

# *DUCKS*

*A Guide to the Durulz*



**RuneQuest**  
THE SECOND AGE

**Glorantha**  
THE SECOND AGE



# RuneQuest

## DUCKS: A GUIDE TO THE DURULZ

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# INTRODUCTION

*Ah and now we turn to the duck. At first glance you might feel the desire to pity the tiny little things. Flightless amongst birds, ignored amongst men and seemingly despised by the powers of Glorantha itself. Should they be any other creature they would deserve your pity.*

*But they do not.*

*Cursed by the gods, hated by our world and set upon by beasts and things and men... the ducks have earned their lot and we must abide by it as well. So I say no, do not pity the duck – avoid it. The words they speak are likely lies and their greasy fingers are never far from theft or treachery. They mimic and mock our ways but they are not worthy of them.*

*If this age does not see the end of them, perhaps the next one will.*

*– Recitain, Tribal teacher of Orlanth*

Whether or not his words are believed by all, Recitain is correct in part when it comes to his summarisation about the worth of the ducks to his people. He speaks of curses, pity and of this age seeing the end of the small, flightless avians. The Orlanthi share many of their settlement watering holes with small duck populations; which skews some of Recitain's views but he is not so biased as to be wrong, either.

The ducks – or *Durulz* – as they sometimes call themselves, are truly cursed by the gods of Glorantha and looked upon as secondary creatures nearly everywhere that they go. Even some of the common laws of Gloranthan physics do not work the same way for the ducks. It is as if the world and its powers

collectively decided to deal the ducks a losing hand. Even so however, the ducks refuse to fold.

The Durulz have had to spread out across the lands of the world to survive, each splintered flock of the Durulz becoming a new plumage or sub-species of the race. They are survivors and pragmatists to the extreme, knowing that if they let their guard down for a second that something in this age would swallow them up – perhaps literally.

Too small and mostly ignored by the dragonewts and Wyrmspeakers, there are almost no ducks within the Empire of Wyrms' Friends. Although they are forced to work hard to get accepted, there are even a few ducks within the God Learners. The vast majority of the Durulz populations of the world are on their own, turning to one another and what few allies they have managed to make over the generations.

Being a Durulz is hard but it makes them harder. If adversity and challenges strengthen those who can overcome them, the ducks are probably the strongest race to be found on Glorantha – even if no one would ever believe it.

## About this Book

This book does what no Gloranthan scholar or God Learner researcher would ever waste their time doing. It peels back the fog surrounding the ducks and their kin, looking at all of the facets of the Imperial Age that they actually play a part in. It looks at their physiology, their culture, their abilities and their stories. Although few would ever dare admit it, the ducks are a diverse and rich race that will one day make a valiant stand against the Darkness, the Faceless Enemy and those of False Life – although other races will always take the laurels and the praise.

This book does not just show the ducks in their natural habitats but also looks at how they interact with others and what makes them interesting and unique Player Characters. Physically puny and not known

for their strength of arms, the ducks have a variety of other tricks and talents that players can now tap into. Essentially, while the world of Glorantha looks down upon them, this book will help make the burden that much more worthwhile.

### Chapter One: What it is to be Duck

Everything that makes up the core being of a common duck; how they came to the place they are now and how they look upon themselves and their situation. This chapter explains what makes the ducks go on each day, what they are seeking out of their lives, what makes them different but the same as their keet cousins and their general physiology.

### Chapter Two: Duck Myths

This chapter looks at what the ducks know about their history but generally are not telling. How most of them were cursed, how the keets gave up their flight willingly and why the Faceless Enemy is a greater threat than any man, Uz or beast.

### Chapter Three:

#### Ducks Across the World

A collection of the largest concentrations of Durulz appearing throughout the world, even in the strangest of locations, this chapter is a detailed look at how the various sub-flocks of Durulz exist in the world of Glorantha.

### Chapter Four: The Scattered Flocks

There are over a dozen different styles and sub-races of Durulz found in Glorantha, from the common wood duck to the ivory mallards and the several types of keet. Each of this sub-species is slightly different in body and mind from their kin, some more than others but they are all looked upon here.

### Chapter Five: Duck Characters

This is a look at how to flesh out and create characters from the various Durulz flocks. It talks about the best ways to make the most out of a duck character and expanded rules on how to create them. The skills, legendary abilities and new and interesting Quirks found here all make duck characters unique and challenging to play.

### Chapter Six: Duck Cults

Although they were cursed and forgotten by one influential god, causing several others to turn away from them, the ducks still have a few of their own cults – a few of which might surprise readers to see doing as well as they have.

### Chapter Seven: Duck Knacks

The ducks were not blessed with their own brand of magic like the dragonewts, the versatility of mankind, the ingenuity of the Mostali, the physique of the Uz or the immortal powers of the Aldryami. They have had to pour themselves and their survivalist attitudes into their abilities and ancestor worship, creating several techniques of hard-living that allow them to accomplish unlikely things in unlikely ways.

### Chapter Eight: The Less-Ignorable

This chapter is a collection of a handful of the more noticeable and notable members of duck and keet society in the Second Age of Glorantha. They could make for fantastic allies to some duck characters, unexpected enemies of others and a small sample of what can become of the Durulz in Gloranth's Second Age.

### Chapter Nine: The Ducks Speak

This chapter is where several vastly different Durulz from the corners of the world speak up about their lives, their lands, their neighbours and their futures. Reading this chapter should help garner some idea as to what it might be like to be one of the Durulz.

## The Fall...and Fall...and Fall of the Ducks

The ducks have lived a very tough existence in the pre-history of Glorantha. Going from high-flying protectors of sky and sea to cursed and wingless creatures that are surrounded on all sides by enemies greater than they are, they are a source of depressing views and bitter anger that seems bottomless at times.

As what is known from what is already written about the ducks and the rest of the Durulz in other Gloranthan tomes and information collections – the worst is yet to come. They are destined to suffer badly in the coming wars between the Empires, the Faceless Enemy that is Chaos will get its fangs and hooks into them and eventually there will even be lands of Men that will put bounties on duck heads and force them deeper into the wilderness than ever before.

All of this badness can seem overwhelming at first but it is a source of potential roleplaying and adventure

ideas for anyone brave (foolish?) enough to choose to play a member of the Durulz race. Whether playing in the final years of the Second Age, when the world comes crashing down around them; or if building upon the first tenets of Ganderland in the dawn of the Second Age – knowing it will be crushed when the Dragonkill Wars begin, getting into the role of a duck is an interesting experience.

Bitter, cynical, callous and belligerent...these are the Durulz of Glorantha's Second Age.



# WHAT IT IS TO BE DUCK

One of the most recognisable and widespread races in Glorantha, the Durulz are one of the building blocks of the events that have shaped the world. Through their often-ignored and commonly downplayed actions, they have been at the foot – or *under* the foot – of the empires, armies and legends of Glorantha. Although no other race in all the world would admit it, not even themselves, the ducks are important.

From the time of the Long Night, when Yelm fell into darkness and the world became the breeding ground for foul things of the Faceless Enemy, the Durulz suffered a powerful curse that took their wings and bound them to the ground like normal creatures. Through a series of decisions (some might call them *bad* decisions); the Durulz fell from the sky forever.

Exactly why the Durulz made these decisions is covered further in the chapter that contains their myths and legends but what they did to the overall mentality and social structure of their people is reflected in several attitudes and activities that seemingly define ‘duckhood’. To truly understand what it means to be a member of the Durulz race one must know about several key duck laws.

The Sky is forbidden. No matter what the Durulz do short of making pacts with the Faceless Enemy, they cannot fly in any way. When Yelm cast us down and sundered Ganderland he made sure that no member of his fellow sky gods would *ever* allow ducks into the air again. That means that no duck would ever even try to fly under the power of his own magics or contraptions – they know it will somehow fail.

Chaos is the Faceless Enemy. Something happened in the Long Night that ingrained a deep hatred for all things Chaos in the Durulz. The Orlanthe have their Hot Storm Wind and somehow it was instilled in the Durulz’s own Storm Bill. Although the fight is led by the Ivory Mallards, no duck can abide the presence of Chaos for long.

Bitterness is an armour. All Durulz know that they are considered a joke, the lowest of the low and it has

formed a palpable cynicism and bitterness in their hearts concerning many of the Big People. Ducks find it useful to be able to shield oneself from their jibes and condescension by going into every situation with a shade of negativity covering their interactions.

Hatred is a weapon. Generations upon generations of ducks being stepped upon, laughed at and ignored can breed a special type of hatred in the hearts of the Durulz. This hatred can replace any idea of mercy or quarter that might stay a duck’s hand. Their ability to redirect the pain and suffering they have endured is their finest weapon.

Trust in the Duckfriends. It takes a special type of Gloranthan to ever do anything for a duck, let alone a large enough group of ducks to earn the title of ‘Duckfriend’. If one is named, that person should be considered a Durulz by the vast majority of the species. Duckfriends are far and few between; they should be cherished. Of course, should a Duckfriend betray that trust, there are no words in Beastspeech for how the ducks will make them suffer.

Ignorance is not bliss, it is the norm. Ducks know from birth that they are going to be looked down upon by the Big People of the world – when they are looked upon at all. No one listens to the plans or rants of a duck. It is more common for a duck’s plan or scheme to be heard, ignored and then reiterated by a Big Person as their own. For most ducks this is only seen as an annoyance for their first few years. It will take that long for a crafty duck to learn to use it. Being hidden and being ignored is all just a matter of *perspective*.

These universal duck laws are considered a constant for all of the Durulz, even the foreign and effete breeds of keets found throughout the islands of Vithela. Although each sub-race of Durulz may have a different reason for holding these laws as part of their sociality, they are present – just another piece of the greater curse that Glorantha has bound to the fate of all Durulz.

What it is to be a Duck

## Durulz Terminology

The ducks and keets of Glorantha have many of their own terms and phrases that stretch across their dialects and cultural differences. Although the translation from Beastspeech to other humanoid dialects might alter these words and phrases, they will remain remarkably similar.

**‘Feathers always grow back’** – This is the phrase that basically explains the survival instincts of the Durulz. No matter what they have to leave behind, they will do their best to survive any encounter.

**Big People** – Slang term for any of the other sentient races of Glorantha that commonly grow taller and more important than ducks do.

**Blackfeathered** – Derogatory slang term for any Durulz that turns against his own people, particularly if they turn to Chaos.

**Duckfriend** – Any non-Durulz that has been granted the social status and trust of the Durulz people. They are marked with an ancient tattoo (in a place they can cover up in public) and are considered to be a treasured member of the species for something miraculous they selflessly did for a group of Durulz without asking for payment.

**Ducktown** – Any part of a larger Big People community that has been set aside for the ducks of the area; often a slum of smaller houses, ponds and muddy paths.

**Faceless Enemy** – Slang term for anything to do with Chaos.

**False Life** – Slang term for anything involved with undeath or necromantic animation.

**Ganderland** – The fabled and ancient ‘ducktopia’ in the sky that was taken from them when they were cursed. Also called Canardela.

**Hungry Folk/Hungry People** – Slang term for any member of the Uz species (including Enlo), on account of how Durulz are frequently hunted for their ‘deliciousness’.

**Little People** – Slang term for any of the sentient races of Glorantha that grow small and short like the Durulz do. Considered a derogatory term by most of these races, as no one likes to be called ‘little’ by a duck.

**Long Night** – Reference term for the Great Darkness that happened after Yelm perished into Darkness.

**Nest of Eight** – The proper term for the Duck pantheon.

**‘No blade is sharper than a duck’s wit’** – The duck saying that means that even the harshest and most dangerous of physical combatants can be out-thought and hopefully overcome.

**Old Shinyhead** – A derogatory slang term for Yelm. The term ‘shinyheaded’ refers to anyone that worships Yelm in particular but any sun-god as well.

**Sky Gods** – Collective term for any Gloranthan god or ancestral entity that is involved with the upkeep or activities of the sky; meaning that they are opposed to the Durulz through Yelm’s curse.

**Stormbill** – A term used to describe brave (or foolish) ducks that swear themselves to the cult of Stormbill (Stormbull).

**‘Swim Under the Enemy’** – A duck phrase that is used to describe how clever ducks will use their natural gifts to avoid most obstacles if they can.

**True Durulz** – The fabled flying Durulz that lived in Ganderland before the race was cast down and cursed by Yelm. There will always be tales of True Durulz roaming the lands but no duck would dare believe it.

**Yelm’s Sentence** – The slang term for the mythic curse that cast the Durulz from the sky.

#### **Keet-specific Terminology**

The following are a handful of terms and phrases that seem to only appear in the keet dialects of Beastspeech, rather than amongst all of the Durulz.

**Ducklands** – Keet slang for anywhere outside of the East Isles that are home to ducks.

**Isle Kin** – Keet slang for the various and diverse breeds of keets that live throughout the Vithelan islands.

**Sacrifice** – The term used to describe how the keets willingly gave up their flight to protect the East Isles from drifting apart.

**Savage** – Derogatory term for those members of the keet tribes who have turned their bitterness into bestial rage or predation.

**The Savaging** – The pact made by the ancient Sorns to betray their kin in order to retain their flight after the Sacrifice.

**‘What was given must be earned’** – The keet phrase that explains how they feel that the Vithelan peoples owe their kind everything that they have in this age. It is the root of their bitterness toward their Big People neighbours.

# Ducktowns

Wherever ducks congregate for longer than a few days' at a time, a ducktown is sure to form. Ducktowns are small (most of the time) communities of ducks that live in roundhouses, cabins and other small habitats around a central water source. Whether it is a riverbed, canal or a series of ponds and wells; there will *always* be water in and around a ducktown. Depending on the amount and current of the water it could be clean, oily or even brackish. The condition of the water makes no difference, just that water is present.

Built much like an Orlanthi town, the roundhouses and steads form the bulk of the community with a few larger buildings and structures used by the whole town. They will sometimes organise small shopping stalls and trading tents but considering that most ducks trade frequently amongst themselves and are highly unlikely to have outsiders willing to trade with them – these are not as common. The ducktown is the only real sense of community a duck has outside of any cult they have chosen to follow.

The families of ducks live in tight quarters and are often forced to farm small fields or paddies, share supplies and protect one another – because no one else would ever dream to do it. It is where ducks know they have a place to live and survive amongst the only others to ever understand their plight; their own kind.

The following pieces of insight into a ducktown help explain some of what it means to be a duck.

## Duckhomes

The 'houses' of duck families are small and squat buildings of a sort that are communal living spaces for normally two to three generations of duck. Ducklings live amongst older siblings, parents and grandparents all under one roof, normally sharing nesting space throughout several common rooms. If food and resources are actually plentiful, such accommodations are not *too* unpleasant. If times are thin however, thefts and bullying amongst family members can be expected in such suddenly constricting quarters.

The most influential duck families in a ducktown will have larger and more impressive duckhomes than their fellows but never overly so. They might have an attached storehouse or arms closet or perhaps – if the

ducktown is lucky – a smoking room for Hazia and duck weed.

The largest duckhome in any give ducktown will almost assuredly belong to any Ivory Mallards living in the area. Inside of this building will be comfortable living spaces, sizable weapon caches and a small library of scrolls and carvings that will help depict how they can fight the Faceless Enemy. Any Ivory Mallards that come to or through the ducktown will be allowed to live in this duckhome without need for rent as payment for their lifelong war against Chaos.

## Watering Hole

Ducks may have lost their ability to fly but they certainly did not lose their affinity for water. The need to bathe and swim almost on a daily basis remains part of most ducks' lives. They have a thick oily coating on their feathers to them to keep them warm and dry, even after a long swim but this makes them easy to



become dirty and foul-smelling. Unless they keep a sufficient amount of water or mud around to help keep this coating down and preen their feathers habitually (much to the chagrin of travelling companions).

Not only does the watering hole of any ducktown serve as the public bath and source for natural drink but it also is the common gathering place for most ducks throughout the town. Those that are not working in the farms, with a trade or at the local tavern will likely be found wading or swimming around in the watering hole.

Many ducktowns with higher populations will also create a smaller watering hole that is not to be used by adults. Instead it is used to help young ducklings to hone their instinctual swimming skills. Sometimes called a 'nestpond', this area of water is universally protected by the community and is known to warrant having a roofed shelter above it in areas thick with aerial predators.

Called a watering hole as a very generic term, a ducktown's water source can be a singular place or a series of individual locations of water or thin mud. Some small ducktowns will have a single pool or creek, where larger communities like those found along the southwestern edges of the Praxian plains might keep entire street-like canals. Most ducktowns are formed near larger bodies of water for this purpose but watering holes can be dug when towns are formed in dryer climates.

### Worshipping Shrine-poles

Many ducks have taken to the worship of the Orlanthi pantheon, altering it just enough for their own deities to take root and form the myths of their people. Unlike the numerous and powerful Orlanthi, who build large shrines and altars to their gods, the ducks are fewer and less influential – making their shrines significantly less to behold.

A ducktown will likely have at most three separate worshipping shrines built in small clearings. Large (two metres at the highest) totemic poles of carved wood or sculpted clay are rooted into the ground by heavy stones or stakes driven into the mud and then painted. Each shrine will be dedicated to a handful of Durulz gods, each one receiving a different symbol, glyph or face upon the pole. This saves space and puts

all the gods' attentions to one place in a ducktown – something that ducks prefer when thinking about what the gods have done to them in the past.

The shrine-poles are often surrounded by small piles of tithes and offerings to the gods that are represented upon them. These piles are universally safe from pilfering; any duck found to be risking the anger of what few gods that allows ducks to worship them can be expected to pay a dire and final price. Duck cultists that worship the deities of the Durulz-Orlanthi pantheon (called the Nest of Eight) can come to these poles to perform their rites and prayers in peace.

### The Nesting Place

A ducktown will assuredly have a single communal building that is constructed much like an inn or hostel; several individual rooms adjoined to a large central room. Although ducks were cursed with internal hatchings, they still have a very strong nesting instinct that causes the pregnant females to gather up feathers, plants, cloth and all manner of interesting materials to form up into a nest for comfort. This building is the nesting place, where many expecting duck mothers come to get away from the cramped quarters of their duckhomes to build their birthing nests.

Behind the heavy doors of the nesting place they can get all the rest they need while being administered to by their parenting drakes and the followers of Canarda the Egg Mother. Each nesting room within the building is only a few dozen feet from the central hall – which is almost guaranteed to have a small shrine to Canarda built within it. The shrine is likely to be carved from local woods or sculpted from sun-dried clay; a totemic idol dedicated to the Egg Mother. Although simple and unadorned as a rule, the shrines are well protected by the local cult members. The main hall forms the place where the cultists rest and store supplies needed by the expecting mothers. It is also where the main doors to the nesting place exist; allowing them to protect the building at the bottleneck if need be.

Each nesting room is rarely bigger than three square metres, bare and empty when unoccupied except for a small table used to hold food, water and other perceived essentials. The floor of the room is where the mother duck will gather her materials and shape her nest, which will be cleaned out after the duckling is born. The parent drake will come and go bringing

### Shrine-pole Symbols

The following are good examples of what the shrine-pole symbols for each of the Nest of Eight deities.

**Grandmother Duck** – The face/head of a duck with closed eyes and a gentle smile.

**Canarda the Egg Mother** – An egg with two wings folded around it protectively.

**The Hurler** – A blank section marked with a deep duck footprint surrounded by a pair of wings.

**Swimmer in the Shadows** – A wide-open eye bordered by a frame of feathers.

**Eggbeater the Singer of Songs** – A face/head of a duck with an open bill.

**The Deathdrake** – The skull of a duck, sometimes shown with one eye in its socket.

**Duru-Orlanth** – A spear and paddle crossed behind a duck's face.

**Stormbill the Chaos Killer** – A face/head of a duck wearing a horned helmet.

what the mother requests in the latter days of the incubation but the mother can come and go as she pleases – normally to get *exactly* what she is craving for her nest at that time.

Even though some duck mothers will sometimes choose to hatch their children at home, the nesting place is a very important piece of the community in any ducktown. Not only due to the importance of the new generations of ducks that are born there but also as a spiritual centre for two of the most powerful cults of the Durulz.

### Farming Fields and/or Paddies

Depending on the local precipitation and the skill of the local ducks, nearly every ducktown will have a sizeable amount of agriculture. Reeds, algae, cattails and thick redgrass are prolific and commonplace in most ducktowns because of the muddy paths and pools. Rice, flax and duckweed is more concentrated in specific areas, becoming seasonal crops to be tended by the ducks of the community.

Dryer vegetable gardens and herb racks are sometimes located next to individual duckhomes, tended by the family and friends that live there. Because of the higher moisture levels in a ducktown and the prolific levels of natural fertiliser in the mud and soil, tubers and root-plants are not easily grown but leafy greens and hanging fruits can thrive. Cabbage, lettuce, tomatillos and spinach are all good garden crops for ducks.

Unless a duck is currently on assignment as a patrolling watch or other devoted role they likely spend a few hours each day tending to the community's harvest. Ducks are not especially talented farmers but they do realise that they cannot rely on the surplus of other races' to feed them unless they actively go out and steal it. A ducktown should want to be as self-sufficient as it can be without having to look toward outsiders for help – because it simply will not happen.

### Flowers

Ducks often supplement their diets in their travels by dining on the occasional flowering plant – a habit that they retained from their days as True Durulz. In their ducktowns however, they will spread flowering seeds liberally in communal areas to make for year-round additives to their meals. Like a condiment or flavourful midday snacking, flowers are not meals in and of themselves but are pleasant to partake in.

Marigolds, carnations and lilacs are particularly favourable to the duck palate but are also easy to grow and are plentiful. They are not against the growth and consumption of any edible flower, with three exceptions – sunflowers, morning glories and moon lilies. Sunflowers are poisonous to Durulz, oddly enough; part of their curse from Yelm expressing itself in yet another way. Morning glories cannot be eaten in respect to Grandmother Duck, who was said to weave the trumpet-like blossoms into a shawl that kept her warm in the top of her flights. Moon lilies are not

strictly *forbidden* to be eaten but are rumoured to be tainted with the essence of the Faceless Enemy – and are potentially the echoes of Chaos itself.

## Notes on the Physiology of the Duck

The following section is devoted to the many differences between the Durulz and their simpler avian cousins. The curse that hurled them from the Sky changed their bodies both inside and out to ensure they would survive to suffer their choices.

### Duck Life Cycle

After a successful conception through an ugly and awkward mating process between a single duck drake (male) and a fertile female, the duck gestation period of 34-39 weeks begins. During this time the mother duck will see a sizeable swelling to their lower body as the egg forms and hardens inside of them. The mother will be overcome with discomfort by the constant

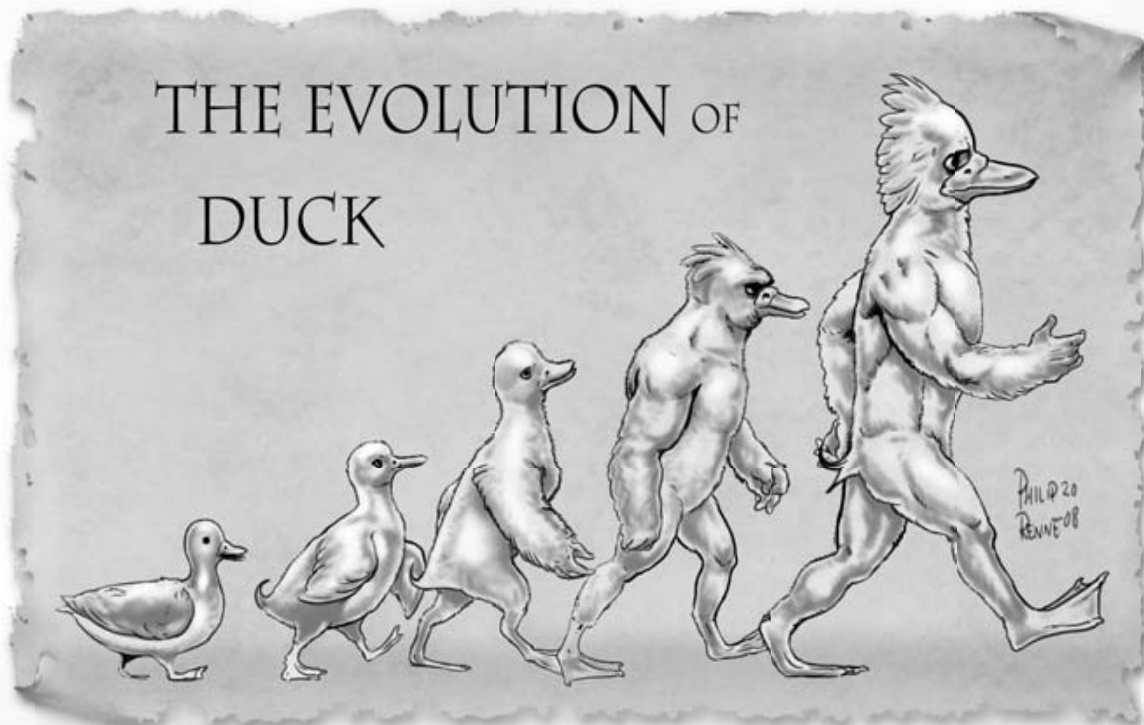
weight in her and the desire to make a nest will become too strong to avoid.

A duck nest is made of soft materials that the mother and drake collect, sometimes with the help of a Canarda cultist. The materials are shredded, torn and otherwise made into particulate pieces to be woven and matted together to form a thick cushion that will help keep the mother warm and comfortable during the final 10 or 12 weeks of incubation. The nest will sometimes also serve as a secondary food source in some Durulz cultures but most civilised ducks store enough food to bring the mother what she needs as she requests it.

Part of their cursing forced the Durulz to hatch their eggs internally, much like the embryonic sacs of mammals, only to give birth to the 'hatchling' much as a human would. Like any humanoid birth, this process is very painful – made additionally so by the passing of jagged and sharp eggshell fragments along with the afterbirth. Many mother ducks discover a new level of spoken profanity during childbirth, passing out shortly after.

Ducks are born with the ability to eat the same foods they can as adults, crushing plant and grain matter into paste with their bills until their row of tooth-like

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growths form around age two. Once they have their 'teeth', denser foodstuff is an option for them as well. Most duck parents that can afford to will feed their children high amounts of flowering plants and slightly diluted liquors, pacifying them through their early years and fortifying their tolerance.

Ducklings cannot hold their own weight on their legs until they are six months old but can swim just seconds after birth. Young ducks tend to spend a lot of time in their mother's arms or in the local watering hole as a result and must be protected especially over the first month or so while their true feathers grow and replace their 'fuzz'.

Reaching puberty at an average of 15 years, ducks go through a rite of passage set by their local adults in a similar fashion to the Orlanthi. This rite often includes a trip into the local wilderness or urban sprawl by themselves, nothing but a weapon in hand and an empty sack in the other. A local animal or object is named and the young duck is sent to go and fetch it, bringing it back to the community. Failure likely means the duck did not survive but success means becoming an adult. Once named an adult they can vote in local duck councils like their parents and neighbours.

The average duck lifespan is only 35 years due to external circumstances killing them off but most ducks have the capability to reach 70 naturally. Any that manage to survive to 50 years old can be considered to be an 'elder' in the duck community, earning the right to complain incessantly and judge everything he witnesses. The oldest duck in history, called Tyberius Swanblade, reached 104 before the snows came and swallowed Dragon Pass and him with it.

### Dental Assets of the Duck Bill

One of the most familiar and recognisable parts of a duck's anatomy, the bill of a Durulz is built much in the same way as those of common birds. It is a dense growth that is firmly rooted to the jaw connections of the skull that serves as the duck's mouth, lips and tongue-carriage.

Both the upper and lower plate of the bill supports a row of small, somewhat pointed tooth-like protrusions called *tomia*. The rows of *tomia* form a somewhat serrated edge that is good for the duck's ability to tear

or saw through wet or reedy plantlife. They are also perfectly suited for the grasping of items in the duck's bill if it needs to do so, which many are noted as doing so with cigars, pipes or the next quarrel to be fired from their crossbow. A duck can also deliver a painful bit on bare flesh with its bill but not one capable of actually doing more than scraping the skin.

It is said that the original Durulz that were cast down from the sky had no teeth but an early legendary hero of the ducks went on a campaign to get them back. He knocked all of the teeth from the beaks of most other birds, gathering them all up and giving them to Grandmother Duck to distribute to her children. Ever since, ducks of all shapes and sizes have had their rows of *tomia* back.

A Durulz's bill is stiff and mostly inflexible, hinged at its root to be opened and closed but that is about it. When a Durulz speaks, the sound is not adjusted much by the position of the bill. There is frequently a clicking or clacking sound that accompanies a Durulz speaking from the hard plates of the bill popping against themselves.

### Duck Speech and Vocalisation

The firm and unyielding material that a duck's bill is made of makes it impossible for them to manufacture certain sounds like most other humanoid can. When speaking in human tongues they tend to favour a slight lateral lisp and frequent whistling or clicking sounds from air passing between their bill plates. They create the vast majority of the sounds they need deep in their necks, shaping the air passage with their stiff tongue against the rear of their mouth. They can learn to speak nearly any language but with some practice and difficulty. They have an accent, even when speaking in their native Beastspeech but it is not thick enough to stop other speakers of that language from understanding them.

Although it is not a true form of vocal language, Durulz of all kinds also have several instinctual noises that they make during times of emotional or physical stimulus. The following is a short list of the most common of these noises and the situation that would cause a duck to emit them.

- Anger** – A long and loud hissing.
- Awe** – Rapid clacking of bill or clicking of tongue.
- Disbelief** – A single quack with a drop in pitch toward the end.
- Fear** – A rapid warbling in back of mouth.
- Happiness/Laughter** – A loud quacking broken by staccato hisses/clicks.
- Jealousy** – A low, barely audible hiss.
- Love** – A frequent, low warbling accompanied by a clacking of the bill.
- Pain** – A sharp, loud quack that fractures at the end.
- Panic** – A series of loud quacks with high-pitched warbling in between.
- Pleasure** – A low and steady warbling.
- Shock/Surprise** – A sharp quack that rises in pitch toward the end.
- Sorrow** – A rhythmic series of low warbles and muted quacks.

### Duck Plumage

The primary facet of a Durulz's body that separates it from others of its species is its feathers. Colouration, consistency, markings and even apparent oddities show one member of the greater Durulz race apart from the next. Such physical differences are often lost on the Big People, who simply view 'a duck as a duck' but have broken the Durulz species into several sub-breeds. Depending solely on their plumage, a duck could be placed in the masses of a ducktown or elevated to warrior-nobility.

Unlike keets, which have varying body and bill/beak shapes as well as different plumage, ducks have basically one body type. They can only really be broken into their sub-species according to their feathers. Most ducks fall into the common 'canard' type ducks, with grey or brown feathering and a slightly lighter head. Other breeds have raised crests or brightly-coloured heads and some are born with dazzlingly white plumage with starkly ivory bills. The colouration of a duck is often due to the colouration of the parents but the occasional ivory mallard is born as a sign of the impending fight against the Faceless Enemy. The actual colour differences are better described later in this book, in *The Scattered Flocks* (page 44).

Colouration and form aside, a duck's feathers are one of its most important physical features. A duck's feathers are thick and durable to hold back the elements, as they were never intended to wear the human trappings of clothing or armour. Although they offer no true protection from wounds or damage but they are the best natural defence to rain, snow and the cold. They allow most duck breeds to survive in temperatures a full 20 degrees lower than that of a human; even though they will complain about it the whole time.

A duck secretes an oily substance through their skin that they ruffle over themselves anywhere they have feathers. It is an annoying habit that requires a free hand and their bill but it is something that they must do routinely. Without the oils coating and permeating their feathers they will soon become dry and flaking, utterly unable to repel water. The oil keeps the duck's plumage supple and waterproof – essentially like the natural oils in a human's skin. These oils collect dirt and filth as a side effect of its usefulness (nothing a duck gets in Glorantha comes without cost), forcing ducks to wash, bathe or swim frequently to keep this collection to a minimum. If this is not done the duck will quickly become dingy, foul and rank. Some ducks will care about this but considering how poorly they are looked upon already – it is not *always* a deciding factor for their hygiene.

### The Difference Between Ducks and Keets

Internally, all Durulz are principally the same. Externally and socially the different breeds that make up the race are quite different. The easiest separation to see is that between the ducks and the keets. Just as the keets are drastically culturally different from the canard ducks, they are physically different as well.

Ducks are all basically the same body type with just a few minor appearance-based traits varying from breed to breed. Keets however, vary drastically in plumage, bill (or beak in some cases) and body type from one sub-breed to the next. Raised on islands just a few hundred miles apart from one another, the keets range from the short and sharp-billed auks (puffins) to the

tall and brilliantly pink phoenics (flamingos), with several other varieties in between.

Apart from their body shape and plumages, keets differ from ducks in the way their beaks or bills are designed. Where ducks have broad, flat bills made of stiff but still somewhat pliable materials, keets all have extremely hard and solid mouthparts. Most keet bills or beaks are thinner and more bladelike than those of ducks, with some breeds actually even being able to use them as weaponry in tight quarters.

All other differences between ducks and keets fall into the social and cultural arena, which is covered in much more detail later in this book.

## Duck Social Mores

The following are noteworthy parts of duck societal views that help shape how they look upon Glorantha and how they generally interact with the societies that populate it. Each individual statement is followed by a brief description how it came to be or how it actually affects the ducks' as a whole.

### The Council is Law

Grandmother Duck had four children. She did this not only because she wanted a large family but rather because she needed a host of different views and opinions to help her steer her choices. Her ideal of the duck people guiding their own kind as a community is seen in the formation of the traditional Council. Every ducktown or other community of Durulz has monthly moots of their adults that form a Council. The Council then votes upon specific matters pertaining to the community; thereby keeping with the traditional mentality of Grandmother Duck that 'all ducks should speak to quack with one voice'.

