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DEMONS VS. DEVILS

Demons are a wide variety of related extra-planetary species native to the Prime, and are descended from creatures originally from one of a number of worlds either near the Markab home world or near another world of the Prime too close to the Primal Chaos. Like the Markabs they are terrifyingly different in quality from other races — their blood is a black ichor, poisonous to non-demonic life forms; they have strange life cycles; and they are innately highly magical and physically malleable. They are also, through their highly magical nature, readily and easily summoned by wizards, witches, and other spell casters, and are eminently useful as minions and servitors. The most powerful demons — demon-kings and the minions of the Demon Gods — are also extraplanar creatures from the Demon Realms. Such creatures are extra-planetary and extraplanar, though the vast majority of demons are neither, as most demons of the Wilderlands are native-born and bred to Gaia in the Demon Empires of the south.

Devils are extraplanar creatures native to the Netherworld, and are extraplanar beings of widely diverse nature and forms. Devils are spiritual creatures that can take many different forms on the Prime. They are innately magical and readily summoned to serve clerics, wizards, and witches. Demons relate to devils in the same way as other mortal races, being no more or less friendly or inimical innately; the demons of the Great Horned Empire and Lesser Horned Empire practice devil worship, their temples dedicated to Lucifer, Arioch, Mammon, Moloch, or one of the related Devil-Gods.

The demons of the Horned Empires confuse the issue even further; as they worship devils, they grow powerful through devilry and service to their fiendish masters. Thus, during countless millennia the souls of many demons that end up in the Scarlet Hells have worked their way up the infernal hierarchy, and many devils take on demonic form by their nature. There are also teeming multitudes of lesser demon souls that are used as fodder by the devil princes in their wars. These demon-devils are perhaps more often summoned than true devils, and so have further muddled the situation... let the unwise summoner beware!

SOL: THE SUN

Sol, Gaia's sun, appears little different than the sun of our own world. It is a great orange-yellow sphere that appears to rise in the east and appears to set in the west. Many peasants believe that the sun revolves around Gaia, but most educated folk know otherwise; even druidic priests rarely make any attempts to hold a pretense of geocentrism, though there are a few cults that continue to hold such odd beliefs. There are many gods associated with Sol, most claiming to have sole jurisdiction over its powers. In the Wilderlands proper, the major solar deities include Adorak Tau, Apollo, Belenus, Mitra, Ra-Harakhte, Surya, Tezcatlipoca, Umannah, Seker, and Shamash. Mitra and Adorak Tau have a special hatred for each

other, as do Umannah and Apollo, while Seker and Ra-Harakhte are brother gods of the Enneadim. Many believe the Celestial Realms of these gods are actually within the sun, or that the sun is merely a reflection of their city/citadel/face, etc.

HEAVEN'S BRIDGE

The second-most important of the celestial bodies, before even the moons and the planets, is the great planetary ring known as Heaven's Bridge; to followers of Odin, Thor, and other gods of the Valonar Pantheon it is known as Bifröst, the Rainbow Bridge, and it is said that many of the gods use the bridge to walk between the worlds. This ring appears to viewers as a curving band across the sky, a finger-wide glittering road crossing from horizon to horizon, high above the moons. From the Wilderlands proper, it is visible in the southern skies. It is visible day and night — by day it appears a shimmering blue with a twinkling of other colors flaring here and there, and at night it dances with all the colors of the rainbow. The entire ring turns a deep gold, even by day, once every 52 years, an event that is met with wonder and horror, depending on the circumstances and superstitions of the viewer. The cycles of the ring are used by many cultures as a means to mark the passing of cycles and ages. Heaven's Bridge last shimmered gold 10 years ago, in 4423 BCCC, and will do so once again in 4475. Gods particularly associated with Heaven's Bridge include Anubis, Brighid, Hathor, Heimdall, Nephtyls, Shang-Ta, and Yog. None are said to possess the Bridge; they are said to guard it or to be the guide across it, but never possess it.

UNDER THREE MOONS

Gaia has three moons. The closest moon is Gorm, a blue-green orb that appears to be about 2/3 the size of Earth's Moon. Sages with telescopes can readily discern continents and oceans upon Gorm's surface, and many speculate at the civilizations and monsters that live there. Gorm revolves around Gaia every 20 days, and rotates on its axis every 30 hours. No major gods claim to represent Gorm; sages believe this is because the gods of the peoples of the moon would never agree to a god of Gaia representing them. The fact that no gods of Gorm have ever made themselves known has little bearing on this theory. Some sages believe that Demon-Gods such as Demogorgon, Dyzan, K'tau, Mynarthitep, Orcus, Tsathoggus, Xiim-Chaasath, Xirchiriog, Yan-Thar, and Yog either are from or at least reside on Gorm. Summoners find the phases and houses of Gorm to be central in many of their spells and rituals, especially those of the Demon-Gods. Oddly, the moon is holy to many tribes of Cavemen, who hold it to be the Land of the Spirits or the Great Hunting Wood. Fey, too, hold the Blue Moon in some esteem, holding festivals when it is full and hiding in fear when it is new.

