERVANT

CHARACTERISTIC	ROLLS	AVERAGE
STR	3D8	13-14
CON	NA	--
SIZ	3D8	13-14
INT	NA	3
POW	NA	1
DEX	3D8	13-14

HIT POINTS: AV 7 MOVE: 1D8

ARMOUR: None normally, but weapons neither impale nor do critical damage. Magic that does physical damage affects the skeleton normally.

AV. DAMAGE BONUS: None

Weapon	Skill	Damage
Broadsword	40%	1d8+1+db
Small Club	40%	1d6+db
Brawl	40%	1d3+db (Note that a skeleton has a 10% chance of breaking an arm or wrist each time it hits with a Brawl attack.)

MAGIC POINTS TO SUMMON: 1 POW + 24 Magic Points. (Note that skills can be added, and characteristics can be increased with the further expenditure of more Magic Points.)

RAISE ZOMBIE (VARIES + 1 POW)

Range is touch. Chaotic. This spell creates one zombie under the command of the caster. It requires a whole corpse with enough flesh on it to allow mobility. The sorcerer draws the eight-lined Seal of Chaos on the forehead, then chants from sunrise to sunset. One point of POW animates the corpse. As with other undead, the necromancer must sacrifice Magic Points to define the zombie's skills and characteristics. The sorcerer needs a successful Luck roll for everything to go right. Failure requires another roll, this time on the Necromantic Mishaps table.

ZOMBIE MINDLESS SERVANT

CHARACTERISTIC	ROLLS	AVERAGE
STR	4D8	18
CON	4D8	18
SIZ	3D6	13-14
POW	NA	1
DEX	2D8	9

HIT POINTS: AV 16 MOVE: 1D8 Max 5.

ARMOUR: None, but impaling weapons do only one point of damage, and all others do half rolled damage + spell damage (if any).

AV. DAMAGE BONUS: +1D4

Weapon	Skill	Damage
Bite	30%	1d6
Large Club	20%	1d8+1d4

MAGIC POINTS TO SUMMON: 1 POW + 20 Magic Points

NOTE: At the Gamemaster's option, zombies may also carry a Necromantic Contagion, a POT 3d8 disease that is delivered through the zombie's Bite attack. If this toxin kills, the victim rises within 1d8 hours as a zombie with its original characteristics and half its skills, plus a 30% bite attack, which also carries the Contagion.

Necromancers can create zombies with this contagion for an additional 10 Magic points. Zombies created through the contagion are not under the necromancer's control, although anyone who knows the Raise Zombie spell can attempt to bind an uncontrolled zombie temporarily with a Luck roll.

Pact Demon - The Vo'i'cha

There are a multitude of demons that serve Chardros, and many of them willingly make themselves available to the cult of Chardros in the

many planes where the Lord of Death is worshipped. The Vo'i'cha, a hideous breed of vulture-demons, take a perverse delight in being made to serve those who follow Chardros, and have aligned themselves with Chardros's cult in the Young Kingdoms.

THE NECROMANTIC MISHAPS TABLE

<u>Roll</u>	<u>Effect</u>
01	<i>The Creature Lifts its head, tells you a secret from beyond life's curtain, then slumps in death. It cannot be reanimated.</i>
02-10	<i>The Creature tells you a secret from beyond life's curtain that is so horrible that knowing it causes you to scream out, faint, and lose 1 INT.</i>
11-20	<i>The Creature's intelligence awakes, but nothing else. It rolls its eyes and clicks its tongue, but cannot move.</i>
21-30	<i>Only the upper half of the torso animates. The creature can drag itself around and moan.</i>
31-40	<i>The creature has no guiding intelligence. It stands about stupidly.</i>
41-50	<i>The creature is a mass of spastic, twitching, thrashing limbs. It can walk, but knocks over furniture as it moves.</i>
51-60	<i>The magic is too strong; the body immediately begins to dissolve into noxious sludge, spraying you as it does. The stench clings to you forever, lose 1 APP.</i>
61-70	<i>The magic is too strong, and the corpse explodes. You lose 3d6 Hit Points.</i>
71-80	<i>The Creature is in such cosmic pain that its shrieks can pierce eardrums. Make a successful Luck roll or lose 1d8 Hit Points and your hair turns white. The creature tries to end its existence as quickly as possible, walking into the nearest fire, swallowing acid, jumping from a castle wall, or another appropriate end.</i>
81-90	<i>The creature animates as you desire, but bears a burning hatred towards you. It attacks immediately, and fights until destroyed.</i>
91-99	<i>As 81-90 above, but the creature comes back from the grave every 1d8 months, reforming itself from whatever dead flesh is available. To stop the attacks you must bargain with the Lords of Chaos.</i>
00	<i>A Gate to Hell opens in the laboratory. The Barrier of Law breaks down, the building your in is destroyed as monstrous demons rush out of the rift. Nothing you do stops them. They tear you to pieces, and drag off your twitching remains to the nether realms. Alternatively, you are instead born alive into another world, where you are placed in thrall to a Demon Lord. Escape is possible, but beyond the scope of this table.</i>

AVERAGE VOICHA GREATER DEMON

AVIAN, CARRION FEEDER

Individual demons of this breed vary little from the same basic form. They are essentially birdlike, although plumage and beak shape can vary from demon to demon. Their feathers always seem to be in poor condition, as does the skin that peeks out between bald patches. Their eyes are cruelly intelligent and malicious, and their whole face seems to be perpetually scowling. Their appearances are deceiving, though, and these demons are capable fighters and very handy servants for the followers of the Lord of Death.

CHARACTERISTIC	ROLLS	AV
STR	3D8	13-14
CON	2D8	9
SIZ	2D8	9
INT	3D8	13-14
POW	4D8	18
DEX	1D8	4-5

HIT POINTS: AV 9 MOVE: 1D8 Flight

AV. DAMAGE BONUS: None

ABILITIES:

- *Bite* 50%, 1d10, damage, 5 MP
- *2xClaw*, 40% 1d8+2, 8 MP
- *Emote*, 3 MP (demon can perfectly mimic any voice it has heard.)
- *Regenerate* 1 MP.
Regenerates 1 MP per round (Note that demon must be feeding on carrion to use this ability, which is why it's cheaper than usual.)

NEED: Must feast upon carrion at least once a day, and can only regenerate while doing so. The carcass need not be human, but must be dead, the ranker the better.

SKILLS: Listen 50%, Fly 50% Own Plane 15%, Summoner's Language Intx3%

Notes: A sorcerer can use a Vo'i'cha bound to himself as the target in the *Buzzard Eye* spell. See the spell description on page 147 of the Stormbringer rules. The demon may attack with both claws and it's beak in the same round.

MP TO SUMMON: 43

Note that any follower of Chardros who knows the spell *Summon Demon* can gain access to a list of names and other ritual implements, which are kept in the Palace-Temple of the Theocrat in Hwamgaarl, that make summoning a Vo'i'cha easier. When using these tools, a summoner may gain an additional +10% to his luck roll to determine if the summon is a success (this applies to summoning only this particular breed of demon.) Also, the summoner may also be granted access to the True Names of specific Vo'i'cha demons who have worked with the cult in the past. These demons will have additional abilities and needs beyond what the average demon of the breed might need, and will be correspondingly more expensive to summon. Game Masters should see the GM section of this book for more examples of these advanced demons.

CULT OF HIONHURN

The Executioner - Lord of Gibbets - Lord of Guilt and Bloodshed

Hionhurn is bloodthirsty and cruel, delighting in nothing save the death of others. He revels not in warfare, but in the actual spilling of blood. He is violence given form, and exists only to slurp the life force of those slain by his followers. There are many people in the world who have been touched by Hionhurn's hand, making them as cruel and violent as he is. These followers congregate in out of the way places, seeking Hionhurn's instructions as to who will next feel the axe on their neck. All souls of those slain by Hionhurn's faithful spend an eternity in mindless, blind agony, tortured forever by Hionhurn's whims. These suffering souls fuel the gods' desire for more power.

OBSERVATIONS

AFFILIATION

Church of Chaos.

CHARACTER OF CULT MEMBERS/IDEOLOGY

By and large, the cultists of the Lord of Gibbets tend to be a melancholy lot. Where as the cults of other Lords of Chaos find some human elements in the god, the followers of Hionhurn find no such solace. They must be murderers and assassins, or their god is displeased. In his very best form,

Hionhurn can be seen as a mercy killer, who relieves the pain of life for those who cannot bear it. To the bulk of his followers, though, Hionhurn is the quiet voice, heard in the dark of night, urging them to kill, to spill blood in his name.

Many of His followers are murderous psychopaths, frequently going on violent rampages and killing sprees that spread over whole continents before being stopped. They can be identified by the vacant, glassy stare, blood-caked features, and complete disregard for the welfare of themselves or others. Others are secret assassins, patiently biding their time until their Lord reveals their next victim. Still others gather in groups, traveling along trade routes seeking signs and portent pointing out a likely victim. In any guise, followers of Hionhurn have an unnerving ability to recognize each other, and will often work together as long as the situation warrants.

In countries where the worship of Chaos is discouraged, Hionhurn's cultists will often masquerade as priests of other gods to lure unsuspecting people to out of the way places, under the guise of participating on some minor religious ceremony. Once away from others, the priests turn on their victim, incapacitate them, and remove their head. No matter what else happens, the follower of Hionhurn always takes great pains to ensure that the head of the victim is removed,

either as a means of murder, or for afterward. Some collect the heads and keep them as trophies, while others simply leave it as a calling card.

Even beyond committed followers, Hionhurn also whispers to the minds of those who perform these duties in an otherwise non-religious context. Many a headman finds joy in the drop of the axe, and hangmen feel a thrill when the rope pops tight. Assassins enjoy the plunge of the knife or the first sip of poisoned wine. The Lord of Gibbets can sway all of these people, regardless of the affiliations, and many secretly worship without even being aware of it.

Hionhurn is the animal inside all of us, the beast that lusts for blood, the monster that enjoys having power over the weak. He is a dehumanizing force in Chaos who seeks to reduce all to mindless, bloodthirsty monsters. His faithful are beyond redemption, living only to spill blood and take heads for their Lord.

They feel no honor in battle, and despise fair fights. All that matters is the murder, and if they must strike from a hidden corner, so much the better. It is the blood of others they crave, since a dead cultist can only suffer an eternal agony as his soul is sped to Hionhurn.

They rejoice when blood flows.

CLERICAL VESTMENTS

Hionhurn's clerics wear dark brown robes - frequently stained with blood. It is rumored that each priest starts off with a robe of pure white, and are forbidden to wash it. As bloodstains accumulate, the garment is slowly dyed a deep brownish red. Priests tend to be shaggy, in emulation of their Lord, so beards, dreadlocks and matted, crusted hair is also common. The sacrificial axe is always at hand.

COMMON METHODS OF WORSHIP/IMPORTANT RITUALS

Murder is the only form of worship Hionhurn accepts, and He cares not for ritual, pomp, or other frippery associated with the cults of Chaos. Sometimes followers draw out the actual murder in order to heighten the feelings of joy they derive from the screams of the victims.

The Vultures in Crimson is a sect of the cult of Hionhurn that has its origins in Pan Tang. They are a group of religious assassins that have spread to almost every corner of the Young Kingdoms. The Vultures worship in two ways.

The first is through actual assassinations. The Vultures find a person of authority, picking amongst all those in a certain area. They go to great pains to ensure the death of said person, the bloodier the better. This is to show that no one is safe from Hionhurn, no matter how mighty or how high their station. When operating this way, the Vultures try to refrain from the killing of others, to better focus their energy on their targets. They are also hired from time to time, especially in places where conflict between nobles is frowned upon.

When not pursuing an assassination, the Vultures spread out, looking for signs and omens. When a sign is found, they find the person indicated by this sign and put them to death. While seemingly random to outsiders, these targets are chosen based on very careful interpretations of the omens so as to not attract a curse from Hionhurn for not killing the appropriate person. These targets can be anyone; from simple farmers and peasants to the next person they meet on a road. No one is truly safe from the predations of the cultists. While operating in this manner, the Vultures strike from ambush, or use guile and subterfuge to lure their victim or make them unaware of the danger they are in.

The cult offers no formal initiation. They can recognize murders on sights, and that is usually all the acknowledgment given to fellow cultists. Rank means little, aside from the ability to make the killing stroke if the murder happens in a group.

SIZE OF CULT

Small. The largest number of followers are members of the Church of Chaos in Pant Tang, where Hionhurn's worship does not seem all that out of place. In the Young Kingdoms, even though a part of the Church of Chaos, there are not many people deranged enough to make themselves thralls to the Lord of Gibbets. Solitary priests and agents are rare, groups of worshippers even more so.

MAJOR WORSHIP CENTERS/PLACES OF POWER

Somewhere on each of the continents that make up the Young Kingdoms, there is a secluded place, far from the habitations of men, where, in a glade carpeted with bones, stands a single bloodstained headman's block. These appear on no maps, and indeed might even shift positions according to some magic not even great sages can predict.

But cultists of Hionhurn always know where these blocks are, and can walk to them without direction, and expect to find them with unerring ease. These are places of great evil, as countless murders and blood sacrifices have been performed in these sacred glades over the centuries.

Normal folk instinctively stay away from these places, possibly without even being aware of what they are avoiding. To followers of Hionhurn, these places are holy beyond words, places where any murder brings the eyes of Hionhurn to gaze upon his faithful.

If a cultist can lure someone to this glade and perform a beheading on the block, it is said that great power and an infinity of bloodshed awaits the successful, while only death and torment await those who fail.

CURRENT GOALS & ACTIVITIES

Even in Pant Tang, where the cult has a strong central organizing body, the cult of Hionhurn cares little for worldly goods and goals. They exist only to slay, caring not even for their position in society. The Vultures in Crimson can keep up lengthy goal-directed before, but the goal is always murder. These are creatures purely of their moment.

FOLLOWERS OF HIONHURN

As Hionhurn whispers to the minds of those who kill, any character from a martial or murderous backgrounds can be made as a cultists of Hionhurn. Priests can also be members of the cult. In all cases, the first weapon skill available to the prospective to cultist must be an axe. If a character is allowed no weapon skills based on occupation,

then their first skill of personal specialty must also be an axe of some sort.

ALLEGIANCE

Followers of Hionhurn accumulate points of Chaos Allegiance normally, and will earn additional points based upon the performance of the following acts:

- Being involved in the execution of another person - 1 point.
- Making the deathblow in an execution - 2 points (4 if you used your axe.)
- Slaying an opponent in combat - 1 point (2 if you used your axe.)
- Sacrificing a helpless person by decapitation - 1 point.

These points stack with other actions that generate Chaos Allegiance points. So, if you execute someone with your axe, you'd gain 6 points of Chaos allegiance, 1 for sacrificing, 4 for executing with your axe, and 1 for murdering (as per the Allegiance rules on page 261 of the *Stormbringer* rulebook.)

SKILLS

Followers of Hionhurn choose skills as normal for their occupation. Characters from martial and executioner backgrounds are the most common grounds from which Hionhurn chooses his faithful, but they can come from any occupation.

Also, followers of Hionhurn get the *Murderous Insight* skill for free during creation, at a base chance equal to their POW plus INT. This can be allocated skill points like any other occupational skill, and raises through experience normally. See the entry below for explanation of this skill.

SPELLS

Followers of Hionhurn, if capable of casting spells, can select spells from the list below in place of up to three of the spells allowed for their occupation.

Cannibal's Feast (10)*, *Frailty from Hionhurn* (1-3)**, *Hell's Razor* (1-4), *Horns of Hionhurn* 91-3), *Lethargy from Vezhan* (1-3)**, *Muddle* (1), *Portent* (3)**, *Speed of Vezhan* (1-3). *=new spell. **=spell from *The Bronze Grimoire*.

New Skills

These are new skills for followers of the cult of Hionhurn.

MURDEROUS INSIGHT

This skill is only available to cultists of Hionhurn. With this skill, cultists can recognize anyone who has committed a murder. With regular success, the user can tell if any given person has committed a murder at any time in their lives, and, in general terms, how that person feels out it. With a critical, the user can determine exactly how long ago the last murder was, exactly what they target felt, and if the target is a follower of Hionhurn. Users can also tell if a weapon or tool has been used as a murder weapon, and get the general feel for the direction of large concentrations of murderous energy (such as the headman's block mentioned above.) The impression from this skill are intuitive, just a feeling about the subject. The user does not gain any specific information, nor does killing something in self-defense count as a "murder."

New Spells

These are new spells for followers of the cult of Hionhurn.

CANNIBAL'S FEAST (10)

Range is self. Chaotic. The caster must cast this spell within 5 rounds of having killed another person. Once cast, the caster must then eat a portion of the murder victim's body. The effects of this spell depend on the portions eaten, as listed below:

- Muscle tissue. If a large muscle group is eaten, the caster will gain five points to his strength characteristic.
- Eyes. If the victim's eyes are both eaten, the caster can add 25% to each sight-based perception skill.
- Ears. If the ears are eaten, the caster can add 25% to each hearing-based perception skill.
- Brain. If the caster eats the victim's brain, he has two choices. He can either permanently gain a single specific bit of knowledge (i.e., the password to get past the guards, etc) that

the victim knows, or can gain five points to his or her INT characteristic.

- Lungs. If the lungs are eaten, the caster has an improved constitution, adds 2 to their MOV, and can run for twice as long without needing to make a CON check.
- Heart. The caster gains a hardier body, and can ignore the effects of Major Wounds. Essentially, this means they will fight until unconscious or dead.
- Liver/abdominal organs. The caster gains a measure of protection from poison. Half the effective POT of any toxin to which the character is exposed.
- Nose. The caster will gain an ultra-sharp sense of smell. He can add a bonus of 25% to any scent based perception skills, and can also apply this bonus to their Track skill.

The duration of this spell is one week, but the caster cannot have any other spell cast on him, or *Cannibal's Feast* will immediately end. If the spell is prematurely ended in this manner, it cannot be cast again for a month.

Note also that, if a murder victim is used to fuel this spell, the caster will not gain any points of Chaos Allegiance for the act.

No matter what effect the caster chooses, the use of the result will seem strange, animalistic and supernatural. For example, if the caster chooses the strength bonus, any exposed muscles will seem to bulge and pulsate.

Skill bonuses granted by this spell are over an above the character's actual skill. Even if using the boosted skill, the character cannot make an experience check with that skill unless they would have used the skill normally.

Spells from *The Bronze Grimoire*

These are adapted spells from the previously published Stormbringer supplement *The Bronze Grimoire*.

FRAILTY FROM HIONHURN (1-3)

Range is touch. Chaotic. Decrease effective by three points per magic point cast for the duration of the spell. Decreasing CON also temporarily

decreases hit points for the duration and makes the target more susceptible to poisons, diseases, etc. If the target is unwilling, caster makes an MP:MP Resistance Table roll to determine the effect of the spell. A decrease in CON to zero renders the victim unable to move until the spell ends.

If the adventurer asks the maximum decrease of nine points, the target's player also rolls a D100. On a result of 00, the Lords of Chaos have played a trick and made the deficit permanent. In compensation, the target's player may add three points to characteristics other than CON. After that, Frailty of Hionhurn does not affect that victim, nor may a victim cast it.

If of equal magic points, this spell and Horns of Hionhurn can cancel each other. If of greater points, the survivor spell takes full effect.

LETHARGY FROM VEZHAN (1-3)

Range is touch. Chaotic. For the duration of the spell, the caster decreases maximum movement by one MOV per magic point. If the target is unwilling, the sorcerer makes an MP:MP Resistance Table roll to determine success. The spell can be cast on another species, such as a horse. Lethargy from Vezhan does not affect Dexterity.

If the caster asks the maximum decrease of three points, the target's player also rolls a D100. On a result of 00, the Lords of Entropy have played a cruel joke and made the deficit permanent. In recompense, the character may add three points to any characteristic, in any combination. After that, this spell does not affect that adventurer, nor may he or she cast it.

If of equal or greater magic points, this spell and Speed of Vezhan can cancel each other. If of greater magic points, the survivor spell takes full effect.

PORTENT (3)

Range is self. Chaotic. An omen is an occurrence believed to portend the future. Caster learns whether a specific course of action augers good or ill. The caster describes the action or decision to which the omen will apply, then awaits the appearance of the omen, always before sunset of the same day.

Specific information is not revealed. For example, Chugol casts Portent and asks if he should break into the Imperial Palace in Imrryr to find a certain tome. An hour later, he notices that water is seeping from a crack in a nearby clay bowl. Chugol interprets this event to be the omen, and decides that it means his plan will fail.

The omen and its interpretation may be clear, confusing, or contradictory. A successful Idea roll can identify an omen. A successful Evaluate roll can clarify an omen's meaning, though often incompletely. (Cultists of Hionhurn can use their Murderous Insight skill instead of both the Idea roll and the Evaluate roll in interpreting the omen's meaning. They use this spell to determine if a given person would make a good sacrifice.)

CULT OF MABELODE

The Faceless - King of the Swords

Followers of Mabelode see themselves as the foot soldiers in the armies of Chaos, the backbone around which any land-based military force is formed. They are integral to the success in any campaign against the forces of Law, and continue to war against their hated enemies at all times. There is no real rest for these bloodthirsty slayers, only brief periods of respite between an epic, ongoing conflict. Given their common use of demon weapons and armor, and the insane degree to which they train, followers of Mabelode are often more than a match for an equal number of lesser troops.

OBSERVATIONS

AFFILIATION

The Cult of Mabelode is affiliated with the Church of Chaos.

