

The Hunter's Code

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| Etymology |

Hunters of old from the frigid northern lands believed in a connection with nature itself, something more pure and deeply nestled within the forces of the world, far from different than any religious belief that idolizes a superior entity. As groups formed and migrated, many others were influenced and saw similarities in the behavior of these natural energies present within nature; many soon learnt how to predict and even harness such power, becoming the first Oracles. Though not all beliefs are commonly shared between hunters and deeply vary based on the group's location. The following pages illustrate what the Band of the Crossed Claw has developed through the years. The Hunters' core ideas most likely derived or branched from aspectism, spiritism and the druidic way of life somewhere in the past, however it is not clear when this or how it happened as all records have only been shared through word of mouth until the very first Oracles started documenting nature's course.

| Beliefs |

Though much of the Band's "beliefs" so to speak are more so superstition, much of it is heavily influenced by the past experiences of hunters of all kinds. They created many theories, concepts, and perceptions on the effects of their behaviors and actions upon the outcomes of both hunt-related and non-hunt-related occurrences. Their archive of ideologies grew with each contract they fulfilled and each setback they overcame. The Band believes in omens both good and bad, and believe that they can influence these omens through various practices.

Specific terminology.

- The Hunt: The act of weaving Diùrr.
- The Wilds: The collection of all free Diùrr in the world, free or bound to creatures.
- Omens: Collection of Diùrr that directs life in either a good or bad way.

| Omens |

An omen is superstitious energy that is believed to grant the affected individual either good or bad luck for the near future. Some omens can last a short time, and others can last indefinitely, however, each can be avoided or sought after. An omen is only a superstitious anomaly, and is not a physical item or event; it is only a spiritual idea. This however does not mean they do not carry some sort of power, as these omens have been gradually grown from past experiences of the Band's hunters. Omens have been tested in the past, and whether it was immense luck and coincidence, or a truly ethereal force, the omens have stayed true to their purpose.

Reading an omen is simply a gut feeling or the consequences of a specification. Omens can be set by only high-ranking Oracles or lorekeepers, and once set, they cannot be unwritten. If an omen has not been triggered for a long time, then it is considered a "Ghost Omen", which is a sign of a greater force being present. This greater force does not necessarily need to be any sort of religious force, but whatever it may be, it is said to greatly overpower the Ghost Omen. Sometimes the strength of an individual's soul can overcome an omen, thus resulting in a Ghost Omen once more.

| Good Omens |

Good Omens are said to be any source of superstitious energy that affects the outcomes of upcoming events or occurrences in a positive way. There are myriad things an individual can do to acquire a good omen, and they are usually foretold to last however long the source of the omen decides. For example, the effects of an omen can last anywhere from a day to a week, though usually not more than that at a time. Various special instances can give good omens under predetermined circumstances. An example of one of these special cases could be a piece of ceremonious armor that will grant a good omen indefinitely for as long as it is worn.

Examples of events that may warrant good omens:

1. A murder of crows is present in a location, signaling possible signs of death and decay. The guild will make it a priority to scout these areas to benefit from the good omen.
2. Defeating a beast as painlessly as possible (The faster and less painful, the better the omen)
3. Surviving heavy combat wounds is a sign of great strength. The more severe the wound, the greater recovery, the greater the good fortune and omen afterward.

| Bad Omens |

Bad Omens, like their good counterparts, are any source of superstitious energy that influences events and occurrences to come, however, bad omens will shift the events of the future in a negative manner. Bad omens can be sometimes removed or undone, though it is a rare opportunity. When a bad omen is acquired, it will stay until the unforeseen consequence has concluded, or the omen is cleansed through whatever task may offer redemption. Bad omens will prompt unlucky anomalies and events and should be greatly avoided if possible.

Examples of events that may warrant bad omens:

1. Animal abuse is not only a permanent bad omen but also an unforgivable act against the Band. Perpetrators will be severely punished for doing so and will be under most if not all circumstances banished from the Band's community.
2. Harming a fellow member grants a very negative omen, though it can eventually be forgiven or otherwise cleared.
3. A beast escaping during a hunt (the more wounded it is when it escapes the more negative is the omen)

| Sacred Animals |

Crow and Raven - The symbol of the Crow or Raven, while still bearing little spiritual meaning, had been kept up in high regards from all guildsmen since the very early days of the Band's life, as its colors and representation were proudly adopted into the guild's coat of arms and uniforms. Through observation and experience the Band soon learnt to utilize murders of Crows and Ravens to their favor, learning to thoroughly search areas where large flocks appeared, often coming across sites where dangerous creatures had passed. The figure of the Crow and Raven slowly became more revered and sacred by the Band, while to this day still

utilizing these creatures as a means of sending important messages and letters or out on the field while hunting. Harming a Crow or Raven is considered to be one of the most dishonorable acts a member can commit.

| Diùrr |

It is believed that every creature, beast, or being has a specific energy or force that can be used to improve one's own power. In essence, this force could be most easily viewed as the soul of the being in question. Creatures upon death release their energy back into nature, only leaving a small part imbued in their bodies. This energy can be harnessed by an individual through embodying it in weaponry, practice, or ceremony. The Band uses this beastial energy to empower their gear generally, ranging from weapons to armor. When an individual uses an object connected to this beastial energy, they are sharing their strength with the owner beast.

