**KRARSHT**

# THE HUNGRY ONE

1. **MYTHOS AND HISTORY BEFORE TIME**

The endless bickerings and jealousies between the gods weakened and finally tore the fabric of the world during the early Gods Wars. Through the tears oozed illogical horrors which intensified the fear and terror of the conflict. One such creature, whose true name is still unknown, was called Krarsht. Also known as the Waiting Mouth, the Hungry One, and the Devouring Mother, Krarsht survived by feeding on what she perceived as the refuse of Glorantha.

It is thought that Larnste, patron of Change, once saw the squirming being of Krarsht and sought to eliminate that Chaos evil from the world. When he tried to step on the foulness, however, Krarsht sprang to bite the god, breaking his divine skin and infecting the wound immediately. Where the god bled, there rose up a foul and evil forest, a perfect nesting ground for all things Chaotic. The wood was later named Foulblood Wood and has remained a bastion of Chaos.

In the Great Darkness, Krarsht reigned unchallenged for a while, but at last had to face Storm Bull and his followers. That god seriously wounded the Devourer in a number of violent battles. Each time Storm Bull could corner her, Storm Bull was able to cut off another part of her being, most of which died, while Krarsht bit at and tore great wounds in the mighty sky- bull. By tasting his blood, the Waiting Mouth learned some of Storm Bull’s secrets, modified them, and took them for her own. Finally the valiant bull drove Krarsht from the surface world, and she was forced to eat holes in the world in which to hide. At first the Storm Bull followed her into these caves, but the Devouring Mother was more clever than the other Chaos gods; some of her amputated parts grew into minor versions of her, the Krarshtkids. Following her underground, they began eating other, diversionary tunnels. Soon it became impossible for the Storm Bull to follow her without being in danger of being lost, and so she escaped annihilation.

# SINCE TIME BEGAN

During the ages to follow, Krarsht grew comfortable in her underground domain. Save for errant Mostali miners, her rivals were few and, unmolested in her labyrinth, she recovered some of her former strength. She attracted some followers from those who admired her tenacity. Her losses in direct confrontation with the forces of Order taught her the usefulness of patience and the satisfaction of vengeance, and she became known as the Waiting Mouth to those few who still knew she existed.

Throughout Time, Krarsht has never tried to hold surface kingdoms, since she owns much of the world beneath. Instead her forces operate against individuals of the surface, those in responsible positions who are ambitious and temptable, or the honorable men who oppose the unprincipled. In fact, Krarsht may be the ultimate tool, if not the cause, of the decay and ultimate evilness of many mundane empires which began with

bright promise. But the cult keeps no written records; only Krarsht herself knows the true bounds of her deeds. The cult tunnels through society as she tunnels through the earth.

# LIFE AFTER DEATH

Krarsht promises that every loyal follower of her in life shall become her in death, and will learn her every secret and have available her every Power. This shall be true for every follower, even though there shall always be only one Krarsht. Philosophers who have studied the question declare that Krarsht’s promised Many Into One is illusion, and that while Krarsht may indeed store a worshipper’s ego in some unimaginable way, the dead worshipper will have no will—that all functioning of the god remain hers alone, and the worshipper merely dreams his presence. It is believed that Krarsht plans a special use, perhaps thousands of years in the future, for the myriad worshipper identities she has stored, but no one has guessed its meaning.

# RUNIC ASSOCIATIONS

The cult is associated with the Runes of Mobility, Stasis, and Death.

# NATURE OF THE CULT

**REASON FOR CONTINUED EXISTENCE**

Since the Dawning, worship of the Waiting Mouth has infested many civilizations. This religion appeals to bureaucrats, con men, unscrupulous traders, and those in general whose foremost desire is to be on the side of power always; the cult of Krarsht teaches many skills and rationales that the ambitious find useful. The cult can conveniently do away with rivals and enemies, as the Mouth needs occasional sacrifices, but not so many that the wrath (or even the curiosity) of the public is aroused. Cult lay members are expected to be or to try to be active in local economies and politics. Others may find success in underworld dealings. Frequently cult members will serve as a clandestine network making any service or item available at a profitable price.

# SOCIO-POLITICAL POSITION AND POWER

This cult always attempts to be obscure or unknown, even in the few areas where major portions of the population are worshippers. The name of Krarsht may be unknown to those who worship her. This is satisfactory to her, for Krarsht is patient. The cult emphasizes secrecy, and its operatives know only so much as they need to function effectively. Only an Initiate or higher-ranking cult member ever enters a cult temple. Lay members rarely see priests, and then only during induction of new members and at occasional ceremonies. Lay members never knowingly see Rune Lords of Krarsht; even Initiates may not see a Rune Lord for years at a time.