Every duck community is managed and guided by the local Council, with a grand Duckmoot taking place once every season amongst the available leaders of the cults of the Nest of Eight. The actual meeting place

changes from season to season and little changes at these meetings but it does allow the greater duck community to know what is happening to them across the world.

### To Err is Human, To be Blamed is Duck

Every duck (and most keets) knows that they have been slotted by the greater forces of Glorantha to serve as the scapegoats for most of the mistakes made by the races of the world. Even though the myths and legends of Glorantha do not *always* put a duck to blame for the world's problems, the ducks know that if they dig deep enough and search long enough – they will find out where one of their brethren somewhere along the way.

### They are Not Laughing with You

A duck's body, voice and somewhat feeble physique has been the focus of jokes, ridicule and side-splitting laughter ever since the Great Darkness was lifted. They learn to ignore the laughter and the stares quickly enough, especially if they find strength in the anger it sometimes causes. Some ducks despise being laughed at or made fun of, turning such scenes into violent outbursts of profanity or even physical threats. Others find the comedic value of their appearance as a good way of getting superior opponents, especially Big People, to let down their guard and become vulnerable to the 'funny little duck'.

### Ducks Only Protect Ducks

Ever since the Dawning and return of light to Glorantha, the ducks have been an accursed race belittled and looked down upon by all others. There have been many Big People cultures and races that have even gone as far as putting prices on the heads of ducks and the Hungry Folk have hunted them for their flesh. It seems as though that nearly all other things on Glorantha seek to do harm to the ducks or will not aid them in the very least. This has meant that the only creatures that ducks can actually count on for aid are other ducks.

The other part of this social norm is the fact that duck communities and families tend to be rather tightly knit and self-reliant. When a ducktown is endangered they know they cannot hope for outside help, so they protect each other as best they can. Although a single duck warrior tends to be a laughable site to most invaders, 25 of them lead by an ivory mallard or two could be something to consider avoiding.

### If You Must be Hated, Deserve It

It is common knowledge that the bitterness and callousness of ducks is well earned from centuries of mistreatment. Most ducks use this negativity to fuel their will to survive, adding it to the host of reasons why they lash out against others as criminals and outcasts. For a duck that has been mistreated long enough, they begin to *want* to do things that earn their place at the bottom instead of simply being cursed to live there.

### Take What You Can

Glorantha is not going to hand anything to a duck without a cost and most Durulz learn well before they ever reach adulthood that they must claim what they can, when they can – and never question the morality of their actions. It might wear on the good nature of a few ducks to live so tight-knuckled and materialistic but when an entire world seems bent on making sure you get nothing at all *anything* you manage to obtain seems like a treasure. Because of this, most ducks are viewed as thieves and bandits (some are, of course) and nearly all are consummate pack rats. A duck is not likely to lose or misplace anything they have taken possession of; if only because they do not know when they might get the chance to get another!

### Realism Over Heroism

Ducks know that they will not likely be recognised for any sort of heroic activity they actually partake in; some Orlanthi or Praxian clansman will be attributed with the stories and legends and soon the duck involved

will be overshadowed into obscurity. This realistic viewpoint over how their actions will be perceived tends to put most ducks in the ‘stand by and see how things work out’ category unless they or their friends’ lives are in danger. Some ducks might have a calling to fight evils and selflessly solve others’ problems – but most know that it is better to keep their own skin in tact before risking it for someone else’s.



What it is to be a Duck

## The Goals of Duckhood

Although every duck will have its own individual goals, likely developed according to their local needs and adventures, there are three main things that every duck (and most keets) is taught as a child. These tenets of duckhood (keethood?) are what lies nestled deep in a duck's heart. They may not know they seek these things but Canarda whispered her desires into the eggs of her children in the God Age, who scrawled it on the inside of their shells. Her words are forever etched onto the eggs of all Durulz, even if they forget having read them.

### Protect your Ducklings

It is every duck's responsibility to the race and the culture of the Durulz, to the gifts that Canarda gave, for every duck to seek their role in the furthering of the species. Sometime after 20 years of age a duck will look to find a mate and create young. The young are universally cherished by all of Durulz kind and ducks make remarkably good parents and guardians – only leaving their children when they are old enough to provide for themselves or are in the protection of another duck.

### Do Not Anger the Gods Further

Ducks know that they are already on bad terms with the Sky Gods and many of their allies in the Gloranthan pantheons but they are warned when they are young not to do anything (or fail to do something) that could anger the gods more. The Nest of Eight is very forgiving of their children but other gods are not. The last thing the Durulz need is another host of gods turning their ire toward duck kind.

### Survive to Prove your Worth

Ducks are natural survivors; a trait normally associated with their selfishness and stubborn streaks. This is actually something that goes much deeper into the original ducks and Canarda's wishes for them. She wanted them to show the gods that they were wrong in cursing them through surviving any hardships that would be hurled upon them. They would endure the bad long enough for the Sky Gods to see how unfair they had been to such a tenacious race, giving the Durulz back their flight and rebuilding Ganderland. This has not happened in countless centuries of weathering hardships, turning the hope of forgiveness into the shadow of selfish pragmatism.

*'Laugh at us, ignore us, heed not our warnings of what we saw and felt in the Great Darkness. When this is all over...we will still be there to say 'I told you so'...*

*...but even then you will not likely listen.'*

— Archibald Three-Quacks,  
Mothersnest Historian

# DUCK MYTHS

The following is a recounting of the myths of the ducks; of all the Durulz. No one outside of the duck peoples has heard these words and believed them but they remain strongly remembered amongst the Durulz. Glorantha cares little to nothing for the origin, cursing and survival of the Durulz through the ages – but they do.

These are the creation myths as remembered by the eldest of the ducks and keets; a compilation of the stories and tales that have been told from one generation to the next. This tells the stories of how the ducks came to be and how they have managed to shape their tiny corner of Glorantha.

## The Celestial Court and the First Egg

When the Celestial Court began to look upon the world and design the plans to shape Glorantha, they all had interesting ideas and places they wanted to focus upon. One amongst the Celestials, the highest flyer of all the beings, called Vrimak; he asked his fellows to give him the eternal Sky. He flew and flew and enjoyed the emptiness of the clouds and the winds under him but soon it was not enough.

Vrimak looked down to where the Court was meeting, saw that they were playing around with bits of primordial stuff and got interested. He swooped down to investigate and found that they were all toying with the Form runes; they were creating all sorts of unique things with their runes. First the Court created the elements and magics that would help them mould reality into easier shapes and soon the Man Rune was formed. When combined with the base elemental runes that were first to fall from their fingertips, the Man Rune begat the coming of mankind. From the Earth Rune came the people of the mud and soil. From the Fire Rune came the firewalker people. From the Water Rune came the people of the Mer. It was not until the

Air Rune spawned the Sky People that Vrimak knew what he must do.

Creatures of logic and sentience walked the ground, swam the seas and soared the skies. These early folk, the true folk of Glorantha, were beyond the understanding of the Celestial Court and like grains of sand compared to the mountain. The Court created gods and goddesses to serve as their go-between; the only way to ensure that their creations would not falter and decay without their direct guidance.

Vrimak saw that the Sky People had a single goddess, a winged wonder named Duck that was wise, powerful and beautiful to behold. Vrimak took Duck and embraced her, giving her a splinter of his Celestial essence. She could not hold so much power and her body gave birth instantly to the birds of the world, which flew from her and populated the whole of Glorantha.

Pleased to have so many things to share his joy of the Sky with, Vrimak congratulated Duck – now called Mother Duck for all of her children – and held her warmly in his arms. In his happiness he squeezed Mother Duck just slightly too hard and something fell from her womb onto the ground. It was the first egg ever laid and it was the colour of fallen snow and as hard as stone.

Curious, Mother Duck tapped her bill against the egg. There was a tap in return from the inside and instantly Mother Duck grew worried that one of her children was forever trapped in the shell. She pounded and pounded upon it but could not break it. She pleaded with Vrimak to help their child, so the High Flyer grabbed the Man Rune and gave the egg three sharp taps. Upon the third tap the shell cracked and fell away, revealing Canarda the Egg Goddess.

Wanting so badly to get back to his Sky, Vrimak gave the Man Rune to Mother Duck and Canarda to occupy themselves while he would be away. They began to toy with the rune and soon Mother Duck felt the beginnings of another birth within her – a larger birth.

Before she could say a word about it, Canarda spoke of her own swelling belly.

Soon both goddesses gave birth to six eggs – three from each of them. The six eggs, along with their mothers, would become the Nest of Eight.

## The Nest of Eight

Mother Duck and Canarda looked upon their six eggs. Mother Duck held her three for the other to see – a speckled one with a tall shell, a dark grey or nearly black one and smallish fat one. Canarda held hers as well – a steel grey egg, a plain white round one and one of the most perfect ivory colour that would not stop shaking. The two mothers sat their eggs in one nest, wrapped their arms around one another and shared the space with the six eggs. They had become the Nest of Eight.

When the eggs began to hatch the gods of the ducks joined their mother and now grandmother. Canarda wept tears of joy when she saw her children as they emerged and *Grandmother* Duck grinned solemnly at her daughter's happiness.

The first egg to hatch was Grandmother Duck's dark grey egg; the duckling that emerged was of darker plumage. She opened her eyes and looked upon the world with two eyes of different colours, one milky white and one a jet black. The young duck goddess backed away immediately, hiding in her mother's shadow. Named Swimmer in the Shadows, this hatchling instantly knew the ways of the spirits and how to walk between worlds; she was the first duck shamanness and the source of all of the Durulz's protection against spirits.

The next egg to move was Canarda's steel grey egg. As if with great strength from within, the slate-coloured hatchling emerged; standing inside the remnants of the shattered and splintered eggshell. His plumage was speckled and grey, its feathers streaked with a shimmer of silver that shines like metal. The duckling who would later be known as Deathdrake looked over to its fellow egg-brother and let out a heavy sigh. Reaching down, the young duck instinctively shaped a stone into a blade and drove it into his brother's shell.

With a sharp quack and a laugh, Deathdrake used the first duck-crafted weapon to split the shell of his little brother – a small but crafty duckling that would serve as the bridge to the human people named Duru. Duru thanked his brother with a hearty embrace.

The next hatching was a simultaneous one – the tallest of Grandmother Duck's egg leaping into the air and landing on the shortest. With a crash and the eruption of laughter, the taller sister who would be known as The Hurler landed upon the shorter and fatter Eggbeater. The hatchlings; one tall sister that was long of wing and the other short brother that was loud-mouthed, rolled around in the slime of their hatching. Grandmother Duck swept her two ducklings under her wing, placing them next to their dark sister and watched the last of the eggs to hatch.

The last of Canarda's eggs, still dancing and twitching from within, rolled out of the nest and into the bare open of the ground. Its mother looked concerned and at first moved to bring it back but was stilled by Grandmother's wing.

Grandmother Duck slowly shook her head and looked to the sky with a knowing grin. The clouds had gathered in the Sky, a rumbling storm building above. The seven gods and goddesses looked on as the Sky opened up and tore the air asunder with a streak of white-hot lightning. Thunder exploded and the bolt struck the egg, sending soil-turned-glass and smoking fragments of shell in all directions.

When the smoke cleared there was a crater where the egg once stood and in the crater stood a white-feathered duck untouched by the soot and smoke and unburned by the lightning. The young duck laughed loudly and walked over to his brother, snatching the stone weapon from Deathdrake's hand with a sweep of his wing. After looking over the crude weapon, the duck that would become known as Stormbill looked to the clouds and nodded happily – as if someone was in the Sky watching over the ivory hatchling's birth into the world.

With the final egg hatched, the Nest of Eight was complete and *Vrimak* looked on from his place in the Celestial Court. He was pleased with what he had created to aid the Sky People and the world was

populated with birds of all kinds. Vrimak knew that his creations would be busy with their children, the True Durulz, so he went back to his Celestial fellows to join them in the end of the Age.

The gods and goddesses of the Durulz were whole and they would enjoy greatness for a long time before they would suffer their fall. Their prosperity would only make the darkness to come that much more tragic.

## The True Durulz of Ganderland

The race of Durulz multiplied over the generations, migrating toward the nest of Grandmother Duck. This place, which was south of the Spike of Law, became known as the Empire of Durulz, Canardela or otherwise the ducktopia of Ganderland.

Ganderland was the perfect place for the Durulz; it had everything they needed to enjoy their lives. They had a huge tract of Sky to fly in, ponds and rivers in which to swim and fish and more friends from the corners of bird-kind than any of them had the power to keep track of. Fields of long and flourishing reeds would grow alongside stretches of fragrant flowers, tended by the magics and skills of the finest Durulz gardeners the Empire had to offer. The crops seemed to grow faster than the Durulz could eat them and there was never a shortage of food.

The Durulz spent their free time playing games, enjoying aerial sports and inventing new ways of wielding the magics of Glorantha. They had more time to enjoy themselves and experience things in a light that some races did not. The True Durulz of Ganderland lived the best possible conditions they could and life for them was good.

The gods and goddesses of the Durulz lived amongst their people; walking, flying and swimming with their fellows – not as equals necessarily but definitely as friends and family. Grandmother Duck spent all of her daytime hours amongst the young ones, teaching them everything they would need to know later. Canarda enjoyed long hours with the eggs and nesting mothers but occasionally took the time to see her sons and siblings.

The Hurler rarely touched ground, always flying, seeing the tops of the Sky and mapping the lands around the Spike. She would come and go, enjoying the rush of being the best flyer in all of Ganderland but she would also fill her nephew's head with stories about the lands beyond the great moat surrounding the Empire.

Eggbeater would sing his songs and drink his drinks, rousing his people to amazing choirs of sound and power. It was through his songs that true Beastspeech was created, contrary to the belief that it came from other races. He made sure that the Durulz knew how to speak to his godly family properly and some of the first priests were Eggbeater's best and closest friends.

While her siblings were playing in the public eye, Swimmer in the Shadows made sure to hold her own special teaching classes inside private spaces. She called powerful spirits into the darkness and helped her fellow Durulz converse with them, control them, bind them and otherwise interact. She has always been the most secretive of her brethren but her powers were the keys to the growth of all Durulz magic.

Deathdrake and Stormbill would enjoy each others' company, clashing weapon against weapon in public view for all to learn from their styles. Deathdrake had the skill and the ingenuity with his newest weapon designs to get the upper hand over his brother but Stormbill's ferocity and single-minded forcefulness always seemed to win out in the end. Deathdrake was a true warrior but Stormbill had a drive that even he did not understand.

During all of his brethren's games and trainings, one of the Durulz gods seemed focussed on something far away. Duru took the Hurler's stories and began to draw together an idea of what lay beyond the edge of Ganderland. He plotted, he planned and he *invented*. He came up with the best way to see the world and learn more about the people of Glorantha.

When Duru had finished his plans he brought it to his grandmother. He had created a huge boat of reeds and magic; he told Grandmother Duck about how he wanted to see the world from *under* the clouds. With one brief description of what he planned to do the True Durulz and their gods and goddesses began to look

outward, away from Ganderland, to the great expanse of the world around them.

## The First Journey

Duru, Grandmother Duck and a few select friends from Ganderland entered the reed boat and began to paddle their way out into the rest of Glorantha. They ventured north and found the legendary water roads with which they needed Duru's magic reed boat to travel upon. They sailed into the lands of the other People, those on the other side of the Spike, following the tale-maps drawn from the Hurler's stories.

Soon they came upon a great and far-reaching marshland called Delicate Swamp. Grandmother Duck was pleased to see new and strange birds that settled in the area. Some of the creatures that flew out from her in Vrimak's original embrace must have carried some of his power as well, because some of them grew into gods of the Marsh People.

They met with the regal and powerful Grandfather Flamingo and heard his claims against the Herons and the civil war that had erupted throughout Delicate Swamp. So much infighting had been going on there that the good plants for food had been overtaken by vines and weeds, forcing many of the birds to leave the Marsh and go looking for food elsewhere. Their battles caused a landslide from the rocky hilltops into the Delicate Swamp, filling the water table and turning the whole area into a muddy gravel pit.

Compared to the bliss and splendour that was Canardela, Delicate Swamp was wrought with pain and angst. Grandmother Duck was saddened by the tales of Flamingo and soon she wanted to go from that place and get back to her own happy children. She did not want Flamingo or Heron to try and recruit her family for their battles and she knew it was beyond her to help them.

When it came time to leave, Duru handed the oar and paddle to Grandmother Duck and tearfully said goodbye. When asked why he was staying behind, he merely opened one of his many belt pouches and spilled a fistful of black, healthy soil from Ganderland's fields onto the muddy ground. The soil spread along the wet gravel and made a small area of

the swamp fertile again. Grandmother Duck cried one tear as she paddled away from her grandson but she knew he had to stay and try to heal the lands outside of Canardela. She paddled away, leaving her most inventive and pragmatic grandson behind to try and solve the problems of their long lost cousins.

## The Keets - The Lost Durulz

When Vrimak's embrace created the birds of the world from Grandmother Duck, some of the breeds of avian saw members of their species elevated to become the gods of their peoples. Among the bird folk that did not find Ganderland, collectively known later as the keets, there were five main families that grew to have gods of their own – the flamingos, herons, gulls, auks and pelicans.

Grandfather Flamingo is said to have been the first, whose feathers took on the colour of the first sunrise over the Delicate Swamp that he called home. His harem's eggs created a flock of pink-feathered children, each bearing the same brilliant colours as the Grandfather. He called them Phoenics and he was full of pride for his beautiful family. They played and lived happily in their marsh, eating shellfish and picking flowers from the water's edge. Delicate Swamp was Grandfather Flamingo's version of Ganderland.

When one of Flamingo's children's eggs hatched a stark white, long-legged bird with a long, sharp bill, Grandfather Flamingo was horrified by the 'abomination'. He turned his back upon the creature so fast that one of his tail feathers freed itself and drifted to the ground. The tiny hatchling saw this and reached out quickly to snatch it up. With that simple act Prince Heron was raised to godhood, his children forever marked as deft opportunists and paragons of agility and wisdom.

When Grandfather Flamingo learned of how his feather was used to turn his pale offspring into a god and herald the coming of an entire race of blandly-coloured avians with common straight bills, he flew into a rage. He turned to the other birds of the marsh and coastlands, asking them to help him in dealing with the plain-looking newcomers.

The seaside brothers – Albatros, Sunbill the Puffin and High Crowned Pelican – conferred to one another to see what they should do. High Crowned Pelican, the glutton of the brothers, had just eaten his fill and did not want to be bothered with fighting or leading his people to war. Sunbill was trying to keep his own tribes of auks from fighting too badly amongst themselves over the best colouration they could muster for themselves. Albatros, the most powerful seer of the Durulz, had already seen the outcome of not only Grandfather Flamingo’s war but of *all* wars to come and the plight of the Durulz. He sent his gulls to the ends of the world to try and avoid what he knew was inevitable; his feathers turned dingy and grey from depression and he too knew shied away from Grandfather Flamingo’s request for aid.

With his fellow gods ignoring his call, Grandfather Flamingo and his Phoenics began a war against Prince Heron and his brethren. The fighting was vicious and both sides did what they could to inflict hurt upon the other. The Phoenics began to stand upon one leg to mock the natural stances of the herons. Prince Heron painted his children in every drab shade of white, grey, black or brown he knew to stoke the choler of Grandfather Flamingo. The battles grew hotter and all of Delicate Swamp was soon swept up into the two species’ destructive games.

The war between Flamingo and Heron turned their Swamp into a wasteland of watery gravel pits and muddy basins in which no one could grow food or fish properly. Things had gotten very bad and when it was at its worst there came a spark of hope from an unlikely source.

The coming of Grandmother Duck and her reed boat gave Grandfather Flamingo the idea to recruit her and her kind to his war. She did not agree however and all she did was tell him how they were obviously family. She left before he could acquire her help but her grandson Duru stayed behind to show the Phoenics how to fix Delicate Swamp.

Prince Heron saw Grandmother Duck leave on her reed boat headed back to Canardela, choosing to follow her to paradise. When Grandfather Flamingo saw teams of herons flying away toward the Spike, he believed that the ducks had betrayed his kind by backing the herons.

He turned on Duru and made accusations toward him; claiming that he was a spy for the herons.

Grandfather Flamingo persuaded the seaside brothers to see the ducks as a threat to them as well and although they were not about to go to war for him – they would defend their lands and watch the seas and coasts for signs of trouble. They would not be his soldiers but they would help him know when problems were brewing.

Prince Heron was turned away from Ganderland when he arrived. Grandmother Duck chastised him for following her uninvited and he grew angry and reared his sword-pointed bill to lash at her. In an instant both Deathdrake and Stormbill were there, weapons in hand to defend her. Prince Heron thought twice about pressing the offence and backed away, telling his family to do the same but the damage was done – the two main sides of the Durulz would never have the chance to become a whole species; forever sundered and forever at odds.



## The Durulz Battles

With the ducks, flamingos and herons at odds with one another and the seabirds caught somewhere in the middle, the Durulz collectively were fighting amongst themselves. Grandfather Flamingo arranged for raids upon Ganderland to try and take food and resources from the ducks, the ducks would send raiding forces into Prince Heron's lands to get revenge for him raising his bill to Grandmother Duck, and the seabirds would occasionally find themselves protecting their lands from one side or the other.

It was a dangerous time for all Durulz, even those protected and happy within the confines of Ganderland. Although the ducks still knew pleasure and free time the number of soldiers being trained by Deathdrake had increased, and Swimmer in Shadows summoned and bound many protective spirits around the Empire. Ganderland was the same ducktopia for Grandmother Duck and her children, but there was a definite different *feel* to the land as a whole.

The Godtime was rife with tensions and battle for the Durulz, but it was not until the return of Grandmother Ducks wayward grandson did things truly become difficult for the Durulz of Ganderland.

## Duru-Orlanth the Explorer Returns

One windy autumn day a familiar reed boat appeared on the horizon, slowly being paddled toward Canardela. The Hurler and her sons and daughters flew out to make sure it was not a Phoenic trick or heron trap but they returned quickly with fantastic news – Duru had returned! Grandmother Duck and many of her children went to the docks to welcome him home, waiting with food and gifts abundant.

When the boat reached the docks, the ducks of Ganderland stood in shock as a changed Duru stepped out. He was taller of stature, stronger of body and somehow *wiser* in his eyes. He wore strange jewellery and clothing and his bill was marked with inking that swirled into patterns. With him he brought a number of strange, featherless beings that wore similar things

upon them. These beings, who Duru called the *Orlanthi*, were new to the Durulz.

Duru had taught the Orlanthy how to communicate with him and he with them. They called him Duru-Orlanth, a title that befitted his place as their go-between. He explained to his grandmother that the Orlanthy were *humans* from the land of rocks and dirt. They had come to see the fabled Empire of Ducks and make allies with them. There was a healing priestess and warrior woman, a plough-tilling farmer and a master of beasts. One by one the Orlanthy disembarked the reed boat and went amongst the True Durulz.

The last to step off the boat was a hulking brute of an Orlanthy wearing a woven hair loincloth, a horned helmet and a bronze ring in his nose. His head was almost bullish, thick-necked and very strong. His skin was struck with many tattoos and scars; his hair was a shock of white, braided down his back. In his hands he held an iron sword as long as two ducks. The massive man lumbered directly up to Stormbill, causing tension to freeze the breaths of all in Ganderland. When the brute reached him, Stormbill looked up at the barbarian and cocked his head with a smirk on his bill. The two exchanged nods. The Orlanthy handed his massive sword down to Stormbill, who in return handed his sturdy axe up in exchange. After this brief connection, as if they already knew one another somehow, they walked off into the wilderness to discuss private matters. Forever later in duck myths and stories Stormbill would wield his friend's sword and Urox would always have the axe in hand.

Grandmother Duck opened the whole of Canardela to the Orlanthy, allowing them to filter through the society of her people. They taught their ways to the young, helped the adults understand what lies beyond the edge of Ganderland and even made many friends. Some ducks began to take on many of the qualities of the Orlanthy tribes and a crossing of cultures was quickly evident.

Frequent trips between Ganderland and the Orlanthy tribal lands across the legendary rivers began to take place. Ducks and Orlanthy lived intermingled and happy. Duru-Orlanth had brought the first outsiders to be welcomed in the Empire and things did not look as though they could get any better.

In reality, things had been set in motion that would never be undone...

## The Coming of Yelm's Legion

With the relationship between the ducks and the Orlanthi tightening and the travels between Canardela and Orlanth's dirt becoming more frequent, it was only a matter of time before the other gods of Glorantha would take notice and wonder what is going on. Chief among them was Yelm, the Sun, who was no friend to Orlanth or his people.

The Durulz had flown in Yelm's golden light many times, nicknaming it 'the Yolk of the Sky' but they never dared get near enough to be noticed by such a huge and powerful god. He quite literally ruled the Sky from far, far above them all.

Once Yelm discovered the Orlanthi's new friends, he wanted to see them with his own eyes. He wanted to *know* if he had to worry about his old foe's allies. Yelm gathered his warriors, picked up his spear and headed to Ganderland to investigate.

Humakt, Orlanth's warmaster and the wielder of a sword called Death, arrived ahead of Yelm's legion and brought warning to his brothers and the ducks. Humakt knew the signs of a warband and he saw preparation for violence in the sun god. Orlanth and his fellows made ready for a battle, heading to the Field of Hoonra to hold back what he felt was an invasion. Hoonra was on the edge of Ganderland's farming crops but they were sure to make an even ground on which to fight.

The Solar King and his soldiers were coming to Ganderland and Grandmother Duck was worried. She and Canarda pulled all of the young and the mothers into the nesting place, calling Swimmer in the Shadows to protect it with her spirit-magic. Eggbeater came too but only to sing soothing songs and tell pleasant stories to keep the huddled masses calm. Deathdrake, Duru-Orlanth and Stormbill stood defiantly with their loyal followers next to the Orlanthi at Hoonra. They had amassed a large defence force but they could already tell that Yelm's force was much larger.

Seeing her grandsons so outnumbered, Grandmother Duck sent the Hurler to the leaders of the other Durulz. She sent her with a message that would forge an alliance between all Durulz. If they would come and help her children defend Ganderland, she would open its gates to *all* Durulz. Paradise would be available to them if they helped, even if it meant bringing their arrogance and pride to Canardela.

Grandfather Flamingo and all of the keet gods, save for Albatros (who already knew how the battle would end), returned with the Hurler to the battlefield to add their forces to the combined armies that were there. Yelm's armies had almost reached the edge of Ganderland by the time these reinforcements arrived. For the first time in all history the Durulz stood as a unified front against a potential enemy. It would mark the first and last moment of solidarity the True Durulz in the Godtime.

## The Battle of Hoonra Field

Whether Yelm was coming to Ganderland looking for a fight or not, he would find one. Seeing the assembled armies of the Durulz and the presence of Orlanthi, Yelm tried to intimidate his opponents at first. He poured on his brilliance and his shining radiance and bellowed out that Orlanth leave this place and make way for his arrival to this new land. Orlanth, too proud to stand aside or give ground, roared back his refusal and waved his spear in the air.

The Durulz were not sure what to do as of yet but as Yelm's legion grew closer to them his heat began to singe their feathers and dazzle their eyes. They grew hot and agitated; soon sweat was dripping from their feathers and many were panting. When the heat became unbearable for them, it was Duru-Orlanth that first stepped out of formation – toward Yelm's approach. He shouted to the sun god to turn away, that he was not welcome and that he could not come any closer.

Yelm was not so easily dissuaded. He responded to the duck's ultimatum with a triumphant laugh – and the order to charge. With that, the battle was upon them.

The battle itself was a terrible one. Yelm was an unstoppable force, his Sun Spear lancing through the Durulz as if they were fog to be parted by the wind. His legion took no prisoners and both sides knew Death many times over. Humakt watched as his sword's power was unleashed by so many and although he was strengthened by such carnage – it did not bring him joy.

Nothing seemed to stem the destruction caused by Yelm's forces, and soon his legion was setting up a war camp deep inside Ganderland. The Sun would not be denied his chance to claim this utopian land as his own, even if he only wanted it to spite Orlanth. All this destruction for little more than pride.

## Ganderland Burns - the Exodus

Wherever the battle was raged, paradise was turned to ash and desert. Ganderland was slowly being burned to cinders by Yelm's heat and his legion's fiery magics. Swimmer in Shadows tried her best to use her spirits to keep the destruction at bay but it was not enough. Soon, most of Ganderland was a blasted desert of molten glass and burning vegetation.

Yelm's presence was just too much for the Empire of Durulz – and Canardela was suddenly no more.

The retreat was called and the Durulz forces withdrew to the centre of the city, where Grandmother Duck, Canarda and Swimmer in Shadows were protecting the population. Yelm had yet to push that far but there was no question that he would be coming soon; with him would come the eradication of the Durulz.

The Orlanthi saw what the war was doing to the land and knew that the battle was over. They did what they could to buy the Durulz time to escape. Many Orlanthi willingly ran to their deaths upon the blades and spears of the Yelmite legion while the rest withdrew back to their own dirt lands to draw away some of the forces.

The first to leave the battlefield was Grandfather Flamingo and the non-duck keets. He and his brethren felt as if the ducks drew them into a trap and that they knew that their promised paradise would be ruined. He

and his allies openly swore to Yelm that they would not offer Orlanth any further aid; an agreement that they kept throughout time. The keet tribes were just as angry with Grandfather Flamingo over the ordeal and they became distrusting and bitter toward one another. Forever they would stay separate from each other's tribes, choosing different islands to live upon to make sure that they would never be forced to count upon each other again.

Although it took Deathdrake, the Hurlter and Duru-Orlanth to drag Stormbill from the battle, all of the ducks gathered around Grandmother Duck in the nesting bastion. She decided that paradise was lost to them and they had no choice but to leave what remained of Ganderland. They would scatter to the world below the Spike, protect each other and create a new way of life on the dirt lands of the Orlanthi and their neighbours.

Duru-Orlanth led the Durulz down the Spike into the lands of humans and common beasts, using the same legendary roads and rivers he had taken many times before. Everyone escaped along with Grandmother Duck – everyone except Canarda.

Canarda remained behind, defiantly waiting for Yelm. She had lost so many children, so many eggs were shattered, so much of her and her mother's hard work put to waste by the senseless violence of the Sun. She grew angrier and angrier the longer she waited and by the time Yelm arrived to where she was waiting she was incensed with fury.

Yelm cocked his head at the duck goddess, confused as to why she would wait. Canarda ignored the smouldering of her feathers and the blinding of her eyes as she walked up to the mighty god. She told him that he would regret one day making enemies of the Durulz and she slapped him across the face. The touch of his flesh seared her wing's feathers but it was the look in her smoking eyes that gave Yelm pause.

Lesser indignities had earned his righteous wrath in the past but seeing a mother's love and sorrow in her face, he allowed her to leave. He claimed victory over the Desert of Death that Ganderland had become and watched as she limped away toward the rest of her race. Yelm would never forget the tenacity and strength he saw in Canarda that day; ultimately it would be the

reason the Durulz would be set upon the path they walk to this day.

## The Coming of Darkness

It was not long after the Durulz had all gone to the world of rocks and soil to create a new civilisation for themselves that Emperor Yelm was beset upon by the vengeful Orlanth. The attack would come swift and powerful, sending the Sun to Hell and starting the Long Night. As Yelm would succumb to Death, he would remember the tenacity in Canarda's eyes that day on the burning remains of Ganderland. He would call out to the Durulz to save him; to have the unyielding strength that he saw in their Egg Mother on his side before the evils of Darkness could take over. He said that all would be forgiven and his praise would be unlike any ever known before if they came to his aid. All they would have to do is fly down into the closing gates of Hell and grab him before it would be too late.

They refused him.

Again he sank further into Hell and the world grew darker still and again he asked them for aid. He told them about how treacherous their ally Orlanth really was and that it would be a dishonour to them to back his usurpation. That they would be heroes to the Sky and fly on golden wings forever.

Again, they refused him.

As the Night was closing upon the world and even the gods began to wonder what would happen to Glorantha under an eternal darkness, Yelm angrily *demand*ed that the Durulz help him. He bellowed and cried out at them, trying to intimidate them into descending into Hell.

Lastly, without a single modicum of remorse, they refused him once more.

After his final refusal Yelm was silent. Hell had closed its maw and swallowed him up, leaving the world in the darkness of the Long Night. The Durulz had their vengeance against the Sun that burned their paradise

but in doing so they condemned all of Creation to darkness and suffering.

## The Hungry Folk and the Faceless Enemy

While the Long Night fuddled all of Glorantha and most races clung to what little light they could muster, there were two families of beings that actually thrived in the darkness that covered the world. Where it was a time of fear and pain for everyone, these two groups would be the greatest enemies of the Durulz in particular.

The Hungry Folk – trolls and their like – were beings of Darkness incarnate, followers of the night itself. The Uz and their kin could see perfectly well with Yelm's blaze gone to Hell and they sated their appetites upon



anything and everything they could. It is said that they particularly enjoyed Durulz-flesh, hunting them wherever they could be found, plucking their feathers and making meals of them. Although there was no malice in their hunting, the Durulz took their hunts rather personally and have forever called Uz enemies because of their predation during the Long Night.

Also within the Darkness was a different foe; a foe that Stormbill knew was coming from his conversations with the Orlanthi called Urox. It is said that while Yelm was falling into Hell, the gate-like maw of the underworld was held open for too long while he tried to get the Durulz to save him. It was open long enough for something to escape; long enough for *lots* of things to escape, actually. While Hell was left wide open, the Faceless Enemy that are the Chaos Gods emerged into the world.