CHARACTER OF CULT MEMBERS/IDEOLOGY

At the culmination of their initiation rituals (which are mainly tests of weapon skill and endurance,) a follower of Mabelode dons his or her first veil, and gives up his or her identity, which the high priest records in a large book that is full of such names. The idea behind this is that, once they become members of the cult, the new initiate's old life no

longer matters. They are now dread warriors of Chaos, and only victory over Law matters.

The sword is the cult weapon for the followers of Mabelode, because it is such a versatile weapon, and can be used in a number of different styles. This is a reflection of the Sword King, who (according to cult ideology) uses only a massive black sword in battles with the forces of Law. All cultists use a sword of some sort almost to the exclusion of any other melee weapon, and many are compulsive collectors of swords from around the Young Kingdoms. Followers of the Sword King generally frown on the use of missile weapons, and leave their use to other, lesser troops.

While they give up their identity upon initiation, cult members often express themselves with the quality and ornamentation of their personal arms and armor. Each cult member is expected to forge their own weapons, and (if capable) to see to the summoning and maintenance of their own demons. As such, each cult member's overall appearance and capabilities can vary widely. Not only does this aid in identification during battles, but also allows individual cultists to perform different battlefield roles, which in turn aid everyone in the cultist's specific unit. This sort of individuality is encouraged by the cult structure, and someone performing a summoning of a particularly useful demon breed is applauded and cheered.

The cult is organized as a series of units that number between ten and twenty individual priests, and lead by the highest-ranking member of the unit. As members progress in rank, they might be shuffled into a leadership position in another unit, or kept on to serve in their own unit. This encourages cultists to bond with each other in order to maintain unit cohesion even within a new unit. It also means that most cultists know a large number of their fellows, and will likely have developed strong friendships and respect for one another. They never leave one of their own behind, and many a priest of Law has regretted a rash decision to take a follower of Mabelode captive when a dozen armored warriors of Chaos show up seeking to free a companion.

Individual priests of Mabelode are often ordered to wander the Young Kingdoms alone, spreading the word and serving the Sword King in any place where a single warrior can go. They are expected to serve as ambassadors for the cult, and to send aspiring cultists to the main cult centers in Dharijor for training and initiation. Even still, they are tireless foes of Law, and work to destroy all followers and institutions of Law they come across.

Individual cultists of the Sword King vary in character, from grim, dour and serious, to fun, cheerful and friendly. But in battle, they are in a state of religious reverence, and no matter what their former selves were like, they are deadly warriors with abilities both fell and terrible.

They are the hammer that shatters those who oppose Chaos, and the anvil on which humanity is forged into warriors of the greatest skill and power. Friend and foe alike both fear and respect the cult and what they are capable of. They are the nameless, faceless warriors of Chaos, and live only to spill the blood of Law across the Multiverse. Only great fools underestimate them, and aren't given a second chance to do it again.

COMMON METHODS OF WORSHIP/IMPORTANT RITUALS

The Cult of Mabelode is unique among the cults of Chaos in that they don't have a formalized period of worship, nor do they use elaborate ceremonies to show their god the depth of their devotion. Battle is the only place where the followers of

Mabelode worship, which is why they seek conflict at all times. It is said that, while in a state of battle-frenzy, Mabelode takes over the soul of the warrior, and they are locked in a state of religious bliss as they rend and slay through the ranks of enemies. Followers of the Sword King thus always seek battle to worship their lord.

When not involved in actual combat, cultists train day in and day out, seeking to improve their weapon skills, or summoning increasingly powerful demons to spill the blood of their foes. Between conflicts, the cultists become agitated, and high priests must take care to prevent internecine wars and factional conflict from erupting.

VESTMENTS

As a god of battles, Mabelode expects his followers to be armed and armored at all times. Also, in keeping with the cult ideology, followers must have their faces hidden from the sight of others, either behind a helmet visor, beneath a veil, or hidden within the shadows of a deep hood or cowl. This is their most distinctive feature; followers of the Sword King are easy to pick out, unless they are in the company of other armored warriors, which is often.

SIZE OF CULT

Large. Mabelode is one of the oldest and most powerful Lords of Chaos in the Young Kingdoms, and his cult is popular in all nations that worship Chaos. While Pan Tang is the true center of the Church of Chaos, the cult of Mabelode is strong in Dharijor and Pikarayd.

MAJOR WORSHIP CENTERS/PLACES OF POWER

Since there is little formal worship of Mabelode from his cult, there are few temples larger or more elaborate than small shrines attesting to places where great deeds have been performed by cultists of the Sword King. Followers are expected to make a pilgrimage at least once in their lives to Mabelode's Forge, a large inland volcano on the Isle of Pan Tang. It is said that demonic servitors busily forge weapons in the heart of this volcano, preparing for the day when the armies of Chaos

will sweep away all resistance in the Young Kingdoms and rule for eternity.

Also, the Maitron Military Academy in Dharijor boasts a large number of Mabelode priests amongst its teaching staff, and there are rumors that the underground "dueling clubs" that form in and around the Academy are in fact small cells of Mabelode worship.

CURRENT GOALS & ACTIVITIES

The cult of the Sword King has informants in all lands of the Young Kingdoms, and any hint of open warfare can attract the attention of the cult. Any conflict will have followers of Mabelode offering their services to both sides for free, wanting only the opportunity to fight. There are also small factions within the cult seeking instruction for summoning special breeds of demons, and other artifacts of power that would be useful during war.

FOLLOWERS OF MABELODE

During character creation, any character from a country that worships Chaos, and has a sword skill of at least 60% can declare that his character is a member of the cult of the Sword King.

ALLEGIANCE

Rank within the cult is relative - the leader of a particular unit will be the follower with the highest Chaos Allegiance score. Cultists with lower scores are expected to do as ordered, but in practice this really only occurs on the battlefield. In addition to gaining Chaos Allegiance points for actions listed on page 260-261 of the Stormbringer rulebook, cultists of Mabelode also gain Allegiance points for the following actions:

- Teaching sword skills – 1 point per person, per week.
- Forging a sword or armor – 1 point per weapon or suit.
- Summoning a demon weapon - 1d8 points
- Summoning a demon suit of armor - 1d8 points
- Summoning a demon fighter - 2 points

- Going a year without another seeing your face – 1 point
- Breaking an enemy's weapon during a fight – 1 point
- Slaying someone with your sword - 1 point (stacks with other points.)

SPELLS

If they can cast spells, the character can choose from the following spell list in addition to their own supplied by their regular occupation.

Demon Blade (8), Fury (1), Hell's Armor (1-4), Hell's Bulwark (1-4), Hell's Razor (1-4), Hell's Sharp Flame (1-4), Mabelode's Shield (8), Sinew of Mabelode (1-3), or Summon Demon (1).

Note that a character may still only choose three total spells, but can learn any of the above spells from the cult following the rules listed on page 144 in the Stormbringer rulebook. The GM is encouraged to work out a suitably exorbitant cost for learning magic this way.

New Spells

These are new spells for followers of the cult of Mabelode.

DEMON BLADE (8)

Range is touch. Chaotic. This spells allows the caster to temporarily imbue his weapon with Chaotic energy, which can take a variety of shapes. At the time of casting, the caster must pick one of the following forms, and the weapon will retain this new ability until the spell's duration expires (the caster's POW in rounds.) Note that this spell cannot be cast on an weapon that contains a bound demon, or is already otherwise enchanted.

- *Raw Damage* -The weapon warps, making it jagged and extremely sharp. When it strikes an opponent, the weapon does an additional 1d10 points of damage.
- *Acid* - The weapon weeps pus-like green acid, which will do 1d4 points of damage per round for 1d8 rounds after contact. Armor only protects against this damage for the first round of contact. Any points of damage done to a weapon, shield or armor are removed from the

items hit points (or protection, in the case of armor.)

- *Fires of Chaos* - Black flames leap from the blade, and do an extra 1d6 points of damage per hit. Targets hit must pass a Luck roll or be caught on fire, and take an extra 1d6 points of damage until dead or the fires are put out (make a Dexterity roll to see if the character can put out the flames.) Flammable objects not worn by another person are automatically caught on fire.
- *Stinger* - The length of the blade erupts in tiny cysts, which burst upon contact with a target. Treat the resulting black fluid as a contact poison with a POT equal to half the POW of the caster. The target will continue to take damage from the poison for 1d8 rounds after the last time it was hit by the weapon.
- *Icy Death* - The blade of the weapon becomes unnaturally cold, and saps the heat and life from its victims. For every 2 points of damage taken by this weapon, the target also loses a single temporary point of DEX, as a creeping numbness spreads through their body. Victims reduced to 0 DEX are paralyzed, but are painfully aware of their surroundings. DEX points can be restored at a rate of 1 per hour if the victim is substantially warmed (set near a fire, wrapped in blankets and soaking in hot water, etc.)
- *Vampyre* - For every five points of damage done by the weapon, the wielder gains a single hit point. These phantom hit points are the first lost to injury, and are not considered for the purposes of determining if the wielder has taken a Major Wound.

While this spell is in effect, the weapon and the wielder count as being demons for purposes. Also, the wielder will always fumble on a to hit roll of 90-100. If the fumble is a roll of 99, the attack does double damage to the wielder, and if it is 100, it is treated as an impale. The weapon automatically hits the wielder, as the demon therein vents its frustration on the wielder. Roll damage normally, including any damage bonus. If this attack penetrates armor, the wielder takes the full effect of the spell. (Note that hit points from the Vampyre form are not transferred in this

instance.) So, this spell greatly enhances the wielder's combat prowess, but can be potentially deadly.

Spells From *The Bronze Grimoire*

These are adapted spells from the previously published Stormbringer supplement *The Bronze Grimoire*.

MABELODE'S SHIELD (8)

Range is Self. Chaotic. Caster's shield assumes the appearance of a shimmering black plane of force. The shield behaves extraordinarily in two ways: (1) the physical shield will not lose damage points while the spell is active, and (2) when the parry roll for the shield represents a critical or an impale, then the attacking weapon loses 2D8 hit points. The spell endures for the caster's POW in combat rounds.

New Demon Abilities

These are new demonic abilities that are available for the demons of Mabelode.

EXPLOSIVE DECOMPOSITION

The Explosive Decomposition attack has a POT equal to the Sacrifice Table result for the magic points spent on this ability. If a victim is touched by a demon with this ability, match the POT of the Explosive Decomposition attack with their CON on the Resistance Table. (re-roll the POT each time the attack is made.) If the attack wins out, the victim takes damage equal to the POT of the attack. If the victim wins, they take damage equal to the attack's POT. Victims slain after taking damage from this ability explode in a huge fountain of blood, gore, and bits of bone. Victims not slain can heal this damage at normal rates, and it responds normally to magical healing.

At the summoner's option, the demon can be given a ranged Explosive Decomposition attack for an additional magic point cost of 5 points. This has a range of ten yards, does 1d10 points of damage (only for penetrating armor. Will only do 1 point of damage to flesh,) and has a 50% chance to hit. Each magic point spent can increase the chance to hit or the range (1 extra yard per point spent,) but

the penetration damage is fixed at 1d10. Victims wounded by the ranged form must still resist the POT of the ability against the CON or take damage like above.

HORDE

For an additional cost of 17 magic points, the summoner (or, more likely, group of summoners,) can summon a horde of a particular demon breed instead of just one. 1D6 of the demons appear in the summoning octagon, and must be bargained with. No member of the horde may be individually bound. When the time for the demons to fulfill their part of the bargain, the summoners can attract 1d00/2 members of breed, who proceed to do whatever they were bargained for. This is usually something tremendously destructive. While this varies from demon to demon, the price paid for their services is usually paid before the time when they are needed. This price is normally quite gruesome, and GM's are encouraged to come up with something nasty in return for a large number of demons (blood of babies, innocent souls for every demon called, etc.)

Demon Breed - Quia'nast'ian

These large, faceless demons are subservient to Mabelode, and are routinely summoned by the Sword King's faithful to aid in a particularly tricky siege or battle. Notoriously difficult to bind, these awful fiends are usually summoned in a horde. They normally need only be pointed towards the enemy for their summoning to pay off.

AVERAGE QUIA NAST IAN GREATER DEMON

HUMANOID, PORTABLE ENGINE OF DESTRUCTION

Individual demons vary in appearance. Most are twisted and shambling, with some limbs atrophied while others are much larger than they should be. All, however, have only a smooth expanse of skin where their faces should be. Skin colors are usually a muted pink color, with occasional spots of blue or white.

CHARACTERISTICS	ROLLS	AVERAGES
STR	5D8	22-23
CON	4D8	18
SIZ	5D8	22-23
INT	2D8	9
POW	4D8	18
DEX	3D8	13-14

HIT POINTS: AV 20 MOVE: 2D8

AV DAMAGE BONUS: +2D8

ABILITIES:

- *Explosive Decomposition.* pot 1d10. Target matched con to pot, takes damage like a poison. Target explodes if slain
- *Demon Weapon.* Demons carry great swords, which do 2d8+2d8 damage. Swords carry Explosive Decomposition power.
- *Vomit Acid.* Spits a corrosive acid that does 1d10 points of damage, with a 50% chance to hit. Demons use this to burn through castle gates and bring down walls.
- *Regenerates.* 1 hit point per round.
- *Carapace.* Blocks 1d8 points of damage.

SKILLS: Great Sword 60% Summoner's Language Intx2,

NEED: Kill one living being daily.

MAGIC POINTS TO SUMMON: 53 (70 If summoned as a horde.)

CULT OF PYARAY

The Tentacled Whisperer of Impossible Secrets - Lord of the Deep

Pyaray, alone amongst the Lords of the Higher Worlds, is immune the strictures of the Balance, and can roam the Million Spheres at will. His agents exist in nearly every plane, every world touched by one of his many tentacles of influence. He sees a universe for the taking, and has his priests roam countless oceans in countless worlds, drowning mariners and sending ship to join the Chaos Fleet, the legion of drowned sailors that cruise the depths of the Multiverse's oceans, waiting for the last day of Battle with the forces of Law.

OBSERVATIONS

AFFILIATION

The cult of Pyaray is affiliated with the Church of Chaos.

CHARACTER OF CULT MEMBERS/IDEOLOGY

Pyaray teaches that, so long as a man has a ship and an able crew, there is no corner of the world that can't be possessed, no secret hidden by the waves that can't be discovered. All he asks in return for this freedom and wealth is the occasional soul consigned to an eternity of darkness in the deep. They loathe the land and

those that live on it, and will not disembark from a ship unless unavoidable.

Pyaray holds his masses of faithful in a fearful place; in all the world, He is the only thing His faithful fear. The threat that they too will be taken to the Chaos Fleet instead of other victims is constant reminder to reeve the oceans for the Lord. All however, enjoy their duties. The power they hold over any ship found in their waters keeps them in a constant state of religious ecstasy.

Almost all followers of Pyaray are from Pan Tang, and are mad with the power they hold as Navy for the Demon Island. In addition to the war galley's captained by these mad priests of the Deep, Pan Tangian Slave galleys typical carry a large number of these men. It is their solemn duty to send the dead to the deep, sink ships, steal all they can for the Demon Isle, and perform other tasks for the Theocrat as needed.

There are a few non-Pan Tangian cultists of Pyaray in the Young Kingdoms. While these madmen exist outside of the "official" Church, they are just as fervent in their devotion, making sacrifices in pools of stagnant water. Such men infiltrate groups of harbor workers, ships crews and fisher villages. They incite crews to mutiny, cover up smuggling operations, and make routine sacrifices to their Lord in exchange for their power.

Priests of Pyaray hold a special hatred for the faithful of the Elemental Ruler Straasha, the Lord of Water. Where Straasha hold the shallows of the Sea, Pyaray rules the depths. Their priesthoods vie against each other, constantly seeking to procure more territory for their Lord. Priests of Pyaray go to tremendous lengths to harm and discomfort their hated rivals.

Pyaray holds the secrets to all that the hungry Pan Tangian soul could want; knowledge, power and wealth. The blood spilt, the anger, slavery, and death that He covets is only a little price to pay for so much benefit. In any case, His priests are happy to pay, and reap their grim rewards.

CLERICAL VESTMENTS

Priests of Pyaray grow matted masses of dreadlocks in their hair and beards, to better emulate the tentacles of their lord. They wield great barbed tridents in battle, and adorn their armor with images of scales, shark's teeth or suckers.

COMMON METHODS OF WORSHIP/IMPORTANT RITUALS

All worship of Pyaray takes place on the high seas, preferably with no land in sight. Nightly sacrifices are made to the Lord of The Deep. The exact methods vary, since the same sacrifice can grow tiresome with enough repetition. Most acts are traditional, like walking the plank, keelhauling or being fed to sharks. On four quarterly holidays, larger and more elaborate sacrifices are made. In all cases, the dead are left to the embrace of the sea.

SIZE OF CULT

In Pan Tang, moderate, otherwise small. While there are a number of Pyaray followers in the ships of Pan Tang, there aren't many elsewhere. Individual and groups of cultists can be found in all port cities of the Young Kingdoms.

MAJOR WORSHIP CENTERS/PLACES OF POWER

There are numerous holy shrines dedicated to Pyaray scattered throughout the Young Kingdoms. These are typically located in tiny islands, out of the way harbors and other secret places. There are

far too many to catalogue here, but one such shrine is detailed below.

The Jaws of Pyaray is a shrine located on the northwest coast of Pan Tang. It is situated on a jagged clump of black rock, scarcely large enough to land anything larger than a rowboat on.

The seas around the shrine seem animated, and will react in strange ways to the presence of non-faithful adventurers. It will also change color, texture and temperature at random. A wild mixture of strangely warped and mixed sea creatures replaces the normal sea life one might expect in this area of the Pale Sea. There are also occasional swarms of the drowned mariners who serve in the Chaos Fleet.

The actual shrine is in the center of the isle, surrounded by fingers of black rock and a outcropping that resembles the jaws of a large shark. It is said that, if Pyaray is displeased with one visiting the shrine, the Jaws of Pyaray will close over them. Whether or not this is true is purely conjecture, as no non-faithful expeditions to the Jaws of Pyaray have ever returned.

There are other such shrines throughout the oceans of the Young Kingdoms, and GMs are encouraged to place them in dramatically appropriate locations.

CURRENT GOALS & ACTIVITIES

Priests of Pyaray care little for the politics of the world, seeking only to sail and spill blood for their master.

For long-term goals, they seem content to plan raids on prominent seaports in the world. These operations are met with varying degrees of success, and vary in size from single ship skirmishes to large-scale naval battles with dozens, or even hundreds, of ships preside.

On occasion, a lone Priest of Pyaray might quest to find some hidden lore lost beneath the waves. PCs running afoul of such a character would have a difficult task on their hands.

FOLLOWERS OF PYARAY

Any character that comes from the following occupations may declare that they are also

followers of Pyaray: Minor Noble (especially in Pan Tang,) Paid Assassin/Thug, Sailor, Shaman/Priest/Cultist, Slave (Pan Tang only.)

ALLEGIANCE

Followers of Pyaray gain Chaos Allegiance points as do any other followers of Chaos, using the rules listed on page 260-261 of the *Stormbringer* rulebook. They will also gain points of Chaos Allegiance for the following actions:

- Every ship sunk by your actions is worth 1d8 points.
- Every person drowned or sacrificed by you is worth 1 point.
- Discovering valuable secrets under the sea is worth 1d8 points per instance.

SKILLS

Followers of Pyaray generally will take their available weapon skills in either Trident or Whip, but this isn't mandatory. Any extra skills will generally be Either Sailing or Navigate. At the GMs option, players selecting skills appropriate to the cult of Pyaray can get a bonus of 10% to each such skill during character creation.

SPELLS

Followers of Pyaray can select spells from the following list, in addition to the ones available to their occupation.

*Breath of Death (6)***, *Control Sea Life (varies)**, *Demon's Eye (1)*, *Guide Water (4)***, *Summon Drowned Dead (1d8)**.

*=New Spell. **=Spell from *The Bronze Grimoire*.

New Spells

These are new spells for followers of the cult of Pyaray.

CONTROL SEA LIFE (VARIES)

Range is sight. Chaotic. This spell allows the caster to have control over purely natural ocean life for the spell's duration. When cast, the caster decides how many magic points to spend on the spell. Each magic point gives a cumulative 10% chance of success. The caster makes the percentage roll,

and if he succeeds, can control the actions of the animals in question for the spell's duration.

The number of animals the caster can control is based on the size of the animal. With small creatures (fish, crabs, sea gulls, etc.) this spells allows the control of 1d8 individuals. Medium sized creatures (larger fish, most sharks, turtles) are worth 1d3. With large creatures (large sharks, whales, sea serpents) the caster can only control a single individual.

If the control roll fails, then the animal is not under the caster's control. If the roll is a Fumble, the animals are enraged at the caster and will attack the caster and any people with him. Once successfully cast on a target, that target cannot be affected by this spell for a full 24 hours after the spells' duration ends.

SUMMON DROWNED DEAD (1D8)

Range is self. Chaotic. When this spell is declared, the player must roll 1d8. This is the number of magic points needed to power the spell. The points spent, and the Luck roll passed, 1d8 drowned sailors will arrive at the caster's location in 1d8 hours. Upon their arrival, they will serve the caster in any manner he wishes until the spell's duration expires, which 1d8 hours after the arrival of the drowned sailors.

If the caster chooses, he may also spend a single point of POW for any number of the drowned sailors. These sailors will not depart at the end of the spell's duration, and will serve the caster faithfully until they are destroyed or dismissed.

The drowned sailors are awful to look at. Their bodies are bloated and water logged. Small crabs still crawl along their bodies, picking off bits of flesh to eat. Their eyes are either missing, or glazed over and white. There is a 1% chance of an adventurer recognizing one of the drowned as a relative or former acquaintance.