# PARTICULAR LIKES AND DISLIKES

Worshippers of the Storm Bull are this cult’s first hate, because of the damage he did to the Devouring Mother during the Gods War. From those great wounds she never recovered. Cultists fear the Humakti, who have proven adept at spoiling many of the cult contracts with their Sense Assassin ability. Krarsht always encourages lay brethren and Initiates to report immediately the presence of Rune Masters of these cults.

Former Initiates or Rune-levels of Krarsht are few. Such of those who violate cult dictates immediately will be attacked by the minor spirit-mouths of the cult, the Krarshtides. Each night for a week the former worshipper will be attacked by one of these monsters, who will eat his Power and attempt to drive him mad. Should the offender survive these assaults, other cult members will hunt him until they get him.

# ORGANIZATION

**INTER-CULT ORGANIZATION**

Through the unity of Krarsht, the regional temples maintain a reliable flow of information. While direct communication between the far-flung temples is impossible, very important information can be told to a sacrifice just before the ceremony of sacrifice, and that information (as the sacrifice understood it) will be made known in a vision to all of the High Priests of Krarsht after the victim has been devoured. In times of the greatest crisis, a cult member will volunteer to be told the information and then be sacrificed; a cultist is more likely to understand and convey cult information accurately than is an ordinary sacrifice paralyzed with fear.

# INTRA-TEMPLE ORGANIZATION

Each temple of Krarsht may control a region 50 - 200km across, with small satellite shrines to the goddess controlled by far-flung Initiates of that temple. The groups of lay members worshipping at the shrines are called Drools. Rune Priests of the cult regularly ride a circuit of 10-15 Drools, stopping for a short time at each in order to perform a few services and to induct new lay members.

Rune Priests (called Tongues) remain at the temple and co-ordinate cult activities when they are not riding between the Drools.

Rune Lords (called Jaws) are the master craftsmen of the cult. They always perform the most sensitive or dangerous tasks for the Mouth. They do not work often, but train frequently. Their clients never see them, know their identities, or have any knowledge of them except their intent. The only way to contact a Jaw of Krarsht is through an Initiate of the cult.

# CENTER OF POWER, HOLY PLACES

The centers of power for Krarsht are her regional temples and local shrines. Her temples are vast underground labyrinths carved by Krarsht’s children. Each will have several disguised or camouflaged openings to the surface world, usually a cave hidden by brush. The land surrounding the opening will always be controlled by an Initiate or lay member of the cult.

The local shrines are given by Krarsht to worthy Initiates so that they may form their own Drool. A shrine is good for the sacrifice of Power to the Maw, but good for nothing else. Rune magic can only be regained at a temple, etc. Sometimes these shrines are great idols, and sometimes small, easily carried altars

*(Though indomitable in war, Oddi knew black moods between battles, and often he was difficult to be with.*

*The war with Ralzakark went well. The wily foe lost many battles, and the Sludgestream itself had cleared greatly, yet Oddi was unable to bring the final strength of the broos to battle. The upper reaches of Dorastor were broo held, and the pass into Ralios lay closed.)*

*Ketil and I rode out from the palace, for we had been too close upon our work. I knew not the farms and vales west of Oddi’s family holdings, so we went there for the rare cheeses which Ketil promised surpassed all others. On our fourth day there we were interrupted in our easy explorations of friendly larders by a young farmhand with very frightened eyes.*

*He and his brothers had been digging a well when they struck curious rock which rang hollow to their picks. After some difficulty they broke through, and discovered a strange underground tunnel large enough for them to walk upright in, which seemed to run on forever. They explored the way in both directions a little, but wisely felt their powers more useful in farming than in fighting, and sent for their local Orlanth priest, who in turn advised us of the discovery.*

*…In one direction the tunnel ran on without turn or interruption. The best lights and spells we cast down it told us that it had no end or deviation. That was to the northwest. In the other direction the tunnel went little more than a kilometer before several other tunnels branched off. There was no dust on the floors, and the air was fresh. The tunnels were very circular, more like tubes than caves. Neither of us had known anything like it. With some misgivings, I conferred with a Lankhor Mhy priest in Shomashill, but there was no Irrippi Ontor temple within several days’ ride. The priest was equally reluctant to deal with me, but I tempted him into cooperation with my tantalizing information. He could not immediately identify the meaning of the structures, and thought they might be some bones of an unknown god. …The priest had eyes as large as mine when he finished his report. We resolved to enter the tunnels as soon as possible… Where the tunnel branched, a new shaft was sunk, and we continued our exploration with secure communications.*