Stormbill told his family that he and his children would make it their mission to fight the coming of Chaos. To give Durulz soldiers something to follow; a beacon of sorts, he would put a spark of the lightning that hatched him in a handful of his children. This spark would mark them as warrior-nobles, fighters against the Faceless Enemy that glow from within with the purity of their mission. They would be born with white feathers and ivory bills; better to see and follow them in the Long Night.

Something Stormbill was told by Urox placed the Faceless Enemy at the front of the threats they would have to face. Although small in number and mostly unknown to the world, Chaos would have to be dealt with before a new age can safely rise. If asked as to why the Faceless Enemy must be stopped, Stormbill would simply smile and claim that every age that passes with Chaos unfettered will appear the next age even stronger. If it is not stopped, eventually Glorantha will reach what could only be described as *Chaos Time*.

In the darkness there were other horrible things, things of False Life that walked beyond the grave. A friend of the Durulz, Humakt showed the ducks how to recognise creatures with False Life and eliminate them properly. As a god of Death itself, Humakt despised the creatures that found loopholes around his area of influence. His Death Rune would not be denied, even if some fool managed to create the Undead Rune.

Humakt taught the Durulz how to fight the False Dead as a favour to them but not without any benefit to his own goals as well.

With most of the duck gods protecting and hiding their children and friends from the rampaging Uz, False Life Ones and the Faceless Enemy, it was everything they could do to survive. Deathdrake forged weapons with his bare hands all day long, equipping those ducks brave enough to follow Stormbill into battle. The Ivory Foehunter had found many new allies in the Great Darkness – others who stood against Chaos as he did – and they battled throughout all the waking hours against it. Even the otherwise savage Zorak Zoran of the Hungry People called Stormbill his ally in this war against the Faceless Enemy. It was the only time in history that trolls fought beside ducks in large numbers, setting aside their normal roles of predator and prey in the name of the crusade against a strengthening Enemy. During this time Urox and Stormbill would kill enough of the Enemy to fill one of the pits of Hell, but it would not be enough.

The Great Darkness was a dangerous time for the Durulz. It was filled with fighting, surviving and learning about the savage realities of the Inner World and the Chaos Gods that now called it home. Throughout all of the pain and suffering of the Great Darkness however, it would pale in comparison to what was to come. When the Lightbringer Quest would bring the Sun back to the Sky, the ducks would have wished the Darkness to truthfully last forever.

It would have been terrible but at least they would have company in their suffering.

## The Sacrifice of the Keets

As Darkness enveloped the world and the minions of Chaos began to surface under cover of the eternal night, the continent of Vithela that Grandfather Flamingo and his keets settled became a source of great tragedy and self-sacrifice. They had created several shoreline communities, each one enforcing their segregation against other breeds of keet. Although they were not violent, they were certainly not friendly.

An incarnation of the demon Zmalak came upon the continent, seeing the bickering tribes of keets that lived there and sent evil emissaries to them. In the darkness and confusion, the Andin demon-men of Zmalak's mother Vith took the shape of keets and walked among them. They drove long spikes of Zmalak's black magic into the stones and sand with mallets of bone, weaving a spell larger than Vithela had ever known before. Where the spikes were driven, black blood of the continent seeped onto the ground. This black water poured mystically from one spike to the next, eventually running together into a single pooling point at the centre of the continent.

The Andin had marked a web of pain and torment throughout Vithela, especially in the keetslands of Haragala. When they were done with their vile machinations, a map of fractures like a broken mirror could be drawn between the spikes. Zmalak's minions were successful in preparing the continent for a terrible cataclysm and when the demon itself arrived to enact it nothing could hope to stop it.

Zmalak walked to the centre of the web of driven spikes, wading into the black pool of the gathered blood of Vithela. Chastising the keets for allowing his minions to work their evils unmolested, Zmalak brought his powerful fists down repeatedly into the pool. His fists shook the ground, knocking both keet and man from their feet throughout the continent. On his 1013<sup>th</sup> strike, thick sweat pooling from his brow, the black blood of the continent exploded outwards from him. Like a plough through a soft fallow field, Zmalak's spell shot out across the land along the black lines drawn by the web of driven spikes.

At first the people of Vithela believes the spell to have done nothing but soon the black blood began to dissolve down into the ground. Where a black line one lay, seawater began to rise to take its place as the pieces of Vithela began to drift apart. Where the black blood touched the sea it became a thick mist, hiding everything from view. Zmalak – now called the Beater of Islands – leapt into the sky triumphant, leaving the pieces of the continent to drift forever into obscurity.

With Zmalak gone, the keets looked to Grandfather Flamingo to save them once again. He knew that it would come at a terrible cost but he went to Prince

Heron with a plan to save Vithela. All of keet-kind would grasp one another's wings, creating a net of flesh and feather that would hold the rapidly drifting islands together until the spell had run its course. Seeing it as an opportunity to earn the respect of the Vithelan people, each island of keets joined in the gathering.

They gripped one another tightly, drawing the floating pieces of Vithela back together once more. The plan was working. Although their wings were already growing tired and some of the bird relatives of the keets had already flown away in fear that their grips would not hold, the continent was slowly gathering again.

It was upon one island, the piece of Vithela inhabited by the pterodactyl-keet Sorns, which one of the Andin spoke to the leader of the Sorns. As the leathery wings of the Sorns were creaking and tearing from the stress of being part of the net, the demon-man whispered that his dark mother could save them from their plight – all they had to do was *let go*. Caught in a moment of weakness, the Sorns released their grip and the net faltered. As the keets collectively fell to the ground from the sudden release, the Sorns winged their way toward Vith, Wakboth and the gods of Chaos to find their new and accursed lives.

Although the net of keet wings had not brought Vithela completely together, it had kept them close enough to one another to become a large group of islands. Grandfather Flamingo, exhausted and sorrowed from the betrayal of the Sorns, leapt into the air to see the results from above. So stretched and pained were his wings however, that he could fly no longer. The same, it seemed, went for all keets. They had made a terrible Sacrifice to Vithela in order to keep it from shattering into nothingness.

They had given their flight to hold together their piece of the world.

## The Last Flight

During the Long Night, the Hurlter spent most of her time in the high Sky trying to look out for dangers to her people. It was on one of her longer flights to the ends of Orlanthi lands that she looked down and

saw her nephew Duru-Orlanth arguing with Orlanth himself. She flew lower so she could hear them but by the time she had arrived Duru-Orlanth had stormed off and Orlanth was alone.

Hurtler settled down to Orlanth's side and asked him what was the matter. The human god responded with a sad shake of his head and could only say that he knew when to admit his mistakes – and that he wished that others could too.

The Hurtler agreed, not knowing exactly what she was agreeing to and Orlanth gave her a firm embrace of friendship. She would not know exactly why that embrace seemed so sad and final to her at the time until later. Orlanth released her, picked up the glowing sun spear he claimed from Yelm as spoils and walked slowly away toward the rest of his destiny.

She flew back to her family to tell them what she saw but by the time she reached them – it was already too late.

## The Coming of Dawn

Orlanth's Lightbringer Quest found Yelm in the lowest parts of Hell, where they said their peace and made their truce. Orlanth handed the spear back to Yelm and helped him back to the surface of the world. The sun returned the world and banished the Long Night, bringing the first dawn to Glorantha in what felt like an eternity to the beings that suffered through it.

Once firmly back amongst the gods and goddesses of the world, nearly all of them paying proper homage to the king of the Sky, Yelm turned his attentions to the Durulz. He had not forgotten that they left him to perish when they could have saved him.

## Yelm's Deliberation and the Accursed Sentence

Yelm's rage at first consumed him, causing him to bellow and cry out for vengeance and he raised his Sun Spear to smite the Durulz utterly and completely. He wanted them to burn in heat and the light of his fires, to suffer and die as he suffered and died.

His judgment found the Durulz selfish and unworthy of mercy but his fellow Sky Gods – Orlanth and Humakt chief among them – spoke of their valiant battles against Chaos, the Hungry People and the False Living ones during the Long Night. They called in favours with their allies and made their case to Yelm that although the Durulz must be punished, perhaps death was too great.

Yelm did not agree at first; he still wanted their lives. A new approach was needed or the Durulz would surely be destroyed. It was Issaries the Talker that came forward with a new idea. He began to speak about how death was too quick and too good for the 'treacherous ducks' and that it would be far better to crush them under Yelm's heel than to wipe them out. Make them suffer, he said. Others quickly joined in Issaries' ruse and the Sky was a cacophony of false claims against the Durulz.

It worked.

Instead of demanding their lives, Yelm was satisfied with ruining them for all time. He began by making sure that he and they would never again cross paths; he was not sure if he could bite back his fury if that were to happen. Yelm knew that he could not come to the ground, for his heat would sear it to glass; he therefore chose to take from the Durulz the one thing that could bring them into his presence – their wings.

He summoned Grandmother Duck to his court and stripped her of her wings, telling her to do the same to her children and their children. The entire Durulz line would forever be earthbound; all of Glorantha being told that they were too cowardly to fly to Yelm's aid so therefore they would never fly again.

As the broken and punished Grandmother Duck began to leave the court to take the judgment to her people, Yelm called out to the other Sky Gods to begin the Durulz's promised suffering. While Orlanth the Leader, Humakt and Urox stood by quiet and sorrowful, the rest of the Sky Gods began to berate and lash out at the retreating goddess. Although they may or may not have meant what they said, their words were heard and marked by the gods' heralds – laying their meaning in Time itself.

Grandmother Duck returned to her people in tears, the world having turned its back upon them and took from her family the ability to fly. She sadly knew that Yelm was wrong in his judgment but who were the Durulz to stand against the assembled Sky Gods? What could they do?

Such was the tragic end of the time of the True Durulz and the Sky. Never again would they fly like the other birds of Glorantha, even those that were born from Grandmother's wings. This was Yelm's Sentence and it would be for all Time.

## An Age of History of Bitterness

From the loss of their utopian world, the enmity of the Sun and the rise of the Faceless Enemy to the

*'It seems that the Great Darkness kept the Big People from seeing what their gods did to us. We must never let them learn...not ever. Making our suffering their gods' providence would only make things worse for us.*

*In this case, their ignorance is truly our bliss.'*

*— Harkenplume, Speaker of Canarda*



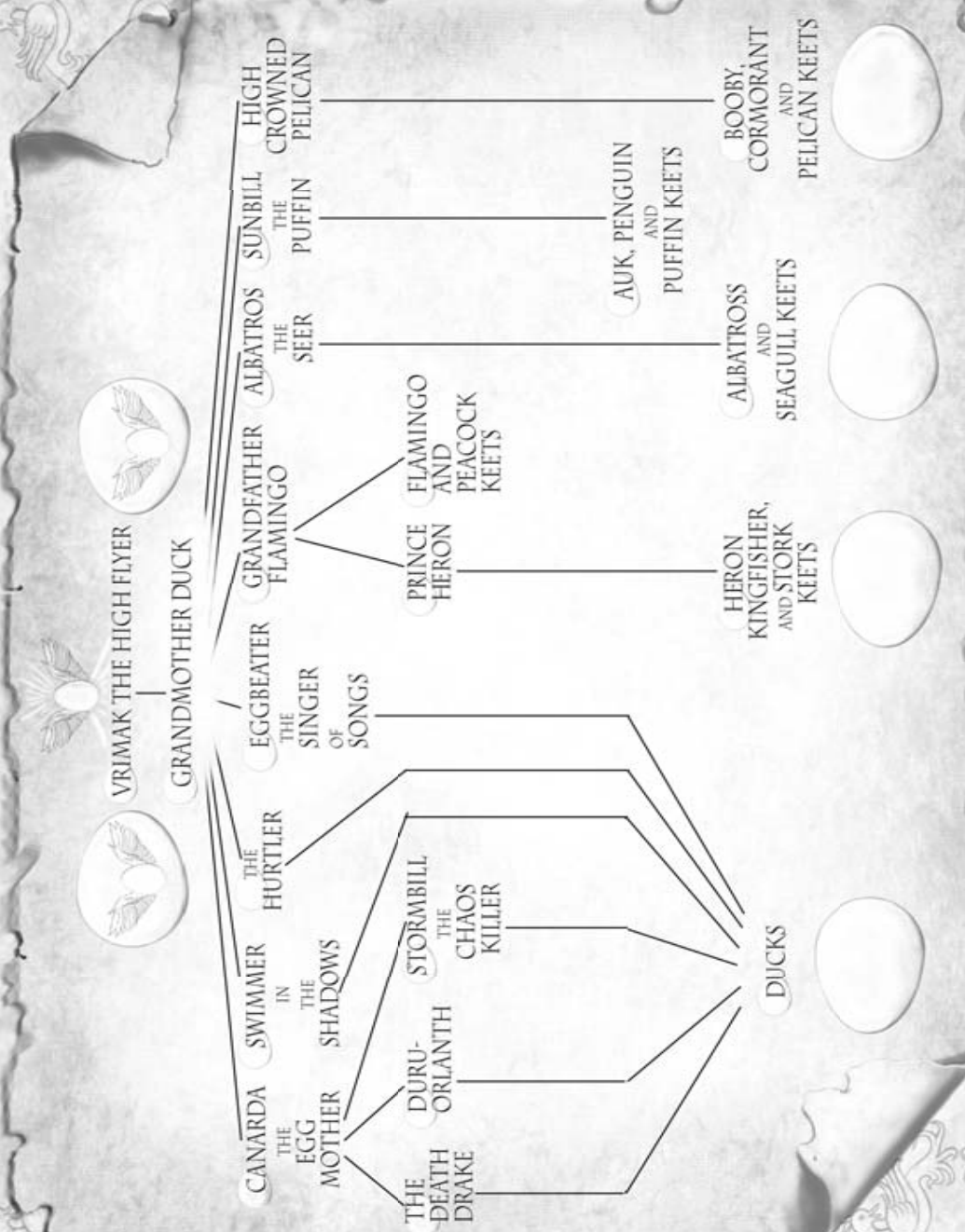
Duck myths

terrible judgment that would take the Sky from them; the Durulz suffered throughout the Godtime. They went from high flying golden beings that knew only joy and pleasure to soil-plodding jokes that were to be universally disliked by the rest of the world.

They grew dark and bitter inside, many of their gods and goddesses withdrawing from the public in order to sulk or plot against their enemies. The ducks of the world followed suit and by the beginning of the Age of History, they *knew* that life would always be an uphill climb on short, wobbly legs. They had no choice but to climb it; if Grandmother Duck taught her children one thing, it was to survive.

Life would be hard from that point forward, but it would still be *life*.

# Duck myths



# DUCKS ACROSS THE WORLD

*'Once, when we were the masters of the Sky, we flew to the ends of this world and saw all there was to see. We landed and tasted of the flowers and reeds of a hundred nations, swam in a thousand ponds and napped under the shade of countless trees. We were the golden Sky People...*

*...then we lost our wings. Old Shinyhead and his cronies levelled their judgment against us and we literally dropped from the Sky forever. Now stranded in the dirt and rocks like everyone else, we have taken root wherever we can.*

*We have no choice to live but where we landed.'*

*– Rugre Wintersegg,  
Runedrake of the Hurlter*

This chapter is an in-depth look at ducks and keets in the lands of Glorantha and then in the area surrounding Dragon Pass and the EWF territories found there, Ralios, the Eastern Isles and some scattered locations throughout the world. As former flyers, the Durulz managed to settle a vast and varied amount of the world before the end of the Long Night and Yelm's Sentence. This has allowed for numerous communities of different Durulz to grow in a kaleidoscopic list of locales. Ducktowns and Keetslands exist on nearly every piece of the planet; where they have not been hunted to extinction, of course.

## Ducks in Glorantha

Unlike many of the other races of the world, the ducks have no real 'homeland' that they can point to on a map. They once had their fabled Ganderland but it was burnt to a crisp in the Godtime and taken from them. Ducks once flew across the world, scattering them

amidst the continents and island chains. Grandmother Duck told her children to survive no matter the costs and they did so wherever they could manage it. The area of Genertela called Dragon Pass would become a haven to ducks from all around by the end of the Imperial Age but currently it is home to too many hungry Dragonewts and Wyrmspeakers to be a safe community for them.

Ducktowns have sprung up throughout most of Glorantha, the individual nationalities or breeds of duck creating the image of a varied species. There is a huge concentration of ducks in the area known as Maniria, south of Ralios and the Dragon Pass, serving as the closest thing to a 'home' as the duck species can ask for in this age of war and strife.

With the EWF gathering power all around them, their old begrudging Orlanthi allies falling to the draconic lure, the ducks of Genertela have more to worry about than just where to build their ducktowns. Although some ducks have sworn allegiance to the Inhuman King, most are too far beneath the political notice of such powerful beings.

Carmania has been a home for secretive and hermitic duck families for generations, only recently being able to raise their bills a bit higher as the Dara Happans begin to fight against the Golden Dragon Emperor sitting on their throne. With other enemies to fill the Yelmities' heads with vengeance, ducks have been able to move back into the area in higher numbers, surrounding Dragon Pass on the north and south with ducktown colonies.

Not attracting too much attention from the God Learners due to the publicly believed idea that ducks have no real gods, allowing for several ducktowns to spring up on both their home island of Justela and along the Solkathi coast. There is a small contingent of ducks camped along with the others outside the Clanking City but no one knows what they are actually there for.

Where there are humans or beastmen, there are likely ducks somewhere nearby. Especially amongst the

Orlanthi. Orlanthis tulas are a good source of trade and shelter for a duck on the move, which is why so many ducktowns spring up within a short walk or swim from an established town. The Orlanthis might not be true allies to the ducks any longer but they tend to tolerate them more than most.

The ducks know that they are only surviving in this world by the sheer willpower to do so. Hungry People and Big People abound throughout the world and none of them are looking to make it easy upon the diminutive ducks. They live wherever they can manage to do so, hopefully comfortably but rarely so.

## Keets in Glorantha

Unlike the ducks, keets were ingrained with the idea of community and tribe since before the Age of History began. Their tribal societies stem from the original deals and treaties made by Grandfather Flamingo in the Godtime and they mostly came to rest after the Battle of Hoonra Field on the continent of Vithela.

Once it was shattered in the Long Night by Zmalak the Beater of Islands, the keets were spread amongst the islands of Vithela forever. There has been some travel by the species here and there but the largest populations of keet species are on the islands surrounding Haragala, where it is said that Grandfather Flamingo rests. The Keetslands (what the Haragalan islands are collectively known as) are where 90% of the keet population thrive.

There are a small number of keet families that migrated to Kralorela, mostly moving from the coast to the bamboo forests of the Shan Shan Mountains. It is one of the only places where ducks and keets can be found in the same area without there being violence between them; survival against the Kralori and the hsunchen tribes means more than old scores to settle.

## Ducks and Aldryami

*'I suspect the tree-folk do not like us any more than anyone else in this world. What could we hope to expect from an entire culture that worships a song we cannot hear and that gets most of its food from the Sun that cursed us? They are a dangerous curiosity to be sure.'*

*Avoid them if you can...it simply is not worth the trouble to get too close.'*

*– Porter Quaksson of Northern Ralios*

The ducks of Glorantha have only a slightly better relationship with the elves than that of most humans – a cold and untrustworthy one. The elven gods did not have anything to do with the ducks' curse, keeping them from being targeted by the bitterness of the ducks. The elves are generally standoffish and threatening to outsiders regardless of species; it just makes it that much more natural when dealing with ducks.

As a generality, Elven communities are far too insular and private to allow a ducktown to grow nearby. Besides the risk of having sneaky, stereotypically thieving opportunists living too close to them, elves are quite aware of the relationship between Uz and duck. Where ducks gather in the wilderness Uz are sure to follow in search of a delectable meal or twelve.

There are some communities of ducks that see the usefulness in placating the effete natures of the elves. Throughout the eastern edge of the Tarinwood there are small duck outposts – not full ducktowns at all – that were built as trading posts between the ducks of Maniria and the elves of the forest. For those ducks that plan to travel to Seshnela from the east, these posts are the only place they *might* be able to find the gear and information needed to survive a trip through elf lands.

As one of the eldest races of Glorantha, the elves watched passively as the ducks were hurled to the ground and their wings taken from them. The ducks hold a little animosity toward the elves because of how they did nothing but do not blame them for not getting involved directly. The ducks would like to think that the elves would have had at least the morality to shelter them but word spread quickly that they were cursed by the gods – and no one would dare help them then. Although much of that bitterness and spite turned into a chilly distrust over the generations they are not considered enemies of the duck people, merely another obstacle in life.

## Ducks and Dragonewts

Being used to viewing the world from below, from the outside, the ducks are well aware that there are two main bodies of dragonewts in this world. They see those who strut around amongst the Wyrmspeakers of the EWF but they also see the secretive bloodlines of dragonewt traditionalists that live on their own paths that do not include the teaching of others the draconic ways. The ducks see these two groups and know that they should dare not deal with either for too long.

The dragonewts that do not follow the EWF and its crusade to draconise everything are a different type of danger to ducks. At least those dedicated to the Wurm's Friends will often try to recruit even ducks to the cause; traditionally-minded dragonewts are far more likely to see a duck and consider it an easy meal. Depending on the life-stage of the dragonewt in question, it might be in the duck's best interest to make himself disappear before it does.

Traditional dragonewts often live in secrecy, up in wilderness heights or twisting caverns to avoid having to deal with the impending clash between their brethren and the God Learners. This will sometimes put their 'lair' in places that look like safe shelters for a group of ducks to use in their travels. This can put caravans of ducks at odds with small rookeries of dragonewts – a situation that should nearly always result in the ducks fleeing rapidly.

In the Stormwalk Mountains, amidst the herding grounds of the minotaurs, there is a beaked dragonewt named Quavvass' ihr that is well-known to the ducks of the area. From his crest of head-spikes he wears several white duck feathers to signify his relationship to the locals. He once came to the aid of a nesting place that was being beset by draconised Carmanians, putting himself in harm's way for several expecting duck mothers. For such an act of heroism and perfectly-timed bravery the local ducktown named him a Duckfriend. Whether or not the title means anything to Quavvass' ihr or not is unknown.

## Ducks and Uz

It should come as no shock that trolls of all kinds are not well-liked by ducks of all breeds. The ducks remember running through the darkness from the Hungry People all too vividly from their legends; all the more refreshed by the trolls' continual hunting after Light had returned to the world. To the ducks, the Uz are the Hungry People, the creatures put on this world to devour and destroy. Every duck hopes and prays to his gods that he never faces them.

Ducks do well to make sure that they have well-lit communities and easily-secured doors and gates wherever they can build them. They must do anything to keep the trolls and trollkin at bay while the ducks make good their escape to hide behind traps, ambushes and other useful tools for battling a superior opponent. Fighting against the Hungry People in a direct confrontation is almost always considered suicide – making it a general anathema to most ducks.

There have been events that have placed Stormbill followers on the same side as Chaos-killers from the Uz cults of Black Sun or Kygor Litor (see *Trolls: A Guide to the Uz*) but these are rare enough to be considered legends to most duck ears. The stormbills believe an old tale of Zorak Zoran fighting alongside their ancestor-god but no other duck wants to think that they could have any sort of relationship with any sort of troll. It is just easier to live by the rule that all trolls want to eat them, so they ignore tales of ivory mallards crossing blades on behalf of a troll.

Ducktowns will commonly have at street side ‘Uz-bells’ hanging from tree branches, awnings, streetposts – anything they can hang them from. Uz-bells are tiny ceramic chimes that are tied to thin pieces of braided flax or silken string hung at roughly seven feet off the ground at important points throughout the ducktown. The bells are far too high for any duck to ever trip them but should one of the Hungry People come to town at night they will surely strike at least one string of the bells – alerting the neighbourhood to their presence and allowing for a defence or evacuation to be sounded.

No duck council would ever name an Uz or Enlo as a Duckfriend – *ever*. No matter what the circumstances might be, there would always be that unspoken danger of the troll deciding to devour its new allies. It is not that the ducks do not think that the Hungry People can be trusted; the ducks *know* they can be trusted... to appreciate a good duck-flesh meal whenever possible!

## Ducks and the Empire of Wyrms’ Friends

*‘Anyone who wants to awaken a Great Dragon has got to be crazy, right?’*

*Well, we are talking about an entire empire of people that want to become part of that dragon, wake it up fully and devour the world to remake it in its image.*

*And the world looks at us like we are the crazy ones!’*

*– Lyra Silverplume, Stormdrake Hero of Prax*

The growing power of the EWF makes it a constant presence over most of Genertela, placing its growth at odds with established ducktowns and farming fields. Their draconising armies and Thunderer cavalry units do not even pause when a duck community is in its way; truthfully they might not even notice the quacking and hissing inhabitants scrambling to avoid being crushed. This sort of happenstance encounter is a good parallel to the social views of the EWF toward the ducks – they are mostly insignificant annoyances that will be devoured when the Great Dragon awakens.

The ducks themselves view the EWF in a much different light. Such a massive empire of huge wealth, power and size is a perfect target for minor raids and banditry. What a few highwayducks can manage to take from a Wyrmspeaker caravan or outpost will hardly be missed by the overall war effort and how could the Inhuman King possibly expend resources to go after a few lowly *ducks*? This dangerous game is a favourite of Genertelan ducks, especially those who have any reason at all to dislike the EWF’s evangelising. Not only do these raids offer strange and wonderful assets to the duck community but other than the raid itself, they tend to be relatively safe endeavour.

The closer a duck community is to EWF lands however, the more likely they are to simply be conquered out of hand by the expansion of the Empire. Either through the direct confrontation by draconised troops sent to clear out potential problems or by the subtle temptations that the Wyrmspeakers bring to anyone that will listen to their recruitment speeches, small duck communities cannot withstand the growth of the EWF into their area for long.

Ducks are unfortunately rather curious creatures in most cases and the sorts of secrets and hidden agendas that make up the inner workings of the EWF are exactly what they yearn to discover. Most ducks are sneaky enough to get past brute guards and common patrols but the draconic magics of the Empire are mightier than anything a common duck can hope to learn in his life. Many inquisitive ducks have disappeared mysteriously when investigating an EWF encampment, likely used as food meat for the dinosaur pens or as disposable test subjects for mystical rituals.

There have been a small number of ducks who have been fully seduced by the speeches of the Wyrmspeakers, joining the Wyrms' Friends willingly. Although it requires the duck to actually get the attention of recruiters or missionaries without getting themselves killed outright as nuisances to the Empire, these ducks become *Wyrmbills*. Wyrmbills are draconised ducks that are allowed to learn the beginning tenets of Auld Wyrnish. Their stiff bills and squawky voices make this a very difficult process, limiting their ability to wield the power of the ancient tongue. Wyrmbills rarely take on much of a draconic presence beyond reptilian eyes, claws and a moulting mixture of scales and feathers. They are hideous to behold by both duck and dragonewt, a mockery of both races smashed together into one awkward body.

The last Grand Duck Moot to take place on Genertela discussed the potential problems that the southern expansion of the EWF poses to the numerous ducktowns in Maniria and western Prax. Dragon Pass is slowly emptying into the rest of the continent and the ducks are worried that they may be forced out of their homes and nesting places. The elders decided that the EWF was not yet an enemy (as much as any non-duck is 'not an enemy') but that they should be closely watched in case the situation escalates.

## Dragon Pass

The most important part of Glorantha to the EWF in the Second Age; home to the greatest concentration of dragonewts and Wyrmspeakers anywhere, will eventually become one of the most important places for all ducks. Although they do not dare venture deeply into the Pass at the height of the Empire, there are many families of ducks that hide amongst the hillside caverns and darker marshes.

When the EWF spreads larger and thinner from the boundaries of Dragon Pass, the ducks will slip by and hide from the two clashing empires by settling in the place that no one would ever look – the heart of the EWF. They will form several small communities hidden away in the foothills and the marshes. The protection that these ancient places of the Pass will offer the ducks will be the only reason they survive

the turning of the ages and the next era of Glorantha will see the Dragon Pass littered with ducktowns because of it.

## Contemplative Nest

Within the dragonewt city of Contemplative Rest, at the foothills of the Indigo Mountains, there is a strange form of ducktown that has sprung up inside of the city's understood limits. Two dozen or more Wyrmbills have created a community for themselves to better serve the EWF without losing the basic tenets of being in a ducktown.

The local lords of the Empire have allowed the Wyrmbills to swim and bathe in the Solfint River but they are not allowed to use the water of the Imperial Fountain Peace for anything but blessings and wishes. The presence of duck feather-oils in the fountain would surely cause the dragonewts to turn on the Wyrmbills in a moment, eliminating their presence in a bloody display of retribution.

Nicknamed 'Contemplative Nest', this tiny ducktown is currently waiting for the first generation of Wyrmbill eggs to hatch. Whether the ducklings will be born with a touch of the draconic in them from their parents might point to the Wyrmspeakers that there is something more to the draconic ducks than just a source of servile labour.

## Delecti the Inquirer

An enigma within the Wyrmfriends, the sorcerer Delecti has a strange attraction and curiosity toward the duck race. He seems far too concerned with their allied connections to the Big People around Dragon Pass and especially of anything concerning their gods and cults. As a former Malkioni some of his curiosity can be explained as sheer will to learn but there is something much deeper in the mind of Delecti that has drawn him to write tomes of biological, social and cultural background on the Durulz.

There is some worry that the sorcerer has dark plans for the ducks in the future and most who know his



name also know to avoid him. The ducks are always waiting for the other foot to drop in life and when a powerful sorcerer on the Dragon Guiding Council takes undue notice of an otherwise unnoticed race, there is cause to worry.

The ducks of Glorantha have not yet heard the last of Delecti...

## Ducks and the God Learners

The ducks view the God Learners as they do nearly any other organisation of Big People; they only deal with them if the ducks will profit in some way, otherwise they are avoided. The fact is that the God Learners wield sorcery that the ducks have no real access to and have turned western Genertela into a potentially hazardous war zone that many ducktowns are in the path of. They do not want to get caught between the EWF and the God Learners and are willing to raid and sabotage both sides to try and ensure their survival.

Although the God Learners are somewhat easier to deal with than the alien dragonewts of the EWF, they are still a different breed of zealots that cannot be trusted. Ducks are used to being the universal scapegoats for what happens around them, making the most out of bad situations but the sorts of things that happen around the God Learners are just too weird even for them. This 'invisible god' of the Malkioni works in mysterious ways – ways that could always backfire on any duck nearby!

It is best to avoid the God Learners, where possible, as a rule but the kinds of powerful magic artefacts and devices that they always seem to have collected is very tempting to any duck. True magical devices are difficult for the unloved ducks to come by but the God Learners and their sorcerers almost assuredly have some at all times. A crafty duck that can get close enough to one might just be able to snatch something useful away before being discovered.

Conversely to the ducks' avoidance of God Learners, the Empire is interested in the inner workings of how the gods work through their creatures and their myths, placing the God Learners in a very strange conundrum concerning the ducks. Cursed by a divine decision, ducks are a perfect testing ground for the power of Heroquesting and the God Learners' wishes to alter the world's core myths.

If the Questors could manage to change the way that the ducks' curse affected them or remove it altogether, they would further prove their power over Glorantha's existing mythologies. The problem therein lies with the fact that few Questors are willing to ever stoop so low as to portray a duck in the Hero Plane, making it quite difficult to alter their myths. It seems as if the ducks' curse is managing to keep the one force that might be able to change it from doing so!

### Jrustela

The homeland of the God Learners, the island of Jrustela is home to a few breeds of ducks that managed to avoid being swept into the Middle Sea Empire as experiments or slaves. Although small duck communities exist throughout the lowlands of the island, the two largest ducktowns are found attached to Piskosol and Orphalsketkal.

The timinits of Piskosol ignore the presence of the larger of the two main ducktowns, a place called Rook. It is a huge ducktown of over 100 individual ducks from 12 family lines. The ducks of Rook are used to being made into the paid tools of Duke Paptalor and his timinit constituents. As that they are biologically better equipped for going into the shallow tidal pools to search for pearls and other resources, the ducks are almost all employed as fisherducks or shoresducks.

The second largest of Brustelan ducktowns is a secret place called Feathercove. It is where roughly 50 ducks live and thrive by raiding the ship crews that come into Orphalsketkal, using their assets to help ducks that want off the island to stowaway in new ships headed to Genertela. There is a waertagi corsair that lives amongst the ducks of Feathercove, teaching them how to survive at sea without supplies and how to best steal from the Middle Sea Empire. He is named Finregaugr and is an ally to local ducks but he has yet to do anything to deserve the title of Duckfriend.

### The Clanking City

Within the steam-belching, cog-winding and metal-forging walls of the Clanking City, a small number of brave ducks have been dispatched on an important mission. A tiny tented boat of ducks has sat anchored and unmolested just outside the huge walls of the city for nearly a year, too small and insignificant for the Zistorites to care or notice them. Under the cover of these tents however, the ducks have been accomplishing what no other outside race has been able to – get access into the city.

For a year there have been specialty trained ducks with the proper runes and equipment to *tunnel* into the Clanking City. It took them nearly 10 months to accomplish such a feat and now have free access to and from the city despite the invisible shield and the constant threat of being discovered by patrols. Their tunnel leads into the Undercity, from which they can go wherever else they need to – hopefully without being captured or killed.

Why have the ducks struggled against such dire odds to gain entry into Zistorwal? The answer is simple; to

try and use the mechamagic of the machine-men to regain the ability to fly. The God Learners have defied the gods and myths before, perhaps ducks are destined to have wings of brass and iron in this age?

### Seshnela

The heart of the Middle Sea Empire, this area of Genertela is considered mostly a safe place by most ducks. The God Learners have far too much to worry about in the form of the growing and encroaching EWF to even give a passing glance to a ducktown being built or a group of duck bandits raiding their caravans. In fact, many God Learner and Malkioni missionaries have fallen prey to duck banditry along the roads of Seshela but not with enough frequency or repetition to warrant additional investigation. Even so, there are three main places of note in the lands of Seshnela concerning ducks.

