

Earthdawn Legends

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WELCOME, FRIENDS AND TRAVELERS. . .



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EDITOR'S NOTE

The things that really suck are the ones that linger. However, I think things are finally getting back on track. I've gotten my summer projects well underway. My room is now a beautiful blue. I have new shelves. My computer is in good shape. Work is going well. My allergies are finally under control. And I am back!

We've spent a lot of time lately playing Dynasty Warriors 3. Very fun, very aggravating. But, at the same time, since we bought out Playstation 2, my work has been much better. And now I get to watch all the anime DVDs I own, which really is a lot.

In short... I'M BACK!!

As always... the game must go on!
Lady Saria
aka Jenny



UPDATES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

-I have my own domain! <http://www.ladysaria.com>

-I am officially out of Poll ideas. If you have any, please send them to us!

-Please read the last paragraph of this month's spotlight and write to us!

-Obviously the last newsletter had the wrong header, and I'm sorry about that. I was trying to hurry to get it out and I farked up. It was really 4-06, not 3-6... duh...



IDEA OF THE MONTH

This will be the last of the "Idea of the Month" segments. To prove that I am personally out of ideas, I have chosen a link to some interesting house rules:

<http://www.geocities.com/perrycharb/hrules.html>



WEBSITE OF THE MONTH

<http://www.tesarta.com/>

Tesarta Online Gamer's Resource Page

This site has a bunch of interesting resources for gamers and writers alike.



THE SPOTLIGHT **Religion, a Fact of Life**

This is part two of a focus on religion and gaming. This may be a delicate topic for some of you, so please know that this topic will be treated with care and will not last for many issues. First, let's set an even playing ground. Earthdawn, Shadowrun, and other RPGs are just that: *games*. A game is not real life and real life is not a game. The average gamer is able to draw a line between his own life and his game. Even a dedicated gamer should have defined boundaries. Always remember, it's just a game.

All of my friends belong to different denominations when it comes down to religion. One is Catholic, another is an atheist. It takes all kinds. As long as there is more than one person on this planet, there will be differing thoughts and beliefs. This is a fact of human nature. Taken to an extreme, the result is a religious war. Think of the Crusades.

For those of you who have mudded (for more information about mudding, visit <http://www.mudconnector.com>), I'm thinking particularly of the worship of a god there. In this case, there are specific advantages, such as earning the use of the holy sword or shield. And yet, Saria and Aryx became an immortal without ever sacrificing a single corpse to a god. Subsequent characters did, but that's a different story.

So, there are benefits to in character beliefs in games. And, I say this for the sake of argument, as long as they stay "in character" there are no problems.

As in our world, many religions exist simultaneously. They always have. Many even share traits or have similar structures. They are an attempt at an explanation of the eternal question "why?".

That there are multiple religions is true whether or not we wish it to be and we cannot ignore that fact. Unless there is a conjunction of certain events (ala the Revelation of John), this will be true. There is no world, fantasy or other, where only one religion can rationally exist alone, be it monotheistic or polytheistic.

In RPGs, religions are as diverse as imagination. There *should* be multiple religions in fantasy. It serves to enrich the tapestry of the world and even plot possibilities. If we are striving for a modicum of realism, which I realize makes little sense in a fantasy game (just go with it for now), we cannot disallow any possibility. Unless you force a kind of predestination on your players (any type of 'plot hammering'), anything really is possible.

Also, as in our world, the worship of one god should not be taken as an affront to another, or the worshipper of another. A little give and take is required in the balance of life. For example, there cannot be evil without its polar opposite, good. While it would be easy to have a Terry Pratchett moment here, I won't.

This is a terribly difficult subject to discuss and I'm sure that I've missed a lot. Next month's section will have an opening for your opinions on the matter. If you wish to send in your opinion, please try to keep it to about 100 words or so. I won't not include something because it's too long, but please don't pontificate.



THE BIGGER PICTURE

Greek and Roman Mythology

Of the second half of this project, the Bigger Picture will have only one article like the one you are about to read. Since the knowledge of Greek and Roman mythology is so common, this article will focus on the parallels between the gods and goddesses and the Passions of Barsaive. The following 5 articles will deal with brief introductions to easily incorporate ideas into our world and games. I have deliberately left out Floranus (who I could only match victory with the goddess Nike) and Lochost because their ideals are too vague and pure to match easily. If anyone has ideas, please write to us.

