

Worship in Karathar

Those who look to the Weave and the stars for guidance will often look to those who are able to manipulate the threads -- either a lay practitioner or a caster -- and ask of them to interpret Fate for them. While there are centers of worship throughout Karathar, there is no central religion based on the Weave nor is there any kingdom that dictates that rites, ceremonies, or other functions related to the various Cults are to be designated at King's Holidays. Most commoners travel to an augur or just to a shrine to worship on their own or in small groups, and rarely do those who are not sages of the Cult participate in rites or read any written text as a means of veneration.

Stars & Constellations

The people of Karathar associate their belief in Fate and the Weave with the stars and constellations of the night sky. The five Greater Constellations are shaped by the brightest stars in the sky, and these encompass other, Lesser Constellations that surround them.

The Gigan Constellation

As the burlmen left Karathar, they told to the wandering peoples that they would leave some of their giantish creatures they called the gigan -- powerful beasts of burden that could pull the burlmen's huge carts and wagons. No one has seen a gigan since, but they live on as the creatures gifted with the sight of the Weave and are believed to walk amongst the threads forever.

The Cult of Gigan believe that the Weave is meant to be read not manipulated, and that there are truths that lie in the very oldest of things. Most centers of worship lie in places where the monstrous creatures of the world were once thought to dwell, even going so far as to build shrines in the dark caverns of the Raibjor Mountains. Scryers are often seen as the oldest and wisest of the interpreters of Fate, but they are also viewed with some distrust because of their disdain for other cults.

Followers of the Gigan often wear oversized robes of furs and cloth, indicating their belief that they are but a small body as part of a larger being. Many of them are isolationists or hermetic in nature, but they are more interested in viewing the threads in all manner of places than adhering to a strict interpretation of this practice.

The Hunter Constellation

He who claims the bounty of the world for those in need is known as the Hunter. His reach is wide and he watches over the night sky encompassing us all under his protection. Those who follow the Hunter are those believe in the power of the individual, seeing the lone skill of a hunter or trapper as being admirable. The Hunter constellation represents the mystics, those who are able to tap into the spirit of humanity and sway them in various ways.

The Cult of the Hunter is most popular in rural regions where shrines can be built along shorelines or in places where there is a pristine view of water or forests. In more remote areas -- or where the ocean is too far away -- followers will

built their sanctuaries along lake shores or man-made ponds. Mystics and their followers believe that society will always have those at the top and those below, and while the Hunter itself represents the "giver" at the top, it is meant to be that those with more should always provide for those who do not have any.

The strongest center of worships for the Hunter are in Bael Saak, on the island of Braën Bahr, and in the city of Birelín, in Terrinjer. Mystics tend to wear some symbol of either a bow or a blue pendant to represent the water. They are practical people, too, and tend towards vestments that do not include robes.

The Otter Constellation

Playful rulers of the rivers of Karathar, otters are seen as signs of good omen for most but treated with deferential respect by those of the Cult of the Otter. Otters are seen to cleanse the area they dwell in of the chaos that takes root, and to eat the creatures that come to cause disease. Thus they are seen as creatures of balance and beauty, true autocrats of the wild.

The Cult of the Otter is very commonplace in the hill country of Karathar, where rivers are plentiful. There are also many varieties of otters that live elsewhere in marshlands, coastal areas, and even in the forests throughout the land. Shrines tend to be small affairs, with followers preferring to give blessings and read the stars in nature rather than under the cold stone of a building.

There is no central place of worship for the Cult of the Otter, though there are larger outdoor temples in places like Tribour Hold and Emal Stovig -- places where nature has taken root in the very hearts of the cities. Shamans, who are the primary practitioners of the cult, tend toward natural clothing and colors of green and brown. They will also sometimes wear small medallions made to look like an otter's paw.

Constellation of the Loom

Crafters, creators, and makers are all seen as taking the very threads of the Weave and building all of society. The Mondrai and Karalindi people both claim that their interpretation of the Loom constellation is the most proper, which has led to the most heated (and sometimes deadliest) disagreements over the reverence of the Weave.

