

FAITH MATTERS



Faith is an important part of the *Hellfrost* setting. While priests worship one deity, being granted miraculous powers in return for their service, the common citizens honor the gods in their own way. Although most have a patron deity, they pray to gods as required by specific circumstances. Thus, a farmer who takes Eostre as his patron may make offerings to Freo when he heads to a distant market, Var to ensure a good price for his crops, Thunor to hold back storms that may ruin the harvest, and Eira when his children fall sick in winter.

While the gods of *Hellfrost* do not often interfere in the affairs of mortals, their power is felt through their paladins and priests, divine heralds, and natural events. While modern man can explain away natural phenomena through science, the citizens of Rassilon are superstitious. A thunderstorm is not a natural event, but the anger of Thunor, god of storms and wind. An earthquake has nothing to do with seismic forces or tectonic activity—it is an indication Ertha, goddess of the earth, is restless or moving around her subterranean home.

To that end, the inhabitants of Rassilon have strong beliefs in the powers of the gods. Whether they pay lip service to many gods, attend infrequent ceremonies when it suits their needs, have chosen a patron deity, have devoted their life without holy vows, or have taken office as a member of the clergy, all citizens honor the gods in some way. To deny the gods is to deny reality.

CULTS & SOCIETY

This section takes a look at how temples are organized, both internally and with regard to the wider faith, and also the matter of clerics and the laws of the land.

TEMPLE HIERARCHY

Cults in *Hellfrost* operate around a hierarchical structure. At the bottom are the laity, men and women who honor the

god but who are not ordained clergy. Above them are the devotees, laity who swear oaths of allegiance to worship the god above all others but who do not take holy office or receive miracles. The first true members of any cult are the priests and paladins. Finally there are the disciples, clergy who have taken their faith to a higher level of dedication.

Every temple has a high priest. Though the bearer is the senior cleric in the temple, the position is honorary and cannot be used to judge the cleric's status as a common cleric or a disciple. The term "senior" is also open to interpretation. Depending on the temple, the post may be filled by the oldest cleric, a disciple, or one with the most access to miraculous powers. Those of Tiw, as an example, often hold ritual combats when the position becomes available to determine who has the right to lead. As always, nothing is quite that clear cut in Rassilon. Some temples of Tiw treat the number of battles a warrior has survived as a mark of his right to lead.

While these titles represent level of faith and hierarchical order, cults also have a varying number of actual jobs within any given temple. For instance, temples to Tiw may boast a Training Master or Master of the Armory; those of Eira might have a Senior Physician or Almsgiver; and those of Thunor titles such as Master of Crows and Wind of the East Gate. No defined, rigid list of titles exists, giving the GM ample room to create unique positions as required.

HIERARCHY OF THE FAITH

Temples in cities and towns operate as independent political and spiritual entities, answerable to no higher authority save the deity. Those in villages, being smaller and often lacking in resources, tend to ally themselves to the nearest large temple, accepting orders from and granting tithes to their superiors in return for aid when required.

This arrangement is by no means universal, and plenty of small temples remain fiercely independent of outside interference. As a result, many temples hold unique rites and festivals, even within the same realm. Often these reflect local customs and traditions. In some cases, even

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his combat abilities, though Leadership Edges are not as important as general Combat Edges. A few dice in Healing never hurts, though can be avoided if you have the healing spell or there is a more dedicated party healer. Smarts is the weakest attribute, though that is not to say it should be completely ignored—Spirit, Strength, and Vigor are just more useful to a warrior.

SIGEL

Training: Most citizens like to think they're basically good people. Sigel's clergy know better. Candidates are required to admit all their sins, for until the soul is cleansed of this weight, one cannot worship Sigel with honesty. Throughout training, the novitiate must constantly purge his soul of sins through confession and ritual cleansing. Transgressions known to the clergy that are not recanted are beaten out before they can tarnish the cleric's soul for eternity.

