

Giving Birth Among the Balazarings

A birth is an intensely sacred event among the Balazarings bearing great significance and none more so than the birth of the prophesized Dog Boy. The birth takes place in the birthing chamber which is always a cave dug into soil or native rock. The chamber is sacred to the Mother aspect of the Hearth Goddess and no actual or de facto* males are allowed within the birthing area.

- 1) Ritual purification of the birthing chamber and the mother to be.
- 2) Female friends and supporters of the mother to be gather to lend their support. There is no spell equivalent to the Couvade spell that Xiola Umber provides but the gathered mothers can lend their moral and even physical support during this trying time. The mothers chant and drum to keep hostile spirits away and attract the goddess' and good spirits' attention.
- 3) The baby must be welcomed into the clan and named before the umbilical cord is cut as the baby's soul is vulnerable to contamination or perversion until the welcoming and naming is performed. Cutting the cord before this ceremony is performed is a very bad thing. After the baby has been named AND welcomed the cord can be safely cut since the baby is protected from malevolent influences.
- 4) The mother and new child are moved (as soon as possible) from the birthing chamber to one of the special huts set aside for new mothers and their children. Here they spend a week in seclusion before being officially introduced to the community.

Premature Births and Stillborns

There is really nothing that the Balazarings can do with premature births. As with stillborns they are welcomed into the clan and named so they do not have to die alone and are still considered to be part of the clan.

* De facto males include female worshippers of Yemalio and Foundchild. If one of these female worshippers wishes to give birth in the traditional birthing chamber they have to ritually (temporarily) sever their ties to their god and become purified as "women". Shamans are allowed in the birthing chamber as they are not men or women.