The first is the black citadel of Arkwal, the city of warriors. Ducks are taught to do anything they can to avoid getting within a day's walk from the black city, as there are always teams of bloodthirsty warriors looking for targets of their martial practices.

The second is a recent place of interest for ducks travelling through the area. The sorcerous experiments of Estan have not only caused recent strange effects to the local weather (raining squid, black snow and so on) but also have infused the river reeds and shore plants with unique and wonderful flavours. Ducks come to the shores near Estan to harvest lilies that taste of peppermint, dewfronds of fine wine and a common algae that smokes stronger and sweeter than duckweed.

The last and most important place controlled by Emperor Ilotos is that of Arolanit. With bountiful fields and caravans of grain and vegetables in a constant flow on the rolling roads and paths, ducks can easily make a decent living legally or illegally. Food is plentiful and the local populations are taught that meanness is a sin, making a duck's life simple – it is better to ignore them than risk damnation through treating them poorly. Although highwayducks will still have to deal with God Learner patrolmen, many ducktowns have grown up in the area off of the Arolaniti peoples.

## Ducks and Yelmholme

The lands of Dara Happa, Carmania, Rinliddi and the surrounding territories are collectively called 'Yelmholme' to the ducks, who look upon the area as the home of their ancient enemy. The Yelmites of the area are far too strong to try to get vengeance upon, especially with so many of them pledging their allegiances to the Golden Dragon Emperor on the Sun Throne. Striking back in their own way, the ducks of Yelmholme fight a constant guerrilla war against the cults of Yelm's pantheon. Ducks are not numbered very high in the area, making their spiteful actions small and ignorable compared to the greater happenings taking place in the area.

The largest ducktown in Yelmholme is found in Rinliddi territories, sprouting out and up from the banks of the Arcos River, just 100 kilometres downstream from

*'I cannot help but wonder what we could accomplish with the thrice-damned ducks and their broken, sundered myth? They will not share enough of what happened in the Great Darkness to help us draw a map to where they went so wrong and we cannot be bothered in our current state of war to research it ourselves.'*

*Some say that they hate the ducks for what they are. I do not. I hate them for what they could become but never will be.'*

*– Professor Mildreke of Estan*

Diavizzi. The ducks call it Canarddi, a play on the local lands and the lost ducktopia of legend. Consisting of both standing structures on the land and floating or pole-supported ones in the river, Canarddi is home to close to 350 ducks of various breeds and professions. Their overall goal is to hopefully convince the Rinliddi bird-riders *against* the connection between their augner bird eggs and the eggs of the Great Dragon. By using the fact that no Rinliddi would ever want to be connected in such a fashion with a lowly duck, the ducks can keep the EWF from gaining more power in

the area. The ducks of Canardii throw enormous 'egg festivals' and 'hatch celebrations' frequently to remind the Rinliddi that if what the Wyrmspeakers say is true, then not only are their birds related to dragons – but also to ducks!

### Dorastor

The root of the Faceless Enemy in Yelmholme, ducks do not settle anywhere near the area permanently. Ivory Mallards, Stormbills and Deathdrake disciples make pilgrimages to the area to hunt down Chaos beasts and minions wherever they can be found.

Being so close to EWF lands and so deep in Yelmholme territory, these are dangerous journeys that claim many duck lives each year. The goal is clear however, to find the place where Gbaji fell and discover a way to undo the opening of the hellspring. Huge tribes of broo, lurking nests of waknath snakes and a nomadic village of werewolf Telmori stalk the area constantly; it is dangerous for the most seasoned of warriors – let alone a handful of prideful and well-trained ducks!

## Ducks and Maniria

Considered the landing point for Grandmother Duck when she was hurled from Yelm's Court, the territories of Maniria are generally called the Ducklands by ducks everywhere. It has a large duck population scattered amongst dozens of ducktowns and individual familial homesteads that nears 10,000, the largest collection of ducks anywhere in the world.

Ducktowns appear in various sizes and shapes all over the Manirian coasts and riverbanks, many of which as large as the largest ducktowns found in other kingdoms or continents. Most carry populations of a few hundred at most but some are veritable ducktropolises of a few thousand. There are several organised forms of duck militia and unions of duck workers that help keep the Ducklands safe and habitable for more of their kind.

The highest ranking Runelords of the duck cults live in the largest and most influential ducktown, named Mothersnest for the belief that Canarda nested here in the Godtime. It is a tightly packed city of sorts that is built around several magically-cut canals out of the river, looking out over the river's mouth to look upon the human seaport of Bemelor. Within Mothersnest

there are actual temples and shrines to all of the duck gods, many of their Orlanthi allies and even a few local deities that the ducks have taken to nodding to from time to time. Four Runedrakes live in Mothersnest; Yuri All-Cares-Taken of Canarda's Motherwatch, Drakeblade Woefather of the Deathdrake Disciples, Lyra Silverplume of the Stormbills and the mysterious Whisperquack of the Shadowswimmers. They form the eldest and most powerful of duck cultists in the area and their voices are what drive most duck moots.

Mothersnest is also a point of trade and commerce for those outsiders willing to come to a ducktown in search of goods. Tradesducks and other 'acquirers' set up booths and sales tents on floating rafts in the river, creating a form of floating bazaar. Traditional shops slanted toward goods usable by ducks line many of the canals or footpaths and prices are competitive with other settlements in the area.

The most common reason for any foreign duck to travel to Mothersnest is to try and compete in the annual contest put on by the ranking members of the cult of Duru-Orlanth the Adventurer. Only 100 ducks may scribe their name on the slate each year on Ducksday, the supposed anniversary of the First Hatching that happens at the beginning of each Sacred Time. The contest requires that each competing duck gather a stone, a feather and a flower from one of 100 random locations across Genertela. These places range from 'The Coast of the Neliomi Sea' to 'The Streets of Frowal'. Any surviving ducks that return with these three items on the next year's first day of Sacred Time will be considered victorious and will be lauded upon by thousands of fellow ducks. Those who succeed are named as legends in the halls of Duru-Orlanth, told the true story of Yelm's Sentence and given the power of an elder from that point forward. In the Sacred Time of 907, the first Duckfriend – a female zebraur named Baudica – galloped forward to put her name on the list and the elders knew they could not stop her. What will happen when or if she returns has yet to be seen.

The ducks that live in Maniria exist in a constant state of concern, even more so than their cousins across the continent. They are caught in a fertile area with excellent river and ocean access between two massive empires at war. The elders know that any given morning could bring God Learner ships to their

shore or EWF dinosaur cavalry from the north. Even with this constant threat looming over their collective heads, Maniria is still one of the best places for a duck to live.

Resources are plentiful from ducktown crops and storage halls, neighbouring human communities are prolific and easy to trade with or steal from and the river brings fresh water and steady supplies of fish from the north. Other than the constant reminder that they are almost universally mocked or ignored, the ducks of Maniria live a rather pleasant Gloranthan life.

## Ducks, Pent and the Praxian Wastelands

The huge are of Genertela that is roamed and claimed by the nomadic tribes of Waha is not a good place for ducks to try to settle or inhabit for too long. The tribal raiders from the Wastelands would not hesitate to attack a growing ducktown, as it would be seen as a weak and easy target. Between the inherent dangers of living in a predator-filled savannah ruled by a violent culture of raiders and the low number of natural water sources, the Wastelands do not receive many duck settlers.

The northern area of Pent is far more naturally habitable but the Pentan horselords make it even less so. In the Wastelands and Prax a duck could at least trust the beast-rider nomads to take what they need and leave the ducks with much of everything else. The horse nomads of Pent do not leave what they view as trespassers as future threats, burning their villages and killing their breeding-age men.

Ducks that find themselves in Pent should beware. The Pentan sun god Kargzant is one of the Sky Gods that helped Yelm curse the ducks and his followers are not to be trusted or suffered for long. Any duck loyal to his people will go to great lengths to do harm to a Kargzant faithful. Because of this, Pent is one of the only places where the ducks willingly find themselves allied with the attacking War Dragons of the EWF – even if the Wymnfriends are not aware of this aid.



## Ducks, Keets and Kralorela

The only place in Glorantha that large numbers of both keets and ducks co-exist, the greater kingdom of Kralorela is a divider between the ducklands of Genertela and the Vithelan keet islands. There has always been some tension between the two halves of the Durulz people but that feeling is palpable wherever they cross paths.

Ducks that have come to Kralorela tend to have been travellers from the west that ventured across the Shan Shan Mountains, likely at great risk and loss to their caravan. The Hsunchen tribes of the Shan Shans are numerous and powerful, making easy prey of the slow-moving and awkward ducks as they wind their way through the thick bamboo forests and jungles of the

mountain range. Those who do make it to the eastern kingdom find that it too treats them as little more than nothing. In a bitter sort of irony however, *all* peasants are treated poorly – so the ducks have much company in their misery.

*‘The birdfolk of the Durulz are welcomed to the lands of Enlightenment. They are no less a part of the Cosmic Dragon as my dewclaw is no less a part of my body. In the celestial cycle of all things, they fill a much needed part that no other beings seem to be able – the roll of fool and jester.*

*It is said that laughter is the music of the cosmos; then look upon the cruel joke that is the Durulz and believe that they are the root chord of our greater symphony.’*

– Sheing Vyr, Hsunchen philosopher of the Hsa tradition

There are only a few minor ducktowns along the western boundaries of Green Contemplation, Hopeful Centrality and throughout Respectful Welcome. They are small affairs that have taken on a Kralori feel to their architecture, dress and weaponry. Rice paddies and reed farms are commonplace; and heavily-practiced martial arts techniques are passed amongst the warrior drakes of the communities. They are not large in size, population or influence amongst the locals but they are well-known to all Durulz in the kingdom as places of safety from outsiders.

Keets in the area are far more prolific and widespread. Where there are only two main breeds of keet in the kingdom, they appear in small communities throughout the entire Kralori coastline. Coming up from Vithela generations ago, the Kralori keets have fully taken on the mentality of the local peoples. Kralori keets are accepted by the locals not as duck-equivalents but instead as a lesser tradition of the Hsunchen people that have somehow lost their shapeshifting capabilities. Many of the older keet communities do not dissuade this avenue of thinking, as it gives them an older and firmer position to take in the kingdom. They are merely tolerant of their duck cousins, viewing them as the least social caste of the beast-folk but whose

existence reminds them that they cannot choose to ignore their Durulz nature simply because it would be more honourable to be Hsunchen.

The state of affairs in Kralorela between the growing God Learner movement and the existing Draconic Mysticism means very little to the Durulz. They have their own gods and myths to look after while trying not be meals for Kralori ogres or the spiritual predators that roam the Kingdom of Ignorance. It is more important to them to survive on a basic level before worrying about what Shang Hsa and his Imperial Court are up to in their golden palaces.

### Chang Tsai, the Nest of Chaos

The so-called Cannibal City within the Continual Ascendance is a travesty to those who would stand against the Faceless Enemy. Eastern ducks and keets do not have nearly as strong a tie to the fight against Chaos as the Stormbills and ivory mallards of the west but many see the horrors caused by the Ogre King and his Legion of Red Bones and feel a stirring in them to fight against it.



There is no ducktown or community within the area of the horrible city but many western ducks aligned against Chaos journey to the area to try and do battle with Red Bones leaders. Some try and sabotage the city's resources, others go for a more direct confrontation. Whatever the tactics or methods, Chang Tsai is universally avoided and hated by all Durulz.

### Yumo De-Dao, Nesting Dream

Just south of the fabled City of Dreams, along the coastline, there is a keet village devoted to the greater purification of the mind. Using a similar technique as the people of Yumo Dao, the numerous peacock keets that call the area home place a blown-out and empty eggshell under the bed of troubled keets that come to the village, drug them with natural hallucinogens and leave them to their sleep. The nightmares and visions they have during their forced slumber are said to flow down into the egg and leave them worrisome and happy by morning.

What happens to the evil and hurtful energies that are stored in these eggshells is unknown but such small and fragile things filled with such concentrated suffering could have a host of dark and sinister purposes.

## The Keetslands of Vithela

Called the Keetslands, dozens of the islands surrounding the main isle of Haragala are the homelands of the varied tribes of keets. Other than the few small communities still found hiding in the shadow of the Haragalan beacon and mercenary camps, each island is home to a single breed of keet. One island's rocky cliffs will be home to the savage warrior auks; the next might be a cove for a pelican keet diving reef. They mingle amongst themselves socially but they *never* live with one another as a rule set down in the Godtime by Prince Heron and the Brothers Seabird.

The keets, led nominally by the Phoenixes on Haragala, collectively believe that the whole island mass of Vithela belongs to them. Their myths and their faith tells them that they gave their wings as the Sacrifice to save the continent and they firmly believe that the

people living on those islands are little more than squatters on their territory. This sort of condescending attitude is why most Vithelans view the keets as beasts to be avoided at best, at worst *slain*.

Some keet islands are utterly off limits to outsiders, like those belonging to the auks or the swordbills, who

*'The Big People around us cannot fathom what we gave to save them from the hunger of Magasta's Pool. They are fools and ingrates all and perhaps we were fortunate not to have sealed all the waterways between these islands.*

*I would hate to share our home with anyone so ignorant and blind.'*

*– Ryderro Risingbeam, Phoenic noble*

have taken their 'ownership' of the islands to a height that has turned them into militant tribals the other keets call Savages. They attack anything that steps foot onto their islands that did not bring a proper gift of friendship and they are most likely to be overcome with wanderlust – taking them away from their islands as adventurers and shoreline pirates.

Other keet islands, particularly those inhabited by the herons, storks and pelicans, are more welcoming to outsiders. They support trading posts and port villages that allow them to interact with the islanders and any travellers from elsewhere that might happen by. It is not possible for an outsider to recognise one keet island from another at first glance; they should all hope to land on one of these more 'friendly' keetsland rocks and not one of the Savaged ones. It is the difference of receiving a cold shoulder from the keets or the ends of their spears!

### Chartam's Shadow

Located in the wooded hills around the glowing city of Chartam on the huge island of Haragala, there is a grouping of buildings stacked onto one another tightly around a pool of sparkling fresh water. This pool is where Grandfather Flamingo and Prince Heron first met after fleeing from Ganderland's fields of battle and it is the point where all keet tribes migrated from once they decided to leave each others' company.

The keets call it 'the Shadow' because of how it sits in the shade of the cathedral dome of the neighbouring city, darkened by comparison to the glowing stones of that wondrous place. It is the primary colony of the descendants of Prince Heron and it is home to over 1,000 adult keet warrior-nobles, their harems and their flock.

Those who come to Chartam's Shadow see it as a beautiful village built from enamelled white wood and intricately carved stone. The herons that live there are prideful and cocky, believing themselves to be of a 'ruling class' of keet. Their ideas of self-grandeur aside, the heron keets are still Durulz and are looked down upon as local threats to travel and expansion.

### Flaminganni

The marshland island of Flaminganni is where the flamingo Phoenics made their home after the Sacrifice. Grandfather Flamingo laid down to sleep at the island's centre right before the Age of History began, his wings aching and he stretched his feathers out to cover the whole island – which is why Flaminganni is a large swamp filled with pinkish algae that is sweet-smelling and attracts many small fish and shrimp. The food pools of Flaminganni keep the Phoenics fed with enough surplus to occasionally trade with 'lesser' breeds of keet.

The Phoenics of Flaminganni are rude and callous to a fault but they tolerate the presence of outsiders on

their islands – just not other keets. Any non-flamingo keet, especially anyone from the heron families, that comes to the shores of Flaminganni can expect to be met by hostile Phoenic hoplites and runecasters.

### Gull Bay

The northern edge of Haragala is grooved and jagged with several rocky bays and lagoons, the collective grouping of which is called Gull Bay. Home to several hundred gull keets of many plumage colours, the whole area is a chain of individual villages and ports that house the shipbuilding efforts of the gulls. They are the most well-travelled of the keets, perhaps of all the Durulz and it is mostly due to their constant plying of the seas. The Middle Sea Empire has a standing bounty on gullship pirates as a result.

One cove within Gull Bay is a bleak and desolate place of grey stone and bland architecture; home of the albatross keets. From within their dark caverns and shallow homes they spend most of their days drunk and depressed, fighting off the dismal visions that their breed inherited from their progenitor. Other gulls come to Albatross Cove to have their fortunes read and futures foretold. What the albatrosses have to say is rarely positive, but they will not lie no matter what their answers might mean.

### Swordbill Springs

A small island of streams and reed-ringed lakes on the southwestern edge of the Vithelan chain is where the savage swordbill keets and their common kingfisher cousins choose to live and hunt. They are fierce tribal warriors that have turned their wetland plains into a

series of large, linked hunting grounds. The abundant fruit trees and game animals on the island attracts Vithelan and outsider travellers to come hunt or harvest for their own islands' supplies and food stores but the outsiders are turned into the prey as soon as they step onto swordbill territory. Tribes like the swordbills that have become 'Savaged' are not friendly to outsiders but are the source for the occasional brave soul looking to prove himself to his tribe by leaving the island and seeing the world.

### The Sorn Rookeries

After they betrayed their kin during the Sacrifice, the pterodactyl keets followed the whispers of the Faceless Enemy to several small islands throughout the Eastern Isles. Invigorated by the pact with Chaos, the Sorns were allowed to keep their wings and their power to fly in exchange for their servitude in the ages to come. Despised by their cousins for their betrayal, made primal by the Savaging, and mutated by the Faceless Enemy, the Sorns are forced to move from one island home to the next in order to avoid being caught and stamped out by other keets or Chaos-killers.

There are several rocky islands that are nomadic homes to the Sorns, the groups of the lizard-like keets moving around in small flocks of ten to twenty. The rookeries are the dens of these flocks, secretly situated on many different islands of Vithela and off the Genertelan coasts. Each rookery is part labyrinth, nest and altar to the Black Sun; it is no wonder why the Sorns are the most prolific of Chaos minions on the Vithelan islands.

# THE SCATTERED FLOCKS

Just as there are dozens of different subspecies of ducks in the animal kingdoms, there are several different sub-breeds of duck and keet in Glorantha. Nearly all of the sub-breeds of duck and keet are physically the same on a basic level but might have minor differences here and there that they have evolved over the course of generations to better suit them in their normal habitats. These differences may not mean much to an outsider but to a duck; they could be the only thing that stands between survival and a horrible, horrible death.

This chapter presents the various sub-breeds of the Durulz species, their physical appearance, where they tend to appear and any other particular differences they might possess.

## Duck Breeds

The following are the known sub-breeds of duck, starting with the common 'canard'. All other entries are alternate varieties that could be chosen by players and Games Masters for their own duck characters.

### Canard

The most numerous of the duck sub-breeds, the canard is what the world thinks of when someone mentions a duck. They typically have brown plumage with white or grey flecks, occasionally darkening all the way to black or lightening nearly to a yellow-tan. Both males and females have this colouration, with some males manifesting a green-grey bill instead of the normal yellow/orange one. Their feet tend to be the common orange with darker webbing between the toes.

Canard ducks make up roughly half to two-thirds of the total duck population of Glorantha, showing their lineage connection to Canarda the Egg Mother through their reproductive proficiency. It is said that both Grandmother Duck *and* Canarda were traditional canards and are frequently drawn or depicted that way in holy works.

**Commonly Found:** Throughout Genertela and Jrustela.

### Emerald-Crown

An offshoot from the common canard, the emerald-crown duck is a beautiful example of the colours duck feathers can be. Females have mottled brown plumage all over their bodies except for a white-ringed black area around the eyes and a band of sapphire blue around their forearms. Males however, are dazzling to behold. Smooth tan and grey of body, emerald-crown drakes have the same blue bands on their forearms as their mates but have a shining green head of short, metallic feathers. A ring of stark white separates the crown from the rest of the body, giving a sharp contrast between the sections. Bills and feet of both sexes range from golden yellow to dull ochre.

Most emerald-crown ducks are destined for politics due to their remarkable attractiveness and personal charm. They tend to have large families and settle in the best homesteads of their ducktown. Those that get into adventuring are almost always doing so in search of fortune and fame.

**Commonly Found:** Seshnela, Ralios, Slontos and Kethaela

### Ivory Mallard

Considered holy descendants of Stormbill the Chaos Killer himself, the ivory mallards are born to every type of duck at random. No matter the parentage behind the hatchling, a pale white child, an ivory bill and storm-blue eyes may spring from the mother. This colouration is the mark of that duck's 'destiny', a position in their society that is supposed to lead them to battles against the Faceless Enemy. As they grow older, drake or female, ivory mallards do not lose any of the purity to the shine of their white feathers but they do see a slight greying to their heads.

Ivory mallards are said to be hatched with more frequency whenever Chaos grows stronger, arming the Durulz with better warriors to battle it. They are given the best resources and training that their local duck community can arrange and are never turned away by the cults of Deathdrake or Stormbill.

**Commonly Found:** Anywhere ducks are found

## Mandari

Smaller of body than most ducks, the mandari duck is agile and striking to behold. Drakes are white chested, golden backed and grey limbed, male mandarin ducks have a 'beard' of rust-coloured feathers under their red bill. The sides of their heads and necks are white, with a black face and shoulders and metallic golden eyes. The feathers on the sides of their head grow backwards into two long groupings that sweep back like tail feathers. Females are comparatively unimpressive. They have drab and mottled brown feathers with black heads and eyes ringed in white.

Mandari ducks are the common breed of duck naturally found in the far east, making them often fill the role of ducktown peasant. They are learned ducks for the most part, trying to stay within the concepts of enlightenment as the Kralori teach. Their traditional methods of focussing mind and body make them stalwart and steadfast in most situations.

**Commonly Found:** Southern Wastelands, Teshnos and Kralorela

## Muscovi

Broad-chested and tall (for a duck), muscovi ducks are dark green to the point of being nearly black all over their bodies, drake and female alike. White feathers cap their upper limbs and their bills and feet are dusky grey. Already rather unattractive to look upon, muscovi ducks also have red, thick, almost wart-like growths around the base of their bills that cause them no discomfort but tend to move distractingly when they talk.

Muscovi ducks are even looked down upon by other ducks due to their physical ugliness and oddly superior physical characteristics. They are deserved of their reputations as thugs and barbarians, as they cannot help but try to overcome their social deficits with their violent natures.

**Commonly Found:** Northern Pamaltela, Fronela and Carmania

## Red-Crest

Thick black plumage covers most of the red-crest duck's body with their arm feathers taking on a tan or mottled brown colour separated by bands of white.

This brown pattern covers all of the female red-crest ducks, including their feet and bills. The strangest feature of the drakes is that they have a striking rust-red head of thick plumage that rises reflexively into a tall crest of bright red when agitated or excited.

Red-crest ducks are fantastic public speakers and have excellent vocal control most of the time. They are taught to revere Eggbeater the Singer of Songs from an early age, as they have descended from his children. Born musicians and entertainers, red-crest ducks also succumb easily to wanderlust because of their strong curious streaks.

**Commonly Found:** Ralios, Peloria and Slontos

## Teal

Named after the nervous sound they make and *not* the colour, teal ducks are one of the rare sub-breeds that do not have colouration differences between the sexes. Both drakes and females have white to grey chests, speckled brown feathers tipped in white flecks everywhere else and a red-orange bill often striped in black or silver. They have wide orange feet that seem somewhat longer than those of a normal duck and extremely oily feathers.

Teal ducks are excellent swimmers, even better than normal ducks, due to their longer legs and wider feet. It makes them seem a little more awkward on land but they spend so much of their lives in rivers, ponds and shallow bays that it is rarely a problem. Their stiff bill is better designed for eating shellfish and tough water-weeds as well, something evolved from their somewhat eclectic dietary habits.

**Commonly Found:** Northern Jrustela, Seshnelan Coast and Slontos

## Widgeon

Energetic and athletically built, widgeon ducks are rather primitive when compared to their Genertelan cousins. They have black feathers streaked in white on their backs and chests, light brown or tan speckled sides and limbs and a blackish head of feathers that shine iridescently in the proper light. Their eyes are black and without pupils and their bills and feet are a strange shock of light blue. Drakes have white patches over their bills, females a light and subtle grey. Their



plumage is strange and stands out against the muted landscape of Pamaltela but camouflage is rarely their course of action when massed violence is available.

Widgeon ducks are far more tribal and shamanic than their northern kin, turning away from most of the duck gods in favour of ancestor worship and spirit practices. They do not leave Pamaltela very often on their own will but every widgeon duck is required to journey to somewhere their elders have not seen before they can be considered an adult.

**Commonly Found:** Northern Pamaltela

### Woods

Similar to the emerald-crown in physical appearance, woods ducks are smaller of body but stronger of limb. Their feathers are tan and brown to grey along their bodies and limbs, with a green-crowned head that is ringed in white with longer feathers at the back of their heads that sweep down onto the backs of their necks. Females are far more muted in browns and tans

only but they still bear the tell-tale sweeping head feathering. Their darker orange feet end in hooked claws designed for gripping wood and their white-streaked red bills are typically harder than those of other ducks.

Woods ducks are very prolific wherever ducks live in close proximity to forests or wooded plains. They live in arboreal ducktowns and farm fruit or nut-bearing trees to supplement their food stores. Most woods duck communities are small and hidden away from public view, as they tend to be more private than other duck breeds.

**Commonly Found:** Central Genertela

## Keet Breeds

The following are the known breeds of keet, starting with the common 'auk'. All other entries are alternate varieties that could be chosen by players and Games Masters for their own keet characters. Even though

there are more individual types of keet than there are varieties of duck, keets only count for 35% of the total Durulz population of Glorantha.

It should be noted that most keets do not share a common body type with one another, unlike ducks. These differences are better explained in game terms in the next chapter of this book.

**Albatross**

Tall, thickly muscled and long-limbed, albatross keets are some of the largest of the keet breeds. They are large and ungainly with dingy grey feathers that occasionally lighten to white around the chest and head. They have a sharp yellow beak and dull black eyes ringed in white or light brown. Males and females look nearly identical, both sexes having a somewhat androgynous look to them.

The direct lineage from Albatros the Seer gives most albatross keets the power of seeing glimpses of the future. There has never been a seer as powerful as the god himself but many exhibit at least minor instincts toward precognitive ability. Because of their power however, albatross keets tend to be depressed and apathetic most of the time – how can they become excited about the world when they already know several of the outcomes ahead of time?

**Commonly Found:** Northern Haragala, southern Genertelan coasts

**Auk**

Short but thickly muscled, auk keets are the most common kind of keet found in the Keetslands. They range physically from all-black to black with white panels on chest or arms, with some having flecks of grey or blue-silver on their backs and faces. Their beaks are very hard and sharp for ripping open fish and cracking crustacean shells, as that they are primarily carnivorous and range from dark black to striped with brilliant colours.

It is said that the auk keets' patron god, Sunbill the Puffin, had a beak of solid gold that lit up the dark journey to the Inner World. This belief that gold is sacred makes most auk keets greedy and easily distracted by precious metals. They also have the most variance in their many individual tribes. The largest

portion of the keets, the collective breed has become dozens of slightly different families that live on many separate islands.

**Commonly Found:** Throughout Vithela

**Cormorant**

Smaller and faster cousins of the pelicans, cormorant keets are long-necked divers and strong swimmers with a leaning toward being Savage. They have black sides and backs flecked or streaked with white, dark faces with reddish beaks stabbing out from white chins that bleed into white chests. Males also tend to have ruddier feet that can brown or even black in colour, with two small bony spurs growing from the ankles. Most cormorant keets cap these natural spurs with bronze blades but not unless they are expecting conflict.

Cormorant keets are the polar opposite of their socialite pelican cousins, serving as the 'royal guard' of the court of High Crowned Pelican, their progenitor god. They respond to most outsiders with reservation and paranoia, only accepting guests to their small islands if led by a pelican keet.

**Commonly Found:** Throughout Vithela

**Heron**

Tall and regal-looking, the heron keets have a wide variety of plumage colours that all fall under their sub-breed. Heron keets range in colour drastically; white, grey, black, brown, blue-silver and even red can cover their thick feathers. They have long necks and angular heads that end in a straight, stiff bill that is normally yellow in hue. Many heron keets have tall head-crests that they groom regularly, fluffing them up when riled or upset.

Inheriting their colour-prejudices from Grandfather Flamingo, heron keets separate their society into castes based on the colouration of the heron's plumage. White herons are politicians and leaders, grey herons are bureaucrats and traders, black herons are spies and assassins and brown herons are commoners or tradeskeets. Blue-silver heron keets are those expected to leave the community as adventurers and red-feathered herons are always the priests of Prince Heron.

It is also common, no matter the role they fill, for herons in Kralorela to be called 'cranes', after the long-lost line of the Crane Hsunchen .

**Commonly Found:** Throughout Vithela, Kralorela and southeastern Genertela

### Pelican

Heavy-bodied keets with thick feathers and stubby limbs, pelican keets come in two colouration varieties – white and brown. Supposedly there were once black pelican keets but they have long since disappeared. Pelican keets are thick and portly but this is offset by their massively distended bill. The mouth of a pelican keet can open nearly as wide as they are and it is the symbol of their gluttonous appetites. Their oily feathers help to keep them warm in the oceanfront spray but it also makes pelican keets typically look unwashed or dirty.

Pelican keets are greedy, materialistic and rarely amenable to negotiation. They are the merchants and traders of the keetslands, happy to store treasures and riches in their bayside communities along Haragala's western coast. They are somewhat cowardly, preferring to hide behind their violent cormorant kin when words fail them. Considering that the enormous sac that forms the lower half of their bill gives them a speech impediment that could be considered a separate dialect of beastspeech, this happens more often than they would like to admit.

**Commonly Found:** Throughout Vithela

### Penguin

Short and powerful, these Savage keets are raiders and pirates each and all. They are heavily muscled from long days of swimming in cold waters, their feathers so small and oily that they look as though they have slicked fur rather than plumage. Penguin keets come in various combinations of black and white, with a few rare bloodlines growing yellow, red or orange 'tribal' markings on their necks, chests and heads. They have very hard beaks and thick spurs on their ankles and their white-ringed black eyes hide the ferocity found in their souls.

Sunbill the Puffin is said to have created the penguin keets to be his shock troops; ground forces that were never meant for flight at all. This is why they are so

thick-limbed and such powerful fighters. Penguin keets have spread on their longboats to the farthest and coldest regions of the Inner World, leaving only a few islands of their kind in Vithela at all.

**Commonly Found:** Roaming on the open seas, Vithela, northern Fronela, Outer Pent

### Phoenic (Flamingo)

The direct ancestors to Grandfather Flamingo himself, the elegant and beautiful flamingo Phoenics (their own name for their breed of keet) are understandably vain. Their appearance is what set them apart from their brethren, their pink to scarlet feathers perfectly tucked to their slender bodies all the way from their thin, stable legs to their curving neck. Their bills have a base of white that ends in black, curved forever into the grimace of disdain they have for all other breeds of Durulz.

Phoenics of all varieties are excellent and practiced spellcasters, with the flamingos focussing mostly on the divine worship of their god-ancestor. They enjoy a haughty view of the world, especially when dealing with Vithelan natives – to whom they have no trouble explaining how they saved their islands from oblivion. Flamingo phoenics do not commonly leave their communities but have been known to travel to the mainland of Genertela when the situation calls for it.

**Commonly Found:** Haragala, Kralorela

### Phoenic (Peacock)

Much shorter than their flamingo brothers, peacock phoenics are also dramatically fewer in number. Their metallic blue or green bodies are arguably even more attractive than that of a flamingo, especially when looking at the polite black-and-white mask of feathers that all peacocks grow upon their faces. The males of the sub-breed also grow a veritable trailer of exquisitely coloured tail feathers, which they try to keep gathered behind them most of the time. When they are aroused or simply showing off however, the tail is spread wide to become a huge fan of brilliance.

They are short-beaked but loud-voiced, collecting runes and practicing their runic magic as often as their free time will allow them. They were created to be the warlocks of Grandfather Flamingo, and they do so continually in the Age of History to serve the

dream their Grandfather had – phoenic superiority of the Durulz.

**Commonly Found:** Haragala, Kralorela, eastern Genertela

**Seagull**

The keets to have on your sailing ship, seagull keets are consummate sailors and ocean-goers. They have grey to white plumage all over their bodies, bright yellow beaks, and clawed feet for gripping the deck of their ship in a storm. They are able-bodied and surprisingly agile on land or in the water due to their athletic builds and overly-oily feathers.

Having turned to shipbuilding, sailing and occasional piracy, seagull keets are the most likely to be seen outside of the Keetslands. They are the keet version of human sea dogs, complete with the penchant for profanity and rum. They have become a general thorn in the side of the God Learners due to an old debt the seagull keets feel they owe to the waertagi – who helped pull the first seagull keets from the water after they lost their wings.

**Commonly Found:** Northern Haragala, scattered in Vithela, on the open sea

**Stork**

The somewhat slow-moving but determined cousin of the herons, stork keets are the messengers of the keet families. Their tall and long bodies are covered in thin white or grey feathers, their strong legs are slender and orange. They have strong yellow bills that they somehow can ‘lock’ closed onto an object they wish to carry for long periods of time, audibly talking strictly through their long and slender throats.

Prince Heron told to the stork keets to never question their brethren, to always serve as the communication avenue between them. They do this happily because with this duty comes a solemn vow from all of the non-Savage keet breeds to do no harm to the messengers. Stork keets will sometimes be given a message to take to the mainland or even for non-keets, but they are always nervous to do so – non-keets do not know of Prince Heron’s decree!