To tap into this beastial energy, an individual must simply have some sort of direct connection to the beast. Generally, parts of a beast will be incorporated into things like gear, but other times it could be just simply wearing a bone or fang/tooth from the beast or clothing made of pelts and skin. Examples of this could be a sword with a beast bone as a hilt, or a shoulder plate for a piece of armor made from beast bone. *Note that this “Force” is not necessarily a legitimate force, more so a superstitious form of honoring our slain opponents. While having a connection to a beast won’t physically improve something, it is believed that they lend more strength and courage.*

| Shrines |

Beast shrines are built as offering places to honor beasts and serve as connections to the Diùrr, Oracles use these shrines for various rituals, but it is encouraged for everyone to bring their own offerings as an everyday practice. The common rituals that take place at these shrines usually revolve around the hunt and are performed for good omens before most expeditions, bringing carved bones with intricate designs, fangs, claws, pelts and beast’s blood to to achieve a better connection with the Diùrr present in nature.

Numerous shrines are built around the guildhouse, singularly dedicated to one beast or animal that has a specific trait associated with it, such as strength, agility or intelligence; the rituals shift from shrine to shrine depending on what energies the Oracle wishes to call upon.

| Mutual respect amongst hunters and nature |

Though sworn against committing such actions, should a hunter disrespect or harm another of its kind, it is considered an incredible crime and comes with many punishments. It is expected for all hunters to treat nature, the creatures and one another with utmost respect, as failing to do so may result in not only leadership intervention but also very poor omens.

| Oracles |



The Oracle is a spiritual figure within the Band's ranks, and holds no power other than directing the various ritualistic practices. Anyone may become an Oracle, though generally the more veteran and wise members are elected, those who have a strong connection with the hunt, nature and its creatures. The role is passed down from one to the other and with it, its responsibilities:

1. The Oracle is responsible for bringing out the inner beast of freshly promoted recruits through a ritual where the member discovers their creature.
2. The Oracle blesses and prepares beast parts for oracle bones, carving upon these items words meant to call out the force of the creature.
3. The Oracle is directly involved in the Beast trials, and is expected to lead them safely, preparing and blessing both the creature and hunter.
4. The Oracle guides any Hunter funeral and makes all the required preparations.
5. The Oracle should document every ritual, hunt or expedition the guild has done on their weapon.
6. The Oracle is the only person allowed to prepare the blessed water solution used in rituals, made from part beast blood and bone shavings of any beast, though the larger the beast the least amount of ingredients is required.

-Example of Oracles-

Oracles usually carry with them the essential tools of their craft at all times, such as chisels, knives and other carving tools necessary for inscribing on bone and other materials. Some like to incorporate music into their rituals, it is not uncommon to see an Oracle well versed in the use of an instrument.

| Oracle Weapons |

Oracles are considered to have a particular connection with the hunt, and their weapons reflect it, the area designed to inflict damage is primarily crafted from beast parts, such as a sword's blade from a large horn or a hammer's head from a large fang.

Throughout the life of the Oracle these weapons get progressively filled with inscriptions, narrating everything the Oracle has ever done within the guild, every ritual, practice and hunt is documented onto their weapon, even if they were absent during the expedition.



No one else may brandish these weapons other than the Oracle, they are considered to wield the very essence of their spirit, they may not change or discard the weapon until it has been completely filled with inscriptions which will grant the guild with a good omen, losing or breaking this weapon is the most dishonorable offense for an Oracle, granting a severely bad omen, it is their utmost duty to complete this diary before passing away or being replaced. An Oracle can choose one weapon before blessing it, fitting it with their preferences, but once the weapon is blessed it becomes attuned to their soul until completed.

The weapon is periodically changed once it cannot bear anymore inscriptions, a new weapon is crafted and given to the Oracle so that they may continue their duty. The completed weapons are stored away and safely kept in the archives as records for the future, or displayed among the other trophies.



| Practices |

| Oracle Bone |

Generally the clavicle bone of a large beast, upon which requests for omens are carved. Once the bone is written on and decorated, it is held above a heat source until the bone cracks, these cracks are then “read” by the Oracle, who interprets the signs given by the formations on the bone, deciding if the response issues a good or a bad omen. Within the Band, these oracle bones are usually used to document the hardships and challenges that the members had to overcome to slay the beast from which the bone came from and displayed as trophies. The carvings and inscriptions can vary from simple to very detailed, the detail level and intricacy of these inscriptions also reflect the strength of the item's effects. The oracle bones can, however be

used for all sorts of other purposes such as “dream catchers” and good luck charms to increase the chance of good omens, or even adorn weapons and armor to enhance and strengthen the person or weapon it’s applied to, drawing the power from the beast in which the item was hosted, granting their abilities onto the holder. As an example, wearing the claw of a harpy would be thought to make one more agile, and the more carvings/inscriptions there are on a piece, the more potent its powers are to be.