Use the sailor stats on p.227 of the *Stormbringer* rules, but dropping DEX by half and giving them 1d3 points of armor. The drowned take half damage from all non-magical attacks, and are far too wet and squelchy to burn, so are immune to heat damage.

Spells from *The Bronze Grimoire*

These are adapted spells from the previously published Stormbringer supplement *The Bronze Grimoire*.

BREATH OF DEATH (6)

Range is touch. Chaotic. The spell suffocates the target who, for the duration of the spell, feels as if drowning. The caster must first overcome the target, MP:MP, on the Resistance Table. Beginning at CON X6, the target must make a D100 suffocation roll each round as the spot rules for drowning.

This spell is rarely known by others than deranged sailors and cultists of the Whisperer. Undo Magic can cancel Breath of Death.

GUIDE WATER (4)

Range is Sight. Chaotic. The caster may divert a portion of an existing body of water, and cause it to move across itself, across land or water, up hill or down, for the caster's POW in combat rounds as if it were a single undine. In cubic yards, the directable portion of the waters may not exceed the sorcerer's magic points before the spell was cast. The water moves at up to MOV 8, in whatever compact shape the caster dictates. At that speed, 16 cubic yards could do 1d6 damage.

CULT OF SLORTAR

The Old - The Beautiful - Lord of Pleasures

Slortar is the eldest and one of the most powerful of the Lords of Chaos. The reason for this is simple; he derives great energy from his mortal followers seeking out an engaging in pursuits that they find pleasurable. While other gods make their followers act in ways narrow of focus, Slortar only expects his mass of faithful to do what comes naturally to them.

OBSERVATIONS

AFFILIATION

Church of Chaos, Pan Tang and Young Kingdoms. Also followed by countless individuals

CHARACTER OF CULT MEMBERS/IDEOLOGY

While the obvious path for this expression is towards sexuality, drugs and other hedonistic endeavors, there are followers of Slortar who have a much more subtle, although no less worshipful, means of expressing their devotion to the Lord of Pleasure. Anything can be a worship activity, from painting, to acquiring goods and making a profit from a merchant deal, to putting a hated enemy to the sword. All of these things can provide pleasure to the participants, and as such, devote energy to the eldest god. This is also why the cult of Slortar is arguable the largest in the Young Kingdoms;

even the faithful of others gods find some activities pleasurable, and by engaging in them they are unwittingly worshipping Slortar as well.

Slortar teaches his faithful that all beings seek out pleasure, but only those who willingly follow Slortar are truly free to experience any pleasure they desire. Anyone who opposes the cult are hypocrites; they still follow their own pursuits of pleasure, even while instructing others not to do the same. Lawful countries tend towards the thinking that pleasure is a distraction from "proper" Lawful devotion, perhaps rightly so, since pursuing pleasure is secret Slortar worship. Thus, the cult of Slortar tends towards subversion and corruption. Wise priests of Slortar know that everything can be had and the price is not always in simply money.

In countries open to Chaos, the cult of Slortar operates openly, actively recruiting new members with promised of sex, drugs, or access to any number of vices with which they ensnare the unwary.

In Lawful countries, the cult is often undergrounds, seeking quiet places where there members can engage in the activities that the authorities deny. Even so, the cult works to undermine the authority in the area by discovering the secret desires of the Lawful priests and Agents, and working towards bringing these individuals within the arms of the cult. Many can be bought

off, since simple greed is easy enough to pander to. Others can be swayed with the promise of sex, the ability to indulge in illegal activities, such as theft, murder or drug use. For the corrupted, it soon becomes easier, not to mention more fun, to join the cult in total rather than attempt to buck the system.

The cult of Slortar also operates complicated smuggling operations, bringing any and all goods to those who will pay for them. These operations span the Young Kingdoms, and not a single port in the world is exempt from the cult's influence.

Cult members pursue their pleasures with reckless abandon. Even their own lives are of little importance, since they believe that Slortar will supply them with undreamt of pleasure in the next world. Self-destructive behavior is considered the highest form of sacrifice a cultist can perform, slowly giving themselves to their god while engaging in pleasure. No intervention can help save such a person, as their lives spin away in a dance of ruin and pleasant destruction.

CLERICAL VESTMENTS

Followers of Slortar tend towards the finest clothing they can get their hands on. Comfortable fabrics like velour and silk are common, as are intricate embroidery and bright colors. Often, their clothing is stained with the remnants of a previous night's worship. On Pan Tang, the followers of Slortar practice ritual disfigurement, to make the beauty of their god that much more pronounced by contrast.

Individual cultists tend to be marked by whatever their prime pleasure is: gluttons tend to be fat and eating; imbibers are usually drunk; drug users are either high or just coming down. Pleasure is a constant pursuit, but thankfully can be done while acting in other ways.

COMMON METHODS OF WORSHIP/IMPORTANT RITUALS

Worship Slortar by the pursuit of pleasure is a constant thing, but there are also mass worship services. These are at least monthly, sometimes more frequently. There are no hard and fast rules when these services occur, since any day is as good as any other.

These services are massive, bacchanalian affairs that can last for days, or even weeks. All manner of pleasure are available for the taking; master musicians play wondrous music, fine art is put on display, sumptuous banquets of rare and exotic foods and wines are served and members are given the opportunity to participate in almost every indulgent act imaginable, and even a few that are not.

These parties tend to wax and wane, and eventually even the hardest cultist must return to other affairs. For many, these services are their first taste of what Slortar offers his faithful. It is usually enough to convince any lay person to join the ranks of the cult.

SIZE OF CULT

Huge. Even as a part of the official Church of Chaos, the cult of Slortar has many, many more adherents than appear on Church rosters.

MAJOR WORSHIP CENTERS/PLACES OF POWER

The largest concentration of Slortar cultists is the nation of Argimiliar, where the bulk of the nobility worship Slortar as a god of hedonism and excessive pleasure. Pockets of worshipers can also be found in Vilmir, where Slortar is popular amongst the downtrodden, and in Ilmiora. Lesser concentrations are found the world over.

CURRENT GOALS & ACTIVITIES

More than any other cult in the Young Kingdoms, the cult of Slortar actively works to convert others to their faith. In Cadsandria, the cult holds open to the public festivals of debauchery. In Vilmir, the cult covertly works to corrupt that country's religious authorities by providing fuel for secret vices. Once authorities are cult members, the cult can operate more or less in the open. If all else fails, the cult simply pursues a life of pleasure and excess, with long term planning taking a little too much forethought.

FOLLOWERS OF SLORTAR

The cult of Slortar draws recruits from all walks of life. As such, any character can declare that he or she is a member of the cult. Since a character's Chaos Allegiance score measures standing within the cult, it takes dedication to the pursuit of pleasure to gain any influence. Character creation will continue as normal, excepting that a cult member can replace the spells with which they begin play with any of those listed below.

All cult members also get an *Evaluate* skill as an occupational skill in addition to their other skills. If an occupation already has the *Evaluate* skill, the character gets an extra 20% to any skill points they put towards this skill. Note that this can take a character's skill over 80% at the time of creation. It takes a keen eye to determine the value of goods, and these cultists, more so than most, need to be especially careful with their wares. No one wants to take dodgy drugs or expose themselves to a diseased prostitute if they can help it.

Also, each character must pick at least three forms of pleasure that they engage in with any degree of regularity. These may be chosen from the list below, or invented by the player or GM.

- The first pleasure is a minor one, but must be performed daily. This might be smoking a fairly innocuous drug, eating a particular type of food, or any number of other things.
- The second pleasure is something that must be done weekly. These may be of similar type than the minor pleasure, but also must be more pronounced in magnitude. Taking a large dose of powerful hallucinogen, eating a barrel of pickles, or engaging in a multi-person orgy is typical. These acts should be still pleasurable, but take dedication and fortitude to complete with any degree of regularity.
- The third pleasure need only be performed once a year, but takes a great deal of trial, practice and skill to accomplish. Such pleasures might be converting a priest of Law to the worship of Slortar, tracking down and consuming a rare drug found only in the Forest of Troos or on Melnibone, or achieving mastery in a particular skill (getting it up to

90%.) The pursuit of these high-end pleasures is what drives the cult, and each year members seek to outdo themselves and each other in accomplishing the greatest feat of pleasure.

ALLEGIANCE

Followers of Slortar gain Chaos allegiance points normally, as listed on page 260-261 of the *Stormbringer* rulebook. They also gain additional points of Chaos Allegiance based on the following actions:

- Obtaining a work of art or other beautiful thing. Worth 1 point.
- Destroying a work of art or written work. Worth 2 points.
- Dutifully participating in the three pleasures chosen during character creation for a whole year. Worth 1 point.
- For every pleasure after the first three performed for a whole year. Worth one point each.
- Disfiguring yourself. Worth 1d8 points per instance.
- Disfiguring others. Worth 1d6 per each instance.

SPELLS

Members of the cult of Slortar may pick up to three of the spells listed below in place of the ones normally associated with their particular occupation. (Note that characters needn't pick any spells, and can still advance through the ranks of the cult without every learning to cast magic at all.)

*Captive Slumber (3)***, *Compulsion (3)**, *Ignorance from Slortar (1-3)***, *Liken Person (4)***, *Liken Shape (4)*, *Rapturing Touch (4)**, *Slortar's Grasp (10)**, *Shatter (3)***, *Wisdom of Slortar (1-3)*, *Witch Sight (3)*.

*=New Spell. **=Spell from The Bronze Grimoire.

New Spells

These are new spells for followers of the cult of Slortar.

COMPULSION (3)

Range is Touch. Chaotic. The caster must overcome the target's POW with his or her own. If the caster wins, the victim will, for the spells' duration, be compelled to perform any act of

pleasure chosen by the caster. Each time a different compulsion is made, the victim can shake off the spell's effects with an INTx3 roll. While this spell isn't addictive, whatever pleasure is forced upon the victim might be.

THE ONE HUNDRED PLEASURES OF SLORTAR

<i>Drinking wine</i>	<i>Playing an instrument</i>	<i>Making a profit</i>
<i>Besting an adversary.</i>	<i>Hanging out with friends.</i>	<i>Playing games of chance.</i>
<i>Collecting something.</i>	<i>Flogging.</i>	<i>Having power over others</i>
<i>Taking drugs.</i>	<i>Exercise.</i>	<i>Eating.</i>
<i>Urinating / defecating.</i>	<i>Buggery.</i>	<i>Learning something new.</i>
<i>Sailing.</i>	<i>Horseback Riding.</i>	<i>Dating.</i>
<i>Sex.</i>	<i>Dancing.</i>	<i>Singing.</i>
<i>Sadism.</i>	<i>Masochism.</i>	<i>Bondage.</i>
<i>Discipline.</i>	<i>Torture.</i>	<i>Planning Parties.</i>
<i>Attending Parties.</i>	<i>Smoking.</i>	<i>Cutting.</i>
<i>Swordplay.</i>	<i>Wrestling.</i>	<i>Inspiring disgust in others.</i>
<i>Stealing.</i>	<i>Winning.</i>	<i>Bestiality.</i>
<i>Gardening.</i>	<i>Lighting things on fire.</i>	<i>Fishing.</i>
<i>Mugging.</i>	<i>Murder.</i>	<i>Painting.</i>
<i>Warfare.</i>	<i>Hunting.</i>	<i>Learning and using magic.</i>
<i>Reading.</i>	<i>Sculpting.</i>	<i>Playing practical jokes.</i>
<i>Manipulating others.</i>	<i>Disfiguring beautiful people.</i>	<i>Fashion.</i>
<i>Participating in politics.</i>	<i>Solving puzzles.</i>	<i>Embarrassing priests.</i>
<i>Enforcing your will on others.</i>	<i>Spanking.</i>	<i>Serving others.</i>
<i>Cross-dressing.</i>	<i>Cannibalism.</i>	<i>Frotery.</i>
<i>Going without sleep.</i>	<i>Sloth.</i>	<i>Frightening others</i>
<i>Deliberately confusing others.</i>	<i>Traveling.</i>	<i>Corrupting the young.</i>
<i>Vandalism.</i>	<i>Sabotage.</i>	<i>Debating.</i>
<i>Sports.</i>	<i>Inciting others to riot.</i>	<i>Research/discovery.</i>
<i>Shoplifting.</i>	<i>Destroying the works of others.</i>	<i>Raising animals/husbandry.</i>
<i>Cooking for others.</i>	<i>Nurturing the sick.</i>	<i>Raising children.</i>
<i>Eating children.</i>	<i>Officiating religious ceremonies.</i>	<i>Committing blood sacrifice.</i>
<i>Convincing others of your divinity.</i>	<i>Making lewd jokes in public.</i>	<i>Protecting others from harm.</i>
<i>Incest.</i>	<i>Lying.</i>	<i>Cheating.</i>
<i>Coprophilia.</i>	<i>Passing gas in crowded places.</i>	<i>Loving pets/slaves.</i>
<i>Racing.</i>	<i>Listening to music.</i>	
<i>Masturbation.</i>	<i>Getting body modifications (tattoos, piercings, etc.)</i>	
<i>Creating something new and exciting</i>	<i>Disturbing the final resting places of dead people.</i>	
<i>Golden Showers/waterworks.</i>	<i>Tricking people into eating disgusting things.</i>	
<i>Impersonating a priest of Law.</i>	<i>Leaving bodily wastes in places where others might find them.</i>	

RAPTURING TOUCH (4)

Range is touch. Chaotic. For the spell's duration, each person touched by the caster must match his or her POW with the caster's. If the caster wins, an intense feeling of joy, pleasure and lust that smothers all other conscious thought overwhelms the victim. This feeling of pleasure is more than purely sexual; it has spiritual components as well. Affected individuals are unable to act for 21 minus their POW in combat rounds. Each round, the victim is allowed an INTx3 roll to snap out of it.

After the spells is over, the victim must make a Luck Roll. If this roll fails, the victim has become addicted to the overwhelming feelings of pleasure the spell engenders, and will seek out the caster for a repeated casting. The caster is often more than willing to comply. Note that if the victim snaps out of the spell before it has run its course, there is no chance of addiction.

If the victim is unfortunate enough to fumble their Luck Roll, their mind had been overloaded by the pleasures of the spell, and the victim dies drooling and twitching with an expression of joy on their face.

SLORTAR'S GRASP (10)

Range is touch. Chaotic. This spell allows the caster to give an addition of his or her choice to the target. After casting, the caster must overcome the victim's MP with those of the victim on the Resistance table.

If the caster wins, he can, for the spell's duration, mentally implant an addiction to any substance or action desired into the victim. The victim must then make an INTx3 roll to avoid engaging in the act. Make this roll every 5 combat rounds of the spell's duration. If the victim successfully resist, this spell cannot be cast on them again for a whole month.

If the victim falls to the spell, he or she has a chance of becoming addicted to the substance or act. For any addictive drugs, the roll needed to resist the addiction is the normal POT of the drug, matched against the victim's CON. For normally non-addictive acts and substances, the POT for resisting the addiction is equal to one half the caster's POW, matched against the victim's.

This spell is often used to help break the will of recalcitrant members of Lawful clergy and bring them within the cult's grasp. Breaking these addictions can be done, but the process is long, fraught with health dangers, and will not automatically succeed.

Spells from *The Bronze Grimoire*

These are adapted spells from the previously published Stormbringer supplement *The Bronze Grimoire*.

CAPTIVE SLUMBER (3).

Range is sight. Chaotic. Causes someone to fall into a deep sleep for sixty minutes minus the target's CON in minutes. The caster must first overcome the target's magic points with their own (using the Resistance Table). The victim is unaware of what occurs while asleep under this spell.

If the victim is to be amenable to simple non-threatening commands (such as that he or she walk from point to point, remain quiet, or climb steps), then the caster must also successfully match POW:POW on the Resistance Table. At each command, allow the sleeper a chance of INTx2 or less to awake.

The victim will not speak or respond to questions, or act against his or her interest. Only the caster can command the victim.

IGNORANCE FROM SLORTAR (1-3)

Range is touch. Chaotic. The spell temporarily reduces the effect of the characteristic INT by three per magic point spent. Decreasing INT would also temporarily decrease the Idea roll, as well as the number of spells memorized. Thus, lowering INT from 18 to 12 would reduce the number of spells memorized to 12. (It is possible to cast while less than INT 16, of course.)

If the target is unwilling, the caster compares current MPs against the MPs of the target to determine success. A decrease in INT to zero leaves the victim a babbling idiot for the duration of the spell.

If the sorcerer requests the maximum decrease of nine points, the target's player rolls d100. On a result of 00, the Lords of Chaos have

played a trick and made the change permanent. In recompense, the player may add three points to any characteristic other than INT, in any combination. After that, this spell can no longer affect the adventurer, nor may he or she cast it.

If of equal magic points, this spell and Wisdom of Slortar can cancel each other. If of greater magic points, the survivor takes full effect.

LIKEN PERSON (4)

Range is touch. Chaotic. This spell allows the target to copy exactly another person's appearance. The target's face shifts and moves like putty, hair lengthens or shortens and changes color, etc., and apparent Size changes to suit the disguise. The caster's spells, skills, etc., remain the same, as does his or her actual size, hit points, etc. If the target is touched by another person, the false likening shimmers and disappears. Duration is the caster's POW in minutes.

SHATTER (3)

Range is touch. Chaotic. This spell makes an object or surface brittle. It can be of the caster's POW or less in square yards. The object or surface then needs on a kick, the thrust of a sword, or a blow from a hammer, etc., for it to shatter into fragments and dust. If an area is thick, such as the wall of a cave, then the portion that shatters is no more than a yard deep. Successive spells would dig more deeply.

If an object (such as a shield) is in someone's possession, the caster must first match his magic points against the possessor's on the Resistance Table.

This spell does not work on living or dead flesh, enchantments, demons or demon-inhabited things. The effect of one or more Shatters can be repaired with the equivalent number of Make Whole spells. Undo Magic has no effect on Shatter.

CULT OF XIOMBARG

Queen of the Swords

Asexual Xiombarg is the Sword Queen, a deity of battle, conflict and cunning. It often assumes a female guise, and the bulk of its followers are women. They refer to their god with a female pronoun, but in fact this deity is alien to human understanding. It assumes the female shape so that people can try to grasp part of its essence.

OBSERVATIONS

AFFILIATION

Church of Chaos. Within Pan Tang, the worship of Xiombarg is not considered part of official Church doctrine. In the Young Kingdoms, most churches of Chaos replace Balo the Jester with Xiombarg within the Chaotic pantheon.

CHARACTER OF CULT MEMBERS/IDEOLOGY

For her human cult in the Young Kingdoms, Xiombarg represents a path to power for those who, under most circumstances, would have none. She is the patron of bored housewives, women who are married off to cement family obligations, and all those who seek love or vengeance from another. Such people find strength in Xiombarg's arms, and her priests teach weapons skills and sorcery so that people can enact the vengeance and hatred they feel towards oppressors.

While technically a part of the Church of Chaos, this is in name only, and the Cult of Xiombarg tends towards secrecy and isolation, even from each other. Recruitment into the cult is a lengthy process, since the places where the cult has the most power are places where the worship of Chaos faces the strictest punishments. Secrecy and subtly are the bywords of these groups, since exposure often means death at the hands of hated enemies.

Being a god of battles, Xiombarg teaches her followers skill at arms, but also of tactics and strategy. Followers often attack from ambush with overwhelming numerical advantages, stage lengthy guerilla campaigns, and make use of assassination to achieve their goals. They never participate in a fair fight, since a fair fight means a 50% chance of losing. They only fight when they are assured victory. At all other times, they are elusive, always dancing just outside the edge of perception.

Xiombarg also teaches her followers a particularly cruel sense of humor. They design elaborate, humiliating punishments for those they wish to destroy, so that the victim is left alone and defenseless before a final assault is launched.

The cult operates in cells, with each cell having little or no contact with others. These operate within a particular geographic area. Recruits are often found in finishing schools,

amongst the nobility, and in loveless marriages. The cult teaches these women (and the few men that wish to join,) that they have true power, since most people see them as no threat until it's far too late. These women make use of what influence they have over their husbands and household for the good of the cell, and are taught sorcery and weapon skills in return. Many a husband has lost his life to a dagger in the dark from his "harmless" wife.

Men who join the cult do so for many of same reasons women do; power. Such men often see themselves as having been passed over, stuck in marriages they didn't want, or looked over for inheritance or position in favor of older siblings. Many choose to become eunuchs once they enter the cult, to better emulate their master.

The most dangerous enemy is the one you don't see or suspect, and Xiombarg teaches her faithful to be this enemy.

CLERICAL VESTMENTS

A typical cultist is almost impossible to distinguish from the regular populace. Such trappings as ritual paraphernalia and robes are markers of membership, which is something the cult avoids.

As such, there is no unifying image that marks a member of Xiombarg's cult. However, most develop a feeling of superiority over others, often far outstripping their station in life. They will also show a betraying unity with each other, which can also cross class boundaries.

Members carry a ritual knife on their person, usually concealed, and are taught in its use as a fighting weapon.

Worship services are held in clothing appropriate to the season, and are observed at a member's home, behind closed doors. Such meetings are disguised as "Women's clubs" to dissuade outsiders.

COMMON METHODS OF WORSHIP/IMPORTANT RITUALS

Weapons skills are central to the tenets of the cult because they are a means by which their members can attain power over their lives and environment.

Part of every weekly or monthly worship service is devoted to weapons training and fighting in armor. Effigies of male authority figures are burnt, defaced, or otherwise destroyed, symbolic of the cult members taking power away from those who possess it.