*One tunnel was a dead end, but the other two opened*

*into a wonderland of convoluted tubes traveling without reason up and down, over and under, through each other and around each other in loops and spirals. At last we found the way to the main hall, and drove new shafts directly to it, bypassing the maze in which we always became lost.*

*The complex held many tubular rooms and ways, but astonishing was the main hall. Here the diggers had carved straight tunnels in grids along all three dimensions of existence, and the result was an enormous open lattice- work cube, perhaps a hundred meters on a side, though our torchlight could not penetrate the heights. The effect of the hall was oppressive and threatening, and we were doubly nervous because of the reputation of Krarsht which*

*the priest revealed to us and because so many of the tunnels were vertical that we could not adequately explore the entire warren.*

*“I have bred large cats to fight large rats,” said Ketil, “but there are no cats great enough to rule here.”*

*When one of us saw movement far above, we alerted everyone, as well we did, for the Krarsht beasts dropped among us with hideous shrieks soon thereafter. These awful things were unknown to us or to the Lankhor Mhy priest, though doubtless Irrippi Ontor held the information, could I have gone quickly to such wisdom.*

*The Krarsht beast is thin and circular, perhaps two meters across, and it has six legs. Standing, it is not more than a meter tall, but its six legs give it great springing ability. I have seen them jump six meters or more from a standing start. When they land, they strike their targets so that their mouth (which is in the middle of their body) engulfs the head of the victim, while the body folds somewhat around his body, from the top down, and the massive digger claws at its extremities may occasionally be brought to bear upon a man, though this is quite rare. The things’ spit and tongue are also death-dealing. Their favorite attack is to drop from above, an attack impossible to miss in the vertical tunnels…*

*…When we returned, we brought stout pikes, and being so armed spelled the doom of the beasts we could find. Ketil rigged stopper bars on the wooden hafts. When the terrible things fell upon us again, they were firmly impaled by their own force in falling, and the bars extending from the hafts stopped the beasts from quite reaching the carriers of the pikes. There they would squirm and scream, their blood streaming down upon our pikemen, who nonetheless stood firm.*

*Within a few days we had carried the battle to the few hanging back in the vertical shafts, and here again Ketil was invaluably ingenious in rigging pole arms which we could fight with while ascending the dangerous heights…*

*By the will of the Goddess, this was the worst fight I ever experienced, for the enemy was bloodthirsty, the way mysterious, and the fighting often in pitch blackness. When we had satisfied ourselves that all the beasts were dead, we turned aside a stream and began to fill the lower depths with water. Militia we called up followed the long tunnels in either direction until they passed out of the very land of the Bilini, where our power could no longer penetrate. We sealed and destroyed what we could, and flooded the rest, but perhaps we could have turned the Erinflarth into those holes, and still never filled them…*

*We had found a temple of Krarsht new-built, and just before the followers would have gathered there to begin their horrible activities. The farmer on whose land the true (disguised) entrance was found had disappeared without trace, and a Storm Bull search of the area revealed no Chaos. Had we known what the place was from the start, we would have kept the discovery secret, but as it was, everyone within many hours travel learned of the strange place too quickly…*

when the Initiate is first recruiting his Drool. The shrine may be shrouded with black silk. If a shrine can be seen, the image of Krarsht will be roughly circular and flat, with six legs about the perimeter of the body, and a large central mouth.

The great holy place of the cult is south of Dragon Pass, in the Holy Country, where Larnste first saw Krarsht and failed to kill her, and where Krarsht’s first feeding took place. Where Larnste tried to crush the Maw is still his giant footprint. About the toes of the footprint collected the infected blood from Krarsht’s bite. This blood fed Chaos, and from that area sprang the foulness which cultists know as the Forest of First Reward, and decent folk call Foulblood Wood. It continues to be a center of Chaotic activity.

# HOLY DAYS AND HIGH HOLY DAYS

The cult deliberately aligned its ceremonial days to conflict with those of the Storm Bull. Thus its holy days are during Stasis week of each season: on Freezeday in Sea-season, on Waterday in Fire-season, on Clayday in Earth-season, on Windsday in Dark-season, and Fireday in Storm-season.

The cult high holy day for the year also is Wildday, Stasis week, Storm-season.

# LAY MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS TO JOIN

Members of the cult are rewarded for bringing in reliable new members, and punished for suggesting fools and traitors. The applicant will be questioned thoroughly by a group of lay members, then scanned by a concealed Initiate with Sense Order. There will be a later interview with the Initiate of the local shrine. If the applicant is accepted for probationary membership, he will have to prove worthy of it by ambition and deed. A Rune Priest permanently inducts the applicant into the cult after satisfying his own sense of the worthiness of the probationer. It is up to the Initiate to decide when the new probationer might be ready for permanent status.

