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# ShadowMyths

- Malochi

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*a biomaggy journal by*

DOUG HOPPES

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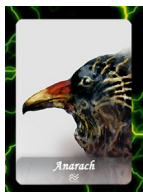
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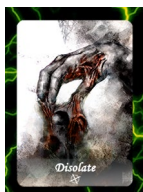
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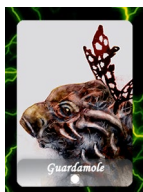
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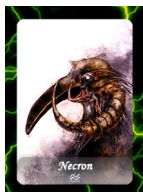
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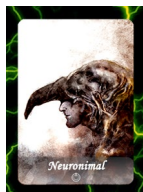


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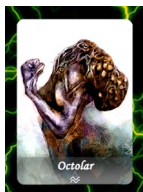


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# Monsters

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Monsters. They are in the games we play. In the books we read. In the movies we watch. Monsters are seen as horrible creatures that jump out at us in the dark and terrorize us. They are given every bad quality that has ever been seen in another person and amplified to the nth degree. Full of nasty claws and teeth, they seem like they could easily end a person's life.

Yet, even as horrible as we make them out to be, we do love them. In some ways, there's a fascination about them. Besides the fact that we loved to be scared, monsters are able to do things that we wished we could do. Many of them are incredibly powerful and can do anything they like. This is a freedom that we are unable to achieve as a human and contributing member of society.

Recently, though, we have started to change the fascinating ones into good creatures and not the horrors that plagued us. Take a look at a vampire. For years, they were the night stalkers who would capture someone and drain their blood. They were seen as callous, and humans were just cattle to them. That's being rewritten. Many of them just want to be left alone in peace and would rather feast on animal blood (no different from humans who eat meat). They use their powers to help others or prevent others from being harmed.

Additionally, there's the concept of aliens and how they look and behave. With the popularity of movies like Star Wars and Star Trek, what the early 20th century saw as monsters, we see them as unique



racers. They are just like you and me, but look differently.

Nowadays, when we think about monsters, the line becomes blurred. The monster seems to be more in attitude and actions rather than looks. Sure, we're still scared by the things that jump at us in the dark and can hurt us. However, for many people nowadays, the thought is always... just because they look different doesn't mean that they will harm us.

There will always be monsters who plague us and make us fear the unknown. Also, there will always be monsters who help us and make our lives better.

## The Same as You and I

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In the beginning of my art career, I spent a lot of time painting landscapes, birds, and people. I would sell my work in small galleries or at plein-air events. However, I wasn't happy. I thought I was, but it wasn't true. It took a simple comment from my wife to show me that.

I kept having trouble coming up with a new landscape painting that seemed interesting. I would avoid painting in the interest of "finding the right landscape to paint." One day, we were talking about how I love landscapes and she immediately corrected me. "No. You don't. You LIKE landscapes, but you LOVE monsters. You send off two or three paintings to the galleries and then you paint one for yourself. It's always a weird painting with a monster in it. That is what you should

be doing.”

She was right. I love monsters and those creatures that differ from the norm.

When I started writing my stories based on my card decks, I also realized that my “monsters” were not scary and the more I thought about it, the more I wanted to represent them as actual people. These creatures were “people” and they had average lives like you and I. They had jobs. They went to soccer (or their equivalent of it) practice and had to coordinate dinner, school and their activities. They hit the morning alarm so they can sleep in or call in sick when they just wanted a day off. They were just like you and me. They just look different.

Whenever I told others about this, they saw my paintings and designs in a different light. The paintings were no longer scary and the situations were no longer horror-filled. The paintings now represented someone in a situation people could relate to. When you saw these creatures as you see each other, you realize we really are the same.

So, the world expanded. The monsters were not really “monsters” but people. However, for clarity’s sake, I still called them monsters since most people assume people are humans and monsters are anything that is sentient but different. Although the term alien could also be used, it is generally reserved for sentient beings coming from outer space.

# How to Use the Decks

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Now, I can hear you saying right now, “Okay. You have a deck of creatures. The art looks cool and interesting. What do I do with it other than just looking at the cards? Is that all there is to it?” Good question!

Yes. They are just cards with creatures on them. Imagine trying to think of a monster or alien creature for your story or game. You are going to draw back onto what you find familiar. If you are thinking of an alien, it’ll probably be some small thin grey or green humanoid with large eyes and a pair of antennas. If you try to imagine a monster in the woods behind your house, the first thing that comes to mind would be a hairy beast similar to Big Foot or a werewolf.

Like coming up with your own stories, you’ll always resort to whatever you are interested in or the last movie/picture that you saw. The problem is that, if everyone did this, there would be no variety. We would just end up with stories or games using the same thing everybody else does.

In addition, when describing the monster your players encounter in games like Dungeons and Dragons, you have to show them a picture from the Monster Manual (and hide all the detail information with your hands), describe the creature and, also, hope that the player hadn’t read the Monster Manual and memorized all the stats about the monster. Overall, the description is the hardest part. When the game master says that there is a “6 foot woman with an octopus head

walking towards you” every player will have a different idea of what they are looking at.



However, if game master shows them a card with this person, the players know what is going on and what weapons or spells they may need in case they have to attack. Showing the picture of the creature is always preferable to the description. The image adds realism to the game that is just not possible with words alone.

First, a word about what the symbols on the cards mean.

## Card Layout

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In the ShadowMyths world (more information about this is later in this book), the wizard, Malochi, was a powerful wizard who tried to take over the world by controlling the races in this deck. He started the War of Corruption and was later defeated.

In your case, maybe the Malochi deck is a religious sect or a university that is studying other races.

The front of the card is composed of three parts: Image, Name, and Symbol. Naturally, the image and name are fairly obvious about their meaning. The symbol is another form of grouping. In my world, each creature is an elemental type and the symbols represent the base elemental structure of the creature. For example, the Groundling is actually the roots on the creature's head. It is a symbiotic wood

elemental that takes over hosts and uses their bodies. This is like the real life Zombie Fungus that takes over ants and cicadas.

The current set of symbols and their meanings that I use are



You are free to use your own meanings for each symbol.

Now, let's see how you can use the cards!

## Writing Prompts

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When writing fantasy or science fiction stories that deal with non-humans, it's not just a matter of taking two different people and acting as if they are human. Each race will have their own thoughts and outlook on life, depending on how others treat them based on their

looks and abilities. For example, If you had a Storm Fae (Left) talking with a Netling (Right), they will not talk about what types of lures or rods they use when they go fishing.



Since both are air creatures, they will probably discuss different ways that they swoop down and scoop the fish from the water. Like many fishermen, they'll probably talk about the size of the fish they've caught or some funny story about the one that got away. The general premise of the story will be the same, but the approach will be vastly different.

Using the cards will help you see the race that you are talking about and kick start your imagination about what their lives would be like. Just don't go for the usual ideas that everybody has. Really think about who they are. Give each one a name. Give them a life that differs from the average person. The easiest way to do this is to look at the creature

and think about someone you know who is similar.

Besides thinking about how the race would behave, also consider how others would see them. Would the creature be common or are they unique? Are there many of them or just a single one? If there is only one, what happened to the others? Are they afraid of people or outgoing? The questions are infinite. The more questions you ask about how others perceive the creatures, a better understanding is developed. You may, like me, even start seeing them as people in your world and not just props.

Remember to treat the races that you see in your writing as actual people with problems and not just ornaments for your stories. It'll make your tales much more interesting. You may find out that your main character, although he looks like a human, is the real monster and the creature that looks scary is just a helpless child. Imagine how that idea would surprise your readers!

So, let's look at how we can use the cards to come up with a unique conversation!





When setting up a situation between two or more characters I've drawn from the deck, I try to understand who they are and what is happening. Here, we have Marek (Left) relaxing at the end of the day and his boss, Symon, approaching. So, what do we know about these two guys?

Marek is a Feledir which is one of the more industrious races in Ozul. They seem to work all the time and are the cause of many of the massive structures in the world. The daily life of a Feledir is pretty regimented and their breaks are even planned out. The village works for a full day with three different shifts working at a given time. Each person in the village will work one shift with one being set aside for sleep and another being set aside for relaxation. However, even in their period of relaxation, they study and work on their personal projects. If something happens that offsets the shift, the Feledir happily adjusts the relaxation and sleeping shift to make sure that they are constantly working on their primary project.

Symon is a human who has overcome his racial prejudices by allowing himself to host a Neuronimal. Extremely rare, the Neuronimal is a symbiote that can be found attached to various types of helmets and looks like a set of roots that form the chinstrap. When the helmet is put on, the detectors immediately determine the status of the brain and whether it is a functioning brain or not. If it is, the roots forming the chinstrap immediately burrow into the neck and work their way to the brain stem. The primary benefit of this symbiotic relationship is significantly increased mental awareness and acuity. The older the symbiote, the more intelligent that the host becomes.

Now that I know who the members of the cast are, time to determine

what is happening. In this case, I can see a conversation between Symon and Marek. Maybe Marek, as much as he tries, isn't capable of some task that he needs to be done. So, what would this conversation look like?

*"Hey Marek," Symon said as he came around came around the lumber piles. "Got a minute? Need to talk to you about something."*

*"Sure, boss. After my smoke, I was going to buzz by and see you anyway. Look. I'm not cut out for this job. I make too many mistakes. I really like what I'm doing, but the stress is killin' me. I see how the other guys look at me. I know that they don't trust what I do. I think it would be best for me to find another gig somewhere else. I really appreciate you giving me the chance."*

*Putting his cigarette down, Marek just stared at the floor. Not moving, he was waiting for Symon to tell him he was fired. Finding another job wouldn't be easy, but it was better than the ulcer this job was giving him.*

*"Nonsense! Look, Marek. You're a good worker. I like having you here and you're doing just fine. I haven't heard anything from the other guys, so I wouldn't worry about that. I was coming over and letting you know I do think that you're a bit over your head in this position. I was wondering, though, if you would be interested in working as an intern with Jelly to improve your welding skills. You'll still get paid your regular salary. Once Jelly gives me the go-ahead that you're good to go, you can get back to your job. Interested?"*

*What? What did he just say? Marek looked at Symon and stared for a minute. "What? You're not getting rid of me? Seriously? Sure! I'll take it! I like Jelly and I think that I could learn a lot from him. Thanks. I really appreciate this. I'll do my best."*

*“Excellent! I’ll let Jelly know now and you can get started tomorrow morning. Just let your foreman know that you’ll be assigned to Jelly for a while,” Symon said as he walked away.*

*Leaning back on the grass, Marek just looked at the sky and wondered if he could handle it. He wasn’t sure but it wasn’t in his nature to not try.*

## Role Playing Game Ideas

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Okay ... okay ... I’m an old-school gamer. I started playing Dungeons and Dragons around the late 70s and continued off and on for much of my life. If I wasn’t actively playing the game, I was reading the monster manuals or other books related to gaming. I loved the books. Learning about the various creatures you can encounter and how they lived or what their special abilities were. As a fan of fantasy and science fiction, this game was perfect for me. What better way to imagine you as a hero fighting off weird creatures and monsters to save a village or town?

You see... I’m one of those people that this deck is designed for ... those who read the gaming books and know everything about the creature before the encounter could happen. No matter that I was just a level 1 character with limited knowledge.

For the gamer, the cards can be shown to them and there is no chance that they can know anything about the creature. The descriptions of their abilities in this book provide the dungeon master with a broad

overview of the creature and how they interact with the party. Even if the gamers bought this book to read, there are no established conventions that define how a creature should behave or their powers.

In any role playing game, the cards can be used in multiple ways:

## Showing Players What They Encounter



Imagine that your players are approaching the Dark Woods. For miles to the left and right, all they see are thick trees with massive thorns the size of a small human. The only opening to the woods they can see has an archway with two figures sitting on either side of the arch.

How would you describe them? You can't really say that each sitting figure has an elephant skull and weird webbing on their body. Although you can say that they are sitting cross-legged and clasping their hands, the players will think that they are normal people. Or, maybe their not sitting. Maybe they are standing and leaning against

the archway.

There's a reason why people say a picture is worth a thousand words. When you show them a picture of the creatures at the archway (not necessarily sitting down), they get an immediate sense of what they are looking at. They will notice that it is made of wood. They will notice that it is humanoid but nothing like they've ever seen before. Maybe they have a map that has the creature's likeness on it and they know that they are in the right location.

With the direct visual information, they can accurately figure out what weapons or spells that they need if combat happens. In addition, since you can show them a card, they don't have access to any of the information about the creature. They don't know the armor class, special abilities, etc.

## **Props in the Game**

There are a variety of ways that the cards can be used as props in the game:

- 1) Tell the players that, during the last bar fight, there was a Storm Fae that came in, ordered a drink and some patrons immediately took a disliking to him. He quickly dealt with the patrons and left this card. Muttering something about "When they come, give them this card. They'll know what to do".
- 2) Use the cards as bounty cards that players can carry with them. Every time someone captures the creature on the card and brings them back for a particular crime, they are rewarded.

3) Maybe lay down four cards on a table in a dungeon. When the cards are turned over, the creature appears and answers a question. Different creatures could answer differently and give them new clues to their problems.

## Campaign Ideas

Unlike using the ShadowMyths Story Telling Cards, it IS harder to come up with new campaign ideas using the monster cards. Harder, but not impossible. So, how I do it is to draw multiple cards and see how the races relate to one another. Let's look at how this is done. Assuming that you drew the three cards:



You could have a campaign set up where a Storm Fae (Smaal) and a Phantom Rider (Naalon) couple are upset because someone has robbed them and taken a valuable crystal. The crystal was given to the Storm Fae from her grandmother and has been in the family for years. Naalon knows who did this. Unfortunately, he was in heavy debt to

some people and he assumes they were the ones who took the crystal. So, he is hiding from Smaal at a local bar when he encounters the player's group. The players agree to help him but they find out that Naalon was wrong. This ended up being an inside job that takes them to a Guardamole city.

## Teaching Tool

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In the classroom, teachers are always looking for fresh ways to engage their students and encourage class participation. This is especially true in creative writing classes where students can explore novel ideas. From the teachers I've talked to, several of them had mentioned that there are three methods that they can be used for classroom study: Writing Prompts, Vocabulary Lessons, and Environment lesson.