The second moon, Luna, is the largest of the moons, appearing from the surface to be the same size as Earth's moon and at



TRYNA OLMERXANATHES

The 18-year-old daughter of Ioanthe Olmerxanathes of Oricha has a fey beauty like that of her mother, with platinum-blond hair, deep olive skin, and sparkling green eyes like her father's; she stands all of 5'6" tall with a petite yet well-endowed figure. She is much beloved by her father, as he believes her to have the most potential of all his children (save perhaps Glison). She originally planned to leave the City State to visit distant relatives in Oricha, but she has remained in the city, enjoying the luxuries and wealth her magic and abilities provide. She currently has three followers, two enchanted and one willing, who wait on her hand and foot.

TRYNA "WILD EYE" OLMERXANATHES: LE female Fey-Blooded Alyran/Orichalan 2nd level wizard. HD 2d4, HP 7, AC 11 (dexterity bonus), Move 30 ft., SL Noble 6. Str 9, Dex 14*, Con 11, Int 16*, Wis 10, Cha 17*. Special ability is Nymph's Charm (any man or woman she spends the night with must make a CL 6 charisma save or be charmed for two months as per the spell). She wields a silver dagger (+0 BtH, 1d4 points of damage) or spells. Spells: detect magic x2, message x2, charm person x2, shocking grasp, and sleep. She carries 2d6 gp, 2d6 sp, and 2d6 cp at all times and has 750 gp in a hidden chest in her sumptuously-furnished flat in the Nobles' Quarter. Her imp familiar, **Kobalos**, usually stands on her shoulder, often mocking her charmed lovers with impudent glee.

Tryna's followers are:

Rex the Red Axe (N male Alyran/Altanian 2nd level fighter, SL General 4, Str 16*, Dex 12*, Con 13*, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 9, weapon specialization (battle axe), wears a steel breastplate) is tall, handsome, utterly pliable, and not smart, just the way Tryna likes her men. Rex was charmed more than a year ago and since on a recurring basis, and no longer has any resistance to her powers.



Josh Kared (LE male Alyran 1st level cleric of Rash'I, SL General 4, Str 11*, Dex 10, Con 6*, Int 9, Wis 15*, Cha 7, wears a mail shirt and wields a war hammer, usually memorizes command and cure light wounds) is actually an agent of the White Lotus, one of Taersidhe's acolytes sent to keep an eye on the Overlord's favorite. His greed and lust for power is appealing to his mistress, but his pock-marked face and beady eyes mean he will never share her bed... and so his secret remains safe for now.

Black Whitney (CE male Alyran 2nd level rogue, SL Guild 3, Str 5, Dex 18*, Con 11, Int 12, Wis 9, Cha 5, wears foppish clothing and wields two daggers) is young, brash, handsome, and horribly insecure, completely putty in Tryna's arms. He is newly her lover, and thus very protective of that status, though he dares not begrudge Red Axe his nights with his paramour.



GLISON YAGAZINAT

The 15-year-old son of Saksarani Yagazina of the Karzulun has raven-black hair, golden brown skin, and sparkling green eyes like his father's, though almond-shaped like his mother's, and is light of build with a wiry strength. He is the second-most favorite of Balamega and the best regarded of his children by most others (who often cannot see beyond Tryna being a woman). He is a solid friend of Llangwellan the Blue, the Wizard of the Tower, and will apprentice with him rather than his great uncle Paramswarn the Red; this is quite a slap in the face, as Paramswarn and Llangwellan are arch-rivals. Young Glison can often be found at the home of his friend, **Thinway Abun**, the Gatekeeper of the North Gate (#36, City State of the Invincible Overlord).

GLISON YAGAZINAT: LG male Alyran/Karzulun 1st level wizard. HD 1d4, HP 4, AC 11 (dexterity bonus), Move 30 ft., SL Noble 6. Str 13, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 16*, Wis 13*, Cha 14*. He wields a dagger (BtH +1, 1d4 points of damage) or spell. Spells: detect magic, detect poison, mage hand, prestidigitation, charm person, shield, and sleep. He carries 2d6 gp, 2d6 sp, and 2d6 cp.

