



KNIGHTS OF GARZA

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What is this?

Knights of Garza is the third monthly small release for **KULT: Divinity Lost**. It presents the story of a cult that can be dropped right into an ongoing campaign or used as a Group Hub during the creation of an Intrigue Map. The 8 Horror Starters at the end also serve as inspiration for other campaigns.



Characters, locations and incidents are portrayed from the metaphorical viewpoint of the *KULT: Divinity Lost* setting.



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THE KNIGHTS OF GARZA

Occultism festers in the city's dark underbelly. Like maggots, they gorge on the rotten and unkept barriers separating Elysium from Metropolis. Deceived by the ungodly insights brought forth by the being known as Amentoraz, they continue to open pathways for malevolent forces to pass through and infect our Illusion. In the search for their messiah, the cult's only weapon is their joint madness and wicked genius.

BENDING THE KNEE

Benito Garza was a man of many pains. Physical, emotional, and spiritual. As an intimate friend of agony itself, he had nowhere to go but turn inwards. No one listened to his desperate pleas, prayers went unanswered, family members never picked up the phone, friends left. It wasn't always like this, no. But that's the image people have when they think of Benito; an ever-dying man completely lost to a state of deep suffering. This image painted by him and spread by faithful loyalists benefits his vision greatly, however, and acts as a catalyst to glue his cultists together.

The truth behind the man is that he was born into a cradle of gold, and it was only after he parted ways with his family to pursue an academic life that things got dire. He naturally gravitated towards mad conspiracy theories, esoteric teachings, and magical nonsense. Studying how people behaved online, especially on forums dedicated to the occult, felt not only right but as if he was made for it. Although he never thought of himself as one of them, Benito found it incredibly comforting when he perceived similarities to himself in the subjects of his studies.

The research took a sharp turn when his façade as a new practitioner proved to be strong enough to form relationships with serious magic users. The final leap into the esoteric underworld was accepting an invitation to shady inner circles where deep knowledge was shared, dangerous rituals were conducted, and important people hid behind false identities. Not long after that, he saw video proof of the existence of a race of demons known as Lyter, which shook him to the point of trying to summon the creature as well. Little did he know this demon is truly Amentoraz (see KDL, p. 250), tasked to find and lure skeptical academics into accepting the harsh Truths of magic; it works and there is much more hidden beyond the veil, one just has to believe it.

The ritual itself was easy to understand, but hard to perform, taking a dozen attempts before actually succeeding. Despite initially believing the contrary, Benito was cursed by Amentoraz with visions of divinity he was not ready to handle. The sights were so powerful that his madness advanced to the point of completely distorting his thought patterns, beliefs, and convictions. Broken and addicted to the wicked insights, Benito cried for the Lyter to return time and time again until his sense of self got completely warped. The Illusion slowly mimicked and made room for what Benito saw in the mirror, a twisted body turned unrecognizable to everyone but him — a visual

representation of his inner power. Limbs merged into new animalistic features, his bones protruded as if he had wings, and organs failed. Looked down upon by Illusion-clouded sights, he was taken as fragile, crooked, ill, malformed, debilitated, incapable. A victim. Knowing this was not the truth, regret soon blossomed in his heart, and with a mind in tatters, he found solace in solitary madness.

Completely deranged, Benito fell prey to arrogance and pettiness. He blamed the Lyter for turning him into a monster and swore to kill the demon. At this point, he didn't simply want to reverse the changes, but to gain enough power to demand its presence and make of it as he wanted. For that he had the wickedest of all ideas — to advertise himself online as a powerful cursed magician. A dark messiah that could cure any misfortune and illness.

The sick and mad soon started flocking to him as if there was no tomorrow, fully believing the madman to be the ultimate good samaritan. They traveled from all around the world to live near his temple, joined him in unholy prayers, studied dusty tomes, and embarked on whatever idea the lunatic obsessed over. In turn, Benito used his magical knowledge to do for others what he could never do for himself: heal their afflictions, offer them a home, a place of understanding, restore their deformities, free them of pain.

His ill intentions got the best of him. Well hidden underneath his benevolent façade, they nonetheless drove everything he did. Once his cult had grown, and the bad apples among his followers were rooted out, Benito advanced to more dangerous ceremonies. With rituals of thought merging and mind control, he turned the upper echelons of his most loyal, faithful, helpful, and daring of Knights into puppets, dancing by his will alone on the magical strings he had tied into their brains. His acolytes' recuperation from their diseased bodies' ailments transformed them into healthy receptacles for the final attempt of capturing the Lyter.