**Writing Prompts:** Like the writing methods and storytelling games mentioned earlier, you could give each student up to three cards to help start their own story.

You could also have each student draw a card. They would write one paragraph about the card to start their story. Next, they would pass their paper onto the next student. The next student will add onto the story using their own card. At the end of the lesson, each student will have their original page back and they see how their story evolved from what the others wrote using their own cards.

**Vocabulary Lesson:** Rather than just use a basic lesson to learn extra

vocabulary words by memorizing or reading books, try having them come up with descriptive words based on the cards.

For example, have each student draw a single card. Once all students have a card, ask them to write down five adjectives and five nouns that describe what they see on the card. After the students have finished writing their words, collect all papers. Next, show all cards to the students, choose one of the papers, and start reading the adjectives and nouns listed. See if the students can guess what card is being described. Naturally, the one who described the card cannot take part.

**Environment Lesson:** This is my favorite lesson. Given the creature on the card, try to figure out where they live, what their home life is like, and what they can do. Think of it like a zoology study. From the shapes of their bodies to the coloration of their skin, you can make all types of assumptions about the creatures. The best part is that you will notice similarities between them and animals in our world. Research similar animals and use that information to make your creature more realistic.

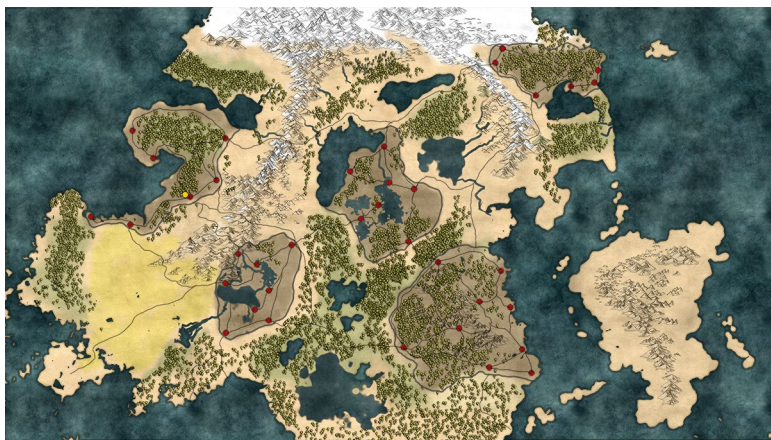
## How I Used the Decks

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Now that we've gone through a lot of different ways to use the decks, the big question I've always been asked is, "Okay, so you created the art for the decks, and you said that you use the decks in writing. What is this book about?"



This book is about wizards, elementals, magic and shadow creatures. The first book in the series is about a boy, Selik, who has this magic ability that everybody wants. He thinks he's pretty tough with this new ability but learns that thinking and doing are not the same thing.



In my world, Death created the universe from the darkness that was ever present. On Ozul, he brought the elemental gods into existence and they created the races who live there. Over the centuries, humans (also known as skin elementals) and other weaker races were being abused by the stronger elementals because they had no natural ability to protect themselves. Death had to balance the world or, eventually, humans and the weaker races would be eliminated. Creating the ShadowMyths decks, Death gave those weaker elementals means to access the magic of the world.

Now that we have the basics, I'll pass you onto Selik. He's young and

foolish, but ... well, you'll see.

## Calaban and Death (Third Age: Year 3126)

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Hey. My name is Selik Garrulus, and I've been asked to fill in what I know about the world. It's the year 3126, and I've just passed my 17th birthday. So, for a human, I'm still young. Now, you may say that I'm too young to know anything, but I'm a lot smarter than you think. Don't let my youth fool you. Also, I have a special trick up my sleeve that most people don't know about. It was something that happened to me when I was younger.

You see, my father passed away when I was 14. Now, that was tragic as things go, but that wasn't the worst part. I found out that my dad was hosting a creature called the Artifact. When he died, I happened to be near him at the time, and this creature entered me. Honestly ... kind of freaked me out at the time. But I'm pretty tough so I knew that I could handle it.

At the time, I didn't know that everybody wanted this creature that was inside of me. Now, I definitely understand why. Besides having direct and accurate access to the history of the world and all information known by previous hosts of the Artifact, I'm able to change into any elemental I want. The Artifact (or Calaban as I like to call him) also has a built-in defense mechanism so that nothing can harm me. That means I'm indestructible, and I can't be beaten!

Now, Calaban is amazing. Death created him long ago to help foster understanding between all the races of this world. In particular, after the War of Corruption, it became Calaban's job to help heal the wounds between the humans and the rest of the elementals. After all, it was my race that started it. I'm not saying that we were right to start the war, but I'm not saying that we were wrong, either.

One night, Calaban and I had a long discussion about who Death was. Long ago, there was nothing but Death. It's not that he was an entity floating in the void. He was the void itself. A sentient consciousness that had no form. After a period, he knew that it was time for the Beginning and time for the End. He had rested enough, and the Great Cycle must begin again. So, he fractured his essence into multiple parts. Some parts created the moons, planets, and suns. Other parts were sent to oversee the created worlds, and they had dominion over what was created. They were all part of Death, but separate from him. Their job was to create life, learn from it, and, after a period, destroy it ... bringing back that knowledge so that Death can rest and the cycle begin again.

On Ozul, my world, Death created the major gods for the earth, air, water, fire, and skin elementals. Their job was to create all the races on the planet so that Death may learn from them. When working with the elemental gods, he was very careful to let them know that all the races had to learn to work together and understand one another. This understanding and empathy between the races would lead to more knowledge for Death to absorb. However, Death knew in his heart, though, that there would always be a conflict between the races since they, ultimately, are a creation of him and he is a creature of chaos.

## War of Corruption (Second Age: Year 2368)

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As time went on, the creations of the major elemental gods fought and ostracized one another. Prejudices and jealousies erupted, and the different elementals began keeping to their own. One particular group of skin elementals, humans, were the ones who most often fought with the others. Humans, and other weaker elemental races, became targets of the stronger races since we did not have any special abilities to protect themselves. Because we were weaker we were taken advantage of for many years. This was known as the Time of Chaos.

Now, I know what you are thinking. If everybody is an elemental, why can't we humans protect ourselves? Well, it's simple, we can't alter our appearance. All the other elementals are mainly made up of their base element structure and can change the shape or density of that material. For example, water elementals can shift parts of their bodies into fins so they can swim faster or hide in the ocean by becoming transparent. We skin elementals can't do that. We're stuck in our single form. It's not like we have other special gifts, like being better at accessing magic from the Path or we're faster or stronger. Nope. None of that. So, we're definitely at a disadvantage against the stronger races. Even among other skin elementals, humans are definitely at the bottom of the power scale.

To help the weaker races deal with this imbalance of power, Death created the ShadowMyths decks in the year 2280. The decks provided access to the world's magic to help the lesser races defend themselves. They came in two forms: sacramancy and biomagy. The sacramancy

deck altered reality or allowed the card holders to draw energy from the Path, and the biomagy deck was used to establish a common language and foster understanding between the different races. As with many powerful items, this worked for a while but soon came to be abused. Humans used the cards and waged war against the other elementals to get revenge on the way they had been treated over the years.

In the year 2368, Malochi, the Destroyer and Corrupter, was ready. He had gathered as many of the ShadowMyths cards as he could. With both decks and help from a group of talented mages, he altered the magic in the cards and could capture many elementals and control them. Malochi had had enough of the world and desired to reshape it in his own image. He felt that humans AND elementals were at fault and sought to control everything.

So, the War of Corruption began, and no one could defeat him.

Eventually, he suffered the same fate that all creatures, humans and elementals alike, succumb to. He died from old age in the year 2432.

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## Malochi

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As a young boy, it bothered Malochi to see his parents always being looked down by those “things.” They weren’t human like he was. They strutted around town, pushing people around and acting like they owned everything. He didn’t know why his parents put up with it. His

dad, a strong and brilliant repairman, seemed to cower and grovel at their feet whenever they came in and ordered him to fix something. It was disgusting. His mom was even worse.

Looking around town, Malochi saw the same thing happening to the other humans. It was obvious that many of the creatures were using their magic and strength to do whatever they wanted to the humans. The local authorities would make some token gesture to help the villagers but nothing really changed. The creatures would just do what they wanted. Malochi had set in his mind that he would change that in the future. He didn't know what was worse ... the monsters or the cowering villagers.

As he grew, he understood that the only way to make a change was to become more powerful than the monsters who were terrorizing the villages. The ShadowMyths cards were the solution. If he could harness their magic, he felt he would stand a chance in any conflict with one of those "things."

So, study he did. For long hours, year after year, he searched out any book or mage that would teach him. He even went so far as studied underneath elemental mages. He suppressed his feelings when studying with the elemental mages but understood that the knowledge was more important than his feelings. As the years went on, he collected more and more ShadowMyths cards and became quite adept at using them. More importantly, his cleverness allowed him to see how to use multiple cards in ways that others hadn't thought of.

The day came when he discovered a unique way of using the cards to control others. A plan formed in his mind about where his future

would take him. What he achieved would become the new order.

## The Separation (Second Age: Year 2433)

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“No.” Death said flatly as the elemental lords looked upon the dark shape at the head of the table.

“No. And that’s my final word. I will not end the existence of the humans of this world. Not to satisfy your blood lust after winning the war. Many good humans had nothing to do with this war. They were just as victimized as you were. Plus, let’s not forget that each one of you elemental lords, not you Lord Mazram, is partly responsible for the actions of the humans. If you had treated them with proper respect as you do with each other and had controlled your races, the war would have never started in the first place.”

Lord Mazram, the skin elemental god, nodded briefly at Death and smiled inwardly. Good, he thought. Good. They are getting what they deserve. How dare they solely blame my children for their problems! Yes, my children were at fault, but they were pushed to it. Those other elementals deserved what they got.

“I will agree, though, that peace must be restored to the world. For their protection and yours, humans shall be quarantined to certain regions of the world. Only humans are allowed in this region. It is forbidden that any other race, including other skin elementals, enter it without the expressive invite of one of the humans. This is their land

and they should be able to live there in peace. Over time, they will learn to live harmoniously with everyone else. But right now, wounds need to heal. After a period, some of them will be allowed to leave the quarantine area. It is my hope that everybody can learn to live together peacefully. You will work out the details, among yourselves, about how to keep the people in the quarantine area. Lord Mazram, you shall oversee this so that your children are treated fairly.”

As Death faded away and the room became brighter, the elemental lords of water, air, earth, and fire started loudly complaining about Death’s proclamations.

“How dare he order us around! We’re not children! This is our world and these are our children that those filthy humans controlled and destroyed! To allow those humans to go out and threaten us again, is UNACCEPTABLE!” yelled Lord Faemir, the fire elemental lord.

As the earth elemental god, Lord Magnus, was about to join the conversation, he stopped. Studying Lord Mazram who was sitting quietly in the corner observing everybody, Lord Magnus understood that this was not the time or place to be discussing any problems that they had with Death’s proclamations.

Quietly he said, “Hold, my fellow lords. Let us rest a bit and mull over what Death has proclaimed. It may be for the best right now. Nothing says that this has to be forever. I suggest that we meet again after we have thought about this.”

As the elemental lords faded away and returned to their domains, Lord Mazram thought he saw the table shift and dissolve also.



## Quarantine Zone (Second Age: Year 2436)

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As Lord Mazram surveyed the world, he created five regions for the humans. Each district was thousands of miles in size and the humans had full access to natural resources to build their towns and live productive lives.



To separate the humans from the other elementals, he created special barriers, canyons on the earth side and formidable waves on the waterside. The canyons were to be inhabited by Death Mists, and the waves were to be managed by the Kai.

Lord Mazram enhanced both barriers by creating a magic field that allowed certain Kai and Death Mists to become far smarter, stronger and handsomer than the other members of their race. Over time, a religious organization was built that further enhanced the specialness of those members of their race that agreed to patrol the border. These unique individuals became known as maulers.

The final part of the agreement between Death and the elemental lords was that the humans had to have the opportunity to learn and associate with the elementals. On the land side, several bridges were created across the canyons. The only humans that could cross the bridges were human mages, and the individuals invited by them. Since mages were supposedly taught to understand the other races in their world, Death felt that they would have the best chance to bridge the gap between humans and elementals. If a human who was not a mage attempted to cross, a mauler would rise up and eliminate them. This also held true for those who tried to send ships across the lakes or the ocean.

When Lord Mazram presented the new world to the other elemental lords, they were strangely quiet. “So,” he asked, “Will this satisfy the rest of you lords? Humans are no longer a threat to anyone else. If, by some chance, they understand other elementals, they should be worthy enough to join the rest of the world community. This is what Death wants, and I think I have delivered a suitable solution.” No

response. The other lords just looked at him. No smiles. Nothing.

Finally, Lord Faemir, the fire elemental god, spoke up. “It looks all nice and pretty. How are we supposed to get the humans in there? Do we just ask them nicely and politely? Please, go in. You’ll love it there!”

“No. They will be herded in by the Death Mists, thanks to Lord Graylar. Some humans will, of course, die, but I don’t believe that will bother too many of you.”

As the other elementals studied the map, they all seem to agree that the plan would work... for now. All understood that there really was no other option. Death would not allow the humans to be eliminated.

## Elementals in Zone (Third Age: Year 3126)

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“My job”, Calaban continued, is to help a particular member of one race better understand the world and teach the world about empathy. I’ve been doing it for thousands of years, and that will be my task for thousands more. You, Selik, are the next human that will help me teach the world. Your father was not a good choice. He preferred to hide away from the world. I can see in you that you want to be part of it.”

As I sat back, I thought ... well, why not? I’m smarter and stronger than the average person. Now, I’ve got this magical artifact that helps me be whatever I want and do what I want. Why not? I could do it.

“Calaban, I’m curious, though. If Lord Mazram didn’t allow other elementals to get into this quarantine zone, how did some get in? There’s the statue at the end of town which, I’m sure, is a captured elemental. Also, there are the ones that my dad and Jakob talk to when no one is around. Where did they come from?”

“Well, at the final meeting, after Lord Mazram left, I overheard some elemental gods talking.”

“Is everything ready? Your people know what to do?” asked Lord Faemir.

“Yes.” responded the air and water elemental gods. “We have given instructions to our priests that they will be visited by certain elementals. Some priests are loyal to our cause and will provide a way to bring in elementals out of sight of the Maulers. No one will know what is happening. We have to be careful not to let too many in or Death and Lord Mazram will notice.”

