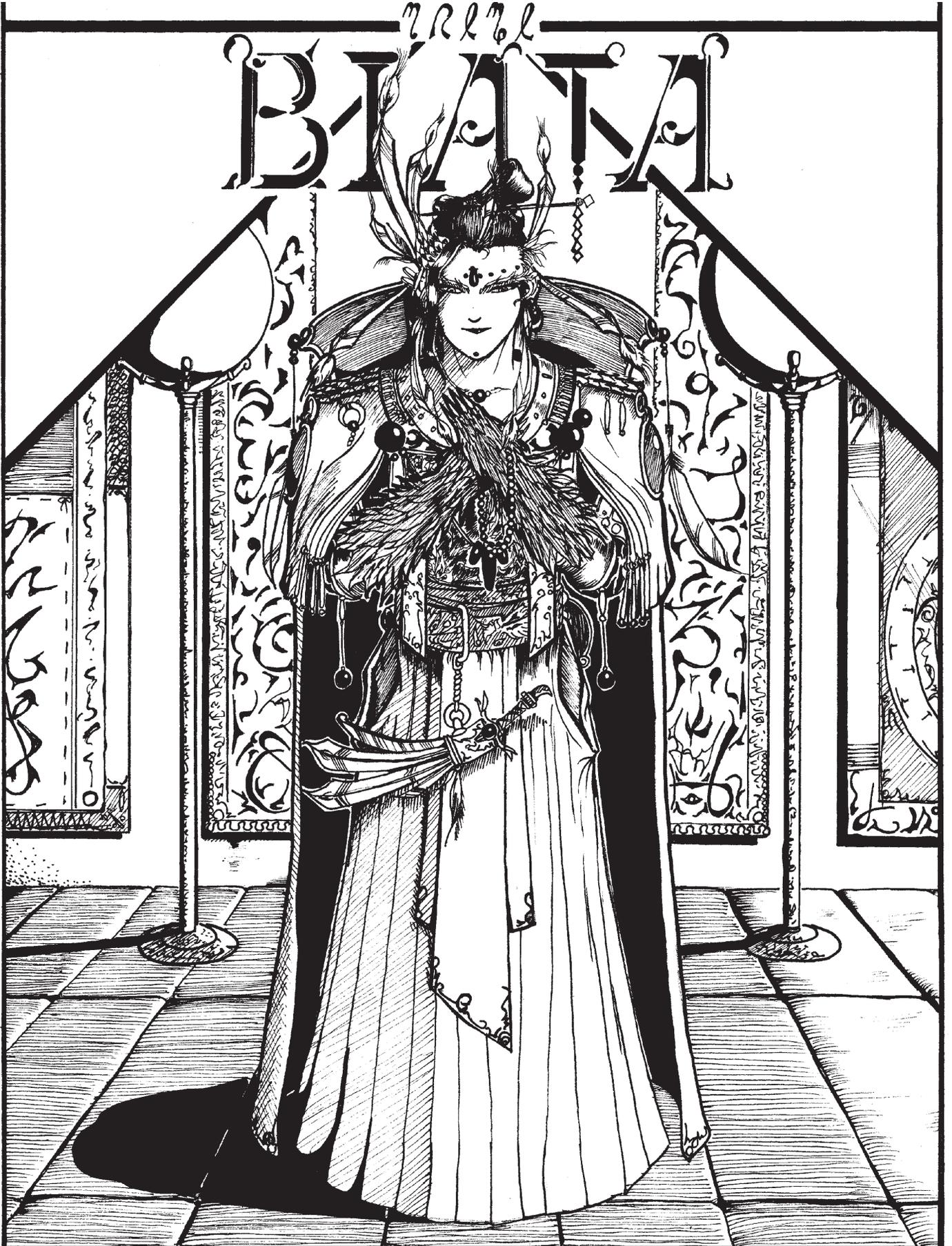


Biata

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BIATA



ROLE-PLAYING ABIATA

Biata should be somewhat logical in their approach to life. They are extreme and, to a non-biata, eccentric in their viewpoints. They always follow a predictable personal code of conduct (if you find out what it is. Some can be easily read, while others choose to conceal it.) Biata never do things “just for the heck of it.” Everything has a purpose and a meaning, even if you can’t figure out what that meaning is. This does not mean that you should play a biata like a Vulcan from *Star Trek*. (That’s for stone elves.) Biata can have a wonderful sense of humor and experience all sorts of emotions, without thinking that these are illogical. In fact, Biata humor is usually twisted and sometimes even sick.