Actual worship of Xiombarg tends towards meditation and quiet reflection. Some say that Xiombarg communicates to them, granting them visions of rewards and eternal life on other planes. In many notable instances, the Sword Queen is said to have spoken through the mouth of one of her followers, instructing that cell towards greater goals.

SIZE OF CULT

Small. The nature of the cult, and the position it takes in society prevents it from gaining the size and notoriety of other cults of Chaos.

MAJOR WORSHIP CENTERS/PLACES OF POWER

Nearly every large city has an active cell of Xiombarg cultists. Each goes by a different name, and operates under a different guise, but they do exist. The cult is especially popular in Lawful countries, where women are downtrodden and disenfranchised by the predominantly male power structure.

Strangely enough, these same attitudes make the cult popular in Pan Tang, where women fair even worse than their sisters in Lawful countries. Secret cells of the Sword Queen's faithful operate at night, in secret, using a vast network of slaves to hide their activities.

CURRENT GOALS & ACTIVITIES

To numerous to catalogue. In general, the cult works towards empowering their members through assassination, politics and the careful use of sorcery. These members in turn assist the cult in "liberating" other women from the shackles of oppression. The methods for these operations vary from cell to cell. For an example, see the *Shying Violets* section of the GM section of this book.

FOLLOWERS OF XIOMBARG

Characters wishing to play members of the cult of Xiombarg can choose any occupation listed on pages 72-73 of the *Stormbringer* rulebook. The cult recruits from all walks of life; their only requirement is that the cultist be looking to increase their personal power. Assassins are common, as are nobles and priests. The vast bulk of the cult is female, but a male PC can gain membership if he has a background in common with the cult's ideology.

ALLEGIANCE

Followers of Xiombarg gain points of Chaos allegiance the same way as other followers of Chaos, with the following acts giving the indicated amount of Chaos Allegiance.

- Committing a particularly cruel act of revenge is worth an extra 1d4 points.
- Killing someone who was a former lover is worth 2d4 point.
- If the act of revenge involves the slaying of a former lover, the character will get 4d4 points total for the whole act.

SKILLS

A wide variety of skills are appreciated by the cult. Individual members can focus on any skills they desire, since any skill can be put to good use. Also, members are expected to have at least some skill in a single class of weapon. This is often a dagger, but sword skills are common as well.

SPELLS

Members of the cult, regardless of occupation, can also receive instruction to learn any of the spells below in place of the ones listed for their occupation. Note that characters are limited to three spells to start with. Characters can also choose to forgo the use of spells if they wish.

*Affliction (4)***, *Clumsiness from Xiombarg (1-3)***, *Deftness of Cran Liret (1-4)***, *Demon's Ear (1)*, *Demon's Eye (1)*, *Enthrall (4)**, *Hell's Razor (1-4)*, *Liken Person (4)***, *Phantom Illness (5)**, *Scry (4)***, *Suppleness of Xiombarg (1-3)*

*=new spell. **=spell from *The Bronze Grimoire*.

Since most cells operate within rigid lawful regimes, demonic summoning is considered too risky, and normally refuses to teach the Summon Demon spell to members.

New Spells

These are new spells for followers of the cult of Xiombarg.

ENTHRALL (4)

Range is touch. Chaotic. The caster must touch the target and look him or her in the eyes. Match their POW's on the Resistance table. If the caster wins, the target becomes fascinated with the caster, regards them as a friend and confidant, and will generally be well disposed towards him or her.

If the target wins, he or she feels strangely wary about the caster, for reason they can't explain. The caster may try again, but each time he or she fails the target becomes increasingly wary of them.

Duration is the caster's POW in minutes.

PHANTOM ILLNESS (5)

Range is sight. Chaotic. The target is the spell must be a person the caster knows very well, preferably someone they've had sexual relations with. Match POW's on the resistance Table.

If the caster wins, the victim will immediately feel violently ill, with stomach cramps, nausea, diarrhea, sweats and fever. These symptoms are generated by the spell, and are not actually harmful.

If the victim wins, the spell has no effect. The target feels momentarily flushed, but this passes.

Duration is the caster's POW in days. Repeated castings can keep the target feeling ill indefinitely.

Spells from *The Bronze Grimoire*

These are adapted spells from the previously published Stormbringer supplement *The Bronze Grimoire*.

AFFLICTION

Range is touch. Chaotic. This is cast on any weapon. Damage done by the ensorcelled weapon leaves festering wounds that heal slowly, 1d2-1 hit points per week. Any exertion by the victim causes wounds to re-open, resulting in a further 1d8 hit points of damage.

If Heal is cast on such a wound, the caster must first receive a successful POW:POW Resistance Table roll or the spell has no effect and the magic points are lost. For convenience, use POW 16 as the passive value.

The Physik skill has no effect on this spell. The Suture ability acts normally.

(Assassins of Xiombarg cast this spell on their weapons right before attempting a murder. If the target gets away, the spell will likely kill them later, or at least leave them helpless for a further attempt.)

CLUMSINESS FROM XIOMBARG

Range is Touch. Chaotic. Reduces the characteristic DEX by three points for each magic point spent, and decreases Dodge by six percent per point. Thus Clumsiness of Xiombarg 2 subtracts 6 points from DEX and twelve percent from Dodge for the duration of the spell. Decreasing DEX also temporarily affects the Dexterity Roll, and could also affect the character's ability to wield a weapon (see the minimum STR/DEX for each weapon.) If DEX falls to zero, the victim is unable to accomplish any physical task without also receiving a successful Luck roll.

If the Victim is unwilling, the caster compares MP's on the Resistance Table to determine the spell's success. If the sorcerer requests the maximum decrease of nine points, the target's player rolls a D100. On a result of 00, the Lords of Entropy have played a cruel joke and made the change permanent. After that, this spell does not affect the adventurer, nor may he or she cast it. In recompense, the player may add three points to characteristics other than DEX, in any combination.

If equal magic points, this spell can Suppleness of Xiombarg can cancel each other. If

of greater magic points, the survivor spell takes full effect.

(This spell is quite useful to the cult of Xiombarg. In addition to its combat relates application, it can also be used to convince someone that they are becoming ill and clumsy, or convince a recalcitrant husband to let his wife handle their affairs until his palsy goes away.)

DEFTNESS OF CRAN LIRET (1-4)

Range is touch. Chaotic. For each magic point cast, the spell increases by 20 percentiles the effect of the craft Sleight of Hand, Conceal Object, or Pick Lock. The caster chooses which. The effect lasts for the caster's POW in combat rounds.

LIKEN PERSON (4)

Range is touch. Chaotic. This spell allows the target to copy exactly another person's appearance. The target's face shifts and moves like putty, hair lengthens or shortens and changes color, etc., and apparent Size also changes to suit the disguise. The caster's spells, skills, etc., remain the same, as does his or her size, hit points etc. If the target is touched by another person, the false likening shimmers and disappears. Duration of the caster's POW in minutes.

SCRY (4)

Range is self. Chaotic. For the duration, caster observes events anywhere in the Young Kingdoms. The caster looks into a clear surface, such as a still pond, a mirror, a lens, or a crystal ball. The future or past cannot be viewed, nor can other planes. Events occur in real time, for a maximum of POW in minutes. The sorcerer must have some familiarity with either the place or the person being spied upon. No sounds can be heard. Witch Sight can detect the presence of a Scry spell, and Undo Magic (4) can undo it.

GAMEMASTER'S SECTION

The Rewards of Faithful Service

SECRETS OF ARIOCH

Trial – Summoning – Rebirth

While there is always differences for individual cultists, for the most part, members of the cult of Arioch are content to serve their Lord's will in the Young Kingdoms and elsewhere, and increasing their own influence and wealth. Cult doctrine insists that Arioch rewards those who faithfully serve him, and also asserts that this is why Melnibone conquered so much of the Multiverse while under Arioch's patronage.

As such, the followers of the Lord of the Seven Darks tend to sort of selfish and insular. They pursue goals for their god, but these goals are gotten at by the cultist's own mind, so there is a certain amount of overlap between what the cultist wants and what Arioch wants. Also, the GM should ensure that there is conflict between members of the same cult. Invariably, there will be cult members who lust after the same resources, and wars between factions are frequent. It is thought that such infighting amuses Arioch, and that He wishes only the best and most powerful of his faithful to serve Him in the Young Kingdoms. At best, Arioch's followers are altruistic sorcerers who use their power and influence to help others (Chaos worship is attractive to someone how sees it as benevolent.) At worst, though, the cult of Arioch can be selfish and uncaring about others, letting countless innocents die if it helps them achieve their ends.

In places where an active Temple of Arioch exists, there will always be dark whispers about

the temple and its practices. In particular, at the University in Cadsandria, rumors circulate about the cult and its aims. Students who are initiated into the cult are instructed to say nothing to their fellows about it. Secrecy breeds power, and the less people know about the cult the better. In other places, the cult of Arioch works either through individuals Agents and cells to bring about outcomes pleasing to Arioch. These cells are often at war with cults of the main Church of Chaos, and the fighting between them can be even more pronounced than either cult's attentions to their actual target.

It is also worth noting that relations between the Church of Chaos and the cult of Arioch are mutually antagonistic. The Church sees the cult of Arioch as a threat to their image of what the future of the Young Kingdoms should be, while the cult sees the Church as a collection of barbaric madmen, who see only the ugly side of Chaos, not it's beauty (ala Melnibone,) nor it's vibrant living qualities.

SECRET GOALS

The overriding goal for the cult of Arioch is to serve as their master's hand in all things. There are a number of different factions within the cult that have a peculiar ways of interpreting Arioch's will, but that is expected with personal feelings get involved. However, all priests do have one instruction that must be followed in preference of

all others; any hint of an item or book that tells of the location of the runeswords Stormbringer and Mournblade must be followed up. Arioch covets these potent weapons, but for reasons his priests have been unable to fathom. It is assumed that they are to be used against the forces of Law.

DARK RITUALS OF ARIOCH

Proper initiation into the cult can only be performed at a temple, and most hopeful initiates travel to the main temple in Cadsandria for their initiation. The actual initiation comes in three phases: a trial, a summoning, and a rebirth.

The trial phase is the longest, and it is here where the candidate's main worth for the cult is gauged. Each candidate is given a task to perform and a month in which to do it. They are to tell no one of this task, and must accomplish it without anyone becoming aware of the task. Should the candidate be unable to accomplish this goal in the allotted time, they have proven themselves unworthy of initiation, and are never contacted by the cult again.

The trial is a test of the candidate's initiative, subtlety and ingenuity. This is a measure of their use to the cult in the future. Common tasks seem almost like fraternity pranks: steal the high priest's prayer book from a temple of Law; break into a certain noble's house and touch his nose while he sleeps; or gain access to the rare books room at the University Library. None of these tasks are especially dangerous, but teach prospective initiates the sort of things they might be expected to do should Arioch have a need.

The summoning is fairly straightforward. The candidate must summon a demon in front of an assembly of priests. This is always performed in the temple's summoning chambers, and the priests are present to ensure that nothing untoward happens. Candidates who are incapable of sorcery are exempted from this test, but may never be more than lay members of the cult. If a candidate does not know the Summon Demon spell, it can be taught from an elder priest, with the cost of serving as that priest's body servant for a year.

If this test is passed, the candidate is moved along to the rebirth. During this ritual, all of the temple's priests assemble in a specially prepared chamber. In the middle of this chamber is a wide basin, large enough to hold a single person. The candidate is strapped to the bottom of this basin, which is then filled with the collected blood from the temple's fountain. The blood is piped in from the fountain, and all of the priests chant a hymn to Arioch while the basin fills. The candidate must hold his or her breath for 5 rounds, after which they feel a strange tugging sensation pulling them downward.

At this point, the subjective experience varies. Many priests tell of their initiation, and describe swimming in a vast sea of blood, witnessing strange demonic creatures. Others describe an alien world of spirals and bright colors, and still others have a vision of Arioch himself. Many also tell of receiving special instruction from the Duke of Hell, instructions which color the rest of their time in the cult. If the GM wishes a special message for a PC priest, this would be a good time to pass one on.

After a period of time, the basin is drained. In cases where the initiate has not been accepted, the basin is empty. If the initiate has been accepted, they stand, covered in the blood of their fellow priests, reborn through their blood into the fellowship of Arioch.

Lay members are also initiated in this way. Prospective Agents of Arioch also undergo a similar re-birth ritual, only the vision granted during the immersion is a trial of some sort, usually a test of their loyalty to the Lord of the Seven Darks.

DEMON PACTS OF ARIOCH

Numerous breeds of demons serve Arioch, and most priests believe that, when they die, their souls will be re-born as immortal servants of the Lord of the Seven Darks. As such, they make extensive use of demons, counting most as a re-incarnated soul of an Arioch cultist from somewhere in the Multiverse. As such, PC priests may start the game with (at the GM's option,) a lesser demon item, bound and instructed to follow their instructions.

This is exactly the same proceeding given in the *Stormbringer* rulebook on page 60.

Also, PC and NPC priests of Arioch who are unable to summon demons on their own can ask the elder priests to summon a demon for them, if said demon is going to be used to further Arioch's aims. This might take a bit of quick talking on the character's part. Such demons will be the weakest possible to be of help, and usually only instructed to perform a given task once. Demon weapons are almost never given out this way, but other demons might be. Characters are required to offer some sort of payment for this service, the particulars of this are left up to the GM, bearing in mind that the cult doesn't normally need pure wealth.

These demons are also given abilities the recipient does not know about, and will likely report what happened during the time they were in the character's hands. These priests aren't stupid, and will want to know when their servants use the Duke of Hell's resources.

SECRETS OF BALAN

The Cult of Pain

As with all of the other cults in this book, the followers of Balan have a number of secrets to which the newly initiated (i.e. PC's) would not be privy. Due to the nature of this organization, its members don't have the same sort of world-spanning interests as some of the other cults. The clergy is usually too wrapped up in their own pursuit of pain and sensation to work on the same grand level as other priests. However, they do have a few tricks that they use on lower level followers, both to keep them in line and make sure that important information gets passed along the cult's chain of command.

DEMON PACTS OF BALAN

High level cult members often work in concert to summon demons for their lower level initiates, especially those who are not capable of doing to on their own. These elder priests use the Chain of Being spell to summon and bind a D'Khan demon, which is commanded to faithfully follow the priests to which it is given. However, this act isn't quiet as altruistic as it may seem. Often, these demons have powers that they have been instructed to not perform for their new masters. These abilities are secret until they are used, and since the demon is not normally bound to the user, it won't obey them if they tell it to stop. Some of the more common "extra" abilities are as follows:

- *Darkness* - if an initiate is not following the

instructions of his or her superiors, they are often singled out for special instruction. In this instance, the demon produces an area of darkness centered on itself, while other priests move in (with helmets containing demons that see by heat or sound,) and attack the now-blinded wayward follower. This attack isn't usually fatal, but serves as a reminder that they can be targeted at any time.

- *Drain Intellect, Muscle or Soul* - If any of these abilities are given to a D'Khan, it is only one, and one that had the best chance of success when used on the target. This is usually Drain Muscle, as the demon is normally wrapped around the character arm, and the CON drain happens automatically. These abilities are sometimes used as a second warning to a wayward priest, and are only carried out to their fatal ends if the priest cannot get away from the demon.
- *Explode* - Demons with this ability are given to initiates who aren't entirely trusted. The explode ability is boosted with an enormous amount of magic points, making the resulting explosion almost certainly fatal. Sometimes, the initiate is told of the explosion, and given a specific task to perform within a set amount of time in order to have the demon not explode at the specified time. Also, most D'Khan are instructed to explode if their user decides to be rid of them and try to cut the demon away

from their arm, but not if they are killed otherwise. It's been rumored that some priests will give their charges demons with this ability, and have them constantly on the run, performing an endless string of errands in order to remain alive. They say the psychological stress this produces is some of the most exquisite pain imaginable.

In addition to these abilities, D'Khan with larger characteristic values are summoned, usually a higher POW to perform a better Drain Soul attack, or a higher STR if it needs to wrestle with its owner for one reason or another. Also, many priests of Balan have learned a spell that allows them to experience the perceptions of any demon they have bound.

INFERNAL PERCEPTION (4)

Range unlimited. Chaotic. After this spell is cast, the caster can see, hear, smell, touch and taste everything that a demon he or she has personally bound is experiencing. Range is no object, but the bound demon must be on the same plane as the caster. Also, skills related to senses are limited to the percentages of those skills actually possessed by the demon. Normally, this spell is used to eavesdrop on torture session, to make sure that the caster knows exactly what is being said, and to check technique. However, other uses for this spell will no doubt come up during play. Also, the caster can use this spell to command the demon to activate one of its abilities (i.e., one of those listed above.) Note that, while it isn't necessary to be a follower of Balan to cast this spell, the priests of the Lord of Pain developed this spell and are very jealous of its use by others. Only those members of the Cult of Pain who have reached Disciple rank (and Agents) are allowed to learn this spell, or to even know about it.

IRON HELM OF KARDO V'ASH

Kardo V'ash is something of as mythic figure amongst the followers of the Lord of Pain. While his early life and rise through the ranks of the cult are mostly unknown, what little is known had become canonical amongst the faithful.

V'ash was born in Pan Tang, the son of a minor nobleman and a Vilmirian slave-girl. V'ash's actually nobility was negligible, but, being a Pan Tangian male, he was automatically inducted into the Church of Chaos. Like many of his peers, V'ash grew in power under the tutelage of the priests of Chaos, and, on his 12th birthday, was initiated in the Cult of Balan. There is little note of him in the histories of the cult from this time period. He was assumed to be an apt, but not stellar, pupil, and was mostly beneath notice of his superiors.

What is known is that, during V'ash's instruction in the Temple, his father fell out of favor with the Theocrat. The exact cause of this dispute is unknown, and probably not even noteworthy; the Theocrat is well known to be a fickle man, and something as simple as not likely the elder V'ash's style of dress could have set him off. Things like this happen quite often on the Demon Isle. In any case, the V'ash family holdings were confiscated and redistributed. Kardo's father was made into a screaming stature, and his mother and siblings were sacrificed on the altar of Chaos in the Palace-Temple. Kardo was spared this fate, presumably by being simply overlooked. In essence, he was lucky.

It is said that Kardo V'ash participated in the sacrifice of his family, but this tale is almost surely apocryphal, as he was not high enough within the Church to be allowed into the main worship chambers in the Palace Temple, much less operate in any official role. What is known is that, after this time, Kardo was becoming increasingly dissatisfied with his life on Pan Tang. He was growing weary of the political maneuvering that was needed to grow within the cult, and life on Pan Tang was lonely for him. He had no source of financing outside of his stipend, and didn't even have a home of his own. However, his devotion to the Lord of Pain was unwavering, and he thought he might be better served exploring his relationship to the Divine Pain in seclusion, away from the distractions of Hwamgaarl.

The priests over him were delighted that Kardo V'ash wished to leave the Pan Tang, as his absence would allow for another initiate to take his place. In truth, V'ash was likely troublesome for the priests, in that he wasn't interested in

playing their petty games with each other. By removing himself from the situation, he could be replaced with a pawn more amenable to the desires of the older priests. He was gifted with a cache of gems and D'Khan demon bound to serve him, and was sent off into the Young Kingdoms.

The motivation for the priest's actions is a matter of speculation to this day. It is possible that the priests somehow knew of what was to become of Kardo V'ash, and sent him along his way with a demon that would allow them to follow his actions, and be able to track him down should he achieve his destiny. Others feel that the priests were merely following normal protocol, and when Kardo V'ash made his miraculous discovery, they simply choose to take advantage of it.

After leaving Hwamgaarl, Kardo V'ash traveled the Young Kingdoms, seeking a new form of pain. Each time he thought he discovered something new, he would experience it himself, and then use it on others, until he thought he understood that particular form of pain in detail. He continued this work for years, and eventually, grew jaded. He felt as though he had experienced every imaginable torture.

Also during this time, V'ash developed a sizable cadre of followers. He instructed them in the ways and rituals of the Cult, and used them as willing guinea pigs for his own meticulous experiments. Once V'ash realized that he seemed to know all there was to know about pain, he developed a plan. No man could know the art of pain better than Balan himself, and Kardo was intent on asking the Father of Misery himself how to proceed.

The torture Kardo V'ash put himself through, with the help of his followers, is so lengthy and grotesque that there is not sufficient length in this volume to illustrate even a fraction of it all. In the end, though, after weeks of near constant agony, Kardo V'ash was suspended eight feet from the ground by metal hooks through his flesh. There he hung until the pain of his injuries was even more than he could stand, and life left him. At some point, members of his band came to check on him, only to find the body missing from the hooks.

Without V'ash charismatic leadership, his followers quickly fractured into a number of small

groups, each appointing a member to operate as head of the cult in Kardo's absence. There was considerable infighting amongst the group members, and their numbers dwindled as they fought to show each other the true meaning of pain. This branch of the cult would surely have died out if Kardo V'ash hadn't returned from the dead. He had transformed during his absence. His body was flayed and dripping with blood, and he bore an immense and heavy iron helm, which was designed to mimic the iron mask that the priests of the Lord of Pain wear. He drew each of the groups together, and reunited them under his rule. It was only then that he told them what had transpired after his disappearance.

He told them that, while he was dying on the hooks, the pain he felt had become so intense that it blotted out all thought. He had become pain itself, and, in that moment, was united completely with Balan. He was drawn away from the Young Kingdoms, and transcended the flesh. When he was finally aware again, he found himself inside a cavern that could hold the entire world. Inside that cavern with him was an enormous figure, bound in barbed wire and suspended from the roof of the cave. It writhed and wailed in agony, and Kardo V'ash knew he had found his god.