Prayers: Sigel's prayers always begin by asking for purification for sins committed. For example, "Bathe me radiant light and cleanse me of my sins." Clerics are fond of quoting righteous scripture and begin such statements with, "Sigel teaches us that..." Worshipers try to refrain from cursing.

Adventures: Darkness lurks everywhere and must be cleansed. Wherever there is evil, the clergy of Sigel are expected to battle it. Because of this, any adventure that promises a clash between good and evil is acceptable to Sigel's clergy. Adventures needn't involve orcs or giants, though—closing down a brothel, thwarting a slavery ring, and slaying followers of Niht and Vali is perfectly good work. Any investigation into why the sun is fading is likely to be of interest to a cleric.

Character Guidelines: Aside from pretty much having to take Spirit (for being able to face the forces of darkness without panicking) and Notice (so you can hunt down foes in the dark), worshippers of Sigel have a great deal of free choice. Sigel demands his clergy defeat darkness, but he doesn't force them down any one path. Yes, paladins are warriors of the faith and should build accordingly, but priests might be scholars or healers first and warriors second.

THRYM

Training: In order to be accepted into the cult one must kill a cleric of Kenaz or Sigel or a fire elemental in single combat. Ambushes and assassination are fine, but no ranged weapons may be used—the victim must be slain in melee. As the victim dies, the candidate must repeat the oath, "By your death the sun weakens/by your death the warmth fades/by your death the winter grows." The novice must then journey into the Winterlands (in winter) and survive a blizzard lasting at least four hours. If he does, Thrym grants him his miraculous powers.

Prayers: Entreaties are always performed naked and when the temperature is below freezing. Praying at any other time is an insult to Thrym. Prayers are always made

in the plural—the blizzard is made of many snowflakes working together—and must include an admission of weakness. For instance, "We stand in the blizzard, weak and powerless before your might."

Adventures: The promotion of the Fimbulvitr takes many forms. Heroes may be asked to fight cultists of Kenaz and Sigel, locate and destroy or recover relics, spread chaos and fear in the Hearthlands, escort tribute to a Hellfrost dragon or frost giant jarl, serve either of the afore-mentioned, or lead orcs and ice goblins in battle.

Character Guidelines: Thrym expects his worshippers to promote the Fimbulvitr by whatever means they can. To that end, they have no favored archetypes. That said, unless you're playing a frostborn, a high Vigor is absolutely vital for coping with the cold—Thrym forbids clerics to warm themselves, remember. Given that at some point you'll end up taking orders from a Hellfrost dragon, a good Spirit die is vital to helping one avoid showing too much fear.

THUNOR

Training: Thunor's clergy are educated outside. They study the different types of winds and clouds, and learn Thunor's mythology. Philosophy and conundrums with no set answers are debated, so encouraging the novitiate to set aside preconceived ideas and adapt as a situation unfolds. His clerics can be eloquent orators, speaking out against oppression and tyranny, encouraging the acceptance of new ideas over tradition, and promoting the idea of free will over ordained destiny.

Prayers: Worship is always accompanied by rumbling drums or clashing cymbals. As mentioned in the *Hellfrost Player's Guide*, prayers are generally written on kites and sent skyward. When spoken words are required, there is no set standard—reliance on defined methods of worship promotes stagnation.

Adventures: Thunor's clerics liberate the oppressed. A village beset by rapacious orcs, a prisoner wrongly incarcerated, prisoners of orcs and goblins—all require Thunor's help. At the same time they are explorers and seekers of new ideas, so exploring an old tomb or delivering someone or something to a distant land is likely to appeal. The more varied the quests the better, for stagnation and repetition is abhorred.

Character Guidelines: As travelers, Survival is an important skill, for there will be long periods when the cleric is away from civilization. Curiosity is a valued trait, but stubbornness is not, for clerics should always be open to new ideas. Beyond these simple guidelines, clerics are given total freedom to pick and choose skills and Edges, for Thunor's clergy have no single defining goal.