Biata are products of earth magics and as such are very uncomfortable around celestial magic. They should feel pain, discomfort, and extreme agitation when these spells are cast on them. How much is determined by the PC, but you must role play **some** discomfort. If you are playing a biata with a parent that was Rider, then you should also have some trouble breathing.

This goes double for sleeping behind a *Ward*. If you do, you should roleplay bad dreams, headaches, and irritability upon waking. You may also suffer plot consequences for doing so. The Plot Committee may refuse to give you any prophecy dreams, may have NPC biata refuse to deal with you, and in the worse case, may tell you that you cannot use any of your racial skills or abilities until you cleanse yourself of this celestial taint.

Going near a celestial circle means a biata should act as if they have had a *Weakness* spell cast on them or are experiencing the effects of nausea gas. To go into a celestial circle should probably make a biata go unconscious. (And no, you cannot “build up an immunity” to it.)

Biata can travel with a celestial caster without any complications, but should refrain from voluntarily having any celestial spells cast on them, except in extreme life and death circumstances. These spells will make you itch and feel discomfort. Some biata may call you tainted for accepting them.

The life expectancy of a biata is like an elf, so years to a biata are not as meaningful as for a human. This makes biata very patient.

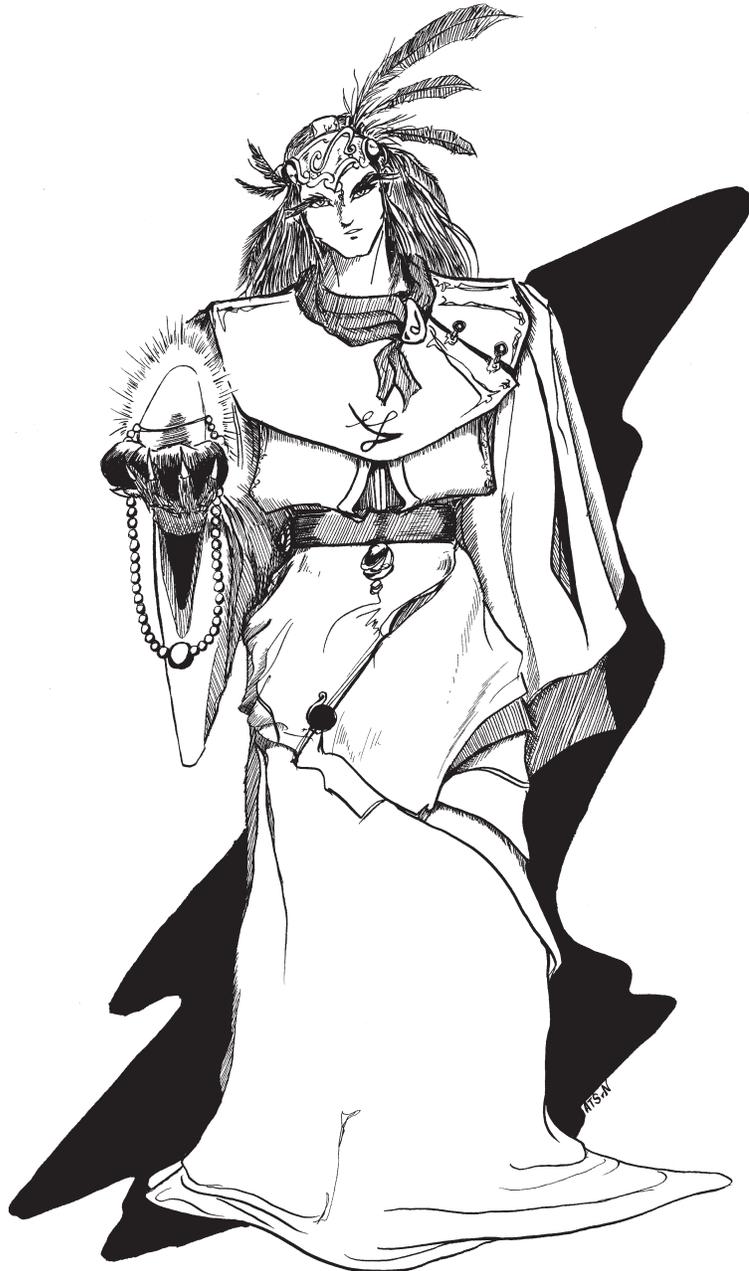
Biata have a strong sense of secrecy with regard to all things that relate to their racial heritage. Their traditions are held highly sacred, not ever sharing the details with those of other races. To do so would be an extreme disgrace, with dire repercussions for those with loose lips. This is somewhat perpetuated by a biata sense of superiority. While not having to be snobs, all biata view their race as a higher life form than others’. Close behind would be other long lived races, like the elves, but their celestial nature tends to lead to obvious problems.