| Call of the Beast |

This ritual is considered a sort of initiation into the Band and is performed by the guild’s Oracle. The subject is brought to the shrine by the oracle where various beast parts are prepared and carved as offerings, a small bonfire is then sparked within a bowl of incense while the Oracle calls upon the various beast energies present in nature, tossing in the offerings they had prepared. The member then gazes into the fire as the Oracle connects them with nature, revealing their inner beast, supposedly having visions inside the flames and discovering their inner beast which they may incorporate in their title.

| Beast Horns & War Calls |

Using beast horns/bones to create instruments and noisemakers, members attempt to attune more with their spirit animal, blowing through the horn or whistle of a specific animal may grant you its blessing before a battle or ceremony. Upon promotion to Novice each member discovers their inner beast through the call of the beast, a ritual directed by the Oracle, and they carry around it’s call from then on. They can summon their beast's power upon using the noisemaker. Often used as a fear tactic once charging into the hunt, to scare/intimidate creatures. In some cases these noisemakers are specifically crafted to bring a creature to you, mimicking their mating call.

| Hunters Marriage |

A sacred marriage before the wilds (to write)

- Handfasting (tie a cloth around both hands)
- Vows need to be spoken (during vows, you can hand over a gift, like a ring or something)

| Hunters Funeral |

The death of a member halts every activity within the guild, making it a priority to prepare the final resting place of a brother or sister in arms. It is believed that the spiritual energy of beasts slain in life is conserved within the body of the deceased and must be harnessed by fire, that is why a large pyre is constructed and blessed by the Oracle so that the body may turn to ashes, however, these ashes won’t be buried, but instead conserved, sealed in clay pots

and given to relatives of the passed. It is common practice amongst the guild members to write a few words on a piece of parchment and toss them into the fire as the Oracle directs the funeral.

All remaining ashes are conserved by the guild and used to infuse new weapons during the forging process; these ashes are believed to hold a great deal of spiritual energy. A successor of a passed higher ranking official within the guild is expected to infuse their weapons with the fallen's ashes.

Even after death the hunt does not end, and the deceased should carry over their belongings, their armor and trophies are buried in the graveyard of the fallen, atop the burial site won't be a stone grave, but the iconic weapon of the defunct, struck within the earth.



| Beast Trials |



The best way of fully harnessing Diùrr is through a Beast trial, a test only for the most devoted. When a member feels ready, they can contact an Oracle who will make all the preparations, and oversee the whole fight. These types of trials aren't a simple challenge, but they are a way to attune their inner spirit to the beast's soul.

The fight itself is considered on a spiritual level, where the soul of the hunter and the beast show their strength to each other in an attempt to attune and become one together. Both the hunter and the beast have to be prepared before the trial can begin in order to bring out their spirits and forces, it is believed that these forces lay dormant within living creatures and can't be harnessed unless killed or awakened by an Oracle. The process to awaken the inner soul of the beast requires a special solution of blessed water to coat the beast, while the hunter faces the same preparations, their spirit won't need to be awakened, so their body is painted with inscriptions and intricate designs using only beast blood. Once both the hunter and beast are ready, the ritual may begin.

If the member successfully strikes down the beast they are granted the beast's very essence, harnessing its spiritual force. Should the fight turn out unfavorable for the member, others having to step in to break it, then it is considered a terrible omen. Should the beast slay the member, then it is believed to work the other way around, the beast harnesses all of the member's force, if this were to happen it will be released free into the wild.



| Cuisine |

The Band prides itself in its own cuisine of primarily meaty foods; consisting of all things carnivorous. The fruits of hunts will generally be consumed afterwards, saved for feasts and celebrations. Usually, its cuisine will be mildly spicy.

Diet is heavily influenced by the hunt, and members usually drastically change their meals before partaking in an expedition, following their beliefs the member is expected to consume food relating to the creature or area the expedition will take place in, consuming meat for strength should they need to face a large beast or seafood if the creature dwells in water.

The Band also produces its own alcoholic beverages, the most notorious being their Misty Red Wine made from Misty grapes.

| Guidelines |

- None of the things in this lore are a mechanical improvement or new form of magic. This is more so a sort of pseudoscientific superstition if anything. All of the things discussed in this lore are pure folklore.
- We encourage people to learn the information of this document through roleplay. However, adapting these values for your own character is completely fine and it is encouraged to put your own twist on the practices and beliefs, based on your character background and the hunters they've met or descend from.
- Using this lore in the creation of your character and backstory will not grant you access into the guild by default, nor any recognition from its members (*eg: having your character be part of the guild in the past even though it did not happen*). You must go through the standard roleplay process to join it.

| Credits |

Writing

- MC_Breadstick
- Vitalian
- Olandyr
- _kindle_fire_
- Crevann

Oracles

- Art by Miguel Nogueira, <https://www.menog.design/info>
- Art from Diablo 4, Druid concept art

Oracle weapons

- (Sword) Art by The griffon's saddlebag

Hunter Funeral

- Art by Jowain92

Beast trials

- Art from Project Awakening