Astendar - Aphrodite/Venus is the obvious parallel here. However, with Astendar watches over art and music as well, so the Muses and the Graces must also be mentioned. Apollo, however, was the god of the fine arts, poetry, and music.

Chorrolis - Hermes was the god of traders and commerce, so he nicely summarizes part of this Passion. Hades, believe it or not, was the god of wealth.

Dis - Eris, the daughter of Night, is the goddess of strife and discord.

Garlen - Garlen is the transcendental mother goddess. She is represented in many goddesses in many cultures. Gaea is THE mother goddess, having given birth to the Titans. Artemis watches over women in childbirth. Hera watched over marriage and married life along with home. Hestia was the actual goddess, the heart, of the home, hearth, and family.

Jaspree - In a peculiar way, Artemis is parallel to Jaspree with her care of the Deer. She is also the goddess of nature, the harvest, and childbirth. Demeter is an incarnation of the mother goddess in her own realm of agriculture.

Mynbruje - Athena is Mynbruje's parallel in respect to Justice. She judged over Orestes. Also, Proteus, the Old Man of the Sea, would always tell the Truth when asked (though this relates to prophesying).

Raggok - Hephaestus and Zeus have had hands in vengeance when Pandora was created. Hera persecuted Herakles and the women her husband amused himself with. All the gods had petty and vindictive streaks. Especially, however, he is represented best by Dionysus, both before his madness and after. Dionysus was dual natured, and was considered "most gentle and most terrible" by Euripides. He could bring joy on one hand, and brutal rage on the other. I believe the mad passions should be viewed this way.

Thystonius - When it comes to war, Athena is a very fierce warrior. She was allowed to use Zeus' weapons. However, everyone knows Ares. It was his blessing warriors sought before battle. He loved the noises of war and bloody battles.

Upandal - Hephaestus is the artificer. He created armor and weapons and jewelry. He made the Olympian gods' thrones.

Vestrial - See Raggok, but also the goddess Eris and Hermes as the trickster. The Erinyes (Dirae, Furies, Eumenides, Semnae) were the goddesses of vengeance.

As you can see, the entire structure of Greek (and to a similar extent Roman) gods and goddess is entirely different from the structure of the Passions. I never got the feeling, however, that the Passions were as gods. They seem more like totems in Shadowrun (ala Native American theology). If this is the case, where are the god(s)? Or are the god(s) only the ideals that we believe in, or perfect forms (see Plato). It is evident that every culture has a belief system that shares many traits with others, but that's a story for another lifetime.



AGE OF LEGENDS

Labyrinthine, Part 2

By: J. Anne Mauck

Jyshe was so tired, she didn't want to walk back to the campsite with Myrie. But Myrie would be waiting for her, and he would want to take care of her. Why he stayed with her, Jyshe would never figure out. Her seizures made her a public embarrassment. They had even gotten her driven out from the best job she'd ever had on an airship. What good was a Sky Raider without an airship?

At the campsite, Rakob and Keelan sat far away from the other three, excitedly whispering about their future plans. They had arranged transport out of Barsaive on an airship, but there was no guarantee that the sailors on board wouldn't arrest them for the rewards. If Jyshe was with them, they could take the ship for themselves. Rakob grinned at Keelan. "Once she sees things our way, she'll come willingly enough."

Myris held Jyshe close that night. He wanted to assure her that in spite of the Horror mark and the seizures, he still wanted to marry her. He had never spoken those words for fear of losing her. She might believe she should leave him for his safety, and that of his sister. Jyshe snored softly in her sleep. No one had told Myris of her seizure that day.

The next day seemed fruitless. Jyshe and the twins believed they had found nothing. They followed Myris to the exit he had found for them. He hadn't slept in three days, and Myris was becoming weary. But he could not sleep until he had done his part and gotten them out.

Once they were outside, he nearly collapsed. Jyshe helped him onto his bedroll where he promptly fell asleep. She put the tent up over him and started a fire. It was not yet noon, but they had decided to stop and find something to eat. Rakob and Myrie had gone hunting.

