

Kadrian Orcish Pantheon:

by Deadmanwalking

Gristark is the Orcish God of rulership, war, the hunt, animals, defense of the tribe, and other such things. He is the King of the Orcish Gods and generally a reasonable sort of ruler...but he is the God of strength and the will to power, caring little for how such power is used. Conquest and brutality is not necessary to win his favor, but neither is it entirely forbidden. He despises lies, though he understands the necessity of secrets and being careful with how the truth is phrased, but has little time for empty braggarts. He is a God of deeds, not words. He is Neutral, his Domains are Animal, Nobility, Protection, Strength, and War, his favored weapon is the greataxe, and his holy symbol is an iron circlet with a stylized double-bladed axe head above the brow...the official Orcish design for a crown.

His elder brother Marinak would be king by strict laws of inheritance, but strength and skill at ruling, as well as ambition, hold more appeal for Orcs in who they choose as King, and Marinak either had little interest, or, while mighty, was never quite a match for his younger brother. Accounts differ. Gristark is, in many ways, the simplest and most stereotypical of the Orcish Gods, but that doesn't make him stupid or incompetent, just straightforward, a trait Orcs admire a great deal. Due to his position and domains, men in Orcish society are expected to be the ones who do battle, hunt, rule the tribe, perform tasks requiring great physical strength, and engage in unskilled labor, while women are expected to follow in the footsteps of his wife, Torika. There's not a lot of stigma attached to men who pursue more scholarly avocations...as long as they *could* clearly manage the more physical sort, but physical weakness is greatly stigmatized in men. He is something of the default God of Orcish men.

Torika is Gristark's wife, Queen of the Gods, and the Goddess of community, learning, creation, craftsmanship, intellect, and knowledge. She is Gristark's primary adviser, the brains to his brawn, as well as a craftswoman, artist, and scholar for the sake of scholarship. She despises stupidity and foolishness, finding both contemptible...but cares little for the ends intellect and good judgment are put to, so long as those follow logically from their possessor's goals and principles. Unlike her husband, she cares little for whether someone lies, provided those lies are clever, but she despises those who are not honest with themselves. Like her husband, she is Neutral, and her Domains are Artifice, Community, Earth, Knowledge, and Plant. Her favored weapon is the quarterstaff, and her holy symbol is a tome with a hammer and an ear of grain on the cover.

She is not related to the other Orc Gods (save her children) and her origins are somewhat unclear and shrouded in mystery, at least to mortals, though the other Orc Gods seem notably unworried about this, and perhaps know from whence she hails. She is a quiet Goddess, but as the primary deity of Orc women, her following is quite large. Somewhat by default, she is also the patron of Arcane magic in Orc society, and many Orc Witches, Sorcerers, and Bards pay her homage. Due to her gender, role, and interests, it is expected that women in Orcish society will be the ones to maintain the community, keep tribal lore and study that of other peoples, craft

tools and weapons, become artists, be in charge of farming activities, and generally perform skilled labor. Women who prefer what are generally seen as men's avocations are looked at askance, and generally seen as courting evil and succumbing to the foul influence of the Goddess Varkoraa. They can often win respect among Orcish men, who value strength above all, but other Orcish women almost always harbor some doubt, fear, or resentment towards such 'unnatural' women. In parallel to her husband, she is the default Goddess for Orcish women.

Marinak is the Orcish God of Death, he is the impartial lord of all death, from cruel murder to merciful ends of those in pain, as well as a God of travel and journeys in his role as psychopomp. As the only Lawful Orc God, he's also generally prayed to by judges and other law keepers for aid in being fair and impartial, and is considered the enforcer of contracts and oaths. Orcs thus take oaths quite seriously, despite their generally Chaotic nature...nobody wants to anger the Lord of Death. For similar reasons, his Priests, who often work as traveling judges and arbitrators, are seen as sacrosanct provided they remain impartial. One who violates his impartiality is not seen as out of favor with the God or having done something morally wrong, but his 'diplomatic immunity' is no longer in effect. Marinak is Lawful Neutral, his Domains are Death, Destruction, Law, Repose, and Travel, and his favored weapon is the scythe, as is his holy symbol.

