

## INTRODUCTION:

It is with great pleasure that I present the background and bestiary for the Mythlore Reunion event. A massive thanks to Larry for writing the stirring background piece and Mark for giving everything the once over, nodding, tutting, rocking back and forth in his easy chair, calling his nurse for more medication and doing some nice little doodles to add a bit of pizzazz to it all.

As you will see some things have changed but many things haven't, at the end of the day, badies is badies and orcs is orcs.

All writings and pictures are copyright but if you're coming to either of the reunion events you can obviously print 'em off for reference. If you want to use any of the contents for any other reason then you'll have to give us a shout, and maybe we can 'come to an arrangement' as they say.

Chin chin  
Si

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### ***Background and Bestiary:***

As we all knows, Fesh was a cosmopolitan place: it was a free and great city for learning and trade between all sorts of cultures and races. But that feels like it was an age ago and the last few years have bugged up all that was good and brought a blight to our land. The grand Elven towers have been pulled down and lie in rubble, the market places are closed up: closed to those in need but not to greed that is. The sewers beneath the city lead to dark tunnels allowing evil to walk into the very hearts of our city and homes. All the places of learning have been torn down too: the libraries burnt to the ground, the colleges closed to all but Felspars cronies, and we're kept in ignorance. But they says that knowledge is power, and so I've pulled together what scraps I can find and put them upon these pages.

It seems like many of the creatures around Fesh have been learning new tricks and have been twisted by the change in magics. They say Felspar's been changing the course and the flow of magic, driving bloody great iron stakes into the laylines to cut off or channel the tides, making wells of power for his own use and corrupting it. They say there aren't many free places of power left in the land, and that there are few mages who aren't under Felspars' yoke these days.

Well I can tell you, there are even fewer are those with hope.

I know I'm not the best in writing and suchlike, such things are frowned upon these days - but I've filled in all the unreadable bits best I can and you have to get what you can get...

"Fesh Socio and Racial Studies - Compulsory Text Part XXI Sub Appendix 4 Summary Pages 91-111"

*Re written and updated by Tish Bundy III - Apprentice Scribe 3<sup>rd</sup> Rate.*

*(Since the original was all burnt and found soggy in a gutter.)*

## A HISTORY OF THE WORLD

*“It is difficult to sort the grains of truth from the chaff of legends; there are just so many and they all tell different stories.” Hanu Lish*

Most cultures of the world share a common legend, details may change, but the core remains the same and it is this; in a time before history there were the Great Beasts.

Wurms, Unicorns, Gryphons and others of the Great Beasts trod the lands, guarding the magic that was theirs, sharing the land with common beasts, and giving council to the First race. Some legends say they were heralds of the gods placed here to protect the First race, others say they were the gods themselves. In the age of the Great Beasts, the world was at peace and full of wonders.

*(The identity of this so-called ‘First’ race has been hotly disputed throughout history by any race that holds the legends to be true. Humans, elves, dwarves and even some of the goblin races make their own claims upon it. The legend of the ‘First’ race has therefore led to more bloody and brutal wars than any other matter of dispute)*

There are many tales of how long their reign lasted and how it came to end; some speak of a war between the Great Beasts and the First Race, others of a struggle for power with the gods. Most tell of a cataclysm that rained fire or ice upon the world, bringing it to the brink of destruction and plunging the remnants of civilisation into a dark age from which it still struggles to emerge.

But whatever legend you believe, it is a fact the Great Beasts fell into the land and passed into myth and legend, for none now tread the world. (Although there are some who dispute even this...).

And yet the wise say that their power did not vanish with them. The energy that formed their essence, once released from its physical form, bled into the land, the rivers and, eventually, the very air we breath.

It became magic.

That magic wove into the fabric of our world and the creatures living upon it, slowly changing the scattered First race and common beasts, lending them power, distorting their form and shaping them anew.

As the disparate pockets of the First race struggled to rebuild their civilisations they marked the places where the Great Beasts (or ‘Myths’ as they had since become known) were thought to have fallen in their cataclysmic battles. They erected temples and shrines or raised sacred circles and megaliths. Some settled close to these sites while others built only far from these ‘graves’, out of respect...or fear.

And legends tell that, all the while, strange new creatures and races began to emerge from the hidden corners of the world.

Goblin folk, vile, twisted versions of the First race came crawling from dark places. Dwarves hammered out subterranean citadels from mountain roots, and Elves emerged from the ancient forests, (although in the Elves’ telling of the tales it was the humans that flooded out from Hyperborea and southern Europa). And yet darker things emerged from

the depths; the restless dead hungering for life, horrors that could tear your mind from its' skull... and worse.

Yet slowly a new world was fashioned; Wars were fought, states and empires were forged from the ruins of the old lands, and the new creatures and races of the world came to embrace the magic that was now part of it and them.

It was the 'Reeves' that discovered whisperings in the magic, essence of the Myths, the 'Sacrum Particulae', that taught those who would listen, (or as some claim, those who had been 'chosen to hear'). These whisperings were the lore of a lost and greater world, and most of the great religions have their basis in this belief, (although there are some that make claim of darker teachings to be found, if you listen well or seek out the dark places of the world, and it's on these borders that the Shaman take their dangerous studies). The lore taught the Reeves to heal and create by shaping the magic... and it taught them to believe.

But not all believed the Reeves. Mages thought the energy flowing through the land was more akin to the forces that point a lodestone northwards. Alchemists called it the 'Prime Element' and saw it as raw material to be moulded into powerful tools and miracles, and weapons.

*(It's probably unsurprising that the teachings and studies of the mages are therefore seen as heresy among the more fundamental Reeves, which has lead inevitably, to many more bloody conflicts throughout history. Or to paraphrase Dilli Purch ~ "People will always find an excuse for a good scrap.").*

There are other tales of how magic came into the world, but none deny its presence, even if some deny its use. In our world, even if a person does not harness it with intent or faith, magic is part of our lives. It's the 'lucky' streak of the gambler, it's the coincidence that brings lost siblings together, it is the wisdom in an old wife's tale. It is the world we inhabit.