Biata have limited roleplaying-only mental skills. If another player agrees to roleplay along voluntarily (like a form of insanity, memory loss, other mental problems), a biata who has been taught the appropriate mind skill can fix various mental problems. (You must be taught this in-game, but no build need be sent on it.) Note: this is a **Roleplaying-only** skill. Both parties must agree to go along with it. Further, you cannot use this ability to get rid of any in-game things

like curses, enslavement, disease, charm, or anything else that needs in-game fixes. Remember, you didn’t pay any build for this “ability,” so you can’t get any huge in-game advantage for it. These role-playing only skills are described in more detail in the Alliance Rule Book on page 72.)

Another roleplaying perk is that biata don’t get drunk off of alcohol. They do have a weakness though—Sarr may have mint, but Biata have (believe it or not) fudge. It acts as both an intoxicant and/or an aphrodisiac depending on how you want to play it. Remember that *Intoxicant* elixirs will work on everyone, no matter what their race.

Sometimes biata have “Prophetic Dreams.” These dreams are always very vague and subject to interpretation. They usually consist of very strong images that stay with the biata after they have awakened. The Plot Committee will use these dreams as a way to introduce plot ideas, generate in-game discussions, and otherwise make your role-playing fun more universal.



BIATA SOCIAL ATTITUDE

This may be a good time to reiterate the point that biata tend to be very extreme in their positions; they rarely acknowledge that the other side may have valid points. This can be seen as both strength of character as well as pigheadedness.

In consequence, one usually finds individual biata completely dedicated to the cause of Good (as she or he defines it) or to Evil, as it is objectively called, but to the specific biata it may be merely a consistent goal. (Biata, for instance, never see themselves as performing “bad” or “evil” acts; they feel that the things they do are necessary for a greater good. That greater good may be the ascension of that biata to a position of power so that some deed or deeds may be performed, but it is never for the sake of chaos or power itself. It always has a reason.)

The greatest acknowledged evil in early biata societies were any action that removed one’s free will. *Sleep* spells, *Charm* spells, Love potions—the use of these were serious crimes. Those biata who would read other biata’s minds against their will were the most serious criminals. Necromancy was not considered evil except when it was used to raise another as an undead (obviously against that person’s will). Unlike Mystic Wood elves, biata do not think the use of these things is evil in all cases. Against monsters, goblins, or barbarians (or to some biata, even humans and other races), free will removing devices were not seen as evil, as these beings were a lower form of life.

The biata themselves are split into subgroups called the High Blood and the Low Blood. They have slightly different roleplaying requirements.

ROLE-PLAYING ACTIONS

Low Blood:

Loves new jokes and making jokes for fun

Almost always open-minded; people are taken at face value

Loyalty is something to strive for but nobody is perfect

Pranks on other races are a lot of fun

Pranks on your own race are a tease

Always concerned for others

Love large groups and parties

Only one lover at a time and loyal to that lover; lost loves take a long time to get over

Vengeance and paybacks are often very cruel and sometimes illogically acted upon

Celestial spells cause anger and irritation but doesn’t rise to the level of vengeance

High Blood:

Jokes are always at someone else’s expense and are often cruel

Always excessively cautious and cynical

Loyalty is only earned in extreme circumstances and is always taken deadly seriously

All pranks are a waste of time and irritating

Pranks on your own race are cause for physical harm

Anything other than life goals are sidetracks

“We don’t party; we do social gatherings.”