There were also a number of human sized masses also bound up in the wire, and each was writhing and bleeding as well. These, Kardo felt, were champions of Balan, whose pain was eternal, just as their presence with their god was eternal. This was the promise of Balan; pain eternal and life eternal. Kardo told his followers that we must suffer to live, and make others know that they suffer for Balan; for human misery feeds the Lord of Pain.

Kardo ran under the bleeding mass, and bathed in the hot, sticky rain that pelted him from above. At one point, a large drop of blood landed directly on his head, and immediately began to dissolve the iron mask he had bolted to his face years ago. This blood began to coagulate, and, as it hardened, shaped itself into the iron helm he now wore.

While wearing this helm, Kardo said, he was constantly in glorious agony, and his connection to the Lord of Pain was much more intimate. He

could feel the suffering of others, and knew how to amplify that suffering in order to please his god. The weeping wounds in his flesh fed the mask, which kept them open. He had achieved a special union with the Lord of Pain, and, should he continue to serve faithfully, would live forever, wrapped up and bound to his lord.

Immediately after Kardo's absence, the priests of Balan used their sorcery to keep tabs on him, and eventually discovered the tale of the Iron Helm, and what it represented. Each coveted the union Kardo had achieved with the Lord of Pain, and desired the Helm for themselves. Thus the conflict between the two separate factions of the cult began-Kardo's followers tried to use his methods to achieve the same union with the Lord of Pain, and the orthodox Cult of Pain tried to gain the information for themselves. Kardo himself vanished, and is assumed to have died at the hands of the priests of the Church of Chaos. His Iron Helm, however, was never recovered, and still serves as a potent motivator for the Cult of Pain's activities throughout the Young Kingdoms. Cult members scour the world, looking for information that will lead them to the Helm, and each faction tries to stymie the efforts of the others.

THE IRON HELM

The helm itself, should the GM decide to allow it to re-surface, has the following powers. When worn, bearer of the Helm behaves as though under constant *Blessed Enervation* and *Pain Divine* spells. It also allows the wearer to cast the *Agony* spell, even if not normally able to cast spells. This costs the normal number of magic points. Wearing the Helm counts as having a helmet on for the purposes of armor values.

However, the pain caused by wearing the Helm is so great that the wearer must succeed in a Luck roll every round or be rendered inactive by the intense, glorious pain. Once put on, the Iron Helm may not be removed unless the wearer is dead. It fits any size person, regardless of SIZ stat, gender or Race. Also, the Iron Helm causes the user to lose Law or Balance allegiance points if not already a follower of Chaos, exactly the same way as Pan Tangian plate armor does (see page 120 of the Stormbringer rules.)

The current location of the Helm is unknown. Common rumors indicate that it is lost on the Marshes of Mist on the Western Continent. Others maintain that it is the hands of Doctor Jest, after Kardo V'ash was captured breaking into Monshanjik Tower. Since the end of Kardo V'ash is unknown, it is also not known how many people have worn the Helm since his death. Indeed, V'ash might even live still.

KARDO V'ASH'S NOTEBOOK

This bound folio manuscript is written in Common, presumably by Kardo V'ash. It details his travels in the Young Kingdoms, and lists in graphic detail the tortures inflicted on himself and others in pursuit of his god. Additionally, it lists the exact rituals and tortures used leading up to his transcendent vision of the Lord of Pain.

Anyone reading the work, which takes 1d8 months, may make checks in Art (Torture), Physik, and Potions. Readers might also be able to glean enough information to piece together the spells of Balan listed elsewhere in this book, including the Ritual of Transcendence. Should a reader attempt to follow the ritual, it will likely kill them unless they have at least 50 points of Chaos Allegiance and are dedicated to Balan. If they meet these criteria, though, they have a POW x3 chance of having the same visions that Kardo V'ash had, although GM's should come up with a suitable reward other than the Iron Helm for such devoted adventurers.

SECRETS OF CHARDROS

The Influence of the United Masses

For an individual cultist, the cult of Chardros' sheer size is a large hindrance. Indeed, since each cultist must always be on his or her best game, each and every day, burn out and desperation are exceedingly common. Also, even the best and brightest members of the cult must understand that the top seat only has room for one person, and that position is almost never open. Many cultists realize this sad fact early in their careers, and many of them drop out of the race for position, rather than face burn out and death at the hands of their fellows, or even be taken out by a pack of eager young priests who covet their positions.

To some members of the cult, the fatalistic nature of their worship indicates that this result is inevitable, and is, in fact, the core principle around which the cult revolves. The life of a cultist is a mirror for the life of others in general; always fighting for position, striving to eke out a meager bit of influence or power, mainly to keep them from being overpowered by something else. However, this way of life is ultimately for naught, as even the most powerful sorcerer will ultimately die, or be otherwise removed from the race in which they have immersed themselves. Thus, life is constantly moving, growing, and evolving, hurtling towards death at increasingly greater

speeds. It is this rapid, rabid energy that feeds Chardros - the lust for power that he inspires in his followers causes them to enter a state of frenzied activity, and the number of cultists working for personal gain causes the rest of the world to adjust to the ripples they cause, which in turn causes greater ripples. These ripples are an increase in Chaos in the Young Kingdoms, which all of the Lords of Chaos enjoy.

Thus, the cult of Chardros is the largest and most influential cult, being the greatest force of entropy in the world. That they bring about the ultimately expression of Chaos (i.e. the complete dissolution of the whole world) speaks to the power of this cult. This large group of psychotic madmen is Chaos in its most destructive form, and they are death for every living thing in the Young Kingdoms. Their influence can be seen everywhere. GM's are encouraged to do all they can to drive this point home to the players. As the game progresses, more and more places should fall into Chaos as the cultists of Chardros undermine the structure of the world as they play amongst themselves. Even a single cultist operating miles away can set events in motion that affect the PC's.

For example, let's assume that a single cultist is operating in Isle of the Purple Towns. Perhaps

he has set himself up in Kariss, well away from the larger temples of Law in Menii. He begins using his magicks to animate the dead, and builds up a sizable base of operations. In order to deal with this threat, the Church of Law in the Isle sends a number of agents and priests to Kariss, with hopes of rooting out the evil festering the north. This shift in focus will allow criminals in other parts of the Isle become more brazen, as there are fewer people to keep them in line. More drugs can be smuggled into the Isle, an increase in banditry along the main roads will likely take place, and the populace will think the Church is slipping in its tasks.

In an effort to take care of these problems, the power structure of the Isle becomes destabilized, and the merchants and the nobles each blame the other for the problems, and begin jockeying for position to take advantage of the situation. Each will try to gain popular support for themselves, and try to make the others look bad in the public eye. So, rather than dealing with the actual problem (the necromancer in the north,) the two factions begin a bitter campaign of politicking. This lack of focus in the government leaves the average person feeling lost and confused, which leads to an increase in violence amongst the people. If the situation gets too bad, the Church will step in and try to restore order, using even more resources to do so.

And what of the cultist? He'll leave a large number of animated dead behind, keeping one step ahead of his hunters. He knows that staying in Kariss for long would result in his death, so he keeps in the move. He might travel to Menii and try to destabilize the local government even more, but this is risky. He might also move to another country entirely, and begin the process over again. Perhaps he travels to Cadsandria, and uses some of the same tricks. Perhaps this time he manages to get into the University Library and steal a priceless tome, and is able to track down a powerful artifact, which he uses in the next country he visits.

The point of this is that even a single cultist can do so much damage to an area as to be a serious threat. Given the size of the cult, though, there will likely not be just a single operative in a

country working to bring it down. There might be two, or four, or even twenty. Sure, sometimes their efforts will run counter to each other, but the ripples they cause can turn into tidal waves of Chaos easily enough. The smart cultist realizes that they can even use a destabilized country to their advantage. Perhaps a Lawful government can be torn down, with a pawn of the Church of Chaos installed in his or her place. Such a cultist would reap large rewards from the Theocrat and the Church should this happen.

There isn't a corner of the Young Kingdoms that isn't touched by the ripples of Chaos caused by the cultists of Chardros, and the GM should keep this in mind when designing adventures. Once the PC's get involved in the plots and plans of a cultist of Chardros (or even if they are Chardros cultists,) the adventures practically write themselves. Besides, pursuing a powerful sorcerer across the face of the Young Kingdoms (or even into other planes,) can be an exciting ride for both the players and the GM.

Also, GM's should bear in mind that a number of cultists drop out of the cult and flee Pan Tang, rather than face death as a cult member. Given that there is only a single Theocrat, and the current one isn't exactly fond of sharing power, there should be a handful of Chardros cultists who are nearly as powerful as the Theocrat, operating outside Pan Tang for their own amusement. One such priest is detailed below.

THE LIFE AND RISE TO POWER OF BISHOP ALDOMAR CHU

Aldomar Chu was born in Pan Tang to a noble related to the Theocrat, which placed Aldomar in line for the throne of Pan Tang. Encouraged by his father, Aldomar joined the cult of Chardros as soon as he was old enough. He was an apt pupil, mastering sorcery early on, and using it to do away with troublesome rivals for the few positions available to young priests. He was particularly adept at animating the dead, and developed a habit of using this ability on adversaries after he had them slain.

However, when it came time for his formal initiation into the ranks of the Priesthood, a number of his rivals banded together and influenced their priestly patron to give Aldomar an impossible task before he was fully initiated. Tasks before initiation are common, and many of Aldomar's rivals had minor quests they were to perform (like visiting the Unholy Fortress). Aldomar, however, was given the task of finding the one thing in the Young Kingdoms that was completely unique, bringing it to the Palace-Temple, and presenting it to a group of elder priests for their approval.

Many of Aldomar's contemporaries would have balked at the task (this was where the idea had come from,) but Aldomar flinched a little, paused, and responded that he would find the something unique and bring it to the Palace-Temple before the appointed limit. His rivals were intrigued, but still felt that the task was impossible, and that Aldomar would be out of their hair soon.

Aldomar, of course, had other ideas. He saw this event for what it was; a naked attempt to have him ousted from the cult before his real power could grow. He was disappointed in his fellows, because the ploy lacked subtlety. He knew who the responsible parties were, and knew also that their patron's in the cult had acquiesced to their request, hoping to see their favorites installed in the position. So, in true Pan Tangian fashion, Aldomar determined that he'd turn this setback into something that would bring him power. He pondered his solution for days, almost losing his life to an assassination attempt that he was too distracted to see coming. Unless he came up with a plan soon, his rivals would all accomplish their appointed tasks sooner than he, and he'd be out of the cult before he had even begun.

While out in the streets of Hwamgaarl, Aldomar witnessed the solution to his dilemma walk past him. That day, the Theocrat was traveling the city with his full entourage, making a show of power to remind his people who was in charge. At one point, the Theocrat actually looked Aldomar right in the eyes for a few seconds before moving on. It was then that Aldomar discovered his path to power: there was, at any time, only a single Theocrat of the Church of Chaos. There

have been others in the past, but as of the present moment, the Theocrat was completely unique.

Aldomar then used his noble position and his contacts in the Church to start rumors that his rivals' patrons were involved in an assassination plot against the Theocrat. Aldomar even planned and staged a few attempts to break into the Palace-Temple after nightfall. These would be assassins where charmed into revealing false information when caught, and died on the altars of Chaos before their true missions (and employer) could be revealed.

On the appointed day, when Aldomar was to show his unique item to his higher-ups in the Church for initiation, the Theocrat and cadre of elite soldiers stormed the section of the Palace-Temple where the initiation was to take place. As the "guilty" priests were taken away for questioning, Aldomar revealed that the Theocrat was the one unique thing in the world, both in name and position. Since this could hardly be argued, Aldomar was allowed to enter the ranks of the cult proper, where he had a long and successful career.

His rivals were allowed entry into the cult to fulfill the empty places left by the deaths of their patrons. Aldomar spent a great deal of time and effort ensuring the deaths of each of these men. Since they had once united against him, he couldn't possibly trust them in the future. So, it would be better to have them removed and replaced by more trustworthy people.

Aldomar eventually grew in power that he could have potentially taken the Theocrat's position. But, rather than seek this position out, he thought he could serve Chardros better alive and out in the Young Kingdoms, away from the politics of the Church. If Aldomar had become the Theocrat, he'd be a known entity, and would therefore be limited in what he could do. As an independent agent outside Hwamgaarl, there was no real limit to what he could accomplish.

So, rather than risk his life for a prize he didn't want, Aldomar fled Pan Tang, taking as much of his accumulated arcane lore with him. His current location is unknown and unguessed at, as he is a mystery to all but the most learned of people. In all likelihood, Aldomar uses magic to

conceal his Pan Tangian heritage, and is working as an advisor to any of a number of countries in the Young Kingdoms. In this way, he can continue to help bring the world to its knees.

ALDOMAR CHU, PRIEST AND AGENT OF CHARDROS

CHAOS 438, BALANCE 50, LAW 12

STR 12 CON 17 SIZ 14 INT 23 POW 27 DEX 13 APP 13

HIT POINTS: 16 ARMOUR: See below

DAMAGE BONUS: +1D4

Weapon	Skill	Damage
Demon Dagger	90%	1d4+2+db+weapon (see below)
Demon Broadsword	120%	1d8+1+db+weapon (see below)

ARMOR: Chu wears either his older demon Pan Tangian Plate armor (2d8+1+1d10 helmet on,) or any of a number of suits of leather armor he owns. These are tailored to fit in with local style and custom, so that he may wear it in public without attracting unwanted attention. Despite differences in style, these all function with the same rules. They are soft leather, and protect for 1d6+1d8 points of damage. Note that his suit of Purple Towner armor is actually Sea leather.

SPELLS: Aldomar knows or has access to all Chaotic spells in the Stormbringer rules. He also knows of the Chardros specific spells from the relevant section of this book, as well as all of the spells from the Bronze Grimoire Necromancy section that deal with raising creatures from the dead or creating them from other materials. Note also that Chu has designed an improved version of *Liken Shape* that allows him to remain in his altered form for 24 hours, and the spell isn't canceled when someone else touches him. This costs him 5 magic points, and is usually cast the first thing in the morning upon waking. This spell is also in his grimoires, and can therefore be stolen by enterprising PC's.

SKILLS: Art (Torture) 70%, Bargain 63%, Common Tongue 115%, Dodge 50%, Fast Talk 115%, High Speech 50%, Insight 79%, Mabden 90%, Melnibonean 60%, Million Spheres 35%, Oratory 90%, Physik 50%, Young Kingdoms 80%.

CURRENT GOALS AND ACTIVITIES: Chu's current location is unknown, but it is assumed to be in one of the Young Kingdom's capital cities. He has heard of the Theocrat's Skull (see below,) and is looking for information on obtaining this powerful artifact.

LESSER DEMON DAGGER

Plain and functional, Chu keeps this on his person at all times. Its appearance is designed to look non-Chaotic. The Chaos sign is very small and set on the bottom of the pommel.

INT 2 POW 7

ABILITIES: *Demon Weapon*, adds 1d8. *Bleeder* (new ability, costs three magic points,) if wounded, target bleeds from injury for 1 hp per round until dead or healed with either magic or Physik.

LESSER DEMON BROADSWORD

The blade of this sword is set with random jagged edges, and small demonic faces roll along the surface like oil. Obviously chaotic, Chu only uses this weapon in the direst of circumstances.

INT 4 POW 9

ABILITIES: *Demon Weapon*, adds 1d10 Damage

THE THEOCRAT'S SKULL

Deep within the innermost places of the Palace-Temple in Hwamgaarl, there lies a casket in which the bones of every person who has ever served at the Theocrat of Pan Tang are interred. This is the Holiest of Holies for the Church of Chaos, a marker that commemorates the link between their ancestor worship with the veneration of Chaos. It also serves as a reminder that the office of the Theocrat is an unbroken chain since the time of Pan Tang's founding. Nothing is more sacred to the followers of Chardros, and, when it was defiled centuries ago, no act was more denounced.

The identity of the thief was never determined, although it is assumed that the person was a sorcerer of no small skill to be able to get so far into the Palace-Temple without being detected by the numerous guards, demonic and otherwise, that lie in wait there is the darkness. In fact, the theft went unnoticed for a long time, possible years, since there were no signs that the inner chamber had been breached.

When the chamber housing the Holiest of Holies was at last opened for an important ritual, the casket was found overturned, and the hundreds of bones scattered about the room with no care. As the bones were cataloged and re-interred, one was found to be missing; the Skull of the First Theocrat.

Unbeknownst to the Priests of Chaos, the Skull, being an object of worship for hundreds of years, had taken on a number of curious properties, which would make it a grand prize for someone who knew about them. It is assumed that the thief somehow knew of these properties, and was guided to the skull by forces unknown. Many have speculated that Chardros himself led a promising Agent to the skull, but the reasoning behind this assertion has been found lacking.

Regardless of the reasoning behind the theft, the Skull is still out in the Young Kingdoms, and the Church of Chaos is offering an immense reward for any who find it and return it to the Church. It should be easy enough to find-one need simply follow one's nose.

Skull of the Theocrat

The skull is unremarkable in appearance; it could easily be confused for any ordinary skull, except for the fact that it is completely impervious to damage. There is also an aura of gloom and chill around the skull, which may aid in its identification.

The skull will manifest its powers constantly, and only be attuning it to can someone attempt to control them. In order to achieve the attunement, a sorcerer of at least POW 17 must spend a whole day meditating on the skull, and sacrifice a single point of POW. Once attuned, the user can attempt to control the manifestation of each power, at the listed magic point cost.

POWER DRAIN

The skull sucks the life out of any living beings within 1 mile of it. Every night at midnight, all beings within the area of effect must make a POWx1 check or lose a single magic point. For each month that passes, the magic point loss increases by one. If any being is drained of more magic points that they have, the skull drains the excess from the target's POW, which only regenerates after a month out of the area.

If attuned, a user can use the skull to rapidly drain the life from any specific person with the area of effect. For each magic point spend by this attack, the caster can drain a number of magic points (and then POW) as the Roll Table on page 163 of the Stormbringer rules. The GM should make a Luck roll for the user when this power is used. If this roll fails, the user loses half the POW rolled for the target. (The target is also drained.)

ANIMATION

Any being drained of POW by the skull will rise as a zombie (with half of the owner's original skills and stats, except POW, which is one) one day after

the final drain. More dangerously, any interred body within the area of effect will also rise as either a skeleton or zombie with base stats and skills.) These creations are uncontrolled, and will attack any being they find.

If attuned, the user can channel magic points into a body (through the skull) with a percentage chance equal to the number listed on the Roll Table on 163 of successfully creating a skeleton or a zombie, depending on the condition of the body. These undead are under the user's control (although, in any area where the skull has already been in use, which zombies are controllable and which aren't can be a bit of a gamble.) The GM should make a Luck Roll for the user when this power is used. If this roll fails, the skull casts the *Army of the Dead* (from the Bronze Grimoire) spell on all bodies within the area of effect. This will almost certainly drain all the magic points from the user. For those without the Bronze Grimoire, this spell takes one magic point to raise as a zombie every corpse within 50 yards of the caster. If this is too many corpses for the caster's magic points, he or she is rendered unconscious by the spell, and the raised zombies are still created. However, if this roll is a critical result, the Skull immediately casts the *Chardros's Eternal Gift* spell (making him a liche), and makes the user immune to any further effects

All living beings within the area of effect will experience strange, dark dreams, mood swings, and chills while being drained. There will also be larger and increasing numbers of undead in the area, starting with small animals and children, but progressing to the elderly, the ill, and eventually normally healthy adults. The stench from rotting bodies will also be nearly unbearable. Also, would-be controllers of this enchantment are often counted amongst its victims.

There is no known way to destroy the skull, although GM's should listen to enterprising PC's and determine if their proposed solution will work. While the skull is invulnerable, there might be a devise of some sort to dampen the area of effect, or cancel it out entirely. Also, the Skull isn't tied to the Young Kingdoms. A demon in service to a rival Chaos Lord might be all too happy to take the skull to another plane, as demons are largely immune to

the Skull's effects. The Skull might also prove vulnerable to an immense amount of damage (such as being attacked by Stormbringer, or taken to Kakatal's palace in the heart of the sun and melted.)

SECRETS OF HIONHURN

Splintered Factions under the Executioner's Blade

Given the nature of this cult, and the psychology of individual cultists, there is very little room within the cult for secret agendas or intra-factional conflicts. True, factions do develop, but more out of an alignment of purpose as opposed to a need for secrecy within the ranks of the cult.

The factions that develop within the cult always have some sort of motivating factor behind their inception. Two such factions will be illustrated below. In addition to committing ritual murder to please Hionhurn, these factions also work to corrupt people into the cult, using the enchantments mentioned below.

THE BROTHERHOOD OF HEADSMEN

This faction of Hionhurn cultists operates in secret within the Northern continent, mainly in Vilmir, but also in Ilmiora. Their favored mode of operation consists of waylaying lone or small groups of travelers on the roads that criss-cross the Northern Continent, and performing acts of ritual decapitation on all victims.

They never murder in the same area twice in a row, and, so far, have been able to stay one step

ahead of the authorities investigating the murders. Their success is, in part, due to the number of Headsmen members that are part of the investigational groups. They secretly undermine the investigation, and make sure that the legitimate authorities will never catch on.

In addition to these activities, the Headsmen are the current keepers of enchanted weapon called *The Headman's Axe*, an evil weapon that tempts its users to further acts of murder. The Headsmen take great pains to leave this axe where Lawful executioners, ordained by the Church, can use it to execute criminals and undesirables. After a time, this influence of the weapon makes them indulge in other, less sanctioned executions, until they are as much a part of the cult of Hionhurn as any other member.

