

# The Cults NetBook

by

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## Introduction

Well, finally here it is, the first edition of the cults net.book. I've worked hard with it, so I hope you enjoy it. I have seen very many things for role playing games on the Internet, but I never saw anything that could be used as encounters or bases for adventures, at least not in this way. What you will find here is a collection of cults, secret societies that worship a god, a creature, or an item. Unfortunately, not too many people contributed to this NetBook, so there are only 10 cults compiled here, although most of them are very complete. Note that some cults were changed in order to not violate any copyright policies of RPG development companies.

## Copyrights

There's not much to say here, really. This guide is *not* copyrighted. Just please distribute this file, unaltered, and don't charge any money for it. If you want to add things to this guide, just contact me and I will include your additions in the next edition of this NetBook. Thanks to all contributors!

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# Part One: Evil Cults

## Tarigath

### *Worships*

Tyaa.

If you need more information then please go to <http://www.geocities.com/TimesSquare/4777/gods.htm>.

### *Known to Society*

Very Secret, 5% of society is familiar with it.

### *Frequency*

Not very widespread, only about 25% of cities have a "base" in them.

### *Organization*

2 Leaders, currently both are friends. When this is not the case, the organization falls into chaos due to leadership quarrels.

### *Description*

This organization is still run by its two founders. It does not have a long history. It supports evil and chaos by supporting Tyaa, the evil bird goddess. All the members of the organization are women, because their patron diety is worshipped only by women. All men seeking to join are invited into the guild hall and promptly sacrificed.

### *Special Hindrances*

Only evil women may join this cult. All potential new members have their gender and alignment checked by spells.

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## Black Rose

### *Worships*

The last "wish" of Eldaran Blackrose's spirit.

### *Known to Society*

Very secretive, almost no one knows about it.

### *Frequency*

Not very widespread; wherever dwarves are killed The Black Rose is.

### *Organization*

The cult is organized in cells of no more than five Cloaks so that if caught, only one cell will be captured. The cells report to a Shadow who will provide assistance to any cell that needs expert help on a particular contract. The Shadows themselves are organised into cells and they in turn reports to a Master who finally reports to the conclave and the Grand Master.

The conclave is made up of each of the twelve Masters and the Grand Master.

- Cloak levels 1 to 4.
- Shadows levels 5 to 10; membership of the cult for a minimum of five years.
- Masters 11 level and over; membership in the cult for a minimum of fifteen years.
- Grand Master; the highest level Master in the conclave.

### *Description*

The elven shaman Tymor Goldenbark found and rescued a spirit on the ethereal plane. The spirit was of Eldaran Blackrose, an elf and former hero / priest of Mask. The spirit had been lost on the ethereal for many years after his physical body was captured and tortured to death by a dwarven raiding party. With his dying breath he cursed the dwarves and swore fell oaths to his dark god that he would have vengeance on the dwarves. With his release the spirit promised Tymor Goldenbark that if he would follow its teaching and swear to help the spirit gain its vengeance the spirit would give the shaman powers and knowledge.

Goldenbark returned to the prime material plane and gathered about him several of the more disreputable of his kin and started to hunt dwarves. The dwarves where always tortured before being killed in the same way that the dwarves of long ago killed Eldaran Blackrose. That is the hands and feet where cut off whilst the victim was still alive and then a flaming arrow was shot into the chest to finish the job.

The cult stayed as a death squad against the dwarves for a short period of time until they realised that wealth and power could be gained by their skills as assassins. Now the cult is willing to kill anyone for a price, except fellow elves, but the main

preoccupation is still to kill dwarves. Dwarves are still killed in the ritual way but methods vary with other victims. The prices of assassination vary depending on the wealth and position of the victim but for dwarves there is always a large discount.

The membership of the cult is limited to moon elves, no other race of elves are admitted and definitely no half elves are ever admitted. The classes of the members vary but the priests are always members of Mask, and a large percentage of members are thieves. The other classes are also represented, the current head of the cult is a 16th level wizard. All members of the cult are proficient with the dagger.

#### *Special Hindrances*

A member can call upon any other member of the cult of the same rank or lower to give shelter and aid in times of need. The cult pays 70% of the contract money to the members who took part in the contract, the other 30% is kept to further the cults expansion. Members who are injured on a contract and return to the cult safe house will be healed for free, if healing is available.

Once you join the cult you are in it for life. If injured on a contract and unable to leave the scene then one of the other members will send the injured member to join Mask in the afterlife. Anyone who informs on the cult or one of its members will be hunted down and killed Slowly. If caught by the authorities expect a quick and painful death.

