

Roleplaying a Rosheni

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Note: while the Rosheni in some ways resemble the Earthly people referred to as “gypsy”, that term refers to a specific culture and people in the real world, and, as such, isn’t a term you should use in-game.

Rosheni Kit (-1/2 point)

Rosheni have a general reputation for being ne'er-do-wells and troublemakers, and they make most Hesketimes wary. Rosheni who look (and act) the part have Stigma: Disliked Race, which costs -1/2 point.

A Rosheni who doesn't dress the part and acts respectably wouldn't qualify for this disad; s/he is just a dark-skinned, dark-haired Hesketime. A Rosheni can (and should) buy off this disad if s/he "cleans up", or if s/he is going incognito with any frequency

Overview

Rosheni are a landless people, who move from place to place and make their living as they are able.

They are divided up into a number of extended-family units, alternately called "clans", "tribes" or "caravans". Rosheni survive best by remaining small and mobile, so whenever the numbers of a band grow too large, some adventurous family will draw the necessary resources from the group to build their own wagon and strike out on their own. Rosheni share some common cultural elements, but each group may have its own distinct traditions.

Almost all Rosheni wander Heskets, living on the roads. This is typically because their reputation as rogues makes them unwelcome tenants on most people's lands (many Rosheni, naturally, claim they are travelers by choice.) The separation between traveling Rosheni and sedentary "gadjé" is very strong for them; they even view other traveling folk as better than the "housey-folk" but still not on par with themselves.

Since Rosheni lack the opportunity to farm or operate in a settled location, their occupations tend towards careers that work well on the road. They are often merchants, storytellers, tinkers, entertainers... and also sometimes thieves and con-men. They rarely have formal clergy with them (studying in a seminary not usually being well-suited to Rosheni), but often have herbalists, healers, and others trained in mystical arts passed down from one person to the next.

History and Culture

The origins of the Rosheni are unclear. Some claim they once held a homeland in modern Zdunarova, while other stories speak of their origins as "across the seas".

Whatever the case, their ancestral tongue is unrelated to the other ancient tongues of Zdunarova.

For the past 400 years, the Rosheni have mainly lived in western Hesketh, particularly in Bilgosh and Kiljukan. Recently, however, the Rosheni have begun to migrate to eastern Hesketh, some across the Grendarr Mountains, some north into Kislevia, others into Chardreau. More and more can they be found in kingdoms like Allondell and Cadfaigh.

The Rosheni are generally known for their dark complexions and hair. However, as they have been moving west, they have begun to intermarry with eastern Heskethines, increasing the chances of light-eyed and fair-haired Rosheni.

There is great diversity among the Rosheni, from lifestyle to values. While most Rosheni are a traveling people, many are semi-nomadic, and others even sedentary. Different Rosheni have integrated into Heskethine culture differently.

There are, however, beliefs which are generally common to most Rosheni. First is loyalty to family -- both extended, and clan. Most Rosheni believe in the standard Heskethine gods, although they also often hold an entirely separate set of beliefs regarding spirits and the supernatural. Belief in destiny is fairly significant, as is holding to the standards and norms of Rosheni living. Lastly, most Rosheni share remarkable adaptability, which has allowed them to survive so far outside of their home, and will allow them to survive many centuries to come. Rosheni culture is often lost in order to survive, and will be further lost in the coming centuries.

One of the most salient points regarding the Rosheni is their variability. Because different Rosheni adapt and integrate differently, there is a wide variety of people whose ethnic heritage is Rosheni. There is much variance between different tribes, although less now as there will be as the Rosheni continue to migrate to eastern Hesketh. This also means that in different areas, Rosheni will be more and less like the peoples they live with. Some Rosheni, for example, stress literacy in the language of the non-Rosheni, others do not.

Customs

Clothing:

It is traditional for Rosheni to wear brightly colored clothing. Women tend to wear long, full, many layered skirts, and usually grow their hair long. Among some Rosheni, married women cover their hair with headscarves. They often wear a lot of jewelry, but not simply for its own sake; jewelry can be a safer way of carrying around money than coin, and can be converted to coin in most places. Rosheni men tend to dress more similarly to the men of whatever place they are living in, although for festive occasions, brightly colored scarves might be seen.