The Cult of the Loom follows a path that ascribes to the notion that one's path is a direct creation of their own actions. Personal responsibility and a vision to the future are both important to the Loom and their followers. Their centers of worship are temples built prominently in places of importance with the two most important being in Alagarán in Ralinđer and the newly-fortified city of Sardinar -- lands contested by Mondravi and Terrini peoples.

The consistency between all followers of the Loom is to wear homespun materials of natural colors or dyes, as well as a cap of grey or brown. Weavers are also prominent in spreading the message of the Weave to others, even going so far as to aid others in other cults with their practices.

The Church of the Weaver

A direct outgrowth of the Cult of the Weaver, a small following of people in Terrinđer (mostly Terrini people) more recently began to worship the Weaver not as one of other interpretations of the Weave but as a deity in and of itself. The small church has begun writing and spreading texts that speak to the battle between the Creator and the Destroyer as nothing more than the Great Weaver creating all things millennia ago and setting all of time in motion.

The Rat Constellation

Filthy, ravenous, and able to multiply from seemingly nothing, the rat is seen as the carrier of disease and, especially, chaos. Few are those who look to the rat with anything but revulsion, yet those who do not are known as the Cult of the Rat. Rather than looking to the Weave as something to keep

Aspects of Fate

There are many ways that followers of the Weave demonstrate their belief. The most common of these is the

protected and balanced, followers of the Rat believe that the world is only pushed forward through time because of Chaos -- the Destroyer of things -- and thus it is Chaos that is the true creator.

The Cult of the Rat is mostly seen as a fringe group in Karathar, and they are typically disregarded or shunned; however, the revelation that the rebellion in Seritsk is being led by the Ikari people, an entire culture of this cult, has led those in Ralinđer and Terrinđer to question whether or not the beliefs of these people needs to be stamped out for good.

Followers and practitioners of the Rat do not have centers of worship, mostly out of fear for their safety. They tend to worship the power of chaos and the continued energy beyond death. While few are able to confirm the rumors, many believe that the Cult of the Rat has been able to revive the dead and call spirits to do their bidding. Witches -- those who follow the Rat -- have been good at hiding their identity, and there are few who know their symbolism or accoutrements.

Lesser Constellations

The night sky is filled with stars and many other constellations aside from those that represent the major constellations. These other constellations are looked at as minor guidance when compared to the Four Skies and Chaos, however, and there are no cults that specifically worship these lesser constellations. Some shrines will offer minor homages to these constellations and have small gifts or rites that are given to them as thank you for aiding in the interpretation of the Night Sky.

Lesser constellations are often associated with or derivative of the greater constellations of the Four Skies or Chaos. These are often used in name days or other rites associated with the nomad tribes, but other cultures use lesser constellations to mark special days as indicated by the king or queen.

Fate Deck, a collection of cards representing the constellations of the night sky. There are many other ways in which those guided by Fate follow their path.

Fate Deck

The Fate Deck is the most ubiquitous representation of the constellations, though there are others, such as oracle bones, Fate dice, or enchanted leaves. The Fate Deck is divided into two smaller sections, the Deck of the Four Skies and the Deck of Chaos. The two sections represent the balance in the world, and the chaos that swirls just beneath it. They are combined to produce guidance to those who draw upon their insights.

The Deck of the Four Skies has four suits of 13 cards, with suits representing the Gigan, the Hunter, the Otter, and the Loom. The number 4 in these suits is often replaced with The Ring because 4 is seen as imbalance and a sign of bad luck. The numbers 11, 12, and 13, are often replaced as well with the Scribe, the Countess, and the Minister, respectively. Each card has both positive and negative associations with it, though they are meant to be read in a way that represents growth, change, and progress.

The Deck of Chaos is a collection of cards that represent the vast array of unexpectedness in the world, and these cards have the quality of inevitability, forced change, and consequences for past wrongs. The deck is comprised of 16 (4 sets of 4) named cards that vary widely in their presentation of good and bad.

Star Signs

The sky and all things in it are of particular importance to the people of Karathar. The night sky, more so than daytime, is of significance because of the stars, and the meaning that has long been conferred upon them. The most important of these are the many constellations in the night sky; however, phenomena like falling stars, eclipses, and the phases of the moon are also seen as important displays of the Weave's influence in the world.