And, however you may choose to explain the world and our place upon it, there is one inescapable truth; to paraphrase the inestimable Mr Purch once again:

***"You are here".***

Reproduced by kind permission from 'The Origin of Magic' by Olias Ringwold – Scribe.

*I was given a copy of the next bit by a strange bloke I met outside the ruins of an old alchemists shop on Chatter Street. I didn't catch his name, but he seemed to know that I was scavenging for bits and books. Gave me an odd wink and slipped me the papers saying they'd find their way into "the right hands", as he called it. My dad warned me about blokes like that, but I sort of feel like I should include it here as it's all about how Fesh came to be buggered up so bad.*

## A HISTORY OF FESH

“All things are cyclical. The world and all life upon it move in ever-undulating patterns. But always, time, and all things bound in it, are revolving destined to revisit itself in one form or another. And with each visitation comes hope anew”

*Sharik Nazrid*  
*Elder to the Duchy of Fesh*

The second age of our world is now known as the *Dark Age*: the time when the Great Beasts and the First race had fallen, when it seemed that man, along with the other races, had abandoned all direction and instead threw themselves against the wild land in an attempt to grapple its power for themselves. But the land is ancient, older than even the very notion of men and their petty ambitions. Many perished: plague, war and famine all pecked at the scattered and malnourished remnants of mankind, whilst the other races carved out their own paths upon the world.

Across the lands of Albion, towns and villages grew anew from the rubble, and among those destined to become most glorious and powerful, were the twin cities of Rulsirim and Fesh. Fesh, situated as it was at the mouth of the river Wyne, became a centre of commerce, quickly surpassing its 'prettier' twin of Rulsirim as a hub of power within the surrounding lands. At first 'Ruku Fesh' was little more than a shantytown, merely a few encampments hastily thrown together by nomads for trade along the river. (*'Fesh' from the local tongue meaning 'marsh' or 'swamp' and 'Ruku' being an unflattering local slang for 'stench'. It's probably unsurprising that the 'Ruku' prefix was lost over the years*). Within a decade of its founding, the marshes had been drained, the foul creatures that once dwelt there driven far away, and the first proper buildings erected. Over the next few decades it became fortified and within a century and a half it was established as a capital city. Whilst Rulsirim had become a beacon to the shining achievements of the arts, Fesh had become the powerhouse of commerce that grew steadily year upon year. It also became a haven for all manners of shady activity and vice.

Adventurers who sought their fortune would set forth from Fesh and kept the lands free from the creatures that stalked there. As more safe routes were established, traders from across Albion, Europa and beyond arrived in greater numbers to peddle their wares in its streets and market places. Countless learned travellers, on their way to or from Rulsirim, passed through the port, and many stayed. Perhaps they were lured by the vibrancy of the place, perhaps diverted by its many illicit temptations, but for whatever reasons, Fesh arguably became a place of more diverse learning and philosophy than its stately twin. In short, it became a hub of civilisation which reached its peak over 200 years ago.

Fesh had become vast: a sprawling city-state that had expanded far beyond its own fortifications. The surrounding lands and hamlets benefited greatly from its presence as the bands of goblin folk and trolls were driven further into the hills and dark forests. On the face of it, Fesh was a shining testament to the labours of man, even exceeding in scale and complexity many of the Elven cities in the Far East. But over the last 40 years, beneath its facade, it had become lawless, vice-ridden nest under the careless rule of a corrupt Duke.

It is perhaps the most telling irony that it was not ill fortune but good that finally brought Fesh to its knees; a simple dispute between guilds that was to see a quarter of the city ablaze and mass exodus within a couple of months.

Almost 20 years ago, following a particularly fruitful harvest, the city of Fesh found itself flooded with shipments of wheat destined for all ports. A territory battle between two rival trade guilds resulted in a battle over storage rights around the docklands. One night, a few weeks later, two grain-warehouses on Mill Lane went up in flames. Accusations were cast, and petitions made, but the Watch made little effort to find the culprits. A month later saw half the storage sheds on Warfside become an inferno in an assumed retaliation.

Panic spread almost as swiftly as the fires that raged through the Gutter district of Fesh, and in the ensuing conflagration, much of the city's winter stocks were destroyed. The Duke's forces, lazy and corrupt, were wholly inadequate to the task of controlling either the fires or the people. Riots spread; deprived of the basic materials to produce even bread or beer the citizens turned upon themselves. Even after the rains helped quench the last of the embers a few days later, the riots continued. A hastily instigated martial law run by an incompetent Watch did nothing to quell the unrest, and the city swiftly slipped into chaos.

Finally, after many weeks of unrest, a large and angry mob descended upon the Dukes fortified palace on Widdershin's Eve. Some say he was killed that night along with his guards, others say he had already fled the city days or even weeks previously. Whatever the truth, the city was without a leader and without order, and it is noted with shame that the sister city of Rulsirim did little or nothing to assist during these dreadful months. But it was from these ashes that a true man of vision emerged.

Master Coelbren had been a respected merchant within Fesh for many decades, and had remained a voice of reason throughout the darkest days of the riots. It was he that brought together the wisest and most eminent elders of the surrounding towns and convened "The Council", the sole purpose of which was to bring order to the chaos that had become Fesh.

Over the ensuing months and years, new trade agreements were drawn up and guilds restructured so that all activities could be regulated and disputes resolved, the old Watch was removed and was replaced by a new City Guard. The first few years were difficult, many of Fesh's citizens had fled the city during the riots to seek sanctuary in towns and villages in the surrounding lands, and Buckstone, Crockers Ash and Doward were sorely tested to accommodate these refugees, many of who refused to return even after peace had been re-established. However, gradually the city and its surrounding towns were rebuilt or restructured, and within five short years, Fesh and its environs were to enter a new and prosperous era with the city at its bustling heart. New commerce with the Kinkind races of elves and dwarves was established, architects and artisans of all races drafted in to work side by side in rebuilding the city anew.