Applicants found to be Initiates or Rune-levels of any cult of order, and particularly cults of Truth, will never leave the questioning session. However, the cult encourages lay members of other cults to continue their observance of the rituals of the other cults, and in general welcomes any being with discipline, ambition, and greed.

# REQUIREMENT TO BELONG

Lay members must donate 5% of their earnings to the cult and attend each service. Every lay member must vow complete secrecy about the existence of the cult and all matters concerning the cult.

Lay members must accomplish the majority of recruitment of new worshippers, and are relied on to pass on all news, rumors, and other useful local information to the Initiate. They often make the initial contact with potential clients. Many of the street urchins infesting every sizable town will be lay members of the cult.

The lay member must provide one intelligent being as a sacrifice each season, and sacrifice 1 point POW each service.

# MUNDANE BENEFITS

Each person recruited by a lay member who becomes a permanent lay member is worth a reward of 10 Lunars to the recruiter. If a recruiter brings in a member who eventually becomes an Initiate, the recruiter receives 100 Lunars from the cult.

Lay members will be found in all cults and occupations. They often help each other find lucrative positions, and will make emergency loans.

The cult will relocate lay members who are under suspicion by local authorities, but even in emergencies will not admit a lay member to a temple. If a lay member has performed with conspicuous incompetence, he will be fed to the Hungry One. The cult can provide Healing for members, with payment to be settled when the member is able.

# SKILLS

Krarsht lay members receive training in the following skills:

***Half Normal Price*** - Hide in Cover, Move Quietly, Listen, Short sword attack only.

***Prohibited*** - The Peaceful Cut.

***Unique*** - a lay member may begin training in the cult special skills, Hurl Pratzim and Net Attack/Parry:

# HURL PRATZIM

Initiates brew this disgusting liquid from the saliva of the Krarshtkids. It is cohesive and viscous. The user reaches into a pouch holding several handfuls of the stuff. He then casts 1 point temporary POW into it, and throws it at a target. Casting this stuff demands skill, because when it leaves the hands it begins to expand and form a conical web about 3m in diameter. If the throw succeeds, the saliva binds and entangles the target. Victims hit by pratzim must make an STR vs. STR roll to escape. The pratzim is always STR 15. A missed roll means that the victim is bound, may not fight with any weapon, and may hop, if still standing, at a movement rate of 2. A fumble roll means that the victim is hopelessly entangled and will strangle to death in CON + 5 rounds unless freed

The beginning skill at Hurl Pratzim is 0%. The skill is learned at the rate of 300/600/1200/EXP for members of the cult, and 600/1200/2400/EXP for non-members. Each handful can be hurled only once. Lay members will have ten handfuls per season.

# BATTLE MAGIC

The cult teaches all the battle magic spells. In addition, lay members may learn a cult special spell, True Net.

## True Net 1 point

*temporal, passive, 80m*

This focused spell affects only nets and handfuls of pratzim, increasing the chance to hit by 5% per point of spell, and increasing the strength of net or pratzim by one point. This spell is stackable to 4 points, and is not compatible with other weapon-improving spells.

# IV. INITIATE MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS FOR INITIATION

The prospective Initiate must have been a lay member for at least a year, and must know Hide in Cover, Move Silently, and Net Attack/Parry at 50% or more. He must then convince the Initiate under whom he worships to sponsor him the next time that a Rune Priest officiates at ceremonies. Abstract this as a roll of D100 of POW + CHA plus 1 for each 1000 Lunars given to the cult and 1 for each worshipper recruited for the cult by the applicant and then divide the total by three and multiply it by five. A roll equal to or less than the result on D100 means success. Applicants who fail the roll must wait for another season. Applicants who fail twice have lost the trust of Krarsht and are fed to her children.

# REQUIREMENTS TO REMAIN INITIATED

The new Initiate is called a Lip. Once accepted, he must restate his vows to the Waiting Mouth and his complete loyalty to the cult. The new vow is of utmost seriousness, and Initiates will be warned (once) that they now never will be allowed to leave the cult alive.

A Lip must sacrifice 2 points POW each week to Krarsht. If this sacrifice is not performed, a Krarshtide spirit will hunt down the offender and hound him until either he is driven mad or dies, or until he returns to explain to his Drool or his temple.

Lips must provide two sacrifices to Krarsht per season.