**Commonly Found:** Throughout Vithela and Kralorela

**Swordbill**

Small, fierce and utterly Savage, the swordbill keets are a dangerous curiosity to outsiders. Their bright blue bodies and orange chest plumage is dazzlingly



attractive while their sometimes eclectic crest-feather styling seems neurotic and random. Marked individually with tribal feathers to show what bloodline of the original kingfisher avians they stem from, each swordbill clan is slightly different in individual colourations. The only thing that is universal between all swordbill keets is their long and iron-hard beak – so sharp and powerful that most armoured beings are not safe from its shearing plunge.

Swordbill keets live almost exclusively on the meat of fish and the harvesting of freshwater insects and crustaceans but they are more than capable of eating *any* animal food source. They have shown this time and time again through their Savage ways, even stooping to cannibalism after tribal conflicts between bloodline tribes. When a swordbill keet's choler is up, nothing is safe.

**Commonly Found:** Throughout Vithela

## Lost Breeds

The following are the few breeds of Durulz that have been lost to dark forces or *other* stimulus that makes them nothing but adversaries of the existing breeds of Durulz. They have been written off as lost by both Grandmother Duck and Grandfather Flamingo and no descendant of either would dare question as to why.

It should be noted that these 'lost' breeds do exist in higher numbers than what most ducks or keets would like to admit but would not make good characters in any fashion due to their unique make-up and histories. To show this, we have chosen to include them in the same format as we would any other creature or monster in the *RuneQuest Monsters* series of sourcebooks. This does not mean that thrill-seeking players could not create good characters from these races – merely that they will be quite difficult to portray properly in a normal *RuneQuest* game.

### Gos (Goose Durulz)

Similar in body structure to ducks, the Gos (pronounced 'gahz') are an offshoot of the Durulz that are neither duck nor keet. They claim to have been born from one

of Grandmother Duck's (who they know as Mother Goose) fallen feathers. Their simple-minded stories talk about a lost egg that would not hatch, the baby inside growing larger and larger as the shell grew tighter and tighter. It was not until Mother Goose's fallen feather drifted down and touched the top of the egg did it break under the weight, releasing the first Gos into the world.

The Gos are throwback Durulz to earlier times when all problems could be solved with a sharp spear or hissing posturing. They are a simple-minded species that enjoys long days of swimming, fishing, gathering and fighting. Males (ganders) are grey or white in colour, normally with a bright yellow or dull black bill filled with somewhat sharp tomia (teeth-like growths), sometimes growing a ridge 'horn' on the upper half as well. Females (hens) are generally darker in tone and rarely grow the ridge that the ganders do. They have wild eyes that are very sharp to see underwater and strong webbed feet to propel them through it.

Gos tribes are rarely more than a few dozen individuals, a third of which will be Goslings. Their communities are based from natural caves or shelters and always near large bodies of water they can use for food and



bathing. Gos flocks are rare to behold anywhere but south-central Genertela, especially in the outskirts of Kethaela and Prax, where they settled after being run out of Dragon Pass by the EWF and Maniria by their duck cousins – who they hate with a passion.

**CHARACTERISTICS**

STR	2D6+6	(13)
CON	3D6+2	(13)
DEX	2D6+4	(12)
SIZ	2D6+1	(8)
INT	1D6+4	(7)
POW	3D6	(11)
CHA	1D6+3	(6)

**Gos Hit Locations**

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1 – 3	Right Leg	-/5
4 – 6	Left Leg	-/5
7 – 9	Abdomen	-/6
10 – 12	Chest	-/7
13 – 15	Right Arm	-/4
16 – 18	Left Arm	-/4
19 – 20	Head	-/5

**Weapons**

Type	Weapon skill	Damage / AP
Bite	50%	1D2
Shortspear	60%	1D8 / 2

**Special Rules**

- Combat Actions:* 2
- Strike Rank:* + 10
- Movement:* 3m, 5m when swimming
- Traits:* Excellent Swimmer
- Skills:* Athletics 45%, Dodge 45%, Perception 55%, Resilience 40%, Stealth 50%, Survival 60%

**Loon (Mad Durulz)**

The sick result of a duck breeding with a keet, often due to Savage keets having their way with unfortunate duck women, Loons are mentally broken creatures that use their madness to tap into unbelievable power. Something about the breeding of the two juxtaposed sides of the race goes awry in the egg of the hatchling,

*always* killing the mother in a bloody display of eggshell shards as sharp as broken glass and as hard as bronze. How the child hatches in the womb at all is a mystery.

Loons are physically similar to both of its parents. A loon born from a swordbill keet and a canard duck will likely be small, large-billed, and covered in blue and brown feathers ruffled in places as if unkempt. One born between penguin keet and emerald-crown duck might have the body shape of the powerful penguin but the distinct head colouration of its mother. Whatever the mixture of breeds, loons are a unmistakably erratic image to perceive.

A loon's madness is a kaleidoscope of emotions, reactions, mixed words and exposed inner monologues. They do not need a reason to do anything, nor would they truthfully remember it if they did. They are a walking, quacking pandemonium – and they are *always* curious about what others are doing.

Empowered with the ability to harness its madness



into an array of spell-like abilities, every loon is considered to always be integrated with and holding two Disorder Runes. They can instinctively cast any spell that requires the Disorder Runecasting skill to cast, regardless of any other runes they would otherwise need to have.

**CHARACTERISTICS**

STR	2D6+3	(10)
CON	2D6+6	(13)
DEX	2D6+6	(13)
SIZ	1D6+6	(9)
INT	2D6+6	(13)
POW	6D6	(21)
CHA	1D6+3	(6)

**Loon Hit Locations**

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1 – 3	Right Leg	-/5
4 – 6	Left Leg	-/5
7 – 9	Abdomen	-/6
10 – 12	Chest	-/7
13 – 15	Right Arm	-/4
16 – 18	Left Arm	-/4
19 – 20	Head	-/5

**Weapons**

<i>Type</i>	<i>Weapon skill</i>	<i>Damage / AP</i>
Shortsword	35%	1D6-1D2 / 2

**Special Rules**

- Combat Actions:* 3
- Strike Rank:* + 13
- Movement:* 3m
- Traits:* Excellent Swimmer
- Skills:* Athletics 45%, Dodge 55%, Perception 55%, Runecasting (Disorder) 75%

**Platys (Psuedo-Durulz)**

When Ganderland was just beginning to be attacked by Yelm's legions, Canarda hurried to gather up all her eggs and bring them to safety. In her haste she accidentally dropped one of her eggs and it rolled away from her, down into the Inner World. It fell into the waters of Pamaltela, flowing into the branches and



reeds cut and set aside by a family of beavers to create their den. Seeing the shining and magical egg, they wove it into their den's foundation, loving it for many long years. Knowing what the beavers had sitting beneath them, the god Wakboth sent a serpent to free the beast from its eggshell prison. With one strike of the snake's fangs in the dead of night the shell was broken and the snake was pulling the hatchling out, holding the beast in its jaws by the ankles. When the snake saw the hideous aberration that it was holding, it let the child go, dropping it into the water – where it washed away.

The creature, now known as Platys (both singular and plural), was a strange spiritual combination of all three beings that touched its egg – Durulz, beaver and serpent. It had the webbed feet and hands, a thick brown bill like a duck, oily brown fur all over its head and body, and a flat leathery tail. If that was not strange enough, where the Chaos serpent bit the creature (on its ankles) it grew sharp spurs like a keets – that were as venomous as the serpent's fangs! What a creature to behold; not Durulz, not mammal...something in between.

These pseudo-Durulz are very rare to find, with most living in the coastal areas of northern Pamaltela in seclusion. They tend to live in the vicinity of common waterfowl, whose eggs they incubate to create new Platys children. From their mud and driftwood huts they live out their long and secretive lives, sometimes reaching well over 100 years of age. They do not seem to worship the gods of the Durulz or the gods of beasts or the Chaos gods – they simply try to hunt and fish in peace and quiet.

**Characteristics**

STR	3D6	(11)
CON	2D6+6	(13)
DEX	2D6+6	(13)
SIZ	1D6+5	(8)
INT	2D6+6	(13)
POW	3D6	(11)
CHA	2D6	(7)

**Platys Hit Locations**

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1 – 2	Tail	2/4
3 – 4	Right Leg	1/5
5 – 6	Left Leg	1/5
7 – 9	Abdomen	1/6
10 – 12	Chest	1/7
13 – 15	Right Arm	1/4
16 – 18	Left Arm	1/4
19 – 20	Head	1/5

**Weapons**

Type	Weapon skill	Damage / AP
Hatchet	50%	1D6–1D2 / 3
Shortsword	40%	1D6–1D2 / 2
Spurs	30%	1D4–1D2plus poison

**Special Rules**

- Combat Actions:* 3
- Strike Rank:* + 13
- Movement:* 3m, 4m when swimming
- Traits:* Excellent Swimmer, Poison
- Skills:* Athletics 55%, Craft (carpentry) 50%, Dodge 35%, Perception 40%, Survival 45%
- Typical Armour:* Thick Fur and Leathery Tail (AP 1 / AP 2 to Tail, no skill penalty)

*Notes:* Anything that suffers damage from the Spurs attack from a Platys suffers the effects of the following poison:

**Platys Venom**

- Type:** Smeard
- Delay:** 1D3 Combat Rounds
- Potency:** 70
- Full Effect:** 1D4 hit point damage to location struck
- Duration:** 2D8 minutes

**Sorn (Pterodactyl Keets, Chaos Durulz)**

The first of the keets sent by Grandfather Flamingo to the Inner World as scouts, the Sorns were given the shape of large flying lizard-birds to better fit in with the herds of Thunderers and dragons living on the youthful world. Born of pterodactyl, archaeopteryx and pteradon, the Sorns were fast flyers and fierce warriors that staked out Vithela as where the keets would go when Grandfather Flamingo brought them. When they gave in to seductive whispers and tempting promises during the Long Night, choosing to betray their fellow keets in favour of keeping their wings and flight, they fell to Chaos and became the lowest of the low in the eyes of their former kin. Now they are hunted by the keets, who look solely for revenge – believing that they would have been strong enough to hold Vithela together if the Sorns did not go Savage and break the chain.

Especially now that they traffic with Chaos things and powers, Sorns are physically very individualistic. Some grow horns, tentacles, or other hideous mutations. No matter how twisted they become from their dealings with the Faceless Enemy, they all tend to have a similar basic appearance. They have scaly skin over most of their bodies that turns thin and leathery under their extended forelimb-wings. They typically have brown to grey-green colouration on their skin and jet black eyes. Their long, beak-like mouths are filled with sharp teeth and their feet end in terrible hooked claws for catching prey. They have a tiny, only slightly functional, set of clawed-fingers at the end of their winged forelimbs. These allow them to manipulate objects when not flying but not overly well or dextrously.

Sorns are nomadic by nature, roaming from rookery to rookery in high cliff eyries. They spend a few weeks in a given area, fishing from the sea or lakes while attacking travellers in hopes of a warm meal or – if their luck is good – magical runes to swallow down into their gizzard for corruption and regurgitation later. They are servants of the Chaos gods but not worshippers; they do not choose any particular cult or god over any others. All Sorns have 1d3–1 Chaos Features (minimum of 0).

Any rune that a Sorn swallows will be mystically corrupted into a Chaos Rune in nine days, eventually being regurgitated for use by an ally or by the Sorn itself. There is a percentage chance equal to twice the Sorn's POW Characteristic that its gizzard will contain a Chaos Rune.

CHARACTERISTICS

STR	3D6	(11)
CON	3D6+6	(17)
DEX	2D6+6	(13)
SIZ	2D6+3	(10)
INT	2D6	(7)
POW	3D6	(11)
CHA	1D6+2	(5)

**Sorn Hit Locations**

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1 – 3	Right Leg	2/6
4 – 6	Left Leg	2/6
7 – 9	Abdomen	2/7
10 – 12	Chest	2/8
13 – 15	Right Wing	1/5
16 – 18	Left Wing	1/5
19 – 20	Head	2/6

Weapons

Type	Weapon skill	Damage
Talons	65%	1D6+1
Bite	50%	1D4
Foreclaw	40%	1D2

Special Rules

Combat Actions: 3

Strike Rank: + 10

Movement: 2m, 6m when flying

Traits: Chaos Feature, Dark Sight, Excellent Swimmer, Savage (Keet Trait)

Skills: Athletics 60%, Dodge 50%, Perception 55%, Resilience 50%, Runecasting (Chaos) 30%, Survival 45%

Typical Armour: Scaly Hide (AP 2, no Skill Penalty)

# DUCK CHARACTERS

*'Made from the Man Rune...such a jest should be a flogging offence! If you want me to believe if even for a moment that those awkward little beasts are relatives of mine, I will meet you on the duelling grounds at sunset. They represent everything we are trying to wash away with the coming of the Great Dragon.'*

— Talon Scaloifiste, *Draconised Orlanthe*

This chapter is focussed on the creation and preparation of duck and keet characters. Although the information found in this chapter is more angled toward the basic template of the common duck, there are several sections that are designed for use solely by keet characters as well.

The information in this chapter brings what we already know about creating a duck character (from the relevant sections of the *Player's Guide to Glorantha*) and adds even more interesting details. More backgrounds, more professions, a new skill and other special interests pertaining to duck and keet characters can be found here.

Readers will find the rules for the basic ducks and keets presented for players and Games Masters alike to create characters with. So long as they follow the listed steps below, they will have a fully fleshed-out Durulz character ready to play at the end of this chapter.

## Durulz Character Creation Process

**Step One** – Choose Breed and Determine character's Characteristics; adjusting if necessary to Breed. See below.

**Step Two** – Determine the character's Attributes. See *RuneQuest* core rulebook.

**Step Three** – Determine the character's Basic skill scores; adjusting accordingly to Breed. See *RuneQuest* core rulebook.

**Step Four** – Determine the character's Previous Experience (Background, Profession and Free Skill Points). See *RuneQuest* core rulebook.

**Step Five** – Determine the character's General Information. See *RuneQuest* core rulebook.

**Step Six** – Determine the character's Duck Quirks or Keet Traits. See later in this chapter.

**Step Seven** – Outfit the characters with Starting Equipment.

Duck Characters

**Games Masters' Note:** Many aspects of these rules will add to or contradict other rules sources. This information augments and/or *replaces* that which is contained within the *Player's Guide to Glorantha*. Games Masters are free to choose which level of rules to use, though what is detailed in this book is official in regards to Durulz characters, taking over for all past publications. Note that for 'monster' encounters and basic enemy antagonists, the rules presented in *RuneQuest Monsters* are perfectly fine. *Ducks: A Guide to the Durulz* grants readers new information as it reflects upon duck and keet Player Characters or particularly important Non-Player Characters if a Games Master so wishes.

## Step One - Characteristics

### Duck Breed Characteristics

While most duck characters will all roll the same types of dice to determine their Characteristics, there are some individual breeds that are smaller, stronger, faster and so on, than the common duck. These are noted below under the entries for the sub-breed categories. These sub-breeds are physically described in the previous chapter, *The Scattered Flocks*.

#### Common Duck Characteristics

These are the Characteristic rolls required for the 'common' duck body types: *Canard*, *Emerald-Crown*, *Ivory Mallard*, *Red-Crest*, and *Teal*.

**STrength:** Roll 2D6 and add three to the final result.

**CONstitution:** Roll 2D6 and add six to the final result.

**DEXterity:** Roll 2D6 and add six to the final result.

**SIZE:** Roll 1D6 and add six to the final result.

**INTelligence:** Roll 2D6 and add six to the final result.

**POWER:** Roll 3D6.

**CHARisma:** Roll 2D6.

#### Smaller Duck Characteristics

These are the Characteristic rolls required for the duck breeds that typically have smaller or stockier general body types: *Mandari* and *Woods*.

**STrength:** Roll 3D6.

**CONstitution:** Roll 2D6 and add six to the final result.

**DEXterity:** Roll 3D6, drop the lowest die and add six to the final result of the remaining dice.

**SIZE:** Roll 1D6 and add four to the final result.

**INTelligence:** Roll 2D6 and add six to the final result.

**POWER:** Roll 3D6.

**CHARisma:** Roll 2D6.

#### Taller Duck Characteristics

These are the Characteristic rolls required for the duck breeds that typically have taller and broader general body types: *Muscovi* and *Widgeon*.

**STrength:** Roll 2D6 and add six to the final result.

**CONstitution:** Roll 2D6 and add six to the final result.

**DEXterity:** Roll 2D6 and add four to the final result.

**SIZE:** Roll 2D6 and add two to the final result.

**INTelligence:** Roll 2D6 and add six to the final result.

**POWER:** Roll 3D6.

**CHARisma:** Roll 2D6.

### Keet Breed Characteristics

Unlike ducks, keet sub-breeds have dramatically different body types from one another. Some are tall and lanky; others are short and thickly muscled. This makes generating keet characters somewhat different from that of a normal species. These sub-breeds are

physically described in the previous chapter, *The Scattered Flocks*.

All keet characters generate their initial Characteristics based off of a generic 'keet' listing, rolling each Characteristic using the method below. When those numbers are generated, any modifiers for particular sub-breeds of keet are applied. These modifiers can be found after the Characteristic list below.

**Base Keet Characteristics**

These are the Characteristic rolls required for creating a keet character.

**STrength:** Roll 2D6 and add six to the final result.

**CONstitution:** Roll 2D6 and add six to the final result.

**DEXterity:** Roll 2D6 and add four to the final result.

**SIZE:** Roll 1D6 and add four to the final result.

**INTelligence:** Roll 2D6 and add six to the final result.

**POWER:** Roll 2D6 and add three to the final result.

**CHARisma:** Roll 3D6.

**Keet Breed Modifiers**

Sub-Breed of Keet	Characteristic Modifiers
Albatross	+1 STR, +5 SIZ, +2 POW, -2 DEX, -2 CHA
Auk	No Modifiers
Cormorant	No Modifiers
Heron	+2 DEX, +4 SIZ, -2 CON
Pelican	+2 SIZ, -2 STR
Penguin	+2 STR, +1 DEX, -1 SIZ, -4 CHA
Phoenic (Flamingo)	+4 SIZ, +2 CHA, -2 STR, -2 CON
Phoenic (Peacock)	+4 POW, +2 CHA, -4 STR
Seagull	+1 STR, +2 SIZ, -2 CHA
Stork	+3 SIZ, -2 DEX
Swordbill	+1 STR, +1 CON, +1 DEX, -2 SIZ, -3 CHA

## Step Two - Attributes

A Durulz character – duck or keet – generates its Combat Actions, Damage Modifier, Hit Points, Magic Points and Strike Rank as any other normal character would using the Characteristics generated above.

It should be noted that playing a Durulz comes with a definite risk involved. They are bent towards only generating average (if not below-average) Characteristics, meaning that their derived Attributes will likely also be somewhat sub-par when compared to a might Uz warrior or Dara Happan knight.

This is just one of several reasons why playing a duck is a *challenge*.

## Step Three - Basic Skills

One way that a Durulz character makes up for their physical shortcomings is through early childhood training by their parents and community. Ducks and keets alike are very communally oriented, placing a new generation's ability to learn and survive close to the top of their priorities for the whole community.

Adults spend long hours showing the young how to do what they know it takes to survive in a world that seems so focussed on keeping them down.

To show this additional teaching and training while very young, Durulz characters have a minor skill adjustment added to one Basic Skill. This minor bonus is in addition to the skill bonuses received later during the Previous Experience step of generation.

### Duck Breed Skill Bonuses

Breed	Skill Bonus
Canard	+5% Persistence
Emerald Crown	+5% Influence
Ivory Mallard	No Bonuses <sup>1</sup>
Mandari	+5 Resilience
Muscovi	+5% Unarmed
Red-Crest	+10% Sing
Teal	+10% Athletics (Swimming)
Widgeon	+10% Lore (World)
Woods	+10% Athletics (Climbing)

<sup>1</sup> Ivory Mallards receive their bonus skill adjustments in their unique Background, and do not get any here.

### Keet Breed Skill Bonuses

Breed	Skill Bonus
Auk	+5% Persistence
Albatross, Phoenic (Peacock), Swordbill	No Bonuses <sup>1</sup>
Cormorant	+5% Resilience
Heron, Phoenic (Flamingo)	+5% Influence
Pelican	+5% Evaluate
Penguin, Seagull	+5% Boating

<sup>1</sup> These keet breeds receive no bonus skill adjustments due to the added utility of their natural Keet Traits (see later in this chapter).

### New Duck Skill – Sardonic Manipulation (INT + CHA)

Every duck learns from their families that their life is going to be a hard one. They develop their dark sense of humour early on, often forcing themselves to laugh at their lot in life in order to stave off true depressions. They know that the rest of the world would rather ignore them as soon as waste the time to see them destroyed and it helps them know their place in the greater scheme of things.

The sooner they come to that realisation however, the sooner they will begin to learn how to use such preconceived ideas against the Big People. If a duck knows that no one will agree to what he has to say, he can then use that knowledge to manipulate their reactions.

Through a liberal use of profanity, bad jokes and disgruntled statements any duck could knowingly influence others by cornering their potential responses. No one wants to agree with a duck, so if the duck wants something done he should vehemently speak against it. If he thinks a price is too high, he should fumble for his purse to buy it so an ally will be given a much better price. By attracting the right kind of attention to their antics, a duck can manipulate nearly any non-duck.

All duck characters receive Sardonic Manipulation as a Basic Skill during character generation. Keets do not receive this skill (they are too self-righteous to learn it at a young age) but could learn it as an Advanced Skill later in life as they experience what the world thinks of Durulz.

For a duck to use this skill, another character should be getting ready to use any of the following skills for their own purposes: Evaluate, Influence, Persistence, Resilience, Sleight, Stealth or Streetwise. Before the other character rolls against his skill, the duck may do something *appropriate* to the situation in order to aid the other character and roll against his Sardonic Manipulation skill. If successful, the other character may choose to use the duck player's skill *roll* as his own in the upcoming skill test. This gives some characters a chance to know exactly if they will succeed or fail in the roll *before* actually rolling any dice!

*For example, Quackxon Wildwood is watching his travelling companion slamming drinks in a guzzling contest at a local pub. When his companion begins to sway at the table, perhaps costing them all a great deal of money, Quackxon grabs a half-full glass and begins to gulp it down loudly, profanely complaining to his comrade about how weak the stuff is. He rolls is Sardonic Manipulation and scores a fantastic '14' – a success. His drinking friend, who was just called upon to roll against his Resilience to try and out drink his opponent, is steeled by the fact that a duck was going*

to beat him and automatically passes his Resilience test of '35' without even touching a die.

## Step Four - Previous Experience

The following sections cover the backgrounds and professions available to duck and keet characters. These backgrounds and professions are in addition to the common ones found in the *RuneQuest* core

rulebook and the *RuneQuest Companion*. They are designed solely for the use of Durulz characters and cannot be chosen by other races (not that they would want to!).

### Duck Backgrounds

Players are free to choose any of the following backgrounds for their duck characters. It should be noted that even those reprinted from *The Player's Guide to Glorantha* have been slightly modified to better fit the roles introduced in this book.

#### Duck Background

Background	Basic Skill Bonuses	Advanced Skills	Starting Money
Duck Commoner	Athletics +10%, Perception +10%, Resilience +10%	Language (Beastspeech) +50%, Lore (Regional)	4D6x50 silver
	Pick Two +10% Boating, Dodge, Driving, First Aid, Influence, Persistence, Sleight, Stealth	Pick Two Craft, Dance, Lore, Play Instrument, Streetwise, Tracking	
	Pick Two +10% 1H Axe, 1H Flail, 1H Hammer, 1H Sword, Bow, Dagger, Sling, Spear, Staff, Throwing		
Duck Craftsman	Athletics +10%, Evaluate +5%, Persistence +5%	Craft +10%, Language (Beastspeech) +50%, Lore (Regional)	4D8x50 silver
	Pick Two +10% Boating, Dodge, Driving, First Aid, Influence, Sardonic Manipulation, Sleight, Stealth	Pick One Craft, Dance, Engineering, Lore, Mechanisms, Play Instrument, Streetwise	
	Pick Two +10% 1H Axe, 1H Hammer, 1H Sword, Bow, Dagger, Sling, Shield, Staff, Throwing		
Ducktown Prankster	Athletics +5%, Perception +10%, Sardonic Manipulation +10%, Stealth +5%	Language (Beastspeech) +50%, Lore (Regional), Streetwise	4D8x25 silver
	Pick Two +10% Boating, Dodge, Driving, Evaluate, Influence, Persistence, Sing, Sleight, Stealth	Pick Two Craft, Dance, Disguise, Lore, Mechanisms, Play Instrument	
	Pick One +10% 1H Axe, 1H Flail, 1H Hammer, 1H Sword, Dagger, Spear, Staff, Throwing, Unarmed		

Background	Basic Skill Bonuses	Advanced Skills	Starting Money
Ivory Mallard	<p>Athletics +10%, Perception +10%, Resilience +10%</p> <p>Pick One +10% Boating, Dodge, Driving, First Aid, Lore (Animal), Lore (Plant), Lore (World), Persistence, Stealth</p> <p>Pick Two +10% 1H Axe, 1H Flail, 1H Sword, Bow, Dagger, Rapier, Shield, Spear, Staff, Throwing</p>	<p>Language (Beastspeech) +50%, Lore (Chaos), Lore (Regional), Survival</p> <p>Pick One Craft, Healing, Language, Lore, Tracking</p>	4D8x25 silver
Urban Duck	<p>Athletics +10%, Sardonic Manipulation +10%, Stealth +10%</p> <p>Pick One +10% Boating, Dodge, Evaluate, First Aid, Influence, Persistence, Stealth</p> <p>Pick Two +10% 1H Axe, 1H Flail, 1H Hammer, Bow, Dagger, Sling, Spear, Staff, Throwing</p>	<p>Language (Beastspeech) +50%, Language (local area) + 10%, Lore (Regional)</p> <p>Pick One Craft, Dance, Language, Lore, Play Instrument, Streetwise</p>	4D6x50 silver
Wildier Duck	<p>Athletics +5%, Lore (Animal) +5%, Lore (Plant) +5%, Perception +10%, Resilience +10%</p> <p>Pick Two +10% Boating, Dodge, Driving, First Aid, Persistence, Sleight, Stealth</p> <p>Pick One +5% 1H Axe, 1H Hammer, Dagger, Spear, Staff</p> <p><b>Pick One +10%</b> Bow, Sling, Throwing</p>	<p>Language (Beastspeech) +50%, Lore (Regional), Survival</p> <p>Pick One Craft, Dance, Lore, Play Instrument, Tracking</p>	4D6x25 silver

**Duck Commoner:** This background is for duck characters born in a small or rural ducktown, which must grow up learning a smattering of different skills in order to fulfil many different roles in his community. The character may have partaken of trips to Big People communities for trade or supplies and he might eventually leave the ducktown in order to see the world and get away from such a 'normal' day-to-day life..

**Duck Craftsman:** This background is for duck characters born to a more influential family within the ducktown, learning the skills of his parents in order to possibly take over the family business. His family's skills and services are integral to the growth and function of the entire community and many of his neighbours will be counting

on his goods in the years to come. Leaving the ducktown for adventure is risky but sometimes even a farmer must travel abroad to find or learn what he needs to keep his farm safe.

**Ducktown Prankster:** This background covers duck characters that were born to less-influential families in a ducktown, doing a host of different things during adolescence to stave off boredom or stagnation. He has likely picked up a few interesting habits or skills during the course of his trouble-making but he has yet to put them to a test. Although he would never do anything to actually harm his community, his pranks could force others to take action against him.

**Ivory Mallard:** This background is for duck characters born with a specifically odd plumage – a bright white body with a grey head. The character was hand-raised very early on to become one of the rare hunters of the Faceless Enemy, learned of its ways and trained to its evil minions. He has always been sheltered of normal talents and skills, focussing instead on purely martial skills in order to stamp out his people's ancient enemy. Born to be a travelling warrior, the character is destined to leave his community behind in order to fulfil his 'destiny'.

**Urban Duck:** This background is for a duck character that was raised in the cities of the Big People. He has had to do a lot to make by in a community that at best

ignores him. Being a duck in an urban environment is never an easy childhood and is commonly filled with bullies, ridicule and overall aggression toward him. This may have lead to odd and interesting combinations of skills for his own survival and often send characters into adventuring – if only to get away from their awkward and mundane lives.

**Wilder Duck:** This background is for duck characters that were born and raised away from a ducktown, likely out in a rural family homestead in the forest or hills. Most ducks are raised to lean upon their community heavily but this duck was taught to rely only on himself and his closest allies. This makes him a born survivor, if not the most personable of ducks.



## Keet Backgrounds

Players are free to choose any of the following backgrounds for their keet characters.

### Keet Background

Background	Basic Skill Bonuses	Advanced Skills	Starting Money
Noblekeet	Athletics +10%, Influence +10%, Persistence +10%	Craft, Language (Beastspeech) +50%, Lore (Regional)	4D8x100 silver
	Pick Two +10% Boating, Dodge, First Aid, Sing, Stealth	Pick One Craft, Dance, Language, Lore, Play Instrument, Shiphandling, Streetwise	
	Pick Two +10% 1H Axe, 1H Sword, Bow, Dagger, Shield, Spear, Staff, Throwing		
Primal Keet	Athletics +10%, Perception +5%, Resilience +10%, Stealth +5%	Language (Beastspeech) +50%, Lore (Regional), Tracking	4D6x25 silver
	Pick One +10% Boating, Dodge, Lore (Animal), Persistence, Sing	Pick One Craft, Dance, Lore, Play Instrument, Shiphandling, Survival	
	Pick Three +10% 1H Axe, 1H Flail, 1H Sword, Bow, Dagger, Shield, Sling, Spear, Staff, Throwing, Unarmed		
Tribeskeet	Athletics +5%, Perception +10%, Persistence +5%	Language (Beastspeech) +50%, Lore (Regional)	4D6x50 silver
	Pick Three +10% Boating, Dodge, Driving, Evaluate, First Aid, Influence, Lore (Animal), Lore (Plant), Sing, Stealth	Pick Two Craft, Dance, Healing, Language, Lore, Play Instrument, Shiphandling, Survival, Tracking	
	Pick Two +10% 1H Axe, 1H Flail, 1H Sword, Bow, Dagger, Shield, Spear, Staff, Throwing, Unarmed		

**Noblekeet:** This background is for keet characters that grew up knowing that they would fill high-class roles within their tribe or community. They are trained to be tribal leaders, travelling ambassadors to other tribes, religious leaders and spokeskeets for the tribe as a whole. Most Phoenixes are raised in this manner due to their haughty lineage, even if they are going to fill a common role later in life.

**Primal Keet:** This background is for keet characters that grow up in the company of Savage keets, learning how to rule the wilderness around them through force of arms and the tenacity of their instincts. Although

not necessarily primitive in the strictest sense of the word, primal keets rarely learn civilised things on account of their uselessness in the dangerous wilds of the Keetslands.

**Tribeskeet:** This background is for keet characters that were raised amongst other keets in his tribe, probably learning all of the same skills and ideals as his parents. The community helped raise the character, teaching him how to best fill his expected role within the greater tribe. Most keet characters come from this background due to its general usefulness in the course of an adventuring life.



## Duck Professions

Players are free to choose any of the following professions for their duck characters. It should be noted that even those reprinted from *The Player's Guide to Glorantha* have been slightly modified to better fit the roles introduced in this book.

### Duck Professions

Profession	Cultural Background	Basic Skill Bonuses	Advanced Skills
Chaos Hunter	Duck Commoner, Ivory Mallard, Urban Duck, Wilder Duck	Dodge +10% Persistence +10%	Lore (Chaos), Survival, Tracking
		<b>Pick Two</b> 1H Axe +5%, 1H Sword +5%, Bow +5%, Crossbow +5%, Shield, +5%, Spear +5%, Throwing +5%	
Ducktown Guard	Duck Commoner, Duck Craftsman, Ducktown Prankster	Dodge +10%,	Craft, Streetwise
		<b>Pick Two</b> 1H Axe +10%, 1H Sword +10%, Bow +10%, Crossbow +10%, Perception +10%, Resilience +10%, Shield +10%, Spear +10%	
Enlightened Duck	Duck Commoner, Ivory Mallard, Urban Duck	Lore (World) +10%, Perception +10%, Persistence +10%	Language (Kralori), Martial Arts

Profession	Cultural Background	Basic Skill Bonuses	Advanced Skills
Townsduck	Duck Commoner, Duck Craftsman, Ducktown Prankster, Urban Duck	Athletics +10%, Evaluate +5%, Resilience +5%, Sleight +5%, Stealth +5%	Craft, Streetwise
Vagabond	Duck Commoner, Duck Craftsman, Ducktown Prankster, Ivory Mallard, Wilder Duck	Influence +5%, Lore (World) +10%, Persistence +5%, Stealth +10%	Survival
		<b>Pick One</b> 1H Axe +10%, Bow +10%, Perception +10%, Resilience +10%, Shield +10%, Spear +10%	
Wyrmbill	Duck Commoner, Duck Craftsman, Urban Duck, Wilder Duck	Evaluate +5%, Influence +5%, Persistence +10%	Language (Auld Wyrmmish), Lore (Theology)
			Pick One Craft, Dance, Draconic Illumination <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See *Magic of Glorantha* for more details on this skill. If you do not possess that book, treat this as Theology (Draconic).

**Chaos Hunter:** The character has joined the unofficial ranks of the ducks dedicated to the hunting down and killing of the Chaos forces that took advantage of his people's curse ages ago. He is focussed on discovering exactly what took place between Stormbill and the Faceless Enemy that warned the god about the strengthening of Chaos over the ages. The character knows his life will be one filled with travel and deadly combat with creatures that will defy logic, pushing his resolve to the utmost edge.

**Ducktown Guard:** The character has lived his life walking or swimming the perimeter of his ducktown, watching out for Hungry People and other dangers to the community. He has been trained how to use a variety of weapons to better protect the skins of his people, especially considering his own feathers are included!

