

Regions - Balazar and the Elder Wilds - The Guise of the Crow - a heroquest

The Guise of the Crow is a heroquest that re-enacts the quests that Foundchild performed in the Greater Darkness to learn how to adopt the appearance of the various herd beasts his people wanted to hunt. This heroquest teaches the individual enacting it how to think and behave like the animal in question. In addition it teaches the individual how to cast the spirit spell "Guise of the [animal]". This heroquest will work for any fixed intelligence animal be it bird, beast or fish.

The spirit spell follows the following pattern:

Guise of the [animal]

2 points

Touch, Temporal, Active

This spell allows the target to adopt the appearance of the [animal] in question. The target only looks like the animal in question, s/he neither smells, nor feels like the animal. The spell also only works on animals within 150 meters of the target. The spell always uses a bone from the animal in question as a foci (it is impossible to use tattoos as a focus for this spell). This makes the spell impractical for very large creatures like brontosaurus.

Many versions of this spell exist in Balazar.

Notes: The knowledge of how to do heroquests for new types of animals has been forgotten by most Balazarings/Votanki except for Blueface the Shaman.

Stages of the Heroquest

This heroquest can be enacted to learn how to cast this spell for any type of herbivorous or omnivorous animal. Once the party has reached the Godsplane they can re-enact the heroquest.

The basic steps of the heroquest are always the same only the specifics change depending on the type of animal the quest is performed for. The "rationale" behind the quest is that you have to learn how an animal thinks before you can assume their appearance.

1) Birth of the Crow

The individual performing the heroquest must break out of their egg. This step is simulated by matching the heroquester's STR vs an eggshell STR of 20. They are allowed to use any magic they want and other heroquesters can help them break out.

The heroquesters have none of their equipment inside the egg but it will be with them again once they are outside the egg.

If the quester needs assistance to get out of their egg they are -10% for the rest of the quest. Any time a quester makes a roll they are +10% for the rest of the quest.

The party finds themselves in a large nest. The nest is large enough to hold the entire party and their equipment. They will have to fly to get down to the ground.

2) Learning to Fly

The heroquesters must "fly" down from their nest. This is simulated by a jump roll however the sensation will be that of flight. Questers can if they so desire climb back up to the nest and try again to fly.

3) Searching for Food

The heroquesters must find some food. This can be simulated by asking the quester to attempt three search rolls. Only one roll is necessary for success.

4) Meeting an Enemy

The heroquesters must defeat or evade an enemy. This enemy will invariably be some deadly enemy of the animal in question. In this case the enemy is a giant hawk (standing in for a regular sized hawk). The party is encouraged to act together as this is the technique used by real crows in defence.

Giant Hawk

STR 33 Move: 1/16
CON 13 Flying Hit
SIZ 29 Points: 21
INT 3 Fatigue Points:
POW 18 46 Magic
DEX 20 Points: 18

Location	Melee	Missile	Points
r claw	01-02	01	6/6
l claw	03-04	02	6/6
abdomen	05-07	03-06	6/7
breast	08-09	07-11	6/9
r wing	10-13	12-15	6/7
l wing	14-17	16-19	6/7
head	18-20	20	6/7
weapon	sr	attack	damage

claw	4	85%	1D8+3D6
bite	7	74%	1D10+3D6

Note: The hawk attacks with both claws at the same SR, then bites 3 SRs later. Both claws must attack the same target, but the bite can go after a different target.

5) Courting a Mate

The heroquester must impress and win a mate. The party will find themselves at a moonlit festival. Their objective is to impress a mate using some social interaction skill. (If you're of a whimsical nature and don't take anything too seriously you can do what I did and tell the party they're at a sock hop and Stairway to Heaven is playing. Tell them they've got until the last yowl from Robert Plant to get lucky if they want to succeed at this stage of the quest. Two of my players failed to impress anyone so they decided to pair off themselves. Thank goodness the characters at least weren't both male!) (Any successes at earlier parts of the quest will add to the chance of success of course!)

6) Raising a Family

The heroquesters are busy nesting and raising the hatchlings in nests on the edge of a cliff. They must feed their family and protect it from enemies. In this case the enemy is an huge cliff toad. I used one toad per three characters.

Giant Toad

STR 42 Move: 24m hop
 CON 21 Hit Points: 31
 SIZ 42 Fatigue Points:
 INT 2 63 Magic
 POW 11 Points: 11
 DEX 11

Location	Melee	Missile	Points
rh leg	01-04	01-03	7/7
lh leg	05-08	04-06	7/7
abdomen	09-10	07-10	7/9
chest	11-12	11-14	7/9
rf leg	13-14	15	7/7
lf leg	15-16	16	7/7
head	17-20	17-20	7/7
weapon	sr	attack	damage
tongue	3	43%	4D6
swallow	3	80%	acid damage

kick 6 28% 5D6

Note: The toad may attack once per round. It normally uses its tongue, which hits on the toad's DEX SR and does damage equal to the toad's damage modifier. The kick is used against targets too big or too dangerous to swallow. When the tongue hits a victim, it wraps around him and sticks to him, then retracts with the victim into the toad's stomach on the next round (the swallow attack) . If the swallow attack misses , the toad may try again the next round. Once in the toad's belly, the character is immobilized, and takes 1 point of acid damage to each hit location each round; armour dissolves first, then hit points. The toad can swallow objects with SIZ's equal to or less than half its own size.

After the toad is dead the party will have to again find some food for their nestlings.

7) Death of the Crow

This is the stage where the roles are reversed. The heroquesters now must meet and kill Mr. Crow. This will prove their dominance over the crow spirit and teach them the spell Guise of the Crow.

Mr. Crow

He takes the form of a pitch black man with a crow's head. He is dressed in a two piece suit that appears to be of 1950's vintage. He wears a fedora and carries a cane. He can turn his arms into wings at will. Of course he can appear however he wishes.

STR 21 Move: 3m/6m flying
CON 21 Hit Points: 17
SIZ 13 Fatigue Points: 36-
INT 22 5=31
POW 21 Magic Points:
DEX 19 21+fetch 30+spirits
APP 16 18=69 total Fetch:
Crowsmeat INT 24
POW 30

Location	Melee	Missile	Points	
r leg	01-04	01-03	8/5	
l leg	05-08	04-06	8/5	
abdomen	09-11	07-10	8/5	
chest	12	11-15	8/6	
r arm	13-14	16-17	8/4	
l arm	15-16	18-19	8/4	
head	19-20	20	8/5	
weapon	sr	attack	damage	parry
cane	6	113%	1D8+1D4	106%

Spells (132%-5=127%)

Befuddle (2), Disruption 1, Demoralize (2), Slow 3, Bludgeon 6, Heal 6, Crowsmeat (fetch) Protection 4, Spirit Screen 6, Farsee 2, Strength 4, Dispel Magic 5, Coordination 3, Simmer (spell spirit) Countermagic 4

Skills

Hide 132%, Sneak 102%, Fast Talk 97%, Orate 101%, Twirl Cane 143%

GM's notes

Mr. Crow's fetch acts in every way as an allied spirit. Mr. Crow was also facing a party with almost no offensive weaponry so he would need to be beefed up if he was facing a fully armed and armoured party.

The End of the Quest

When (if) Mr. Crow is defeated Blueface instructs the party to cut out his breastbone. Blueface then takes the breastbone and waving his hand over it changes it into multiple foci for purposes of casting Guise of Crow. This is a two point spell and some questers may have to forget spells to learn it. Of course it isn't necessary for all members of the party to know the spell. All that remains then is the "long" trip back to the mortal plane.