

Half Ogre Racial Packet

Re-edited for NERO Midwest use by Drew Muldowney

Appearance:

Half ogres (not actual Hybrids) have physiology not unlike humans. The most notable exception is their yellow skin. The color is a glaring, bright yellow, fully unlike the color of eastern humans. Other exceptions are their large tusks and pointed ears.

Most Half ogres will bear several tattoos. These vary from tribe to tribe, meaning anything from simple marks of allegiance to protective runes (real or symbolic). The only type of tattoo that spans all the various tribes is the aqua tattoo of leadership. This tattoo will be detailed in a later section.

Role-playing notes:

Half ogres are, on the average, the best fighters on Tyrra. Few enemies want to even think about what a blood-raged half ogre war party could do to them, much less actually face them in battle. The fact that they are superior fighting machines is apparent to the half ogre, often leading them to be great braggarts. Both of the above trends stem from one fact; according to half ogre spoken tradition, half ogres were born to fight. To a half ogre every problem can, and probably should be solved with battle. Such is the reason for their dueling system (described later).

Fear is almost non-existent in the half ogre language. The only time, other than due to some form of mind control, they experience fear is when dealing with undead. For some reason, half ogres have an unnatural fear of all types of undead. In the half ogre mind, there is no difference between one undead and the next. A half ogre will often choose the name of a particular type of undead and use it for any undead he encounters. (Example, Grex, a half ogre fighter comes running into town. The guard asks him why he is in such a hurry, and he comments that there are 7 death Knights chasing him. The town then prepares for the worst, only to do battle with 6 skeletons and a ghoul)

Because half ogres see fear as a weakness, they lash out at those that cause them to experience it-- notably necromancers. To the earth loving half ogre, nothing is more foul than Chaos. Often times, unless guarded by undead, the half ogre will slay any known Necromancer on sight. Their theory is; Once a defiler (their term), always a defiler.

Half ogres tend to treat most races with a bit of trepidation. This is largely due to the common usage of the term half ogre; an insult to all half ogres. Half ogres hate the term, as it is a misnomer and belittles the race. Half ogres will generally refer to themselves by caste or tribe. Once a half ogre begins to trust a person, they are considered great allies and compatriots. Nothing is more loyal than a half ogre friend. When placed into a new situation where they know no one, a half-ogre will tend to gravitate towards those persons that appear to be better warriors. As such, they tend to first make friends with orcs, barbarians, Dwarves and humans. They will often think elves, hobblings and scaven to be weak and unnecessary, unless they have proven themselves (in battle, of course).

When it comes to thinking, half ogres are often called stupid. Such is not the case. Half ogres display a pattern of linear thought. Half ogres will, on average, have difficulty with complex, wordy topics, as well as prefer to talk of concrete ideas, rather than abstract ones. (If, at this point, you are unclear on the proper way to role-play Half ogre thinking patterns, play dumb until you can speak with your race marshal). This makes some things difficult to comprehend, such as reading. However half ogres can, on occasion, be just as bright as your average person. A lack of tense in their verbs, as well as a lack of case in their nouns can best demonstrate the linear thought processes. Thus a half ogres' speech will usually sound choppy and crude (e.g.-- rather than saying "I killed him several times", it would be "me squish him buncha times"). Likewise, their writing will reflect a similar style, often with "um"s and "uh" as part of the text. A good idea for accurately simulating their scripting style is to hold the pen in a closed fist and script sloppily. Seldom, if ever, should a person use proper capitalization, spelling, or punctuation.

This linear thinking does have its hindrances, but has its benefits as well. The half ogre understands runic magic on a subconscious level. He also can read the subtle signs the earth gives to her children. This is a very limited form of divination. It is detailed later.

Benefits and Drawbacks:

The half ogre leads a violent life. From infancy, he is given the least amount of pampering necessary, and as a result, all half ogres have 2 additional body.

The half ogre also has linear thought; this causes the cost of scholarly skills to be doubled.

Make up: All half ogres have yellow skin. They all have pointed ears and large, protrusive tusks. The yellow skin is best done by a liquid or pancake makeup. Remember, if you use liquid make-up, a setting powder is recommended; It prevents the makeup from running. The tusks are best made from friendly plastic. In my experience, it works best if you make the teeth fit over the 6 or so teeth in the front of your mouth. The tusks should protrude outward, and if done properly, should fit comfortably. (If done properly, they can even be eaten with)..

Biological Matters:

The half ogre's metabolism functions at twice the rate of a human. What this means is that the half ogre ages, gestates young, and experiences life at twice the rate of a human.

Female half ogres go through a natural cycle of 2 weeks. During one of these weeks they are fertile, and will produce child, if they mate with a compatible male, approximately 50% of the time. If fertilization occurs, the child takes 5 months to bear. At the end of five months, the child must be delivered by caesarian section, due to the slenderness of the females' hips. This is usually done by a tribal healer, a shaman, or in a pinch, an animal husbander. Healing is achieved through use of magic or alchemy.

At age 7 or so, the half ogre begins adolescence, marked by the appearance of the tusks. By the time he is 8, he is half way through puberty, and is turned out from his home.

The half ogre may produce offspring through mating with any of the civilized races of Tyrra. If the female is not a half ogre, the gestation period is 5 months. If the female is, the gestation period is that of the father's race.

All half Ogres have an interesting metabolic defect. Their body cannot break down fructose, the sugar found in fruit. This causes, when fruit is consumed, a dramatic rise in blood sugar levels that must be relieved with activity. The only activity truly capable of lowering the level is Combat. As a result, anytime a half ogre consumes more than a little bit of fruit, fruit juice, or fruit product, they become blood raged and battle crazy. They will subconsciously look for fights, becoming more and more irritated if one can not be found. Eventually, they will resort to seeking combat out, even if only with a tree. Another side effect of the fruit sugar is the decrease in fear level. War parties presented with insurmountable odds, or any undead at all, will almost always consume fruit before entering battle.

(Note: It is not recommended for player to use this as an excuse to ignore the role-playing disadvantage involving undead. Half ogre will generally avoid consuming fruit or fruit by-products unless the situation is really desperate. Additionally, half ogres will quickly grow angry if other people try to continually feed them fruit. The effect of fruit on a half ogre is not particularly pleasant for the half ogre or the people around him. Suggested role-playing tip: the effects of fruit on a half ogre are very similar to those of alcohol on other races. As such, role-playing the resulting physical discomfort after imbibing is recommended.)

Origins:

The following is the story told by the shamans to the young children in the south. It may or may not be true, but is a good story none the less.

Long ago, when the earth was young, the world was devoid of all intelligent life. Mother Earth was sad, for she alone could feel the great loneliness... She then laid several eggs.... They hatched into beautiful winged serpents-- the dragons. The dragons were proud and happy and kept the Earth company. She taught them all she knew, and soon their power level reached that of hers. Slowly, over time, the dragons split into 2 factions. They began to quarrel, injuring the earth in the process. The earth wept tears for her children. She tried to stop them, but her power was lessened by their creation. So, she decided to have more offspring; these, smaller than the dragons, but very powerful in their own right. Thus were born the giants. They were a great race of very beautiful people, as large as the mighty oak. They outnumbered the Dragons, whom they called brothers. Also, they loved their mother. Thus, they worked hard to stop the fighting. A great battle ensued. The giants were able to claim victory only because in the fighting ,the land was torn into several pieces. The two draconic factions were, luckily, on different sides of the great river. Thus on the two landmasses did the two factions stay.

Mother Earth filled the air with soot. The soot choked the dragons when they tried to fly. Thus, for a thousand winters, were they forced to stay where they were. Over this time, each side forgot what it's original Quarrel was about. They even forgot that the other side existed. All they cared about now was destroying the giants. Learning from the Earth's example, they decided to combat the giants with smaller beings. From the trees they carved the Elves, from the

stone, the stumpy beards were formed. In the river clay, humans were crafted. One dragon ventured to the edge of the world. He believed that anything he found there would be the toughest of all living things. There he found only a clump of lichen. He cursed it, attempting to roast it with his fiery breath. It survived, little phased. Then he realized he had been right all along, this green plant was the toughest of all living things. From it he formed the green body of the noble orc. Some of the dragons took the flesh of the animals and formed the Scaven. Only one made a creation of his own will, the hobbling, though the hobbling was all together short and weak, the new creation made up for the shortcomings with cleverness. Eventually all the dragons met in the south. On the frozen island, they breathed life into their creations. Each race awoke, somewhat dazed and confused. They were told that they were made to serve the dragons.