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## **Church of Rauma, God of the Downtrodden**

#### *Worships*

Rauma (really an aspect of Myrkul, but they don't know that).

#### *Known to Society*

80% of poor people, 10% of the well-to-do.

#### *Frequency*

In cities where it exists, 50% of peasant populace will worship it.

#### *Organization*

Hidden from followers, but one priest in every town with connections to a priest of Myrkul who never appears himself (usually a small temple of Myrkul is hidden nearby).

#### *Description*

To explain why Myrkul would be worshipped by normal people... Rauma advocates the eventual overthrow of the rich, the way the cult works is to get a large peasant following by proclaiming to be the god of the poor, then gradually the priests work the worshippers into a mindset that the rich don't deserve what they have... and the poor outnumber the rich. Then usually bloodshed follows, with Myrkul quite happy about it all. Usually this cult is best used by introducing it as a normal church, then having peasants come in conflict with PCs so that the PCs notice the real attitude of the church. The symbol of Rauma is three circles, two on top and one meeting them underneath.

#### *Special Hindrances*

Once the true nature of the church is revealed, the leader must sacrifice themselves to Myrkul for their failure. This will happen if more than 50% of the followers leave after the PCs expose their folly.

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## **The Paratheo-Anametamystikhood of Eris Esoteric (Poe)**

#### *Worships*

Eris/Discordia, the goddess of chaos.

#### *Known to Society*

15%.

#### *Frequency*

Small cabals in many areas.

#### *Organization*

1 Polyfather, 5 Holy Apostles, 1 Chancellor or High Priest per cabal, the latter is a chancellor appointed by the Polyfather, a number of deacons and disciples in roughly a 1:5 ratio.

### *Description*

Many small groups of people following in their own ideals of chaos. The organisation of the ranks is merely to show involvement, understanding and the acceptance of the philosophy.

### *Special Hindrances*

Must be Chaotic and have a wisdom of 8. Deacons are always of at least 3rd level, chancellors of at least 5th, and only 5 apostles at one point in time may exist, those being at least 12th level. The polyfather(1), is at least a level 15 priest of Discord. (further information later) Immune to any form of anyone to try to detect his alignment or of lies.

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## **The Dark Druids**

### *Worships*

The Witch Queen.

### *Known to Society*

Author doesn't tell, but read the description.

### *Frequency*

Same as above.

### *Organization*

Read the description.

### *Description*

#### History and Beliefs

The organisation of the Dark Druids stretches way back into the annals of history. Their original beliefs were actually quite passive, believing that just as everything lives, all things, in the fulfillment of time, must end. They believed that it was a perversion of nature to tend to the sick, or feed the starving, or even warn someone about the large boulder about to land on their head. To put it simpler, they were the ultimate in Non-interventionists.

Then one day, as in all things, something happened that changed the way the world looked at the Dark Druids and at the way the Dark Druids looked at the world.

It was during a siege at a city (time and place are now unknown). The populace of the city were starving, the Dark Druids at their temple in the city were not, and chose not to share their food with the populace of the city. Things turned from nasty to worst and all but one druid survived. That druid went immediately into isolation living on an island.

Nothing was heard about the Dark Druids for a few decades, until a village (Zebonis) near the island started having mysterious deaths.

Eventually the cause of the deaths was tracked down to a temple on the island, where a small band of Dark Druids lived. The temple was destroyed by the local population. 12 druids survived the slaughter and pronounced a powerful curse upon the dead body of their abbot (unknown to everyone this curse inhabited the body of a baby, who later became the Witch Queen). It was later found out that the people who mysteriously died had a form of plague which spread through the area soon after.

Since that day the Dark Druids have followed the practice of actively speeding along death. Therefore the religion has been outlawed and banned, hunted down and nearly wiped out several times only to come back stronger and stronger.

Their more current history is closely woven with that of the Empire of Legolis.

### **6716**

The Dark Druids, an outlawed religious sect of priests of a diety of death, managed to infiltrate some of their followers into the Emperors private chambers in the palace at the capitol Legolithiapolis. Once there they managed to capture the Emperor and his four generals and replace them with exact clones under the sway of the Great Dark Druid himself. A reign of terror began that night, unnoticable at first but with each passing day securing the Great Dark Druid's hold upon the Empire of Legolis.