Food:

Rosheni tend to eat the food of wherever they are. The more nomadic and isolated they are, the more their diet consists of simple fruits, plants, berries, mollusks, small mammals, and whatever else might be readily available. Hunting has been developed to some extent among the Rosheni. Rosheni generally drink water, unless at a feast, when

they drink beer, wine, and other spirits. Among the Rosheni, roasted hedgehog is considered a delicacy. Horse meat, however, is almost universally unacceptable, because horses are so vital to the Rosheni way of life.

Religion:

The Rosheni generally adopt the dominant Hesketime religion, although they do not always become devoted to one god or the other. Still, some gods are more appealing to the Rosheni, such as Kintaka or Zotra, and it would be possible to be particularly taken with one deity.

Rosheni belief in the supernatural is very strong. They believe in their powers to curse, to heal, and in the use of charms, amulets and talismans. The Rosheni use two forms of divination, one solely for non-Rosheni, as a form of income, and the other for themselves. The first, fortune telling, is used to predict the future. The second, however, relates to healing powers. Fortune-tellers are predominantly women, as are the healers who distribute charms and suchlike to ward off illness. Herbalism is the main source of healing among the Rosheni, and is practiced equally by men and women. Alchemy, therefore, would be much more common than either form of magic, which might still be seen. Most likely, magic-users among Rosheni would take Mysticism, since traditional Mage magic involves years of bookish study not well-suited to many Rosheni.

Beliefs in Hesketime gods and spirits are not completely separate; rather, mainstream Hesketime beliefs have been incorporated into the Rosheni world view. Rosheni believe that there is perhaps a continuum between the spirits of the dead and those of the gods. The Rosheni pretty much see all otherworldly things as spirits (fae, celestials, demons, gods, spirits of the dead, etc.) of varying significance, power and intent.

Communication with outsiders:

Mistrusted as they are by the gadjé, the Rosheni have learned to protect their interests by keeping their secrets, and by selectively presenting their appearance.

When interacting with gadjé about personal matters or valuable information, they seek to gain something of value and to offer little of substance in return. They may avoid disclosure by answering a question with a question.

They may choose to appear open or approachable to the gadjé in order to gain favor or avoid scrutiny. Presenting a harmless face to the gadjé allows the gadjé to believe the Rosheni are ineffectual -- just artists and entertainers, perhaps even lazy rogues, but not the sort to pose any real danger.

While Rosheni are by and large a charitable people, with the gadjé they may employ that charity to curry goodwill. Rosheni recognize that they need to foster trust to find a receptive audience for their trade.

Regardless of appearances to the contrary, however, Rosheni do not generally trust non-Rosheni, and consider them naïve. When Rosheni steal from the gadjé, they do so with a "Robin Hood" mentality, having few qualms about stealing from those who can afford it.

Magic among the Rosheni

Sheva

The Sheva are the go-betweens between the Rosheni and the spirit-world. The spirits are held in great respect, awe, and sometimes fear. Not every Rosheni would want to speak directly to the spirits. Direct contact with the spirits allow the spirits to gain an exaggerated control over the unprepared Rosheni. Sheva are rigorously and carefully trained to approach and communicate with the spirits in a way that shows respect yet allows the Sheva to maintain full control. The Sheva, however, tend to live partially in the spirit world, and often seem very distant.

Generally speaking, the Sheva are the magic users of the Rosheni, and concern themselves almost exclusively with the spirit world. They use fortune-telling for themselves, and also as a way to earn money.

There are many ways a sheva might represent a connection to the spirits. A sheva with a connection to divine spirits (e.g. the gods or celestials) might choose Cleric Magic. A sheva drawing abilities from other, non-divine spirits might choose to represent this as Mage Magic (with spell incants to match) or as Mystic Magic, particularly the Path of the Seeker.

The Sheva are responsible for the spiritual welfare of the clan and caravan, protecting fellow Rosheni with appropriate charms and amulets. They also warn the other Rosheni if for any reason they have offended the spirits, and if they are in any danger. For example, the Sheva would warn her cousins if there were angry or evil spirits in a particular area, and would help them to ward off and protect themselves against such spirits.

Draveni

Among the Rosheni there is also a class of magic users who are the healers, the Draveni. They use magic to heal and protect, and use fortune-telling as an element in healing. They make talismans and charms to protect against and cure disease.