Each race was taught a skill, though the dragons saved their greatest skills, in case the underlings ever thought of rebellion. The races were told to go forth and multiply. Each did. When they had grown in sufficient number, the dragons used their powers to assume the guise of their creations. They went and influenced the peoples to slay the Giants. Only the hobblings refused, choosing instead to live lives of happiness. To aid the races in their war, the Dragons taught the arts of the defilers. Armed with the power of darkness, the children of the dragons attacked the giants. Many were lost. Finally, one went to the Great cave and asked the earth for help. Awakening from her slumber, mother earth saw what was happening. Outraged, but weak, She used her power to cause fear in the races. For 300 years, the rivers ran of blood, and the sky was black with soot. At the end of this time, the earth rumbled greatly and from the great cave came the first 1000 of our people. This was the last act of the earth; she then fell into the great sleep in which she even now rests. The Newborn Race called them selves Glorax. They were a hardy lot, as tough as the orc. They had skin the color of gold, the blood of the earth. Their tusks were large, to rip the throats of our enemies. Their ears were pointed, so that they may hear the whisper of their sleeping mother. That my child is how we came to be. For a year we wandered in the wilderness. Then a giant found us. Calling us brother he led us to his village. The giants taught us to kill. Each of us was given a sword, or a club. We were sent to destroy a village of elves. Not one elf survived. Afterwards we feasted on their flesh and the boon of their trees. Suddenly, all was different. Each of our people became bloodthirsty. We fought amongst ourselves. Thus did we learn of the double-edged sword of the fruit.

After the effect wore off,, we returned to the village of the giants with our numbers greatly reduced. When we arrived, we found the giants to be fighting a great winged serpent. Naturally, we ran in to fight. Outnumbered and wounded by the giants' spears, the dragon was very unhappy. When he saw us carrying high the heads of his beloved elves, he became enraged. He realized that if he were to stay, his life would end. He inhaled deeply. All braced for his deadly breath. Instead, he shouted a curse, grasped outward seizing a giant child and one of us...

Three days later, as we sat sharpening our weapons, tempering them in the blood of the fallen, we noticed a large shadow pass over us. Fearing retaliation from the dragons we rushed to gather our javelins. Suddenly it began raining. Not a rain of water, but one of blood and body parts. Pieces of the two captured children of the earth fell to the ground. Yet, all the pieces were not there. We raised them onto burial litters and prepared for the ensuing war.

We then went to slay a settlement of the stump beards. A month had past. When we began to approach the city, we heard them cry an unfamiliar word- Ogre. They then ran into the earth and hid. We destroyed the city, sacking it for its wealth. It had little, only a few pelts and weapons. This we felt was odd... On our way back to the village, we encountered an abomination. It had skin yellow like ours, but was much larger. Its tusks were crooked, with barbs upon it. Hands the size of bucklers crushed our scout. We set upon it. It screamed that all peoples would die at the hands of the mighty Ogre. There was that word again, ogre. We gathered that this was what the people had mistaken us for. We set upon the creature, slaying it. We dragged the body back to the village, which we found deserted. Not one giant remained. There was evidence of a struggle, but no blood. Odd, we thought. Our shamans went to investigate further. There on a slab of stone was a message in the runic tongue of the giants. It said:

Brethren, A peace has been reached among the Dragons and ourselves. No longer will we interfere with one another. We are now set to destroy the rogue dragon Granvex, who hath made the abomination know as the ogre and seeks to defile our mother. My Children help us. Join with the races of this planet. Attempt to destroy the pitiful Ogre and oust the pockets of evil. Tell not the other races of your connection to us, for now they fear both the dragons and the giants. From time to time, one of us shall call to you to listen to our advice and help our mother fix what is wrong. We shall watch you, our siblings, though we may not be seen. Listen intently to mother, and remember that glory is won in battle.

The shamanee of the Glorax decided a wait of two generations would be wise before questing for the other races. They settled down, and tried to raise families. The wisest of the Glorax set down a warrior's code. Every thing in the village was to be earned through battle. The first Thing was to choose a leader. The best of the fighters emerged victorious. She chose the loser of her last duel, A mighty male as her mate. A month later her stomach was visibly

swelling... Five months after the duels, she collapsed onto the floor, her body in pain. The herder of the yaks, mighty mounts of war to the Glorax, recognized this as what occurred when the yaks calved. He went to attend her. Something was wrong. The child couldn't exit. This did not normally happen in yaks, but when it would, the belly must be split. Thus did the herder and he retrieved a bloody tiny male Glorax. However the chief was dying... a cry for help was made, resulting in the arrival of the shaman. He scribed a rune upon her stomach, and asked of his mother, the earth, that she heal the mighty warrior. Thus she did. The child uttered the syllable Klaz. Thus it was named.

After a year it was finally discovered that no Glorax female could give normal birth to a child, her hips were too narrow. But as long as the shamanee could heal the women all was well. The children grew quickly. At age 8, the mothers decided the children to be old enough to care for them selves. Each had been taught a skill of combat and had to fend for themselves. Several Years passed, and the children eventually decided to return to their homes, demanding to live there. They were met with force. Some overpowered their mother, and were seen as worthy to live under their roof. Others lost, and were forced to wander again. Eventually every child either returned home, or would join the shamanee to learn the arts of magic. The children were still seen as underlings, until they could defeat their father in combat. Then the parents would hold a great feast. The child would get tattooed as a full member of the tribe.

Thus for 20 years did the Glorax live apart from the dragonspawn. One day a rider entered the village. He was different from the Glorax, and some of the newer Glorax were afraid he was one of them afflicted with some sort of disease. Then the high shaman approached the man with open hands. Sensing this as a gesture of good will the man bowed. He said he was part of an advance scout from a nearby fiefdom. He requested that several of the Glorax accompany him to meet the man's chief. When the envoy entered the camp, all the inhabitants believed them to be ogres. Suddenly ogres attacked the meeting. Enraged at the abominations, the Glorax retaliated with impunity. At first the humans and their elven allies were perplexed by this action, but then, an ogre and Glorax fought one another they realized the two were not of the same race. After the last ogre fell, the humans thanked the Glorax. They said they would return to the village in a fortnight to celebrate peace.

The human and elves theorized that these beings must be a hybrid of the ogre and some, other, higher race (notably human or elf). Thus came the name Half Ogre. Word was sent to the various corners of the land to treat these "half ogres " as civilized people. That, my children, is from whence the accursed term came. It seemed to stick, no matter how hard the Glorax tried to get rid of it.

The 2 weeks passed and the treaty with the settlers was ratified. A week of feasting was proclaimed. Stories were exchanged, and the people were happy. On the last day the half ogres all felt queasy. Their hands visibly shook. The shamans did all manners of divinations, as did the elves. This was the first recorded occurrence of our power to hear the whispers of mother. Most of the divinations reported that the earth was to shake, and danger was near. The "half ogres" loaded up their yaks, Hitching to them wagons to bear the settlers away. In a mass exodus, they left the valley, just as the tremors sent toppling many rocks and trees. The human settlement was destroyed, but most of the settlers survived, seeing with awe the precognitive power of the fair yellow children of the earth. Thus it was recorded in the annals of civilization that the half ogre could sense imminent doom. This would eventually end up, much like the fruit, a double-edged sword.

The settlers returned to their valley, and started to rebuild. Aided by the half ogres, they constructed rounded houses. They surrounded the settlement with a large palisade, and dug out a small spring to form a water pool. The two peoples learned from one another, the settlers learning Combat skills, and the half ogres learning of celestial magics. It was at this time that the runes lost their power. The befuddled shamans discerned that this was due to a large comet that had become trapped in the orbit of Tyrra. The remaining knowledge of the runes was scribed onto a tablet and buried in the earth.

The settlers and the half ogres worked well with one another, becoming prosperous. Their city became a bastion of trade with the northern lands. Thus did the curse come to our people.

This is the story the northern tribes tell. Like the southern story it may or may not be true, but it is a good story too.

The Great Cave

The only evidence of the true origins of the Half Ogre people come from ancient writings known as the Rintah Tablets. It is written on these eroding stone texts that thousands of years ago, the Half Ogres were born from the earth itself out of the one of Tyrra's great orifices known as the Great Cave. Many interpretations are made from the tablets for quite literally they claim that the Half Ogres had crawled out of the Great Cave like newborns from a womb, and thus began the long history of their race. Some Half Ogre shamans today believe that the tablets were

meant to be metaphoric in their description of the first days of the Half Ogre, but the greater population of Half Ogres are more inclined to believe the word for word dictation of events described on the tablets.

The Rintah tablets go on to describe how Half Ogres were blinded for days in the sunlit world of Tyrra and how the newly born creatures lived off the bats that lived in the cave. Slowly, they learned to communicate with each other until they had finally semblances what sufficed at the time as their own language.

There were many Half Ogres in the Great Cave-- about 300 in number. While the cave served the newly born Half Ogres for a time, eventually it became too cramped for them to live in. They decided that it would be best if they split up into small groups of 20-30 Half Ogres each and spread themselves around geographically, traveling north from this region.