A love is once and forever. A lost love is forever mourned. New loves are never as true

Revenge is best given after careful thought and planning as to what will most pay back the person

Celestial spells cast on the person are likely to be met with physical reactions

ORIGIN OF THE BIATA

By Jihaval Toron, Historian, Royal Academy of Arcane Arts

The actual origin of the biata race is lost to antiquity, but the following tale may hold a grain of truth. Later, more recent studies of this history are easier to confirm.

Thousands of years ago, a brave group of stone elves went to uncharted high mountain ranges. They were mapping the area and collecting samples of local flora and fauna. They were in search of rare ritual components, as well as anything unusual, for future use. One day, as they reached the cleft of a cliff, they saw a group of gryphons.

Gryphons are large creatures, half lion, half bird. They stand over seven feet tall and are a sight to behold. The gryphons’ feathers can be quite colorful, and as they swooped and glided on the air currents, they held the human’s attention in an almost hypnotic way. As a result, they didn’t notice other gryphons sneaking up on them.

The elves were quickly subdued and were carried away through the air. They were taken to a large cavern high in the mountains where they were unceremoniously dropped. Some had died among the way, but the rest cast their healing spells and most were saved.

They consoled each other and wondered what to do. They explored much of the cave they were in, but found no signs of the gryphons or any way out.

After many hours, two gryphons landed on the ledge of the cave mouth. They were badly hurt from another battle. Some of the elves, in fear, threw various spells and fought to the best of their ability, but stopped when Kira, their leader, demanded that she be allowed to ease the pain of the gryphons. Much arguing ensued and the gryphons merely watched. The healer attempted to approach the gryphons, but they were able to put her to sleep with a mere glance. When the others leaped forward, they met with the same fate.

When they awoke, they found food for themselves and overcome by hunger, they ate. Various gryphons flew by and watched but none interfered.

Over the next years, they explored the caves further. They found underground streams and areas of safety and comfort, and as the months dragged by, they realized they were being kept as pets by the gryphons. Some attempted escape, but nothing more was heard from them. Others committed suicide, knowing that they would be resurrected back in their homelands. Others decided to fight it out and discover all they could about their surroundings.

They noticed as well that they were changing from generation to generation. Some were beginning to grow feathers in their hair, and their upturned eyebrows now turned feathery as well. Others were growing claws and other gryphon-like attributes. It is theorized by the historians that perhaps the gryphons, who are known to be able to shapechange, had mated with them, producing such offspring, the results of which were the biata of today. (It should be noted that when gryphons shapechange, they can only change into biata form.)

Over the next few hundreds of years the biata discovered that not all of them were the same. The oddities are now known as Riders and Hunters. Their names are derivative of their mental links to the gryphons or the biata.

They noticed as well that they were beginning to have skills they never had before. As stone elves, they had always a minimal understanding of certain abilities of the mind, but the biata noticed that they could break sleep and charm magics and that they could even charm and sleep others with a specific look. Their skin lost its pale hue and became varied tans and browns, like most other races.

They began to accept their changes and to refer to themselves as "biata" which in their language meant "of the gryphons."

They also noticed that the some biata had much greater powers than others. They called these biata "High Blood," and as society progressed, these High Blood became the natural leaders in their respective communities.

Over the years, new elves were brought to the caves and the captives began to grudgingly accept their new lives. Caves were explored that wound deeper and farther into the mountains and underground streams filled with fish were discovered.

The community grew and soon paths down the side of the mountain were created. Small towns and settlements began to line the hills nearby. The gryphons who had once seemed interested in the elves were rarely seen again. Over generations, they became distant and apart and were living almost like the dark elves.

The area where the community first began became known as the Homeland, and it was there the biata made their seat of government. The primary problems facing these early biata were the common ones of any wilderness dweller: goblins and other monsters. The biata rarely came in contact with humans, elves, dwarves, and the like, and as time wore on, their legends of these beings made it clear that the biata felt themselves superior to them.

However, encounters with these other beings was inevitable.

In some biata communities, a few gryphons were still in

close contact and social interaction with the biata. In this situation, when the other races attacked, the gryphons would assist, offering rides to biata warriors from other communities and actually taking part in the battle.