**Enlightened Duck:** The character is one of the foreign ducks that grew up, at least for a while, in the Kingdom of Enlightenment – Kralorela. Some of their teachings and customs rubbed off on the character and now he looks upon the world in a different way. He still holds dear the teachings of the duck pantheon but the Cosmic Dragon of the East also shines brightly in his heart.

**Townsduck:** The character is a stable member of a duck community, frequently travelling in and out of other races' settlements for what little trade and commerce he can. He knows that many will ignore him or treat him harshly when in the lands of the Big People and that he will not be taken seriously. Especially in the lands of the Yelmities, worshippers of the Sky Gods that cursed the ducks, the character must find other ways to get by and make allies.

**Vagabond:** The character, for whatever reason, has left the safety of his ducktown in order to see the world. Rarely letting his feathers fall upon the same area of ground twice, the character enjoys being on the move as often as possible. He makes for the perfect adventurer or sell-sword, as he has no loyalties to anywhere specific. Instead, he enjoys the freedom of not being bound to anything...or anyone, for that matter. Only his survival matters; to him, anyway.

**Wyrmbill:** The character is one of the rare ducks to have listened to the evangelising of the Empire of Wyrms' Friends, earned an audience with the Wyrms' Face Believers and managed to join their cause. He has learned enough of the draconic mysteries to have begun shaping himself into a 'greater' being and his attachment to the world of common ducks has long since faded under the shadow of the Great Dragon.



## Keet Professions

Players are free to choose any of the following professions for their keet characters.

### Keet Professions

Profession	Cultural Background	Basic Skill Bonuses	Advanced Skills
Bloodbeak	Primal Keet, Tribeskeet	Athletics + 5%, Dodge +10%, Resilience + 5%, Throwing +10%	Martial Arts +10%
Keetslander	Noblekeet, Primal Keet, Tribeskeet	Boating +10%, Lore (World) +5%, Resilience +5%	Survival
		<b>Pick Two</b> Athletics +10%, Perception +10%, Throwing +10%, 1H Axe + 10%, 1H Sword +10%, Shield +10%, Spear +10%, Throwing +10%, Unarmed +10%	
Ship's Keet	Noblekeet, Primal Keet, Tribeskeet	1H Sword +10%, Boating +10%, Lore (World) + 5%, Unarmed +5%	Shiphandling +10%
Warbird	Noblekeet, Tribeskeet	Dodge +10%, Influence +5%, Resilience +5%	
		<b>Pick Three</b> 1H Axe +10%, 1H Flail +10%, 1H Sword +10%, 2H Axe +10%, 2H Hammer + 10%, Athletics +10%, Bow +10%, Dagger +10%, First Aid + 10%, Shield + 10%, Spear +10%, Throwing +10%, Unarmed +10%	

**Bloodbeak:** The character is one of the keets that train extensively in the use of their beak, body and spurs (if any) to serve them as a weapon. The character may very well be a devout follower of the keet gods, thanking them for their blessings through pure and natural combat. The actual styles of fighting may vary from keet to keet. One tribe's bloodbeaks fighting might be in quick, precise strokes; another might teach a frenzy of haphazard gauges and rakes – it all matters on the mindset of the tribe.

**Keetslander:** The character was raised on the Vithelan islands collectively known as the Keetslands. The character has had to learn an assortment of skills to better survive in the island-rich archipelago and combat with other tribes or trespassers has forced them to become tough and wary. Keetslanders tend to eventually become swayed by their wanderlust,

getting in a boat and heading toward the mainland and adventure.

**Ship's Keet:** This character has spent much of their life on a penguin longboat or a gull caravel. The character is a skilled shiphand and ocean going traveller, living on what the seas offer up. Where some ship's keets make a living working as a crewkeet on a legitimate vessel, most are pirates or raiders that take what they want from all they cross paths with.

**Warbird:** This character has been trained in a traditional manner to become a dedicated soldier to the tribe. Setting aside their wild natures, a warbird fights with skill and training over passion or instincts. They are the garrison soldiers that protect a tribe's lands and what the noblekeets call upon to defend the villages and homes when trespassers abound.



## Free Skill Points

Players will now need to spend the Free Skill Points to wrap up their previous experience. All Durulz characters start the process with 100 additional skill points. The player can add these free Skill Points to his skills in the following ways:

- \* Add to a Basic or Weapon skill score.
- \* Add to an Advanced skill score, as long as the character already possesses the skill.
- \* Purchase an Advanced skill. This costs 10 Free Skill Points and the Advanced skill starts at its basic Characteristic-derived score.

Additionally, Durulz characters have the following options to spend their free skill points *not* on skills at all but for the gaining of alternate character facets.

- \* Duck (not keet) characters may choose to expend 10 Free Skill Points to gain an additional roll on the Duck Quirks table (see later for details). This can be done a maximum of two times at character generation (allowing for three total rolls on the table).
- \* Durulz are natural scavengers; they may spend Free Skill Points to acquire additional funds used for equipping the character. For every 10 Free Skill Points spent in this way, the player may add '+1' to the dice total he will roll for his background's Starting Money.

**Important Note:** No single skill can benefit from more than 30 Free Skill Points. This means that an Advanced skill purchased with free skill points cannot be increased by more than 20 points.

## Step Five - General Information

The following section contains how to add the necessary bits of information to further 'flesh out' the character as a whole, adding some of the most important aspects of their existence. These are not alterable or vary in any way and are not derived by any specific Characteristic or skill. They simply are added to any Durulz character.

## Movement

Durulz characters have awkward legs that end in flat webbed feet, making their land locomotion slightly more taxing than that of a normal humanoid. This gives them a comical gait that has been the source of much ridicule, pranks and even a popular mocking dance performed at many Carmanian children's parties.

All Durulz characters (unless altered later) have a base Movement of 3 metres (3m). This is the normal distance a Durulz character can move in one Combat Action.

## Hero Points

Even ducks, the lowest of the low in many Gloranthan's views, have those amongst them who set out as adventurers to make their fortunes. Different from common folk through their course of actions as much as their training, Durulz adventurers have the same kind of additional *drive* that other adventurers do.

Every Durulz character starts with two Hero Points, which can be expended at any time in the normal manner. It should be noted that if a Durulz character has the prerequisite skill level for a specific Duck Knack (see page 97), they can spend their Hero Points now to have learned it at character generation. They should beware however, as this means that they will not begin play with any Hero Points – very dangerous for any Durulz!

## Age

All Player Characters begin their adventuring careers as young adults. For Durulz characters, this is a somewhat flexible number depending on the traditions of the local ducktown or keet tribe. Physically speaking, a duck or keet is matured into adulthood at roughly 15 years of age; they may not have passed their rite of passage as of yet – if they are required one by the local traditions. To show this difference of starting age potentials, there is a large degree of variation in the dice used to determine starting age for Durulz characters.

Roll 2D6 and add the result to a base score of 10. This is the starting age for a Durulz character. Older results

mean that the character was delayed by tradition or failures to passing their rite of passage. Younger results point to a culture that needs replacement warriors or workers quick enough to force youths through their rites at earlier ages. No matter the results of how old the character might be, he will be considered an adult to his peers.

### Appearance

The various physical appearances are described fully in the previous chapter, *The Scattered Flocks*. Characters should be described using the guidelines found there under the specific sub-breeds, allowing for some individuality and uniqueness to show through their character's description.

### Special Rules

In addition to their own Characteristics and varied statistical differences, all Durulz have a few special rules that they *all* must follow. These are in addition to any Quirks, Traits or other abilities they might gain during the course of their lives. The three traits that all Durulz have are *Excellent Swimmer*, *Flightless* and *Social Misfit*.

#### Excellent Swimmer

Where swimming was once a joyous pastime for the Durulz in Ganderland, it has become a necessary tool for survival in the ages after flight was taken from them. All Durulz have oily feathers and webbed feet that are used to help them whenever swimming, making them quite agile and expeditious in water. This allows them a resource for food, exercise and even escape from conflict whenever they are near a body of water – which is very common.

Durulz characters gain a permanent +30% bonus to its Athletics skill whenever swimming. In addition, the character uses its normal Movement score when swimming.

#### Flightless

Yelm's Sentence was far more than just a mythic punishment that took the physical wings from the ducks – it took all forms of *flight* from them. From that point forward, no duck would ever be able to fly again. This is not just a figurative statement; it is **all inclusive**.

No form of flight can ever be successfully used upon a duck. Magical spells that would cause levitation or flight as a mode of locomotion will automatically fail or fizzle when cast upon them, contraptions designed to defeat the pull of the ground and create flight will likely break down catastrophically if they try to ferry a duck and even gliding will abruptly lose its ability and cause the incorrigible duck to plummet to the ground again. The Sky Gods will enforce Yelm's will to keep ducks flightless in all ways; there is no sane way around it.

### Chaos Flight

The only way that a duck could ever actually achieve flight is through the worship of Chaos gods who bless the poor creature with a Chaos feature that could provide flight. The Chaos gods do not care about Yelm's punishment, nor of his anger when they disobey it. They can give ducks flight if they want to.

This of course mutates and warps the duck into something more akin to a beast or monster – meaning that Yelm's Sentence still stands, in a certain way of looking at it. *No duck has found flight...just some Chaos creature that was once a duck!*

### Social Misfit

The Durulz, whether they want to admit it or not, are not accepted in most social circles as anything but an annoyance. They are ignored as much as they can be, mocked whenever possible and the target of every disapproving glance in the room. This can make any Durulz want to tear their feathers out in frustration sometimes but it also has its own special brand of benefit.

In any social situation with races that are not ducks or keets (or their Chaos equivalents), every Durulz character can expect to be ignored and misheard. In these situations the character receives a -20% penalty to their Influence skill when dealing with any non-Durulz. Repeating themselves, growing louder and

more profane with each repetition, can help mitigate this penalty. As long as the character continues to try to Influence the same target(s) with the aforementioned exponential profanity and volume, each Skill Test will see -5% less of a penalty to his skill (-15% on the second, -10% on the third and so on) – but the Durulz must find a way to top himself each time to lessen the penalty properly.

Additionally, Durulz tend to be small and easily lost in crowds – especially crowds that do not want to deal with them anyway. The character can use the overall dismissing of his race to effectively move about unnoticed in any group of Big People that numbers at least three times his SIZ Characteristic, gaining a +20% to his Stealth skill while doing so. Obviously this only works until the crowd is made aware of the character, at which point the bonus vanishes altogether; the people are watching the character as if he might steal from or otherwise touch them!

## Step Six - Duck Quirks and Keet Traits

*‘The curse struck deep on all of us... but some it seems are more cursed than others. I count myself amongst the lucky ones.’*

— Billblade ‘the Butcher’

The Durulz are an interesting and unique race that, unlike so many others native to Glorantha, are vastly different from one specimen to the next. This can be seen in the physical differences between their two halves – ducks and keets – but also in the individual sub-breeds found in those halves. While the physical differences are remarkable, there are also several other differences on a *mythic* level that appear in individual ducks and keets.

Ducks from all over the world exhibit strange and interesting nuances to their existences, echoes of the Sky Gods’ torments to be sure, making their lives sometimes more difficult and other times simply more *unique*. These are called Duck Quirks.

Keets have drastic physical and mental differences that have evolved in their sub-breeds over the generations, many of which are useful to their survival in the harsh waters and islands of Vithela. These are called Keet Traits.

The following section contains the rules and descriptions for Duck Quirks and Keet Traits, how to add them properly to a Durulz character and what they mean in game terms to Games Masters and players alike.

### Duck Quirks

The ducks are an odd race that makes its way in Glorantha, often falling on hard times and being forced to go to great lengths to survive. They are both magically and socially cursed but they do not let this become the focus of their gripes and curmudgeon’s views – they can find a host of other reasons to be unhappy and angst-ridden in this world.

One thing that never seems to pass them by is Glorantha’s way of making things just a little bit *harder* for them. This manifests in a variety of ways that surface over the course of a duck’s life. These small and interesting ways are collectively known as Duck Quirks.

Duck Quirks are minor alterations to a duck character that hail from a host of mythic and magical changes that have taken place over the ages. Some are utterly harmless, others detrimental to a certain degree and a rare few are oddly beneficial.

Whatever the case may be, all duck characters generate one Duck Quirk on the following table and apply it to their character. As was noted earlier in this chapter, some players may wish to add additional rolls by spending Free Skill Points as well.

### Duck Quirks

1D20 Result	Duck Quirk
1	Yelm's Spite
2	Bad Luck Charm
3	Trouble Magnet
4	Sweetmeat
5	Addiction
6	Shadowless
7	No Echo
8	Greasy Oils
9	Clacking Stutter
10	Rainbringer
11	Slurring Warble
12	Bright Eyes
13	Off-Toned
14	Compulsion
15	Foul Taste
16	Bitter Rage
17	Flocking Movement
18	Wide Webbing
19	Thick Plumage
20	Wanderlust

**Yelm's Spite:** The character is particularly sensitive to the glaring stare of Yelm's light. At any point when the character is caught in direct sunlight and is not actively shielding his eyes with a free hand (or other method) he suffers a -5% penalty on all Skill Tests that require vision.

**Bad Luck Charm:** The world seems to be aligned against the character and no matter what he does he brings horrible misfortune to those around him. Whenever the character rolls a 'double number' on a skill roll (pass or fail), the next skill roll made by an ally within 10 metres of the duck will be an automatic failure.

**Trouble Magnet:** Problems and complications follow the character wherever he goes, making for an adventurous but dangerous life. Every day the Games Master should roll a test against a percentage chance equal to the POW of the character. If this roll succeeds (the result was equal to or less than the duck's POW), something dangerous or threatening will cross paths with the character sometime that day between sunup and sunset.

Games Masters are encouraged to come up with their own troubling situation but the following table could be used if something more random was desired.

1D4 Result	Type of Trouble
1	Weather or Terrain-based Danger
2	Morally Challenging Threat
3	Predatory Monster Encounter
4	Chaos-related Encounter

**Sweetmeat:** The character has the horrible affliction of actually being quite *tasty*. In addition to constantly having to swat away biting gnats, flies or other blood-sucking vermin, predatory creatures will be able to smell the savoury flesh of the character – always choosing to attack him over other equal targets in a combat situation.

**Addiction:** Having to grow up in a world that is generally aligned against him has been stressful and the character has only found solace while embracing a somewhat minor vice. Over the years however, this embrace has turned into a powerful addiction. The character must pass a Persistence Skill Test every day if he wishes to avoid partaking in his addiction. If he fails this test he will suffer -10% on all skill rolls until he indulges himself.

The following table can be used to randomly determine what the duck is addicted to. Alternatively, the Games Master can simply choose something instead.

2D6 Result	Addictive Substance
2	Pain (must suffer 1 HP or more of damage)
3 – 4	Sugary Foods
5 – 6	Hazia
7 – 9	Alcohol
10 – 11	Duckweed
12	A Particular Flower

**Shadowless:** Yelm and his daylight somehow refuses to shine upon the character, bending around him and avoiding his body. This does not have any actual negative effects upon him other than being a few degrees cooler from always being 'in shade'. The most unsettling and recognisable part of this avoidance is the fact that the duck cannot cast a shadow in natural

light sources. Magical light will still throw a shadow off of him but torches, campfires and even sunlight will eerily not.

**No Echo:** It seems that Glorantha itself does not want to hear what the character has to say more than once. No matter how loud he yells, talks or quacks his voice will not ever repeated as an echo. His footfalls and other noises will echo just fine, just not any form of sound that comes out of his bill.

**Greasy Oils:** The oily secretion that all ducks create to keep their feathers from becoming waterlogged is particularly thick and greasy on this character. This has no truly detrimental effect upon him but does require him to bathe and groom twice as often, otherwise his feathers will take on a waxy look and begin to smell rather badly.

**Clacking Stutter:** The character has a nervous habit of popping his bill shut repeatedly when he speaks, creating a sort of stutter. This does not get in the way of his speech or make him incomprehensible – merely annoying to hold a length conversation with.

**Rainbringer:** The Storm Gods are never letting the character forget his place in the world through an annoying habit of dropping light rains upon him anywhere he goes for a prolonged amount of time. Not much more than a mist, the rain is not going to make a huge difference on crops but it makes everything quite *damp* and uncomfortable. If the character stays in a specific location for longer than a week, there is a cumulative 5% per day chance that it will begin to rain – and keep raining until he moves along again.

**Slurring Warble:** The character has a somewhat distinctive speech pattern that comes from his learning how to speak beastspeech using his tongue and bill's edge more than his throat. Basically an exaggerated lateral lisp, the character has a very hard time not slurring his 'Rs' and 'Ls' while overly warbling on his 'S' and 'Th' sounds. This makes him even more comical than others of his race and the target for much mockery.



## Duck Characters

**Bright Eyes:** Something about the character's hatching gave him the brightest colour of eyes. Whether it is a brilliant green, sapphire blue, golden yellow or even eggshell white – his eyes are piercing and attractive (for a duck!).

**Off-Toned:** The character's plumage always seemed a little strange but has grown into a completely different colour or hue than that of his parentage. Emerald-crown ducks might have bright red heads, wood ducks might have cobalt blue specks and a basic canard might turn out to be flamingo pink! It is an oddity but has no otherwise effect upon him other than the constant social responsibility to complain about being so different!

As an important note, Ivory Mallards **cannot** have this Duck Quirk. They must re-roll it immediately if it ever occurs in their character generation.

**Compulsion:** The character deals with the stress of being a duck by subconsciously focussing their attentions toward some specific task or action, making it into a compulsion that will soon annoy

those around him that notice. Although a harmless habit, this compulsion could be problematic in very rare circumstances (arranging chairs in a trapped room, for instance).

The following table can be used to randomly determine what the duck is compelled to do. Alternatively, the Games Master can simply choose something instead.

2D6 Result	Compulsion
2 – 3	Ruffling Feathers
4 – 5	Arranging Objects
6 – 7	Whistling or Humming
8 – 9	Polishing or Cleaning Possessions
10 – 11	Fiddling with Small Object
12	Hygienic Cleanliness

**Foul Taste:** The character is *blessed* with bitter or sour-tasting flesh that might discourage predators from taking more than a single bite from them; if they survive the first one, that is. Anything that successfully inflicts damage upon the character with any form of attack that would put his flesh or blood in the attacker's mouth (or equivalent) will have to pass a Persistence Skill Test in order to attack the duck again *using his mouth*. Strangely and sadly enough, this Quirk has no effect on the Hungry People – who seem not to care at all about the foul flavour.

**Bitter Rage:** Generations of the character's family line have been mistreated and looked down upon and this duck simply cannot take it anymore! He has figuratively swallowed too much bile and vinegar in his daily life and it causes him to explode into a frenzy of adrenaline and profanity toward the target of his stored hatred. This of course is not always a good thing, depending on what he is rushing headlong towards to attack...

If the character scores a critical hit in combat, it will go berserk until all of his foes are destroyed. While in this state, the character's Hit Points do not change, though

he will automatically succeed any Resilience test that does not result in an automatic failure. The duck feels no fatigue and suffers only minimum possible damage from poisons. He may not parry, dodge or use any form of magic. This rage lasts until the duck's foes are incapacitated, the duck is knocked unconscious or if the character can critically succeed in a Persistence Skill Test.

**Flocking Movement:** The instinctual flight patterns of the character's ancestors – the flying 'V' – still shows up in his everyday movements. He always prefers to be to the rear flank of an ally, moving in his 'wake' so to speak. Strangely enough however, when he is doing so, his Movement score increases by one metre (1m) per Combat Action!

**Wide Webbing:** The character has strong toes and feet that splays wide and has thick webbing between them to better propel him through the water. When swimming the character has a base Movement score of four metres (4m) instead of the normal three.

**Thick Plumage:** The character's pinfeathers (the tiny ones under the main plumage) are especially dense and thick, making him look a little pudgier than a normal duck, especially in the chest and stomach areas. This additional layer of cushioning feathers is just thick enough to protect the character slightly from physical damage, acting as natural armour. The character has a natural AP of 1 on his Chest and Abdomen hit locations (no skill penalties).

**Wanderlust:** The urge to see the world through adventure and excitement has always been evident in the character, potentially an inheritance from Duru-Orlanth. He is always looking for new ways to prove himself more than 'just a duck' and typically thinks of himself as a hero of his people – even if they do not share his views. The character gains an automatic extra Hero Point above and beyond the normal starting allowance.

## Keet Traits

The more segmented side of the Durulz, the keets are broken into several small sub-breeds and tribes that have extremely different body types and features that make them each quite unique. Unlike their duck cousins, who were actually *cursed* to have their problems, the keets believe that they gave up their flight in order to save Vithela and grew into their callous and bitter natures over the generations of not being thanked for it.

This lack of mythic cursing is why keets do not roll upon the Duck Quirk table but instead automatically gain interesting abilities and physical features based upon their individual breed. These are collectively called Keet Traits and they pre-determined, unalterable and ultimately defining of the sub-breeds of keet.

The following list describes which keet breeds possess which Keet Traits, followed by the descriptions of the Traits and what they do in game terms.

- Albatross:** Seer, Sharp Beak (1D3)
- Auk<sup>1</sup>:** Sharp Beak (1D3+1), Sparkles
- Cormorant<sup>1</sup>:** Sharp Beak (1D2+1), Spurs
- Heron:** Regal, Sharp Beak (1D4+1)
- Pelican:** Pouch-Gullet, Sparkles
- Penguin:** Expert Swimmer, Savage, Sharp Beak (1D3), Spurs
- Phoenic (Flamingo):** Magical Fluency, Regal
- Phoenic (Peacock):** Magical Fluency, Mystic, Regal
- Seagull<sup>1</sup>:** Expert Swimmer, Sharp Beak (1D3)
- Stork:** Sharp Beak (1D4), Tireless
- Swordbill:** Primal Rage, Savage, Sharp Beak (1D6), Spurs

<sup>1</sup> Any of these sub-breeds may choose to also add the *Savage* Keet Trait to their lists at character generation due to their individual tribe's background.

### Expert Swimmer

Keets with this trait are born with longer legs, wider webbed feet or thicker feathers that help them swim remarkably well and fast. They are able to dive deeply and glide through rivers, seas and oceans like their ancestors once flew through the air. Keet characters with this trait gain a permanent +40% bonus to its Athletics skill whenever swimming. In addition, the character adds one metre (1m) to its normal Movement score when swimming.

This trait replaces the keet's existing *Excellent Swimmer* trait.

### Magical Fluency

Keets that possess this trait have an innate connection with the magical forces that permeate Glorantha due to their direct lineage to Grandfather Flamingo. Spells and spellcasting come naturally to the keet, increasing their overall magical potential. Keet characters with this trait may choose a total Magnitude of Folk Magic spells equal to their CHA Characteristic.

See the *Player's Guide to Glorantha* for details on Folk Magic. If this book is not available, Games Masters should allow the character to begin with 1D2 integrated runes (and the associated Runecasting skills) instead.

### Mystic

Possessed only by peacock Phoenics, this trait shows the strange and deep understanding that the peacock keets have to their magical abilities. They are attuned to how their own magics function to the point where they can augment the spells they unleash with greater potency. Peacock keet characters with this trait can add 1 to the Magnitude of any spell they cast with the Progressive trait without spending an additional Magic Point.

### Pouch-Gullet

The most prominent physical feature of the pelican keets, this trait describes the distended and sack-like lower portion of the pelican's bill. Made of a tough but flexible substance similar to leather, a pelican's lower bill is a sort of 'pouch' that they can comfortably store things within. Due to their already warbling speech patterns, storing objects inside the pouch-gullet does not hinder them from talking, breathing, drinking or even eating – it adjusts for the items inside. A pelican keet can hold up to three ENC 1 items or many '–' ENC items (within reason) at once, which they can reach in and grab at any time.

### Primal Rage

Swordbill keets have a deep tribal rage inside of them; a leftover from the battles that they had to fight against the Sorns to claim their island territories. It is a useful asset in battle but can easily cost the keet his life if he cannot regain control. If the character scores a critical hit in combat, he will go 'Primal' until all his

foes are destroyed. While in this state, the character's Hit Points do not change, though he will automatically succeed any Resilience test that does not result in an automatic failure. The character feels no fatigue, cannot be rendered unconscious and increases his Movement score by one metre (1m). The character's Close Combat skills are doubled as long as he is Primal. However, he may not parry, dodge or use any form of magic. The character may attempt to end the Primal state early via a critical success on a Persistence roll. No matter how it happens, the swordbill's fatigue level is immediately dropped to Debilitated at the end of the Primal state.

#### Regal

Keets with this trait are physically attractive, elegant to behold or otherwise a picture of keet royalty. They are *almost* regarded by outsiders as normal Gloranthan species, making them much better at dealing with outsiders. Keet characters with this trait do not have the *Social Misfit* racial trait like other Durulz.

#### Savage

Keets with this trait hail from a tribe that have fully embraced the predatory nature of their avian ancestors, hunting and fishing and living off the flesh of their kills. They have, through generations of predation, untapped their wild potential. Savage keets have an additional Combat Reaction and a +1 to their Damage Modifier. Due to their primitive backgrounds however, they *always* are considered to fail Improvement Rolls (only gaining the 1%) on the following Advanced skills: Engineering, Language, Mechanisms and Streetwise.

#### Seer

Possessed only by the children of Albatros, keet seers can tap into their god-ancestor's ability to look upon events that have yet to happen in order to avoid dangerous outcomes. The only issue is that they cannot see events in their *own* lives, only others. By looking into the eyes of a sentient being the keet can see flashes of that being's future. Of course, they may or may not believe a 'lowly' keet about their unfolding

life, which is the great tragedy of the albatross keets' special ability.

In game terms, an albatross keet can spend one minute looking into the eyes (or equivalents) of any sentient being before spending any number of Magic Points; one for every hour forward the keet wishes to see. Once he has decided how far he wishes to 'see', he gets flashes of the target's future. The keet character then rolls his Perception skill. If successful, the keet can decipher the flashes well enough to explain what the target might want to avoid if possible in the near future. Failure means that the keet sees only confusing images that mean nothing to him.

If the keet can understand the images, he can try to get the target to avoid potential dangers or seek potential rewards that he saw. This requires the keet to succeed in an opposed Influence Skill Test versus the target's Persistence (everyone requires a little convincing that a keet can see the future). If the target manages to believe the seer, the target will be able to re-roll one failed skill roll every hour that the keet saw in his visions.

#### Sharp Beak

Most keets have pointed beaks rather than the dull, rounded bills of the duck breeds. These beaks are very useful as tools and for some breeds of keets, a good weapon. Any keet character with this trait has an alternate unarmed weapon that they can wield with their Unarmed skill. The amount of damage that it inflicts is listed in parenthesis next to the trait.

#### Sparkles

The glitter of silver, gold and gemstones is very attractive to some keets, making it rather difficult for them to pass up the opportunity to obtain them. Whether it is some kind of instinctual wish to 'brighten the nest' or just plain old greed, these keets cannot stop themselves from snatching up sparkly things. Whenever the keet with this trait is presented with the chance to lay hands on precious metals or gems they must pass a Persistence test *not* to do so.



**Spurs**

Some keet breeds have natural weaponry that grows in the form of hard, bony spurs just above the rear of their ankles. With a quick jump or raking kick, a spurred keet can easily open unarmoured flesh. Keet characters with this trait can add 1D2 damage to attacks made with their Unarmed or Martial Arts skill.

**Tireless**

The symbol of the stork keets' tenacity, this trait is what makes the storks the chosen messengers of the keet tribes. The keet character can function under physically stressing situations for prolonged amounts of time without fearing the effects of fatigue or tiredness. The keet with this trait can pass a Resilience Skill Test anytime he gains a level of Fatigue for reasons related to exhaustion, activity or other mundane physical efforts. If successful, the character does not gain the Fatigue at all.

## Step Seven - Starting Equipment

The last part of character generation, every Durulz character needs to have some essential equipment if

it plans on having a slight chance to survive in the harsh world around it. Depending on where a duck is born and raised, what sort of social environment his family was in and even the local resources available to him; there is a multitude of material assets that exist in Glorantha for them. There are also however, several items that only appear in the crafthouses of local ducktowns or in the tribal villages of the Keetslands.

The following section contains the rules and descriptions for equipment built and designed for use by ducks and keets. These entries include a few updated items from the *Player's Guide to Glorantha* and are considered to be the more accurate versions of said items.

In addition to the items found in this section (where appropriate), all other equipment found in other *RuneQuest* supplements and sourcebooks can be purchased for a Durulz character with their starting money (especially those found in the *Glorantha: The Second Age* series).

### New Duck Equipment

The following are all items made for and by ducks and can be found in most ducktowns. Either at local crafthouses or bazaars, they can likely be tracked down in some way wherever ducks gather and live.

**Duckblade:** This weapon is a small and easily hidden dagger with a recessed blade that is used for an upward stabbing motion. The 'duckblade' is actually just a modified stiletto to be tucked into the folds of its wielder's clothing or ruffled feathers, gaining a +25% bonus to Sleight Skill Tests made to hide or palm the weapon. Cost 25 SP.

Weapon	Skill	Damage Dice
Duckblade	Dagger	1D3+1
STR/DEX	ENC	AP/HP
-/-	-	3/2

**Duckweeds:** This collective type of plant grows along the edges of most ponds and streams and is traditionally chewed or smoked to release its powerful and refreshing juices. Although it tends to be quite tasty and aromatic for other species, only Durulz can gain its full benefit. When smoked or chewed, the duckweed has some interesting effect upon the

imbiber depending on the 'colour' of duckweed. Each type of duckweed can only be used once a week or the Durulz will become immune to its effects.

plentiful in ducktowns across Genertela. It takes two to four weeks for a duck armourer to make a fitted suit of reed armour but fitted reed armour offers only *half* (round up) the normal skill penalties for wearing it.

### Duckweed Colour Variations

Colour of Duckweed	Effects	Side-Effects (if any)	Cost Per Use
Green	Removes 1D3-1 levels of Fatigue	–	25 SP
Red	Keeps user awake for 3d6 hours without fail	User gains 1 level of Fatigue	20 SP
Brown	Calms user into peaceful, dreamless sleep	–	15 SP
White	Sharpens senses (gain +25% Perception for 1d6 hours)	User suffers -5% penalty to all non-combat skills from distraction while duckweed is in effect.	35 SP
Violet	Causes minor but enjoyable hallucinations		20 SP

**Oilcomb:** Ducks are frequently grooming themselves in order to keep the amount of their natural oils from becoming too thick or thin on their bodies. Most ducks use their hands and bills to ruffle their feathers and spread their natural oils around as they groom. This stiff brush made from thin but stiff pieces of leather is used instead and is designed to do a much better job. This is far more efficient, keeping the duck from having to groom nearly as often and allowing him to go nearly a week between full groomings. Cost 10 SP.

**Spurs (Keet Spurs):** These items are leather bands with short dagger-like blades that are worn in the same place that keets grow natural spurs, just above the ankle. Their use is looked down upon by the keets (who feel the ducks are stealing the idea) but are often a lethal surprise for anyone who faces a duck in close combat. Many foolish foes have fallen to a poisoned spur when trying to take an otherwise disarmed duck into custody. This weapon cannot be used to Parry. Cost 150 SP.

**Reed Armour:** Huge patches of papyrus and other reed-grasses grow wherever ducks tend to live and are harvested frequently for their use in many resources as well as clearing the waterways for better access. Some of the larger and tougher reeds are occasionally woven into one another like wicker and dried, creating a single mass that is lightweight and remarkably tough for untreated plantlife. If given to a duck armourer, these thick reeds can be woven and wetted before being placed on a shaping mannequin, drying into form-fitted pieces of reed armour.

Weapon	Skill	Damage Dice
Spurs	Unarmed or Martial Arts	1D4
STR/DEX	ENC	AP/HP
-/11	–	2/4

Reed armour does not offer particularly dense protection and it softens in water but it is very inexpensive and

**Uzbane:** Made from a foul concoction of animal musks and duck urine, this noxious yellowish oil is designed to foil the senses of the Hungry People. Having been hunted by the greater Uz family since the Great Darkness, most often by the scent of their preyed-upon flesh, they devised this fluid to throw off hunting trolls and trollkin. By liberally splashing the ground with the substance behind them, they can add

Armour	AP <sup>1</sup>	ENC <sup>1</sup>	Location	Cost
Reed Helmet	2/1	1/2	Head	50 SP
Reed Armlet	2/1	1/2	Arm	65 SP
Reed Skirt	2/1	2/3	Legs	75 SP
Reed Shirt	2/1	2/4	Abdomen, Chest	125 SP

<sup>1</sup> The number after the parenthesis is used if the armour is thoroughly wet.

a +25% bonus to anything using the Tracking skill within 100 metres – success meaning that the tracking creature finds the uzbane patch and not the duck’s own trail. Only a critical success on a Tracking roll can defeat the powerful odour of uzbane. Of course, if the stuff gets spilled *on* the duck he would then count as the patch being tracked! Cost 100 SP per six-use bladder.

**Waterproof Pomade:** Mixed from collected oils from pressed duck feathers and harvested beeswax, this thick and goeey substance is used to make sure that the equipment of a duck is just as waterproof as his feathers are. When rubbed lightly onto objects and equipment (especially leather) it gives the item(s) a subtle shine, but also keeps it from being adversely damaged by natural water or wet weather for a full month. Cost 50 SP for a six-month clay jar.

### New Keet Equipment

The following are all items made by keets, normally for their own use within the keet tribes and can be found throughout the Keetslands and parts of Kralorela.

**Featherblend:** Keets that do not fish in the sea will often hunt for their prey in the sometimes thick foliage of the Vithelan islands. With the bright colours and patterns of the different breeds clashing with the dark undergrowth, some tribes devised this dull-brown or grey sticky mud substance that acts as perfect camouflage for the surrounding area. Although it halves the benefits of the *Excellent Swimmer* or *Expert Swimmer* traits while applied, featherblend grants the wearer a +25% bonus to Stealth in a natural environment for 2d6 hours before it dries and flakes off. Cost 25 SP per use.