Several years passed before normal life and the liberties of men were infringed upon at which time a Duke of a nearby state (a boyhood friend of the Emperor) chose to visit the Emperor and discovered that the Emperor was not who he portrayed to be. The Duke quickly left the capitol and retired to his own domains and began investigations into the person who claimed to be Emperor. After much work and consultation with the gods, the duke discovered the truth behind the Great Dark Druid's schemes and, calling his friends within the nobility, declared war upon the Capitol and fake emperor. Unfortunately the Great Dark Druid had been very busy during his years in control, placing loyal followers in positions of power within the structure of the Empire.

### **6722**

A great battle was fought on the plains and walls surrounding the capitol. For three months various offensives were made by the Duke against the forces of the Great Dark Druid until neither side was truly capable of victory. The Duke, sick of the thousands of deaths that had occurred, chose to retire from the field of battle and instead, knowing that his enemy was

incapable of doing anything, split the empire into various fragments placing trusted friends of his upon the thrones of what in future years was to become the kingdoms of Peltam and Forlard. The Duke and the Fake Emperor of Legolis signed a treaty soon after the war declaring a state of non-aggression between the new kingdoms and the Empire of Legolis.

So began the rule of the Dark Druids placing Puppet emperors upon the throne for some 120 years.

### **6838**

The kingdom of Peltam under the rule of Llewellyn requested that a group of powerful nobles from within his kingdom seek out and destroy any dark druid incursions into his country. The result of this request were two major wars against Legolis effectively crippling its power and an epic attack upon the Dark Druids secret home base within a mountain. After the first battle between Peltam and Legolis a powerful being known as the Witch Queen was inadvertently released from her magical prison at the same time releasing the once Emperor of Legolis and his four generals, all of whom promptly vanished. Soon after the Dark Druids withdrew to their mountain base to contend with a challenger to the office of Great Dark Druid. The result was that the Great Dark Druid was defeated by the Witch Queen who then persuaded the Dark Druids to worship her (a deity in her own right) instead of the diety of death. None know whether the original Great Dark Druid died at the Witch Queen's hands or fled to safety. Soon after these events the nobles from Peltam attacked the mountain base of the Dark Druids whilst large forces from Peltam and Forlard attacked Legolis in an attempt to divide the forces of the Dark Druids. The nobles managed to infiltrate the mountain and with the help of the diety of death render the Witch Queen mortal in an attempt to destroy her, unfortunately during the fight with the Witch Queen one of the nobles in his haste managed to banish her to the astral plane hoping that she would be lost forever. The Dark Druids immediately lost all of their priestly powers due to the banishment of the Witch Queen.

The god of death, their earlier patron then sealed all the dark druids (that were there) in the mountain, confining them to exile, never to walk upon the surface of the planet again.

For the next 87 years what is left of Legolis is in ruins no one count or baron is around long enough to leave a lasting impression. The entire nobility of the so called empire can be challenged by those of lesser station and the phrase 'Might is Right' becomes a cold hard reality.

### **6925**

Eight nobles from Peltam enter and take over a small piece of Legolis, over the next couple of years they gain partial control over all of Legolis.

### **6931**

The eight nobles become demi-gods after discovering the Temple of an ancient diety of good that was once worshipped in Legolis.

### **6934**

The Witch Queen returned in the body of an innocent woman during some dark ceremony carried out by a secretive group of Dark Druids. She then immediately attacks the eight demipowers of Legolis. Knowing that as a god herself they were unable to harm her she decides to give them a choice, either become one of her followers and gain unimaginable power, or die an eternal death at her hands. From the eight four chose to join her and four chose to stand instead for the principles of good.

At this point a hitherto unknown entity entered the picture, calling herself 'She who dreams' stated that the eight demi gods had been tempted beyond their capability to understand and somehow stripped the Witch queen of all her powers, a conversation then took place between the eight demi gods and 'She who dreams', the result of which was that all eight became gods in their own rights, four became evil and four became good, the eight were then sent off to some other dimension, where all trace of them was lost.

### **7295**

Present Day.

### *Special Hindrances*

Only Humans can become Dark Druids, the reason being that of all the demi-human races, they all embrace life, this is shown by the fact that they are all longer living than humans.

Humanoids cannot become Dark Druids simply because they usually cannot comprehend things like theology, religion, etc., although humanoids are usually used as cannon fodder by the Dark Druids whenever they have need of an army.

All weapons, shields, armour and magical items of the Dark Druids are, at the least, quality items. As the Dark Druid gains levels their items become more potent, some becoming magical in nature, increasing in power as the Dark Druid gains levels. The only drawback to this is that the Dark Druid must rededicate all of his equipment to the Witch Queen once a week and at a recognised temple. If the Druid fails in this task then his items begin to lose thier potency (A comparison can be made to Drow items).