TIW

Training: Tiw's militaristic cult is run like an army. Instructors put recruits through punishing boot camps to test their physical fitness. Recruits must be able to handle a barrage of threats, taunts, and beatings, for the

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MAYOR CARRYING DAY

Deity: Hothar

Some years ago, a nobleman decided that two small hamlets on his lands should merge to create a village. Between them lay a slow-moving stream bordered by wide, muddy flats. The noble left it to the locals to decide who should be mayor of the new village, demanding only that he (or she) present himself at his hall at sunset.

Naturally, each hamlet decided one of its own would be the logical choice. So it was that each hamlet bodily lifted its candidate and raced toward the manor. The race soon developed into a brawl, the end result being two battered and bleeding candidates.

Over the years, the ritual for mayoral election has changed somewhat. Today, the candidates are no longer carried. They have been replaced by two large leather-coated, wooden balls with caricatures of the contenders painted on them. Instead of racing to the lord's manor, each side of the village begins outside the house of its chosen candidate, and attempts to carry its "candidate" to the other hopeful's house. The first ball to reach its destination earns the candidate being represented election. Should no side achieve victory, last year's candidate remains in office. Typically, the contest devolves into a brawl on the banks of the river, resulting in a lot of bruised, tired, and muddy villagers.

As is normal in such events, the use of magic is expressly outlawed. Any one caught cheating can expect to be repeatedly dunked in the thick slime until he repents his wickedness and apologizes to Hothar.

MINTING THE BREAD

Deity: Var

Before the advent and spread of the scield, most nobles and warlords minted their own coins. This resulted in a bewildering variety of standards and values, and made money-changers a necessity. Though it no longer possesses a mint, and its fortunes have waned, one community continues to mint a single base metal coin once a year (always on a Marketdaeg). The coin is struck by the ruling noble, and then baked into a small bun by clerics of Eostre Plantmother. Throughout the day, buns are freely given to citizens who attend the market, and to the poor.

At sunset, the buns are broken open (to do so beforehand ensures very bad luck will befall the household). Whoever finds the token coin is required to hand it in to the nearest cleric of Var (one is always present). In return, he is given usable coins. In olden times, the value of the coin was set at one gold scield. Today, it is worth ten gold scields—this is actually paid by the nobleman, rather than the uncharitable cult of Var. The coin is then melted down to prevent it being put into circulation or the locals seeking to return to the old currency.

Should no one hand over the coin by dawn the following morning, the cleric of Var curses the settlement, declaring it will suffer poor trading fortunes by its refusal

to adapt to the new ways. If the culprit is found, he is assured a thorough beating by an angry mob of merchants and craftsmen.

ORPHAN'S DAY

Deity: Eira

The Blizzard War and the chaos that followed led to a huge increase in the number of orphans and abandoned children. Those who survived relied on charity and theft in equal measure. Each year, local children (orphaned or otherwise) visit their neighbors' houses, proclaim their poverty, and ask for alms. Most are given a silver scield or scrap of food for their trouble. Those unwilling to show charity typically suffer a robbery before nightfall. By tradition, this petty act of theft is not seen as a crime.

OYSTER DAY

Deity: Neorthe

This ceremony marks the start of the annual oyster catch. The day begins at dawn with a token feast of bread and ale paid for and officiated over by the ruler. After the meal, the oyster fishermen walk down to the shore, the villagers falling into line behind them. At the beach, they are greeted by the resident cleric of Neorthe dressed in clothes decorated with oyster shells. The oyster fishermen make offerings to the cleric, who represents his god, asking for a good catch in the coming year. Offerings are typically small parcels of food or purses of silver. This done, the ruler then wades into the shallow water and rakes up a single oyster.

If, when opened, the oyster is found to contain a pearl, the season will be profitable—the larger the pearl, the better the village's fortunes. The oyster is then swallowed by the ruler, symbolizing the settlement's continued union with Neorthe, and the shell given to the cleric to adorn his costume next year.

OUTLAW DAY

Deity: Nauthiz

The inhabitants of one Hearthland's village are the descendants of outlaws, a fact of which they are quite proud. On the first Marketdaeg of Werremonan, they remember these distant days by "robbing" visitors. Gangs of villains, usually the most important members of the village, accost visitors to the market and demand money from them.