The valleys to the north seemed promising as potential hunting grounds, and by splitting up in the smaller groups or "tribes" they could hunt in small enough packs that would not consume too quickly the local food supply.

The newly formed tribes migrated northward some 200 miles from the Great Cave. They settled in areas south of what thousands of years later would be known as the kingdom of Evindarr. As the Half Ogres traveled to their new lands, they discovered that a similar breed of creatures known simply as Ogres, lived in these lands. The Ogres or full Ogres, though, had features that were considerably harsher than the Half Ogre and their stature was certainly bulkier, but it was uncanny how similar in many respects the two races truly were.

As they settled in their new homes and built fortified villages and communities, they decided to try and make peaceful relations of their full Ogre cousins who lived in the same regions. Initially, relations were successful, so an attempt to merge both types of Ogres under unified tribes was made. After a few decades though, the union turned out to be less than harmonious. There were several physical differences that became roadblocks to their developing relationship. The Half Ogres were by far better skilled in the use of weapons, but lacked the strength to match their full Ogre cousins. They could not defeat full Ogres in battle, for they had no one to train them to fight better than the abilities they already possessed. Which meant that the full Ogres had the upper hand in governing the tribes.

This presented communication difficulties, for the full Ogres were not all that bright when it came to planning strategic combat, and not nearly as intelligent as the Half Ogres. Sadly, the full Ogres would not listen to the strategies of the Half Ogres, because they had too much pride to believe that their weaker cousins knew better about the arts of war. This social schism is what finally drove the two races apart. That, and the eventual discovery that Ogres and Half Ogres could not bear children together.

The tribes who attempted to live with their full Ogre cousins eventually branched off and returned to their lifestyle of living in their own separate Half Ogre tribes. They did continue to keep good relations with the full Ogres and traded with them. Sometimes they warred and hunted alongside the full Ogres, too.

During this time and for several years to follow, the Half Ogres learned more about themselves and a unique ability within them that began to surface more and more frequently. At sporadic times, one of their five senses would pick up an abnormal signal, sight, color, sound, smell, taste, or sensation. For a while they did not know what these sensations meant, until they finally put the pieces together and realized that it was a warning of some kind whenever a natural disaster was about to take place. Occasionally they would get one of these sensations and a disaster would not follow, but that was rare. This ability baffled even their most intelligent Ogres. Eventually, they would learn more about this ability, but without the skills to read and write, any retained information about this ability was lost in a few generations' time.

They also discovered something about themselves that almost destroyed any chances of their continued survival. They had an internal drive and instinct for fighting. The slightest insult from even a tribal comrade would send them in a rampaging fury. Internal strife within each tribe grew; many fought and killed for mates, food, and power. When they had lived with the full Ogres, they were not strong enough to challenge the brute strength of the larger creatures for what they desired and were forced to keep their tempers in check. Now, separated from any stronger governing force, they degenerated to a culture in a constant state of internal violent strife and turmoil. Blood feuds were common as were duels to the death over pride and honor. The more learned of the tribes believed that this path would eventually lead them to extinction.

Concerned for their mutual survival, members and leaders of every Half Ogre tribe came together to work out a system of government where they could live together harmoniously, yet continue to feed their internal drive for fighting and survival. They eventually developed a non-lethal dueling system that would keep anarchy from consuming each tribe, yet fuel their warring nature. They would be able to fight for what they needed in a ceremonial fashion that was never to the death. They could duel for leadership, dominance, family status, settling arguments, and the right to choose mates. This was the only solution to their dilemma and it seemed to work well for the tribes. This means of self-government has maintained to present date.

First Contact With Other Races

Around 4,000 years ago, the Half Ogres had their first contact with the civilized races of Tyrra. This generation of Half Ogres had little knowledge of these other peoples or races at that time, and were wary of any contact with them.

A large group of Humans and Elves settled into one of the valleys where some Half Ogre tribes resided. Some of the settlers discovered one of the tribes and initially thought they were a tribe of full Ogres. However, they noted the oddities these Ogres had in comparison to other Ogres they've encountered before. Their size was a good deal smaller, their features less harsh, and their temperament, in some fashion, under control. The settlers believed them to be some kind of half breed race and dubbed them their current racial name, Half Ogres, for the very first time. The settlers suspected that the Half Ogres' blood was mixed with some kind of higher race such as Human and decided to attempt to make relations with these creatures.

The Half Ogres were very cautious when their new neighbors approached them. Their founding ancestors did warn them that civilized races might not take too kindly to a race possibly related to the savage Ogres of the area. Any outside race was not to be told much about where they came from. The civilized races once warred near the Great Cave and any mention of it might spark their memories of hatred.

Negotiations with the settlers took many months as the Half Ogres scrutinized their intentions before making any peace pact. Eventually the settlers proved that they only sought peace, and a pact was made between the three races.

Trade between the Half Ogres and the settlers was fruitful. The settlers also depended on the Half Ogres for their survival, because they knew the locale better than the settlers. In exchange for guiding them through the hazards of the valleys and protecting them from local monsters, the Humans and Elves taught the Half Ogres skills they never had access to before. Many of these skills of combat were unknown to the Half Ogres, and they relished the opportunity to learn them. With these new fighting skills, even they could best a full Ogre in one on one combat. Even more important was the learning of the skills involved in wielding magic, with no half Ogre had learned before that time.

The ability to cast magics was very difficult to teach to them, for the skill of reading and writing itself was extremely difficult for any of the Half Ogres to learn. Many gave up early in their literacy education and learned the new fighting skills instead. Those few who learned how to read, write, and read magic were able to grasp the ability to wield magic taught by the Elven settlers. They were revered in their tribes as wise and powerful, and many came to them seeking advice. It was decided by all of the tribal chiefs that these "wiser" Half Ogres take the station as Shaman, or wiseman to the tribe. Eventually, certain standards had to be made so that not just any spell casting Half Ogre could become a shaman, so they created within each tribe a Shamanees, or shaman council to track their members and initiate any who wished to earn the title and responsibilities of the tribal shaman.

Several of the different tribes' Shamans came together to think of a way to repay the kindness of the settlers. They decided to try to arbitrate a peace treaty between their full Ogre counterparts, who occasionally would raid the Human and Elven settlements. After managing to get the settlers and the Ogres to come together under an agreement to cease hostilities for the time being, the Half Ogres were able to convince both parties to sign a peace treaty. Coexistence, however, between the full Ogres and the Settlers became strained not long after the treaty went into effect. The full Ogres wanted the settlers to forge weapons for them and to teach them magic but would give nothing in return for these weapons or skills. The full Ogres felt that they were being merciful by not attacking the settlers, and that was enough to merit such gifts. The settlers were not about to arm the full Ogres, which would give the settlers a serious disadvantage if the unpredictable full Ogres ever decided the treaty was null and void. They also argued constantly over land rights, for the Ogres were very territorial and claimed that much of the land the Humans and Elves populated was really Ogre property.

Eventually, the leaders of the full Ogres told the Half Ogres that they were going to kill all of the settlers if they did not cooperate with them. The Half Ogre Shamanees decided it was best to end the treaty and let the two factions come to their own resolve. They did, however, keep up the spirit of the treaty by arbitrating disputes between the settlers and full Ogres from time to time. And sometimes they were successful in preventing bloodshed between the two parties.

For the years that followed, the Half Ogre tribes grew in size, their total population spanning as large as 5,000. Their relationship with the settlers had solidified and the Half Ogres had relationship with the settlers had solidified and the Half Ogres had relationship with the settlers had solidified and the Half Ogres had finally come to terms with their awkward selves. They learned to finally come to terms with their awkward selves. They learned to enjoy life to its fullest, and they looked forward to whatever challenges the future would hold for them. They were

robust and had finally made a place for themselves on Tyrra.

The various Shamanees finally learned how to interpret the signs from the gift of predicting the dramatic shifts in nature. They kept written records to identify the different signs and senses that were given to a Half Ogre before an event happens. Initially, they taught their tribes how to predict these signs, but occasionally Half Ogres without reading and writing skills misinterpreted the signs which caused the shamans to begin reconsidering the allocation of this wide misused information. Three years after the shamans began teaching all Half Ogres the skills to recognize the different signs of nature, almost an entire tribe mistook the sign for an avalanche with that of a flood. They all headed to higher ground only to find it collapse beneath their feet. A great majority of the tribe died in the rubble. Learning from this lesson, the Shamanees of all Half Ogre tribes from then on guarded the secret interpretations of the signs so that only shamans may know what they meant. This helped prevent any more misreading of the signs.