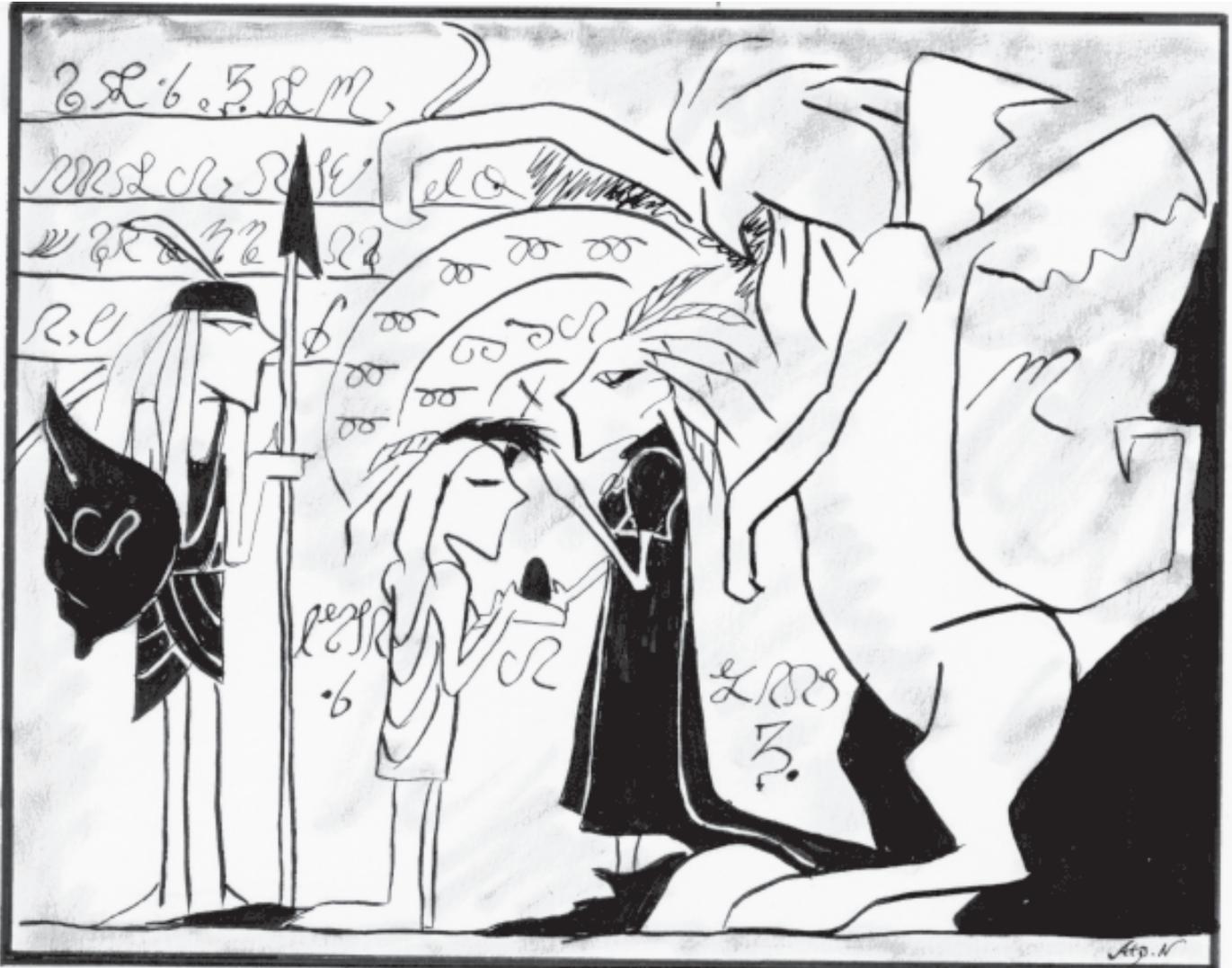
Even with the help of other biata, the battles were long and fierce, and what turned the tide of the battle were the necromantic spells and the raising of the dead enemies as zombies to fight for the biata.

Even when the battles were won, they only helped to fragment biata society even more.