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## **The Red Cord**

### *Worships*

No one really, just they want to get rid of foreigners.

#### *Known to Society*

Almost everyone knows it exists.

#### *Frequency*

Not shown by the author.

#### *Organization*

None specific.

#### *Description*

This cult was prevalent in the lands of Turmish several years ago. The cult started quite small over two hundred years ago when a small group of nobles and priests decided that the influence of foreigners and none humans was starting to affect the traditional ways of life and must be stopped. They decided to form a secret organisation to dissuade foreigners for settling in the land. This started by making goods and services hard to obtain and when this did not work then more drastic means were applied, setting fire to crops and killing live stock where used if this did not work then the settlers were killed. The killings were done in a ritualistic way by strangling with a red silken cord and the cord left tied around the neck with special knot as a warning to others to leave.

The cult flourished for many years until they started to kill their own people who had dealings with foreigners. As many influential persons at court made their money from overseas trade then the government decided to act. They set up a secret organisation of their own to track down and bring back dead or alive the leaders of the cult. The operation was a qualified success in that the government managed to capture or kill most of the leaders and many of their henchmen but several escaped and went underground.

That is the way things stand at this moment. The government is still trying to eradicate the cult completely but the cult has now changed its targets from foreigners to government officials, members of the aristocracy and members of foreign governments in the land

#### *Membership*

To become a member of the Red Cord the person must be of true Turmish stock and human. They will be approached by a junior member of the cult and sounded out on their feelings towards foreigners and the government. If the answers are to the liking of the questioner then the prospective member will be taken to a place where the more senior members of the cult will question him. If they like the answers then the prospective member will be taken on as a probationary member of the cult. The probation lasts for as long as the cult feels is necessary to prove the persons loyalty and desecration. Once the prospect is accepted by the cult, if he isn't then he's dead, he will be initiated into the mysteries of the cult and can never leave, except by death.

#### *Special Hindrances*

The cult will teach the member all thief skills for free, if available by class, as he raises in levels. The cult will always try to rescue a member captured by the authorities. The cult once entered can never be left. The government and its agents will kill any one suspected of being a member of the cult. Foreign governments will either kill or capture suspected members of the cult found in their lands. Members of the cult never wear armour heavier than leather and may only wear one magical item of protection. Members of the cult are free to use magical spells if they are allowed by class but they are not allowed to use magical weapons. Other magical items are useable depending on class but the victims of the cult must be killed by the Red Cord.

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## Part Two: Neutral Cults

### The Brotherhood of the Shadow

#### *Worships*

God of Shadow Magic.

#### *Known to Society*

Only a few, about 5% of Society knows. But all Shadow Mages must belong to it.

#### *Frequency*

In almost all cities.

#### *Organization*

1 Dark Shadow, 10 Shadows, the rest Shadow Mages.

#### *Description*

This Organization is very secretive. It consists of all Shadow Mages. Those who want to study to become a shadow mage must first find a Shadow Mage sponsor. The Brotherhood is very secretive, only teaching those with the most potential. One can be evil, good or neutral but one must not fight each other while in the confines of Holy ground. Otherwise Good vs. Evil goes on as usual. In other words, Good and Evil Brothers will socialize in holy ground but fight amongst themselves on the outside.

There can be only one Dark Shadow; he is at least of the 20th level, and the only way one can be a Dark Shadow is to fight for the Position. The fight does not have to be to the death. No one can be of a higher level than the Dark Shadow, and one must be a Shadow to challenge the Dark Shadow. The same goes for all Shadow Mages that want to move up in the world. They must challenge.

#### *Special Hindrances*

None showed.

#### *Contributed By*

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### The Guardians of the Eternal Flame

#### *Worships*

The Eternal Flame (a flame that never dies, nor can it be put out; it's other powers are up to the DM).

#### *Known to Society*

0% to 30%, varies with region.

#### *Frequency*

Rare. Only found in areas surrounding their 2 headquarters.

#### *Organization*

2 Oligarchs (one for each sect), 2 inner circles (5 members each, again one circle per sect), 2 outer circles (20 members each, again, one for each sect), then regular members.

#### *Description*

The Guardians of the Eternal Flame were founded over 200 years ago by two brothers, who found the flame burning on a rock on the side of a mountain. They picked up the rock, and brought it back to their keep. Unfortunately, one brother was good, and the other was evil, so they never got along very well. One day the evil brother took a torch, and lit it with the Flame. He ran off with the torch and built his own fortress, some distance from his brothers. After this happened, both brothers founded identical orders (perhaps at the request of the now double flame), one dedicated to good, the other to evil.