A few years later, the Half Ogres were given a powerful sign, to which the shamans predicted as a powerful sign, to which the shamans predicted as a great earthquake. In a great exodus, the Half Ogres ushered the settlers and full Ogres out of the valley before the earthquake began. The disaster did happen, but most of the escaping residents of the valley survived. The Humans and Elves were in awe of this ability to predict such an event. The Elves theorized that the Ogres have some sort of higher brain function that allowed them limited precognitive abilities. The settlers could not have possibly guessed the truth that the Half Ogres could pick up on the minute signs nature gives before such an event occurs.

Regardless, the heroism and wondrous powers of the Half Ogres were recorded by the settlers, who made it part of their lore. What was meant as praise, would soon end up as condemnation for the Half Ogre race.

Here the two stories converge. The following story is probably true, as both the northern and the southern tribes agree on it.

Slaves of Elaan- Traders who came to the valley to sell their wares to the settlers heard the tales of the miracle that the Half Ogres performed and brought the story back north with them. Eventually, this story reached as far north as the Elaan Empire, which today would encompass parts of the lands known as Niman, Ashbury, and Volta. Emperor Manarack Dravus of the Elaan learned of the Half Ogres and their “precognitive skills.”

The Elaan Empire at the time was in turmoil; the outer provinces were in a constant state of revolt. Emperor Manarack wanted to retain the entirety of the empire and keep it from falling apart by provincial dissolution. He was looking for any opportunity to save it from such a fate. He figured that if he had enough of these precognitive Half Ogres under his control he could predict certain outcomes and save his empire by preventing certain futures from happening.

For three years, Emperor Manarack sent slavers to capture as many Half Ogres as possible and bring them back to his empire. The slavers begin hunting down and capturing the Half Ogres as soon as they reached the southern regions where the creatures lived. The human and Elven settlers interceded and tried to stop the slaver mercenaries of the Elaan. The slavers led the settlers into a trap and killed all of them. Those who resurfaced left the valley in fear. The settlers realized that these Elaan slavers were too powerful to overcome, and that the Half Ogres were doomed. They could have done nothing else but run away and save their own lives.

The Elaan slave army continued to capture Half Ogres. Initially, the slavers captured them in small groups, such as Half Ogre hunting parties. But as the Half Ogre populations became more and more depleted by the slavers, their villages became easier targets.

Soon, the slaver army captured whole tribes.

Out of sheer desperation, the remaining southern Half Ogre tribes went into hiding. The slavers could not find the secret Half Ogre stronghold, and gave up their search. They returned back to the Elaan Empire with their last batch of Half Ogre slaves.

The captured half ogres were brought north, farther than they had ever been before, to the cold reaches of the Elaan empire. Emperor Manarack sorted through the thousands of new slaves to find the most potent seers. Through the torture of many slaves, Manarack discovered that the shamans of each tribe possessed the skill to see the future best. After weeding out the shamans, Manarack sent the balance of the half ogres to work as normal slaves, mostly doing hard labor. Realizing the emperor had been given false information about their powers, the shamans played along as “psychic” advisors. One particular shaman, Caff, even took the role of the emperor’s personal advisor.

In their years of service, the shamans realized that the empire was crumbling, and a slave revolt was imminent. They also realized it would be beneficial to aid this revolt, expediting its implementation. A former chief of one of the tribes, Burc, was stationed in the kitchens of the emperor. Caff asked Burc to be a liaison between the resistance and the Shamans. Burc agreed, and joined the resistance, bringing many of his people with him. Finally the resistance was poised to strike at the capital, given proper chance. Burc went to Caff, telling him that the time was nigh.

A week later, Manarack stormed into the shamans' quarters, Demanding to know the future of his empire after several uprisings in the north had occurred. He made an ultimatum to the half ogre wise men—Answer within a week, or they all would be killed to the point of no return. Taking his cue, Caff had all the shamans fake a trance, fasting and chanting bits of the old tongue. After 2 days the “trance” ended. Caff told the emperor that he and the shamans saw the northern territories falling to revolting slaves. He said that in his vision the place was not guarded well, and that if the emperor sent most of his forces to the north, he could probably avert this disaster. Manarack stormed from the room calling to his military commanders. He had bought the lie.

The emperor sent a great portion of his army, and most of the secret police to the north. Caff told Burc that when the army was three days from the capital, the rebels should strike. After three days of hiding, the real revolt occurred. The slaves laid siege to the palace, and after a bitter four day battle, finally routed the imperial guard.

Manarack and his brother Corax escaped from the palace by means of a secret tunnel. The last thing he did before leaving the castle was to poison the food stores. The dravus brothers were never seen again.

The rebels burned the slave dens, and looted the city. Caff and his fellows ate a wondrous feast that night, and all died of the poison. Many did not return, but Caff did.

Northern Migration

For several years after the fall of Elaan, the half ogres living under the new provisional government felt out of place. Although they had shared many of the same experiences with the slaves, the half ogres felt uneasy living in such a large and mixed populace.

The new government had found it difficult to rule over such wild peoples as most of the slaves were. That, coupled with the vastness of the empire caused many problems. Some of the ex-slaves abused their new freedom, becoming lazy, and stealing what they wanted. Though the new government leaders were good people, they had no experience leading a people who had only known the crack of a whip and the cold steel of the shackles. And the government was adamant about not reinstating slavery.

The Half ogres longed for life to be as it was. Burc and Caff, now great heroes, had different ideas about the future of their people. Caff believed that nothing remained of their southern homes, and that the half ogres should go north in search of suitable lands. Burc, however, disagreed, saying that he believed many of the tribes of the south had probably survived. He longed to be with his family. The trip might be hazardous, but he was willing to take it.

Many sided with both leaders. Finally it was decided to execute both plans. A duel could have decided the matter finally, but so many people were involved, that a simple duel was out of the question. Burc and Caff wished each other well, and parted company on good terms.

Thus ends the common stories. For more on Caff, and the northern tribes, see the Ashbury section. To find out about Burc, and the southern tribes, see the Tyrangel/ Southwatch section.

Culture:

The half ogre's culture is based upon combat. Every position, piece of property and right is earned through a duel. Over the years, an explicit system of rules for the duel has evolved.

Holidays:

Half ogres usually do not have a set holiday, but have celebrations at certain times in nature's cycle. Each season has a specific fest to liven spirits and commemorate its passage.

Winterfest- Celebrated the first hard frost after the shortest day of the year. It is held inside one of the larger huts, and includes a feast of roasted game, bonfires and various intoxicating drinks. It served to help stave off cabin fever in the colder months.

Springfest- Celebrated when the local birds begin to sing at night. A large banquet with many types of fruit, bread and

jams are served. The ensuing battle rages lead to many duels, and this is also the time most mates are chosen.

Summerfest- Celebrated when the shamanee divines that this day shall be the hottest. A large pit is dug, and filled with water. The half ogres swim and play to escape the brutal heat. Deer and boar are served with large quantities of grain spirits.

Autumfest- Celebrated as the leaves change color. The last of the fresh produce is eaten, usually resulting in a large turkey and yam dinner. The fallen leaves and branches are piled high and set ablaze. Goblins are snared, and placed in a pit for young half ogres to fight by the light of the fire.

Dueling system: According to the dueling rules, known as the "racoosee reyva" a duel must be fought for the following reasons:

- You are called a liar
- You, your friends, your family, your tribe, or your martial abilities are insulted
- Someone steals from or attacks you, your friends, your family, or your tribe
- Whenever a person attempts to cheat you out of money or items
- If a person annoys you constantly by offering you fruit or fruit derivatives in order to incite your blood rage
- If someone steals from your kill
- To establish dominance with a hitherto unknown Half ogre. Such a duel can be repeated every season. The loser must treat the winner as his superior.

Duels are also used to:

- Decide tribal leaders. Whenever a serious challenge is issued, but no more often than once a year, all half ogres are permitted to enter the contest. They each mark a pebble and place it into a pot. The high shaman stirs it, and a child pulls two stones out. Those individuals duel. The winner's stone goes into another pot. This is repeated until no stones exist in the original pot. Then a similar thing happens with the second pot, until only 2 contestants remain. Those two duels and the winner can challenge the old Chief. If he wins he is declared Chief and, He will travel to a secret place and be tattooed by the high shaman with the mark of a leader.
- To Choose a mate. Each sex duels for the right to choose first. The system works as above.
- Try criminals. A criminal is considered innocent if he can defeat the chief in a duel. He ma also choose not to initiate this duel and instead take the punishment given
- To resolve civil cases. Both contestants must agree to the terms before hand, clearly defining what will be gained from the duel if each should win

The dueling rules are:

1. The duel must be announced by one of the two parties.
- 2 a duel may not be refused for any reason other than pregnancy
3. An arbiter must be chosen to ensure the duel is fairly fought. Both people must agree on this person.
4. ONLY melee weapons may be used. No missiles, magic, gases, armor, shields, enhancing spells, enchanted weapons, or blade poisons may be used. Each contestant must enter the combat with identical spell combat protection (e.g. bless, shield, magic armor, etc)
5. A healer, a person with curative elixirs, or a person trained at first aid must be present.
6. Before starting, each member must announce what will be gained if he wins.
- 7.All styles of fighting not expressly forbidden are allowed. Combat ends when one person falls to the ground unconscious, bleeding to death, or if a person yields. The healer will mend the fallen if he is bleeding to death or unconscious.
8. The use of a finishing move is forbidden under pain of death. Defeat is humiliation enough, and no life need be shed
9. Once victory is claimed, the vanquished must abide by the ruling
10. The ruling made is absolute. No rematch is permitted, and each contestant should not be bitter. Violators will be banished for 6 months.
11. No fruit product may be eaten in the hour prior to a duel.