KNIGHT BACHELOR

While on campaign, if a knight errant performs a great feat of prowess or acts in a manner most chivalrous, and it is witnessed by the Overlord or one of his great lords, the knight has a percentage chance equal to his charisma score plus level of being promoted to a **Knight Bachelor** [SL Military 11; note that if the knight actually saves the Overlord's life, he is more likely to be ennobled as a knight of the court]. A knight bachelor is given the right to add a crest to his coat of arms, and to bear his crest on a pennon on his lance (usually held by a squire on a spear in battle). The knight bachelor is also granted a knight's fee (see knight of the court, above) as a bookland grant (not a noble fief, and usually non-hereditary). A knight bachelor holds the right to collect all fees and fines on his domain, but other elements of low justice (whipping, jail time, etc.) are still held by the local magistrate or noble. Knights bachelor are also expected to lead the Overlord's Equithrongs (10 squads of 10 lances, 500 soldiers total) into battle; unlike knights errant, knights bachelor cannot avoid a call-to-arms from the Overlord, regardless of what other lords or causes they serve. Knight bachelors are not granted a stipend during campaigns, but have more shares in the loot. While on campaign the knight bachelor has the right of high justice; this is unquestioned for his troops, but usually a wrangling issue when dealing with locals, especially while dealing with troopers versus locals.

KNIGHT BANNERET

For every successful campaign during which a knight bachelor leads his Equithrong to more victories than defeats, the Overlord has a 15% chance (cumulative) of recognizing the knight by granting him a full banner at the end of the campaign, making him a **Knight Banneret**. [SL Military 12]. The Knight Banneret is granted the right to add supporters (heraldic figures holding up, or supporting) and a motto to the knight's coat of arms, and allowed to place his coat of arms on a full banner (held by a squire or knight errant during battle). The knight banneret is also granted more and wealthier lands for his maintenance; this is needful as a knight banneret commands a Noble Army Battle and is a part of the War Council during the campaign season, and has many more social expectations during peacetime. Knights banneret have the right to mete full low justice on their lands. Knights banneret of the realm are not great in number; there are currently fewer than 40 knights banneret in the realm, several of these are too old to campaign.

KNIGHT OF THE INNER CIRCLE

A **Knight of the Inner Circle** is any knight (errant, court, bachelor, or banneret) who has proven himself valorous in the face of a terrible monster, such as a dragon, troll, or griffon, or against great odds (at least 3-to-1 against equal opponents), and had such valor witnessed by a member of the Knights of the Inner Circle. In such a case there is a base percentage chance equal to the sum of the knight's level, social level, and charisma modifier that he is sponsored by that knight for membership in the Knights of the Inner Circle. Unless the inductee is blackballed by at least three Knights of the Inner Circle, he will be made a member of the select order by the Overlord. A knight errant of the Inner Circle may wear the badge of the order, a pegasus argent rampant, while knights of the court, bachelors, and bannerets may wear it as a crest. Knights of the Inner Circle are taught secret handshakes and other recognition methods, as sometimes the knights must operate incognito. Knights of the order are given quarters and free board in Fortress Rhamsandron for life. They will be called upon to form an honor guard for the Overlord during specific ceremonies, and at times form a specific strike force in the Noble Army (i.e., are called upon to do battle with giants, dragons, and the like).

The Knights of the Inner Circle are taught the **Great Bash** combat maneuver. With this maneuver the knight can make a massive, terrible strike against a large-sized beast, dragon, giant, or magical beast; the knight must wait to strike last in the round, and suffers a -4 penalty to hit, but deals additional damage equal to his entire strength score

or his level, whichever is less. The training to learn the maneuver is free and requires a month of daily sessions in Fortress Rhamsandron.

At 6th level, or immediately upon membership if already 6th level or higher, a Knight of the Inner Circle begins training to ride a pegasus; the pegasi are stabled in the upper levels of the Cryptic Citadel and launch and land on the flat top of the vast tower. The training requires an entire level of advancement during which the trainee must spend at least three months of daily courses with his new steed, first at low levels in the bailey of Fortress Rhamsandron, and continuing ever higher, until he and his steed can dive from the top of the Cryptic Citadel and spear three silver rings with his lance. The upkeep of the winged steed is free at the Citadel, but must be paid for by the knight if he keeps him at his manor (1 sp per day due to the need for special grains and fruits).

Finally, if the knight indicates a dislike for upstart adventurers and riffraff, he will be invited to join a secret society known as **FEAR**.