Coelbren had proven by all accounts, to be a wise leader: he established a new and just council with Barons or 'Wardens', guiding lesser councils in the seven towns and hamlets that now made up the Duchy of Fesh: Buckstone, Ganarew, Solomon's Tump, Crocker's Ash, Doward and Glewstone - (or the "*Seven Sisters*" as they were known). Coelbren was made High Warden of Fesh in honour of his achievements, (the title of 'Duke' now having been dispensed with). It was said that his bloodline could be traced back to the founding fathers of Ruku Fesh, and his word was law; in all respects but name he was a King. It was he that still saw the city's potential and he that nurtured it to its new zenith. However, Coelbren was already advanced in years before he undertook the rebuilding of Fesh, and the effort had begun to take its' toll...

Coelbren had established each council throughout the Duchy with the best and the wisest to assist and advise each Warden, the High Council was no different. He chose what he

considered to be the finest minds of scholars and merchants to be his council, among them his brother's child: Felspar. Coelbren's brother, Nevellis, had been advisor to the Duke of Rulsirim, but had died some years previously whilst travelling with the Dukes' daughter Ivrin. Coelbren sought to honour the memory of his brother when he elected Felspar to run the City Guard, little knowing that his brother had in fact, been a vicious and ruthless man who had sought the downfall of Rulsirim for many years. It had been the young Felspar who, having discovered the death of his father by unknown adventurers, had ensured that Ivrin was murdered on her return to keep her silence. Felspar was very much his father's son. These days many whisper "Coelbren's folly" if a man is misplaced in a position of authority, or a boat set to sea under the misguided belief that its construction alone will see it right. But it is a brave, or foolish man, who would say it aloud.

Gradually, over the years, Felspar undermined his uncle's authority in every manner conceivable, insinuating his own sympathisers in key positions throughout the city. By cunning and guile he set rumours loose upon the streets, old rivalries between the guilds were reborn, and petty squabbles between councillors and their coteries were fuelled to reveal the underbelly of Fesh that Coelbren had sought so hard to heal. But always he kept to the shadows, never revealing his hand, ever present to advise and comfort his uncle who watched helplessly as his fine work crumbled before him. Eventually he tore the High Council asunder, setting faction against faction: words were spoken, oaths broken and accusations made until dissent once again escalated into riot in the streets. Those that practiced magiks were sought out and slaughtered - and the Wardens of the seven towns watched on in horror as the city at their heart descended once more into hell.

Coelbren realised too late the cause, Felspar's supporters were many, and this time the screams of riot drowned his pleas for reason. All Coelbren could do was watch his city collapse, helpless in his tower at the centre of it all.

As the mobs gathered once more at the palace gates, urged on by Felspar and his followers, Coelbren gathered a small retinue of good men and women, and reluctantly fled the city under cover of darkness. Fesh belonged to Felspar.

In the following months an exhausted Coelbren and his retinue travelled the land in secret, attempting to rally the seven councils in the outlying towns. Together with those able bodied citizens who had fled the most recent riots, and troops from Rulsirim, they quietly amassed an army of guards, soldiers and adventurers with which to face Felspar in his fortified city.

But Felspar, now self-proclaimed 'Lord Overseer', had not been idle in the months of his rule; Fesh had become a citadel filled with horrors. On the advice of a Mage called Shadeth, who had quietly assisted Felspar for many years, they had gathered creatures from across the lands to swell the ranks of his forces.

When Coelbren's army arrived on that fated morning, and gazed down upon the plains surrounding his city, the sight must have chilled the heart of every man present. The land seethed with every horror imaginable: banners of human flesh flew above the massed ranks of berserks and mercenaries, and every gaol in the city had been emptied upon the field. Within their ranks were freaks and ghouls raised by dark magic, their howls piercing the morning sky. And worse still, alliances had been forged with the Goblin-kind that infested the deepest bowls of the far mountains; orcs, trolls, and ogres stood hungry for war and filled with bloodlust. And on the far ridge, surveying his army, sat Felspar, clad in madness and black armour, flanked by masked riders, with the robed figure of Shadeth by his side.

Vastly outnumbered, Coelbren's army still fought bravely, and thousands were sacrificed on the fields that day. But defeat was inevitable in the face of such an army of greed and hatred, and once again Coelbren was forced to turn and flee from his city, his forces routed and slaughtered. When Felspar realised that Coelbren had once again eluded him, his rage was greater still. In his anger he berated his new alliances for their ineptitude, all that was promised them he withdrew for their folly. From the jaws of victory Felspar snatched defeat, as his army turned in upon itself. He withdrew with his forces to the safety of Fesh as every barbarian, half-breed and murderer set first to attacking him and then, when they realised he was beyond reach, set upon the land and its people. In the months that followed the land became a killing field and the Lore that flowed through it soured with spilled blood.

As the years have passed, so the fighting has calmed, but the scars do not heal. Bandits now rule the roads, and orcs and goblin-kind once again roam the outlying woodlands, raiding towns and hamlets. Villages have become palisades, guarded fiercely by scared and suspicious inhabitants. And through it all Felspar still rules from within his citadel. Retinues of armed guards travel the scoured land, collecting taxes from people who are all but peasants now. Those who do not pay are taken, some to the citadel, others to the mines. But more disturbing are the rumours of dark magiks worked upon those taken to Shadeth's tower in the fortified palace.

Still worse, it is said that Felspar is amassing yet another army to regain full control of the lands around Fesh and to crush those small groups of partisans still loyal to Coelbren. But, though they still call to the people to rise up against the tyrant, there is little fight left in the people. Many warriors and adventurers perished in the last great battle, and most able-bodied men are now taken and pressed forcibly into Felspar's army. The land seems without hope.

