

Blood of Pangea Opherian Scrolls

Adventures in the Tradition of Dark Fantasy

by

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Die
House
Rules

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For the lovely and capable
Robyn, who stuck with this side project
and made it all the better with
her ideas, insights, and enthusiasm...

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and, luckily for us, in
the public domain as befits a classic!

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INTRODUCTION

This is another supplement to the Blood of Pangea game and, as such, requires the original rulebook. As always, it offers new content while leaving as much as possible to the individual judge, who can mine its pages for useful items or begin an entirely new setting in the world it imagines; sword and sorcery with a darker tone...

DARK FANTASY

By the early 1960's, society was changing, and the sword and sorcery genre changed along with it, giving rise to a new kind of fantasy that was as turbulent as the decade itself. Instead of earthly heroes who battled evil and set things right, this type imagined tragic anti-heroes in an amoral universe fighting to survive.

Perhaps it was a changing culture. Or maybe the creeping cynicism infecting everything as an old world died. Either way, it resulted in a genre where mankind struggled against an indifferent cosmos as mere pawns in the hands of callous powers, and the best anyone could hope for was to live for the moment and avoid the worst suffering.

There were several variants, some more comical and light-hearted considering the subject matter involved. But most employed at least one of the following as inspiration for their own:

- (1) An ancient, decadent race on the verge of extinction who dabbled in dark sorceries and entered into pacts with the lords of Chaos.
- (2) Emerging human kingdoms living in the shadow of this fading empire and fighting for supremacy, often against each other.
- (3) An amoral universe governed by competing forces of Law and Chaos knowing only an eternal struggle for balance despite the misery caused.



(4) Doomed anti-heroes, often with the best of intentions, making tragic choices and leaving great suffering in their wake.

(5) And finally, a willingness to explore the darker side of human nature, whether the cursed, criminal, or drug addicted.

This is the stuff of fantastic literature, but also good role-playing, because it focuses on the character, who is both accomplished and flawed as befits the anti-hero. These are always fun to play.

This later period in fantasy was diverse. However, even charming scoundrels in a lawless city owe much to the above ideas about decadent empires and criminal anti-heroes. Indeed, the tragic anti-hero stems from a rich tradition, and the infusion of these elements into the genre has only made it more engaging and, arguably, more human!

POLYHEDRAL DICE

Optionally, players can use special polyhedral dice to calculate damage and similar events. These come in assorted shapes and are commonly used in role-playing, being easy enough to convert:

DIE	USED FOR...	DIE	USED FOR...
4-sided (d4)	minor traps	10-sided (d10)	strong poison#
6-sided (d6)	item cost*	12-sided (d12)	common feats
8-sided (d8)	weak poison	20-sided (d20)	severe trauma#

*Also, whenever a single die is called for (i.e., 1 in 1d6)

#Variable; may include stronger poison or mechanical traps

Common feats (d12) include the full range of combat or non-combat actions, being easily converted from 2d6. Otherwise, damage from poison or traps can be assigned as befits the situation at hand.

OPHERIAN SCROLLS

This book uses the (optional) Khul-Dur setting of Pangea, imagining an ancient island inhabited by the remains of the Opherian empire, now collapsing before the emergent Younglings. This race practiced powerful magic and made wicked pacts, serving Chaos in a land where the balance between life and death is precarious and violent.

The players become winged Mahara, decadent Opherians, or clever and resourceful Younglings. Along the way, they will run afoul of terrible enemies and even meet the agents of Law and Chaos, taking sides in a never-ending struggle for power. Or perhaps they only serve themselves, fighting to preserve the cosmic Balance. Anything is possible...

I. ANTI-HEROES

Dark fantasy is less humanistic (and human-centered) than traditional sword and sorcery. Accordingly, magic and non-human races feature more prominently, if somewhat less pleasantly. In this spirit, players can choose from any one of the following non or semi-human races, each with their own unique culture, history, and abilities:

RACE	ABILITIES	NOTES
Mahara	flight	beautiful winged humanoids
Opherian	by house	corrupt, semi-human race
-Iteeli	pact	earth-bound, sworn to Myrx
-Ktula	pact	followers of sexless Ftan
-Lluth	pact	given to the air mistress Xiag
-Thule	pact	sacred house of war (Targ)
Youngling	stamina	widespread, fully human race

RACES OF KHUL-DUR

The MAHARA are a race of winged humanoids originating along the rocky western cliffs of Khul-Dur. They are generally human (Youngling) in appearance and, indeed, most men find them exotic and beautiful, although successful cross-breeding is unheard of.

A cliff-dwelling race, the Mahara are natural gliders, using their birdlike wings to fly at 30', noting that they must land for 1d6+1 rounds once every 5 rounds in flight or hovering. This precludes the use of armor and shield, for they operate as thieves/corsairs and cannot employ heavier items in any event. The Mahara enter into no pacts.

The OPHERIANS are a slender, pale race of beings. Although basically human in appearance, they have an exotic (and almost elfin) visage some find beautiful and others unnerving and disdainful as befits such an ancient and aristocratic people. They long ago made pacts with the many demon lords and carry power through their bloodlines:

The PALE HOUSES of Opheria represent the old dynastic lines carefully preserved through sorcery and selective breeding (which has doubtless led to their ultimate degeneration). Although generally amoral, individual exceptions exist, noting that Opherian culture is bound by tradition that values hierarchy and otherwise keeps the peace.

ITEELI is the earthbound house sworn to dark Myrx, the Dirt Lord and ultimate keeper of the dead. As a noble house, they are responsible for burials and the public funeral rite, knowing the names of the ancient gods that protect the Opherian afterlife. Iteeli characters read from the secret RHYME OF MYRX, using it once per day as their pact allows.