“Great! This will be a perfect opportunity to get rid of the troublemakers and criminals in our lands. Since Death and Lord Mazram love those humans so much, they can have them. They have provided us a perfect opportunity to cleanse our lands also.”

As the image faded, Calaban spoke again. “That,” Selik, “is why you have elementals here. At first, they were not the best examples of the other races, but most of them were good people. Nowadays, many of them have come to see the quarantine areas as a sanctuary and protection from others of their own race. They have a right to live safely and freely just like you humans. That is the true meaning of the quarantine zones. That is the idea Death had in mind.”

## The Guild (Third Age: Year 3127)

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I'm tired. I don't know what I'm doing. It's been a year since I started this journal. I don't know if I'll ever finish it. I don't know if I even want to finish it. Sitting with Kira at the breakfast table, I couldn't organize my thoughts. There were too many things going on, and I was losing touch with reality. As much as I thought I could do it all, I realized that it just isn't possible. However, there wasn't anyone else capable of doing it, so it all fell on my shoulders. So many people were counting on me to solve their problems. I needed to solve the riddle of changing the hybrids, like Kira, back into their human and elemental forms. I needed to repair the rift between the humans and elementals. I wanted to be out adventuring in the world and not in this old house studying dusty books, looking for clues to my problems.

I never noticed her watching me but her hand softly touched mine and, quietly, she said, "You're wrong, you know. You can't solve everybody's problems by yourself. I care for you deeply and I know that you feel the same for me. However, you have to make time for yourself and not worry about my problems. If you take care of yourself, everything will fall into place. Please... get help."

As I looked into her eyes, I knew that she was right. That was the moment that the Greywell Wizard's Guild, or more commonly known as the Center, was formed. The idea of the Center was to train people to become wizards and help them to understand the world around them.

We could teach others about the elementals they share the world with and show that they are not the horrific creatures that our parents told tales about to scare us.

The first instructors would be Kira and I. Jakob, Kira's father, spent most of his time with the Travelers and other mages, so he could not be relied on to make an appearance. He would be a guest instructor. We wanted to create a mentor/student type of system where an older mage would take a younger one under their wing and instruct them personally. The best way to learn something is to teach it, and Kira and I would provide the overall instructions. Over time, we'd introduce more visiting mages as guest instructors.

That part didn't quite work out the way that we wanted it to.

The next step was to determine who would attend the school. This was tougher. The people of Greywell, for the most part, are isolationists. They don't like new people coming into town or new ideas that may change their way of life. This guild definitely fell under that category. So, how did we find the students?

As I thought about the problem more and more, I realized that the best candidates were the ones who wanted to see the world. They were the ones who wanted to go beyond the everyday life of Greywell, and knew that there was more to life than this small town. They all flocked to the Travelers to hear their stories or welcome them into town.

They would be the first students and fortunately, most of them were my friends.

So, I went around town looking for them and quietly told them about the new guild that I was proposing. A lot of them loved the idea and wanted to participate. Some wanted to be part of it, but were afraid of how it would affect their standing in the community or what their parents would think. I was confident that they would tell no one but only time would tell. Either way, it looked like we had enough interest to start the guild.

Since we knew that the townspeople would not approve of our teachings, we purchased an old church building near the outskirts of town. This would act as a library and museum where people could come and spend time together learning about the world around them. We had unique items that were brought in by the travelers, and books that talked about other races in our world. Most people thought they were fantasy books but, nevertheless, they were popular. It didn't matter to me if they believed the material in it or not.

Secretly, though, in the back rooms of the Center, we would meet with prospective students who wanted to be mages. We would break the group into two areas of interests: biomagy and sacramancy. Biomagy is the study of the races who exist on our world, and sacramancy is the study of the magic in the world and how to access the energy from the Path.

The first group, biomagists, would study the various races and report all of their findings. Their focus would be to understand the elementals lives and why they act the way that they do.

By understanding others and their reasons, the mages would have a better understanding of who they were in the world. Naturally, they'd

have their own set of ShadowMyths cards to help them achieve this goal.

The second group, sacramancers, would study how the cards access the magic in the world and the best practices to use that magic. They will investigate existing magic and create new spell combinations. Their other main task will be to collect as many cards as they can for the guild.

## From the Children (Third Age: Year 3127)

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Gathered around the table, Jakob, Kira and I were not sure what to do. We needed ShadowMyths cards to teach the students, and we only had a handful. In the quarantine zones, the cards were fairly rare but seemed to be plentiful outside of it. At this time of the year, the traveler caravans were not seen that often and, more times than not, didn't include mages or magic merchants. Therefore, our only option was to purchase the ones we needed. It wouldn't be cheap to purchase the cards, and we really did not have enough excess funds to be doing that.

We knew that the best source of cards would be through the Balak Shifters, the ones who first introduced humans to magic. They were still around in many cities and still passing on their knowledge. However, the next closest city of any size or potential was Falard, and that was at least three weeks away. The caravans could get to it and bring back one priest, but that wouldn't solve our problem about



getting cards now. We had no idea when the next caravan would be arriving.

“Valchion has the cards that we need and they won’t be expensive,” said Kira. “The magic within the biomagy cards help different elemental races communicate with each other. When elemental children are young and don’t understand the common language, the parents use the cards to help the children communicate with those of different races. It’s common practice and the cards are pretty plentiful.”

Jakob seemed a bit worried. “Yes, but will they give them to us if they know we are going to teach humans? The last time the cards were in human hands, they were corrupted and enslaved entire villages of elementals. What could we do to change their mind about that? I’m afraid that suggestion is out of the question.”

“I think we can convince some of them to give us the cards. Not all elementals hate humans. Especially not the ones in this zone. Besides, you and the other wizards have made some friends who you can trust. All we need is a small set of cards so that we can teach the mages who want to learn. It’ll be slow but, once the elementals in the area learn that not all humans are bad and some can be trusted, they may help us more. Besides, no trust will ever be created if both sides avoid the other side.”

As I listened to Kira and Jakob, I knew we didn’t have a choice. We needed those cards to teach the other students. With no form of reliable communication, too many things can go wrong when we introduce the students to the different elementals. It’s hard enough

dealing with the racial prejudices, but having each side misinterpret what the other is saying will lead to disaster.

“Kira. Can you go over to Valchion and get some cards? Not too many. We just need some to practice on.” Turning to Jakob, “and Jakob. Can you go with Kira? I would like to know if there are some elementals who would be interested in teaching at our school. If you have some personal friends who could be trusted, that would be great. In exchange for their help, let them know we can offer some of our extra sacramancy and biomaggy cards as payment. The sacramancy cards will protect us against other elementals but, unless we can talk to them and foster that understanding, the school won’t succeed.”

Both Kira and Jakob nodded in agreement and left the room. I wasn’t so sure about sending Kira along on this trip. I had absolute faith that she could take care of herself and, with her father along, there would be no issues. However, I kept wondering if there was something I was missing. I know she cares about me, but she’s been more and more distant lately. Maybe we both need some time alone.

## ShadowMyths Cards

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Before checking out the journal notes from the wizards in the field, we should talk a little about the ShadowMyths cards, themselves.

When Death first created the ShadowMyths decks in the Second Age (Year 2280), he presented visions to the humans and weaker

elementals. These individuals, known as channelers, could create the cards and use them to a limited degree to talk with the other races, but they didn't fully understand what was going on. All they knew was that they could understand them and communicate with the elemental creatures when they held the card. Many of them were viewed as insane and, since the cards could not be destroyed, were thrown away or hidden. Death decided to present the dreams to some of the Balak Shifters, and initially charged them with helping everybody.

Since the Balak Shifters had the greatest connection to the Path, he felt that they had the best chance of instructing how to use the cards. So, in their dreams, he started sending visions of the decks and how they could be used to some of the shifters. It was a source of pride in the community if one received a dream. They were considered one of the chosen ones because it was felt they had a special connection with Death.

The channelers would create paintings of the various races, and when finished, the painting would shrink to a card. Every time they signed the original card, a thousand copies of the card would appear next to it. The signature on the original would disappear. After a certain number of signatures, the original card would also disappear. To protect the cards and their creator, only a handful of cards could remain in the creator's possession. Most of the other cards would disappear and randomly appear in different parts of the world.

Initially, the Shifters set up schools where they would teach the different races the common language using the cards. Over time, though, they realized that they would have to go out into the world and provide the cards and teachings to the different elemental villages.

In the beginning, most of the races had no interest in dealing with others who weren't like them.

Things didn't really take hold until the merchants and creators decided to learn. Rather than just learning the common language, the merchants felt that their products would sell better if they knew the language of each race. The more easily that they could communicate with the race, the easier it was to sell them goods. At this point, the mages and the Shifters started traveling with the merchant caravans.

Eventually, time came when the cards were very common and became a staple in almost every village school. All elementals other than humans were learning the individual languages of the other races. Humans were only taught the common language because the elementals didn't want their language to be soiled when spoken by a human.

Now, even though the cards were thrown away, they could never be destroyed. In the beginnings if humans were found to possess them, the cards were immediately confiscated. Over time, as more humans became mages, this changed. However, for many of the modern day elementals, it's still incredibly distasteful if a human could speak their language.

Using the cards, the biomagists began collecting information about all of the different races so that we may understand them better. Now, let's see what we've learned so far about the cards.

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# Biomagy Journal

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# Aarok

Classification	Sentient Race
Elemental Type	Skin
Habitat	Open Ranges
Height	6' on all fours (8' fully erect)
Speed	Moderate
Strength	Moderate
Intelligence	Smart
Interaction	Pacifists that avoid contact with other people in the list.
Special Characteristics	Group Telepathy links knowledge of everyone.

## Description

Roaming the countryside in massive herds, the Aarok quietly goes about their business searching and gathering food for their families. Although they own no possessions, the Aarok is a sentient creature of very advanced intelligence. They prefer to spend their days in telepathic communication with the rest of the herd. Matter of fact, for any telepathy-endowed race nearby, it sounds like a

large and noisy gathering. As they search the surrounding area, they constantly update the rest of the herd with new information. It may seem that they would be overwhelmed with everyone "talking" at the same time but, somehow, they can filter out all the noise and hone in only on the news that they need.

The major benefit for the mind-sharing among the entire group is that they can solve complex problems extremely quickly. The sharing also allows them to partition information across multiple minds so that, in case of death, the knowledge is not lost. There is no definitive answer about whether the mind sharing happens when Aaroks meet other herds. When talking with mages that have encountered them, they indicate that this is not the case; that Aaroks can only mind-link with their own group.

Even though they prefer telepathy, they are still capable of speaking the common elemental language. Communications with others are more about information sharing. Since they don't need any possessions, their only desire is to obtain more information. The new data is shared with the group and passed down through the ages.

## **Interaction**

When someone first meets an Aarok, they get the sense that they are dealing with an animal or ignorant race. Walking on all fours most of the time, the Aarok looks like any basic beast of burden or grazing animal. They will use this to their advantage when gaining new information from others. They will play "stupid" in order to get the upper hand in information gathering and negotiation.



## **Combat**

As a pacifist, the Aarok will avoid conflict. If it occurs, they have two major forms of attack: trampling and striking with their legs/forearms. The trampling would happen if there is a large group of them around. The mind-link would notify the other members of the herd of who the target is.

Where the Aarok is alone, it is always surprising that they can stand on their hind legs. When that happens, they are usually around 8' tall and easily walk and swing with their forearms for a short period. Although not great fighters, they would prefer to run away as opposed to using this method.



# Anarach

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Classification	Sentient Race
Elemental Type	Air
Habitat	Mountains
Height	3'
Speed	Fast
Strength	Weak
Intelligence	Moderate
Interaction	Reclusive and Isolationists. Determined when decided their path of action.
Special Characteristics	Highly adept and maneuverable in flight

## Description

High in the mountains, the Anarach is a bird-like race that keeps pretty much to themselves. They build their communities in the cliffs overlooking the world and their powerful wings are extensions of their arms. Although they can reach great altitudes by flying, they prefer to glide on the thermals with massive outstretched wings.

The village of the Anarach is very similar to many avian communities where there is a central meeting aerie that all of them can congregate. Usually, it is a bowl near a mountain top with perches carved into the rocks. Once a month, they assemble to talk about the things that need to be done to help the community. Most of the topics include which parts of the village needs repair, who should do the repairs, if there are any outstanding problems between the members, and if anyone has seen any potential and long-term threats.

The interesting part of the Anarach village is that there are no leaders or main council heads. The village works on a democratic idea that everyone, young or old, has a voice and can speak their mind. This sometimes leads to trouble and disagreements but every member of the village agrees (whether or not they agree with the decision) to abide by the majority thought. Those who do not, eventually, get frustrated and leave the village to start their own community.

## **Interaction**

When working with the Anarachs, people get the feeling that, mostly, they don't make any major decisions without the voice of the community. The younger ones will tend to do this with all decisions and, as they get older, they'll learn what should be brought before the village and what can be decided on their own. So, the younger ones tend to not be very confident and decisive.

Once a decision has been made, though, it is very difficult to change their mind; even when there is new information that may impact their current plan. This leads them into situations that they cannot back out of. However, their fixation on the path and decision that

has been made and approved by the community will always force them to continue on.

## **Combat**

The primary attack for the Anarach is a sweeping dive with a slashing weapon. Since the tips of their wings have hand-like appendages, they will carry small knives or other forms of slicing weapons. During combat, they will glide down towards an opponent with the sun behind their back and then, at the last moment, fly upwards and slice with the weapon. This provides for an extremely powerful strike as they gain significant power through the arcing motion of the flight.

If, for some reason, they are brought down to the ground, they can defend easily with the weapons but they are not really effective against strong or agile warriors. Most of the time, they will try to fly away or, if other Anarachs spot them, they can be carried off. However, this is extremely difficult and tiring so they would not be able to go very far (around 1 or 2 miles).



# Asiluth

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Classification	Sentient Race
Elemental Type	Water
Habitat	Ocean
Height	5'
Speed	Moderate
Strength	Strong
Intelligence	Smart
Interaction	Outgoing and loves exchanging ideas. Does not fight for the sake of fighting.
Special Characteristics	Very good about evaluating mechanical items and how they work.