The amount is based on the person's outward appearance, but is never higher than 10 gold scields, and most demands are for silver scields. Those who refuse (whether playing along or out of ignorance to what is happening) are grabbed and locked in a barn. To secure their release, they, or their friends, must pay a "ransom" equal to twice the initial amount demanded.

Ignorance of the custom is not an excuse for impolite or violent behavior. Anyone who causes trouble (as opposed to playing at resisting the outlaws) is arrested for

of Messengers, and many are paid up members. Membership is not required, and plenty of clerics enjoy the freedom of freelance work, taking on commissions as suits them rather than taking orders.

Membership of the guild can be represented in play by taking the Connection (Messenger Guild) Edge and the Orders Hindrance. Many clerics have a fixed base where potential patrons can contact them, and such structures always contain a shrine. All Messenger Guild houses contain a shrine to Freo, with Hrafn represented as a raven perched on one of the god's shoulder.

While sensible travelers stick to main roads wherever possible, messengers often take the most direct route, confident in their abilities to keep them out of trouble. "As Hrafn flies," a common expression, refers to a straight line distance between two points, and is often used when describing distances between locales.

Ceremonies are impromptu affairs, held any time clerics gather in more than a pair. Here the clergy swap stories of their travels and adventures, though they never divulge the recipients of messages to each other out of professional courtesy. As well as a form of boasting—often the teller of the most outlandish but true story avoids having to buy drinks for the night—these stories help pass on news messengers need to know, such as increased orc activity or political unrest.

Character Guidelines: Hrafn's clergy may be called upon to travel anywhere in Rassilon, and so should be proficient in the core travel skills—Boating, Riding, and Survival. A good Vigor score is handy for helping cope with the rigors of travel. Knowledge (Folklore, and Heraldry) can also be useful, though clerics can get by without these. Fleet Footed is a favored Edge. Knowledge (Area) is much more useful—it's hard to deliver a message if you can't find the recipient. While not required to be secretive, clerics are typically reticent to discuss their business—Big Mouth, while not prohibited, is not an appropriate Hindrance.

HRAEZLA

Titles: Terror of the Heavens, Fearmonger, Lord of Nightmares, Father of Terror, Warrior-Bane.

Aspects: Fear.

Affiliations: Dargar, Hela.

Symbol: A skull with spider legs.

Priesthood: Lords of Fear (priests); Lords of Terror (paladins).

Herald: None.

Holy Days: Each Deorcmonan is a holy day.

Duties: To induce and spread fear.

Sins: (Minor) failure to induce fear in a sentient being once per week, being Intimidated; (Major) failure to induce fear in a sentient being once per month, helping someone overcome their fears, suffering the effects of Fear; (Mortal) suffering the effects of Terror.

Signature Power: *Fear*.

Powers: *Fatigue*, *lower trait* (no boost), *nightmare*, *panic* (no bless), *stun*, *summon spirit* (fear, phobia only).

Trappings: Miracles relate to horrific hallucinations and visions and have no associated game mechanics.

Special: Clerics cannot take the Phobia or Yellow Hindrances.

Hraezla is a scion of Glapsviðr (p. xxx), created as a weapon in his war against the gods. A vile and spiteful creature, he could peer into the hearts of the gods and induce visions of their worst nightmares. Many fell under his assault, their hair turned white, their flesh drained of color, and their faces contorted in utter terror as their hearts ceased beating. According to some cultists of Hrist (p. xxx), it was the sight of Hraezla that turned their deity into a craven coward. The origin of Hraezla's name is unknown, but every race and culture translates it with the same meaning—Terror.

No images of Hraezla exist. It is said his visage is so horrific it can cause death from fright, and despite their best efforts none of his followers have ever been able to adequately capture that in art or sculpture. Instead, his cultists pray before graven images that would make men of weaker will vomit or flee in panic.