**Keetspear:** This is the traditional weapon used by most keet tribes throughout the Keetslands. It is essentially a shortspear with a forward-protruding ‘spur’ on the base of its head. This distinctive prong is what makes a keetspear special; as it not only inflicts additional lacerations when thrust but it also keeps the spear from being lodged in a wound if the wielder turns the weapon

a certain way when striking. Keetspears are considered weapons that can Impale a target but not on any attack where the attacker wishes not to. Cost 35 SP.

Weapon	Skill	Damage Dice
Keetspear	Spear or Throwing	1D8+1
STR/DEX	ENC	AP/HP
5/9	2	2/5

**Sorn Bolo:** After the Sorns betrayed their keet kin at the Sacrifice, they became the single most hated entity for all keet tribes, no matter how far spread or varied in thinking. Where Sorns were spotted still flying on their leathery wings, keets would soon be around to hunt them. The herons designed this ingenious weapon, unsurprisingly called the ‘Sorn bolo’ to help bring the flying Chaos minions down to the ground where the keetslanders could then tear them apart.

A Sorn bolo is two lengths of oil-treated vine or rope tied at the middle to form an ‘X’ with heavy weights at all four ends. Along the ropes are inserted thin metal barbs and hooks that are not individually anything but painful yet collectively they are lethal and inhibiting. When thrown correctly, the bolo wraps around the limbs (or wings!) of a target and slices them up terribly whenever they move, making flight impossible.

Anything struck by a Sorn bola must immediately pass an Athletics or Acrobatics Skill Test with a penalty equal to –5% times the amount of damage the attack inflicted. If passed, the bola batters against the target but is deflected away, inflicting minimum damage (as if Parried). If successful, the weights spin around the target and entangle him while the barbs slice and pierce his flesh, inflicting normal damage. Anything entangled in a bola has a –30% penalty to attacks, Parry and Dodge skill rolls until he breaks free or is freed. Taking any form of Combat Action (even Movement) while entangled in a Sorn bolo inflicts its base damage (no Damage Modifier) to the target. It takes an Athletics test to break free of the bola, which will also inflict the damage accordingly. Cost 100 SP.

Weapon	Skill	Damage	Range	Load	STR/DEX	ENC	AP/HP
Sorn Bolo	Throwing	1D4+1	25m	-	8/10	1	2/5

**Spurcaps:** The natural spurs of some keet breeds are sharp and hard but can quickly dull and splinter when fighting armoured or parrying opponents. To help keep this form of erosion from happening, most spurred keets tip their growths with caps of hammered bronze, which must be replaced every season. Wearing these caps keep the keet from suffering damage when his spur-augmented attacks are parried but also add +1 to the damage they inflict. Cost 50 SP a pair.

## New Durulz Legendary Abilities

### Bitter Enmity

**Requirements:** CHA 14 or higher, Persistence skill at 70% or higher. Ducks Only.

**Hero Points:** 8

The character has been stepped on, pushed aside, hated and ignored for his whole life – but he has learned how to use that to his supreme advantage. By brooding over how much the world around the character dislikes his species as a whole, the character augments his own lethality toward them. So long as the character is fighting non-duck enemies, he receives the following bonuses.

- \* +10% to all attack rolls
- \* +10% to all Dodge rolls
- \* +1D2 additional Damage Modifier

### Piercing Call

**Requirements:** POW 14 or higher, Sing skill at 80% or higher, Keets Only.

**Hero Points:** 12

The character has tapped into the ancient primal vocal techniques that Prince Heron is mythically known for. Prince Heron was said to be able to strip flesh from bone with his call, even giving the mighty Stormbill pause when the Durulz were battling over Ganderland.

The character does not have nearly this power but when he puts his soul behind his sharpest calls he can shake his foes to the bone.

By calling upon this ability and spending a number of Magic Points, the character can emit a powerful vocal call in a cone that extends a number of metres outward equal to his POW. Every living thing with a CON Characteristic in the effected area must pass an immediately Resilience test or lose a number of Combat Actions equal to the number of Magic Points the character had spent. As this is a physically-based sonic attack, creatures that are deaf are still required to take this test. After a Piercing Call is made, the character always receives a level of Fatigue.

### Underbelly Strike

**Requirements:** INT 14 or higher, Weapon skill at 70% or higher.

**Hero Points:** 10



The character knows that the best way to get through an enemy's defences is to bring his blade up and under the armoured areas of a target – something that is easy to do when you are a diminutive, flightless avian. Any Durulz character that has learned this Legendary Ability can learn to ignore some or all of the Armour Protection of his enemies. By spending a Combat Reaction in tandem with a melee Combat Action that is using any sharp-edged weapon of ENC 2 or less, the character can ignore all AP received from mundane armour and half that provided by magical or natural sources (rounding up).

## Roleplaying as a Durulz

Choosing to play a duck or keet in a *RuneQuest* game set in Glorantha's Second Age is not a decision that should be taken lightly. They are not as physically or magically powerful as many of the other races of the world, not even the 'basic' humans that form the average Gloranthan inhabitants. They are not going to be recognised for their deeds very often, if at all and they are not the type of characters to run out and be the big hero that some role-players are looking for. Spoken simply, ducks are not the heroic type.

All that being said... they are some of the most enjoyable creatures to portray if you like sourness, bitter spite and darkly comical ineffectiveness.

This section is devoted to those players who want to be fully prepared to role-play as a member of the Durulz race. Be it duck or keet, there are several aspects of the species that should be understood before donning the feathers and preparing to take the chance. Being a duck is not easy.

Consider yourself warned.

### Acting the Part

Some gaming groups pride themselves on their voice acting, mannerisms and other character-building facets of their roleplaying skills. Although not all players will do so, a duck character is a great way to have a good time acting out their part in the story.

It might be a challenge for a player to immerse themselves in the world of the Durulz but we have drawn up the following helpful hints and acting suggestions to perhaps aid them.

- \* Sit on the floor or try to stay lower than the other players.
- \* Be a true cynic. Nothing is as good as it seems and bad times are always right around the corner. Always remember that things are likely worse around the next corner.
- \* Try to avoid thoroughly theological discussions in public, as it might attract attention to your people's curse through your semantic meanderings. Or worse, it might fully reveal your gods to the God Learners.
- \* Bring some crackers, torn up pieces of bread (for ducks) or beef jerky (for keets) to the game session and do your best to talk with your mouth full as often as possible. Ducks and keets are not known for their manners. The more that your fellow players find themselves ignoring you, the more 'in character' you will be!
- \* Never be too proud to run away from a combat. You will likely be blamed for anything bad that happens during a combat anyway, so you might as well shoulder the berating unharmed.
- \* You are *not* a leader. Even the dumbest idea delivered by the local trollkin is likely to be better received than anything that comes out of your bill – so do not even try unless asked to. Then complain a lot about it.
- \* Angst and bitterness are your two best friends. When a smile comes to your bill it should be due to some Big People's misfortune or discomfort. It is darkly pleasing whenever someone else in the world can suffer like your people have.
- \* True friends are a myth – a fable told to ducklings to keep them from committing suicide before their feathers come in. The people you are travelling and adventuring with are *allies of the moment*, nothing more. They will one day turn on you and blame you for something, so make sure you always recognise them for what they are. Duckfriends are the exception but they are too few and far between to count for much anyway.

### Motivations

There are many reasons why a common Durulz would leave the 'safety' of his home and journey across a

world that is seemingly out to make them miserable. Whether it is for coin, quest or necessity, the desire to leave the community in search of *more* is very strong for most Durulz.

The following sections describe several good reasons why a duck or keet character might decide to pack up their things and begin their journeys across Glorantha.

**Wanderlust**

Durulz are naturally interested in seeing other places due to their ancient ties to the Sky and flight. Before they were cursed they could soar on the winds and see as much of the world as they wanted from the safety of the clouds. Even though they have lost their wings, their desire to see more than what they can did not vanish with their flight. They collectively call it wanderlust and it is the primary reason why any Durulz leaves home and seldom looks back.

Although it appears to have a stronger pull on the somewhat migratory keets than it does over the more ‘domesticated’ ducks, wanderlust begins to set in just after adulthood. When the Durulz reaches biological adulthood, just after their youthful ‘fuzz’ gives way to true feathers, making them venture further and further away from their homes until they are called upon for their rite of passage. When it comes time for their test of adulthood, they will be happy to go freely into the unknown world.

As a Durulz gets older they learn how to set aside their wanderlust for stability and community for the most part, realising that they have to settle down and work on making sure the next generation can be brought into the world safely. This does not mean that all Durulz give up adventuring or such when they reach a certain age; it just means that around the age of 40 years they stop feeling like they *have* to go and seek the unknown.

**Safety**

There are countless dangers to duck and keet settlements in the world. When the larger and deadlier of these dangers threatens the community, the community is often forced to flee. Surviving the threat is more important than permanence and this puts many adult ducks and keets on their feet and into the world to look for a new place to live.

Ducktowns and keet villages cannot simply be placed wherever the survivors happen to end up; they require certain resources and amounts of space – not to mention a safe buffer from other dangers. This is why many Durulz risk everything and become an adventurer. They are on a search for a good place to settle in and hopefully return to tell the other refugees where it is.

Additionally, even if they are Big People, there is safety in numbers. A duck or keet travelling alone will likely become the meal of some hungry predator. If they manage to tagalong with a group of other adventurer types they are surely to have much better chances at survival – if they do not get killed by their new ‘friends’, that is!

**Religion**

The teachings of the Durulz pantheon are rather widespread amongst their descendants and the various duck cults ask their members to view the world in many different lights. Some Durulz become world travellers because of the needs of their ancestor-gods, turning a normal quest or journey into a holy prerogative driven by the runedrakes of their faiths.

The specific faiths that tend to push their members to adventure do so by asking acolytes to walk in the footprints of their ancestors, doing much of the same that they did when they came to the Inner World. Followers of Deathdrake and Stormbill wander the world in search of enemies to battle and vanquish, the Hurler asks her children to see as much of the world as possible and the Seaside Brothers want their descendants to find their betrayers.

The followers of Duru-Orlanth the Adventurer are not simply encouraged to go into the wilds and seek excitement – they are instructed to. The actions of Duru-Orlanth the Explorer in the Godtime were some of the most brave and courageous to ever happen in duck history and his cult idolises these actions and seeks to add some of its own to the folklore of the Durulz.

Ducks and keets that risk their lives in the world around them on behalf of their ancestor-gods’ myths and teachings must never forget that they are still the scapegoats of the Sky Gods. Adventurers that feel they are protected by their faiths only have to think back

to how the Durulz pantheon was treated by the other gods of Glorantha... they will remember their place quickly enough.

**Treasure**

A Durulz's life in Glorantha is a pretty hard one, so why not try to immerse it fortune and luxury? One of the biggest reasons why any duck or keet chooses to risk life and limb is the simplest – coin. Gold and jewels, magical artefacts and just luxurious things can be enough to drag a duck out of his home and into his armour.

Chief amongst all rumours of treasure that will bring the ducks out in numbers is whenever an ancient Ganderland artefact is said to have been found. When the Durulz escaped Canardela they brought with them many of their perfect tools, art and writings. Once a season or so something that supposedly was created by the True Durulz surfaces in an unlikely place and word spreads like wildfire to every ducktown for hundreds of miles. Duck adventurers go scouring for the object, normally less enthused when they actually discover that the rumour was drummed up or the artefact has been taken by Big People looters. These Ganderland objects are rarely anything but perfectly-

crafted mundane devices made of a dense ivory-like substance that was prevalent in the ancient land.

**Revenge**

The biggest and most powerful cause that any Durulz uses to fuel his need for adventure is a burning revenge upon those that have kept them down and harmed them over the generations. They know that it is not the Big People's *fault* that they have been taught to do their part in Yelm's Sentence but the ducks have to turn their blame on someone. By hating the instruments of their angst they might actually be able to inflict some hurt back upon them; as they know they cannot hurt the Sky Gods themselves.

Ducks focus their bitter machinations on the Big People, especially those devoted to Yelm and his Sky God cronies. They find ways of making their lives harder; hindering them in any way they can without risking full scale retribution. Banditry, raiding and underhanded sabotage of their communities is commonplace but some more experienced ducks might look to helping the EWF and the Golden Dragon Emperor keep the Yelmites in check. The ducks might not be able to create an empire or army to rival the Big People's cities and legions but no one fights an underdog guerrilla war better than the lowly duck.



# DUCK CULTS

*'Our gods are the ancestors that laid the eggs from which we all were hatched. Some have forgotten how much they cared for us in the nests of our history, going to the teachings of mystic dragons and Orlanthe winds but not we faithful...*

*...how can we forget the mothers and fathers of our people?'*

— Malissa of the Eight Nests

Few Gloranthans even recognise that there are such things as 'duck gods'. Durulz keep their own pantheon mostly to themselves in fear of getting their gods into more trouble. Most outsiders would disbelieve the existence of godly ducks or keets anyway but the Durulz feel it is best not to leave that to chance.

There are two parts of the Durulz pantheon; the Nest of Eight and Flamingo's Court. Even though they are all related through Grandmother Duck and Vrimak the High Flyer, they are distinctly separate.

The Nest of Eight consists of the eight ancestor-gods of the ducks. Beginning with Grandmother Duck, these are the traditional cults of the vast majority of the Durulz. Duckfriends could technically join a Nest of Eight cult but would not likely to ever rise in rank beyond Initiate.

In a similar vein, Flamingo's Court is made up of the ancestor-gods of the keet tribes. Unlike the ducks, who might allow a duckfriend to join their cults, there is no such thing as a 'keetfriend' and therefore no such thing as an outsider member of a keet cult.

Durulz can theoretically join human cults if they are exposed to it enough but it would require the cult to pay enough attention to the duck or keet to actually allow them to become a lay member in the first place. No Durulz can attain the rank of Rune priest or higher in a non-Durulz cult but they can join them normally. Ducks tend to occasionally foray into Orlanthe cults,

keets are sometimes drawn to the Vithelan teachings and both are curious about Kralori beliefs from time to time.

Durulz cults are technically a form of ancestor worship, even though they are still worshipping the teachings of gods. It is simply that the gods the Durulz are worshipping are direct ancestors to each and every one of them. Their familial connection to their gods does not make them any stronger of faith or better at divine magics, it merely allows them to *feel* their gods in just about every facet of their lives – a constant reminder of the tragedy that befell their people in the Godtime.

## Cult Descriptions

Each Durulz cult entry is organised in the following manner:

**Name:** This is the common name of the ancestor-god that this cult is based around. It will include any alternate nomenclature or any special terminology used to describe the collective members of the faith.

**Description:** This describes the ancestor-god's role in the Durulz pantheon and provides details on their roles in the myths of their people. This will also explain what manner of god the ancestor is (protection, hatred and so on) and how they influence the world. It talks about what makes the cult interesting and unique.

**Runes:** The Durulz pantheon is not unlike the other faiths of Glorantha in the fact that they can teach many magics to their members – mostly through the use of Rune Magic. This section tells what runes are the predominant resource of the cult. Essentially, ducktown shrines may have access to skilled teachers with these runes in order to teach their spells to cult members.

**Type:** This summarises the area(s) of influence that the ancestor-god keeps within his domain of worship. Some areas of influence might seem odd but few Gloranthan gods fit into a single definition.

**Sub-Pantheon:** All the gods listed here are technically of the 'Durulz Pantheon' but also fit into one of two sub-pantheons; those of the ducks or of the keets. Should any outside pantheon have an attachment to the cult in some way, it will be listed here as well.

**Worshippers:** These are the types of Durulz that make up the main body of the cult's members.

**Worshipper's Duties:** This is what is expected of a typical follower of the cult on a regular basis. From spreading the word to fighting the minions of Chaos; their normal tasks are found here.

**Initiate Membership**

**Requirements:** This is what is required of members to become full members of the cult and not just 'layduck members' that pay bill-service to the ancestor-god in question. If this is done and the local representation of the cult is pleased, the character can then count himself as an actual member of the cult.

**Cult Skills:** These are the skills that are thought of as primary to members of the cult. Mentors and teachers of these skills can be found to help with half-priced training.

**Cult Spells:** These are the basic spells that cult members will be able to learn at half the normal cost up to a Magnitude of 2. This level of Magnitude increases to 3 for Acolytes, 4 for Speakers and finally 5 for Runedrakes. Most of these spells can be found in the *RuneQuest Companion* and *Cults of Glorantha One & Two*.

**Common Divine Magic:** These are the divine spells that are available to be learned by anyone willing to pay the full amount at a full Temple dedicated to this cult's ancestor-god.

**Acolyte Membership**

**Requirements:** The same as for Initiate but with more difficult or at least involved tasks that must be accomplished to acquire the higher level of Acolyte.

**Speaker Membership (Rune priest)**

**Requirements:** This is the same as the earlier levels but again has additional needs and tasks that must be completed before one of the cult's Runedrakes can bestow this level upon the character.

**Special Note:** Any role-specific duties or tasks that the Speaker must perform or arrange for while serving the cult at this level.

**Divine Magic:** This explains what divine spells are now available to the Speaker.

**Runedrake Membership (Runelord)**

**Requirements:** This is the ultimate level a cult member can reach and not all cults have Runedrakes at all. The term 'Runedrake' is masculine in form but is also used for female members that reach this level.

**Special Note:** Any role-specific duties or tasks that the Runedrake must perform in addition to serving as one of the cult's highest leaders.

**Divine Magic:** Any new divine spells that are now to the Runedrake due to his unlimited access to cult mysteries and secrets.

**Special Benefits**

Any unique or special abilities that the Speaker has been taught. This sometimes comes in the form of remarkable talents or even special Durulz Knacks that are passed to the member upon reaching the various levels within the cult. It should be noted that benefits gained from lower levels do not go away upon receiving new benefits from higher ones.

**Associated Cults**

These are the gods whose cults are somehow connected to this one. Although the two cults do not have to be exactly *friendly*, they have enough interaction at some level that they are divinely connected. Members of this cult could learn a single divine spell from any of their associated cults but it will count as one Magnitude higher than it really is for the purposes of POW costs.

**Canarda the Egg Mother**

*God of the Nest, God of all Hatchings, Mother of Tenacity*

Canarda, daughter of Grandmother Duck, is the first amongst the ancestor-gods that was given the blessing of godhood when her shell was tapped open using the Man Rune. She was given power through the rune by playing with her mother, swapping the Man Rune as the only prize for their games and contests. She was given the blessing of motherhood, laying the eggs of

the Durulz and the strength to outlast the pain of births. After Grandmother Duck had long but stopped laying new eggs in fear of making too many gods, it became Canarda's role to populate the Might Duck Empire.

Her cult, called the *Motherwatch*, is a matriarchal monastic order that is easily the largest and most influential of all the duck cults. Acolytes and Speakers appear throughout Genertela and Jrustela; rising wherever ducks create communities. Her cult helps the duck species reproduce safely from one generation to the next, not only serving as midwives but also martially protecting the mothers in their months of discomfort and vulnerability. She is worshipped by mothers and daughters and especially by those duck hens that have realised that they cannot have children. She stood defiantly in the face of Yelm and her cult stands just as steadfast in the path of adversities that threaten duck mothers.

Canarda is almost always depicted as a pregnant duck hen with a shield in one hand and an unhatched egg in the other. The nesting places of the ducks are all considered shrines to Canarda no matter how big or small but only permanent buildings devoted to her cult can be considered true temples. Any duck hen or duckling is welcome in a temple to Canarda but adult drakes can only come inside if they have a pregnant hen they are caring for.

**Runes:** Fertility, Harmony.

**Type:** Fertility.

**Sub-Pantheon:** Nest of Eight

**Worshippers:** Duck mothers, daughters and protectors of both. Midwives.

**Worshipper's Duties:** Oversee and aid in the hatching of new ducks, help and protect expecting mothers, defend and help nurture infant ducklings. Try to have as many children as possible.

**Initiate Membership**

**Requirements:** Standard but must have *tried* to reproduce at least once (successfully or not).

**Special Note:** No duck drake or male Duckfriend can attain the level of Initiate in Canarda's Motherwatch.

**Cult Skills:** First Aid, Lore (Animal), Lore (Plant), Craft (Apothecary), Craft (Midwife), Healing

**Cult Spells:** Comfort Song, Consecrate, Cure (Disease), Ease Childbirth, Heal Wound, Shield

**Common Divine Magic:** All.

**Acolyte Membership**

**Requirements:** Standard.

**Speaker Membership**

**Requirements:** The would-be Speaker of Canarda must have helped with the successful hatchings of eight ducklings under the roof of a Canarda shrine.

**Divine Magic:** Couvade

**Runedrake Membership**

**Requirements:** The would-be Runedrake of Canarda must have helped with the successful hatchings of 100 ducklings under the roof of a Canarda shrine or temple.

**Special Note:** Runedrakes of the Motherwatch are responsible for the choosing and training of the Speakers, meaning that they must always stay within a few days' walk (or swim) from the nearest actual ducktown temple to Canarda.

**Divine Magic:** Bless Nest (acts as Bless Home)

**Special Benefits**

Cult members of Acolyte rank or higher do not gain levels of Fatigue for staying awake with a labouring mother. Runedrakes of the Motherwatch gain an additional Reaction each turn usable to parry or defend an expectant duck hen or a young duckling.

**Associated Cults**

**Chalana Arroy:** Provides Heal Body

**Grandmother Duck:** Provides Summon Moot

**Swimmer in the Shadows:** Provides Exorcism

## The Deathdrake

*God of the Blade, The Deathsmith*

The Deathdrake, is the first of Canarda's children and first drake of all duck-kind. He invented the first duckblade when he was still wet from his own yolk and was the source for the fighting abilities of the duck species. It was the Deathdrake that created the weapons and shields that the True Durulz used to defend Canardela from the invading keets and Yelm's Legions and his fighting prowess was second only to his younger brother Stormbill's.

Learning the true secrets of Death from Humakt himself, the Deathdrake was careful only to show the controllable parts of the power to his children. Exchanging a promise to the Orlanthi god of Death that Deathdrake's students would forever bring Death to the False Life Ones, his cult is dedicated to the eradication of undead and those who would create it. The Deathdrake Disciples are primarily warriors but they know their way around a forge and anvil as well. His cult operates most of the forges and weapon crafthouses in ducktowns, creating the weapons and armour used by townsduck militia and ducktown guards.

Deathdrake is always shown in writings and carvings as a silver-plumed drake with a sword or dagger in one hand and a shield in the other. He sometimes is given a black cowl or iron mask but most often he is shown with an almost saddened look on his face.

**Runes:** Death, Metal.

**Type:** Death, War.

**Sub-Pantheon:** Nest of Eight

**Worshippers:** Warrior ducks, weapon and armoursmiths, ducktown soldiers.

**Worshipper's Duties:** Forge metal weapons and armour for duck communities, fight against the enemies of the community, Answering the call to arms when fellow ducks are attacked. Ending the existence of False Life things.

### Initiate Membership

**Requirements:** Must have the 1H Sword and Craft (Weaponsmith), skill at 50% or higher.

**Cult Skills:** Dodge, First Aid, Lore (Undead), Perception, 1H/2H Sword, Shield, Spear.

**Cult Spells:** Bladesharp, Endurance, Exorcism, Hand of Death, Remove Fear, Seal Wound, Undead Bane.

**Common Divine Magic:** Bladesharp, Exorcism, Find (Undead), Heat Metal, Turn Undead.

### Acolyte Membership

**Requirements:** Acolytes of Deathdrake must have forged their own sword by this time and can only wield weaponry forged by their cult members.

### Speaker Membership

**Requirements:** Deathdrake Disciples that want to attain the rank of Speaker must prove their worth to the cult by finding and destroying a sentient False Life being. Most undead outside of skeletons and zombies count for this purpose.

**Divine Magic:** Spirit Blade.

### Runedrake Membership

**Requirements:** Runedrakes of the Deathdrake must have 80% in 1H/2H Sword and at least 70% in Craft (Weaponsmith), Dodge and Lore (Undead).

**Divine Magic:** Living Blade

### Special Benefits

Any weapon forged by a Deathdrake Disciple has a bonus to its AP value depending on the rank of the forging member. Initiates grant a +1 AP, +2 AP for Acolytes, +3 for Speakers and +4 for Runedrakes. Additionally, any weapon forged by a Runedrake of Deathdrake can strike insubstantial undead as if they were physically tangible.

### Associated Cults

**Duru-Orlanth the Adventurer:** Provides Pathfinder

**Humakt:** Provides True (Sword)

**Stormbill the Chaos Killer:** Provides Face Chaos

### Duru-Orlanth the Adventurer

*Duru-Orlanth the Explorer, Follower of the Road, Dusty Path Wind*

Brother to the best warriors of duck-kind, son of Canarda and friend to Orlanth Adventurous, this heralded ancestor-god is where duck wanderlust comes from. It was he who travelled to the other parts of existence outside of Ganderland and it was he who found the Orlanthi beyond the rivers of legend. He brought the wind gods of the humans to Ganderland and introduced them to his family. He was the first to make allies of outsiders and he would create bonds with Orlanth that later meant the difference between destruction and punishment at Yelm's hand. Duru-Orlanth is the heart and soul of the travelling duck; the urge to move forward into unknown adventures.

His cult is the largest of all the duck cults, forming tens of thousands of members across Glorantha. Ducks who are living on the road, surviving by their wits and their skills, are the perfect members of the cult. The cult teaches that anything can be overcome with the right tool for the job, even if you must steal that tool. Members of the cult are devoted to seeking challenges and quests to prove to the world that the ducks are not worthless or merely comic relief on a cosmic scale. Like a species-wide adventuring guild, his cult's worshippers collect countless rumours and possible quest targets to give out to its members. Completing a task means that they will be headed in a different and more interesting direction soon enough.

Duru-Orlanth is depicted as a lean drake wearing the traditional garb of the Orlanthi, often clasped with an iron feather. In one hand he carries a paddle to a boat, oftentimes pictured as being used as a walking stick. His other hand is always open, reaching out as if to grab something that no one else can see. He is the image of adventure and most young ducks want to walk in his footprints because of it.

**Runes:** Earth, Man, Motion.

**Type:** Earth.

**Sub-Pantheon:** Nest of Eight.

**Worshippers:** Duck adventurers, travellers and explorers.

**Worshipper's Duties:** Complete tasks handed down from the cult hierarchy, see new things, test your limits, test cult members' limits.

**Initiate Membership**

**Requirements:** Standard.

**Cult Skills:** Athletics, Boating, Dodge, Lore (World), Spear, Stealth, Survival.

**Cult Spells:** Clear Path, Find (Enemy), Mobility, Pathfinder, Versatility.

**Common Divine Magic:** All.

**Acolyte Membership**

**Requirements:** Cult members that want to achieve this rank must have spent at least one month adventuring away from a ducktown or other community with a group of non-ducks.

**Speaker Membership**

**Requirements:** Cult members trying to become a Speaker of Duru-Orlanth must have spent at least one season adventuring abroad with a group of non-ducks.

**Divine Magic:** Spiritual Journey

**Runedrake Membership**

**Requirements:** Only those ducks that have completed the annual Ducksday Gala competition successfully can hope to become Runedrakes, requiring that they have spent a full year travelling the world to complete their Ducksday quest.

**Special Note:** Runedrakes of Duru-Orlanth are blessed with the entire knowledge of Durulz history, essentially giving them Lore (Durulz) 150%.

**Special Benefits**

Members of the cult that reach the rank of Speaker or higher can expect to be treated with great respect in any ducktown. They only pay one-tenth the normal cost for any mundane item or service while within a duck-owned or operated commercial outlet.

**Associated Cults**

**Canarda the Egg Mother:** Provides Heal Wound

**Ernalda the Queen:** Provides Strength

**Grandmother Duck:** Provides Summon Moot

**Orlanth Adventurous:** Provides Cover of Night

### Eggbeater the Singer of Songs

*Creator of the First Quack, The Voice of the Ducks*

Amongst the children of Grandmother Duck, Eggbeater is unique in many ways. His quacking laugh that brought tears to his mother's eyes caused her to give its sound to all of duck-kind, his singing call became the whistle of the wind through the reeds and his stories were the inspirations for a lifetime of poems and plays. His voice and the voice of his worshippers are the communications between the many facets of duck society.

The cult is responsible for keeping track of all of duck history through folklore stories, fables and songs. Eggbeater teaches his worshippers how to be convincing and believable through the most troubled or fantastic of tales and how to spread information in pleasing ways across the world. His cult is welcome in any duck community, because current events and entertaining stories are soon to follow.

Eggbeater is described in the old stories and pictographs as a short, fat and jovial duck with a wide bill and always with a cup of wine or ale in his hands. He is sometimes shown holding a peacock-feather quill, a reference to the supposed riddle contest that he won over Grandfather Flamingo's finest army of sages but this only appears in depictions that surface on the eastern side of Genertela and Kralorela.

**Runes:** Communication, Truth.

**Sub-Pantheon:** Nest of Eight

**Worshippers:** Duck sages, bards, entertainers and storytellers.

**Worshipper's Duties:** Spreading information and communications between ducktowns and other communities, remembering duck history through stories and songs.

#### Initiate Membership

**Requirements:** Cult members of Eggbeater must have good singing voices, requiring a minimum of 60% in the Sing skill.

**Cult Skills:** Influence, Lore (Duck), Lore (World), Perception, Sing.

**Cult Spells:** Babel, Eloquence, Entertain Audience, Glamour, Illusion (Sound).

**Common Divine Magic:** All.

#### Acolyte Membership

**Requirements:** Standard but the would-be Acolyte must have a Sing skill of 70% or higher and a Lore (Duck) skill of at least 40%.

#### Troubaduck (Runepriest) Membership

**Requirements:** Standard but the member must have a Sing skill of 80% or higher and a Lore (Duck) skill of at least 50%.

**Divine Magic:** Battle Song



### Maestro (Runelord) Membership

**Requirements:** Standard but the member must have a Sing skill of 100% or higher and a Lore (Duck) skill of at least 75%.

**Divine Magic:** Thunder's Voice

### Special Benefits

Cult members that achieve the rank of Troubaduck are amazing storytellers and impressive singers, integrating their divine faith into their songs; this allows them to substitute their Sing skill for Lore (Specific Theology) when casting Divine Magic. Maestros are so skilled that they are allowed to re-roll any Sing skill check made they feel is insufficient for any reason but must accept the second result regardless which is better.

### Associated Cults

**Grandmother Duck:** Provides Summon Moot

**The Hurtler:** Provides Find (Duck)

### Grandfather Flamingo

*King God of the Keets, The Handsome King, Father of the Phoenics*

Risen from one of the first birds to fly out from under Grandmother Duck's wings, Grandfather Flamingo is the first of the godly keets. The embrace of Vrimak gave birth to the sunrise bird but it was the mass jealousy and adoration of Grandfather Flamingo's sunrise plumage that he was elevated to godhood. He took control of the birds that joined him in the Delicate Swamp, the birds of the sea and those who were forgotten by the rest of the Durulz. He made his own empire, a kingdom of keets.

Grandfather Flamingo is a stern ruler of his people, settling for nothing but the most beautiful birds to join him in his court and never settling for less than the best from them. When his tragically *plain* child, Prince Heron, rebelled against his rule and created the first splinter tribe of keets, he became displeased and was never again seen without his beak turned downwards in a deep frown. When he was again betrayed by the Sorns during the Long Night, he chose to never again trust anyone but his own children. It was a Sacrifice of more than just his wings; he gave up on his fellow keets.

His cult embodies his distrust and his superiority over the world around him. Grandfather Flamingo teaches his worshippers that they are the most important beings in the Inner World and that no one should dare stand in the way of their wishes. Although the reality of this can be troublesome, the cult always blames others for shortcomings and mishaps.

Grandfather Flamingo's cult is not strictly based on narcissism and blind egotism, however. It is rooted in the divine right to rule that the ancestor-god had given to the Phoenics. Even though Glorantha as a rule pays no attention to the needs or desires of lowly keets, this cult strives to rise above the Sacrifice and become powerful despite the odds against them. They are natural leaders and powerful followers of a god that claims kingship over all of keet-kind.

Grandfather Flamingo is depicted as a tall and regal keet with dazzling pink and red feathers. His downward curved bill is black and he wields *Sunder*, his silver spear of rulership. Idols of the Grandfather are always carved from rose quartz and onyx and can be found in each of his temples.

**Runes:** Law, Mastery.

**Type:** Ruler, Water.

**Sub-Pantheon:** Flamingo's Court

**Worshippers:** Phoenic noblekeets, tribal leaders, zealous warbirds.

**Worshipper's Duties:** Strengthen the commanding ties between the noble class and tribeskeets, uncover divine secrets that may lead to undoing the Sacrifice, eliminate Savage keet tribes.

### Initiate Membership

**Requirements:** Standard.

**Cult Skills:** Boating, Driving, Influence, Lore (Flamingo's Court), Play Instrument, Sing, Spear.

**Cult Spells:** Analyse Magic, Command (keet), Countermagic, Oath of Ordeal, Shield.

**Common Divine Magic:** All.

**Acolyte Membership**

**Requirements:** Standard, with the added requirement of the cult member having at least 75% in the Influence skill.

**Chancellor (Runepriest) Membership**

**Requirements:** Standard but only achievable by flamingo or peacock Phoenic keets.

**Divine Magic:** Find (keet)

**Keetlord (Runelord) Membership**

**Requirements:** Standard but only achievable by flamingo Phoenic keets.

**Divine Magic:** Excommunicate

**Special Benefits**

Members of the cult devoted to Grandfather Flamingo that reach the rank of Chancellor (Runepriest) can use their heightened self-assuredness and superiority to steel themselves against the magics of ‘lesser beings’, receiving a +25% bonus to resist spells cast by any being not of Phoenic lineage. At the rank of Keetlord (Runelord), this bonus increases to +50%.