## Description

The Asiluths are a race of water elemental warriors that build their structures among the kelp forests. As a race, they are outgoing and very open to new ideas. They go about their business and are always looking for new and innovative ideas for the creation of armor and weapons. Although the toughest members of their race are highly regarded, the ones who can come up with new ideas to

improve their armament are the most respected.

Most of their weapons and armor are fashioned from the hardening and sharpening of kelp, in addition to the use of different materials such as conch shells, bones from dead sea creatures and any other material that they find in the ocean. As a matter of fact, their weapons are so strong that they are regularly sold to other underwater races. Along with the sales of the weapons and armor, they are also hired often as security for the city races.

Unlike many warrior communities, the Asiluths are not focused only on physical training. They understand the importance of the training of the mind. When the children are young, their schooling has a high emphasis on science and math and, if lucky enough, many of the children will start apprenticing with a master armorer or weapon maker. It's a sense of pride for the mother, who also fights and creates weapons/armors, and father if their child is chosen at an early age by a respected mentor.

## **Interaction**

When interacting with the Asiluths, it's important to note that they love new and innovative ideas. They are constantly searching for better ways to do things and will happily exchange their own knowledge or material goods for this end. In the beginning, they may seem reserved but, once they become comfortable with someone, they are hard to shut down. They want to talk about everything and anything.

A mistake that many people make is that they live for fighting. Nothing could be farther from the truth. They are not pacifists and



are willing to fight but they do not fight for the sake of combat or proving how strong they are. They make perfect guards and sentries but will never engage in warfare unless it threatens their community.

## **Combat**

As stated earlier, the Asiluths maintain traditional edged weapons and armor for their combat. The weapons and armor are made and tempered from dense kelp and woven so that lasts a long time. They are adept at hand-to-hand combat and traditional warfare.

Besides their gear, they are formidable in their kelp forests. They can camouflage themselves to the point of being nearly invisible. Many times, they would prefer to do this rather than fighting but, if the need arises, they will attack their enemies. They are merciless fighters and do not believe in leaving anyone alive.



# Balak Shifter

Classification	Sentient Race
Elemental Type	Skin
Habitat	Cities and Villages
Height	6'
Speed	Moderate
Strength	Moderate
Intelligence	Smart
Interaction	Always willing to talk but more interested in teaching about the Way of the Path
Special Characteristics	Martial Artists who can change into their elemental avatar instantly

## Description

Among the inhabitants of the crowded human villages, you can easily find the Balak Shifters trying to teach the villagers about the Way of the Path. The monks are known for their politeness and cleanliness, and they are willing to talk to anyone as long as that person is interested in listening. In cases of rudeness from others, the priests are fairly stoic and will try to leave the situation

if possible.

Their initial training usually starts out at a reclusive monastery in the deep forests of the quarantine zone. They are taught to see the other elementals around them by sensing their presence through "feeling the air". This method allowed them to see changes in the world's magic and home in on the cause of the shift.

Once they understood the disturbance and the path to correct it, they were given the choice of where they would prefer to spend their learning years. They leave with their mentor and learn to connect to the secret power internal to themselves. After learning to harness that power, they are sent out to teach others about how to see the Path and the access to the world's magic.

The Balak Shifters try to teach as many people as they can about the Way of the Path. This view of the world started when some initial members began receiving visions from Death as He created the ShadowMyths Decks. These visions were the Dream Paintings and images that we now see on the Magic and Communication decks.

They understood His plans and knew that they had to do more than just create the images. So, they started mass producing them and distributing them all around Ozul. In the beginning, they freely gave them to the humans but realized that, without proper understanding of the Path, the power of the decks would be limited. So, they began going out into the world and teaching others about the magic and Death's Plans.

## **Interaction**

The Balak Shifters are personable and nice. They will talk to anyone and find personal hygiene to be one of their highest priorities. In

addition, all members are healthy and very friendly. According to them, they prefer it that way because it makes people more at ease when talking to them.

The one thing, though, is that they are somewhat focused on a single topic: The Way of the Path. They will always try to steer the conversation towards that topic.

## **Combat**

Although they appear gentle, when confronted with a physical situation, they are deadly fighters. Besides being physically fit, they have excellent hand and eye coordination and are adept at hand-to-hand combat. They don't tend to use weapons if they have a choice but this is another area that they are trained in.

In dire situations, though, they prefer to rely on their inner strength and shift their body into their chosen avatar. The avatar is actually an illusion but, if their opponent believes in the illusion, the damage and attacks are seen as real. Sometimes, the Balak Shifter may have an avatar that is a winged creature. So, when they shift into that form, it may seem like they could have flown away. Under that circumstance, the shifter leaves the battle by running away but the opponent will only see a winged creature flying.

Finally, they are also adept at the use of the ShadowMyths decks and always several cards on them. In dire situations, they will invoke the magic of the card at its full strength.



# Balakor

Classification	Sentient Race
Elemental Type	Earth
Habitat	Cities and Villages
Height	7'
Speed	Moderate
Strength	Strong
Intelligence	Smart
Interaction	Arrogant unless they view someone as an equal. Prefers actions over words.
Special Characteristics	Able to withstand great amount of pain strictly through the use of willpower.

## Description

The Balakor is a race that takes great pride in their mental and physical strength. At around 7' tall and possessing little fat, it's easy to see that they are extremely physically fit. However, it doesn't stop there. Their belief system is based on the fact that the mind and body are linked.

Unlike many races in which the weak are culled out, the Balakor learns to compensate any physical weaknesses by improving the mental abilities. It is unknown what happens to those who cannot meet the requirements of both states but there are tales that indicate that they are killed. The thought is that those who are eliminated are agreeable to the treatment since they have a hard time living with them not meeting the base requirements of their village. Other tales say that there is a remote location that they are exiled to. However, no one has ever found it and, since the village always seems to have strong and healthy people, the first rumor is usually the one that persists.

As many other races have noticed, the mental and physical strength of the Balakor have caused them to be a bit arrogant. Overall, the race does not go out and boasts of their feats since they believe that actions are more important than words. However, it can be seen in their eyes and how they carry themselves. When dealing with other races, they will only defer to those individuals that are stronger or more intelligent than they are. If not, then that person is generally ignored.

### **Interaction**

As mentioned earlier, the Balakor is a very proud race but will learn from others who are stronger or smarter than they are. When they first meet someone, they will size up the other person and see if they are worthy of further communication. If the person is not worthy, then they will ignore them.

However, it should be noted that they aren't ignoring them. They understand that their evaluation could be based on incomplete



information. So, if they spend some time with someone, they may, later, test that the person is smarter or stronger than they first appear. Initial communications are slow as they try to determine whether the person can be respected or not.

## **Combat**

Although the Balakor will use standard armor or weapons, their favorite method of fighting is hand-to-hand. As with many earth elementals, they can shift a portion of their body into different instruments. For the most part, they will shift one of their hands into a shield and the other one into a sword or an ultra-strong spike.

During combat, their favorite tactic is to use their attacking hand as a putty-like soft mace and, when it strikes their opponent, their hand transforms into a set of ropes. By shifting their great weight backwards, they are able to surprise their opponent and pull them off of their feet. They then transform both hands into spikes and engage in close combat. This is effective maneuver for their bulk and speed.



# Bone Spur

Classification	Disease
Elemental Type	Disease
Habitat	Host
Height	Not Applicable
Speed	Not Applicable
Strength	Not Applicable
Intelligence	Not Applicable
Interaction	Unknown how it is spread but appears to be from touch.
Special Characteristics	Fossilized until the afflicted is unable to move

## Description

Most physicians have no idea what causes the bone spur. This disease was first thought to exist only in Bone Elementals but, over the years, it has spread to others that have an internal bone structure. Wood and all forms of Air elementals do not seem to be affected.

When someone is afflicted with the Bone Spur, they start out with the body aching and stiff. However, over the period of several months, they noticed that the parts of their body that are stiff will start having various bone-like structures growing out.

As the structures penetrate the skin, a thin membrane grows over the bone so that there are no open sores. There is also a numbing that seems to accompany the growth. The growth can be shaved down and there is no pain associated with it. Unfortunately, the shaving seems to cause the growth to occur at a faster rate.

Eventually, the growth will work its way into the brain or a major organ and all functions, other than bone growth, will cease.

At the time of this writing, there doesn't seem to be any cure for this disease.

### **Interaction**

None

### **Combat**

None





# Bone Tooth

Classification	Sentient Race
Elemental Type	Symbiote
Habitat	Host
Height	Host
Speed	Host
Strength	Strong
Intelligence	Host
Interaction	Only with host
Special Characteristics	Increases density across multiple parts of body

## Description

The Bone Tooth is widely regarded as a disease by those who have never experienced it. In reality, this “disease” is actually a symbiotic entity that attaches itself to a host in a false form of a beneficial relationship. The method for contracting the host is as simple as fluid transfer from one host to another.

When attached internally, the Bone Tooth will communicate, in simple terms, its desire to feed off of the calcium of the host. In exchange, the symbiote provides the ability to temporarily transform part of the host body into super-hardened bone. The bone is hard enough, when used as a shield, to deflect sharpened swords and other weapons. Blunt weapons can damage it but usually only superficially and the bone is quickly grown back. If the bone is used as a weapon, the point is sharp enough to penetrate light armor (non-plate mail).

An important note is that the victim is not capable of refusing the symbiote. In addition to latching itself to the internal bone structure of the host, it also will burrow tendrils into the brain and “convince” them that the symbiosis is a good thing. The symbiote will also suggest to the host that he needs to find ways to replenish his calcium intake. The longer that the symbiote can feed, the better.

If, for some reason, the symbiote is unable to transfer itself to a new host after completely depleting the calcium from the current victim, it will die in a matter of hours.

## **Interaction**

The only form of interaction that they engage is a “feeling” that is felt by the host. When the Bone Tooth first merges with the host, the victim knows that the merge is happening but accepts it as a good thing.

There is a mutual feeling that the symbiote will need calcium and that the host has enough in its body (and always producing more) to



sustain the symbiote. In addition, the host also understands its new abilities and how to control them.

## **Combat**

The Bone Tooth, per se, does not engage in combat. However, it can transform parts of the host into bone but this is not instantaneous. It takes several seconds for the transformation to take place. So, it's generally best that the host decides what needs to be done before combat starts.

The bone-like structures are dense and durable against edge weapons and provide some protection against blunt weapons. If the structure is damaged in combat, it can easily repair itself in a matter of minutes.



# Catacoon

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Classification	Sentient Race
Elemental Type	Skin
Habitat	Caverns
Height	4'
Speed	Fast
Strength	Moderate
Intelligence	Genius
Interaction	Very reclusive
Special Characteristics	Telekinetic ability to shape things. Able to perform mass hypnosis

## Description

The Catacoon is one of the most innovative races on Ozul. Being a quadrupedal race, they could not use their hands to create complex items. At best, they could move things and grip them. However, having a strong intelligence, over time, they evolved the use of telekinesis to move things with their mind. Although the stronger minds allowed them to move heavier and heavier objects (most of

the time, it's about half of their weight), their true strength came into the fact that they could precisely place and adjust things easily.

From stories told by the rare few that interact with them, the Catacoon seems at home in large cave systems. The entrances to their homes are quite hidden and no one seems to know where they are. To gain material for their inventions, they will hire out a small group of Ravenites but, even then, the few Ravenites that they deal with only indicate that they meet at a location chosen by the Catacoon. Once the meeting is over, the Catacoon seem to disappear.

Because of their reclusive nature, the Catacoons have developed mass hypnosis that allows them to “disappear”. In reality, they don't disappear but have altered the minds of those viewing them. They may be able to access parts of the Path in the same way that the Balak Shifters or Elemonks can.

From the outside, the Catacoon city appears to be a mad-house with constant noise and items strewn all about. The entire village is always trying to work on something and, sometimes, you'll see quite a number of them working on a large project. Once the inventions are created, they are evaluated to deem if they are useful to the village. Those that are not useful are destroyed after meticulous notes are taken. The library that contains all of the information is at the center of the village and is open to anyone in the city.

## **Interaction**

The Catacoon is an extremely reclusive race. It is rare that they communicate with others and, only then, if the individual has shown a remarkable intelligence or they are needed for some special service. If the Catacoon agrees to meet with someone, it is always done on their terms. They prefer to meet at remote locations and have a habit of “appearing” at the time of the meeting. When done, they immediately “disappear”.

## **Combat**

There doesn't seem to be anyone who has known to actually fight a Catacoon. The assumption, though, is that they have a wide variety of unique devices that can be remotely controlled by their minds such that they never need to appear or be present in the combat situation.



# Death Mist

Classification	Sentient Race
Elemental Type	Air
Habitat	Open Ranges, Caverns, Swamp, Forest
Height	Not Applicable
Speed	Slow
Strength	Not Applicable
Intelligence	Moderate
Interaction	Unknown
Special Characteristics	Feeds off of mental energy.

## Description

The Death Mist is an insidious race that feeds off of the mental energy of others. To most races, it really has no form other than the look of morning mist and fog. To feed, it will wind its way through a village or township and find the weakest members. Flowing into their mouths while they sleep, the victim is immediately put in a dream-like state where they feel themselves getting up and going

about their day. This is just a dream they are having. In reality, they are in a coma-like state and cannot be awoken.

The Death Mist doesn't really have any form of a village that we can easily understand. Not needing any material possessions, the community will often be seen in the open fields during the morning hours. In that large grouping, it's possible to discern multiple bipedal-like shapes of different sizes. Maybe this is a congregation of adults and children. The current theory is that the adult mists feed off of the mental energy of others and then share that energy with their offspring. However, this is conjecture since no one really knows for sure.

Due to their unusual nature, most of the information about them seems to be derived from the ones on the border of the quarantine zone. Various races have mentioned that they could interact with them and they appeared to be semi-transparent humans in robes. Their forms, though, kept shifting as they talked.

## **Interaction**

Outside of the ones in the quarantine zone, they don't seem to communicate with any other races. It is difficult to determine where their village is and how large. The only indications seem to be a slight rustling noise present in a large field or forest or the presence of a low-lying fog in caverns.