Keelan sat, humming as he rummaged through his bags. "Jyshe," he said quietly, "come over here for a moment, would you?"

She knelt next to him without saying anything.

He pulled out the hammer and examined it in a ray of sunlight. "I know it's not quite what you expected, but I think it is what you were looking for."

Jyshe knew better than to express any emotion over his discovery. To express anything would show her interest, which was something he and Rakob could take advantage of. "Congratulations," she said, extending her hand, palm up.

He shook her hand and grinned. "I would be more than happy to make a trade so that you might possess that which you have sought so long."

She laughed. "You sound like a Troubadour. And here we all thought you were only a common thief."

He narrowed his eyes at her. In a low tone, he said, "We know you want this. There are things we want. A trade is only fair, my dear." He put the hammer back in his bag and shoved it behind him. He then used the bag as a pillow as he reclined to get a better look at her. "Come with us. Help us out a little and you can have it."

"Why me? Surely the two of you are talented enough to surmount anything that may come your way." Jyshe looked towards Myris. He still slept.

"Don't you want to be on an airship again? Don't you long to feel the boards creak under your feet, to feel the wind in your face, to look down upon great cities and know that you could destroy them if you so desired?" Keelan's eyes glittered at the thought.

She let a small smile creep across her face. "And what would be the price to have that desire fulfilled?"

"Kill the twins and come with us."

"When?"

"Tonight."

That night, Jyshe prepared the rabbits and deer that Rakob and Myrie had caught. Myrie had taken her aside and warned her of Rakob's temperament and smug smiles. Jyshe nodded and pretended to be concerned, but knew that the twins would be safe, until after dinner. She sprinkled extra seasoning on Myris and Myrie's dishes, with a wink at Keelan. After they ate, she retreated into Myris' tent.

As soon as it was completely dark, Rakob stuck his head inside the tent. "Let's go."

Jyshe tossed Myris' arm off of her, knowing he would feel none of it. "Is he...?" Rakob looked nervously at Jyshe. She nodded.

"What? Didn't you think I would?" She grinned her vilest and then waved him outside so she could dress. "Be ready when I get there."

Outside, the stars sparkled merrily, as if it were any other night and not one filled with outright lies and questions of betrayal. Jyshe pulled her cloak tight around her and tugged the tent flap shut. Without another glance backwards, she followed Rakob and Keelan into the dark.

They walked in silence all night and through the dawn. Jyshe walked a few feet behind the two men, so she wouldn't risk a backstab or two. "I figure we've walked far enough that nothing's going to, you know, connect us," muttered Rakob.

Jyshe sighed, but agreed to settle down for a while. She volunteered to watch for passersby, "Just in case." The two men smiled knowingly. A few hours were enough to make Jyshe question her actions from the past half day. Should she have told Myris instead? Would he forgive her? Could he forgive her?

By the time, the two men woke, it was time to eat. Rakob volunteered to hunt if Jyshe agreed to cook. Within minutes, she and Keelan were alone again. Jyshe got up and began to stretch. After a sideways glance at Keelan, she fell and started shaking. She squeezed her eyes closed tightly. Through everything, she could hear Keelan pulling the hammer from his pack and bringing it to her. "Here," he said as he shoved it into her clenched fist.

Immediately, she stopped shaking and relaxed. She began to breath deeply and then smiled at him. "Thank you," was all she said. But she knew from this single touch that this truly was the Mallus of Dawn and that it had at least some of the power that had been hinted at in the manuscripts she'd read. She pressed her forehead against the head of the hammer and sighed.

Roughly, Keelan pulled it away from her and hurried to stash it away again. "Don't say I did that. I'll kill you first."

Jyshe nodded, successfully hiding the grin that tried to force its way through. For the rest of the time Rakob was gone, she studied a map of the local area. They were near the city of Delebna, where Jyshe had heard the King had established a constabulatory force due to some concern over the city's less benevolent citizenry. She could reach it on foot in less than one day. If all went well, she would meet friends there as well.

Rakob seemed to have a fondness for rabbit, since that was all Jyshe had ever seen him bring back from a hunt. Either that, or he was particularly inept. Using the last of the supplies she had brought with her, she prepared a stew that didn't taste particularly rabbit. She tastefully left out the carrots.