Hraezla has few shrines and no temples. His clergy work alone, considering even their peers fair targets for their attention. More often than not secret shrines spring up wherever there has been some vile atrocity or sickening crime, areas where the people are already afraid. The Liche Lands of Old and the Withered Lands are dotted with them, for these very realms quail the hearts of mortals.

While both aspects of the clergy are expected to use their miracles effectively, they differ in their mundane approach to generating fear. Priests are not called Fearmongers for nothing. They delight in creating rumors than cause widespread panic and fear. His paladins prefer physical fear-inducing actions, and are much closer to Dargar's cult in that respect.

Ceremonies take one of two forms. The first involves sacrificing a sentient creature to Hraezla. The unfortunate is tortured with terrifying visions and promises of a grisly end until his heart fails. The second forces the cleric to face, and overcome, his personal fears. This self-testing, which is considered a ritual of cleansing and purification, must be attempted at least one per month.

Character Guidelines: Outside of his miracles, a cleric's best means of inducing fear is through Intimidation. Since the clergy are expected to resist fear, a high Spirit is essential. Courageous is the quintessential Edge. Strong Willed is favored because it helps one resist being intimidated, a form of fear in itself.

HRIST

Titles: The Quaking One, He Who Jumps at Shadows, Self-Preserver, He Who Walks Forward and Runs Backward.

Aspects: Cowards.

Affiliations: Eira, the Unknowable One

Symbol: None (clerics don't like to draw attention to themselves).

fore the effects are handled, the GM must draw a card from the action deck. A royal card (Jack through Ace) means a random spell is cast instead. GMs using this cult in adventures should create a quick random spell table. Assigning spells in advance to the sixteen royal cards allows the GM to determine the random spell using the one card.

If the random spell cannot be cast for any reason, it is treated as if the cleric rolled a 1 on his Faith die. For instance, a cleric of Loki tries to invoke *bolt* at a distant foe. He draws the King of Clubs, which the GM has predetermined is the *armor* spell. Since *armor* requires Touch to work, the spell fails.

Trappings: Clerics can choose any trapping at the time of casting. However, if a random spell is cast, a random trapping is also assigned.

Loki represents the unpredictable forces of chaos and disorder. In the beginning, long before the God War, Loki plagued the gods' efforts to bring order to the universe. At first his antics were harmless japes, amusing to all but the dourest deity. Slowly, though, his tricks became malicious and destructive. Unwilling to kill one of their own, the other deities instead tried to imprison Loki. Each attempt failed, for Loki's powers over chaos were too strong to tame. Meeting secretly, the gods crafted special shackles, which they named Time. Calling on all their power, the gods finally bound Loki.

Loki is the father of the Unknowable One. Whereas Loki sought chaos for its own sake, his son uses chaos to teach valuable lessons, never acting maliciously. It was this difference in personality which spared the Unknowable One his father's fate.

The Lord of Chaos has no shrines or temples—a structured organization goes against his nature. Worshipers rarely gather, for their malicious nature and desire to cause chaos knows no bounds. As a result, there is no trust or cooperation among the clergy. In some instances the clergy actively works against their comrades. For instance, a cleric may learn a colleague is planning to kill a nobleman. Rather than aiding his comrade, his rival may instead inform the target his life is in danger. Knowing an assassin is on one's tail is often enough to cause disruption in itself.

While incapable of personal action against the other gods, Loki is still able to grant his followers access to miraculous powers. However, even his most devout followers are not immune to the deity's capricious whims. At random intervals, Loki switches the power being petitioned for a completely different one.

Loki's clerics want one thing—to free their god from his shackles. This, they believe, can only be achieved by breaking down order and reducing the world to total anarchy and confusion. Clerics of Loki are predisposed to causing chaos for no reason other than to spread misery and discord. Less militant worshippers may scatter stinkberries or summon a wild but generally harmless beast in the middle of a crowded market, spread false rumors to sow mistrust among allies, or commit acts of minor sabotage, such as posing as a cleric of another faith and

conducting a wedding ceremony (the marriage would be invalid).