If one can approach an actual Death Mist village, they may see a human-like form appear before them. The only records of this happening is in the villages on the border of the quarantine zone. Those members appear to be stand-offish and to the point. If



someone attempts to get through the border, this "sentry", known as a Mauler, will ask for the reason for passing. If the answer is satisfactory, the mists will part and the person may go through. Otherwise, it will disappear into the surrounding mists and the entire mist will surge towards the travelers.

## **Combat**

The Death Mist has no permanent physical form so it is immune to any slashing or bludgeoning weapons. They seem to be affected by a wind or heat and can be easily swept away. However, it's not sure that this destroys the creatures or just disperses them. Heat and wind have no effect on the Maulers.

During combat situations, the Death Mist will overwhelm the opponent and try to enter the mouth or nose. Once they have a foothold on the opponent, they work their way to the brain and the victim is immediately immobilized. In the opponent's mind, they will see themselves fighting off the mist. However, others will see the opponent as falling and in a catatonic state.

Once the mists have consumed all the energy in their victims, the bodies are carried off to various collection areas. Animals and other scavengers are always present at these areas.



# Disolate

Classification	Disease
Elemental Type	Disease
Habitat	Host
Height	Not Applicable
Speed	Not Applicable
Strength	Not Applicable
Intelligence	Not Applicable
Interaction	The disease seems to be transmitted through touch.
Special Characteristics	Translucent membrane is formed over the decayed flesh.

## Description

Over time, this disease will slowly dissolve the flesh of any elemental or human. As the rot takes hold of the body, a semi-transparent skin will grow over the open wound. This preserves the integrity of the body while allowing the disease to continue eating away at the tissue.

When a person is first afflicted with the disease, their skin seems to itch more so than usual. As they scratch at it, the infected area spreads and a burning sensation starts. They notice that part of their skin becomes a bit translucent and they can see the internal parts of their body. In reality, what they are seeing is a clear membrane left over after the disease has consumed the skin tissue. The membrane is not nearly as strong as skin and can be easily broken. If that happens, more membranes are spread so that the wound is closed.

As the disease spreads throughout the tissue structure, the body becomes more and more vulnerable to open wounds and breaks in the membrane. Eventually, there are too many open wounds and the body collapses. It is unknown why the disease does not attack the internal organs but only the external tissue.

The only known treatment is the removal of the body part that contains the infection.

## **Interaction**

None

## **Combat**

None





# Dualysis

Classification	Disease
Elemental Type	Disease
Habitat	Host
Height	Not Applicable
Speed	Not Applicable
Strength	Not Applicable
Intelligence	Not Applicable
Interaction	Seems to be contracted through fluids
Special Characteristics	Makes non-functional duplicates of body

## Description

In the annals of weird diseases that afflict the people of this world, this is probably one of the strangest. The Dualysis disease manifests itself by evaluating the body and creating a non-living duplicate of it. The strangest part is that the person afflicted with the disease remains alive and there doesn't seem to be any permanent damage. There is some speculation that this could be a form of a symbiote

that is trying to make a new body but there is no evidence that that is true.

When someone is affected by this disease, they become extremely lethargic. Most of their energy seems to be drained and they spend a lot of the time bed-ridden. After a certain amount of time, a small wound appears at the end of the fingers of one hand. A mucous membrane constantly exudes from that wound and, after a while fashions itself into the same type of race as the afflicted. The main body gets weaker and weaker. If the mucous membrane is cut off and the wound is sealed, it will reopen and the process starts over.

If the process is allowed to continue to the end, there will be two identical people conjoined at the ends of the hand. The wound is then immediately closed, causing the bodies to separate. The new body has all the same organs and be almost a complete duplicate.

The host slowly regains their strength and everything returns to normal. How and why this disease developed is a total mystery.

## **Interaction**

None

## **Combat**

None







# Elemonk

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Classification	Sentient Race
Elemental Type	Wood
Habitat	Cities and Villages
Height	6'
Speed	Fast
Strength	Moderate
Intelligence	Moderate
Interaction	Pacifists in which all interactions are always slow and purposeful.
Special Characteristics	Can move incredibly fast even though they don't seem to be moving at all.

## Description

“They don’t move. Not at all!” That is the usual comment when talking about the Elemonks. Naturally, they do move but their movement is so slow and graceful, it’s hard to distinguish, sometimes, what is happening. The Elemonk is a wood elemental race that focuses on being one with the world around them.

They have incredibly long lives and seem to be attuned to the world. Sitting for days at a time, they appear not to move but sometimes they seem to be everywhere at once. One theory about this is that they slip in and out of the time stream or the current dimension. Not sure how they do that or even if it's true.

Another strange ability of the Elemonks is that they can communicate with inanimate objects. From talking to them, they indicate that the entire world and everything in it is alive. Everybody can listen to what the world is saying by just listening. The tough part is that they can't explain how to listen. They just know that that is the answer.

When questioned about this ability to talk to inanimate objects, they could prove this ability to answer questions that no one could answer. For instance, they were given a test where a human was placed in a room with several pots. The human said a couple of phrases and then left the room. The Elemonk never met the human and didn't know what happened. When we brought him into the room, we asked what happened. The Elemonk could recite everything that happened. We still don't know how he did it.

## **Interaction**

When meeting an Elemonk, you get a sense of calmness. There is nothing rushed about them. Not in the way that they talk or their movements. It seems that everything happens in slow motion. The conversation is the same way. They speak clearly and in a slow drawl. They don't embellish their words and are very careful about everything that they say.

The strangest part of dealing with Elemonks is their ability to do things quickly with no one noticing it. This is even true if you are looking directly at them. For example, if you ask them to construct something, one second you see their hands move slowly in the construction and the next minute, they are almost done. You are unsure about what happened. This seems to even happen when they travel. No one ever seems to recall them walking somewhere or traveling. One minute they are in one location and, later, they are in a different location.

## **Combat**

As with many pacifists, the Elemonks will try to avoid combat as long as they can. They will use their time-shifting techniques to place them in a new location that is out of the danger area.

If there are others in danger, they use their abilities to immobilize the opponents using materials in the area. Otherwise, they may leave the area and gather more material and return or ask others for help before returning.

They use no form of technology or weaponry to attack an opponent.



# Feledir

Classification	Sentient Race
Elemental Type	Skin
Habitat	Cities and Villages
Height	5'
Speed	Moderate
Strength	Moderate
Intelligence	Moderate
Interaction	Hard-working and industrious
Special Characteristics	Ability to focus for long periods of time on a task.

## Description

The Feledir is one of the more industrious races in Ozul. They seem to work all the time and are the cause of many of the massive structures that you see. They have a great facility for working together and this seems to be due to their management and living structure.

The daily life of a Feledir is pretty regimented. Their breaks are even regimented. The village works for a full day with three different shifts working at a given time. Each person in the village will work one shift with one being set aside for sleep and another being set aside for relaxation. However, even in their period of relaxation, they study and work on their personal projects. If something happens that offsets the shift, the Feledir happily adjusts the relaxation and sleeping shift to make sure that they are constantly working on their primary project.

The village is divided into several major groups: Organizers, Security, Transport, Workers, and Designers. The Organizers decide which project is to be worked on and what the labor breakdown is to be used. These are usually the Village Elders and they are also the ones who communicate with the outsiders to determine if they should take on the project or what projects are needed.

The Security team maintains the village and keeping intruders out. Every so often, the village is beset by raiders from other Feledir villages and there is a need to protect the current projects. In rare cases, the Security team is set out to steal ideas from the other Feledir villages. This usually happens in situations where they are falling behind schedule and the transport team has told them of other advances in some villages they visit.

The Transport team is used to deliver the projects to the ones who requested them. During their travels, they tend to also act as spies when visiting other Feledir villages. They are the eyes and ears for the village. When something unusual is found in the world, they report back their findings to the Organizers who, in turn, send out



the Security teams to retrieve any new technology that may be of use to them.

The Workers and Designers are the backbone to the society. They are responsible for the building of the project. Sometimes, the Feledir may sub-contract out the work to other races. However, if it can be done within the confines of the village, they prefer that. The Designers are also the ones to come up with new ideas for potential future projects.

## **Interaction**

When dealing with the Feledir, you have the feeling of a nervous and agitated person who can't seem to stop. They are constantly on the move and have a hard time relaxing. Their speech is even hurried.

Since they keep well within their caste system and information is only allowed within members of that caste, they don't know of any secrets of information outside of their area of knowledge.

## **Combat**

Most of the fighting falls under the responsibility of the Security caste. They are skilled in various forms of combat and will always be heavily armed. Their armor is durable, light and is as strong as standard plate mail.

If possible, the Feledir fights in large groups and tries to overwhelm their opponents by sheer numbers. They are only known to retreat if defeat is inevitable.



# Groundling

Classification	Sentient Race
Elemental Type	Wood
Habitat	Forest
Height	3'
Speed	Host
Strength	Host
Intelligence	Host
Interaction	Stilted speech when using the victim's vocal system.
Special Characteristics	Able to take over any weak-minded individual and use their abilities.

## Description

The Groundling is a root-like creature that entraps forest wanderers. Some believe them to be symbiotes but this is not quite right since the relationship between them and the victim is not a mutual one. They prefer to take over the body of the victim and keep it alive while feeding on their mental energy and brain matter.

They look like roots and, when attached, form some type of hair structure. In reality, the creature has buried itself into the brain of the victim and lives by feeding off of the nutrients of the body. As long as the body is healthy, it remains content. If the body withers or dies, then the Groundling falls dormant until another host touches it. To entice other sentient creatures, the Groundling sends out a soft mental command. Anyone within a 50' region can hear the voice in their mind. Once it is touched, a mental signal is sent through the victim and it works its way up to the brain structure.

When the Groundling attaches itself, it immediately takes over and makes use of any special abilities belonging to the victim. It can use any spells or magic items that the victim has. At this point, it will return to the Groundling village and resume its former life. Each Groundling is able to recognize each other based on the color and formation of the root.

From the victim's point of view, they have the feeling that they are paralyzed. They can see their body performing actions but they can't control what is happening.

## **Interaction**

When interacting with a person who is hosting the Groundling, the person will act as he or his race has always acted but in a stilted manner. There are times when the person will stop talking and then resume.

When Groundlings talk among themselves, they will extend one of their root structures out to touch another Groundling

root. The victim can hear what is going on through this form of communication.

## **Combat**

Although the Groundling may have the abilities of the victim, it doesn't necessarily make it a better warrior. Since a lot of fighting and combat is automatic and based on muscle memory, the Groundling will have an understanding of what to do but not the physical skill to actually perform the maneuver. It will execute any physical combat maneuvers in a haphazard and unskilled manner.

If able, they would prefer to run away or use any form of magic (spell or item) to finish the conflict.



# Guardamole

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Classification	Sentient Race
Elemental Type	Skin
Habitat	Ocean
Height	2'
Speed	Fast
Strength	Moderate
Intelligence	Moderate
Interaction	Reserved and tolerant of others
Special Characteristics	None

## Description

The Guardamole is a small fish-like race that primarily lives in the Malachus Trench of the Sea of Death. This quiet community tends to go about their business and not bother anybody. To provide more income for their families, in cases where they do not want to be a farmer, they will hire themselves out to other races as servants and workers. They are generally efficient with the tasks at hand and

never really question things outside of their jobs. There doesn't seem to be any form of curiosity that is exhibited by the race which leads to a feeling that there really isn't anything remarkable about them.

The cavern system of the Guardamole is designed such that hierarchy in the village determines how far the villager is away from the cavern entrance. Those at the lower levels will be near the entrance of the cave with the leaders safely in one of the inner sanctums. Inside of a cavern, there are many paths that lead to the inner sanctums and, unless you live there, they are confusing to navigate. In the community, each member is required to have a specific job that maintains the cavern system, besides their other activities in their lives.

The simple villagers go about their day working on the caverns and farming. The large farms are on the fields above and provide food and trade goods for some races.

Entertainment seems to be relatively simple where they enjoy playing of instruments, dancing, and talking. It's common to see many small groups of Guardamoles sitting around talking about the days and things that are happening in the surrounding regions. Nothing is ever done about it but they do talk about it.

## **Interaction**

When dealing with this race, the first impression that people get is that they are a dour race. This is not really true but they are very reserved and don't show their emotions to anyone else. In their culture, the showing of the emotions means that they don't have



control of what is happening and it bothers them.

With outsiders, they spend a lot of time listening to what the outsider is saying but not really show any reaction to it. They will also politely answer questions but not provide more information than is needed.

## **Combat**

Now, an important point to make is that, just because they are reserved, doesn't mean that they won't fight back. They will fight on when their life is threatened but, more times than not, they will accept their fate if they cannot run away.

When they fight, they will use any instruments they have in the cavern or near the farms. However, their fighting skill is very rudimentary and anyone with some basic combat skills will have no problem defeating them.



# Human

Classification	Sentient Race
Elemental Type	Skin
Habitat	All Habitats
Height	6'
Speed	Moderate
Strength	Moderate
Intelligence	Moderate
Interaction	Open with their own kind but very much isolationists when dealing with others
Special Characteristics	Able to wield magic more easily than other elemental races

## Description

Humans... the corrupters of the world. Or so that's what most of the races thought of them. Like the rest of the skin elementals, humans do not have the capability of shifting their shapes but they are very adaptable and clever when they want to alter their environment. They easily will change the landscape of their world to meet their needs and desires. This is even so when it directly

conflicts with another elemental race. Humans are not known for living in harmony with the other races.

Most of the humans live in a quarantine zone but they don't understand its significance. Only the mages do and they are a hermitic group that tries not to associate too much with the other humans. Near the edges of a quarantine zone, the humans get a glimpse of other elementals but they regard them more as myths and legends. They do stay away from the ravines and open oceans because they understand that there is only Death.

In most of the settlements, the humans believe that they are the sole residents of the world. They encounter various animals and succumb to many of the elemental diseases and symbiotes but have no real experience with the more sentient races. Those humans create insular societies and don't like outsiders.

Overall, humans live simple lives. Food and sustenance is raised on farms or provided by the trading caravans. Their daily lives are generally composed of work, some play and music, and rest. Once a year, a caravan of mages will show up in town and ask for volunteers to go with them to other cities. Although it is voluntary for the younger people to do so, there have been questions about this. Especially in towns where there doesn't seem to be that many volunteers. The mages explain that this prevents disease within the community that is a direct cause of inbreeding.