At such time, the Headsmen will approach the prospective cultist, take the axe back, and move it to another locale, so that the cycle begins anew.

THE HEADMAN'S AXE

This two handed axe has appeared as one might expect a weapon of Law to look; its plain and functional, with no embellishments or designs marring its perfect surface. This design is

intentional, to make it look like an axe a Lawful executioner would want to use.

If the axe is available to a person performing an execution, he or she must match their POW against a POT of 16 on the Resistance table. If they pass, they'll use whatever weapon they wish. If they fail, however, they'll pick up The Headman's Axe and use it in the execution.

When used to execute someone, The Headmen's Axe will always result in a single killing blow, regardless of the executioner's skill or any other factors. Even if the user can resist the POT of the weapon, they might still find themselves wanting to use the Axe, since it makes their job so much easier.

Each time the Axe is used in an execution, its effective POT is increased by one for the person who performed the execution (note that, in cases of multiple people performing executions, the weapon's POT might be different for different people.) When the weapon's POT reaches 20, the user will think of it as "their" Axe, and want to carry it with them always.

From then on, the user must resist the weapon's POT each time an opportunity to use the Axe comes up. At first, this manifests as a desire to execute anyone guilty of a crime, even if they are supposed to die by another means. Each time this resistance roll is failed, the POT for that user increases by one.

If the POT reached 25, the user has been completely overcome by the Axe, and will seek to use it on anyone who angers him or presents any sort of obstacle to the user's continued possession of the Axe. During this time, the user will be plagued with dreams of murder, flowing blood and the screams of the dying. Even while waking, they will hear voices, which seem to come from the Axe, urging them to kill people nearby.

Eventually, the user will be too much of a threat to the local populace, and will either be killed (sometimes by a new user of the Axe) or run out of town. Should the latter occur, the Headmen will be watching and waiting for a time to approach their new Brother. The Axe will find a new home, and the process will start all over.

If used in combat, treat The Headman's Axe as a Lormyrian axe that has a permanent version of Hell's Razor (4) cast on it (i.e. add 4 points of damage to any damage done, up to the maximum damage for the weapon, 18 hit points.) Additionally, any roll of 01 to hit with The Headman's Axe will always sever the head of a human shaped opponent, regardless of armor. If the target can make a critical dodge, this is instead treated at a critical hit (i.e. double normal damage.) The Axe has 30 hit points, and will lose all magical properties if broken.

If the Axe's POT gets to 20 or above, the user will also accumulate points of Chaos Allegiance as though they were a follower of Hionhurn, although at half the rate of a committed follower.

THE VULTURES IN CRIMSON

This sect of religious assassins is renowned and feared all over the Young Kingdoms. So little is known about their methods or organization, and this ignorance breeds fear. The cult teaches that no one is beyond their reach, and nothing will keep a Crimson Assassin from his or her target.

Very little actual information is known in common circles about the Vultures. It is known that they sect originates in Pan Tang, where members of the cult of Hionhurn use the network of Crimson Assassins in the Young Kingdoms to reach targets that Pan Tang can't. Beyond this fact, any other information is based in conjecture and dodgy information.

There is some speculation that the Vultures operate as an assassination arm of the Pan Tangian government, and that the religious motivations have been tacked onto the group to add an aura of unwholesomeness. This is presumably to make Lawful authorities fear reprisal from the sect.

The Crimson Assassins are reputedly all sorcerers of great skill, who know spells and techniques that no other sorcerer has ever been able to decipher. They can disappear in the blink of an eye, and appear several yards away. This makes them incredibly hard to counter, and aids in the pursuit of their targets. The truth behind this rumor is that, while a number of assassins are

sorcerers, the effects commonly attributed to the cult are the result of a highly effective tactic where a number of assassins work together. One might get a guard to follow them, and duck into a shadowy alcove, while another assassin makes himself visible. Since they all wear the same garb, it appears as though the assassin has jumped several yards ahead.

The sect's supposed use of sorcery isn't limited to disappearing and teleportation. People who have defended against a cult's attack have reported that the assassins seem to know the layout of any building they operate in, know the guard rotation schedules, and even some secret passages of which residents aren't aware. It is assumed that this knowledge is gained via sorcery, and cannot be defended against.

In fact, this knowledge isn't supernatural. The sect has eyes and ears in every nation of the Young Kingdoms, and its operatives are present in the staff of any noble, official, or anyone of import. If that individual is targeted for assassination, these resources are tapped in order to gain knowledge of the area. The Crimson Assassins only attack when well prepared.

The exact method by which the Vultures in Crimson choose their targets is not known. Most people suspect that a form of divination is involved, while others assert that the victims are chosen at random, since the forces of Chaos are inherently unorganized. (This is a comforting thought to the enemies of Chaos, which is, unfortunately, wrong.) Victims are really chosen amongst those who are a thorn in the side of Pan Tang, and anyone who might be moved into a position to threaten Pan Tang or her schemes.

A fact not commonly known about the Vultures in Crimson is that each assassin is a devout worshipper of Hionhurn, who try to curb their thirst for violence to channel that energy into a single murder. This sect then must operate differently than the rest of the cult of Hionhurn, since a trail of bodies would lead to hidden assassins, or their network of informants.

PCs might become targets of the Vultures in Crimson, especially if they work against the designs of Pan Tang or members of the Church of Chaos. The sect also operates in the trafficking of

information, since their network of informants knows things most people don't. PCs might find the Vultures to be a surprising source of info if they find themselves operating in a city where the Vultures have a target. Of course, the PCs might find themselves to be targets, or may even find that they and the Vultures are workings towards the same goals, in which case the Vultures would make a valuable, if uneasy, ally.

THE GREY GIANT

Not every cultists of Hionhurn is a member of a vast network of cultists. Hionhurn works to subvert any who kill others, and can often turn someone to His worship without that person ever seeing another cult member.

Such was the case with Gregor Stoutheart, a Purple Towner bounty hunter who has turned to the worship of Hionhurn. He stalks the upper reaches of Tarkesh, where the locals refer to him as the Grey Giant.

Stoutheart's tale starts off simple enough. He was born in Karris, the eldest son of a peasant family under fealty to a minor Sea King of the Purple Towns. One summer, he was working with his father, hauling grain grown on their master's farm to Menii for sale at the Market in that city. Along the way, they stopped at an inn and where allowed to sleep in stable with the horses.

During the night, Stoutheart and his father were awoken by a commotion amongst the horses. The animals were agitated because someone had broken into the stable and was in the process of transferring ownership of a fine animal to himself. The thief got away before either man could do anything, but Stoutheart, who had always been a decent tracker, took off into the night to pursue the thief, while his father stayed behind to explain the situation to the people who owned the inn and the animal.

Naturally, the people staying in the inn assumed this was all some sort of trick, and that Stoutheart had in fact stolen the horse. Gregor's father was going to be sent off to the local sheriff by morning, and was being led away when Stoutheart returned, mounted on the stolen horse,

covered in blood. He seemed dazed, and it was assumed by the people present that he had been wounded apprehending the thief. All was forgiven, and Gregor and his father went on to Menii. The body of the thief was never found.

Word made it back to the Sea Lord who employed Gregor of what had transpired. If what he heard were true, then young Gregor would likely make an excellent bounty hunter. He had Gregor track down debtors and people who had defaulted on loans. Gregor never missed a mark, and was able to track down and extract every cent the Sea Lord was owed.

News of Gregor's skill spread, and he was soon operating as a freelance bounty hunter for the wealthy and influential of the Purple Towns. His travels took him all over, even once to Imrryr, and he had an astonishing success rate. He pursued deadbeats, escaped killers, and all manner of desperate people who ran to escape their problems.

Unknown to his many employers, as Gregor got older, he started to develop a rather unhealthy appetite. When he was pursuing a mark, he found himself wishing the mark would resist, so that Gregor could kill him without attracting undo attention. He was disturbed by these feelings, but seemed powerless to counteract them. At night, he was plagued by dreams of his first murder, when he had tracked the horse thief down. In his dreams, Gregor strangled the thief, butchered him, and ate large portions of the muscle.

He killed a number of his marks, those who resisted capture anyway, and would secretly eat small bits of them. He found this process grimly satisfying, but would always insist that it would not happen with the next mark. But, try as he might, he couldn't help himself. Eventually, he actually started killing marks, even those who didn't resist capture. He would report to his employers that the mark had resisted, and it was necessary to kill them. Naturally, he didn't let on that he was also eating more and more of the bodies, disposing of the inedible bits.

If people noticed that Gregor was resorting to killing more and more as he aged, they didn't say anything. He got results, and that was all that mattered. If anything, this made Gregor's condition

worse. He knew that he'd eventually start wanting to kill people other than his marks, and the he'd be no better than those he used to hunt for a living.

So, full of self-loathing for what he had become, Gregor began formulating plans for suicide. He made several attempts but always stopped himself at the last minute. He was a miserable wreck, alone and without any support. But, he was good at what he did, so his employers didn't care.

But, one fateful day, members of the dreaded Vilmirian Inquisition approached Gregor. It seemed there was a serial killer loose in Vilmir, who was always too far ahead of the authorities to be caught. Gregor was charged with finding this individual and bringing him to justice.

The killer was a serial cannibal who called himself the Jackal. His victims were from all over Vilmir. He was fond of children and young girls, and would leave his victim's gnawed bones on the doorsteps of their families when he was done with them.

Gregor sprang into action, heading for Vilmir. Soon, though, his investigations took on a decidedly strange aspect. The Jackal seemed to know about Gregor, including the bounty hunter's peculiar appetites. The killer would leave Gregor notes, which talked about "being of kindred spirit," and more ominously, "worshiping at the same shrine." Gregor didn't know what this last phrase meant, but he continued to follow the clues the Jackal would leave for him. It became apparent that the Jackal was leading Gregor to something, but Gregor didn't care. If he died, then his suffering would end.

Gregor pursued the Jackal, even when the trail led out of Vilmir and into Ilmiora. From there, the trail of clues and dismembered bodies led across the Pale Sea into Tarkesh. Each step further made Gregor less and less human, and, towards the end of his quest, he was as much a murder as his quarry. The voice in his head at last had become too much for him, and he succumbed to the infernal hunger that gnawed at his belly.

It was in the ice-capped mountains of northern Tarkesh when Gregor finally caught up to his elusive quarry. Months had passed since entering Tarkesh, and Gregor was certain he'd be

able to catch the Jackal. One morning, before the sun had risen and night still slept on the world, Gregor found the Jackal's camp, situated deep in a high mountain cave. He found the Jackal, a surprisingly small man, lying on his side, facing the dying embers of a small campfire.

When the Jackal made no movement to indicate he had heard Gregor's approach, the hunter stole into the cave, drew his knife, and rolled the Jackal over.

Before he could plunge the killing blow, Gregor saw the worst sight he had ever seen. The Jackal had slit his own throat, grinning as he took Gregor's prize away. This grin still marred his face, even though it was half-covered in congealed blood.

Gregor's rage consumed him. He tore about the meager campsite, wrecking what he could reach and burning anything that would burn. He stabbed the Jackal's body several times, and was about to chuck the body into the growing bonfire, when he noticed a rolled up piece of paper tucked into the breast pocket of the Jackal's vest.

Despite several knife holes and copious bloodstains, Gregor could still make out the bulk of the letter. It was addressed to him, and, in the tiny, neat script, the Jackal addressed him thusly:

Gregor,

I know what you are. I've always known, because we are the same. I'm certain you've felt it, the kinship we share. I can only assume that is why you've followed me to this cold, barren place.

Try to understand why I took my life. It is not yours to take, you see. My soul is sworn to another, the Voice that Whispers. He seeks your soul as well, but I'm certain you understand this as well.

I have but one message for you. Heed the Voice. It will guide you to safety and keep you from those who'd harm you, or keep you from your task. It led me to you, and led us both here. My life was to help make you what you are. I have succeeded, as you'll never be welcomed back in society after people realize what you've done. You have no choice but to heed.

If you haven't already done so, you need to eat my flesh. It's the only food for miles, and will help you in ways you can't imagine. Be sure to eat anything that isn't bone, or you'll not survive the winter.

We'll meet again,

The Jackal.

Gregor crumpled up the note and tossed it into the flames. He looked at the body, still grinning at nothing, all gray flesh and glassy eyes. He knew the truth in the letter. Gregor had assumed that the final confrontation with the Jackal would cost him his life, and had not planned to survive the encounter. As such, he had no food or water, other than melted snow. He had only two choices: die, either by starving or committing suicide like the Jackal had; or he could follow the Jackal's instruction, and consume his body.

Just then, Gregor's stomach rumbled, and he knew that this choice he had already made a long time ago. He stepped towards the body, drawing his knife.

Gregor did survive the winter, and it was shortly thereafter that he began terrorizing the villages in the northern reaches of Tarkesh. The intervening winter had done strange things to Gregor's body and mind, and the already large man was now huge, gray skinned, and seemingly immune to the cold. The monster he had become was devoid of any human feelings of mercy and humanity. He now lives only to kill and feed.

GREGOR STOUTHEART, THE GRAY GIANT, SERIAL KILLER AND CANNIBAL

CHAOS 108, BALANCE 5, LAW 20

STR 12(17) CON 13 SIZ 13(18) INT 12 POW16 DEX 14 APP 10

HIT POINTS: 16 ARMOUR: None

DAMAGE BONUS: +1D6

<i>Weapon</i>	<i>Skill</i>	<i>Damage</i>
Wood Axe	120%	1d8+2+db
Hunting Knife	90%	1d4+2+db

SKILLS: Bargain 60%, Dodge 100%, Hide 80%, Murderous Insight 50%, Natural World 50%, Young Kingdoms 50%.

SPELLS: *Cannibal's Feast (10)*. Note that Gregor counts as being permanently affected by the effects numbered 1 and six, this being part of the power gained from eating the Jackal. He can therefore not choose to enact these effects, but can use the spell to enact others.

SPECIAL EFFECTS: Eating the Jackal's body has giving Gregor a number of special effects. As mentioned above, he is permanently affected by part of the *Cannibal's Feast* spell. In addition, he has grown much larger, increasing his SIZ by five. He also is immune to the cold, and can be outside in any extremely cold temperature with no risk of dying from exposure. He will also take no damage from any magical effect that uses cold to effect damage.

USING THE GRAY GIANT

Gregor works well as an elusive adversary for a PC from a Lawful background. He might be leading a PC bounty hunter down the same path he took with the Jackal.

PCs who have been exposed to the influence of Hionhurn might feel pulled towards Tarkesh for some reason, only becoming aware when they hear tales or see the handiwork of the Gray Giant. The sight of red blood over white snow can awake certain hungers the PC might not know they've had. And, assuming that they can finally slay the Gray Giant, the urge to eat from his body might be more than the PC can take.

If they do manage it, the GM should take care to notice if they seem to be drawing any pleasure from the kill. Hionhurn is always accepting promising recruits.

SECRETS OF MABELODE

Nameless Fury in the Name of the King

As far as cults of Chaos go, the Cult of the Sword King can, more or less, be taken at face value. When a cultist joins the ranks, he or she gives up their identity, and with it their personal ambitions for wealth, fame and recognition. Granted, this process isn't always perfect, and most cultists seek admiration for the other members of their unit. But, members of the Sword King's cult do not trend to have the same level of megalomaniacal grandiosity commonly found in other cults.

In fact, when not actually involved in battle, these cultists tend to be relatively normal people. For the most part, they go about the business of training and summoning. They're always on the lookout for conflicts in which to get involved, but, with a few notable exceptions, they don't go looking for fights where they might not otherwise exist.

The exceptions for this are cult members from Pan Tang. These followers tend to be violent and bloodthirsty, and there are several instances in the history of the Young Kingdoms where conflicts between nations have been prompted by meddlesome followers of Mabelode itching to go to war. In particular, several years before Elric takes the Ruby Throne, a series of nasty border skirmishes between Vilmir and Ilmiora erupted,

only to have a number of units of Mabelode cultists show up on the battlefield, attacking people on both sides of the conflict. Sometimes such involvements by the cult are attempts to find new recruits amongst the members of either side, but often they are simply excuses to fight and worship.

SECRET GOALS

Thankfully, not many. The cult's individual units are often left to their own devices, but any time spent on neither training nor warfare is considered a waste. So the Sword King's faithful are not commonly involved in secret plots or plans (unless, of course, these plans might lead to warfare.) By and large, the cult isn't about secret deals and politics, and working towards secret goals only hampers their training. To a Sword King cultist, they need nothing other than basic weapons and armor. Their faith in the Sword king is enough to see them through any conflict, and if they live to see another dawn, so much the better.

THE SWORD KING'S FURY

While there are little formal ceremonies in this cult, worshippers do speak of a phenomenon,

where followers of the Sword King apparently are overcome by visions of battle and bloodshed. During battle, if a cultist gives in to these visions, it is said that Mabelode takes possession of the chosen Warrior, prompting him to great deeds of might and carnage.

The GM is encouraged to allow the Sword King's Fury to take over a PC or NPC Mabelode cultist at dramatically appropriate moments of the adventure. While under its effects, the character will act as though under the *Fury* spell (that is, one extra attack, cannot parry or dodge, ignores injuries until dead), receive a bonus of +30% for each attack, and, if a Luck roll is passed at the end of the Sword King's Fury, instantly heal all damage taken.

The Sword King's Fury lasts until the GM decides it is no longer needed. After the effects have passed, the character will pass out for 21-CON hours, his or her body taxed to its limits by the terrible energy and bloodlust that flowed through them.

Characters wishing to bring on an episode of the Sword King's Fury must have accomplished a great deal of carnage already to attract Mabelode's attention. If the GM decides that this is the case, he or she secretly rolls the player's POW X3. If this roll fails, the Sword King is unimpressed, and will not listen to any further entreaties. If it passes, the Fury takes full effect.

While under the Sword King's influence, the character is subjected to vision of warfare from all over the Multiverse. While part of their mind will still be aware of the conflict happening around them, they will also be fighting in countless wars across the planes, sometime fighting strange alien beings or mechanical devices. Their weapons might shift into rifles and pistols in their hands, and the character might even be taken to another world to fight in the battle he or she has witnessed. Being transported to another world is seen as a sign of great favor for the character, and their name will be entered into a book of great heroes after the battle.

Being affected by the Sword King's Fury will also double any Mabelode Allegiance earned during its duration.

DEMON PACTS OF MABELODE

Many units of the Sword King's cultists have made pacts with a single Que'Nast'lan demon for aid when such a demon would be beneficial to their cause. The cost for calling upon these awful creatures varies, but often a member of the unit to offer him or herself to the demon for single combat. This usually results in the cultists being reduced to a red paste, but sometimes a very strong fighter can defeat the demon.

In any case, the demon will usually perform whatever task for which it has been called before trying to collect its price.

SECRETS OF PYARAY

Cursed Sailors of an Undersea God

Thankfully, the cult of Pyaray has little care or inclination to pursue long-term goals or participate in the nasty power politics that characterize other branches of the Church of Chaos. The followers of the whisperer think that such concerns are petty distraction, things that must be dealt with. While they don't necessarily see themselves as any better than the other cults, they are disdainful of anything that prevents them from sailing the seas again.

To this end, priests of Pyaray spend months at a time patrolling the seas of the Young Kingdoms, only putting into Port in Hwamgaarl to resupply, drop off captured slaves, and allow the crew a very brief respite from the arduous task of crewing a Pan Tangian galley. Even under these conditions, priests stay on board their vessels or in the harbor district, straying into Hwamgaarl proper only when it would be foolish or fatal to not do so, such as a mandatory audience with the Theocrat.

While away from Pan Tang, these priests hold absolute sway over every aspect of the ship's course. They have orders to patrol certain sections of the Young Kingdoms before returning to Pan Tang, but are given a fair amount of leeway otherwise to pursue their own goals. As one of the most powerful nations in the Young Kingdoms, there is very little real threat of attack on Pan Tang, so naval patrols are not so tightly regimented that a handful of ships not showing up on time will not ruin the island's security.

PATROLS OF THE CULT

A typical naval patrol series is outlined below. This is intended to give GMs some insight as to where Pan Tangian ships would be in the world, and what their motivation might be. Statistics for a typical priest of Pyaray and his crew of cutthroats are also provided.

Western Continent Patrol

Total time at sea, in average conditions, of this leg is 12 days. However, this does not take into account, adverse weather, navigational errors, or extended encounters with other ships or forces. GMs should figure an even two weeks for this leg, give or take a few days to account for unforeseen circumstances.

HWAMGAARL TO DHAKOS

Travel time is five days. The patrol vessel sails south from Hwamgaarl, skirting around the edges of the Dragon Sea to minimize contact with sea serpents and other nautical weirdness from the sea around Melnibone. Dhakos is the capital of Jharkor, a Lawful nation. If the captain fails a Luck Roll, the galley has run across a ship from Jharkor's navy, and must flee or engage. If the Navy vessel is not encountered, the galley stands a good chance of happening upon a trading vessel from one of the other countries in the Western Continent, and will

pursue and engage at all costs. Any peoples captured will be chained in the galley to replace slaves that died during the pursuit. Those that survive the journey to Hwamgaarl will be made slaves upon arrival. The captain will also make a number of sacrifices to the Lord of the Deep from amongst the captured.

DHAKOS TO GROMOORVA

Travel time is two days. Gromoorva is the capital of Dharijor, which is a Chaotic nation aligned with Pan Tang. The galley will not pursue or engage Dharijoran vessels unless provoked. Other ships will be engaged as above. The second reason for this leg of the journey is to remind the Dharijoran people where their loyalties lie. Ships badly in need of supplies might put into port here, but this is rare.