# MUNDANE BENEFITS

Initiates in good standing who have been in a temple for three years or more and who have followed cult dictates may be provided with their own Drool or be sent out along with a Rune Priest to establish one or more new Drools. They also will receive a small shrine to Krarsht.

All Initiates have better access to training than do lay members, since they have proved their devotion.

# SKILLS

The following skills will be available at every temple:

***Half Normal Price*** - Acid Brewing, Camouflage, Climbing, Composite Bow, Dart Throwing, Jumping, Light Crossbow Attack, Lock Picking, Poison Brewing, Spot Hidden, Spot Trap, Thrown Dagger, Trap Set/Disarm, and Weapon Making.

Lips will be trained in the following cult special skills:

## Bribery 05%

The knowledge skill Bribery may be taught to a person up to his Oratory percentage or to 50%, whichever is lower. Bribery is taught to Initiates and Rune Masters for free; it is also taught occasionally to non-cultists for 500/1000/EXP. A D100 roll equal to or less than the Bribery skill successfully bribes the target. A critical hit bribes the target without leaving him knowing that he has been bribed: the bribery will not show up quickly if the target is questioned. It will show up by Divination.

## Sense Order 05%

This ability is first learned to 5% ability plus perception bonus, and rises only through experience. Success in this skill allows

the user to sense the presence of concentrated Order; it does not trigger for the background radiation of the natural world, but does alert the user in the presence of special magical items of Order or of Initiates and Rune-levels of such cults. This skill is effective to a range of 15m. Successful users will receive a vague sense of unease and the knowledge that Order is near.

Cost: time. Available only to cultists.

## Brew Pratzim

This knowledge skill successfully used allows the user to brew five handfuls of pratzim for each person participating in the process. The brewing takes four hours, and requires a SIZ 3 amount of blood for each participant. A Rune Priest must provide the necessary Krarshtkid spittle as the base for the potion.

Cost: time. Available only to cultists.

## Teeth of Krarsht 0%

These special cult throwing weapons are designed to administer poisons from a distance. They are disc-like, with six sharp points arranged equally around the perimeter (each representing one of the Devourer’s legs.) The weapon does 1D4 damage plus the effect of the poison. Basic skill is 0% plus any attack bonus. The training cost for this weapon is 100/300/900/EXP for cultists; non-cultists will be taught only to 25% for a flat sum of 1800 Lunars. Teeth of Krarsht can be made by any worshipper with 25%+ Weapon Making skill.

# VI. RUNE LORD MEMBERSHIP GENERAL STATEMENT

The Rune Lord of Krarsht is called a Jaw, and is responsible for successful completion of cult contracts. A contract to Krarsht occurs whenever any worshipper of Krarsht interacts with the world, for the worshipper in accepting the way of the Hungry One has agreed to further the power of Krarsht both during and after life. More narrowly, the cult undertakes deeds for non-cultists which those ambitious, jealous, or greedy souls may be too squeamish or too much under suspicion to perform for themselves. This might be an assassination or murder, a kidnapping, (rarely) a theft, the spread of rumor or gossip, and so on. The cult will undertake to perform these contracts to its utmost power, because it knows that every such contract paves the way for more Chaos in the world.

A contract will either be ‘one-legged’ or ‘six-legged.’ For a negotiated price, the cult will attempt to complete a one- legged contract once and only once. For six times the price, the cult will agree to a six-legged contract, to be attempted until successful. The cult will never decline any contract which it perceives will further the will and domain of Krarsht and of Chaos generally.

A Jaw is contacted through the local shrine Initiates. The client or contractee will never meet the Jaw. Once the veracity of the client has been established, the Initiate will arrange an interview at a safe place, and there question the client by using a long and constantly improved list of questions. A scribe may copy the client’s answers, or the Jaw actually may be listening from behind a partition. Once the list of questions is ended and satisfactory payment made (50% in advance, 50% upon completion), the client never is seen again.

Jaws sometimes are required by the cult to maintain a public identity, though never in regions dominated by Storm Bull worshippers. The public cover permits a Jaw to be intimately acquainted with religious, political, and economic conditions in an area, and it is said that experienced Jaws know years in advance just who their clients will be. The Jaw never makes any contact with a prospective client, though a layman may well do so. Just as with the Waiting Mouth, the Jaw is patient.

Entire political structures may be infested with Krarsht worshippers; even then, none will know the Jaws.

# REQUIREMENTS FOR ACCEPTANCE

Krarsht requires her Jaws to have 90% ability in one missile weapon, Move Quietly, Camouflage, Trap Set/Disarm, and Hide in Cover. They must be able to brew a potion or acid to at least POT 10, and have 15+ POW.