BE CAREFUL WHEN DUELING OTHER RACES.

They always tend to complain about the rules. And often they have little honor and will attempt to kill the vanquished. If you feel doubts about dueling a member of another race, find another means to settle the dispute. If none can be found, choose the highest-ranking noble in the town as an arbiter. It won't guarantee the person won't kill you, but most nobles can muster a life spell if necessary.

Criminal matters:

For most cases, no written law exists in the half-ogre society. Usually if a person commits what would be considered a crime, some party is slighted. That person may then petition the chief to ask the shamanee to accuse the individual. If the individual is accused, he must then either accept the punishment, or try to prove his innocence against the chief. If the individual is not accused, he may still be dueled by the slighted party. On occasion, the crime an individual may commit slights the whole tribe. In that case, the youngest shaman, the grand Shaman, and the chief hear all evidence and go into private to decide on the outcome. If 2 of the 3 choose to accuse the individual, he must either accept their ruling, or duel the chief. Examples of crimes that are considered to slight the whole tribe and their punishments follow:

Arson: Death and permanent banishment

Extortion: banishment, time determined by shamanee

Extreme cowardice: banishment, time determined by the shamanee

Homicide (killing another)- Death and permanent banishment.

Missing guard duty- 6 month banishment

Necromancy- Branding, Death, and permanent exile

Slavery- Death and permanent Exile

Treason (against the tribe, or tribal allies) Death and permanent exile

Breaking Banishment- Death for all except those permanently banished, Obliteration for them.

Special ability:

All half ogres can sense signs of impending natural disaster. This information is perceived as a type of sensation closely akin to whatever is going to happen. For example, if a nearby volcano will erupt, the half ogres will feel extremely hot, even if swimming in the lake. It never manifests itself as an exact description of what is going to happen when. Among the shamans, an accurate record of what had happened along with the signs the tribe felt is kept. Using their special skill (Craftsman other: Divination- Giant runes (called read nature in NERO NY)) they can pinpoint the exact time of the incident, and get a good sense as to what it will be. This skill is known only to half ogre shamans, and they will never teach it to a non-shaman, much less anyone not of their tribe.

Out of play, the best way to disperse this information is to have a member of the plot committee prepare a small index card with a description of what a character would feel. Each player is then expected to seek this person out as early as possible, get the card, Read it and gives it back to the plot member. In order to use the craftsman skill to deal with the information so gained, the player needs to have a plot Marshall on hand.

Language- almost all half ogres speak the common tongue of Avalon. Any deviancies from this will be noted in the section containing specific chapter information. That being said, Long Ago the half ogre people developed their own language. Remnants of it are some times spoken, especially as a matter of formality, or to add emphasis. A list of common expressions and words is below. Each should be spoken harshly, and with a halting gruff Tone.

ANNUU- An insult, it means literally - "Filthy pig"

BES- A term of endearment, it means, "mate"

BROG- The verb "to Fight"

DURG- Thief (insulting)

EHLL- Home/hut

IZSU- food, (literal- "game")

JINGAH- Lower than dirt, an insult

NAUP- Coward, also an insult

OHSE- Mine (possessive)

PAHMM- Giant (the race)
RACOOSE- I challenge you (to a duel)
REYVA- Rule or Law (literal Will of the chief)
SCKOOO- Liar (said with disgust)
SINGA- Tribe or village
VAAH- Scum (insult)

So, You want to be a shaman-

A player wishing to aspire to shaman hood must meet several requirements. First he must learn how to cast a ninth level spell of any school. Then he must seek entrance to the shamanee in play. After a short test to determine if the half ogre can cast a ninth level spell, the shamanee vote on the applicant. This is done by ball. Each shaman deposits a ball, white, blue, or black into a pot the white ball is a vote of definitely, the blue a neutral vote, and the black is a vote of no. If any black ball is found in the pot, the applicant is denied. If there are more white balls than blue, he is accepted, otherwise he is rejected. Once accepted, he must duel the high shaman for the right to join. If he succeeds, he is welcomed to the shamanee. That night, the shaman takes him to a remote location and shows him the herbs and small animal parts needed to make the tribal leaders tattoo. The grand shaman then starts to instruct him on the reading of the giant runes. Both of these items are considered very secret. You will not willingly tell them to any one, even your best friend or mate. For the first skill this has a lot of implication, for the second, the implication is less, as only a person with a mind disciplined enough to learn a ninth level spell will be able to accurately and effectively use it. Other wise it will function exactly as astrology does.

So you want to be the chief-

To become the chief, you must defeat the previous chief in a duel. The process of this special duel is detailed in the dueling section. Once you have won, the high shaman will lead you to a secret place, usually a grove or a cave. There the newest shaman has prepared the ink for your tattoo. You will be tattooed with a mark. This mark looks like a "tribal" tattoo (thus patterned after the tattoos of the Morai civilization on real earth) and will always be of an aqua color. Mixing equal parts of blue and green liquid make up best represents this color. Some eyeshadows will also do well. Each time you lose the position, you wont have the tattoo removed, but if you regain it, another will be applied. As the leader of the tribe, you get to live in the largest home in the village. It is two stories, and is usually surrounded by a fence of some sort. The people of the tribe may give you a gift, but they will NOT keep you up, even if you order them too. You are expected to be as self sufficient as you were before. The only difference is you get to allocate the communal labor, and lead the people into battle. (*Remember, on an out of play note, if you abuse this privilege, you may find that the plot committee "conveniently" has you randomly abducted or worse*)

Common Stories: These stories are told to young half ogres. Interestingly enough, they vary little from tribe to tribe.

Suhl and the Twelve Mountains:

The shamans to teach the youngsters about other races use this story. From tribe to tribe, The Proper names may change, but all in all the story remains the same.

Once, long ago there was a great warrior of our race named Suhl. He fought in a war against a group of evil humans that lived in the north. He Slew many enemies and fought many battles. After the war he headed back to his tribe. A great snow came, separating him from his comrades. He found a cave and rested there for five nights as the storm raged on.

Suhl awoke on the sixth day and realized he was lost. He knew that his home was south, and that if he traveled that way he would eventually Recognize some land marks and make his way home. He discovered a trail leading south through several mountains.

The first mountain he came to was tall and covered with snow and ice. He met a traveler there; an Elven man named Jacob. They traveled together for company. Jacob always complained of the cold and built fires each night. Suhl said this was not smart and that it could attract enemies. On the third night Jacobs fire attracted many wolves. Jacob was weak and was killed by the wolves. His screams of pain awoke Suhl, who then killed all the wolves. Thus did Suhl learn that Elves are easy prey and should not be brought to a fight.

The second mountain was covered with many caves. Almost nothing lived there. Suhl met an Orcish man

named Skall and they decided to travel together. Many Trolls lived in the caves and would attack the two at night. Suhl and Skall were both great warriors and always watched out for each other. For three nights they slew trolls by the dozens. On the fourth day they reached the other side of the mountain. Skall went west to find his tribe and Suhl continued south. Thus did Suhl learn that Orcs are a good people who fight well.

The third mountain was a sleeping volcano. Suhl met a Biata woman named Sarilla. They traveled together up the mountain. On the fourth day, Suhl felt as if he was covered in burning oil. Not being a shaman, he could only guess that the volcano would erupt soon. He made Sarilla rush down the mountain. The mountain didn't erupt and she claimed Suhl was mad. Later that night he awoke to find her astride him with her claw at his head. She claimed to be healing his mind. Suhl struck her mightily and chased her up the mountain, but gave up when she ran into a cave. As he walked down the mountain he heard a rumbling. He rushed for the bottom of the mountain. When he turned back to look at the eruption, he saw Sarilla rushing down the path. The lava caught her and she exploded into flames and died screaming. Thus did Suhl learn that the Biata are a devious race that must be watched at all times.

