

The Bearkin

The Bearkin are the shock troops of the People of the Bear. They know a special kind of magic, how to bind the spirit of a bear into its skin. When they do this skin and expend some MP they can take on the attributes of the bear whose spirit is bound into the skin. Bearkin always have a human profession and their bearkin "profession" which are tracked separately.

Note

While Bearkin are traditionally soldiers in their human profession and get all the skills thereof this is not a hard and fast rule and Bearkin have had other professions.

Note

You cannot share skill points between the human profession and the bearkin one. They are totally separate.

The ritual involves fasting and drugs. The participant must ascend into the mountains, slay a bear, skin it and bind its spirit into the skin. This is normally done single handedly but this is not an actual requirement. There are three types of bears commonly found in the mountains around the valley, black, brown and white. Once upon a time cave bears were also found but no one alive has seen one.

Becoming a Bearkin

When hunting your bear make a Luck roll. On a fumble¹ (99 or 100) you fail to find a bear. On a failure all you can find is a black bear. On a 1 x POW roll you bind a white bear. Otherwise you bind a brown bear.

E.g. Paris with a POW of 18 rolls a 100 on his search and all he can find is a black bear to bind.

Harod with a puny POW of 12 rolls a twelve on D100 and manages to bind a white bear!

Sharwon binds a brown bear by succeeding on her Luck roll.

Note that traditionally men bind male bears and women bind female bears. This is a tradition though not a hard and fast rule. Your gender does seem to be affected by the gender of the bear you bind.

When a bear is slain its spirit can be bound into its skin. This requires the permanent sacrifice of one point of POW for each characteristic bound into the skin. This normally includes STR, CON, SIZ, armour and skills or five points in total². If the statistics of the bear have not been calculated already roll the stats. These stats will stay the same and can only increase through

¹ If your POW is 20 or less the fumble is 99-00. If your POW is 21 or higher the fumble roll is 100.

² MOV is free.

successful resistance rolls. See page 13 of the Magic World rules. Roll one extra die and drop the lowest die when rolling stats for your bear.

You can bind multiple bears, though this is frowned on, but you can only wear a single skin at a time. Dark rumours exist of other bindings being possible.

Note that creating a bearskin is worth twice as many shadow points as POW points were expended to create the skin, so normally 10 shadow points. Each time the bear is invoked a shadow point is added to your total.

Starting skills for bear skin are per the variety of bear bound. The new Bear skin can divide 130 points among any of the skills. Bear skin skills are kept track of separately from skills known in human form.

You get to add your bear stat skill category modifiers to your base skill. (See page 15).

Skills can be improved normally through use (experience rolls) but cannot be trained.

Skills Available to Bear skin

Skills	Black	Brown	Polar
Bite	25%	25%	25%
Claw	40%	40%	40%
Climb	60%	30%	15%
Dodge	DEX x 2%	DEX x 2%	DEX x 2%
Hide	45%	35%	60%
Jump	05%	05%	05%
Listen	30%	30%	30%
Nature	25%	25%	25%
Search	20%	20%	20%
Sense	15%	20%	25%
Sneak	30%	30%	50%
Swim	50%	50%	90%
Track	25%	25%	25%
Wrestle	40%	40%	40%

Types of Bears

The stats for the brown and white (polar) bears can be found on page 160 of the Magic World rulebook. All types of bears have the wrestle skill. This has a base chance of 40%. Real bears only hug to do damage (equivalent to db x 2) but bearskin can do any of the actions listed under the Wrestle skill on page 46 in the rules.

Black Bear

<i>Characteristics</i>		
<i>Stat</i>	<i>Dice</i>	<i>Average</i>
STR	3D6+6	16-17
CON	3D6	10-11
SIZ	3D6+6	16-17
INT	5	5
POW	3D6	10-11
DEX	3D6	10-11

Move: 18

Hit Points: 15-16

Damage Bonus: +1D6

Attacks: Bite 25% 1D10 + db

Claw 40% 1D6 + db

Wrestle 40% db x 2

Notes: a bear may attack twice in a round, using either two claw attacks separated by 5 DEX-ranks, or a claw and bite separated by 5 DEX-ranks. If the bear succeeds at both claw attacks they can then opt to do a hug attack the following round. Once a target has been hugged the bear can continue to do their damage each round without having to roll to hit. They may also attempt to bite 5 DEX-ranks later. The victim needs to break free with a STR vs STR on the resistance table.

Skills: Climb 60%, Hide 45%, Listen 30%, Track 25%, Sneak 30%,

Armour: skin and fur worth 1D6 points of armour.

Note: Wearing a bearskin conveys the armour they had to the human form but not the damage resistance a bearskin has.

E.g. Sven has bound a black bear. While wearing his bearskin he gets 1D6 armour. Note that this only stacks with magic and cannot be combined with other physical armour.

What Can a Bearkin Do?

In their bear form a bearkin cannot:

- Speak
- Read
- Cast magic

Human auxiliaries always accompany the bearkin into battle so they can cast healing magic on them. They can understand humans though the stupider specimens often misunderstand orders.

Invoking the Bear

After obtaining their bearskin the bearkin can don the hide (almost all of them wear the hide all the time) and by expending five MPs can take on the attributes of the bear for one minute per point of POW they possess. It takes as many DEX-ranks as MPs required to Invoke the Bear

E.g. Paris has a POW of 15 and can turn into a bearkin for 15 minutes. Because he spent the full five POW to bind his bear it takes him 5 DEX ranks to change form.

Note that INT is halved in bear form.

The bearkin cannot use magic once transformed but does have the advantage that they only take half damage from non-magic weapons. Armour is subtracted from this amount of damage and then the damage that got through is halved.

E.g. Sven is struck by a great axe with a weapon boost spell on it. The damage roll is 13 points. Sven rolls a 4 on his armour save reducing damage to 9. Four points are magic so he takes those four points. The other five points are halved and rounded down for another two points for a total of six points of damage.

If a bearkin is wounded while not in bear form they must roll a Luck roll to avoid invoking the bear. Subtract the amount of damage from the roll. If they take a major wound they automatically transform into a bearkin and become subject to the effects of the Fury spell (see page 111 of the ***Magic World*** rules).

When the bear has been invoked bearkin tend to see all problems as something that requires the application of violence.

As long as the bearkin has MP they can keep invoking the bear.

At the start the bearkin still appear mostly human but as time goes by and they invoke the bear spirit more often they start to look more and more ursine. Old bearkin start hibernating.

Bearkin and Magic

While bearkin cannot cast spells themselves they are not immune to magic. They will allow trusted friends to cast spells on them.

Note

The effects of spell cast on or a potion administered to a bearkin in human form will vanish when they change to their bear form and vice versa.

Damage

Any damage taken in one form, bear or human, will transfer to the other form when they change.

E.g. Sven loses a foreleg while in bear form. When he turns back into his human form he will be missing the corresponding arm.

Note

The extra hit points a bear form has DO NOT transfer back to the human form.

E.g. Paris who has 14 HP in his bear form but only a weedy 12 in human form is reduced to 1 HP in bear form. He loses consciousness and reverts back to human form. Although his bear form lost 13 HP he does not die but instead has 1 HP.

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