

Regions - Balazar and the Elder Wilds - Balazaring

Social Structure

The Elders

The council of elders meets to discuss matters that affect the entire clan. They act purely as an advisory group as any clan member can decide to ignore their suggestions. Their authority arises from: 1) their age (to a certain extent); 2) proven ability and wisdom; 3) their track record as advisors. Usually they will just oversee tribal discussions and offer up suggestions as to possible actions.

Social Structure

Balazaring clans practice neither patrilineal nor matrilineal descent. An individual considers him or herself to be descended from both parents. They try and keep track of as many relatives as possible to keep the number of individuals they can turn to for help in hard times as high as possible. No specific rules exist as to where you can live exist. When a couple decides to marry they go live wherever they want. Hearths are voluntary arrangements, not kin arrangements. This results in a very flexible social structure with couples moving around trying to get into the best situation possible. Clans are basically groupings of lineages each of which congregate into hearths for mutual benefit. Balazarings are allowed to have sex with anyone who isn't a parent, sibling, grandparent, aunt or uncle. First cousins are permitted however.

Marriage is not a requirement for having children as each individual in a hearth is given equal access to food and resources as long as they contribute. Two individuals who wish to have a short term liaison in order to have children or for any other reason are free to do so with no possibility of stigma attached.

Families are small as Balazarings believe in quality, not quantity. Children are breast-fed for two or more years and women do not tend to have more than one child every three years or so. Children are never aborted or abandoned (unless they are deformed in some fashion) as children are never unwanted. There is no stigma associated with being a "bastard" as personal achievements are more important than parental or ancestral achievements. Initiates of Grandmother Earth know many ways to avoid having children when they don't want to including an innate sense of when they are most fertile.

All food collected by the hearth is shared more or less equally. (The sick, children and pregnant women get extra shares). Game killed by hunters is divided slightly differently. The individual responsible for the kill (if identifiable) is given the heart and the haunch. (In practice the primary hunter often eats the heart raw in the field). All hunters involved are also given a portion of the meat. The elders then receive portions of the organs and all the remaining meat is roasted or otherwise prepared and shared amongst the other

men, the women and the children. Excess meat is either dried or smoked. (The shares given to the hunters are of course shared around as well). Eating meat by yourself is a serious violation of Votank's laws. Hunters discovered to have done this (other than the traditional heart) are ostracized and if this crime reoccurs they are banished.

The food gathered by the women and children (which can include small game) and which in some seasons is much more plentiful than that hunted by the men is divided amongst the hearth mothers who share it amongst those associated with her hearth. The hearth mothers are responsible for keeping communal fires burning and keeping the communal larders stocked.

Each hearth will have a number of these larders stored as well-hidden caches. It is a grave transgression to take supplies from one of these caches without replacing it. When men want to go out hunting they have to approach their hearth mother and ask for supplies. These requests are rarely refused (only an irresponsible or reckless hunter might be refused).

Law and Order

The group is fairly conservative but flexible as the harsh environment does not reward rigid behavior. Very few proscriptions and laws as to behavior exist. Being banished from the clan is the ultimate punishment. Only rape, consorting with Chaos, murder or crimes against the gods or ancestors would result in banishment. (Crimes against the gods or ancestors include acts like desecrating holy sites or one of the communal winter hearths, looting or destroying a cache, eating meat alone or cannibalism). When someone is banished the clan will ignore that individual as if he/she no longer exists. (In the case of murder the murderer will sometimes be killed in turn by a relative of the victim. This is not considered murder as you cannot murder someone who doesn't exist anymore. However this is very rare as killing someone (even a murderer) places a permanent taint on your soul). This treatment will normally drive that person away. Often they migrate to one of the Citadels or travel far into "civilized" lands.

Votank's Laws

It is wrong to eat in secret.

It is wrong to sleep with your mother, father, aunt, uncle, grandfather, or grandmother.

It is wrong to take from a cache without putting something else in.

It is wrong to eat people.

It is wrong to kill people.

Change is bad.

Chaos is bad.