The fourth mountain was beautiful and covered with clouds. He met a barbarian man named Killaxe. They decided to travel together. Two paths existed, one was full of pits and crevasses, and the other was smooth with a gentle slope. The two men decided to take the easier path. They eventually came to a collection of burial mounds. Killaxe claimed that evil spirits would plague him and his tribe if he crossed for no reason. Suhl said that was not true as undead didn't come out during the day. Killaxe still refused. Suhl gave up and decided to cross. As he did, three bandits leapt out, intent on killing him. Killaxe gave up his fear and aided his friend. Together they killed the three women. Killaxe ran from the mounds and told Suhl he could help no more. Suhl ventured on and eventually came to the other side. Thus did Suhl learn that barbarians are good fighters, but are often too superstitious for their own good.

The fifth mountain had many hot springs. Suhl met a mystic wood elf named Fernell on the path up the mountain. Fernell seemed to like Suhl and they traveled together, sharing a bed roll at night. Eventually they came to a stream they had to swim across. Suhl easily made it across, but Fernell did not. Half way across she became tired and clung to a rock to keep from being pulled under. While searching for his rope to save her, Suhl discovered that his sack of gems was missing. He realized Fernell must have stolen it and left her to die a cold watery death. Thus did Suhl realize that mystic wood elves are a weak race of common thieves that will steal your heart while taking your money.

The sixth mountain was barren and windswept. Many small animals lived there. Suhl met a male scavenger that resembled a mink. His name was Carthidge. The wind was bitter cold and Suhl shivered badly. Carthidge, covered in thick fur, was warm. Suhl wanted to kill some of the small animals that lived there to make a fur coat. Carthidge was offended, claiming he would kill Suhl if Suhl tried to kill the animals of the mountain. On the fourth day, Suhl could bear the cold no longer. He found a nest of ermines and began to club them with his mace. Carthidge attacked Suhl, and Suhl caved his skull in with the mace. Suhl skinned Carthidge and had a very warm fur coat. Thus did Suhl learn that the scaven are nothing but weak animals pretending to be civilized.

The seventh mountain was laden with crevasses and boulders. Suhl met a hobling man named Grenich on the path. They traveled together, and Suhl often thought Grenich a great burden. Grenich had difficulty navigating the terrain. On the third day, they came to a chasm that was over twenty feet wide. Suhl looked down and could not see a bottom. He was about to turn around when Grenich produced a grapnel, some rope and a few spikes. In a matter of minutes, he had spanned the chasm. The two safely crossed. And parted company. Thus did Suhl learn that the hoblings were a weak people, but they made up for it with cleverness.

The eighth mountain was covered in brambles, and many thorn bushes. Suhl met a stone elf female named Zenith. They traveled together, and Suhl noticed that she spoke little and never smiled. As they ascended the mountains, the brambles became thicker, blocking all paths. They pressed on. For two days the thorns tore at their skin and clothes. Zenith and Suhl bled much. The stone elf passed out. Suhl bandaged her, and put his bed furs over her to keep her warm. That evening a storm blew in, bringing lightning and rain with it. Suhl sat vigilant over Zenith's sleeping body as the lightning struck the mountain for most of the night. The next morning Zenith awoke to find Suhl drenched, half mad from the deafening thunder. Using her powers she soothed his mind. They traveled the rest of the path without incident. At the base of the mountain, they parted ways. Thus did Suhl learn that Stone Elves, while weak of body, were strong of mind.

The ninth mountain had a flat top, with a beautiful lake in the center. Suhl met a gypsy named Rodrigo. They traveled together and Rodrigo told Suhl many tales, Suhl thought many to be too fantastic to be true, but they were good stories anyway. Rodrigo brought a large bottle of mead on the trip. The two drank it and became very drunk the first night. Rodrigo traded Suhl a jar of dried beetles that brought good luck for a jewel encrusted dagger Suhl had brought home from the war. The next morning, while holding his aching head, Suhl realized he had been tricked. He demanded the dagger back. Rodrigo refused, claiming a deal could not be undone. Suhl took the dagger by force. The two didn't

speak the rest of the trip, and when they reached a fork in the path, Rodrigo cursed Suhl with the tail of an ass, and ran away. Thus did Suhl learn that gypsies are sneaky thieves not to be trusted at all.

The tenth mountain had many rock slides. Suhl met a tiger Saar female named Thrush on the path. Together they traveled up the mountain. The path was difficult, and the two slid as they climbed. It took 10 days to reach the top. Nothing grew here, and both Suhl and Thrush were very hungry. Thrush decided to scout ahead, looking for a clear path with her catlike agility. She went a ways and was gone for a while. Suhl began feel queasy. He felt as though the earth beneath him was rumbling. Thrush then called to him saying all was clear. Cautiously, he tossed stones before him, expecting a rockslide. As he had expected, one of the stones caused a rockslide. Then thrush leapt out. Suhl realized she had meant to kill him. He unslung his mighty mace and caved her skull in. He left her body for the carrion crawlers and vultures, making his way down to the base of the mountain. Thus did Suhl learn all Saar are savage animals pretending to be civilized.

The eleventh mountain was steep and covered with icy patches. Suhl met a dwarven female named Valia. The two were both sturdy enough to navigate the mountain, and made good travel companions. Valia spoke very little, but she did comment on the axe Suhl was using to chop ice with. She said the metal had a flaw, and would soon break. Suhl dismissed this saying that he had taken it off a dead enemy officer in the war. The next day, while chopping holes in the ice to make foot holds, the blade shattered. Shards of metal wounded Suhl, making his left arm useless. He began to plummet, but Valia grabbed him as he fell by, saving his life. With hr help, Suhl was able to cross the mountain. The two parted as friends. Thus did Suhl learn that dwarves are a capable people, and that they are experts at weaponcraft.

The twelfth mountain was black as soot, and smelled of brimstone. Suhl met a dark elf named Kenshi. Kenshi spoke little to Suhl, and when he did, it was always as if Suhl were a child. Suhl disliked Kenshi's company. Kenshi disliked traveling during the day, and would only travel at night when all Suhl could see was Kenshi's eyes reflecting the starlight. On the third night of travel, Kenshi appeared before Suhl and demanded money for protection. Suhl scoffed and said that the black elf must be insane, Suhl could fend for himself. Suhl traveled the rest of the night not knowing if Kenshi was lurking to kill him at any given moment. Just before dawn, Kenshi reappeared, asking for money again. Suhl readied his mighty mace, and told the man no. Kenshi sighed, throwing three severed northmen heads before Suhl. Kenshi said that they had followed Suhl since the beginning, and that more lurked in the night. As solace disappeared into the shadows, he told Suhl to be certain to accept a dark elven offer, for it is seldom they will come to your aid. Dawn came and no sign of Kenshi or of northmen could be found. Suhl made his way down the mountain peacefully. Thus did Suhl learn that there is more to the dark elves than meets the eye, and that one should never turn their backs upon them.

The road leading down from the last mountain merged with a trail, which eventually led to the encampment of Suhl's party. As he feasted by the fire he told them of his travels, and they asked if he traveled with a normal human. He said no, he had fought along side humans in the great war, and knew them well enough. Besides who would want to travel with a greedy, know it all, confusing human who could barely keep up in a fight. It's not that great of an adventure to travel with one anyway.

Playing a Hatcha

Long ago In the Ashbury area, many young half-ogres were kidnapped by the giants, and forced to work "righting" nature. Many were never seen again. They eventually grew to be Hatcha (literally those who do not fight) occasionally a hunting party will encounter a strange half ogre. They usually challenge him to a duel, and the bewildered creature flees as the weapons are drawn. This is not to mean that the Hatcha are cowards, they just do not understand the dueling tradition, and fear they will be set upon by the entire party.

Playing a hatcha is easy, it also allows an easy out for players who created their characters before this packet. It can be assumed that sometime after being released from the giant's services, some of the young half ogres banded together forming tribes, etc, that had no knowledge of their roots. Hatcha get all the benefits and drawbacks any other half ogre does. They merely don't know a lot about their race.

They still will have odd feelings, still get the willies from undead, etc, but they are free to react in different manners from "standard" half-ogres.

Players playing "standard" half-ogres are free to react any way they deem appropriate to the hatcha, though curiosity and pity are often prevalent.

Half ogres of the Tyrangel/ Southwatch area:

Culture: The Half-ogres of the Tyrangel area call themselves the tribe of the waning Moon. They are somewhat different from their northern counterparts. Several generations of slavery after their return to Avalon and a run in with a pack of werewolves have influenced their culture. Each half-ogre belongs to a caste and hates with a passion the werewolves (they refer to them as "the Big wolf" see the history section for more info). The castes are not like most real world ones, as a person can change their caste, and actually chooses which caste to join. The castes are remnants of the slavers separation of the various professions. There are 6 castes:

Babyfangs- Young Half-ogre children. They bear a moon tattoo on their left cheek. The color is that of their dominant parent's star (see Below)

Pariah- These are outcasts. Their tattoos have been removed, and they are generally attacked on sight if recognized as a former member of the tribe.