The more extreme members of the faith happily summon ferocious beasts in public places, bring nations to bloody war, and slaughter nobles and other important citizens to sow the seeds of confusion and chaos in the hierarchical society which pervades Rassilon's cultures.

As befits their nature, clerics of Loki perform no ceremonies—committing acts of chaos is worship enough, and to follow a set series of litanies would go against Loki's personality. They do sometimes create completely nonsensical rites, but usually only when it can sow confusion.

THE MACHINE GOD

Titles: None.

Aspects: Order, unification, obedience.

Symbol: A cog bound with chains.

Priesthood: The Changed.

Herald: None.

Holy Days: None.

Signature Power: *Boost trait** (no lower),

Powers: *Aim**, *altered senses**, *analyze foe*, *armor** (metal plates), *bolt* (metal shards), *detect* (no *conceal*), *energy immunity**, *environmental protection**, *fly* (metal wings), *leaping**, *mimic*, *precognition*, *quickness**, *smite** (affects punches only) *speaking language**, *speed**, *wall walker**, *wandering senses**, *warrior's gift**.

Trappings: Spells with a visible effect always involve metal.

Special: Spells marked "*" have a Range of Self. Clerics may not take the Champion or Holy Warrior Edges.

Despite its title, the Machine God is not a true deity. Rather, it is an artificial construct, the work of mages who sought to create a god long before the Blizzard War. The creature, a vast, immovable, metallic construct of clockwork and gears gained sentience beyond human ken within seconds of being awakened.

In those brief moments of time it learned all there was to know about the mortal world, and it saw there was a problem—disorder. It informed its creators of its plan to bring order and unity to the world, sparing no details in how such universal order would be achieved. Horrified by the monstrosity they had created and the world it intended to fashion, the mages tried in vain to destroy the Machine God. Dozens of wizards died that day, and in the end they succeeded only in sealing the Machine God in the vast cavern in which it had been created.

For a millennia, the Machine God worked on its plan. It designed and created a new race of servitors, one whose obedience was total and unwavering. When the dwarves of Karad Noshrek tunneled into the cavernous prison, they unleashed the Scavengers on the world, paying the ultimate price for their fateful act.

Its clergy, known as the Changed to the races, were once living beings of flesh and bone. After undergoing excruciatingly painful physical transformation they emerge as part-living creature and part-machine. The

stars are the remnant of flower petals ripped up by Tiv after Eira left him. Another claims they are sparks caused by Hagvirkr sharpening Eostre's hoes and plows in readiness for the coming spring. Yet another says they are flakes of snow sent by Thrym to blanket the world in ice, but scorched by Kenaz or Sigel before they strike.

The Stone Shower begins on the second Marketdaeg of Werremonan and ends anywhere from five to seven days later. Legend has it that during this time Haptsönir and Jarngrimr, bitter enemies, throw huge boulders at each other. Many of these miss and fly out of Godsheim into the great heavenly void.

On the third Waesdaeg of Huntianmonan the night sky is broken by the impressive Blood Drops, fiery red streaks that burn through the heavens. These are blood drops from the epic struggle between Thunor and Thrym, which has been raging since spring. Old wives tales claim that if snow falls before the end of that week, winter will be hard and last well into Eostremonan, for Thrym has driven back his rival. If the snow holds off, the winter winds will be less harsh and spring will come early next year.

The Sparks begin on Endedaeg of Fogmonan, as the Anvil moves into alignment with the Forgemistress, and last exactly four days. It is widely agreed they are sparks created by Ertha striking the Anvil.

CONSTELLATIONS

For untold millennia the races have stared at the heavens and seen shapes in the firmament. Over time, sages and skalds named these formations and attached myths to them. So were born the constellations.

The oldest existing star charts are those inscribed by the gatomen at the height of their ancient empire, though the faded images on their crumbling stone tablets and temple walls bare little resemblance to modern charts. Of the current civilized races, it was the elves whom first charted the firmament.