GROMOORVA TO BANARVA

Travel time is one day. The galley is not likely to encounter many ships in this part of the sea, but any that they do find will likely have an escort of brave Tarkeshite sailors for protection. The galley captain isn't likely to back down, but the additional soldiers will make taking a ship, and its crew and passengers, all the more difficult.

BANARVA TO HWAMGAARL

Travel time is four days. This leg of the patrol requires the galley to sail through the relatively narrow opening to the Great Western Bay, through which all ships seeking port on the Western Continent must pass. The likelihood of an encounter is great, and many galley captains find that the best picking can be found during this leg of their patrol.

Northern Continent Patrol

For this leg of the patrol, total time at sea averages 29 days. This is the longest and most arduous leg of the patrol, but also the most rewarding. Captains returning to Hwamgaarl with a full complement of slaves and loot can expect an invitation to the Palace-Temple of the Theocrat as a reward for faithful service. Time at sea varies,

and can be as long as two months, if conditions and encounters prove problematic.

HWAMGAARL TO MENII

Travel time is 10 days. This is the longest leg of this patrol, but also the mostly likely to produce prey ships. Menii is the busiest trading post in the Young Kingdoms, and a Pan Tangian galley can almost always find decent pickings in this part of the sea. In fact, if things go well enough, the galley might be full with enough slaves and loot to head back to Hwamgaarl without finishing the patrol.

MENII TO JADMAR

Travel time is six days. Jadmar, the Capital of Vilmir, has a large standing Navy, and this leg of the patrol is the most dangerous for the galley. There is a good likelihood of ship encounters, but they are more likely to be naval vessels as trading ships. Pan Tangian captains are brave, but not fools. They will flee if outnumbered. Vilmirian ships are a good source of slaves (in particular, red hair, which is common amongst Vilmirians, is attractive and exotic to Pan Tangian nobles.)

JADMAR TO ILMAR

Travel time is eight days. The galley must skirt around a broad peninsula that shoots out from southern Vilmir, and will reeve along the coast while doing so. When they arrive in the seas around Ilmar, the galley is usually packed with slaves and loot, and will often head for homeport, instead of attacking ships in the seas around Ilmar. This is not always the case, however, and a cunning galley captain will feign indifference to local ships to lure them closer for a kill. Ilmiora lacks a strong naval presence, and what ships that are here will likely be simple trading vessels.

ILMAR TO HWAMGAARL

Travel time is 5 days. This leg of the journey is normally devoid of encounters with other ships. As the galley gets closer to Pan Tang, there are fewer and fewer ships in the waters. The crew will remain wary, though, on guard for any strange manifestations from in and around Pan Tang. The waters are tainted by blood and evil magic, and attract all manner of strange animals.

Southern Continent Patrol

Total time at sea for this leg is 26 days, which can vary like the other legs of the patrol. Ships in the Pan Tangian Navy make an entire patrol sweep over the course of roughly three months, given a few weeks downtime in Hwamgaarl, and sent out again. To avoid establishing a predictable pattern, the order in which they patrol changes each time, as do the order within the different patrols. Particularly dangerous places, like Jadmar, are sometimes avoided entirely.

HWAMGAARL TO MENII

Travel time is ten days. Menii, being the busiest port, gets a second dose of attention from Pan Tangian galleys. The journey here is also fraught with danger, since they must skirt around Melnibonean water to avoid the hazards found there.

MENII TO CADSANDRIA

Travel time is three days. These waters practically swarm with merchant traffic, accompanied by ships of stout sailors for protection. Pan Tangian galleys always outclass these vessels, and the prizes found in this area of the Young Kingdoms can be the richest of all.

CADSANDRIA TO RASCHIL

Travel time is 4 days. These waters are much the same as those between Menii and Cadsandria. In addition, the galley is within sight of the Argimiliarian coastline, and will raid there for slaves and supplies as needed.

RASCHIL TO HWAMGAARL

Travel time is nine days. This is the longest trip home for the galley, and the most dangerous. The galley must go around Melnibone, either to the north (which adds three days to their journey,) or to the south, (which means cutting briefly through the Boiling Sea, which is dangerous, uncomfortable, and potentially fatal.) The long way home is usually the one chosen, although captains might have other plans for this leg of the trip. An occasional venture into the Boiling Sea, has proven lucrative in the past.

THE COLD EMBRACE—A SHIP OF THE CHAOS FLEET

Below are the game statistics for the crew of a Pan Tangian galley. GMs are encouraged to use these as needed, especially when a PC ship runs afoul of the deadly reavers.

The Cold Embrace is a Pan Tangian slave galley. It is an ancient ship, having sailed the seas of the Young Kingdoms for over 300 years. It has had a series of captains, of which the most recent is a priest and Agent of Pyaray named Yin-Tom D'ash. When it leaves Hwamgaarl, *The Cold Embrace* has a full complement of 500 chained galley slaves, 100 warriors of the Pan Tangian Navy, and 60 officers. In addition, Yin-Tom keeps a cadre of 10 lesser priests of Pyaray, as his personal staff, to assist in sacrifices and the occasional summoning.

The figurehead of *The Cold Embrace* shows an octopus with obvious chaotic features enveloping a hapless human sailor, who reaches outward and appears to scream. The sails are ripped and patched in places, but still bear the red Arrows of Chaos, leaving no doubt to this massive ship's allegiance.

The ship's crew attacks any vessel they find. The ship's victims often hear and smell the ship well before an encounter with it. The stench from the slave galleys billows out from the ship like a cloud, smelling of hot metal and the rancid, oniony odor of filthy human bodies. On quiet seas, the sound of moaning, screaming slaves and the rhythmic pounding of drums to set the ship's pace presage the approach of *The Cold Embrace*.

THE CAPTAIN

Despite the ship's bulk, Captain D'ash can make it surprisingly manoeuvrable, able to come about and pursue just about any ship in the seas. Captain D'ash seeks prisoners and loot, but will gladly oblige those who wish to die rather than be captured. The priests of Pyaray make blood sacrifices after each ship found and sunk, in thanks to the Whisperer. The captain of enemy vessels is usually lashed to the mast and sent to the deep

with his ship, to serve Pyaray in his cold, lightless Hell.

CAPTAIN VIN-TOM D'ASH

PRIEST AND CHAMPION OF THE WHISPERER

Captain D'ash is an imposing sight. He's huge, covered in dreadlocks, and always wears his suit of demon-bound Pan Tangian plate, even while on his ship. He's also noted for his cruelty, even amongst his crew. He brokes no talk of mutiny, and will not hesitate to send troublesome crewmen to their deaths at the sea's bottom. He's implacable while pursuing a goal, and would make an excellent campaign villain.

CHAOS 333 BALANCE 15 LAW 23

**STR 13 CON 12 SIZ 16 INT 16 POW 18 DEX 13
APP 10**

**HIT POINTS: 14 ARMOUR: 2d8+1d10. Pan
Tangian demon plate (see below)**

DAMAGE BONUS: +1D4

<i>Weapon</i>	<i>Skill</i>	<i>Damage</i>
Demon Trident	120%	1d6+2+db+d8 +poison (see below.)
Demon Whip	60%	1d3-1+1d6+plus entangle.

SKILLS: Bargain 60%, Dodge 60%, Insight 50%, Natural World 45%, Navigate 100%, Oratory 60%, Potions 30%, Sailing 100%, Young Kingdoms 60%.

SPELLS: Bounty of Straasha (4), Breath of Death (6) Chain of Being (4), Chaos Warp (4), Control Sea Life (varies), Guide Water (4), Summon Demon (1), Summon Drowned Dead (1d8), Summon Elemental (1).

BOUND DEMONS AND ELEMENTALS: Undine bound into gold ring on right hand. D'ash keeps this creature in case he falls overboard while in his armor. The ring is a simple gold band with a series of screaming faces on it. MP to summon: 28

THE SHARK

Lesser demon, bound into trident. D'ash named this demon after its appearance when summoned, which was a purplish vapor vaguely composed into a shark's shape.

INT 4 POW 15 CON 21

ABILITIES:

- *Demon Weapon.* Adds 1d8 damage.
- *Paralyze.* Demon matches his CON of 21 against the CON of the victim. If demon wins, victim is paralyzed until they can roll a CONx1 roll at the start of each round.

NEED: Demon weapon must be bathed in blood at least once a day. D'ash keeps a supply of slaves on board for this.

THE ARM

Lesser demon, bound into whip. D'ash named this weapon after the Arms of Pyaray, since the whip has taken on a tentacle-like nature since the demon was bound into it.

INT 5 POW 22

ABILITIES:

- *Demon Weapon.* Adds 1d6 Damage.
- *Entangle.* Instead of dealing damage with a successful hit, D'ash can have the whip entangle a foe. By keeping the entangled foe off balance, D'ash can reduce their Dodge and weapon skills by half. The whip can be cut. It has four hit points.

NEED: Demon whip must touch human flesh at least once a day. It feels cold and clammy. D'ash normally keeps it on his person, and lets it slither over his body until needed.

THE SCALES

Lesser demon, bound into armor. Since binding this demon into his armor, D'ash has noted an accumulation of tiny sea lice on it. These lice are in fact manifestations of the demon bound therein, and scuttle over the surface of the armor to add protection whenever the D'ash is hit by a foe. They link together with overlapping carapaces, forming considerable protection, despite their individual size.

INT 4 POW 5 APP 10

ABILITIES: Demon Armor. Adds 1d10 points of armor.

NEED: The armor must be soaked in seawater for at least 2 hours a day. As a result, it's very rusty, but still functional.

THE CREW

The crew of *The Cold Embrace* is a somber lot. Their fate is to die in combat, or drown as a sacrifice to Pyaray. Still their fear of D'ash keeps them in line.

SAILORS OF THE COLD EMBRACE

A typical Pan Tangian sailor has the following stats. For officers, increase all skills by 25%. These are hard men, cruel and resentful.

**STR 12 CON 13 SIZ 14 INT 12 POW 10 DEX 13
APP 9**

HIT POINTS: 14 ARMOUR: None

DAMAGE BONUS: None

<i>Weapon</i>	<i>Skill</i>	<i>Damage</i>
Cutlass	45%	1d6+2
Dagger	40%	1d4+2

SKILLS: Climb 75%, Jump 50%, Natural World 35%, Sailing 60%, Swim 60%, Wire Walk 35%.

PAN TANGIAN MARINES

There are roughly 100 of these warriors on board the *Embrace*. They do the bulk of the ship's fighting. They still wear metal armor, seeing the chance of drowning at sea a welcome chance to serve Chaos forever.

**STR 13 CON 14 SIZ 13 INT 10 POW 9 DEX 11
APP 10**

**HIT POINTS: 14 ARMOUR: 2d8+1 Pan Tangian
Plate, Helm On.**

DAMAGE BONUS: +1D4

<i>Weapon</i>	<i>Skill</i>	<i>Damage</i>
Sea Axe	50%	2d6+2+db
Cutlass	55%	1d6+2+db

Full Shield 50% kb+1d4+db
Hunting Bow 60% 1d6+1+1/2db

SKILLS: Climb 50%, Dodge 50%, Jump 45%, Sailing 30%, Swim 30% (not that it'll do them any good.)

OVERSEER

Treat the Overseer as a Pan Tangian Marine, but with a cat-o-nine-tails instead of a cutlass. The cat does 1d6 points of damage.

GALLEY SLAVES

These poor wretches are from all over the Young Kingdoms. Some die after capture, but others are chained to the oars. There are close to 500 slaves in the galleys, monitored by an overseer.

STR 7 CON 7 SIZ 10 INT 10 POW 4 DEX 11 APP 8

HIT POINTS: 9 ARMOUR: None

DAMAGE BONUS: -1D4

<i>Weapon</i>	<i>Skill</i>	<i>Damage</i>
Fist	25%	1d3-1d4

SKILLS: Any, but at base chance.

PRIESTS OF PYARAI

D'ash keeps a cadre of lesser priests on board. They serve a variety of functions, from assisting in summoning to officiating sacrifices and other rites while at sea. This sort of position is typical of newly initiated priests. If they can survive 5 years at sea, then they'll have accumulated enough Allegiance to go on to other positions.

STR 12 CON 14 SIZ 14 INT 16 POW 16 DEX 12 APP 10

HIT POINTS: 14 ARMOUR: 2d8+1, Pan Tangian Plate

DAMAGE BONUS: +1D4

<i>Weapon</i>	<i>Skill</i>	<i>Damage</i>
Whip	45%	1d3-1+db+entangle
Trident	65%	1d6+2+db
Dagger	40%	1d4+2+db

SPELLS: Chain of Being (4), Bounty of Straasha (4), Breath of Death (6), Summon Elemental (1) and Summon Demon (1).

SKILLS: Climb 50%, Dodge 50%, Jump 45%, Sailing 30%, Swim 30%

THE EVER-HUNGRY

D'ash and his crew spill so much blood into the waters of the Young Kingdoms that *The Cold Embrace* has a large number of sharks that follow it through the waters of the Young Kingdoms. These fish have grown huge from feeding on sacrifices thrown into the water, and are almost always in a state of feeding frenzy. Any character falling into the water with these beasts must pass a Luck Roll to avoid attracting 1d6 of these animals.

MEDIUM SIZED SHARKS.

Statistics for these creatures can be found on page 222 of the *Stormbringer* rulebook.

LARGE SHARKS

These behemoths are creatures of legend. They can swallow people whole, attack small boats, and make short work of anything they decide to be food.

STR 45 CON 32 SIZ 45 INT 2 POW 14 DEX 10

HIT POINTS: 39 ARMOUR: 1d8 Thick Skin

DAMAGE BONUS: +5d6 MOV 10 (SWIMMING)

<i>Weapon</i>	<i>Skill</i>	<i>Damage</i>
Bite	75%	2d6+db

SKILLS: Jump 45%, Search 50%, Smell Blood 80%, Track 30%.

SECRETS OF SLORTAR

In the Worship of Secret Pleasures

People attracted to the cult of Slortar tend to be, amongst other things, seekers of pleasure and thrills. Such individuals also tend to be inordinately charismatic people, and those with the greatest charisma and force of character typically find themselves at the high levels of the cult's ranks. In many ways, the cult of Slortar is a cult of personality, since the head of any individual cult will hold the bulk of his faithful in awe. Such a person has tremendous power in their hands, and usually aren't afraid to sacrifice younger, less experienced cult members to foil the authorities.

The cult is attractive to new members for a lot of reasons that are obvious. The hedonistic aspects of the cult attract the bulk of its adherents, and the focus on pleasure provides a great deal of comfort to those who must toil daily for their existence. These reasons alone are often enough to convert someone to the cult, since many people find comfort, aid, and succor in Slortar's loving arms.

Other attractive aspects of the cult may not be quite so obvious. In places where the cult operates openly, such as Cadsandria, membership in the cult's inner circle is reserved for the wealthy elite of that society. True, there are many, many people swelling the masses of the cult who aren't

in the inner circle. But admission to this group is something of a status symbol. Having other people feel envious of your position is a rarified sort of pleasure, and something that many nobles enjoy immensely.

Still, the cult does attract a large number of what Lawful regimes consider "undesirable," those who are marginalized or otherwise have no proper place. Vandals, brigands, even murderers all have a place in the cult, and an aspiring cult leader will recognize the skills such people can bring to the cult.

Unbeknownst to most of its members, the cult of Slortar also breeds a race of half-demons, using cult member's bodily fluids and magical energy to produce these foul offspring. Half-demon children are raised in secret cult monasteries throughout the Young Kingdoms, often operating as orphanages to encourage the adoption of the demon-children. Whether this is for some secret goal, or is just a method to increase the amount of Chaos in the Young Kingdoms is left up to the individual GM.

DARK RITUALS OF SLORTAR

The process by which half-demons are conceived and born (as practiced by the cult of Slortar) is

lengthy and involved. There are three steps, each entailing substantial magical and financial resources.

STEP 1: OBTAINING SAMPLES

The cult maintains a sizable body of ritual prostitutes, whose duty is supposedly to bring pleasure to any who ask for it. However, unbeknownst to their customers, these prostitutes know certain magicks that allow them to retain the emissions of their customers, and expel them later, fresh as though just spilled, into a prepared vessel at the end of the day.

Attractive people with spell casting abilities are a prized commodity amongst the cult. Even is a holy prostitute cannot cast spells, it can be cast on them by another.

At the end of the day, the prostitutes will converge on the house of the priest in charge of their work, and expel the collected fluids into a large basin or jar. These vessels contain demons with the ability to keep the contents fresh, in a manner similar to that of the spell listed above.

Once the vessel is full, it is taken to the cult's main center of worship. It will likely be placed in storage until the other requirements for the creation of the half-demon have been acquired.

STEP 2: ACCUMULATING MAGIC POINTS

In addition to the collection of semen, the cult also needs copious amounts of magical energy to accomplish the half-demon ritual. This is collected at the monthly revels that function as worship meetings.

The high priest of the cult will often know a spell that enchants an object to siphon a minute amount of magic points from anyone within a certain range. These magic points are stored in the object until they are needed.

Aside from the casting of the actual spell, this step in the process is the easiest, and is normally only performed a couple of times before the actual summoning attempt.

STEP 3: SUMMONING THE MOTHER-DEMON

This is the last part of the process, and is also the most time-consuming and arduous for the priests of Slortar. At this point, a grand summoning must be performed to bring a demon of immense power to the Young Kingdoms.

The summoning for the Mother-Demon works just like a regular summoning, only that the magic point requirements for the Mother-Demon are huge. She requires at least 50 magic points to summon, with each additional magic point added giving the summoning a 1% chance of succeeding. Thus, to be certain of a success, the summoner must have access to at least 150 magic points. Note that magic points accumulated through Step #2 of this process cannot be used for this requirement.

While her appearance varies at each summoning, the Mother-Demon is always obviously and obscenely female. In one form, she takes the shape of a massive ambulatory vagina, while at other times she is a regal, although huge, statuesque beauty. In either form, her swollen, distended labia guard a fanged, drooling mouth that eagerly slurps up the collected semen after the magic point sacrifice is paid.

Once summoned, the Mother-Demon will bargain with her summoners. The accumulated magic points from Step #2 are her price, which she will accept with a successful Luck Roll on the part of the summoner. At this point, the accumulated magic points and semen from Step #1 are given to her, and she departs this world.

After the ritual insemination, the Mother-Demon vanishes to gestate her offspring in her own plane. The gestation period varies, and can take as long as two years from the date of the ritual. During this time, the Mother-Demon refuses all summonings, and will under no circumstances be brought to the Young Kingdoms.

When the gestation period is over, the Mother-Demon will give the high Priest of Slortar that summoned her a sign, indicating that the time of birth is approaching. Another summoning is held, this time with only a relatively minor (20 points) magic point sacrifice. When she arrives again, the entire ritual chamber is flooded with

sticky amniotic fluid, and the demon-child is born into the world. This process will take 1d8 hours, and will likely tax all the priests present.

Once the child is born, the Mother-Demon leaves the Young Kingdoms, and will not answer another summons for a year. Thus, the number of half-demon children in the Young Kingdoms is limited, both by the expense involved in their creation, and by the nature of the Mother-Demon.

There are a few new spells and demon abilities involved in this process, which are detailed below. Note that these spells and abilities are not well known, and it is up to the GM to decide if a player would have access to them.

New Spells

These are new spells for followers of the cult of Slortar.

UNNATURAL RETENTION (1)

Range is touch. Chaotic. While under the effects of this spell, no substance placed in the body of the target will age, be digested, or undergo any of the normal processes associated with it. These substances are held in a sort of magical stasis, and, at any time, can be expelled from the body. Once expelled, they will behave normally.

If the target is unwilling, the caster must overcome his or her target's Magic Points on the Resistance Table.

The spell's duration is half the caster's POW in hours. At the end of the duration, all substances held in the body will begin to behave normally (that is, food will be digested, and so on.)

Holy prostitutes of Slortar use this spell to collect semen from unsuspecting donors. There are other uses for this spell, which its certain enterprising players can come up with. Note that food consumed while under the effects of this spell will not be digested, and will therefore provide no nutrition for the eater. The victim will feel stuffed to the gills, but will soon begin to starve if the spell is cast over and over again.

ENDURING FRESHNESS (10)

Range is touch. Chaotic. Enchants a vessel that, if airtight, will prevent the decay or corruption of

any item contained inside. This can be up to a gallon in volume. Once the vessel is closed, the spell takes affect, and will keep its contents fresh indefinitely, until the bottle is opened or broken.

New Demonic Ability

This is a new demonic ability available for the demons of Slortar.

SPAWN

The cost of this ability is fixed at 10 magic points. The demon must also have some way of draining away characteristic points from a target (i.e. Drain Soul, Exsanguinate.) The demon can use points drained either in the way its ability describes, or it can use the points on a one-to-one basis as magic points for creating new demons.

For example, if a demon were to drain 8 magic points from someone with a Drain Soul attack, it can use those 8 magic points to birth a new demon worth 8 points from itself. Points can be stored up for ten rounds, and then must be spent or used in some other way.

Demons created in this manner are not bound to the owner of the parent demon, and will continue to grow as time goes by. These baby demons must have the same method of characteristic draining as the parent demon, and can use gained points to increase its own characteristics/abilities until it matches the parent demon. Once it has also learned the Spawn ability, the child demon will be able to spawn new demons itself.

New Enchantment

This is an enchantment available to those who worship Slortar.

SLORTAR'S EMPTY BASIN

A shallow bowl that resembles a wash basin, the Empty Basin is a powerful enchantment that drains away and stores magic points.