Lay vs. Magic Casters

Those who are keepers of tomes, oral history, or true manipulators of the Weave are all known as casters. There is a difference, however, between those who are highly skilled in their abilities and those who have -- for a variety of reasons -- very little power in their altering of the Weave. These are respectively known as magical casters and lay practitioners, typically called augurs.

Throughout Karathar, both casters and augurs are respected for their craft, and it is often that augurs have only lost their connection to the Weave because of some momentous spell years before that they were never able to fully recover from.

While some augurs travel from village to village offering their services, most remain in one place, worshipping their cult of choice and helping where they can. Casters are the true adventurers, spending the healthiest parts of their lives wandering Karathar in search of places they can use their power for whatever purposes benefit the world.

Important Observations

Throughout Karathar, there are a variety of local observations of the stars that can be both cultural or regional, but there are some observations that are commonplace among all those who believe in Fate and the Weave.

Raising and Lowering of Constellations. When a constellation becomes visible in the night sky or sinks below the horizon as the world shifts, those who look to that constellation for guidance will observe this changing of the night sky. These celebrations are largely relegated to the cult of a particular constellation, but it is not uncommon for anyone with a strong tie to the Weave to observe these changes.

Solstices and Equinoxes. Most important throughout Karathar are the summer and winter solstices and the vernal and autumnal equinoxes. These events mark different but no less vital changes in the night sky and the observation of that sky for all people. The solstices represent the great balance of the world, ushering in either the impending darkness of winter or the long days of summer. The summer solstice is a celebration of longevity, life, and change for the better. It is also seen as the day with the least clarity. The winter solstice is a marker of darkness, coldness, and the chaos of the unknown. It is, however, also a celebration of the night and having the most vision of any other day of the year.

Celestial bodies. Comets, shooting stars, and other celestial phenomenon are very integral to the interpretation of the night sky. While those with in-depth knowledge of the sky and its innermost workings understand the difference between a star and a meteor, the layperson often sees these events as an unraveling of the Weave and look to it as ill fortune. Rituals of various kinds to help mend the break are often performed when these events occur.

Role-playing Veneration

Because Fate and the Weave are vital to the understanding of Karathar, its cultures, and the conflicts that often come up between peoples, knowing how to blend in Fate into your character can be a rich way of developing your role with your fellow players. The above provides insight into how various casters and followers of particular cults look at the world; similarly, the descriptions of

cultures earlier in the chapter goes into some detail on what those of an individual culture look to when interpreting the stars and the Weave. Your character should have some opinions on Fate, the Weave, cults, threads, and any of the material on the belief system in Karathar. That could mean they are apathetic to it -- even in the face of tempting it. There are, however, few people who simply do not believe in it; more likely they don't believe that it affects them as much as others claim. When you get to character creation and are working through your person's backstory, keep these ideas in mind.

Tempting Fate

To Tempt Fate, players lay out cards in the center of the table and reveal them individually. As described above, the number of cards laid out is determined by the Risk Threshold. The player(s) who must reveal cards then flip cards one at a time on their long side in any order they would like. The chapter on the Fate Deck details a few ways in which players can lay out the cards according to various interpretations of the Weave in Karathar.

Card Orientation

All cards have an orientation. They are either "skyward facing" (Skyward) or "earthward facing" (Earthward). Depending on this orientation of the card, there will generally be a positive or negative effect.

Interpreting the Cards

Once the full lay of the cards has been placed, a player begin to turn the cards, flipping them on the long face of the cards. Cards do not need to be turned in the order in which they were drawn. Cards should then be placed aside in the order that they are flipped to assist in the narrative of the action after all of the cards have been turned. Cards are not resolved until all cards have been flipped. Once all cards have been turned, then players resolve each card in turn, applying its benefit or flaw as they resolve it.

A Note on Fate In-game

While Tempting Fate is the meta-game mechanic to represent chance in *Plight*, it is also likely that in certain instances – perhaps prior to Tempting Fate or when casting magic – that characters would use a variety of methods that suit their culture to tap into the Weave and call on Fate themselves. Players are encouraged to devise their own unique methods using the notes from choosing your culture.