Like Godsheim, there is no one correct view of the stars. Every race, major culture, and cult, not to mention different geographic regions, has their own twists on the tales. Some use different stars in the constellations, while others ignore entire formations in the heavens. The constellations depicted on the star chart and described below are the most widely accepted facts and figures, though as you will see there are varying stories for many.

Although there are countless lesser constellations made up of faint pricks of light, the great constellations are those used in fortune telling, navigation, and common stories, and the ones most clearly visible from the mortal realm.

The star chart is based on midnight observation of the heavens taken from Nara, a major center of learning in the Freelands. As the hours of night pass, the stars rotate counter-clockwise through the sky. As the seasons pass, so different formations are first over the horizon.

To use the star chart, rotate it until the current month is at the bottom. Constellations at the bottom of the chart

are in the northern sky, while those at the top lie to the south. (In order to see the constellations as they would appear in the sky to the characters, hold the chart above your head with the current season facing away from you, and bend it into a curve.)

The world has an axial tilt of around 20 degrees. Thus, constellations near the horizon partially disappear during the year, only to rise high in the sky some six and a half months later. The images on the chart depict all the constellations at their zenith, something that never actually occurs in the night sky. However, geography and cosmology are not recognized sciences in Rassilon, and all star charts the characters will ever come across show the stars in this manner.

Any references to seasons in the text below relate to the Hearthlands.

0. THE SECRET SIGN

This constellation appears on no star charts save the most fanciful, for it is sacred to Niht, mistress of secrets and darkness. That it even exists is subject to furious debate, even among the goddess' cultists. Those who claim it must exist say it is formed of dark stars, invisible to all save Niht herself. Skeptics consider this a very poor excuse for claiming something "must" exist. Even among those who agree it exists, there is no consensus regarding in which part of the sky it hangs.

The mythical constellation goes by many names, including the Veil, the Shroud, the Shadow, the Dark Lady, the Assassin, and the Black Watcher.

1. THE COMPASS

This constellation is known as the Northern Cross in much of the High Winterlands and the Wheel in the Hearthlands. Regardless of race, culture, or faith, all agree it was placed in the heavens by Freo as an aid to navigation. Rassilon has no north star. Instead, the vertical arm of the Compass points due north, guiding travelers on their journeys.

The Compass appears fully in the heavens in late spring, the time when most citizens begin long journeys. As it slips down in the sky toward the horizon, wanderers know it is time to find shelter from the coming winter.

2. THE STAG-HEADED HUNTER

Ullr, the stag-headed god of hunting, who the constellation represents, begins to break the horizon in spring and crosses it fully in Werremonan. This marks the official start of the hunting season in many regions. It lasts until the god sinks again in early Fogmonan. During winter Ullr is only partially visible, when it is said he is sheltering within his hall and preparing for next year's hunt.

3. THE FLAMING CLOAK

The stars of this constellation flicker red in the night

Symbol: A heart wrapped in chains.

Signature Spell: *Boost/lower trait* (Spirit, Vigor, and Intimidation only).

Powers: *Armor, deflection, energy immunity, fear, summon spirit* (courage), *weapon immunity*.

Trappings: Trappings relate to physical defense and indomitable will. *Armor* might simply allow the target to shrug off damage, while *deflection* might be a stare that causes attackers to quail or involve physically swatting aside a weapon like it was a feather.

Dark Pact: Those who form a dark pact with Andhaka do not lose Vigor. Instead, they suffer a loss of Smarts. Eventually they end up too stupid to flee danger. Cultists may take Nerves of Steel, Improved Nerves of Steel, Hard to Kill, Harder to Kill, and Strong-Willed through dark pacts. The first four cause their skin to harden and transform into scales. The latter turns their eyes jet black and soulless.

Description: The Fortress of the Abyss is always shown as a muscular figure. His skin is scaled, his head like that of a triceratops, his feet wide and immovable, tipped with claws that can grip any surface. His eyes are soulless, jet black orbs—all viewers see reflected are their own fears and weaknesses, for Andhaka fears nothing. He has no need for weapons or armor, for none below the level of demon prince can summon the mental strength required to raise a weapon against him, and even his peers must delve deep into their inner reserves.