FEAR

The **Fraternity for the Eradication of Armored Riffraff** was founded during the Guild Wars of the late 40th century, when the priests of Pegana caused the guildsmen to rise up and seek more power from the nobles, gentry, and military. During the wars the Guild of Armor Smiths decked out the best warriors of the rebels in fine plate armor; in fact, whole new technologies were developed during the war in order to try to armor the Guild warriors better than the knights. In the long run, of course, the knights gained much from these developments, but for long years since they have harbored hatred of any not cut from chivalric cloth wearing plate armor.

And so FEAR was born in the days following the Guild Wars. Once a broader organization, today FEAR has a hold only among the elite and "entitled," as the Knights of the Inner Circle seek to purge the realm of the riffraff who go about wearing the armor of their betters. Several nobles, knights all, have joined their cause.

The knights of FEAR have all trained in a special form of combat that they use only against targets specifically called out by FEAR; the knights would never use this method during combat with any other opponent, especially a chivalrous opponent (though a Chaotic Evil knight might consider such in a life-and-death situation). This method, the **Great Plate Crush** style, can be used only against opponents in plate armor (as listed below). The attacker suffers a -3 penalty to hit, but when he does hit he doubles all damage, dealing only subdual damage. This style takes into account the knight's intimate knowledge of the workings of plate armor. It can only be used with light, heavy, or large maces, and cannot be used in combination with any other special styles or attacks. This method is taught to new members of FEAR; training is free, and requires one month of nightly sessions.

The leader of FEAR is none other than the **Commander of the Knights of the Inner Circle, Sir Robert Aug** (LE male Alyran 15th level knight, SL Military 13, AC 21, HD 10d10+30, HP 95, Attacks: heavy mace (+17 BtH, 1d8+3 damage) or Great Plate Crush with heavy mace (+14 BtH, 2d8+6 subdual damage). Str 15*, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 14*, Wis 10, Cha 16*. He speaks Alyran, Common Viridian, and Dwarvish. Horsemanship, inspire, embolden, demoralize, and battlefield dominance. He is an initiate of the Hell-Bridge Temple, and can cast detect magic, detect poison, and first aid each once per day. He can use the **Great Plate Crush** style, and can employ the Great Bash maneuver. While on FEAR outings he wears a red hooded robe over full plate and a great helm, a large metal shield (blank, but covered with a red sheet nonetheless), and wields a +2 magical heavy mace. He has magical armor and weapons in his townhouse, but never wears anything that could identify him while on FEAR business. While on FEAR outings he rides a black destrier named **Bonecrusher**, given to him by one of his noble followers; Bonecrusher is stabled with the Horse Trainer in Twilight Village, who knows nothing about his owner other than a young, nameless page drops off his stabling fee and picks him up usually one night per month). Sir Robert has medium-length straight black hair,

RASH'L THE TYRANT

LESSER DEITY

SIZE: Large (8' tall)

HD: 20d12

HP: 176

MOVE: 60 ft., 120 ft. (fly)

AC: 22

ATTACKS: Magical +2/+4 chaos bane executioner's sword (+25 BtH, 2d6+5 damage or +27 BtH, 4d6+5 damage against chaotic-aligned creatures) or spell or ability

SPECIAL: +2 magical weapons or better needed to hit, regenerate 5 hp/round, SR 5, True Vision, Detect Lies, Deific Powers, Divine Spells, and Dominate Commons

STR 18, **DEX** 16, **CON** 16, **INT** 22, **WIS** 24, **CHA** 20

ALIGNMENT: Lawful Evil

TYPE: Deity

XP: 30,970

DISPOSITION

- | | |
|------------------|---------------|
| 1) Angry | 4) Solemn |
| 2) Unsympathetic | 5) Interested |
| 3) Brooding | 6) Annoyed |

The deity known as Rash'l is quite distinct from his deific progenitor, Ra-Shang Liu, the Lawful Neutral Karakhan God of Bureaucracy. Rash'l of the West usually appears in the form of a tall and muscular human male wearing saffron robes trimmed in black over lacquered black and yellow armor; he has no head, there is merely a large, shining golden crown where his head and neck would be. In one hand he wields "Final Arbiter," a massive +2/+4 chaos bane executioner's sword, and in the other a Book of Law, his holy canon, wrapped in chains. When he speaks, his voice rings from throughout the area in which he stands.

COMBAT: Rash'l dislikes combat, but does not back down from it. He prefers to use his spells, abilities, and deific powers whenever possible, and only closes for melee when necessary.

TRUE SIGHT: Rash'l sees all things as they truly are on the Prime; only deific-level magic can fool his sight on the Prime. His sight is twice as powerful as that of an elf, night and day or underground; only darkness created by another deity is impervious to his vision.

DETECT LIES: Rash'l automatically knows when a mortal is lying to him; he will not know the truth, but he will know what he is told is a lie, dissimulation, or incomplete truth.