When the requirements are met, the temple priest will assemble a quorum of their number to examine the applicant. There will also be 4D6 Krarshtkind present. The applicant must then convince them of his worthiness, abstracted for game purposes as a roll of 0100 equal to or less than POW + CHA divided by 2 plus 1 per contract previously brought to the temple by the applicant. If the roll is not successful, then the applicant waits at least one season before trying again. If the second attempt does not succeed, the applicant will be devoured by the assembled mass of Krarshtkind.

# RESTRICTIONS

Jaws may marry only within the cult, and then only with someone of Lip status or greater. They must fulfill or be working at all contracts to which they have committed the cult, and must make at least one contract per season should their workload fall below a level determined by the High Priest of the temple. Most Jaws will live a disguised life in a community; they will not be able to absent on long journeys and special missions; for that reasons some Jaws will always remain at the temple, both to guard it and to act as a reserve.

# BENEFITS

Jaws have the normal Rune Lord benefits of Power Support and Divine Intervention. Instead of the normal allied spirit, they may ally a Krarshtide (see the associated cults section).

For each weapon skill mastered, Jaws receive one iron weapon of that type (or 5 iron arrows, quarrels, darts, etc.). Jaws keep 40% of their livelihood profits and incidental monies (not cult contract money) for the purpose of keeping paid informants and supporting an occasional Initiate aide.

# SKILLS

The following skills are available to both Rune Lords and Rune Priests:

## Acting 10%

This is a knowledge skill. It costs 500/1000/3000/EXP to learn from its masters; Jaws and Tongues may learn it for half price. When the skill is successfully used, the persona portrayed will seem real and natural to all who see the user. It may be combined with the Disguise skill.

## Disguise 05%

This knowledge skill costs 200/400/800/1600. The successful use means that the character has altered his appearance to all viewers.

# BATTLE MAGIC

A Rune Lord or Rune Priest of Krarsht may learn this battle magic spell for 500 Lunars; it may be taught to non-cultists for 1000 Lunars.

## Image Creation 2 point

*unfocused, temporal, passive, 80m*

This spell creates an image of a humanoid figure, the actions of which will be the actions of the caster of the spell. The image may look different, as when the caster is stranded in the middle of a band of trolls and really wants to look like a troll until he can get away. The image may be cast over the caster, or on any other target with-in the 80m range of the spell.

If the image is intentionally jostled or attacked, it will go away. During the round the enemy took to hit the image and dispel it, the image will provide the target with a 5% additional Defense-add per point of SIZ difference between the image and the target. The maximum image SIZ is 21. Casting the spell requires no motion which would give away the fact that the character is casting a spell.

# VIII. RUNE PRIESTS GENERAL STATEMENT

The Rune Priests, called Tongues, run the cult. They oversee the feeding of sacrifices to the Waiting Mouth, oversee the shrines, and induct new members. Fighters and magicians from the Order cults have rarely invaded the temples of Krarsht with any success.

# REQUIREMENTS FOR ACCEPTANCE

The prospective Tongue must have been an Initiate of four or more years good standing, must Sense Order at 90% or more, Read/Write the local language at 90% or more, and have a POW of 18+.

# RESTRICTIONS

Tongues may marry only from within the cult, to worshippers who are at least Lips (Initiates). They are restricted to DEX x 5% in advancing all DEX-based mundane skills. Priests do not need to personally bring sacrifices to Krarsht.

# BENEFITS

Priests live at the regional temple when they are not travelling on cult business. When there they receive free room and board.

# RUNE SPELL COMPATIBILITY

Rune Priests of Krarsht have access to all standard 1 point Rune spells. They cannot summon Small Elementals, but they can call up a Krarshtkid who will act as an elemental would (see the associated cults section).

Tongues may use the following cult special spells:

## Defend Against Law 1 point

*15 minutes, range 160m, reusable, non-stackable*

This spell adds 30% to the defense (as does the Shimmer battle magic spell) of one being who is fighting against one or more followers of Law/Order. This spell will not work against Chaotic beings.

## Face Law 1 point

*15 minutes, 160m, reusable, non-stackable*

This spell will affect only lay members of Krarsht. The target will stand his ground and fight the lawful foe he faces, even if he would ordinarily run.

## Chomping 1 point

*15 minutes, touch, reusable, stackable*

For each point of POW up to 4 put into the spell, the target will do an additional 1D6 damage with a bite and increase his attack chance 10%. The target’s teeth will grow longer and sharper, and the chomper will be able to impale as per the rules. This spell often is used in conjunction with Venom Bite.