He's very much a Grim Reaper figure, appearing as a tall and slim, pale, Orc in a long dark cloak. He's the elder brother of Gristark and something of the bachelor uncle of the pantheon, though he takes mortal lovers upon occasion, exclusively picking men for this particular honor. He's thus also the theoretical patron of male homosexuality, though that doesn't come up a lot, since Orcs mostly don't care and Orcs who happen to be gay tend to follow whichever God suits their other interests. It does mean that being an undertaker, judge, or priest of Marinak, is something of the 'stereotypical' job for gay male Orcs...but that's a custom more honored in the breach. He is perhaps the least commonly directly worshiped Orcish God, but all pay him homage in passing, and none dare disrespect those who directly follow the Lord of Death.

Degrak is the Half Orc God of the sun and daylight, blindness, lies, manipulation, lust, seduction, betrayal, and madness. He is the child of Gristark's dead brother Andrak, who was once God of the sun, love, laughter and passion, and Kentala, the Human Goddess of night, darkness, the hunt, and the wind, and is the twin brother to Eneka, and is the husband of Varkoraa. He is also the reason his father is dead. He values cleverness and trickery above all things, and favors other Half Orcs above his Orcish or Human worshipers. He is the patron of spies and assassins, as well as prostitutes and madmen. His alignment is Neutral Evil, his Domains are Charm, Evil, Madness, Sun, and Trickery, his favored weapon is the dagger (often made of obsidian, a material he holds sacred), and his holy symbol is a blood-red half-disc representing the sunrise.

Degrak was born of passion, if not love, and he was treated well enough as a child...but something was always wrong with the young God. A subtle madness infected him, and he perceived slights on his heritage where none were intended and nursed bitter grudges towards

those he felt belittled him, he also tormented his sister, overtly at first, and then subtly once he learned that she was better in a fight than he and quite willing to beat him if he killed her pets or destroyed her things. So he learned to be clever, subtle, and patient but never stopped being paranoid, cruel, petty, and vengeful. His mother saw this in him and kept a wary eye on her son, but his father loved him unconditionally...which was all the advantage Degrak needed to kill him and steal his domain over the Sun, and secure his position as the God of betrayal as well. As vengeance for all the 'slights' he had received due to his mixed blood, he cursed the Orcish people to be blinded and hurt by the sun's light. He has managed, by a combination of charm and being useful (he is the only trickster in the pantheon), to ingratiate himself enough to the other Gods that he is not a pariah among them, and has even successfully seduced and married his cousin Varkoraa (he doesn't judge her, after all...though he is also the definition of unfaithful), but his sister Eneka has never forgiven him for their father's murder, with she and her agents opposing him and all his works, and her husband Gulnar agrees with her and follows her lead in this. His worshipers tend towards secretive cults, raving madmen, or professional criminals of one sort or another, and are disturbingly common among both Orcs and Half Orcs.

Eneka is the Half Orc Goddess of freedom, the wind, birds, archery, beauty, and love, especially romantic love. She is the twin sister of Degrak, though in many ways the two could not be more different, and is married to Gulnar, son of Gristark and Torika. She is a kind Goddess, valuing compassion, the ability to think for oneself, and loyalty very highly. She approves of both cleverness and strength, but only when used towards good ends, and considers such gifts being turned towards evil and cruelty a tragic waste. Her priests often work as matchmakers, revolutionaries, and hunters of evil. Also, because she is the Goddess of archery, it is very common for Half Orcs to practice archery as their primary combat role, and Orcish infantry supported by Half Orc archers is a common sight. She is Chaotic Good, her Domains are Air, Chaos, Charm, Good, and Liberation, her favored weapon is the longbow, and her holy symbol is a dove in flight with an arrow in its beak.

Eneka is known, among the gods, for falling in love often, by deific standards, and with all manner of people. Her mortal lovers have included men and women, human and orcs, gnomes, dwarves, and every other race under the sun, even an elf or two...as long as their hearts were pure. Her husband has no particular problem with this, and indulges in his own trysts upon occasion (though he sticks to orc or half orc women for the most part), something she would never dream of forbidding. Why cage love? She is also the primary opposition to both slavery and her nefarious brother among the Orcish Gods (though her husband helps) and a dangerous warrior. Due to her breaking of many traditional Orc gender roles, Half Orc or Orc women who take up more non-traditional careers often seek Eneka as their patron, as do most Half Orcs in general who don't worship her brother. Male Orc followers of her are uncommon. Additionally, due to her promiscuity combined with her brother's role as God of Lust and Seduction, Half Orcs tend to be perceived as somewhat promiscuous, and while some eschew that stereotype, many also embrace it, giving Half Orcs quite a reputation for such behavior in both Human and Orc cultures.