The last time Benito Garza walked on Elysium was on a fateful summer night when the cult managed to summon the Lyter into the body of a chained vessel. Their joint madness not only called forth Amentoraz, but also completely shifted the cult's master into the borderlands of Metropolis and locked him there. To this day, Amentoraz remains stuck inside the body and mind of one Knight, forever agonizing over the hunger it feels. To the creature, it is deeply infuriating to see many walking ready-made meals he cannot feast on.

However, despite exchanging sides of the veil, both the creature and Benito feel cheated. They are way past the negotiation phase. It was, is, and forever will be a silent war.

THE OPERATION

The cult receives insight from Benito through prophetic dreams and subtle symbolism. Most of them are quintessentially mad. Wide-eyed and disturbed, profoundly lost to psychosis, hallucinations, and paranoia. To them, Benito is the sacred healer lost in an unknown otherworld they need to find by all means possible. Not only do they adore the man, but he is the only one that is able to cure them of their illnesses. They are able to see him during psychotic breaks and blissful nightmares where one experiences terrifying hallucinations

of Reality; the most scarring one being of Benito himself. A horrifying bloated man in his 50s, with long curly rotting nails, melting face, protruding bones, bloodshot eyes, crooked teeth, and malformed scraggly limbs. Larvae live in his orifices and folds, hiding in his ears, nostrils, bellybutton, and under layers of heavy fat tissue. His voice whispers with a guttural undertone, cracking and failing every so often, sharing enlightened knowledge and demanding help from beyond the veil.

Meanwhile, Amentoraz, imprisoned inside the body of a chained cultist, constantly fights to subdue the cultist's soul and thoughts. Now starving and unable to feed on the cultists, it hopes that one of them will allow a droplet of madness to fall into its mouth. The creature uses magic to perform unsettling scare tactics on the cult. It senses their shame and guilt only to spire it out for everyone else to hear, distorting their dynamics and causing them to doubt one another. Powerless and shackled, Amentoraz has to wait for its vessel to fall into slumber so dream magic can be employed as a way to invade other cultist's dreams and learn more about them. As a result, other Knights often report they cannot stop dreaming about the creature's true form — a dark, obscure soul made physical.

Although the cult suspects the demon knows exactly where Benito is located, they are ultimately unable to grasp the slightest scent of the cosmic intentions behind all of this. To keep Amentoraz fettered means the cult will not stop performing rituals that erode the barriers between Elysium and Metropolis. Once they begin to falter and doubt their mission, Amentoraz will jump in and feed them what appears to be valuable information, so they feel like this fight is worthwhile.

Regardless of Amentoraz puking the truth of Benito's whereabouts, the cult organizes and performs dangerous rituals to locate places where the veil is thin, as well as ceremonies to deteriorate what is left of it. Their hums and chants attract creatures and survivors alike. Many want to flee the machinery of death, escape from a nepharite, or were lost before encountering the gateways opened by the Knights. Others are curious, attracted by madness, have their nests disrupted, or simply want to see what is all the fuss about. Some barriers will never be erected again. Others will have many creatures pass through before closing forever. Nevertheless, they always hope for Benito to come back using the gateways they create.

GRANULARITY AND PACING

In the grand scheme of things, Malkuth is but an ever-present passive voice permeating each scene, ritual, thought, and feeling. She isn't manipulating — or forcing — Amentoraz to submit to her will. She is, in fact, the impulse behind the creature's actions and lack of thereof. It could be that Amentoraz has more than enough power to get up and leave, but cannot find the strength to do so. Or that Amentoraz has reasoned that

the suffering is for the greater good. Or any other excuse and sentiment.

As the gamemaster, it is your job to decide how many layers you want the antagonists to have. A creature that is demanded by a higher power to pretend it is weak has much less granularity than a creature with conflicting emotions about whether or not its job is being fulfilled, especially when kept in the dark about its successes and failures. The same logic applies to Benito. If you choose to forego all the bitterness and regret, you're left with a mad man who happens to look like a creature.

This is but one way to use Amentoraz. Although the effects of coming into contact with the creature are always the same — Amentoraz weaves visions of divinity and inspires humanity to seek ways to break out of the Illusion — people rationalize it differently.

KNIGHTS OF GARZA

Type: Cult.

Ties to Powers: The Archon Malkuth.