Then one day, when a group was out far from home, looking for ritual components and rare herbs, that came upon a small group of barbarians fighting a biata riding a gryphon! The gryphon swooped through the sky as its rider shot arrows towards the barbarians, who flung back spears and arrows of their own. The gryphon fell into the mountains, away from the barbarians. The biata ran to the spot where they fell. The gryphon was already dead and the rider very close to death. They unfortunately had no healers among them and could do no good for the rider, who, in her dying wish, requested that the blood be poured over the bodies (if she did not resurrect.).

As it was, she did not resurrect and the request was fulfilled, but so many mysteries remained. Who was this rider? Was she the only one? And what about the strange request?

The biata alchemists took blood from both and did some tests and discovered that the blood mixed easily between biata and gryphon. Then one brave volunteer drank some of the blood.



He went into a coma lasting more than two days and when he awoke, he spoke of wondrous dreams.

He changed his profession and began studying to become a learned sage. Others drank the gryphon blood and had various reactions; most went into a coma or at least a deep sleep for a long time; some had dreams, some did not, and some became violently ill. Some biata still use the drinking of gryphon blood as a symbolic act to cement relationships or to otherwise perform rituals.

As for the gryphon rider, her body was buried. Two days later another gryphon rider appeared and asked the biata if they had seen her. They reported her fate, and the new rider was sad indeed. The leaders of the biata tribe at this time were named Drall and Jona. Drall met with this gryphon rider and tried to ask him questions about his tribe. He looked at her and said "Why don't you ask the stone?"

When she looked confused, he said, "The stone. Isn't that why you settled here?"

Drall said she had no idea what the man was referring to, but before she could finish, he suddenly reached out and placed his hands on her head. She felt his presence within her head and could not resist as she felt him search her memories in mere seconds. Almost as soon as it began, it ended, and the stranger just looked at her in silence for a minute. He turned and mounted his gryphon and they flew off.

Drall immediately went into the caverns and began searching for the stone that was referred to. She tried speaking out loud for guidance and she laid her hands on any unusual looking stone she could find. She could not understand what the rider was talking about, and later relayed their conversation with the rest of the High Council.

The Council decided that this was certainly worthy of investigation and, without telling the rest of the tribe, began the search. For three weeks they searched and had just about given up looking, when one of the Council discovered that a certain large stone in an unused cavern area felt warm to his touch.

The Council gathered about the stone and attempted to discover its secrets. It felt warm to all. What they discovered was that the stone had some sort of sentience and had vast knowledge, and that it was possible to read biata history from the stone.

Over months of experimenting and trying various methods, they found that the stone (now called the Biata Stone or the Homestone) could communicate with the biata when they touched it and concentrated. It apparently held the memories of their relatives, and biata could read their ancestor's memories through it. It said it was a relic of the Great Gryphons, but would reveal no more of its origins, power or purpose. It was also discovered that while under the effects of drinking gryphon blood, one could communicate easier and better with the stone while in a trance.

This sort of thing cannot stay secret long, however, and soon the tribe knew of the Stone. Fights broke out over who could use the stone and meetings were held to divide up time for research. Usually they found the stone remained silent on the great questions of the day.

Biata soon learned that small versions of these stones could store their memories. Biata now carry with them one of these small stones. When they die permanently, the stone is carried to the homestone where the memories are placed into the homestone.

Most biata communities today are situated near a homestone, where the biata protect and preserve it. Although not all use a "High Council" as the legends say, all are highly protective of the stone.

As biata traveled through the mists and discovered other biata, the legends crossed and now no one is certain where the original biata originated.

HOMESTONES

A homestone is a sentient being, living off of the memories absorbed by it.

To better explain, here is an excerpt from "Arch Enemies," a novel about the biata in Ashbury by Michael A. Ventrella:

"What exactly is a homestone?"

She considered me for a moment before answering. "There are a number of homestones around the world, but only a few have been discovered," she replied. "They are large hematite stones, black and shiny, usually located deep underground in caves."

"I know what a hematite stone is," I replied. "Biata call those homestones? They're not that uncommon ..."

"No, a homestone is more than that," she said with emphasis. Reaching into her shirt, she pulled out a small black stone on a chain around her neck. "This is my personal homestone," she said. "It travels with me always. It remembers for me."

"Remembers?"

She waved me down and tilted her head slightly. Holding the stone up to her face, she gazed into it.