## Tongue 2 points

*15 minutes, voice, reusable, non-stackable*

This spell allows the target’s tongue to be used as a weapon. The tongue has a range of 3m, and will have an attack chance of the target’s DEX x 5 to succeed. If so succeeding, the attacker’s POW must overcome the POW of the defender. If succeeding, the defender takes 4D3 in Disruption-like damage.

## Sweat Acid 2 point

*15 minutes, touch, reusable, non-stackable*

A successful cast causes the target’s skin to secrete an acid whose potency equals the caster’s POW. The target or the items he carries or wears will not be affected by the acid, but beings or foreign items who touch the target will suffer the effect of the acid.

## Venom Bite 2 points

*15 minutes, touch, reusable, non-stackable*

The target of this spell injects a poison of potency equal to the caster’s POW on a successful bite attack which does damage. The target will be temporarily immune to the poison’s effects for the duration of the spell.

# SUBSERVIENT CULTS SPIRIT OF REPRISAL

Krarshtides appear as shadowy, palely luminous images of the Mother Mouth, identical in form to the Krarshtkids below. Each spirit has a POW of 2D6+12. In use, these spirit attack by means of spirit combat. If they succeed in an attack and their victim does not, they may attempt to drive the victim insane. To do this they must make another POW vs. POW attack, just as in spirit combat. If they again succeed, thoughts and terrors of Chaos devour the victim’s mind, driving him insane. Those who go insane traditionally kill themselves, but they are in any event no longer a threat to the Maw.

A Krarshtide has 3D6 INT. A Jaw of Krarsht may choose to use one of these spirits as an allied spirit. If they do not succeed, they will be subject to the spirit’s insanity attack.

# KRARSHTKIDS

From the parts of the Mother hacked off by Storm Bull in the Great Darkness grew the Krarshtkids. Resembling (but much smaller) the Waiting Mouth, a Krarshtkid has a central body 1 m in diameter with six legs jutting out around its perimeter at roughly equal spacings. These creatures can eat anything but favor loam, clay, sand, and limestone. They are the primary builders of the underground Krarsht temples. As they eat, mature Krarshtkids make individual 3m diameter tunnels, turning the earth they munch (through their digestive tracts) to a form of stone with which they line their tunnel walls. A younger Krarshtkid may eat a tunnel as small as 1 m in diameter. Tongues frequently choose Krarshtkids as allied spirits, in which case use the INT + POW stats for the Krarshtides.

### *Characteristics Average*

STR 2D6+6 13

CON 3D6 10-1l

INT 3D6 10-11

POW 2D6+12 19

DEX 3D6+6 16-17

SIZ 7 Move 3 Hit Points 11

01-02 F LEG 3/4

03-04 RF LEG 3/4

05-06 RR LEG 3/4

07-08 B LEG 3/4

09-10 LR LEG 3/4

11-12 LF LEG 3/4

13-20 BODY 7/6

### *Weapon SR Attk% Damage Parr% Pts*

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Fang | 7 | 50% | 2D6 \* | - - |
| Tongue | 6 | 75% | \*\* | - - |
| Spit | 1 | 80% | \*\*\* |  |

\* Fangs - when a successful bite does damage to the target, the potency of the poison (equaling the CON of the Krarshtkid) will try to overcome the CON of the target. If successful, the target will be paralyzed for 20-minus- CON days.

\*\* Tongue - a hit by the tongue will then attack the POW of the target. If successful, the target will take 4D3 damage - In a Disruption spell.

\*\*\* Spit- the spit of the Krarshtkid is the pratzim base which the Initiate learns to brew. This will entangle the victim if successful.

# ASSOCIATED CULTS PRIMAL CHAOS

See the separate cult write-up for Primal Chaos.

# BLACK FANG BROTHERHOOD

The brothers of the Black Fang found much to admire about Krarsht, and they occasionally appear at local shrine services. Many Black Fang schemes require sub-contracting particular skills or contacts from the Hungry One. In return for profitable co-operation with a probably continent-wide organization, the Brotherhood provides these two spells:

## Concealment 2 points

*15 minutes, 160m, reusable, non-stackable*

This spell combines Invisibility and Silence, and makes the Invisibility passive. If the character protected by this spell attacks with missile, melee, or magic, he becomes visible in the first strike rank of the melee round in which he attacks and will disappear after the last strike rank of that round unless engaged in melee. In any round the character disengages from melee, he will disappear again at the end of the round of disengagement.

## Vision 2 points

*15 minutes, 160m, reusable, non-stackable,*

This spell gives a mobile viewpoint up to 240m away from the spirit of the recipient of the spell, as described in the rules.