One curious issue is that there doesn't seem to be any form of conflict within the quarantine zone. This could be because of their

insular nature but, as many wizards suspect, it may be related to some form of magic in the quarantine zone. This is also another reason why there doesn't seem to be many weapons and none of the towns are fortified.

### **Interaction**

Humans are very open when they are within their own communities but not so much for those outside. Naturally, the younger humans are always curious and excited to see new people enter their town but, over time, they resort to the insular methods of the elders.

### **Combat**

Many of the weapons and armor that humans possess tends to come in with the trading caravans. They are not known for creating their own weapons outside of small makeshift knives and utility weapons. Many of their weapons are farm and other tools used in their daily lives.

They have no real fighting skills other than their own natural ability.



# Majalam

Classification	Sentient Race
Elemental Type	Skin
Habitat	Oceans
Height	3'
Speed	Moderate
Strength	Moderate
Intelligence	Smart
Interaction	Open but can turn skittish extremely quickly if they feel threatened
Special Characteristics	Excellent at negotiations and can evaluate the value of people and goods quickly.

## Description

In the caverns that dot the shorelines of the open seas of Ozul, the Majalam have created a vast city of trade. Being an amphibious race, they are comfortable in both the water and land and, with their sensitive filters on their faces, they are able to “hear” any language and it is automatically translated to something that they can understand. This ability for quick translation has led them to

be known as excellent traders. They will trade in any commodity and for any information...for the right price.

The cavern system of the Majalam is a vast network of tunnels that always ends into a central trading area. This is designed for two main reasons: Reduce congestion within the central trading area and, more importantly, provide security and control violent outbreaks. When situations get out of control in the marketplace, the Majalam will summon various elementals in their employ to alter the market place layout and herd the trouble-makers out. These elementals can erect walls quickly and a maze is created to push those individuals out into the connection pathways.

It is well known that many of the human wizards visit the marketplace so they may learn more about the various races and trade for goods that are normally unavailable to them. The Majalam traders are one of the few races that openly accept the humans and will trade with them.

## **Interaction**

Mostly, the Majalam always seem as open and friendly people. They will chat about any topic and can speak any language that is needed. However, during this entire time, they will size their contact up and determining what essential value they have... whether it is in terms of information, connections, goods, or just pure friendship (rare). Their reactions and comfort levels are based on what they determine to be your use to them is.



## **Combat**

Because they are extremely good traders, they have a wide assortment of weapons and armor for their use. They are typically not fighters and would prefer that those in their employ do the fighting.

In situations where they must fight, the primary choice of weapons will be any long-range one that they determine to be the most accurate. They would prefer to complete the task as possible and get on with their work.

Naturally, the more affluent the Majalam is, the better weapons and more protection they have.



# Marrow Siphon

Classification	Disease
Elemental Type	Disease
Habitat	Host
Height	Not Applicable
Speed	Not Applicable
Strength	Not Applicable
Intelligence	Not Applicable
Interaction	Ticks lay eggs under skin after contraction through touch.
Special Characteristics	Larvae work their way into the bone and consume all of the marrow.

## Description

The Marrow Siphon is a disease spread by small little tick-like insects present on a corpse. When a person touches an infected corpse, a wave of the ticks flow over the interacting appendage. If the touching object is organic, they will immediately start burrowing into the skin. Otherwise, they will crawl until they can find some organic material.

Once the ticks are under the skin layer, they begin the search for any major veins or vessels that may lead them to an internal skeleton structure. When those structures have been found, they will lay thousands of eggs and immediately leave the body and return to the corpse. Their life purpose is complete and they will die.

In situations where the ticks encounter a Bone Elemental, they will eat holes through the bone and lay their eggs directly in the marrow. This process usually lasts for several minutes.

The victim will exhibit rashes where the ticks had entered and a thin mucus film will form as the skin repairs itself. The gestation for the larvae in the body is usually one week. As the larvae hatch, the area that the ticks entered will become red and burn. If they are not already inside of the bone, the larvae will immediately work their way to the closest source of bone. The victim will feel a tingling sensation as the larvae move their way to the bones.

Once they reach the bone, they will eat their way into the marrow. From there, they consume the marrow until everything is gone. The victim's skin will become pale and they will be extremely fatigued. They will also have extreme difficulty in stopping any cuts or minor lacerations.

There is no known treatment for the disease and, in most cases, the only resolution is the removal of the infected area and the burning of the items of the victim.

## **Interaction**

None

## **Combat**

None



# Necron

Classification	Sentient Race
Elemental Type	Skin
Habitat	Mountains
Height	6'
Speed	Moderate
Strength	Strong
Intelligence	Moderate
Interaction	Quiet and observant. Not into conversation but polite when they are questioned
Special Characteristics	Extremely adept and fast at climbing.

## Description

The rock cities of the Necron are well known around the northern regions of Ozul. These bird-like people are famous for their mountaineering skills and the fear-inducing trails to reach their homes. Although it may seem that they share the abilities of many of the bird-like races, the Necron does not have wings or any flight ability. Their lean and humanoid bodies are perfect for scaling rock

cliffs and that is where they spend most of their time.

Whenever someone needs to navigate through the northern reaches of Ozul, they will hire several Necrons to guide them through the treacherous territories. They have built alliances with many of the mountain races and have very specific paths that they can follow through the mountain.

As mentioned before, the Necron is well known for their cities. Carved within the side walls of mountains, they have created caverns that can only be navigated using a series of extremely thin stairs. The stairs are also not continuous. There are plenty of spots where they discontinue and the traveler needs to jump across the open air to another set. This is extremely harrowing since many of the steps may be several hundred to a thousand feet up.

Besides the steps, the walls themselves are hand-carved with decorations. Climbing the sheer walls, you can see them hold on with one hand while they use their rock-axes to carve delicate symbols. It is unknown what the symbols represent. More study needs to happen to understand this and they are reluctant to even talk about it.

## **Interaction**

Necrons are a quiet and accepting race. They will listen more to what other races are saying rather than offering their opinion about something. When they are together, they will discuss more about the family or trips or other bits of information in low tones.

There is a secretive feeling that you get when speaking with them and



it's very apparent that they are always watching you.

## **Combat**

As competent climbers and mountaineers, their first option during combat is always to escape to higher locations. This is especially true if they are also eager to continue the fight. In the mountains, they have an uncanny ability to disappear in the rocks and ledges. They can become so still that they disappear.

Their preferred method of fighting is by grappling. With the extremely strong arms and lean bodies, they are able to subjugate many opponents while other Necrons come over and use knives or other small implements to eliminate the threat.



# Netling

Classification	Sentient Race
Elemental Type	Air
Habitat	Clouds
Height	4'
Speed	Fast
Strength	Weak
Intelligence	Moderate
Interaction	Flighty and chattery. Tend to not sit still and move between topics often.
Special Characteristics	Able to disappear quickly and maddenly fast.

## Description

“Dancers of the air” or “Flighty Odd People”. This race has their fans and those who are annoyed by them. The Netlings are lithe and supple air elementals that can be seen constantly gliding and dancing in the clouds. The light bone structures allow them to soar on wind currents and parts of their bodies become the wind and clouds, themselves. They have been mainly described as “Clouds

that take form.”

The Netlings live in small round domes that exist within the cloud structures. These domes are forever shifting as the clouds move through the sky but the Netlings are used to it. They love frolicking among themselves and feel that life is about enjoyment.

There does not seem to be any formal hierarchy to their society. However, it has been noticed that the females are listened to more often and the elders are mostly female. It is unknown what roles the males play in their society.

The Netlings are a curious race that likes to visit the surface a lot.... especially during the morning hours. Flitting back and forth between the various flowers and trees, they are constantly chattering and laughing as they go along. They love to explore new areas that they've never seen and have a fascination for the races that live there.

## **Interaction**

Encountering one of them is a maddening venture. They have problems sitting still and will constantly move away and towards someone while they are conversing. They will be curious about the item that a person is carrying or the person, himself, if they've never encountered the race before.

## **Combat**

Netlings are not an aggressive race and do not have any form of weaponry. Violence is totally against their nature. During any combat situation, they merely turn into clouds and fade away. The only way to hold them is to encase them a solid structure. The speed at which

they move and disappear makes it almost impossible, without magical means, to trap them.



# Neuronimal

Classification	Sentient Race
Elemental Type	Symbiote
Habitat	Inanimate Objects
Height	Not Applicable
Speed	Slow
Strength	Moderate
Intelligence	Genius
Interaction	Only with hosts
Special Characteristics	Increases intelligence and obsessiveness within the host.

## Description

One of the most desired symbiotes in the known world is the Neuronimal. Extremely rare, the symbiote can be found attached to various types of helmets and looks like a set of roots that form the chinstrap. Inside of the helmet is a set of neural detectors that can determine whether brain activity is close enough for assimilation. When there is no activity nearby, the symbiote lays

dormant and enters a state very similar to being in a coma. The only functions running are brain wave detectors.

When the helmet is put on, the detectors immediately determine the status of the brain and whether it is a functioning brain or not. If it is, the roots forming the chinstrap immediately burrow into the neck and work their way to the brain stem. There is no pain since some tendrils provide anesthesia to the central brain region. At this time, the symbiote starts feeding on the fluids produced by the brain during activity.

The primary benefit of this symbiotic relationship is significantly increased mental awareness and acuity. The older the symbiote, the more intelligent that the host becomes. He can remember more information, notice more minute details and work out problems significantly faster than before. In addition, he seems to have a better connection to the Path and can use the ShadowMyths cards at their full power level.

At some point, though, the host realizes that this is not a long-term solution. Because of the increased activity on the brain, it decays faster than normal. Eventually, the level of intelligence becomes normal due to the advance decay of the brain. This may happen with days or months of when the symbiote is attached.

## **Interaction**

The hosts of the symbiote act as they normally would but exhibit much more mental capacity. When the helmet is first put on, the host will go through a period where they are arrogant and head-strong (if they weren't already fairly intelligent). Eventually, due to



their nature, they take up activities that mean a great deal to them and have very little time for other people.

## **Combat**

Depending on the nature of the combat, most hosts with Neuranimals are good at adapting the current situation for a favorable outcome. This is through the use of making advanced weapons from the simple items around them to talking and convincing others that combat is not the way.

For those who are mages, they have a wide array of spells available to them. Also, the connection to the Path allows them to combine the ShadowMyths cards into new spells that no-one had ever encountered.



# Octolar

Classification	Sentient Race
Elemental Type	Water
Habitat	Ocean
Height	5'
Speed	Moderate
Strength	Moderate
Intelligence	Smart
Interaction	Extremely open and agreeable.
Special Characteristics	Able to shapeshift their bodies to mimic the look of any person or animal

## Description

Having the shape of a human with an octopod head structure, the Octolar is famous for their ability to shape-shift and look like anyone else. By the simple act of seeing and touching another person, they can contort their body into the other person's likeness.

The range of this likeness is determined by the size of the other

person as they can only shift into someone else who is of similar height. They are able to expand their bodies to fill gaps that deal with weight or other deformities.

The Octolar live in undersea communities composed of sand domes. They have a unique relationship with each other that is not dependent on looks but on their mental abilities and character. Naturally, the elders are the ones that, not only exhibit high intelligence but a lot of charm.

There is a downside to their community though: treachery. With their high intelligence, they are masters of manipulating one another. This extends to other races and, frequently, they'll be found trying to control others to do their dirty work. The goal of their treachery is not to eliminate the others but to gain the favor of the council. The more favor they have, the more freedom they are given.

## **Interaction**

When talking with an Octolar, you'll find that they have a startling and annoying habit of mimicking everything that you do and how you talk. They are constantly studying your behavior in case they need to take your personality for their own someday. They plan for the future and understand that they never know what may come in handy.

## **Combat**

The Octolar rarely, if ever, engages anyone in single form combat. They are capable fighters and can defend themselves. However, their preferred method is to run and hide within large crowds. Since they can

easily shift into another shape instantaneously, they are impossible to find when they reach a crowd.

In addition, they will definitely engage in large combat with many warriors. In this situation, they are known to immediately take the place of another warrior they have slain. Suddenly, the attacking group doesn't know if the warrior next to them is their friend or a foe. The only thing that betrays them is the fighting style, since that cannot be mimicked. Since they are only copying the look of the armor, it doesn't provide any real protection.



# Phantom Rider

Classification	Sentient Race
Elemental Type	Air
Habitat	All Habitats
Height	4'
Speed	Fast
Strength	Moderate
Intelligence	Moderate
Interaction	Extremely reclusive and do not like to associate with others outside of their race
Special Characteristics	Able to shift from corporeal and non-corporeal forms extremely fast.

## Description

“Ghosts of the Night” and “Death Stealers”. These and many more titles are given to the Phantom Rider. This race of air elementals is considered the “cleanup crew” of the elemental world. They are constantly moving about and collecting dead bodies.

No one knows the reason since they have found no communities

where the Phantom Riders exist or anyone who knows of one. All that is known is that, after the death of a powerful sentient elemental, the rider comes in, absorbs the body into the mount and then leaves. It is claimed that there is a rustling sound like leaves on the wind and a blast of chill air. At that moment, some people see a mist in the shape of a rider and a lion swoop in and envelope the body. Suddenly the body is gone and so is the cold.

From what can be pieced together from accounts, the riders seem to come in, collect the dead and then transport them to paying customers but, as much as all information that surrounds this race, nothing is known for sure. The rumors, though, speak quite a bit of the race.

Apparently, they are a fairly happy and competitive race. When someone powerful dies, they receive some signal of the event. It is surmised that Death may be silently communicating with them. Once that happens, the race is on. The more bodies that they collect, the faster and stronger they become. It is a matter of pride in their community.

Once the bodies are collected, those that are not sold to various wizards and collectors are dissolved. The Phantom Riders seem to consume something internal to the bodies and the rest of the flesh is dissolved and returned to the earth. The items collected are then stored in several locations or sold to the collectors and wizards who hired them.



## **Interaction**

For those who have claimed that they have met and talked with a Phantom rider, it is known that they are a fairly quiet race. Once they, supposedly, get to know you, they are open and happy. They seem to understand better the concept of Death more so than the rest of the races on Ozul.

It should be noted that people who have claimed to have met and befriended them are generally thought to be unreliable.

## **Combat**

Although there is no reliable account of anyone who has fought or captured a Phantom Rider, several things can be determined about combat with them.