"There are three main homestones in Ashbury that we are aware of," she explained. "One in Bloodstone, one in Hopewell, and one in Thrommel. These homestones are very large, about six feet tall and maybe ten feet around, and they are located in caves or else have had castles built around them. They were discovered by the biata years ago and the towns grew up around them to protect them as much as anything else."

I nodded. So far this was much easier to understand than much of what I had heard in the last few days.

"The homestones are special to our people, perhaps because of our mental abilities inherited from the gryphons. These homestones are holders of memories. They are the protectors of our history. I carry my own small homestone that remembers what I do. When I die, this homestone will be carried to the main homestone and my memories will become part of the whole."

"So, someone can talk to you after you are dead?" I asked incredulously.

"No, not at all." She smiled. "It's more like a library. A biata can touch the stone and 'read' our histories by following the memories of those who lived the history. It is also a way for us to seek comfort from our ancestors in times of need. So you can imagine what a tragedy it is if a biata loses his or her homestone."

I thought about that for a few moments and said, "So is every hematite a potential homestone?"

"Apparently," she shrugged. "But to find large stones like the ones in the caves is most unusual, as you can imagine."

The importance to the biata heritage is why the large homestones are protected by gryphons. Only a gryphon can truly bond with the stone, and thus protect it and know when it is being attacked.

When the gryphon permanently dies, the ritual process must be done all over again with a new gryphon.

When a biata touches a main homestone, it radiates extremely warm to hot. It should be difficult to pull away upon the first touch. Because a high blood is extra sensitive, it is painful for them the first time.

If the main homestone is harmed or destroyed, it will cause an instant reaction to all biata. Depending on the severity and the distance, the damage to the biata can be great. (This is all determined by the Plot Committee).

A biata's personal stone can be brought to the homestone at any time and the memories placed within. Anyone who is attuned to the stone can then read the memories. To have a stone lost or destroyed is a very sad situation indeed.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How long do biata live?

An average of 2000 years. However, you're an adventurer, so you'll be lucky to last 15 (once you start playing that is).

How old is the race?

Thousands and thousands of years. No biata knows exactly.

What is a Homestone?

A sentient rock being; approximately .3' in diameter.

Is there more than one Homestone?

Abolutely.

What does a small Homestone do?

A small Homestone (called a Lode stone), when touched, radiates as follows:

Normal biata/stone elf: warm

High Blood biata: hot

Rider descendant or direct offspring: scalding

Rider: burned, 1 body point

Gryphon: turns red hot

Greater Gryphon: turns white hot, high pitched whine heard by all in room

What is a Rider?

A Rider is an NPC only! It is a lesser offspring of Gryphons.

What is High Blood?

A High Blood is as refined blood as possible without being a Rider. They are usually very eccentric, almost crazy.

Why all the emphasis on blood?

It's a status thing. High Bloods are held in high regard.

How does one lose their honor?

An out-and-out lie to save self would do it. Defiling the race of its honor by telling racial heritage secrets is another way. (This could easily be a death sentence for the offender by biata standards). Being treacherous against other biata for personal gain is yet another way.

How do you act to biata without honor?

They are completely shunned. They are invisible to you. You would not even help a dying biata if he or she were branded honorless.

How does one get Honor back?

First, a suicide ritual with biata witnesses must be performed. You must take a death. A *Life* spell cannot be used. Then you must right the wrong. Next, you may be given a quest by the Council. It should be extremely dangerous and incredibly self sacrificing.

What does drinking one dose of Gryphon blood do?

A vial of gryphon blood will cause you to fall unconscious for length of time, and possibly receive a vision of the future (see Plot first!).

Non-Biata: Don't do it! If a non-biata drinks gryphon blood, they should take a death. (Don't use this as a way to kill your non-biata enemies; if you feed them gryphon blood, assuming you have any, their deaths will be adjudicated as a role-playing death and you might be brought up on murder charges.)

Stone elf: Should be unconscious for about ten days. . .so make sure you don't drink it at the start of an event.

Normal Biata: Out for five days, so do it just as the event is ending!

High Blood: Out for two or three days

Rider: Out for ten minutes

If player drinks more than one dose at one time, see Plot. Effects *cannot* be reversed by a *Purify Blood*.

How much do biata talk about their race heritage?