Rakob and Keelan had a discussion about going on again, but Jyshe fell asleep while they argued and they felt it best to let her sleep. It's true what they say about sleeping Sky Raiders, you know. When she woke, the moon was shining and the stars winked at her through the clouds. The two men had eaten all the stew and left nothing for her. They were both unconscious near their bedrolls. All was just as she had expected.

Jyshe pulled two lengths of rope from her pack. She tied their ankles and wrists together and then tied those to a rope at their waists. It wasn't shackles as she would have wished for, but it would do. While she waited for them to wake, she cleared the campsite.

As is to be expected, the two men were quite confused and then extremely angry when they woke. Jyshe picked up their packs and strapped them on their backs and forced them into a march. Using a sharp stick she had found, she prodded them along. She answered none of their questions, save the one they did not ask. "Yes," she said with a grin, "I took the hammer."

At Delebna, she marched them straight to the building currently serving as a jail. The guards seemed shocked when they recognized Rakob. Jyshe gracefully turned down the rewards for the two men as well as the offers for drinks from several of the male guards. After Keelan was locked up, Jyshe asked to speak with him quickly before she left.

"Keelan, I must thank you for the hammer. However, I'm not sorry it ended this way. Best of luck in the legal system," she added nonchalantly.

Outside in the bright sun, Jyshe took a deep breath of the city air. It seemed like it had been years since she had felt this free. No thieves to guard her back from, no lovers to guard from jealousy, no friends to pull out of stupidly dangerous situations. And yet, she felt the loss.

She walked straight to the inn she had heard about as if she had been there many times before. It felt familiar, though it was the first time. The sign had a running red rabbit and the name: The Red Hare. She stopped to brush the street dust from the edge of her cloak. When she pushed the door open, it took a moment for her eyes to adjust. Just inside, to the left of the door, just as she had requested in her explanatory letter, sat Myris and Myrie. She heaved a sigh of relief and headed to sit with them and explain all over again.



FLAVOR TEXT

Town: Delebna

This is a relatively large town, almost large enough to be considered a city. The jail and police force is the newest addition to this area, which is mostly populated by dwarves. There is a large trading fair held there once every month, which draws citizens from many of the surrounding towns and villages. The Passions here are not worshipped as much as nature is, and this is demonstrated by the naming of the main buildings after animals, however all of the animals named are mundane animals (ie no espagra, dragons, unicorns, griffins, etc.).



WHO'S WHO

Name: Inyelle Sual
Age/Gender/Race: 87/Female/Elf
Adept: Retired, now a scholar

Inyelle Sual is still young by elven standards, but chose to give up the life of adventure and magic to stay with the young human man she fell in love with. They were married and adopted five young orphaned children, two of which are orks, the others human. If any seek her to become her student, she pretends that there is another of the same name that they seek. She wishes only to be left alone to enjoy this part of her life with the man she loves, until he dies. At that point, she may begin to adventure again, following a different path.



ADVENTURE HOOK

During a festival in the city/area where the adventurers are, one of them witnesses something shady happening, but that is not seen by anyone else. It may be a once-famous thief (now believed to be dead) stealing something, or something unbelievable or wrong with an illusion, but curious enough for one of the players to be deeply interested.



POLLS

There was no poll for the June issue.



FAMOUS LAST WORDS

Random Sci-Fi Thoughts from My Job

J. Anne Mauck

So, I was reading this book about the history of maps and navigation for work. I came upon this paragraph:

"Jean Picard, an astronomer and mathematician with the Royal Academy, was assigned the task of making an arc of the meridian so that a true circumference of the earth could be determined. This prime meridian was established on a line running north and south of Paris."

Being the Star Trek:TNG Geek that I am, my first thought was: Hmmm, I wonder if this was in some part responsible for the character of Captain Jean-Luc Picard... I mean, astronomer, mathematician, Paris... It's too much!

So there you are, a brief insight into how my mind works. Scared yet?



SPECIAL THANKS

My mother deserves this special thanks for supporting my writing and acceptance of Earthdawn. In fact, she bought a good portion of my Earthdawn collection for me.



~FIN~