BloodFangs- The warrior caste. Each has Red tusks, a moon tattoo as the Babyfangs, as well as a hollow red star tattoo over their right eye. During times of war, the blood fangs (and all the other castes) they fill the hollow part with a blood based paint.

Black Hands: these are the stealth warriors of the Tribe. Each has a hollow Black star over their right eye. They also have the moon from their time as a Babyfang, As well as a solid black tattoo covering their entire left hand.

Azure Eyes: The celestial/ battle Mages. Each has a hollow blue star over their right eye, the Babyfang moon, and one or more blue eyelid (see below). Once a person joins this caste, he may never become chief.

Alabaster hand: The Healing/ protective mages. Each has a hollow purple star over their right eye, the Babyfang moon, and a solid white (palm excluded) right hand.

****Note**** Membership in a caste is not limited by class. Any class may, if they meet the tests of the caste, join any class.******

Joining castes:

Each caste has its own criteria for joining. They are as follows:

Blood Fang:

The entrant must, anytime after defeating their mother to return into her home, call out at the top of his lungs that he is worthy of being called blood fang. At that moment all of the Blood fangs not occupied with important matters- Guard duty, criminal trial, occupied in a duel, etc. will begin to converge on the applicant. He is Wrestled to the ground, and bore away to a nearby cave. The blood fangs toss all manner of fruit and fruit juices into the cave, and wall the young applicant in the cavern for a week. During that week, the blood fangs spend their time seizing many dangerous animals and monsters. These are brought to the cave. The Blood fangs stake the monsters out around the entrance to the cave, set many large mechanical traps in the area, and light a large ring of brush afire to form a flaming barrier 3 yards from the cave mouth. the door to the cave is opened and a half starved, blood raged almost insane Half ogre emerges, bent on destruction. if he can kill all of the creatures and not get killed by the traps, he passes the test. if not he may try again when he resurrects, or he may embrace cowardice and run through the fire, barring him from joining for a full year.

Once he has passed the test of battle, an applicant is healed and prepared for the final test. All of the blood fangs are given a riding crop. The applicant must run the gauntlet, ending up at a large table with a gourd on it. in the gourd is a secret herbal mixture that will give him the blood red teeth of the caste. He is then tattooed with his star, and is at that moment a blood fang.

Black Hand:

Individuals of the black hand are a special lot. Before a child is turned out of his home, the black hand decides if he is worthy to undergo training in their art. The silent, stealthy black hand bases this decision on previous scouting

excursions. If the child shows promise, he is abducted the night before he is to be turned out by masked invaders (disguised Black hands) He is clubbed about the head to the point of unconsciousness.

He will awake in a pitch black room. A gruff voice instructs him to do many tasks in utter silence. Each time the child makes a noise, he is struck with a riding crop. The child may try to escape, but he is chained to the wall. When the child learns stealth enough to complete most tasks silently, the masked overseer lights a lantern, seizes the child and leads him to a dingy cell. For 3 days he is kept there with no sustenance. The black hand then conveniently rescues him. The offer to let him go back to his family, or join their ranks. Most choose to join.

If he chooses to join the caste, 2 members seize him while a third covers his whole left hand with a black tattoo. This is a very painful procedure, and the child is told not to scream. Nothing occurs if he does scream, it is just considered bad form. For six months thereafter, the child is taught in any roguish skill he chooses. At the end of his lessons, He is told that before sun down on the next day, he must bring 30 gold worth of treasure to his teacher. If he does so, he is accepted as a full member and is tattooed with the hollow black star on his face. If he is unable to gather all the money, he must repeat the training/ treasure hunt again until successful.

Azure Eye:

The azure eye caste will attract people with a love for battle magics. The largest portion are celestial, but all schools are accepted, provided they are not defilers. an applicant may join the caste at anytime in their life. He must show he can cast a spell to a member, and ask to join. The member takes the individual to one of the shamans in this caste, or the most powerful azure eye if none are shamans. That person will have the individual held down, and his lower right eyelid tattooed. Hence forth he may never be a tribal chief. The applicant is then assigned to a teacher. when the teacher feels the applicant is ready, (of course after some studying and free labor) and the applicant can cast a third level spell, the applicant has his lower left eyelid tattooed, and is tattooed with the hollow blue star. The applicant is then considered a full member of the caste. Later when he learns a ninth level spell his upper left eyelid is tattooed, and if he pursues formal magics and achieves 1st level, his upper right eyelid is tattooed.

Alabaster hand:

The alabaster hand are the tribal healers. they are also the ones in charge of Spell protections. Theirs is the gentlest of all initiations. An applicant must ask to be a member. If the majority of the cast agree, and the person can heal, or offer protection (be it magical, alchemichal, or any other non physical way) he is accepted. He is tattooed with a hollow purple star. He is then instructed to visit the most powerful healer in the tribe. This person blindfolds the young applicant and leads him to an ancient cave. Here the applicant is told a present lies for him at the bottom of a pool of white water. Looking down on the ground he sees a bubbling white pool. Reaching his hand into it, he finds nothing. However when he retrieves his hand, he notices it has been bleached solid white. That was his gift. He is now a full fledged member of the caste.

History

After the fall of Elaan, the two heroes of the rebellion, Burc and Caff each took a party in a different direction. Burc went south. When he arrived in the area he set up a small encampment. They first started by clearing a forest. They fashioned the trees into a large palisade. Huts were built, and A well dug. The people began to live and prosper again. Thus they did for 5 generations. One year during the festival of the Bittercold, a strange group of men entered the Village. They said aloud in a booming voice "follow us brethren" Thus did every half ogre follow these beings, now known to be giants. The giants loaded the Half ogres into a large barge and took them across the sea.

For many lifetimes , the half ogres did all manner of things in the continents of Zephyr, Amys and Gandar. They would dig springs in the desert, Harvest flowers in the jungle, etc. finally The foreign lands Suited the eccentric giants. all of the half ogres were offered passage back to Avalon, but many decided to stay in the new lands. Those that chose to return boarded a ship and departed across the great salty river. As they were crossing, a great storm welled up. Several of the half ogres were swept overboard. Full of strength, they tried to keep up, but were soon pulled behind. The last thing the half ogres saw was their brothers being swept beneath the waves.

After the storm cleared, the journey was very easy. It seemed that a pod of dolphins were helping to guide the ship , allowing for a peaceful journey. On occasion, one of the half ogres would see, or so he thought, a glint of yellow beneath the waves, perhaps the fallen had survived. The Giants moved the ship into a bay on the southern coast of Avalon. The half ogres gleefully jumped into the water, swimming ashore, sea sick from their long voyage.

The half ogre's first order of business was to erect a city. Cutting a forest, they began constructing their rounded

huts, as well as building the city wall. Within 3 months, the city was fully finished. The half ogres then began their peaceful existence.

One day, a large caravan of humans approached the palisade. They entered the village bearing gifts of beer and bread. The half ogres, as of yet unable to harvest their newly planted grain, feasted on the food. Each ate until full, drifting easily off into a peaceful sleep, almost too easily. The Tribe awoke to find itself shackled in the bottom of wagons. Slavers had captured them. The slavers evaluated the skills of each person and tattooed a color coded star mark upon their face to identify their vocation. The whole lot became property of some cruel master in the north. For 7 generations, the half ogres were forced to toil in the various enterprises of this man. Finally when he had finished all of his work in the north, he moved the entire population to the south. As the caravan entered what is now Southwatch, The main wagon's axle broke. The guards went to seek a possible replacement. After they had entered the woods, several screams were heard. The guards were not seen again.

For many days, the half ogres starved in their steel shackles. Then they saw a small, heavily armed band of humans approach the wagons. These humans looked in awe upon the half ogres, never having seen "ogres so small." They proceeded to raid the food stores and prepare a huge feast. While they were eating, one of the men had an idea about entertainment. He went to one of the empty wagons and unhitched it. Moving the wheeled cage around to the feast area, the others realized his plan. 2 men chose 2 of the half ogres from the cages. One had a blue star over his left eye, the other had a red star in a similar location. 2 clubs, and a large piece of roast were tossed into the cage. The half ogres quickly followed them.

The original plan was to watch the brutes smash one another over the food. However this was not the case. Freed of their shackles, both ran for a club. The azure eye tossed his club to the Bloodfang. Then the azure eye destroyed the door with his magic. Unleashed was the full fury of the Bloodfang warrior. The 5 bandits probably could have taken the warrior by force, were it not for the cleverness of the azure eye. He destroyed the door on a cage full of Bloodfangs, Releasing as many as he could. Seizing large rocks, the warriors crushed the men into pulp. The azure eye then went and released all of the others. One healer decided to have some fun. Healing the two bandit leaders, he cut their tongues out. Then he tossed them into a cage, along with 2 rocks and a turkey. The bloodfangs moved a large stone to seal the door and left the two men there.