...And yet as darkness descends there is still one tiny glimmer of hope for salvation; rumours in taverns of hooded travellers who have opposed Felspar's retinues, or tales of bandits struck down by a sudden flash of steel, with only the flutter of a cloak in the woods to mark its passing. Stranger still are the tales of those once again working the fabric of the Lore without aid of book or scroll. Such things have not been seen for twenty years or more, and some say it is an omen. Some call them ghost or vapours, others say they are wraiths of the deceased come to seek vengeance.

Many folk have not seen the like of this before, but I have; they are not wraiths, but men and women who, for too long, have been away from these lands. In their youth they strode the countryside like titans, their bodies may have been tempered by age, but their passion burns as bright as it ever did. Speed has been replaced by guile, strength by skill, and recklessness by wisdom. They have heard the call and can no longer ignore it. Tales are told in hushed tones at the fireside and the names of *Ycore*, and *Elvana* are whispered where once they were sung. No one dares to hope, but if pressed folk will tell you of ...

## THE OLD HEROES

...and their deeds are legend...

*Shemesar the Peddler* "Don't know who the 'Old Heroes' are but they better be bloody amazing if they're going to make any difference around here. And so to the Bestiary – it ain't everything that's out there, but it's a start..."

## THE BAD BUGGERS:

**Orcs:** Stocky figures with skins of green, brown or black. You can usually smell 'em before you see 'em. They have slavering jowls hungry for battle and power. They were once a proud and noble warrior culture but now they have debased themselves and become mercenaries and fodder for the battle lords. They speak in their own language, and few men can twist their tongues to utter Orcish. They are tough and bloody strong, poisons and disease don't seem to affect them. They aren't the brightest, but do possess a cunning animal mind that should never be underestimated. They also have a primitive but effective grasp on some magic that's a cross between a Wargrim and a Shaman. They are very dangerous in numbers - and they certainly have numbers.

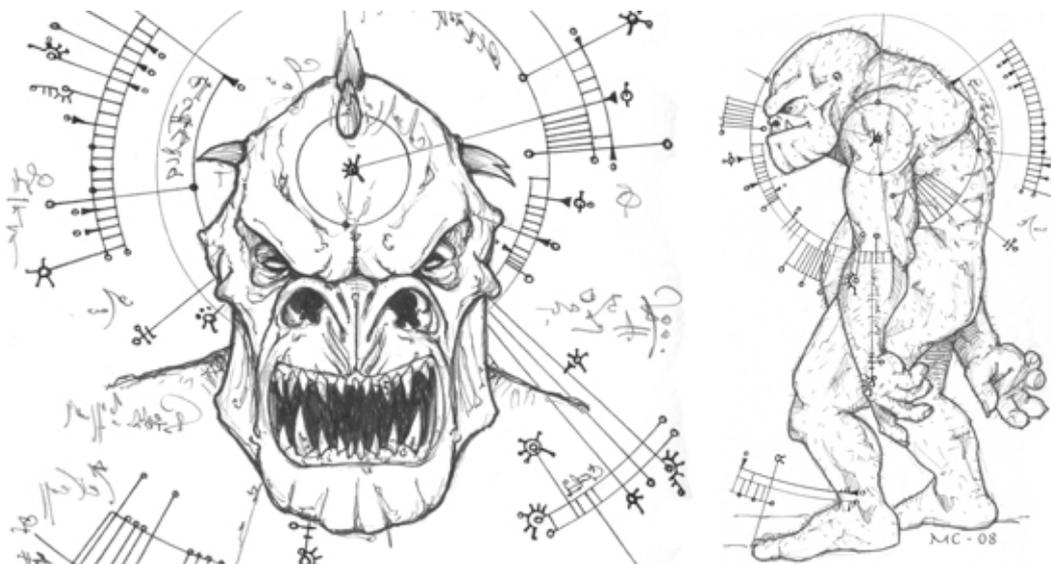


**Goblins:** These are shorter cousins of the orc, but a distinct and separate race. They're not as physically strong as an orc but are far more ingenious, being masters of crafting strange and wondrous weapons, potions and magics. They favour ranged weapons and try to avoid a straight fight, unless they are being used as a shield by their superior orc masters. Some goblin types have attuned themselves to an element: fire and Ice goblins are rare but not unheard of, and can band together to create powerful spells. Wood and Night goblins have also been encountered. They are cowardly in small groups, but in numbers, and with hit and run tactics, they can harass any force. Nasty bunch of sods.

**Night Elves:** Elves who have shunned the light of day, they're harsh, bitter and cruel, some say they dug too deep into the wells of the Wryd and were twisted by it. They're masters of poison and shadowy lurking death. They Woad themselves with fiery brands and rare magics and herbs, that make them tougher than their physical frames - etching permanent sigils into their skin. They're said to have the power to paralyse their victims by raising their weapons high in the air and maintaining eye contact, this is known as the Eye of the Basilisk apparently. They have to keep eye contact, but while one 's doing this, his mate is doing you in the back. The females are also powerful with strange magics - it's said that these She Witches have the power to curse like a gypsy.



**Trolls:** Big bad buggers. Stupid and brutish but singular in intent: pointed in the rough direction of their foes they are almost unstoppable in their destruction. Their bodies regenerate any wounds exceptionally quickly, unless those wounds are caused by *Elemental* forces. Not surprisingly they detest fires and cold and when confronted with the like, can go into a bloody great berserk rage. It is also known to be rumoured to be alleged to be suspected to be possibly feasible, that the digestive juices of a troll are a powerful concoction that can cause diamonds to form within the troll's stomach. However many a blade has been ruined trying to find out the truth of this. They're far too stupid to understand the concept of magic and their simple brains are unaffected by mind magic. Once battered down, a big fire is needed to consume them lest they rise again. Trolls are often used by orcs and goblins, who can afford the incidents of 'friendly fire'...or squashing... or eating.