Being an air elemental and extremely swift, they would probably use that to their advantage. They have never been seen with any form of weapons, so the most probable attack would be to come in, absorb the enemy and then leave with them in tow.

This seems very credible since a cold blast of air always follows them before they show up. It's possible that the cold air renders an opponent somewhat neutralized. Even if the opponent wasn't disabled, any strikes against the Phantom Rider would be useless since they can immediately shift parts of their body to air or mist.



# Philagomite

Classification	Sentient Race
Elemental Type	Web
Habitat	All Habitats that are warm
Height	4"
Speed	Moderate
Strength	Weak
Intelligence	Unknown
Interaction	Unknown
Special Characteristics	Able to create invulnerable structure on hosts that it inhabits.

## Description

The Philagomite is a small insect-like creature that spends a lot of time living off of the flesh of any warm-blooded race or animal. They can be found in all temperate zones but the warmer climates are their favorite.

Their communities seem to be strictly built of their own families

with the queen of the community giving birth to the entire group. When females in the group mate and are about to produce offspring, they immediately go in search of another warm body to begin their own family. They can only survive outside of this environment for several days. Their favorite tactic is to move into city locations where it is easy to find proper hosts.

When a Philagomite finds a suitable host, it will start constructing a web dome onto the skin. The webbing attaches itself to the skin and the host only feels a slight tingling. Their favorite targets are sleeping creatures because this gives them enough time to build a nest without disturbance. The nest looks like a cocoon made of webbing.

As the dome is nearing completion, the queen will sit atop of it and lay eggs into the inside of the dome. After the eggs are done, the dome is sealed and the queen moves off to die. It takes about two weeks for the eggs to hatch and, once that happens, the children will start eating the host from the inside. Interior walls are built into the inside of the host so that the body does not die off immediately. There is no known way to remove the cocoon and most people just resort to removing the limb.

One important thing to note is that the Philagomite seems to mainly prefer Skin Elementals since they have the body structure that does not change and the nutrients traveling through the blood stream. This has led some wizards to come up with ideas of changing the blood composition in a victim to remove the Philagomite. No known records have been found in which this method has worked.

## **Interaction**

Being a form of insect, there doesn't seem to be any form of communication with these creatures. Sensitives have a feeling that there is a remedial communication using telepathy but the information is so basic that it is difficult to understand.

## **Combat**

The Philagomite is a fairly easy creature to kill as long as it has not created a cocoon on the body. They don't seem to have any form of defense other than being inside of the cocoon.

The cocoon, however, is extremely strong. It is tight enough that air or water cannot penetrate it and strong enough that it is immune to cutting and bludgeoning weapons. Acid and other forms of dissolving liquids also do not affect the cocoon.



# Ravenite

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Classification	Sentient Race
Elemental Type	Skin
Habitat	Forests
Height	3'
Speed	Fast
Strength	Moderate
Intelligence	Moderate
Interaction	Always looking for the next best deal and to barter for an upgrade to what they have
Special Characteristics	Inherently know value of item and what a person is willing to do to get it

## Description

As scavengers and hoarders, the Ravenite is known throughout the Elemental world to be the main resource of providing something that someone needs. With their small wings and nimble bodies, they are able to go most anywhere and collect things that they find. They have an excellent memory and can locate items in their own inventory or the location/information about how they got the item.

In addition, if the item is too large to bring back to the community, they will enlist the aid of other Ravenites by trading them one of their current goods for the help.

Among themselves, the Ravenites have no need for money. They willingly trade items that they collected and there doesn't seem to be much rhyme or reason between the items they trade other than their own personal preferences. They do, however, extract money from non-Ravenites. This allows them to purchase foods and other goods that could not be scavenged.

The village of the Ravenites is a series of large enclosed oval nests (looking like eggs) that are wedged between branches and the trunks of trees. The nests are typically about 20' or more in the air and provide for only one opening that the Ravenite can fly into.

### **Interaction**

Discussion with a Ravenite is an annoying process. It's like dealing with a used-product salesman who is constantly trying to get you to trade one of your items for one of theirs. They are always looking to upgrade what they have collected and discussions are along that path.

The important thing to remember is that they are very intelligent. They inherently know the value of something and, more importantly, they understand the value of something to the people that they are interacting with. How they know this is unknown.



## **Combat**

The Ravenites are not known for their fighting abilities. Although they are agile and fast, they prefer to escape or, if not possible, they will try to barter their way out of a situation. One of the standard tricks is to agree to find something for an opponent but replace it with a cheaper replica that looks similar.

If combat happens, they will always try to go for any long-distance weapon they have in their arsenal. This greatly increases their chance for survival and aids in their retreat.



# Salamite

Classification	Sentient Race
Elemental Type	Symbiote
Habitat	Oceans and Lakes
Height	Host
Speed	Host
Strength	Host
Intelligence	Host
Interaction	Only with the host
Special Characteristics	Provides host with various water elemental abilities

## Description

The Salamite symbiote can be found in various oceans and lakes around the world. Initially viewed as a small amorphous blob in the water resembling an Octolar, the Salamite floats suspended until it can find a host.

Once it finds a suitable host, it will absorb itself into the host

through the skin. Communication is immediately established that informs the host that it would like to join with it. In exchange for providing nutrients from the host body, it will provide the host with the general abilities of the water elementals. Being able to breathe underwater, shifting parts of their skin to various water implements and weapons, and able to become mainly invisible underwater are some basic abilities it can provide.

If the host rejects the Salamite, it will accept this, most of the time, and go on its way to find another one. It can live for a long time without a host since it usually has an excess store of nutrients that it can feed off of internally. If it is required to feed off of itself, it will grow smaller.

It should be noted that sometimes the Salamite may not leave if the host rejects it. There are some Salamites who do not care if the host wants it or not (rare) and most would also not leave if it does not have enough nutrients to last for a while (survival mode). In the case of the survival mode, though, they will leave once they have enough to survive on.

In the hidden parts of several cities, there will be several merchants that will sell someone a Salamite for a fee. The Salamites are, in effect, slaves to these merchants. The buyer is required to return once a week to ensure that the Salamite has not escaped or been damaged.

## **Interaction**

When communicating with a Salamite, the hosts find them to be a good-natured and quiet symbiote. They love telling stories about

their other hosts and also things that they have learned. In their mind, the abilities are a fair exchange for the nutrients they receive and, as a bonus, they can travel more of the world than they ever could via water.

## **Combat**

During combat, the Salamite can help the host protect themselves by shifting their body parts into various water weapons. In extreme cases and situations where the host has no combat training, the Salamite will ask to take over so it may react properly.

Although Salamites are not trained fighters, they are proficient with creating weapons and adjusting the body to adapt to combat situations. Sometimes, they may just liquefy the entire body so it may flow away in a stream or hide in a rain puddle.



# Seeder

Classification	Disease
Elemental Type	Disease
Habitat	Host
Height	Not Applicable
Speed	Not Applicable
Strength	Not Applicable
Intelligence	Not Applicable
Interaction	Contracted through touching various simple moss varieties
Special Characteristics	Begins transfer of victim into a seed and, eventually, a forest plant or tree.

## Description

Genetically created by various wood elemental races as a disease for the skin elementals, the Seeder slowly consumes the nutrients of the body and replaces them with wood fiber.

The Seeder appears as simple moss on the wood elemental. When the elemental came into contact with one of the sentient skin

elementals, it would brush the moss onto the intended target. The moss would immediately adhere to the skin and could not be removed. Over time, it would start spreading and the areas that it touch would harden and stiffen. Eventually, one of the victim's appendages would solidify into a large seed.

After a while, the seed would be too hard to carry and the victim's body would be too stiff. At this point, the seed would take root and the skin elemental would be replanted as a tree.

The terrifying part of this is that the mind of the skin elemental would still be active during this entire process. This was determined when other telepaths could "hear" Skin Elementals screaming. In some societies, the Skin Elementals were put to death to save them from this anguish and going mad.

Over the years, though, a problem arose. The disease, first engineered to only affect Skin Elementals, began affecting all the elemental races. It had mutated enough that no race was safe anymore... including wood elementals.

## **Interaction**

None

## **Combat**

None







# Shadow Knife

Classification	Sentient Race
Elemental Type	Air
Habitat	Caverns and Cities and Villages
Height	5'
Speed	Moderate
Strength	Moderate
Intelligence	Moderate
Interaction	No interaction to outsiders.
Special Characteristics	Able to shape weapons made of air and easily penetrate armor.

## Description

One of the deadliest races around, the Shadow Knife makes a perfect assassin and is not to be trifled with. These air elementals can slide quickly from the shadows, kill their intended victim, and then disappear. With built-in weapons made of “air”, these hardened devices can extend past the shadow and eliminate someone without forcing the Shadow Knife to leave his protection.

The Shadow Knife mainly lives with the cavern systems under Ozul. They are only seen in the upper world at night or in various shadows. Their society is based on creating chaos among other families so they can better their place in the world. The only people that they can fully trust are their own family members. Anyone outside of that group is seen as an enemy and a threat. Even in rare situations where more than one assassin is needed, they will always recruit a family member or close relative.

In their secretive caverns, they will train and share special techniques among their own family members. Their special sanctum of training has several magical devices to prevent other members of their race from spying on them during training exercises.

The only times that they seem to "work" together is with a common enemy and, even in that case, they will, more times than not, kill their own race in addition to the enemy force. There doesn't seem to any form of friendship between them unless something is mutually beneficial to both parties.

To contract a Shadow Knife for a task, the requestor leaves a Memory Ball in several specific locations (known only to those who have dealt with them before). The requestor goes back later and determines if the Knife has responded. The Memory Ball will show where to leave payment. Woe to him that cheats the Shadow Knife and not pay. Most times, the Knife will eliminate that person and those they hold dear.

## **Interaction**

No one has ever admitted to ever talking with a Shadow Knife and all information about their family life is suspect. What is known, though, is that if a Shadow Knife is captured, they will immediately kill themselves. Each Knife has a spell imprinted in their brain where they can immediately call up the memory and "die". As they die, their bodies dissolve.

## **Combat**

Since the Shadow Knife spends most of their time in the darkness, they are incredibly difficult to see and hit. If they are shown in the light, they are weak but will try to dissipate into forms of dark mists and spread out to the shadows.

Their preferred method is to form parts of their bodies into piercing weapons for impalement. However, a curious feature is that they need not form the entire weapon. For example, they could create a long tendril that are mists so they get past the armor part of a foe and the part that is past the armor is immediately reshaped into a spike or knife.

In addition, they also like to surround heads or exposed features of an opponent and then solidify their mists into spikes. It is rumoured that most people will hear a slight chuckle before they die.



# Storm Fae

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Classification	Sentient Race
Elemental Type	Skin
Habitat	Mountain
Height	4'
Speed	Moderate
Strength	Moderate
Intelligence	Moderate
Interaction	Reserved and extremely serious. Quick to the point.
Special Characteristics	Able to shift the external tendons into any form of weapon or arm

## Description

The Storm Fae is an aerial race of winged creatures that inhabit many of the mountain regions. Although their powerful wings can help them achieve any height, they prefer to soar on the winds. Using this soaring method, they can fly for many distances without being tired.

Besides the long-distance soaring, the creatures can carry many objects (up to twice their weight) by using the external tendons on their backs. These tendons move like worms and can be manipulated to hold any device. Thereby leaving the wings free for flying. The tendons can also be fashioned into structures that can be used as ordinary hands.

The society of the Storm Fae is a rigid one in which they spend most of their time gathering food and necessary supplies. Living in the mountains does not provide them with an abundance of resources and they try to make the best with what they have. They can withstand cold temperatures by wrapping themselves in their wings. During the summer times, the wings also act as a ventilation system with the tendons transporting heat from their bodies to the wings.

Being a stoic race, they place a high value on work. Play is almost unheard of among the elders and quickly presented as being unseemly for children of certain ages to engage in. Naturally, there are always the rebellious ones but they eventually learn to follow the lead of the average citizen or be encouraged to leave.

## **Interaction**

When meeting a Storm Fae for the first time, you get a sense of seriousness that you don't see in many people. They don't waste words and there is no form of idle chatter. The smile is never seen. They will get right to the point and decide whether they wish to engage with you. Once they are done with their business, they leave quickly without a word.



## **Combat**

The Storm Fae is an efficient fighter. Their preferred method is to attack from the distance and, especially in ShadowMyths magic use, they are quite ruthless. In addition, with the aid of their tendons, they are able to fashion hands and armor to protect their body.

If they are required to engage in close combat, they will shift the tendons to create spikes on their wings and body armor for their chest and legs. The older the fae, the stronger the tendon. From that point, they will then rake at the opponent with both the hardened tendons (formed as spikes) and their spike wings.



# Swamplar

Classification	Sentient Race
Elemental Type	Wood
Habitat	Marshes and Swamps
Height	8'
Speed	Slow
Strength	Strong
Intelligence	Moderate
Interaction	Extremely nice and jovial, they come across as slow but this is deliberate.
Special Characteristics	Incredibly strong and can transport between trees once per day

## Description

During the night, many of the residents of local swamps always comment that they can hear the crashing of trees and the thrashing of water. Those that venture to check out the sounds don't return. This is the main domain of the Swamplar. The Swamplar are violent tree and root creatures that have their homes within the very heart of many of the marshlands.

During the daytime, they are dormant and prefer to sleep in the still waters of the swamps. At this time, they are feeding on the local nutrients in the water and the trees that they are nestled against. If they are disturbed, they will rise up and defend themselves but, as a general rule, they would have built dense fencing structures made of natural wood to keep intruders out.

At night, they awaken and gather in the main clearing of the swamp. First order of business is to determine if various members are allowed to leave the village to start their own community. The strongest of the Swamplars takes on any challengers for this right. Each member that wants to leave (male or female) had to prove that they are strong enough to defend and create a village. If they can prove this to the elders, then they are given permission to leave.

It should be noted that it is not a requirement they defeat the strongest Swamplar. They just need to provide evidence that they are strong enough to protect their own village.

Once the challenges are completed, the village went back to the normal routine of sharing information, playing games, and visiting with friends. Overall, they are a pretty happy group of people who value family and strength above everything else.

## **Interaction**

Although the Swamplar may talk slow and appear to be dense, they are a fairly bright race. They like to think things over before committing to any form of decision. They are open with most races and will easily engage in long conversations.