Andhaka is the spirit of inner strength, steely looks that can cause a berserker's courage to falter, unshakable self-belief, and unassailable power. Many of his followers are not great leaders of men, but cowards who seek refuge and strength in his cult. Neither Dargar nor Tiw will traffic with cowards nor teach them how to protect themselves, and Eira's clerics speak of peace and understanding, when most of those who feel persecuted want only to fight off their oppressors. Where the gods fail, though, cultists of Andhaka are only too pleased to help.

The demon prince cares not one iota who worships him in life, for all shall kneel before his might in death.

GRAETHIG

Titles: Lord of Plenty, Demon of Covetousness and Greed, the One Who Provides.

Aspects: Wealth, material greed, covetousness.

Symbol: A skull emblazoned gold scield.

Signature Spell: *Boost/lower trait* (Gambling, Lock-picking, Persuasion, and Streetwise only).

Powers: *Bolt, charismatic aura, lock/unlock, summon demon* (chain, changeling, collector, fetter hound, imp, librarian), *summon spirit* (jealousy).

Trappings: All trappings are, when possible, related to wealth in some form. *Charismatic aura*, for instance, might bedeck a target in jewelry or allow him to bribe people with gold coins. All are illusions, and disappear when the spell ends. *Bolt* might represent a stream of battering coins.

Dark Pact: The Rich and Filthy Rich Edges are available as dark pacts. Such money brings with it the Major Greedy and Mean Hindrances. The demonist becomes exceptionally jealous of his wealth and has no concept of charity. He won't lend money without charging exorbitant interest rates.

Description: Graethig is often shown as being a human with just two small horns to mark his demonic nature. Such images are flattering, for Graethig's true form, as detailed in several demonic texts written by demons, has goat legs, a torso of matted black hair, scaly arms, a bald, red head broken by two unsightly horns, and three pairs of scaled wings.

Those who crave material wealth are drawn to Graethig's dark cult. Merchants, thieves, nobles, and peasants chant together and offer blood sacrifices in roughly equal numbers, each beseeching their fell master to give them wealth beyond their imagination. The demon prince is only too happy to provide, for he knows soon he will have more of his favorite currency—damned souls.

Typical worshippers crave the good things in life and seek to gain riches without earning. Nobles oppress their peasants with taxes, thieves steal from those who already have wealth, merchants charge high prices for shoddy goods, and peasants take to murdering strangers for their belongings, stealing sheep and cows, or without holding their tax payments.

JARNBANIX

Titles: The Shrieking Storm, Dealer of Quick Death, Demon Lord of Ferocity and Rage.

Aspects: Ferocity.

Symbol: A mailed gauntlet.

Signature Spell: *Quickness*.

Powers: *Battle song, boost/lower trait* (Strength, Vigor, and Fighting only), *smite, summon demon* (demonic soldier, lasher, spined, and rage), *summon spirit* (anger), *warrior's gift*.

Trappings: Trappings take the form of physical transformations to something resembling the demon prince.

Dark Pact: Demonists can take the Berserk, Frenzy, and Sweep Edges (and the Improved versions) through a dark pact. Each Edge slowly transforms them into a twisted horror, a mortal version of their infernal patron.

Description: Jarnbanix takes the form of a monstrous humanoid. His savage head is marred by a wide mouth full of large teeth, with two silver tusks protruding at the corners of his maw. Two large horns, like those of an aurochs, sprout from his furrowed brow. Batlike wings tipped with razor sharp claws stretch from his back. His arms are those of a lion, tipped with iron claws as sharp as any spear. His skin is midnight blue, but concealed beneath silver armor in which the misty forms of devoured souls writhe and silently scream.

Jarnbanix is the demon of lightning quick attacks, relentless ferocious strikes, and sudden death. Many of his followers are berserkers and assassins, drawn to him because he places no restrictions on their behavior.