DEIFIC POWERS: Teleport without Error at will to any point within 100 feet of a worshipper; Teleport 5 times per day; Shadow Walk at will (may step through the Planar Membrane into the Shadowlands); Deific Word Of Recall 1/day (instantly transports him from wherever he is to the Court of Tyranny in the Netherworld; only deific-level magic can stop this ability; if he resorts to this he cannot return to the Prime for seven days). If killed on the Prime his body dissipates and his soul returns to the Court of Tyranny, where it is confined for a year and a day; his priests will be unable to regain spells of 3rd or higher level during this period of exile. The blade, "Final Arbiter," will remain on the Prime... of course, when that year and day is up, he will seek personal revenge...

DIVINE SPELLS: Rash'l has unlimited use of any divine spell of 5th level and lower. While on the Prime he can also cast eight 6th level, eight 7th level, six 8th level, and six 9th level cleric spells, picking and choosing them at will. These high-level spells regenerate instantly upon returning to his Court of Tyranny in Netherworld, or after spending at least one minute in the Netherworld, or 10 minutes in the Shadowlands. Most common high-level spells used while on the Prime: Banishment, Blade Barrier, Holy Word, Repulsion, Fire Storm, Summon Planar Ally, Gate, and Soul Bind. Rash'l commands

undead and devils as a 20th level cleric.

DOMINATE COMMONS: Rash'l has the ability to dominate the will of any not of royal or noble blood (whether noble born or made). He may dominate up to 40 hit dice/levels of victims at a time. He may target any person he sees, any number of targets per round. The target must make a charisma save against CL 20 or be controlled by Rash'l like one might a puppet; once dominated, the victim cannot resist the god's will. Targets of the Gentry may add their SL as a bonus against this ability. He often uses this power in degrading ways, making commoners and even gentlemen kneel before him in the mud, or kill each other slowly and painfully. Sometimes he has a victim walk on his hands and knees, and stands atop them, that his feet touch not the ground (he can fly, but this is much more dramatic, and a good lesson to the rabble).

COMMON QUOTES: "I am the law!" — "To question the law is to question reality." — "Fear is the binding force of all things." — "Ask not for justice, for there is only law!" — "Order is freedom, freedom is obedience, obedience is life."



ESGALBAR: THE HIDDEN DWELLING

The colossal beech tree in which Esgalbar is housed stands 240 feet tall and its vast branches cover an area 240 feet in diameter. Due to constant tending by elven druids the tree is unnaturally vital and strong, and has a huge, thick canopy that helps keep the tulamë well hidden from prying eyes. While its leaves turn a golden yellow in autumn, they do not fall from the branch until the new buds are well under way, so Esgalbar is well hidden even in winter. The tree is as hard as iron, and impervious to natural fire, axe, and saw; it is as strong as if not stronger than a stone tower twice as thick!

The lone, 16-foot thick trunk is bare of branches up to 40 feet, where a confusing profusion of branches and leaves hide everything above; the area below is deeply shaded, especially considering that the mid-level branches of the tree's neighboring brethren merge with its lower canopy. The overall effect is much like being in a vast, leafy dome with a large column in the center. Shade-loving vines dangle from the lower branches of neighboring trees, but none depend from the leaves of the colossal central tree. The ground around is mostly dirt, with moss-covered rocks in size up to an ogre's head scattered about the shadowy clearing. Thanks to layers of elven

enchantment, to the untrained eye there is never any sign of tracks, and even trail-grizzled rangers would be hard put to find any spoor (CL 8 to find any sign of elven tracks at the base of the tree).

The tulamë are built of a thick, water-resistant gray cloth that functions like the material of an elven cloak, making them virtually invisible high in the branches of the colossal beech. The material is specially treated, and is as hard as 2" thick oak, though it is as thin as woolen cloth. The wooden platforms on which they stand are molded from the branches of the tree itself, and so are again virtually impossible to distinguish from the tree, were they even capable of being seen from below. The different levels are connected by three-foot wide open wooden ramps, bridges, or ladders; all the elves of Esgalbar are quite proficient at hustling along these at running speed; other tree-dwelling elves may walk at full speed without danger, or run with a successful level-based dexterity check. All others can only move at half speed normally or quarter speed on ladders; any faster movement requires a successful dexterity check or the speeding fool falls. Someone falling from a platform, ramp, bridge, or ladder has a percentage chance equal to the total feet he might fall of having a chance to catch onto a branch; this requires a dexterity check. Failure indicates the fool falls all the way to the ground, suffering appropriate damage.

Note that the lower branches of the colossal beech often meet and mingle with the