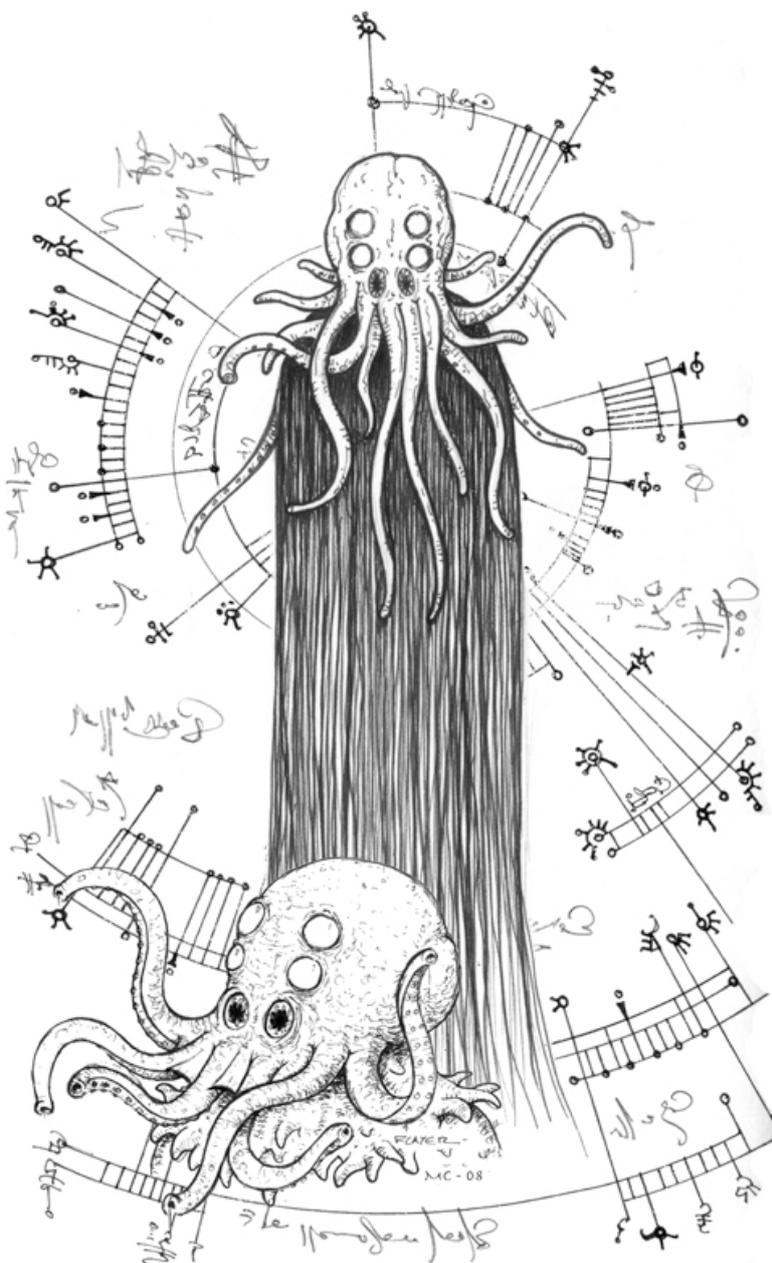
**Ogres:** Originally from the hills in the far North, Ogres were a solitary farming race until Humans and others ventured into their territory and forced them into service, (although quite how they did it to such big brutes is a bit of a mystery to me). They're slow but immensely strong, tough and chunky. They are easily outwitted, but if they ever discover they've been tricked they become blinkered for revenge and won't stop until they've ripped your head off, and done the business in your neck hole. They somehow have resistance to certain magics, exactly which magic seems to be variable, why this is, isn't known. Over the years they have been bred and inbred to create vicious and vile warriors.

**Giants:** Mountain dwellers: little is known of Giants - how something so big has remained such a mystery is a bit of an enigma in itself. They're as powerful as they're large, and somehow have been coerced into becoming mercenaries, (again, not sure how exactly). Those that leave the mountains speak nothing of their home, although there are rumours of two great cities of Giants that sit on twin peaks high above the clouds. Usually the mercenary types are the young or the runts of their race, out to prove themselves before they return home. They love their beer and if you ever have a brewery big enough to get one drunk, then perhaps they might tell you tales of their bigger brother or their towering father - but never of their home. Oh, and *never* wake a giant up after a few barrels of beer, as their hangovers are said to be as big and brutal as them. Not the most clever of creatures, but strong as strong can be - a swipe from a giants weapon can smash a shield and shatter limbs like nothing.



**Hobgoblins:** Another twisted race of the goblin kind. They're much more powerful and intelligent than the usual goblin, and big and tough as an orc, so it's thankful that they're rare. They're predominately found in the far East, living on the planes and in the foothills of the mountains. They're cultivators of lotus plants that they mix and transmute with dark Wyrd to give them extraordinary abilities: some potions send the drinker in to a rage of destruction, some toughen the skin, others may drive the drinker mad - or kill instantly. They have some spells but aren't as powerful as a goblin. They also have weapon masters that are akin to a human Shangarin, who hold what, in goblin terms, would be classed as '*Honour*' - but it wouldn't be wise to turn your back on one.