The main effort of both orders is to keep the other order from gaining too much power. The Oligarchs are the Original Founders, who have kept their identities hidden from their followers. Apparently, the Flame itself has kept them alive. Both halves of the Flame have taken on the respective alignment of their owners and Guardians. The White Guardians are Neutral Good. The Black Guardians are Neutral Evil. Both Flames are the same color, so the only way to tell them apart is by detect good/evil or by what they are burning on. The Flame of the White Guardians burns on a rock, while the Flame of the Black Guardians burns on wood, and must be kept fed. The Oligarchs choose the Inner Circles, the Inner Circles choose the Outer Circles, the Outer Circles initiate new members. Only people from the towns near the HQ's of the Guardians will know them 30%. Farther away it lessens.

### *Special Hindrances*

The White Oligarch is a high level human ranger. The Black Oligarch is a 24th level human thief. Members of the Inner Circles will be at least 10th level, any class. Members of the Outer Circles will be at least 5th level, any class. Regular members will be anywhere from 0th level up (but few will be very powerful, or else they'd be in the Circles).

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## **The Wolf Cult**

### *Worships*

Wolves (not as a deity but honors them).

### *Known to Society*

About 1-3% of the population have heard of it.

### *Frequency*

Very isolated. Usually away from large centers of civilization. In the author's world, so far there is only one village that has these cultists. The entire village are members, and there is a population of about 30-40 people.

### *Organization*

Governed by priests of any nature religion. (In the author's world, the priests are druids.)

### *Description*

The Wolf Cult is a small, little known cult that springs up mainly in small villages or hamlets. Often, where the cult is present, the entire village will be followers of this cult. Although the cult is best suited to rangers and druids, there are other followers of this cult as well. All members of this cult, upon initiation, must have their right arm scarred. This is done by raking the entire length of the forearm with a wolf's claw. This scar must NEVER be concealed, otherwise the cultist is shamed.

Followers of this cult are mistrustful of large cities and towns, preferring small rural areas instead. None of the hindrances reducing ability scores are applied when dealing with other cult members, for they find the scars to be appealing rather than revolting.

The cult has a very odd sense of ideals, for they consider wolves to be above anything else. They would not even consider harming a wolf (thus the -2 to hit), and revere them as majestic beasts. Wolves do not fear members of this cult, and rarely do they attack cult members (usually only occurs if they are being magically controlled). Many cultists have a wolf as a companion, and these wolves are often well trained. Often, the village or hamlet where the cult is located will have wolf dens and a resident wolf trainer among their ranks. They are a proud cult, and will fight fiercely to defend their homes. They will give their lives to protect a wolf.

### *Special Hindrances*

Cannot wear metal armor. Cannot own more items than they can carry with them. Can go for one day of solid exertion (such as forced march) without any fatiguing effects.

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## **The Spinning Ones**

### *Worships*

Lliira.

### *Known to Society*

Most people have heard of them.

### *Frequency*

Not shown by the author.

### *Organization*

Non-existent; read the description to understand.

### *Description*



All worshippers of Lliira know of the cult, and many people in the towns where they hold their gatherings have heard and witnessed them in their strange rituals.

The gatherings are held frequently in many cities throughout Faerun. The gatherings start when one of the spinning ones has a vision of where to hold the next gathering. The information is passed by word of mouth throughout the city within a day.

The followers gather at the chosen site, usually a disused warehouse, and set up the bands and lights. The lighting is usually provided by local apprentice wizards who have mastered the Dancing Lights and other spells of similar vein, and the bands are usually young bards who are into heavy percussion. The gathering start at dusk and quite often carry on till the dawn.

It has been noted that certain narcotic substances are smoked and swallowed at these gathering. The local authorities in many cities have tried to ban these gatherings due to the disturbance caused to the residents and the narcotic substances sold at the gatherings, because of the suppression by the local authorities the gatherings are of necessity clandestine.

*Special Hindrances*

None shown by the author.

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## Final Note

I know this is not a big collection of cults, but I do think that the cults you found on this book can be very helpful when designing adventures, as here you have encounters and even full bases for adventures. I've worked hard (believe it or not) on passing on the cults that were given to me. Please distribute this file as it is. Any addition should be sent to me via email.

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## Editing Notes

The document has been edited for legibility purposes by

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Spelling errors were removed, and the layout generally edited for consistency and ease of view. Nothing of the contents has been altered, except for some weird language constructs.