It is taboo to talk about it at all to a nonbiata. It is a dangerous thing. At the very least, you will be branded honorless, but it could be far worse, depending on the infraction. Biata hold their racial secret sacred. It is fine to talk about personal heritage, though. To another biata, it is all up to the player.

What is a Prophecy Dream?

A prophecy dream is a vision of the future, but only a piece of the puzzle. No two are exactly alike and they are vague enough that they are subject to interpretation. The story is cryptic and full of symbolism.

What happens when you get a Prophecy Dream?

They can hit you anytime. When they do, you will suddenly fall asleep. You will be approached by a plot person wearing a white headband when this occurs. The plot person will relay your particular dream to you.

What is a blood oath?

A blood oath is the complete commitment of intent and honor to a cause. This is never taken or given lightly. It is always deadly serious. To break or go back on one's Blood Oath is forgivable only by ritual suicide. No other solution is acceptable.

When a biata mates, what happens?

Low blood/other race = either race

High blood/other race = low blood biata

High blood/low blood = either one

High blood/high blood = high blood biata

Elder high blood/low blood = high blood biata

Elder high blood/high blood = elder high blood biata

Hunter or rider/any biata blood = high blood biata

Gryphon/any biata or any other race = must see Plot

Note: any biata related child exposed to a lot of celestial magic will give you a deformed monster.

How long is pregnancy?

Low blood: 10 to 12 months

High Blood: 12 to 14 months

Elder Biata: 14 months

MAKE UP AND COSTUME

The eyebrows have to be real feathers attached with spirit gum. Don't glue them directly over your eyebrows for it will be very hard to remove later. Glue just above them and let the feathers hang down.

The eyes must be easily visible twenty feet away—it has to be obvious to everyone that you're playing a biata.

Use liquid eyeliner around your eyelids (Waterproof is best). Always bring eye wash with you, just in case of an emergency. Spirit gum or makeup in an eye is no fun.

Claws are for mature (and usually older) characters. Fake claws out of friendly plastic can be superglued to your own nails. You *must* let them work off on their own, or you will lose a layer of your own nail pulling them off. Feathers can be attached almost anywhere for a great effect. Feathers sewed to a glove makes an excellent claw.

Two claws are for NPCs only such as gryphons n biata form.
 Biata feel that certain colors represent emotions, and this is based on the fact that the colors of a biata's feathers relate to the biata's individual personalities. The colors can change over the years as the biata's personality changes (or may change suddenly due to a traumatic experience).

A biata may have more than one color feather at a time, but no more than three. These colors should not contradict each other (such as blue and red, or yellow and green) unless you decide to play an absolutely insane biata who will be shunned (and maybe hunted) by the other biata.

- Black*: stubbornness / lawful
- Blue*: tranquility / passive
- Brown*: isolationism
- Gray*: neutrality / shy / passive / kind
- Green*: hatred / jealousy / cruel
- Orange*: rigidity / firm emotions
- Purple*: calculating / serious
- Red*: anger / fierce emotions / mood swings
- Tan*: mercenary
- White*: mischief / lust / impulsive
- Yellow*: love / honesty / trust

BIATA WRITING

															
A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N		
															
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OF	ALL	AND	AS	TO	THE	MUST	UN-	NON-	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	WEST			
															
TRUE	FALSE	DAY	MIDDAY	NIGHT	FAMILY	DESTROY	NEW YEAR	FACT	SLEEP	CHARM	LIFE	DEATH/KILL			
															
WIND	EARTH	WATER	CHAOS	SUN	MOON	STARS	RARE	JUSTICE	CONTEMPT	SAID BY STONE	RESPECT	MAGIC			
															
HIGH BLOOD	BLOOD	HONOR	SHOW HONOR	PURE	HOME	GRYPHON	RIDER	COUNCIL RULER	COUNCIL	FORCE	STONE	THE COUNCIL	CELESTIAL		
															
BARBARIANS	EVENDARR	HIDDEN/SECRET UNKNOWN	ROMANCE/LOVE	FIRE/HEAT	MIND WIPE/BRING HARM NECROMANCY/EVIL										
															
MIND MELD	MIND REPAIR	MIND WIPE	MIND CRACK	WHAM	PERIOD	COMMA	HYPHEN	EXCLAMATION	QUESTION						

TO DOUBLE A LETTER, USE DIAGONAL LINE

MM = 

PP = 