**Mindflayers:** Horrid things! Few have seen them and returned with enough mind to report of their findings. Bulbous heads contain their massive brains, with numerous eyes and dripping, twisted tentacles surrounding their mouths. Not too sure where they're from, or how they've come about. It's rumoured that they're courted by Felspar, who uses their abilities to torture and gain information and to make troops of the most debased and mindless warriors. They have a powerful ability to do a 'Psychic Scream' that enters the minds and causes a seizure. The first scream will bring the strongest warrior to his knees, disrupt any spell and drain the will. The headache it causes will stop a Mage from remembering the words of a spell, and a Warrior will have trouble even holding a sword, such are the spasms and tremors in their bodies. A second scream will cause all but the strongest man to faint, or sink into a delirium of pain, it would take a great will indeed to stand and fight after this second onslaught. A third will wipe most memories away and cause the victim to become one of the mindless under the flayers power, or turn the brain to mush ready to be sucked up by the tentacles. Flayers possess some magic but are physically quite weak. Thankfully Mindflayers are rare and it takes them some time to get together the energy to do a Psychic Scream. If you can – RUN!

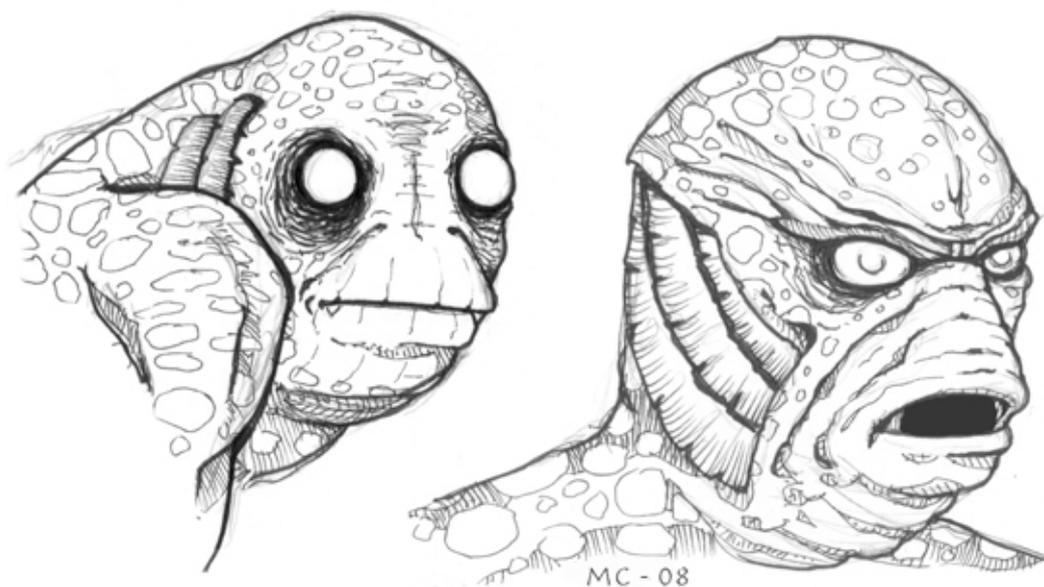


**Succubae:** These are pretty ladies infested with evil spirits: the ‘female of the species’ and all that. They use their Glamour and feminine charms to seduce and entrap, luring those they encounter to join them in their wicked ways. Those under a succubus’ charm will fight to the death to protect her, and obey her without reference to reason. Few red-blooded men can resist their charms, and those taken by a Succubus are seldom seen again. The rare few that do escape are often aged and withered husks of their former selves, (having been ‘used’ repeatedly to pleasure her and driven mad by the experience), and can never look at the female form again – or wear restrictive underwear I don’t doubt. Thankfully a Succubus can only extend her charms on a handful of subjects at one time in her harem, however she often has other magics to protect her...

**Forest Elementals:** Otherwise known as Shambling Mounds, these creatures protect the oldest of the forests and, left to their own devices, tend the ancient trees. However, they’ve been known to be goaded by wood goblins, and whipped into a mighty rage. Once awoken in this manner they’re a difficult foe: blunt weapons, arrows and spears have no effect. A good axe blow will harm them, as will Elemental spells, however, while they’re in contact with their mother earth they’ll continue to grow and regenerate. They’re slow but have the strength of oak and can tear through a shield like a dried leaf, bones are just twigs to them and skulls brittle acorns.



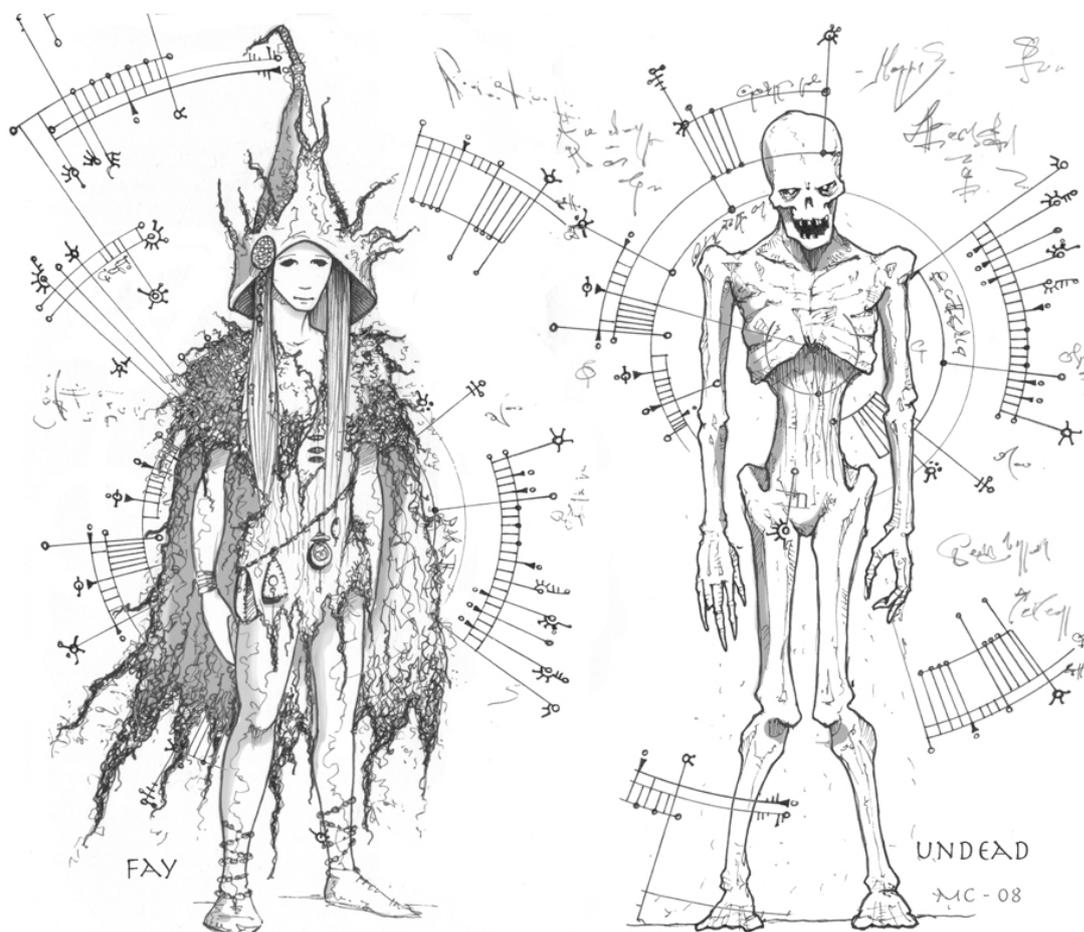
**Frog Folk:** Amphibious creatures most at home in swamps and boggy areas. They have limited intelligence but seem to have a primitive hierarchy of Warriors, workers and even rare Shaman. They're mostly harmless if left to their own devices but fiercely territorial if you're unfortunate to stray into their breeding areas. Some are poisonous and their touch can cause cramps, vomiting or even agonising death. Apparently they're quite tasty with a little garlic though...