In the south watch area, as well as most of the lands south of Therendry, no half ogres lived. After the battle with the Jhivante, all the remnants of the southern tribe integrated with their northern brethren. The newly transplanted half ogres found the land to be good, and full of virtue. Slowly, tenuously at first they reached out to the other races in the area. The first they met were the elves. At first, as was common through out the history of the half ogre race, the elves were frightened. None in the initial contact group had ever seen ogres this small. Several noted the pointed ears, and wondered of their origins. The leader of the tribe thought to bring the group to the nearest city.

In the city, an old elder had remembered the legends of the chaos hating half ogre. He claimed, rather erroneously, that they were of part elven descent, and would make good allies. Thus was trade established. The elves provided soft blankets, and finely tanned hides. The half-ogres skill with weapons allowed them to provide the elves with many types of animals to eat. Word spread quickly that the half ogre traders were fair, and only sold the best of meat to their trade partners. Eventually, many different people would come to the village of the half ogres, not only to trade goods but also to gain training. Thus a prosperous time began.

One warm autumn day a group of the colorful humans approached the village. The half ogres approached the wagons in peace. The gypsies had many wares and the peoples traded well. In fact the half ogres exhausted their resources, and were forced to hunt that night for their own food. When the Half-ogres returned, they found their village in flames, their remaining people huddled in the foundry, wounded and in need of help. They immediately set the alabaster hands to fixing the wounded. In the light of the full moon they began to search for other survivors. They found many dead, but only one wounded. The small child was trapped under a beam that had fallen from one of the flaming huts. As the Bloodfangs tried to lift the beam from the child's body, she coughed. As she died the last words she uttered was "the colorful humans..."

Suddenly the half ogres thought about their trade partners. Several rushed out to help the gypsies. But their wagons were empty. Not a light mind you, but just deserted. And it was not deserted like a people fled in fear, but as if they had just left of their own volition. This was considered odd. but it was assumed that perhaps whomever attacked the village feared the gypsies curses. The search parties returned to the now ruined village.

Total, 17 were dead, 5 wounded and the entire village destroyed. All of the people claimed that a large pack of upright wolves attacked and looted the village. The whole tribe decided to hunt down these "big wolves." For a month they wandered searching for signs of the evil wolves. One day, exactly one month after the destruction of the village, none of the 5 wounded half ogres could be found. The chief searched high and low for the missing half ogres, finding

them clenched in pain, about a mile from the camp. He watched with horror as they began to look less and less like him, and more and more like wolves. They were changing before his eyes. he seized his hunting horn, and sounded it with all his might. The entire tribe converged on the sound and quickly slew the lycanthropes.

Suddenly from out of the bushes another werewolf emerged. Howling, he lunged at the chief. Before he made any contact with the stalwart leader, the azure eyes burned him into cinders with their mighty magics. As the now limp body fell to the ground, the half-ogres saw it change. It was one of the gypsies who had so recently visited them. On that day, Graz Heartrender, mighty chief of the southern tribe, declared that from henceforth the tribe should be bent on destroying the "big wolves". Realizing the moon was the source of the lycanthropes power, the tribe decided, after some deliberation, to call themselves "the tribe of the waning moon" to represent that they were the doom of the harvest-time gypsies and all other werewolves. since that time they have rebuilt their village in a more secure location, and now great honor is given to any person, or group of people who successfully slay one of the were kind.

Members of note in the Tribe of the waning moon:

Grok Backwhacker- Current chief. age 16. Member of the Blackhand. defeated Grom Toestabber in the chieftom duel by distracting the chief, shouting a warning of approaching undead, then inserting a knife between Grom's ribs.

Dreg Runeeye- head shaman. Age 32. Member of the azure eye. Most gifted seer of recent years. Has never missed a divination since becoming a shaman.

Grom Toestabber- Most recent chief. Grom is now 20. his epithet comes from his innovative fighting style- he would use a short sword to block his opponents blows, while mortally stabbing them in the toe with a spear. A blood fang to the end he hopes to win back his title from Grok within the year.

Skrob Heartpatcher- Highest level healer. Now 30 she seeks the items necessary to create a healing circle for the tribe. epithet comes from an incident with an insane troll that was killing off tribal hunting parties. It would rip the people's heart out and consume it. Skrob hid in the brush, healing them after the creature left. She eventually went on to lead those warriors in a battle against the creature, gaining great fame.

Half ogres of the Hadran empire

(Most all contributed by: Christopher Reum)

I. Overview/Philosophies:

There are many different half-ogre clans and tribes scattered across the lands of Hadran. Each tribe varies in its history and its view points since there is not one main half-ogre group. Most half-ogres can be found in the cities and towns of other cultures especially humans, but many are found as lone travelers. In contrast to other tribal groups, such as the barbarians though, half-ogres are not male dominated and rely on both men and women to be the hunters and the family care-givers. The main half-ogre theme is survival because most tribes live in harsh regions which is why they believe that strength is everything and civilization is a weakness that detracts from survival. They do not normally prey on civilized folk but will defend their territory against any threat, and because their tribes are usually small, they often must unite with other races to defend themselves against others.

II. History/Legends:

Each tribe of half-ogres has a different opinion about their origins; however, it is consistent that they do not relate themselves to true ogres. In what was once the Hadran Empire, the few tribes that have been discovered have remained aloof in the Dragonspine Mountains, but occasionally seek or offer aid to their neighbors. It is generally thought that the half ogre tribes here are formed from the warriors that fled the horrific battle with the Jhivante. Heading west, they eventually met a group of dwarves. Living with the dwarves eventually led to a slightly modified culture from that of the east.

III. Society:

As stated previously, half-ogres are a warrior people who see one's strength as all important. Because most half-ogre tribes live in harsh lands, the most important feat for any individual is survival. Most tribes do not grow things, they

hunt and gather or take anything that they need in order to survive.

Half-ogre tribes in the Hadran area are generally male dominated, but on occasion, a female has become leader of her tribe after defeating the previous leader in combat, but culturally the women are just as important as the men often hunting next to their mates. Most tribes' leaders appoint themselves tribal chieftain after they defeat the current chieftain in combat (usually not to the death). However, many tribes also have a council of elders, who help the leader make wise decisions, but the chieftain final word is law. Every tribe also has a tribal shaman, who, unlike the shamans of the east, is exclusively an Earth caster. In many tribes, the shaman is so powerful and influential that they actually lead the tribe.

IV. Culture:

As with any society, family is seen as an important concept; however, half-ogres have two ideas of family. One could be termed as the immediate family, which consists of the father, mother, and children. The other could be called the extended family, which consists of everyone else within the tribe. Many half-ogres believe that the growth of children and the knowledge that they obtain is the responsibility of the entire tribe, not just their father and mother. Most scholars believe that this developed because both men and women can be the hunters/warriors and because if survival being difficult, either could die and the children must rely upon the rest of the tribe for their knowledge and survival.

Daughters and widowed females are married off by the father to the most powerful or richest male. Usually this is done to secure allegiances or to repay debts, and marriage does not have to be only inter-tribal. Daughters can be married to other tribes or other clans to secure relations or seal agreements.

V. Relations with other Races:

Hadran Half-ogres have an affinity to strong races such as humans, half-orcs, and barbarians. They still generally see humans as a weak people because they live in fortified cities but will seek their aid whenever necessary. Half-orcs and barbarians tend to survive in similar terrain as the half-ogre people, so they are seen as more powerful races, but neither is dealt with frequently because of their aggressive nature.

Hadran half-ogres see hobblings as weak little creatures, which can not defend themselves against any threat. They also see elves as frail beings, but believe that the elves can be stout fighters when they combine their magics with their skill in shiny weapons.

Half-ogres are closest to dwarves because they both live in mountainous regions. Dwarves are seen as great fighters, but half-ogres size just doesn't allow it much freedom underground, so many half-ogres tend to fear enclosed spaces.

VI. Use of Magic:

As with all half ogres, Hadran's population has a difficult time understanding scholarly things including celestial magic and as a people, they tend towards the use of earth magic. They have no concept of good and bad earth magic (earth vs. necromancy) and will use necromantic spells to defend themselves. Of course the fear of undead still exists, and no half ogre will create, control, or aid these abominations. Of course when it comes to battle, they would rather show their power in armed combat, but the use of magic to defeat an enemy can be appropriate.

VII. Language:

Half-ogres have both a complicated oral language and a very simplistic written language normally keep by the tribal shaman or chieftain if their is no shaman. Oral stories, rituals, and dances are the basis of teaching other half-ogres including the young. It is a great person who can retell his deeds through dance or oration.