Gulnar is the Orcish God of loyalty, friendship, heat, fire, honesty, the night itself, healing, and general benevolence. He is the son and heir of Gristark and Torika, elder brother to Varkoraa, and husband to Eneka. Perhaps the kindest of the Orc gods, Gulnar is the God of camaraderie around the campfire at night (a necessity for Orcs not for light, but for heat in the winter) and his priests serve as healers, peace bringers, and warriors against Evil, as well as performing all marriage ceremonies in his role as God of Loyalty. He values loyalty, compassion, and honesty above all things, and while a skilled warrior, is the Orc God least inclined to violence, preferring peace and good fellowship. He has nothing against strength, cleverness, or the other virtues his parents espouse, but like his wife feels they are only worthwhile in the pursuit of good causes, and unlike her is actively angered rather than merely disappointed when those gifts are perverted to foul uses. He is Neutral Good, his Domains are Darkness, Fire, Glory, Good, and Healing, his favored weapon is the falchion, and his holy symbol is a flickering flame.

Gulnar's marriage to Eneka is of long standing, and the two are still very much in love and work together well to foster goodness and oppose evil. Due to the polyamorous nature of their relationship, such arrangements are actually fairly common among Orcs, and given his priests officiating over marriages, plural marriages of various sorts are not unusual. Gulnar's priests are notable for being very peaceful right up until they encounter true Evil, and then *notably* violent, and he is by far the most likely Orc God to have Paladins. Gulnar's worship tends to be a quiet and personal thing for non-priests, as some worshipers of the other Orc Gods feel that while the principles he espouses are good, the God himself is weak, passive, or indecisive, this isn't true but causes just enough stigma for many worshipers to keep their worship quiet rather than shouting it from the rooftops. Due to the associations with fire and the night, and their racial ability to see in the dark, Orcs consider night time to be a peaceful and safe time, particularly with the aid of a fire to drive predators away.

Varkoraa is the Orcish Goddess of brutality, personal violence, storms, and the sea, as well as shipwrecks and other disasters. She is the daughter of Gristark and Torika, younger sister to Gulnar, and wife to Degrak. She is a deadly and powerful warrior, believing strength is the greatest virtue, though she is more flexible than her father in how she defines strength (for example, she's actually got a lot of respect for her husband's ability to convince people to do as he wishes), though she personally has more aptitude for direct violence than manipulation. Indeed, she acknowledges no other virtues as relevant at all, believing that strength (or, perhaps more accurately, capability) is the only thing that matters. Her priests often lead raiding parties or practice banditry of some sort, though her worshipers also include sailors of all sorts, whether they find her philosophy on life appealing or not. She is Chaotic Evil, her Domains are Chaos, Evil, War, Water, and Weather, her favored weapon is the trident, and her holy symbol is a stylized wave crashing against rocks.

Varkoraa always bridled against the gender roles set out by her deific parents, preferring combat to study, and sailing to agriculture. She was rebellious and her parents were not especially tolerant of rebellion. They attempted to force her into a role she did not desire, and she responded forcefully against them, and eventually broke entirely with her family. It was in this

state that Degrak, the Lord of Lies and Manipulation, found her. He spoke of how his human mother was a great huntress and warrior and how he didn't care about the things her parents spoke of as incorrect or evil, indeed, how their whole morality was hypocritical and foolish...and in this way he seduced her. After a time, he convinced her that a cautious reunion with her family was in their best interests, and that they had best be married if such a thing were to occur. And so he built his power base, and escaped justice for his father's murder. Now, over time Varkoraa has realized how thoroughly she was used, but by the time she came to that realization, she was simply impressed with her husband's skill rather than angry. She is, however, much more careful of following his requests these days. She has become a brutal, cruel, and amoral deity, who believes those who can take and hold a thing deserve it, and those who can't do not. Ironically, her position as an unambiguous female warrior is actually one of the main reasons for the prejudice against such in the modern era, with there being a constant fear that they will turn out like her. This, ironically, makes Evil tribes who worship her a lot more accepting of female warriors than less evil groups. Her association with the sea and patronage of sailors also means that sailors are very distrusted in Orc society. They're useful, and indeed respected, but they're also all assumed to be a short step away from piracy and raiding. Her worshipers are primarily either violent criminals, tribes who subsist on raiding, particularly vicious warriors, sailors, or female Orc warriors seeking a patron (the last a role she shares with Eneka, depending mostly on the temperament of the woman in question).