One thing to keep in mind when talking with the Swamplars is that they have absolutely no interest in any form of technology. Their world is fashioned from the natural world and prefer to only engage with those items.

## **Combat**

The Swamplar is often very calm and not prone to anger. However, when threatened, they are very formidable fighters. Outside of their great strength, they have a cunning understanding of their surroundings. Since they are rarely seen outside of their swamp area, they make use of all the "dirty tricks" when fighting in mud and water.

Their main form of attack would be to overwhelm the opponent and drag them into the water. In the swamp water, they can move very fast and use parts of their body to anchor against existing root structures. This allows them to be immovable and protects them against any form of fire damage.

If they are threatened with fire, they will try to flee via the water systems in the swamps. Once per day, they can merge with trees and transport from one tree to another.



# Swarming

Classification	Sentient Race
Elemental Type	Wood
Habitat	Underground
Height	1'
Speed	Fast
Strength	Weak
Intelligence	Genius
Interaction	Unknown
Special Characteristics	Able to form complex weapons using their bodies in conjunction

## Description

With a high buzzing sound emitting from the ground, the easily agitated Swarming is protective of their underground hives. These small killers normally do not associate with any other races and prefer to be left alone.

The Swarming race seems to be a cross between normal bees and

other flying birds. Most people assume that they have the same intelligence level and that would be a mistake. Their society is a sophisticated collective in which they spend a lot of their time studying their natural environment and how to manipulate it to fit their needs.

Analysis of unknown material is made through extending their side tendrils into the material. They procure a small taste of the material and their taste buds are very efficient in defining the composition of the new item. From there, they discuss among themselves to see if there is any natural way to reproduce the new material.

Information from abandoned hives has shown that they have some form of factory set up to reproduce, naturally, any material that they have tested. It is unknown what they do with the newly created material since no one has ever seen them with any man-made items.

## **Interaction**

Since no one has ever communicated with a Swarmling, it is unknown about what they would do. The only form of interaction is where someone has accidentally discovered their hive.

From the survivors of such a situation, there seems to be an idea that the Swarmlings broke into two groups: soldiers and transporters. The soldiers are the advance group that will attack the intruder and the transporters will start gathering up equipment in the hive for evacuation.



## **Combat**

From all accounts, combat with the Swarmlings is dangerous and can easily lead into defeat for the opponent. They have two forms of attack: chemical and natural.

The first phase of the Swarmling attack is split into two groups. The first group surrounds the opponent and starts saturating the air with a dense mist of oil chemicals. Once this is done, they will light the oily mist on fire. It is unknown if they are able to do this naturally or if they were carrying some device to do that.

After the dense mist of chemicals is lit, the second group will attack in the form of projectile missiles. The Swarmling will immediately dive, at a rapid rate, toward the opponent, joining their bodies together to attack as one strike, and then, upon impact, split up again. They will continuously do this until the intruders are destroyed or have left the area.



# Telek

Classification	Sentient Race
Elemental Type	Skin
Habitat	Cities and Villages
Height	5'
Speed	Moderate
Strength	Moderate
Intelligence	Moderate
Interaction	Playful and fun. Very open to strangers.
Special Characteristics	Able to mentally immobilize others when they or their family feel threatened

## Description

The Telek is a moderate size humanoid that is known throughout Ozul as one of the kindest races. They will welcome any stranger and make them feel at home. For them, it is the heart of the person and not their looks they value the most.

When people encounter a Telek village, they get the immediate

feeling of fun and laughter. The villages are lively and many people find they don't want to leave. However, for most people, though, eventually everything becomes too much and they realize that they must move on. The source of such decisions is actually in the magic present at various parts of the town.

To protect their town from intruders who overstay their welcome, once a year, the Teleks imbue some crystals with a ShadowMyths Loneliness Card. The Loneliness Card makes the intruder uncomfortable because they know that this place is not their home. They are encouraged to travel to another location to find their true home... a place where they feel the most at ease. On the average mind, the spell typically takes about 3 days to take hold and then people move on. Higher intelligent creatures take a little longer before the spell takes effect.

Overall, Teleks are known for their openness and focus on family. They do not have large families so they may make the most of taking care of one another. Most families have around 2 children and comprise of many in-laws, parents, grandparents, and close relationships. If someone is suffering or in need of help, they will take them in for a period, and, when they are able to move on, guide them to their destination.

Their societies are simple and they prefer to work with their hands rather than relying on technology.

## **Interaction**

Meeting a Telek is equivalent to meeting a long-lost uncle or aunt who has missed you dearly. They are very welcoming and take

an interest in everything that you do. You feel like they could understand you and any issues that you have.

They don't seem to have any agenda other than ensuring that you are okay and welcome.

## **Combat**

Although they seem to be simple folk with no technology, their magic abilities are extremely strong. Being actively connected to the Path and having collected a wide array of ShadowMyths cards, they can wield the magic faster than most races. A large portion of their spells are related to transportation so they can remove themselves and those they are protecting out of danger.

Besides the magic that they wield, they also have an innate ability to mentally freeze anyone that causes them harm. Usually, this only extends to 3 or 4 moderate size opponents but, as danger increases, they can affect more people. So, their basic strategy is to freeze their opponents and then teleport out of the area.



# Tendron

Classification	Disease
Elemental Type	Disease
Habitat	Host
Height	Not Applicable
Speed	Not Applicable
Strength	Not Applicable
Intelligence	Not Applicable
Interaction	Unknown how the host contracts this disease
Special Characteristics	Converts hands into bone clubs

## Description

The Tendron is a rotting flesh disease where the nutrients that create bones in your body gather near the end of your hands. As the disease progresses, the hands become stiffer and the fingers eventually fuse. The victim notices that there are skull-like bone structures that develop. The disease is highly contagious and transmitted through direct contact.

When first contracting the disease, the victim will feel some weird tinglings along his arms or appendages. Over several days, a stiffness will settle in and he may feel weaker. This is the early stage of the disease and, if treated properly, the process can be halted.

Typical remedies for the disease at this stage are various tubers and roots found in local swamps and marshes. The nutrients found in these tubes seem to dissolve the internal disease. Most healers will grind up the tubers and provide them with protective waterproof containers.

If the victim notices that their fingers can no longer move, it is almost too late. The only thing that can be done is to remove the hand and apply the remedies. It is important to note that any form of magic or healing that tries to grow the appendage back will fail.

Once the disease has run the course on both hands, it mysteriously stops. The victim is left with two skull-like appendages for hands.

### **Interaction**

None

### **Combat**

None







# Tree Symbiote

Classification	Sentient Race
Elemental Type	Symbiote
Habitat	Marshes and Swamps
Height	Host
Speed	Host
Strength	Host
Intelligence	Host
Interaction	Only with host
Special Characteristics	Gives ability to transport between trees

## Description

When investigating how the Swamplars could transport between trees, it was discovered that they may have a special relationship with the Tree Symbiote. This symbiote is found near the root systems of trees in various swamp locations that are heavily inhabited by the Swamplar.

Unlike most symbiotes that are attached via touch, it is known that a person can be paired up with a Tree Symbiote by ingesting it. Most of the time, this happens when people are foraging in the woods and the small slivers of the symbiote get into the natural food system.

Once the symbiote has been ingested, it will establish communication with the host. Most people talk about the fact that they can hear voices in their heads but cannot see anyone. The symbiote is relatively harmless and is content with experiencing everything that the host does. It appears to live for that moment and has no higher aspirations.

The life of the symbiote is around 1 day. This may be another reason why the Swamplars are forever resting in the waters. They may ingest Tree Symbiotes regularly.

An interesting theory is that, somehow, the Tree Symbiote is a recording device and funneling information to another source through some magical means. This idea is based on the concept that the symbiote asks a lot of questions and, mostly, doesn't really do anything with the information. It's more interested in the experiences and the reason behind certain decisions.

There is some conjecture that all Tree Symbiotes in the same swamp are really one single entity. This may explain the idea of the gathering knowledge and the fact that each seems child-like and asks a lot of questions.

## **Interaction**

All communication only is between the host and the symbiote. Outside of the host making comments about hearing voices, nothing unusual is generally noted. However, with the symbiote, there are constant questions about what is happening, why something is happening, and what the host thinks about it. They seem to be eager to learn... as a child would be.

## **Combat**

Outside of the ability to allow the host to travel between trees, there doesn't seem to be any other special enhancements for combat. With the transport ability, the host just has to touch a tree and he immediately melds into it and reappears at another tree within the same swamp.



# Warmoth

Classification	Sentient Race
Elemental Type	Skin
Habitat	Open Ranges and Cities and Villages
Height	6'
Speed	Fast
Strength	Moderate
Intelligence	Moderate
Interaction	Wary until they get to know you. Distrustful of outsiders.
Special Characteristics	Martial art skills combined with extremely fast movement.

## Description

The Warmoth is a nomadic race that makes their home across many of the open plains of Ozul. The various tribes use different neck tattoos to show their allegiance, and they will change the shapes of their horns for ornamental purposes. However, when a male or female (both have horns) do something that dishonors their tribe, a part of their horn is cut off. If the horns have been shorn to the

skull (typically around 6 total dishonors), they are forced to leave the village. These homeless Warmoths make their way to any open cities or villages near the edge of the plains.

The Warmoths are a mixture of hunter-gatherers and, while they are in a particular location, very territorial. This causes a lot of tension between the various tribes and, in some cases, the tribes have created alliances to protect them against others. If a tribe is driven off of a location where they have set up their village, they will move on but send back some of their more reckless warriors to harass the new tribe. After a while, the harassing will diminish.

The villages of the Warmoths are temporary and, if needed, can be folded up and moved to new areas in a matter of hours. Most of the materials that they use in the villages are made from the animals that they hunted or found in the plains.

In terms of technology, they forego their use and rely on their innovations. As the years go by, more and more of the younger Warmoths see the advantage of technology but they are hard-pressed to get the elders to embrace them.

## **Interaction**

As with most nomadic races, the Warmoth is very reserved when meeting strangers or members of other tribes. They will be polite at first but wary of what the newcomers' intentions are.

Once they get to know you, though, they are very open. There doesn't seem to be any topic that is taboo and they are always interested in learning... especially if it can make their lives easier.



## **Combat**

The main form of combat deals with the wooden and bone weapons they have fashioned from various animals. Although the weapons may appear primitive, they are put to good use since the Warmoth is incredibly fast.

Besides the weapons they fashion, they have some form of martial arts that are taught to everyone in the village. These fighting techniques ensure that they are deadly with their own natural hands and the horns on their heads.

# Appendix

# Elemental Symbols

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**Air Elemental** - Air Elementals are mainly composed of bits of dust or mists. They are known for being very indifferent to other races since they find them “fleeting”. They tend to live very long lives.



**Bone Elemental** - Bone elementals are considered some of the strongest elementals around. Naturally, most of them are composed of various bone material but they are able to change the densities of parts of their body at will.



**Disease Elemental** - Disease elemental will take the host material (i.e. skin, rock, bone) and mutate it with their own DNA. It is unknown whether the elemental is sentient or not.



**Earth Elemental** - Earth elementals are mainly composed of dirt, small bits of rock, moss, and other small materials. Their body composition allows them to morph their body more easily into other shapes.



**Fire Elemental** - Being composed of fire, it's natural to think that they are rash. They are not. Fire elementals understand the fleeting nature of the world and tend to adjust to it more easily than other races.



**Lava Elemental** - These elementals tend to be very headstrong and violent. Able to shift parts of their bodies into forms of lava, they tend to use this to their advantage when dealing with people. A lot of times, it's their way or no way.



**Rock Elemental** - Being composed mainly of various ores and types of rocks, the Rock Elemental tends to be one of the physically stronger races. Most prefer to work with their hands but that doesn't mean that they are not intelligent.



**Sand Elemental** - Due to the nature of their world, Sand Elementals tend to be extremely reclusive. They prefer to stay with their own race. Composed mainly of sand, they blend in very well in the deserts and are almost impossible to detect.



**Skin Elemental** - Skin elementals are considered some of the weakest elementals around due to the fact that they don't have the ability to shift their forms. Most have to rely on various external weapons and their intelligence to survive



**Symbiote Elemental** - Symbiote elementals are semi-sentient. They tend to exist only if there is a host and will move between different hosts when one dies. Communication is usually handled telepathically.



**Water Elemental** - Being partly composed of water, these elementals are able to shift the density and transparency of their skin. This makes them extremely difficult to find in their natural environment.



**Web Elemental** - Like the Disease Elemental, it is unknown whether this race is sentient. They tend to be more insectoid and live in hive communities. They have a rough form of communication but not many can understand it.



**Wood Elemental** - One of the more common elementals, the Wood elemental is composed primarily of different forms of tree bark. They tend to be the ones that will interact most with the humans and are easily found in the forests.



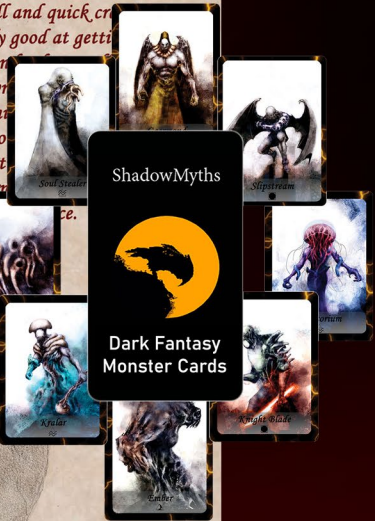
# More Decks Available!

The ShadowMyths store has more decks and folklore legends of the creatures in the decks.

## *Felinicus*



Known as the "Hunter in the Dark," and a favorite among many of the rock elementals, this small and quick creature is extremely good at getting vermin and Unkn... the Felinicus as pets to conversat... they fear... bro...



## *Human Folklore*

"Them caves have eyes! I tells ya! Those things are watchin' you all!" the old man yelled at a group of young kids near the entrance of Bartlowe Hole. Many a caver have sworn that there was something in the cave that was watching them. Those who have investigated the "eyes" say that it's just some rock formations that look similar to cats. One caver claimed that he tried to carve out the "cat" from the rock, but could not. His tools weren't strong enough. When he went back, the formation was gone. This occurrence of the disappearing formation led to the legend that they

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