All surfaces of the basin are engraved with images of base and debauched behavior, culminating in a stylistic depiction of an orgy in the bowl's central depression. It is a light terracotta

color, resistant to damage, and of unknowable antiquity.

If the basin is kept empty, it will incite all those around it to engage in some act of carnal desire to licentious behavior. All people within 100 yards of the Basin must resist a POT of 16 with their own Magic Points. If they fail, they'll feel an impulse to engage in some form of pleasurable activity. If they give in to this impulse, at the start of the act, the Basin will drain away a single magic point. The target will experience this drain as a sort of shuddering spasm of joy, not quite orgasmic but close.

At the completion of this act, the Basin will again attempt to influence the character to act. This time, it will be more difficult to resist the urge, since the target will be minus a single magic point. Once again, if the target fails to resist, they'll act in a pleasurable manner, losing a magic point at the start of the act.

The basin can hold roughly 100 magic points before becoming satiated. It can hold these points indefinitely, and any sorcerer capable of casting spells can use the magic points in the Basin as their own. This makes the Basin handy for demon summoning, where a large pool of magic points can be accumulated very fast. It can also be used to provide the Mother-Demon incentive to spawn the cult's half-demon characters.

The Basin is solid and sturdy, but can be broken by persistent adventurers. Any blow doing ten points of damage or more will cause it to shatter, exploding into a shower of white-hot ceramic fragments. This will do 1d6 points of damage for every 10 magic points currently held to all targets within 50 yards of the bowl.

The Empty Basin is currently in the possession of The Purple Tongue, a cult of Slortar operating in Pickarayd. This branch of the cult is busily churning out half-demons as fast as they can, and storing them in an orphanage in the highlands of that country. They have somewhere between one and two dozen half-demons of various ages, most of which are being groomed for places within the cult.

New Demons

These new demons are available for those who worship Slortar.

THE MOTHER-DEMON

An ancient demon, huge and powerful. No stats can do this being justice. She is impervious to almost all weapons, and can choose to destroy up to 1d8 opponents in a combat round, unless they can dodge away from her attacks (which always hit.) If she chooses, she may also take those who please her away, subjecting them to awful magical operations, making them something other than human.

She is revered by the cult of Slortar, rather than worshipped in her own right (although there are some who secretly offer her worship) because of the service she offers the cult. Her motives are alien and unknowable. She might choose to destroy a cult as soon as help it. Only the sacrifice of magic points seems to offer her any solace, and a cult without a sufficient sacrifice will feel her heartless wrath.

She knows all spells associated with the cult of Slortar, as well as Chaos Warp and Curse of Chaos. She will sometimes bestow a demonic feature open a priest whom she favors.

The summoning of the Mother-Demon isn't really a summoning per se. She is far too powerful to be compelled to the Young Kingdoms by mere human sorcerers. She can be called and cajoled into manifestation, but this is at her pleasure.

DEMON CONCUBINES

A demon concubine is a status symbol for members of the cult of Slortar. The summoning and binding of one of these beasts is quite a feat, and his or her fellows afford any sorcerer who can maintain them great esteem.

AVERAGE DEMON CONCUBINE, LESSER DEMON

HUMANOID, NAUGHTY PLAYTHINGS

Concubines can be of any shape or appearance, and some can even switch freely between genders at their master's command. Exotic skin tones are common features, as are feathers, scales, or animal eyes. Adept in the ways of love, a demon concubine can take an aspiring sorcerer farther into the mysteries of Slortar's pleasures than most human minds can handle.

CHARACTERISTIC	ROLLS	AVERAGE
STR	2D8	8-10
CON	3D8	13-14
SIZ	2D8	8-10
INT	3D8	13-14
POW	3D8	13-14
DEX	3D8	13-14
APP	5D8	22-23

HIT POINTS: AV 11-12 MOVE: 8

AV. DAMAGE BONUS: NONE

ABILITIES:

- *Drain Soul*, POW:POW roll per round, drains 1d8 MP per round, then drains POW.
- *Knowledge* (secrets of love.) Demon knows all there is to know the art of lovemaking, including knowledge from other planes and dealing with non-human species.
- *Spawn*, the demon can use stored magic points from their *Drain Soul* ability to make new minor demons, which are birthed from its body. Note that a demon must have at least 17 mp to spawn a demon-child; one for each d8 for the spawn's characteristics, and ten for the *Drain Soul* ability.
- *Shape Change*, the demon can alter its gender from male to female at will. It can take no other shapes, unless given other shapes during summoning (see page 172 of the *Stormbringer* rules for more information about this.)

SKILLS: Listen 20%, Move Quietly 20%, Own Plane 15%, Summoner's Language INT x2.

NEED: Demon concubines have ravenous sexual appetites, and must satisfy their carnal desires at least once a day to keep them happy. They will actively pursue more than one encounter a day, though, and can swiftly exhaust the stamina of their summoner.

MAGIC POINTS TO SUMMON: 59-61, depending on SIZ.

abilities. Treat these abilities as though they had been received through the Chaos Warp spell, only without the normal POW loss. For each full magic point earned by giving up skill points, the character gains another Chaos Allegiance point.

Any time the half-demon gets a chance to have any characteristic increase, they may, if they choose, instead buy a new demon ability with a magic point cost equal to the points gained to the characteristic. Note that this is in place of the characteristic gain, not as a supplement to it. They will also gain a single point of Chaos Allegiance for each point of attribute spent in this manner.

GMs may also secretly determine that a character is a very human seeming half-demon (even without the player knowing.) Such a being might be drawn towards Chaos, but might also wish to distance itself from that force. Until the exact nature of the character is revealed, the GM is encouraged to have demonic abilities manifest at dramatically appropriate moments, or at any time the character is exposed to strong Chaotic energy (spells, demons, etc.) If the character discovers his true heritage, from then on they may behave like a half-demon character, as described above.

CREATING HALF-DEMON CHARACTERS

At the GMs option, players can make half-demon characters during character creation. Note however that these beings are rare, and whole groups of them working together would almost never happen.

A half-demon may roll any three characteristics on d8s instead of d6s. For each characteristic rolled this way, add 1 point of Chaos Allegiance to the character's score.

Additionally, the player can sacrifice any and all skill points during character creation to purchase demon abilities, at a cost of 25 skill points for a single magic point's worth of demon

SECRETS OF XIOMBARG

The Power behind Thrones

While the cult of Xiombarg does offer its members a number of benefits, these do not come without a cost. By joining the cult, the members trade one form of servitude for another, and Xiombarg can be, like any Lord of Chaos, a cruel and fickle mistress. The high priest of a cell rules that cell absolutely, answering only to Xiombarg. Many develop inflamed senses of self-importance, and it is not uncommon for the cells to be seen as extensions of the high priest. This works wonderfully for the priest, but her underlings typically are less than thrilled when their own desires are glossed over in favor of supporting those of their mistress.

The method the cult uses to gain power and influence for its members tends towards violence and murder, in keeping with Xiombarg's title of the Sword Queen. However, only so many nobles in kingdom can die under mysterious circumstances before attracting unwanted attention. Eventually, most cells attract too much attention, and must contend with nosy authorities investigating the cult's activities. If these figures are also disposed, this attracts even more attention. At some point, the cell members must decide to flee and relocate to another area. In this way, Xiombarg keeps her faithful isolated and constantly on the move. Even

fellow cell members might turn another in for freedom, and eventually the individual cultist is left with no support but that from their god. And this is when the true nature of the cult comes out.

At this point, cultists are so indoctrinated in the idea that power comes from violence and manipulation that they cannot any longer live around normal people. At such times, they become wandering agents of destruction. Some try to form new cells in new cities, and meet with varying degrees of success. Eventually, the cultist will not be welcome in any part of the Young Kingdoms, and can only plea to Xiombarg for help and support.

To these requests, the Queen of Swords is only too happy to oblige. Supplicants are whisked away to other world, often transformed into hideous animal-human hybrids under the guise of being better able to live in their new environment. As their time away from human form grows, their human minds fade, until they are simply mindless beasts in thrall to Chaos.

This is how Xiombarg rewards her faithful. They are trained up to be effective soldiers for her armies, and the Sword Queen makes them remove themselves from human society, until they have nowhere else to go but straight into her arms.

Xiombarg will often hint at this fate by rewarding faithful cultists with animalistic mutations while still operating within human cities. Such cultists refuse to see the disfiguring mutations as anything but signs of favor, and work even hard to enmesh themselves into Xiombarg's plans.

THE REWARDS OF XIOMBARG

GMs wishing to emulate the Sword Queen's fickle sense of humor can use the following procedure. Each time the cultist makes a successful Allegiance check, the Gm should secretly make a Luck roll for the cultist. If the roll fails, then Xiombarg's attention has been attracted, and she bestows the cultist with one of the mutations listed below. GMs should roll a D10, or pick one that is particularly appropriate.

- 1-3 - The cultist's body or mind is invigorated with the power of Chaos. They immediately gain a single point to any characteristic.
- 4 - Carnivorous. The cultist develops an overwhelming preference for meat, and will not be pleased with any other food. As her Allegiance points increase, this desire for meat turns into a desire for fresher meat, and eventually raw meat.
- 5 - Animal features. The cultist's face takes on a slight animalistic cast. This can be any animal. As Allegiance grows, this cast becomes more and more pronounced.
- 6 - Dark Hunger. The character develops an extreme sexual appetite. This starts of relatively normal, but as Allegiance grows, becomes increasingly deviant. She will eventually desire anything she sees.
- 7 - Bloodlust. When angered or stresses, the character is prone to violent actions. If blood is spilled before them, they must make a POWX5 roll to resist being enraged, and respond as though under the effects of the *Fury* spell. Character may also develop a desire to drink blood.
- 8 - Night eyes. The character can now see in the dark as though it was daytime, but their eyes will shine in strong light like those of

an animal. Colors lose their sheen, and, everything looks flat and dull.

- 9 - Mutation. One of the character's limbs develops an animal appearance. This might be claws, a tentacle, or extra hair, at the GMs option. Claws and tentacles might be used to attack (30% base chance, 1d6+db damage,) or be disfiguring and completely useless.
- 10 - Hide bound. Each time this result is rolled, the character gains one step on the Roll table in natural armor as their skin hardens, develops scales or plates of bone. The first time, this is worth 1d2 natural armor, 1d4 the next, 1d6 after that, and so on.

Each obvious physical mutation costs the character one point of APP. Reduced to zero APP, the character becomes a mindless spawn of Chaos. Such characters are considered demons, and can be summoned and bound like normal.

THE SHYING VIOLET SOCIETY – A CULT OF XIOMBARG CELL

The Shying Violets is the name of a group of the wives and daughters of wealthy nobles and merchant families operating on the Island of the Purple Towns. Morgan Cleareyes, the eldest daughter of a prominent Purple Town merchant family, formed this group several years ago.

Cleareyes was a student of science at a monastery dedicated to Arkyn in the mountains of the central Purple Town island. She was, by all accounts, and apt pupil, skilled in numbers and figures. She also volunteered in the monastery library, helping to keep track of the books and artifacts held therein.

She left the monastery before her education was complete, and returned to the Menii to assist her family in operating its busy merchant business. To her chagrin, her father, Luscious Tightpurse, was a devout follower of Goldar, and would not allow a woman to be too intimately involved in the family fortunes. She was instructed to stay away from family affairs, and focus her attentions

on more “womanly” things, such as looking for a suitable husband to increase her family’s holdings.

Playing the role of the dutiful daughter, Cleareyes formed the Shying Violets, which had the expressed goal of organizing activities so that young men and women in the Isle could meet and fall in love. It would also provide good places for wealthy businessmen to meet and make deals. These gatherings have proven to be quiet popular, and Cleareyes and the Violets are in high demand in Purple Towner society, which is exactly what Clear eyes wishes. The truth behind this organization is, of course, much more sinister.

Morgan Cleareyes always harbored a great deal of resentment towards the culture that brought her up. She felt that her brother’s were unfairly initiated into the family business, and that her brains, skill and insight were not given a chance to prove themselves. She hated being moved to the monastery after arguing with her father, and sought a means to improve her life. Or at least alleviate the boredom that was her constant companion in the monastery.

One day while working in the monastery library, Cleareyes made a startling discovery. There was a secret passageway in the library that led down into the ground beneath. There she discovered a collection of tomes and artifacts that made the main library collection pale in comparison. Fearing discovery, she left, covering her tracks so that no one would notice the intrusion.

She did a bit of digging amongst the monks, and discovered that the monastery was once the holding place for dangerous artifacts of Chaos, with the idea that the monks would give each artifact careful scientific study. However, over the years, no new artifacts were brought to the monastery, and eventually those who knew of the existing collection died off without telling where it could be found. The collection was known about by reputation, but no one, save Cleareyes, had any idea where it might be.

So, Morgan Cleareyes had found her boredom relief. Night after night, she left her cell and stole into the hidden chamber to pick amongst the musty tomes, seeking and finding knowledge that wore away at her sanity. She returned to one

book again and again, *The Lexicon of Chaos*, and learnt all she could about the worship of the Lords of Entropy. Thinking she had found a way out of her boring, prosaic life, she attempted a summoning in the bowels of the monastery, perhaps not thinking anything would happen.

At a critical juncture, though, something went wrong. Instead of pulling a demon into this world, Morgan Cleareyes was sucked out of hers. She drifted amongst the spheres for a time, seemingly dragged along by some outside force.

The Sword Queen was aware of the girl, and her lust for power and adventure. When the summoning went awry, it brought the girl to one of its domains.

What transpired during this time is purely conjectural. It is known that when Cleareyes was returned to the monastery, she was a devout servant of Xiombarg, and was committed to bringing others to the god. She left the monastery, feigning homesickness.

Her desire to help in the family business was a rouse to get involved enough to eventually take over. She thought that, with her families resources behind her, her worship of Xiombarg could spread much farther than it could without.

When her father rebuffed her, Cleareyes was not put off. She figured that if she couldn’t have her father’ company, she could work to take over every wealthy family in the Purples Towns.

The Shying Violets were initially only organizing parties. But, at these functions, Cleareyes was looking for potential recruits for her cult of Xiombarg. She found many, mostly jaded housewives and wealthy matrons. She took one initiate, then two, and then more. Cleareyes is very convincing, and few turned her offers down. Those who did refuse met with untimely and unfortunate accidents. Soon Cleareyes had a sizable and loyal following, and she began to put her plan into action.

Each member of the cult was expected to pressure their husbands into making sure that they dealt only with the husbands of other members. This was done easily enough using purely mundane means, and the occasional bit of sorcery to help smooth things along. By working together,

the cell was able to make their husbands companies grow to substantial profits.

The cult was also responsible for the misfortunes that fell upon competitor's ships and families. In this regard, the cell was operating rather like an ordinary merchant cartel, albeit one with a more magical arsenal.

The next stage, though, was a bit worse. Now that the cell members where more or less in control of the operations of various business in the Isle, the cell began removing the husbands from the picture, and handing control over to the cult members. Some of these transfers of power were very public, but others were private. Influential members would come down with mysterious ailments, and their wives supposedly passing their wishes along.

This is how the situation stands now. The cult is consolidating their power in the Isles, and more and more merchants are becoming unavailable. It's only a matter of time before someone starts to notice. And when Morgan Cleareyes starts to mutate, the cult is going to take on a decidedly unwholesome nature.

USING THE SHYING VIOLETS

This group makes an excellent introductory point to a campaign involving politics of the Young Kingdoms. Even if a group has no female PCs, a GM can still have them run afoul of the society's members.

For example, suppose one of the PCs attracts the attention of beautiful young women of a minor noble house while in the Purple Towns. She generally makes herself useful tot the group, perhaps speaking to her father about loosening import taxes on goods brought into the Isle. When a third party wishes the adventurers to perform a task of dubious legality, the noblewomen can vouch for the third party, indicating that they have a stellar reputation and would never do anything to jeopardize others. However, the maiden is secretly a member of the Shying Violet's inner cult of Xiombarg, and is making use of the adventurers to ferry goods to all corners of the Young Kingdoms. And, even if this comes to light, they surely won't blame the noblewoman. This is an

excellent opportunity to play with your character's ideals and biases.

Also, the characters might be hired to look into the increasing number of murders and disappearances amongst the nobility and merchant families of the Purple Towns. All signs seem to point to the Shying Violets, which should seem absurd to the adventurers, and their employers. Also, an "informant" might come forward with information implicating another merchant cartel in the murders, indicating that this cartel was seeking to divert attention away from itself to the Violets.

If the PCs begin working against the new cartel, they will attract a lot of attention for themselves. In this way, the Violets make their adversaries work against each other, while maintaining the veneer of innocence that keeps them safe.

GMs should work to play up the innocent girl angle of the Violets. This will keep the players from taking the group seriously, which will make the eventual reprisal all the more shocking.

SECRET GOALS

Morgan Cleareyes is currently seeking to establish Violet chapter houses all over the Purple Towns. Since the nobility of the Isles sees the groups as a great benefit, they have substantial funding.

Aside from Menii, most of the houses are in rather out of the way places on the far shores of the Isle. Cleareyes indicates that she wished the Violets to have a presence all over the Isle to better serve the nobles and merchants that get so much out of the society's services.

Any PC with magical knowledge, if faced with a map of the Isle with the Violet chapter houses in place will note (with and Idea Roll) that the houses all form the points of a sign of Chaos, with the middle point somewhere in the central highlands of the Isle. This middle point is found to lay right over the monastery where Cleareyes first made her pact with Chaos.

Cleareyes plans to use the chapter houses for the society as mass altars to Chaos, and, on a night of a conjunction in the Million Spheres, have sacrifices performed at each house, while she and a select few perform awful rites at the monastery. If

all goes well, a "font of Chaos" will emerge at the central point, and, should anyone bathe in it, they will gain vast cosmic power. Cleareyes read of this in the *Lexicon of Chaos*, and any PC that reads this tome will know of the rituals needed.

If the font is opened, anyone with can bathe in it. The effects are based on how many of the altars are functioning and receiving sacrifices:

- 1 - One altar contributes only a bit of energy. Anyone bathing in it gains a single point of Chaos Allegiance, and adds one point to each characteristic.
- 2 - Two altars contribute 2 points to each characteristic, 2 points of Chaos Allegiance, and a single demonic ability with a cost of 3 points or less.
- 3 - Three altars contribute 3 characteristic points, 9 points of Chaos Allegiance, and any combination of demonic abilities of a cost of 5 points or less.
- 4 - Four altars ass 4 characteristic points, 16 Chaos Allegiance, and any number of demonic abilities not costing more than 10 points together,
- 5 - Five Altars add 5 to each characteristic, 25 Chaos Allegiance, and any number of demonic abilities up to a cost of 20 points total. Regardless of other factors, and character who bathes in a font of this level or higher will immediately count as a champion of Chaos for all purposes.
- 6 - Six Altars add 6 to each characteristic, 36 points of Chaos Allegiance, and demon abilities of up to 30 points.
- 7 - Seven Altars add 7 to each characteristic, add 49 points of Chaos Allegiance, and demon abilities of up to 40 points.
- 8 - Eight Altars add 8 to each characteristic, 64 points of Chaos Allegiance, and demon abilities of up to 50 points.

For an altar to contribute energy to this process, it must be consecrated, and no less than 20 people must be involved in a sacrifice of some sort. This can be the traditional type with blood and knives, but might also be sexual in nature.

Also, the font is only open for 30 rounds, and a character must be in it to all ten to gain even the slightest effect. If any altar is stopped from contributing during the process, its effects are lost. At the end of the 30 rounds, any characters who gain power from it are considered demons, and can be summoned and bound as normal.

Naturally, PCs might allow the process to happen, and bathe in the font themselves when the time comes. GMs should take to care to only let this happen to very lucky and careful PCs, since the tremendous power gained can make for some difficulties in the future.

This set-up is designed to be played out as a mini-campaign, or perhaps a diversion from a longer story arch. Also, an immortal sorcerer in the form of Morgan Cleareyes can be a thorn in the PCs side for a long time to come.

MORGAN CLEAREYES

WEALTHY SOCIALITE AND XIOMBARG CULTIST

CHAOS 30, BALANCE 2, LAW 10

STR 10 CON 13 SIZ 13 INT 17 POW 18 DEX 14
APP 17

HIT POINTS: 13 ARMOUR: None - wears a suit of leather and ring (1d6+1, helm on) if situation warrants.

DAMAGE BONUS: NONE

<i>Weapon</i>	<i>Skill</i>	<i>Damage</i>
Dagger	120%	1d4+2

SKILLS: Art (Conversation) 80%, Bargain 60%, Craft (Sleight of Hand) 55%, Dodge 75%, Evaluate 60% Fast Talk 65%, Insight 70%, Listen 50%, Million Spheres 10%, Natural World 35%, Oratory 70%, Ride 70%, Search 50%

SPELLS: Morgan Cleareyes knows all of the spells associated with the Xiombarg cult, mentioned in the player section for this cult. She also knows *Witch Sight (3)* and *Summon Demon (1)*. She is loathe to actually use a summoning, since her last one went so poorly, but might do it if adventurers prove particularly meddlesome.

CONTACTS/ALLIES: Given her position in Purple Towner society, Cleareyes has contacts in just about every facet of life. Any statistics needed can be found in the Young Kingdom's Digest, on pages 221-228 of the Stormbringer rulebook.

Any members of her cult can be found in the same section of the book, but replace any spells with appropriate ones from the Xiombarg cult section. In particular, Morgan has trained a pair of assassins in the mysteries of the cult. These two women are her constant companions, and do the bulk of her dirty work. Use the assassin stats in the

Young Kingdoms Digest, but add 30% to each weapon skill, and replace their *Bonds Unbreakable (3)* spell with one from the Xiombarg cult section.