# MISCELLANEOUS NOTES BUILDING A TEMPLE

When a Tongue of Krarsht has satisfied himself that a new temple is needed, and has secured a surface area proper for the comings and goings of the cult, he consecrates the site in a brief ceremony. The consecration notifies Krarsht that a new temple is needed. For months thereafter, Krarshtkids will tunnel to-ward the temple-to-be’s location, and then start on its construction without further prompting by the Tongue. Krarsht will reveal the completion of the complex and its only-then-existing entrance in a vision to the consecrating priest.

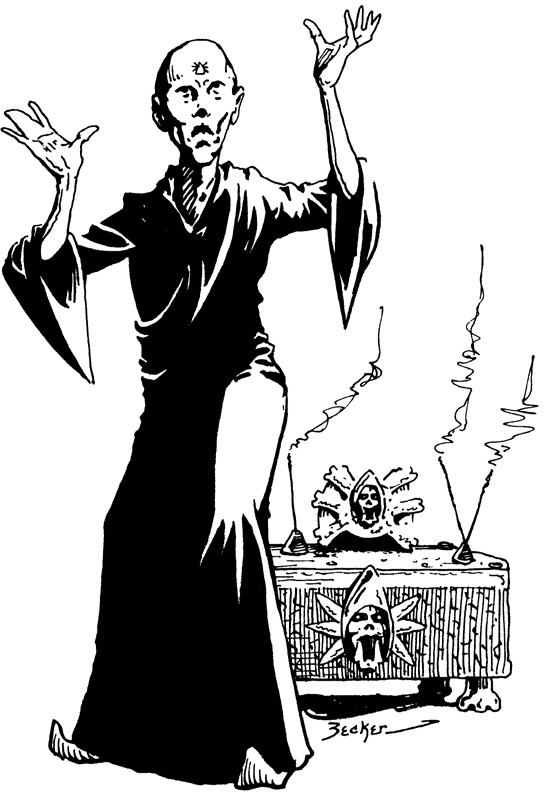
A temple of Krarsht is built to Krarsht’s specifications, which always change in arrangement. There are quarters for the Rune Masters of the temple, the ceremonial halls, and the feeding pits for the Krarshtkids, and many labyrinthine connecting tunnels, and tunnels which go nowhere. Pits open with-out warning, and streams occasionally break through in unexpected places. The first exploration of a Krarsht temple is both a sacred thrill and a mortal terror for the consecrating Tongue.

# DIVINE INTERVENTION

Krarsht is proud, and wants no worshipper to avoid becoming her when that is his destiny. But she is willing to help a mission occasionally. She does not provide normal Divine Intervention for followers. If a follower asks for her intervention and she deigns to give it, she will send 2D3 Krarshtkids and 1D3 Krarshtides to her worshipper. For 15 minutes he will have nominal control of the beings, as a member of another cult might control an elemental. After that time, the beings return to whence they came.

# THE HALLS OF KRARSHT

Some say, though none but Krarsht will know, that all of the subsurface world is honeycombed by the servants of the Hungry One, and it is in fact likely that at least some major river valleys of Glorantha are crisscrossed by her underground ways. The dwarves, though loath to talk of their own affairs, have a few times encountered the Krarshtkids, if not their worldly masters or other-worldly Mistress. It is known, though, that the dwarves prefer granite, marble, and basalt as structural elements, while the Krarshtkids find such hard materials to impede the Mobility component of their make-up.

Philosophers point out that lack of ventilation in the great lateral connecting tunnels surely makes impossible all physical and underground movement between the temples by any but the Krarshtkids. Others are not so sure. If the connectors do not serve a purpose now, may they not in the future? Is Krarsht not merely a surviving Chaos God, but the Chaotic parallel to Arachne Solara herself? And will Krarsht’s webs of nothingness be shown to bind all Glorantha in some unimaginable way at the end of Time? Stories are told of tunnels which open the ways to Hell, and other tunnels which open to strange places without gods. More is said, but it is fanciful.

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# BLACK FANG RELATIONS

Though relations with the Brotherhood are nominally cordial, Krarsht worshippers find the membership of this great crime ring undisciplined and never expose any inner secrets to it. It will sell skills to selected members of the Brotherhood, but reserves the right to reject any such application without comment. Skills are sold at ordinary rates.

The few Black Fang members who actually know of Krarsht see the cult as admirably performing what seem to be incomprehensibly long-range actions. Individuals of the cult never enjoy the fruits of crime, and have about them an austerity which borders on the disgusting.

Since Krarsht practices little organized crime (such as per week levies, disposal of stolen goods, prostitution, etc.) and Black Fang practices little else, the two cults rarely collide on questions of policy or execution.