They are responsible for the physical health of the clan and caravan. However, for the Rosheni, physical and spiritual welfare are very closely linked, and sometime the realms of the Sheva and the Draveni overlap, and they must work together.

Draveni who have their healing powers through a connection to divine might take Cleric Magic. Those with other origins might instead take Mystic Magic, particularly the Path of the Healer and maybe the Path of the Protector.

Gervenya:

While not strictly magic-users, there are also among the Rosheni herbalists who make potions. They aid in healing, as well as other aspects of Rosheni life. Moreover, they sell potions as another means of earning coin.

Other Rosheni have magical abilities as well, but they are not necessarily trained as are the Sheva, the Draveni, and the Gervenya. Occasionally, however, there are other

forms of magic, such as hypnotism, which crop up and are studied and taught.

Rosheni Clans/Bands

Whitewind Clan

The Whitewind Rosheni are a typical Rosheni clan. Many of their traditions are applicable to other bands, too, including their Honor code, which other Rosheni are welcome to use.

The Whitewind Clan left western Hesketh in the past century, and has since been traveling through much of eastern Hesketh. The Clan has grown rapidly, and smaller caravans of younger folk have been forming and going off on their own. They often use the term "Rosh" as interchangeable with "Rosheni".

Each Whitewind Rosheni has three names. The first is a secret name, which an infant's mother whispers at the time of birth. This name is never used, but serves to confuse the spirits, as the true identity of any Rosheni will forever remain hidden. Fae, for example, would have no power over a Rosheni if he or she revealed his or her name, because it would be a use-name, not a true name. The second name is the Rosheni name, used only among the Rosheni. The third and last is a name of convenience, used in dealings with non-Rosheni.

Roshkhan Traits

Purity: One important value is purity. All cleansing must take place in running water, from washing clothes to bathing. There are rules regarding where water for various uses should be taken from a stream. Lastly, they are fairly strict about washing before eating.

Superstitions: Whenever the spirits are offended, the Rosheni must cover his/her eyes in respect and penance. If it is only minor, only one hand is necessary -- but if it is more serious, they must use both hands. This is also used as a warding sign, particularly when the housey-folk blaspheme (as they are most wont to do, being only ignorant housey-folk).

Whitewind Rosheni Honor

This is an official half-point Honor code.

It should be noted that this code of honor generally applies to all Whitewind Rosheni. The disadvantage means following the code to a fault. Not taking the disadvantage does not necessarily imply violating the code.

However, *any* Whitewind Rosheni that significantly violates the code, whether they've taken the disadvantage or not, will suffer similar penalties from other Whitewind as if they had (e.g. killing a Rosheni, or blatant disregard for Rosheni values and customs). The idea is that this is how all members of the community are expected to behave if they want acceptance in the community; the disadvantage is available for players who want to take it to the extreme.

- 1) Be loyal to and honor your clan and family, no matter what. Respect them, trust them, defend them, even with your life, if necessary.
- 2) Welcome any Rosheni you may meet as if they were one of your own. Provide share with them your food, fire, and shelter. Protect them, if necessary, from any non-Rosheni.
- 3) Trust not any non-Rosheni. Do not believe anything they may tell you, unless they have proved to be trustworthy -- and even then be on your guard.
- 4) Always keep the ways and customs of the Rosheni, for they are what make you what you are.
 - Honor and respect the spirits. Do what is necessary to appease them. Listen to them; take their advice to heart. However, also fear them, and do not ever reveal to them your name. (The Rosheni consider the fae to be “spirits”.)
 - Never reveal your Rosheni name to any non-Rosheni, but use your use-name.
 - Keep the laws of purity -- only use running water for drinking, bathing and washing, always wash before eating.
 - Keep to the ways of dress of the Rosheni.
 - Keep your money as much as possible in the form of jewelry and jewels, rather than in coin, to protect it better from being lost or stolen.
 - Never eat the flesh of a horse.
 - Celebrate festive occasions with a traditional meal of roasted hedgehog.
 - Pass on these ways to your children
- 5) Do not violate this code, on pain of banishment from your clan and family, and abandonment in a world that will never trust or accept you.

Other Groups

While the Rosheni constitute the majority of traveling folk, there are other traveling, homeless groups of people in Hesket who are not Rosheni, but who may have similar customs, and who may be referred to as “Rosheni” by outsiders.