**Were Creatures:** Cursed or diseased? It's not known. They change into beastly forms under stress, a full moon or, if especially powerful, under their own will, whereupon they become a savage creature possessed of a great strength. Little can harm them in this state, apart from true silver and pure Elemental magics, and their blight is passed to any victim that survives an attack. There're said to be herbs to cure this blight if they're administered before the first change at the next full moon but I don't know what they are. They're hard to spot in human form, they look like you or me, but in beast form you can't really miss 'em – Big Teeth!



**Fey Folk:** A wide variety of creatures: some small as a pinhead, some large as a giant. Boggarts, Brownies, Shide, Fairies, Gremlins, Fauns, and Elfs, (not *Elves* who, some say, used to be Fey who left the Faerie realm many eons ago). They live in the hollow hills and the old forests in a realm parallel to our world but different, and they claim to be the First race, dating back to the time of the Myths. They have an elaborate structure of laws and courts, rules far too complex for humans to comprehend, and their world has many portals into ours. Their magics are far more powerful than any of this realm. Tales tell of them stealing children in the night, and creating marsh lights to trap unwary travellers. And also they help by making shoes for poor cobblers, but I'm not sure how many of those are true. They follow their own rules and laws, and their ambitions are beyond the understanding of any sane man. Keep your airs and graces about you and understand that everything they offer comes at a price.



**UNDEAD:** A wide range of creatures raised from the dead realm by bad magics.

**Zombie:** Zombies are slow and shambling corpses held together by magic. They have little intelligence and simply head towards the nearest living thing to feed their insatiable appetite. They have no mind to affect with magics, and other spells have little effect. You can burn them up with a big spell but you is better off lopping off their heads before they takes a bite out of you.

**Skeletons:** A skeleton is a puppet of bones held together by bad Juju. Arrows go straight through them, and there's no point trying to stick them with a spear. Your best bet is to get a good lump hammer and to smash 'em to bits: your sword is just going to give 'em a chip. You can blast 'em with magics, but you ain't going to achieve much and you'd do better to find the puppet master if you know what I mean.

**Ghouls:** These were once living men that were cursed into un-death by feeding of the flesh of their fellow men. They have the power to paralyse their victims by touch before they feed upon them, and have more mind than a zombie being able to hiss and sometimes talk - but not enough mind for them to be effected by magics. They're faster than a zombie and can remain quiet, hide and use some cunning, often lurking amongst a pack of zombies or leading a zombie 'shamble' - which is what they call a group of zombies.



**Drules:** Drules are night elves who have walked the path to un-death in the same manner as Ghouls. They have the power to take your sight with their touch, - it can come back after a while, but sometimes it's lost forever. They're clever but their dead brains still take no effect from magics. - but you can blast them with Elements. They're able to talk and some even can cast spells. It's often difficult to distinguish a Drule from a Night Elve just by sight.

**Ghosts:** Spirits that have no presence on this plane but can affect the mind and heart. Only those who straddle the planes can hurt them. Ghosts are not ways bad, and are often tortured souls who have unfinished businesses on this realm. Some aren't so nice, and chuck stuff about a bit or sometimes try to trip you down the stairs. A good Reeve should be able to make them cross to the other side if they want to, and if placated they can even be helpful...sometimes.

**Vampyres:** These fiends feast upon the blood of the living, and have great strength and magic at their command. It's said that no weapon can harm them and only a hawthorn stake through the heart will kill them - that and sunlight. Oh, and they don't like garlic...and something about running water...and sleeping in their own grave soil. In fact, for something so un-killable, there's a lot of ways to kill them apparently. However, they *are* immensely strong and have powerful magic like I said, and usually they have a small horde of undead and possibly a few mates as well. Best avoided I reckon.

**Wraiths:** Powerful ghostlike knights that straddle the plains of existence. They can cause the dead to rise and those they touch, even by their weapons, to wither and lose all strength. They can only be affected by the strongest of spells, the purest silver or by weapons tempered in powerful magic, all other metals will shatter against a wraith, either by hitting them or parrying their ghostly weapons. Given time, a wraith's touch will cause a victim to fade from this realm and become a wraith themselves. They have their own powers of magic, and often come with a horde of other undead creatures.