Agenda: Operating in secret, they gather to study the machinery of death and forge ways to destroy the Illusion's barriers, for good or ill.

Membership: Although anyone can be a sworn Knight, what truly unites them is the primal need to survive. In sickness, the stricken turn to magic and madness to find ways to cheat death and find their healer.

Leadership: Benito Garza guides the cultists from beyond the veil. No other active voices have challenged his leadership. Secretly, Amentoraz might give conflicting information to keep them working.

Attributes: Combat [1]; Influence [1]; Magic [3]

Moves: *Unearth an Abominable Ritual, Open a Gateway to Another Realm, Infect Someone With Madness, Refuse to Die, Bring a Place Closer to Malkuth's Citadel, Cause Someone to Dream of Malkuth's Oubliettes, Heal Someone and Leave Visible Scars, Unwittingly Distort the Illusion With Their Madness.*

History: After falling prey to Amentoraz, Benito Garza promised other dying men and women to help them avoid the agonies of a life in sickness. Slowly but surely a cult was formed around Benito's blessings. Many were cured, many were lost in the borderlands. Some of the subjects were turned into vile monsters, while others stated that had they known what would become of their body and soul, they would rather have died instead. The cult remained strong nonetheless, and when Benito went missing, they bonded over a new mission.

Description: The stricken pray to Benito Garza, a self-proclaimed messiah. The mad drift into sleep listening to the demented lullabies of Amentoraz. Shrouded by darkness, their hums and cries erode the barriers of our Illusion, bringing victims closer to Malkuth's Citadel, where they will be irrevocably changed.

ently. What the Knights believe to be a demon vomiting knowledge, religious fanatics see as a sign from God, doctors might identify as a mental illness, drug users believe it was a horribly enlightening trip, etcetera.

Ultimately, it is unknown whether Amentoraz is a single being, omnipresent or not, or a hivemind of multiple creatures carrying around the seeds of divinity. Whatever it is, this cult has managed to capture it.

Keeping in mind the different consequences of choosing one path over the other, it is left to you to decide which approach suits the story your group wants to tell. Some questions will inevitably arise depending on your choices. For example, if Amentoraz is a single being, what could be done to escape the meat prison? How does it feel to be disconnected from a higher purpose? And, alternatively, for how long can the cultists keep one Amentoraz separated from larger cosmic connections? Furthermore, what happens if Amentoraz cannot fulfill the age-old job to feed on madness? Is this followed by death? Or maybe it's a liberation.

Whatever the path, answers, granularity and overall aspects you choose to explore, know that there are no wrong choices here. The only difference is some of them clearly benefit some things, while others don't. Mix-and-match details, break and expand the meta-narrative, delete and add information. Do what you have to do to make it fun, engaging, and horrifying.

HORROR STARTERS

Player characters as victims

- ◆ Old Friends of Beniro. The group is approached by disguised cultists trying to find out more about the man. Soon enough, they will be invited to join the cultists in their search. The final goal is indoctrination.
- ◆ The player characters are part of the dozen weaklings that got rooted out before Beniro set out to performed extreme magical feats. Now, the renegades are deemed guilty for the disappearance of the cult's great savior.

Player characters as investigators

- ◆ The group decided to tackle the infamous case named "Dead Amelie," a girl that was possessed by an evil creature and came back to lucidity after their parents called for Beniro's aid. The girl's sanity quickly deteriorated afterwards, and now she believes to be dead.
- ◆ Rehabilitation centers all over the city are reporting that masked people in black hoodies are praying on their doorsteps — all of them are Knights. When approached, they threaten with death whoever tries to stop the prayers. The group is tasked to search for correlations between the clinics and the cultists.

Player characters as cultists

- ◆ Charged to kidnap the cult's next sacrificial lamb — someone that is tied to their pasts, from way before their days as Knights — the group has to decide whether or not sacrificing this person is the right thing to do.
- ◆ Taking care of the vessel for the Lyter becomes an arduous task, as they have to deal with the creature both inside their dreams and when they're awake. The group has to learn how to better protect themselves before the demon completely breaks their barriers and exposes secrets best left buried.
- ◆ Suspecting some Knights are being mind controlled by Beniro ended with the group being locked inside a darkened room with the Lyter as a punishment. Can they endure a face-to-face intimate talk with the devil?
- ◆ A ritual gone wrong exposed the temple to dangerous supernatural activity. Haunted by forces beyond their understanding, the group is tasked with finding a way to communicate with the creatures and establish a safe space for the next ritual.