**Mummies:** These are ancient nobles who have had archaic magics wrought upon their dead bodies to give them life in death. They are typically found bandaged in swathes of rotting linen, and are powerful in ways of the old magic. They fear fire and are best dealt with in this way. Thankfully time has made them rare, but those that do remain are very dangerous.

**Lich:** A Lich was once a very powerful Mage or Reeve who has used magics to cheat death. They're generally ancient and very powerful, and usually stand at the head of mighty undead armies. There are whispered rumours that Shadeth himself is a Lich - which don't make much sense, as I'm sure Coelbren would've noticed that he was employing a Lich at some point down the line - or at the very least has several Lich's in his employ. Their brains are dead to mind spells but they have great magics of their own to command, and some have the power and draw life from the living. Few men have the power to stand against a Lich and the best advice is to form a small army and hit them with everything you've got. Or run.



## OTHERS: Things not of this realm.

**The Planes Interlopers:** Things not of this plane but drawn or summoned from an 'other' place, they cross the realms and are not supposed to be. They have great powers, being able to draw upon the powers of their realm and this. Some call them Daemons or Night Gaunts, but this is not their true name, for those who can know a true name have power over the named thing. These beings have magic far stronger than any known in this realm, and our magic is said to have little or no effect. It is rumoured that the wizard Shadeth is in league with such creatures and has called many to do Felspars bidding - which makes me want to shit myself to be quite honest. Save your powers to heal, protect or counter their spells and flee. Resist making a bargain with them unless you have nothing to loose. It often takes ancient powers or mighty relics to be used in ritual to dispel such entities from this realm.



**Walkers:** Strange beasts, wearing odd clothes, often accompanied by ravenous hounds or young children. They are scared of beasts and fighting and can call upon a thing called an 'Armed Response Team' if they feel threatened. Therefore if ever these creatures are encountered all fighting must stop, masks removed and a cheery good morning/afternoon offered. Wait until they get out of the way and then continue, and hope they don't ask for a 'photo' (whatever that is).

### And perhaps the most dangerous of all:

**Humans:** ok, so there are some good 'uns, but there are also some nasty buggers out there too: wild warriors from the North, masters of strange arts from the East, song weavers from the South and inbreeds and n'er do wells from the West. Although maybe not the strongest or the most intelligent of all the races, their adaptability and unpredictability still makes them fearsome opponents. They are good with magics and arms, and even have powerful weapons such as law and taxes. They come as Barbarians and Bandits, Army Troops and Gypsies, Magicians and Cavillers, Pirates and Accountants - definitely ones to avoid.

## THINGS LESS LIKELY TO EAT YOU:

**Elves:** Once a proud and noble race, now beaten down and hunted by the forces of Felspar. They have been expelled from the city and their majestic towers torn down. Many have travelled to the East to return to their homelands, others wander the wilderness. Whereas they were once friendly and welcoming, they are now suspicious and wary, as would you be if you had groups of blood-thirsty hunters after you since Felspar put a bounty on your ears. Many sympathisers wear a bandana in support to aid the elves who themselves, have taken to wearing head-dresses to hide their tell-tale ears. They are slighter than a man but have more a natural affinity with magics. Their body chemistry gives them resistance to the paralysing touch of a ghoul.



HALF ELF



DWARF

MC - 08  
HALF ORC

**Half Elves:** They are a product of an Elve and a human who love each other very much and have a loving special cuddle. They are still hunted and despised by Felspar's cronies. They are as fit as a man and almost as strong in magics as an Elve. They aren't as widespread as they used to be as many of the elves have travelled East, and those who remain are distrustful of men. They have no safe haven like the Elven cities to the East, and thus they are perhaps the most opposed and full of hatred towards Felspar.

**Dwarves:** Dwarves are a short, stocky and powerful race. They're rough and tough and can take a bigger battering than a mere man. They're clever in the ways of alchemy and mechanics but their bodies find it harder to work the magics. They're incredible miners and have a natural ability to detect slopes – which is useful. They're tolerated by Felspar but many think that, when he's 'sorted out the Elves' he'll turn on the dwarves. Ancient wars between dwarves and elves are still a sticking point to any Elven friendship. Their warriors are amongst the toughest in the land and their kinship once earned is a bond that cannot be broken.

**Humans:** Told you there were some good 'uns - we're a mixed bunch us humans. There are precious few of us who still stand opposed to Felspar, fewer still openly support Coelbren, as this would invite disaster upon our kith and kin. Many of the young and idealistic have been butchered in the Great Slaughter of the plains, and the land is worked by the weak and sick these days. Anyone who looks like trouble is taken to the citadel and not seen again. The majority who remain 'free' are those who keep their heads down, getting some food for their families' mouths and paying bloody obscene taxes to avoid Felspar's schemes. Perhaps, secretly, they wait for a better time, but it'd take a heroic action indeed for the people to face Felspar again...

**Half Orcs:** Now there are some who say they've known half orcs and they weren't that bad. I don't believe 'em personally. Some even say they're related to Dwarves way back, but both are likely to kill you if you suggest that to their face. Ugly sods.

So there you are dear reader - this is rough idea of what's out there, if you ignore the squirrels and sheep and stuff. There are other freaks and horrors that lurk in the shadows: things that 'shouldn't be' - odd experiments and cross breeds and suchlike that have no names - or might just be rumours and children's tales...

Some say that all isn't as it seems, well I can tell you for sure that things are *never* as they seem.

As I said, hope is something seldom seen these days, but I *do* hope. I hope that by knowing the strengths you can find a weakness. I hope that being forewarned is forearmed. I hope for a sign.

I just hope.

Tish Bundy III – Apprentice Scribe 3<sup>rd</sup> Rate at the *Startled Squid* – or what's left of it.



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