**Associated Cults**

**The Seaside Brothers:** Provides Shipspeed

**Grandmother Duck**

*Mother of all Ducks, Goddess of the Durulz*

The first of Vrimak’s loves and the source for all waterfowl, Grandmother Duck is a quiet but remarkable being that embodies patience and selfless love for one’s children. She gave birth to all of the Durulz gods and the mundane waterfowl families that now inhabit the Inner World. The love of the Celestial Vrimak turned her into a goddess but it was her care and love for her children that made her the matriarch of the Durulz.

Her cult, surprisingly, is not as large as those of her children. Shrines and temples to the Grandmother are often small affairs tucked away in nesting houses and ducktown gathering places. Her cult does what it can to help all of the other duck cults in their duties, always looking after the worshippers of her children

as much as Grandmother herself looked after the Nest of Eight.

The cult looks after the young and adolescent ducks in a community, teaching them their basic skills and helping them to become the best member of the ducktown they can be. It is through the instruction and training by Grandmother Duck’s worshippers that the physically-lacking ducks have survived so well over the ages. She teaches her cultists that the best way to defeat one’s enemies is to simply outlive them – survival over all else.

Grandmother Duck is always pictured as a grey-feathered hen with wide eyes and open arms, oftentimes cradling eggs or young ducklings. She has also been pictured wearing a shield on her back in some more militant ducktown shrines but this is likely their own addition to the idea of the ‘great protecting Grandmother’.

**Runes:** Harmony, Mastery, Truth.

**Type:** Fertility, Ruler.

**Sub-Pantheon:** Nest of Eight

**Worshippers:** Duck teachers, mentors, protectors of the young.

**Worshipper’s Duties:** Training and teaching young ducks, protecting the weak or defenceless, helping other duck cults with their duties.

**Initiate Membership**

**Requirements:** Cult members that want to rise to the rank of Initiate must first spend at least one month helping other duck cultists in their own duties.

**Cult Skills:** Dance, First Aid, Lore (duck), Lore (Durulz), Lore (plant), Shield, Sing, Spear, Survival.

**Cult Spells:** Heal, Heal Body, Protection, Shield, Summon Moot.

**Common Divine Magic:** All.

**Acolyte Membership**

**Requirements:** Standard but the cult member must



spend at least one month in a ducktown teaching ducklings their basic survival and life skills.

#### Speaker Membership

**Requirements:** Standard but the cult member must spend at least one season in a ducktown helping to strengthen the community through various avenues of aid.

**Divine Magic:** Consecrate

#### Runedrake Membership

**Requirements:** Standard but the would-be Runedrake must have built at least one temple or shrine to Grandmother Duck in a ducktown that did not previously have one.

**Special Note:** Runedrakes of Grandmother Duck cannot willingly start any conflict that could end in the harm of another duck.

**Divine Magic:** Eloquence

#### Special Benefits

Cult members of Grandmother Duck gain additional Reactions each turn usable to parry or defend any younger or less experienced duck. Acolytes gain one additional Reaction, Speakers gain two and Runedrakes gain three. These Reactions *cannot* be used to defend the cult member, only other ducks.

#### Associated Cults

**Canarda the Egg Mother:** Provides Comfort Song

**Duru-Orlanth the Adventurer:** Provides Find (Enemy)

**Orlanth the Leader:** Provides Glamour

#### The Hurlter

*The Fastest Sister, Duck of the Road, Goddess of Lost Flight*

Always caught as the middle child, the Hurlter was not as wise as her older sister Swimmer in the Shadows; nor was she as talented as her younger brother Eggbeater. She was a lanky and ungainly thing, long of limb and long of wing. Her eyes were sharp but her blade typically was not. The only thing she seemed to actually excel at was *flying* – which was taken away from her by Yelm's Sentence. Earthbound and depressed, she began walking the world in hopes of finding something to fill the void in her heart. She went to the top of the highest mountain and the cold wind made her miss soaring. She swam to the bottom of the ocean and cried salty tears when she saw the Mer zooming past on winds of water and wings that were fins. Finally she went to Grandmother Duck and explained where she had been and how much it hurt. When Grandmother cheered for her, telling her how lucky she was to have been so far and seen so much in such a short amount of her life – the Hurlter smiled for the first time after losing her wings. She could not fly, to be sure but she *could* still see all that this world had to offer.

Her cult is much the same. Travellers, scouts and wanderers, they are taught that the only enemy they truly have is stagnation and complacency. They exist to map out the world in terms that their duck brethren can understand, hoping to create a good system of safe routes between ducktowns. They make sure that

all of the children of Grandmother Duck can move around across Glorantha without fear of the Big or Hungry People.

The Hurler is described in all texts and drawings as being tall and lanky with shimmering feathers the colour of the sky. She is always pictured with a bow under her arm and three arrows; one for the past, present and future.

**Runes:** Communication, Motion.

**Sub-Pantheon:** Nest of Eight

**Worshippers:** Duck scouts, pathfinders and wanderers.

**Worshipper's Duties:** Mapping the routes between ducktowns, scouting wilderness, passing communications between ducktowns.

**Initiate Membership**

**Requirements:** Standard.

**Cult Skills:** Athletics, Boating, Bow, Craft (cartographer), Dodge, Driving, Lore (World), Perception, Tracking.

**Cult Spells:** Clear Path, Find (Duck), Mobility, Pathfinder.

**Acolyte Membership**

**Requirements:** The cult member must have mapped routes between at least three other major ducktowns in order to achieve this rank.

**Speaker Membership**

**Requirements:** The cult member must have mapped routes between at least five other major ducktowns in order to achieve this rank.

**Runedrake Membership**

**Requirements:** The cult member must have mapped routes between at least 10 other major ducktowns in order to achieve this rank.

**Divine Magic:** Guided Teleportation (between Hurler temples only)

**Special Benefits**

Members of the cult that reach the rank of Speaker or higher are considered to have the Keet Trait of *Tireless* (see page 75).

**Associated Cults**

**Duru-Orlanth the Adventurer:** Provides Versatility

**Eggbeater the Singer of Songs:** Provides Glamour

**Prince Heron**

*Prince of all Keets, Heron the Rebel, God of Freedom*

Looked upon with disdain by his father, the great Grandfather Flamingo, Prince Heron is the voice of practicality and pride within the keet pantheon. He is a proud and strong warrior-noble, standing tallest amongst waterfowl. His stone-shattering whooping call is a powerful reminder of what just retribution lies in the heart of the oppressed and his lance-like beak is able to break any bond or chain. Prince Heron does not want his father's throne; he simply does not want anyone to tell him he cannot have it if he did.

His cult is dominated by proud warrior-nobles and fierce individualists bent on making sure that the keets' tribal way of life remains free from tyrannical rule under Grandfather Flamingo. They are the voices that speak against the consolidation of tribes and they happily lead raids and skirmishes between the keetsland islands to ensure that the boundaries remain bold and plain. The cult of Prince Heron is not simply a collection of troublemakers; they firmly believe that only through the division of the tribes can they remain free to do what their ancestor-gods need them to do.

Prince Heron is depicted as a stark white keet that is tall and wiry, his beak long and straight like a sword. He is always pictured with a short spear in one hand and a bunch of pink feathers in the other – the fistful he tore from his father when they first fought.

**Runes:** Disorder, Truth.

**Type:** Ruler, War.

**Sub-Pantheon:** Flamingo's Court

**Worshippers:** Heron and Stork warbirds, nobleskeets devoted to their tribes, enemies of the Grandfather Flamingo cult, Swordbill keets.

**Worshipper's Duties:** Lead keet tribal actions, free the enslaved, weaken the cult of Grandfather Flamingo.

**Initiate Membership**

**Requirements:** Cult members must have at least a 50% in the Influence skill to achieve this rank.

**Cult Skills:** Athletics, Boating, Lore (keet), Outlaw, Persistence, Sing, Spear, Unarmed.

**Cult Spells:** Great Shriek (same as Great Roar), Pierce (usable on caster's beak), True (beak)

**Common Divine Magic:** All.

**Acolyte Membership**

**Requirements:** Cult members must have at least a 70% in the Influence skill to achieve this rank.

**Speaker Membership**

**Requirements:** Cult members must have at least a 90% in the Influence skill to achieve this rank and must have the crimson plumage denoting the clerical lineage of heron keets.

**Divine Magic:** Living Blade, Thunder's Voice.

**Runedrake Membership**

**Special Note:** There are no Runedrakes in the cult of Prince Heron, as that the Speakers control the cult through group consensus and lengthy debates.

**Special Benefits**

Members of the cult receive a bonus to their natural skill with their beak attacks, gaining +10% to their Unarmed skill at Acolyte level and another +10% when they become a Speaker.

**Associated Cults**

**Seaside Brothers:** Provides Shipspeed

**The Seaside Brothers**

*The Three Gull Gods, Keepers of the Coasts, The Court Triad*

The combined worship of the three keet gods – Albatros the Seer, Sunbill the Puffin and High Crowned Pelican – has been the norm for most keet tribes for the entirety of the Second Age. Just as their children did when all keets were young, the Seaside Brothers stuck together for safety and camaraderie. Albatros would mope around because of his uncanny ability to know the future; Sunbill would pick fights with the strongest of the world's creatures; Pelican would gather the riches of the world in his bottomless gullet. They individually each brought a different vice to the hearts of their children but when they were together they were strong and watched out for one another. So has their cults formed together into one force.

There are many different faces to the cult of the Seaside Brothers. Each individual shrine or temple in a village is likely to be more devoted to one aspect of the Brothers than the others, predominantly due to the breed of keet that built it. Shrines with Albatros dominant will be dreary places devoted to reflection and prophecy. Sunbill's shrines are places for martial pride and warrior training. Pelican-focussed shrines are depositories of wealth that second as trading posts. Essentially the Seaside Brothers will not turn away a keet who finds something of themselves under the roof of this trio of ancestor-gods.

The idols of the Seaside Brothers are always the same; a ring of three keet faces around a central tribal knot. One is a drooping gull's face, another the glare of a puffin and the last a grinning pelican. The focus of a shrine's devoted ancestor-god all depends on which of the faces is put forward and kept looking toward the entrance – a sign that the god welcomes its children.

**Runes:** Infinity, Mastery, Trade.

**Type:** Harmony.

**Sub-Pantheon:** Flamingo's Court

**Worshippers:** Any keets that want to worship the Brothers are allowed but ship's keets are most common.

**Worshipper's Duties:** Protect the shrine and the local tribe, undertake quests befitting the dominant Brother in the shrine, eliminate tribal weaknesses by spreading knowledge and skills.

**Initiate Membership**

**Requirements:** Standard.

**Cult Skills:** 1H Sword, Athletics, Boating, Evaluate, Lore (World), Perception, Shiphandling, Spear, Unarmed.

**Cult Spells:** Fate, Float, Increase/Decrease Wind, Mindlink, Shipspeed, Submerge, Water Breath

**Common Divine Magic:** Cloud Call, Consecrate, Face Chaos

**Acolyte Membership**

**Requirements:** Standard.

**Speaker Membership**

**Requirements:** Cult member must hold monthly services at a shrine devoted to the Seaside Brother of his preference (see below) to achieve this rank.

**Divine Magic:** Seastrength

**Runedrake Membership**

**Requirements:** Cult member must have built a new shrine or temple to the Seaside Brothers in a foreign land (requiring the member to travel) within the last year.

**Special Benefits**

Every member of the cult of the Seaside Brothers must pick a devotee ancestor-god they wish to be their specific patron, which is most often the same as that of their first shrine.

Cult members who are devoted to Albatros the Seer that reach the rank of Speaker count all Divine Magic spells as being 1 POW less than they are (minimum of 1) for the purposes of Dedicated POW. This increases to 2 POW less when they achieve Runedrake rank.

Cult members who are devoted to Sunbill the Puffin that reach the rank of Speaker add +1D2 to all attacks

they make with their beak or spurs. This increases to +1D4 when they achieve Runedrake rank.

Cult members who are devoted to High Crowned Pelican that reach the rank of Speaker are considered to have access (once a day) to five times their current POW in the local currency (whatever it might be) by reaching into their pouch-gullet and 'finding' it. This increases to 10 times their current POW when they achieve Runedrake rank.

**Associated Cults**

**Grandfather Flamingo:** Provides Oath of Ordeal

**Prince Heron:** Provides True (beak)



## Stormbill the Chaos Killer

*Ivory Drake of the Storm, Foehunter*

Strangely enigmatic and oddly intuitive, the youngest of the duck gods is the mightily determined Stormbill. Hatched of the storm's fire and tempered by an instinctual desire to seek and slay the minions of the Faceless Enemy, Stormbill is the only duck god that seems to have a constant connection with gods of other pantheons due to their solidified front against Chaos. He holds his rage for Yelm and the gods who cursed his people hot in his heart but he knows that through the ducks' suffering they will find strength – strength to keep Chaos from growing too powerful through the Imperial Age. He has a kinship in particular with Urox and their mission to eradicate the Faceless Enemy comes before any supposed misgivings.

Nothing stands between Stormbill and the Faceless foes. During the Great Darkness, when Chaos emerged at waxing strength and the world feared all, he took up his blade and stalked its greatest of foes. During the hunt Stormbill crossed paths with the terrible troll Zorak Zoran, who was also hunting in the darkness. The troll licked its muzzle once toward Stormbill, telling him to move along or become a meal but the Ivory God stood firm and said that he did not want to kill the troll – as it would tire him too badly for the fight against Chaos. Zorak Zoran laughed at this but admired the duck's bravery and swore that he would not eat his people then, 'until Chaos is defeated'. Thus, the Stormbills earned a respite from the Hungry People.

Stormbill was there, forgotten by most other storytellers, at Urox's side during the Gbaji Wars. The Orlanthi's axe and the duck's sword cut down many foes before the fighting was over but the cults do not forget. Even today it is not uncommon to find at least one ivory mallard drinking and celebrating with the Uroxi jarls, waiting for the blowing of the hot storm wind that will call them all to arms.

The cult is a very simple collection of fierce duck warriors, Chaos hunters and ivory mallards seeking to devote their lives to battling the Faceless Enemy. They know that they might be slain, eaten by the Foe but as long as they think they can choke the beast on their way down to Hell – they gladly go to their deaths. They live their lives to the fullest, nomadically travelling from

shrine to shrine enjoying strong drink and duckweed whenever they can but always darkly aware that their next battle might be their last.

Stormbill is always shown as a muscled ivory mallard with a steel-grey bill and fierce blue eyes. In his hands he carries the oversized sword of Orlanthi forging and he often wears a horned helmet with a metal faceplate that covers his eyes and upper bill. He is sometimes drawn having bull's horns himself but the Stormdrakes of the cult deny this to actually be true.

**Runes:** Beast, Death.

**Type:** War.

**Sub-Pantheon:** Nest of Eight.

**Worshippers:** Chaos hunters, duck barbarians, ivory mallards.

**Worshipper's Duties:** Live a good life, hunt and kill Chaos, die a glorious death.

### Initiate Membership

**Requirements:** Ducks of this rank in the cult must not have any Chaos taint.

**Cult Skills:** 2H Axe, 2H Sword, Athletics, Dodge, Lore (Chaos), Sense Chaos, Shield, Spear, Unarmed.

**Cult Spells:** Bladesharp, Demoralise, Detect (Enemy), Face Chaos, Impede Chaos

**Common Divine Magic:** Berserk, Find (Enemy), Shield, True (sword)

### Acolyte Membership

**Requirements:** Standard but the cult member must have slain at least 10 Chaos creatures or destroyed at least one Chaos Rune, bringing the remains to a shrine as trophies.

### Thunderbill (Speaker) Membership

**Requirements:** Thunderbill's must have at least have slain at least 25 Chaos creatures or destroyed at least five Chaos Runes, bringing the remains to a shrine as trophies. Alternatively, the cult member can raze any temple or (un)holy site devoted to a Chaos God to achieve this rank as well.

**Divine Magic:** Thunder's Voice

**Stormdrake (Runedrake) Membership**

**Requirements:** A cult member that wishes to achieve this rank must have at least 90% in his 2H Sword skill, slain at least 50 Chaos creatures and razed at least one temple devoted to a Chaos God.

**Special Note:** Stormdrakes live relatively simple lives in the terms of material possessions outside their arms and armour. They habitually spend their loot and treasure on frivolous items and expenses in order to live life 'to the fullest' and are considered to spend 90% of their monetary wealth (jewellery and items of art included) on drinks, food, entertainment and the like anytime they enter a populated area in which they have the capability.

**Divine Magic:** Lightning Strike

**Special Benefits**

Initiates gain the Sense Chaos skill automatically (see page 73 of *Cults of Glorantha Volume 1*) when they achieve the rank, having to increase it on their own afterwards. Acolytes are always prepared in their hearts for battle, shaking off any drunkenness and 1D3 levels of Fatigue as a Reaction in the first turn of any combat. Thunderbills can call upon Divine Intervention on a 1D10 instead of a 1D100. Stormdrakes are blessed by the ivory feathers of the ancestor-god, giving them the same appearance as an ivory mallard (if they did not before) and complete immunity to electricity-based damage that did not come from a Chaos-related source.

**Associated Cults**

**Duru-Orlanth the Adventurer:** Provides Pathfinder

**Grandmother Duck:** Provides Summon Moot

**Urox:** Provides Strength

**Zorak Zoran:** Provides Seal Wound

**Swimmer in the Shadows**

*The First Shamaness, Goddess of Mysteries, The Black Spirit Hen*

**NOTE:** The format for the cult of Swimmer in the Shadows is slightly different than that of a normal divine cult, as it follows closely to the design of the shamanic Spirit Practices covered in *Cults of Glorantha Volume II*.

Grandmother Duck's second daughter, Swimmer in the Shadows, hatched into the universe with one eye turned toward the Spirit World. With one eye of pitch and the other of bone she looks upon the Inner World and judges it accordingly. She is the most bitter of all ducks, the source of cynicism and contrariness for many of her children. Her dark and drab feathers are mixed with the magic of spirits and before she took her first flight she already could speak with the spirits of the world. What secrets they told her and what tricks they taught her are hers and hers alone to know and tell – which she rarely ever does.

Her cult, nicknamed the Shadowswimmers, is actually part shamanic practice and part divine cult depending on who is doing the worshipping. She teaches her followers the ways of dealing with spirits and the magics found in the darkness. She is said to grant her worshippers the same mysteries that she uncovered in her studies throughout the Great Darkness. Her cult is especially shut off from most other cults, although she keeps relations with her sisters and mother relatively well. Her followers are asked to keep to themselves and their own members, only emerging from under their veil of secrecy when duck-kind needs their enigmatic wisdom.

The primary goal of the Shadowswimmers is to seek a 'cure' for the hellish effects of Yelm's Sentence. Since it was a Sun god that cursed them, the cult believes that perhaps the answer can be found in Darkness. They go into all of the places that other ducks shun in order to hopefully find the text or spirit that will hold the key to putting the ducks back in the Sky.

Swimmer in the Shadows is always drawn as a dark-feathered duck hen with one pitch black eye and one white eye. Sometimes she is shown cloaked in tendrils of spiritual darkness, but most of her practitioners dislike how 'evil' this makes her look.

**Runes:** Darkness, Spirit.

**Tradition:** Duck.

*'All I can pray for is an enemy on my blade, a drake to give me strong ducklings, a pipe of the strongest growth the river can produce and a flagon of our town's best and finest.*

*If I had to pick just one?*

*The enemy on my blade...I can always celebrate with Stormbill in heaven.'*

*— Lyra Silverplume,  
Stormdrake of the Mothersnest*

**Sub-Pantheon:** Nest of Eight.

**Worshippers:** Duck shamans and shamanesses, spirit magic practitioners, duck hermits.

**Worshipper's Duties:** Seek secrets unknown to most of duck-kind, protect your community through spirit magic, try to find the cure for Yelm's Sentence in Darkness.

**Practitioner Membership**

**Requirements:** Standard.

**Practice Skills:** Influence, Lore (Darkness), Lore (Spirit World), Perception, Stealth

**Practice Charms:** Darkness, Magic

**Spirit Spells:** Blinding, Darksee, Darkwall, Second Sight, Spirit Block

**Fetishes:** Darkness spirits

**Spirit Ally:** Shades (darkness elementals)

**Common Divine Magic:** Analyse Magic, Exorcism, Soul Sight, Spiritual Journey

**Spirit-Talker Membership**

**Requirements:** Standard but must also have set up a private or secluded shrine that will serve as the character's information depository.

**Divine Magic:** Command (Shade)

**Chieftain Membership**

**Requirements:** Standard.

**Special Note:** There are no common Shamans in the Shadowswimmers, the cult mixes such duties into those of their Chieftains (called Runedrakes by other cults). As a result, Chieftains devoted to Swimmer in the Shadows need to be warrior-shamans that perform both roles.

**Shamanic Abilities:** Shamanic Escape, Spirit Capture, True Sight (shaman(ess) can see hidden or invisible things with a Perception check)

**Fetishes:** Shades (Darkness elementals)

**Special Benefits**

All practitioners and cult members to Swimmer in the Shadows are always considered to have the *Yelm's Spite* Duck Trait (see page 70).

Additionally, any member that reaches the rank of Chieftain (Runedrake) have untapped a spiritual connection between elemental Darkness and themselves. They automatically gain +25% to their Runecasting (Darkness) skill and spend one less Magic Point when casting spells that require the Darkness Rune (minimum of 1).

**Associated Cults**

**Canarda the Egg Mother:** Provides Consecrate

**Grandmother Duck:** Provides Protection

**The Hurtler:** Provides Clear Path

# DUCK KNACKS

*'What those wretched things lose in size, strength, skill and social graces they make up for in sheer frustrating ingenuity.'*

— *Duenge Erro, Openhandist Mostali*

Trolls are powerful and can eat anything. Dragonewts have their own breed of magic and the ability to reincarnate. Elfs could not be closer to the spirits of the forest. The Mostali have not found a challenge they could not invent themselves past. Even the humans have their cults and mental tenacity to overcome. Ducks have...ducks have...?

Feathers? A bill? Annoying voices littered with profanity and small bodies that are easy to ignore?

It is plain and simply put that duck characters are at a slight general disadvantage when it comes to their physical survivability. To help survive against such dismal odds opposing them they do their best to make sure their people are skilled and ready for what is surely going to try to *kill* them. Where the keet tribes have their own natural abilities to set them apart from their cousins, ducks have nothing built into their breeds to help them – save for one thing.

Their bitter strive to survive, what sets them apart from anything else in Glorantha, forces each and every duck to look at everything they have learned and figure out better ways to use it. In a world that has cursed them to failure, it takes a great deal of creativity and out-of-the-box thinking concerning everyday things to make up for their other and numerous shortcomings.

This occurs in the form of Duck Knacks. Knacks are additional powers that duck characters only (not even the keets can draw upon them) can purchase in the same fashion as all characters can purchase Legendary Abilities. Knacks are drastically less powerful in comparison to Legendary Abilities, meaning they are also drastically less expensive in term of character resources and prerequisites. Unlike

Legendary Abilities, which might require multiple skills or Characteristics, each skill has its own Knack that ducks can 'come up with'.

## Learning Duck Knacks

To learn a Knack, a duck character must perform the following steps:

- \* Spend an Improvement Roll on the skill in question.
- \* Succeed the Improvement Roll, taking the skill's rating to 60% or over.
- \* Spend **two** Hero Points.
- \* Add the Duck Knack to the character's list of Special Abilities.

It should be noted that the character does need a mentor or teacher for these Knacks (unlike Legendary Abilities). It is assumed that the natural adaptability and pluckiness of the duck has shined through that particular skill, coming up with the Knack 'on his own'.

## Duck Knacks

The following are the Knacks available to duck characters, their descriptions and how they function in game terms.

### Expert Faller

**Skill:** Acrobatics

*You learned the best way to fall down without hurting yourself. Your quacking and flailing might not look pretty to outsiders but it hurts a great deal less than landing like they would!*

Whereas normal characters can pass an Acrobatics skill test to cut damage from falling by half, you can choose to either *automatically* only suffer half damage or roll the test to completely mitigate the damage from a fall of less than 30 metres. If you fail this roll however, you suffer *normal* damage!

### Stamina

**Skill:** Athletics

*You have discovered the finer art of reserving your energy over long periods of time, making you more likely to succeed in otherwise exhausting situations.*

By taking twice the time it takes to perform an Athletics test, you can add +20% to the skill.

### **Leg Paddler**

**Skill:** Boating

*You can make any boat go faster by using your own natural paddles to propel and steer it.*

By leaning out of a boat and using your webbed feet to paddle or steer, you can add any racial bonus you have to Athletics (swimming) to your Boating skill check.

### **Improvise**

**Skill:** Craft

*When having to put things together on short notice, you will sometimes use materials or ingredients that were not meant for your project.*

By exacting your craft using substandard and potentially unheard of ingredients, materials or supplies, you can perform your craft cheaply. You may voluntarily choose to take a penalty to your Craft skill (symbolising the improvised materials), reducing the cost of the crafting project by an equal percentage. Thus, if a blacksmith duck wants to use salt instead of buffing sand on a rounded rock instead of an anvil, he could reduce his Craft (blacksmith) Skill Test by -20% in order to reduce the costs for the project by the same -20%.

### **Distracting Movement**

**Skill:** Dance

*You know how to gyrate and cavort in a comical dance pattern that will often draw the attentions – and attacks – of your enemies, maybe giving your allies a chance to strike true.*

By spending your Combat Actions to dance distractingly during a battle, all enemy combatants that can see (and would be distracted in such a manner) you must pass a Persistence Skill Test or be forced to attack you. Any enemy can choose to simply spend a Reaction to ignore you however but this must be chosen *before* they decide to make the Skill Test.

### **Camouflage**

**Skill:** Disguise

*A duck is never going to be mistaken for anyone that is not a duck, so you instead know how to make yourself up to look like a fern, a rock or some such.*

You can use your Disguise skill to appear as an object instead of a person, if you have the proper materials on hand to do so.

### **Ducking Dodge**

**Skill:** Dodge

*You use your small size and expendable feathers to save your skin.*

When you Dodge an attack successfully and you must Give Ground, you may do so in any direction you choose.

### **Foot Steerage**

**Skill:** Driving

*You know how to hold the reins to your vehicle with your webbed feet, leaving your hands open to do other things.*

You may choose to use the Driving skill with your feet, allowing you to use both hands for other purposes but a critical failure on a check in this manner will surely pull you from the vehicle by your ankles.

### **See it from Below**

**Skill:** Engineering or Mechanisms

*Your size and oily plumage allow you to get into and under projects that Big People cannot.*

When dealing with the machines and devices of Big People you may add a bonus +5% to your Engineering or Mechanisms skill roll for each point your SIZ is lower than that of the machine or device.

### **Judgmental**

**Skill:** Evaluate

*You have honed your snap-judgments and bitter appraisals to a remarkable clarity, often getting a good idea of what something is worth in an instant.*

If you choose to 'snap judge' an item, trade or proposition, you may roll an Evaluate Skill Test with a +10% bonus. If you do so however, you cannot alter the result of that roll in any way (not even Hero Points), as that your mind is made up.

**Quick Patch**

**Skill:** First Aid

*A little mud and a few feathers can make a quick bandage in combat but one that will need to be replaced later for fear of a worse infection.*

You can use the First Aid skill as a single Combat Action with a -10% penalty, stopping bleeding and such. A normal First Aid skill check (1D4+1 Actions' worth) must be taken on the same wound within 24 hours or the wounded Hit Location will take another HP of damage and the wound will re-open.

**Grandmother's Remedies**

**Skill:** Healing

*You remember several of the duckling stories you were told growing up of what strange herbs and practices cured ailments.*

When using your Healing skill for anything other than Surgery, you can pass a Lore (duck), Lore (Durulz), Lore (history), or Lore (Plant) Skill Test to add +20% to your Healing skill. If you pass the Lore check but still fail the Healing check, your 'ancient remedy' is actually going to worsen the situation somehow, likely causing CON loss in the patient from adverse reactions.

**Mockery**

**Skill:** Influence

*By mimicking an opponent's actions and words with comical versions of your own, you can force them to make mistakes in frustration.*

You may copy a target's actions over the course of a combat round (or one minute, if outside of combat) and pass an Influence Skill Test. If successful the target must pass a Persistence Skill Test or fail in his next 1D3 skill rolls taken in your presence out of sheer frustration.

**Mastery of Profanity**

**Skill:** Language (any)

*Your command of the most socially unacceptable insults, obscenities and expletives can make a sailor blush, a debutante faint or cause a warrior to recoil in disbelief.*

With a Language Skill Test that matches a known language of the target of your profanities and spending a Reaction, the opponent must succeed in a Persistence test or lose one Combat Action from the sheer shock of what horrible statement you concocted.

**Quack-fu**

**Skill:** Martial Arts

*A stylised form of fighting that is less a martial art and more an improvised form of dirty fighting, 'Quack-fu' is not taught or learned - it is made up as the duck goes along.*

You have come up with a few good hand-to-hand (or bill, foot, elbow and so on) strikes that you have incorporated into your fighting style. You may add



+1 to your Damage Modifier when attacking with the Unarmed and Martial Arts skills.

Unlike other Duck Knacks, this Knack may be purchased up to three times cumulatively.

**Paranoia**

**Skill:** Perception

*Although it might seem like you are constantly looking over your shoulder and checking to make sure doors and windows are latched, you are remarkably perceptive.*

You are given an extra Perception Skill Test to avoid any sort of ambush, trap or notice someone following you. Of course, the Games Master should have you make these frequently to represent your growing paranoia.

**Stubborn**

**Skill:** Persistence

*Canarda's tenacity bred strongly down into your line and you can hold your position firmly against most arguments and debates.*

Whenever you have the opportunity to make your mind up against a topic, course of action or decision you cannot be shaken from that stance. You *must* pass a Persistence Skill Test to ever change your opinion or course of action, even if by magical coercion, if you have verbally announced your position.

**Off-Note**

**Skill:** Play Instrument

*By hitting a discordant note or rhythm that you have found your instrument capable of, you can cause others to lose their focus or prowess.*

As a Combat Action you can make a Play Instrument Skill Test, forcing all who hear it within 10 metres to take a Resilience Skill Test. If they fail, they lose their next Reaction.

**Never Give Up**

**Skill:** Resilience

*There is something that you hold dear, something out there that you believe is worth living for and you will never fold your hand so long as it still exists.*

You must pick a specific item, place or person that is dear to you. So long as you are aware (or believe) that your actions are helping to protect or defend it, you receive a +20% bonus to all Resilience rolls.

**Sheltered Riding**

**Skill:** Riding

*Whatever you are riding is probably a great deal tougher, physically speaking, than you are. You have mastered a technique that puts your mount in the way of most attacks aimed at you. It might not be brave or courageous but it will save your skin!*

Whenever you are attacked while mounted upon a creature that uses the Riding skill to control properly, you may choose to spend a Reaction and make a Riding Skill Test in the same way as you would a Parry – except the mount suffers the attack instead of you if successful.



**Migratory Instinct**

**Skill:** Shiphandling

*Although you cannot hope to ever fly again, your natural instincts toward wind direction and long-distance migration make you useful in the crow's nest of any sailing ship.*

For the purposes of getting direction and keeping a steady wind in your ship's sails, you are allowed to make a Shiphandling Skill Test at a bonus equal to one-half (round up) of your Survival skill.

**Quack-along**

**Skill:** Sing

*Reciting one of your catchiest old sing-songs from your duckling days over and over again, you can get the annoying tune stuck in others' heads – much to their chagrin!*

By spending 1D4+1 full Combat Rounds (or minutes) constantly singing the same song while performing your other actions, you can make a Sing test. If successful, all those that can hear the repetitive and annoying duck-tune must make a Persistence skill roll. If they fail, they will be unable to get the tune out of their heads, making it impossible for them to do anything that requires concentration (including some spells) for 1D6 hours.

**Switcheroo**

**Skill:** Sleight

*So long as you are placing something of a similar size and weight in something's place, you can generally lift about anything off of anyone.*

When you are making Sleight Skill Tests to pick pockets or steal in plain sight, you may add a +20% bonus if you already have something in your hands of roughly the same size and weight to put in its place. Most viewers see you putting something back and do not care to inquire further about the workings of a duck.

**Opportunistic Vanish**

**Skill:** Stealth

*You know how to use someone else's actions and distractions to make your exit into hiding; perhaps leaving them to the enemy but definitely getting yourself a good safe place to lay low.*

You may spend a Reaction in combat at the same time that someone else is spending a Combat Action to do something that would attract attention (casting a spell, attacking and so on) in order to make a Stealth Skill Test combined with a normal Movement in order to hide mid-combat.

**Safety First**

**Skill:** Streetwise

*You have been around the towns and cities of the Big People enough that you have a bill for sniffing out safe places to stay.*

With a normal Streetwise Skill Test any character can find lodging in a city but whenever you do so it always seems that you find the most duck-friendly place in town to lay your head. Games Masters can choose to make your 'safe place' little more than a hovel in a dark alleyway but it will make for a safe night's sleep nonetheless.

**Prey Instincts**

**Skill:** Survival

*When you are in the wild places of this world you are well aware of the sharp teeth and hungry appetites looking to get a piece of you. It is best to think like the prey they will treat you as and you will live a little longer.*

As long as you travel at half normal speed and stay wary of dangers around you, you can add +25% to any Survival Skill Tests made to avoid natural predators and potential ambush points.

**Underhand**

**Skill:** Throwing

*When you are throwing a weapon at a larger target you already tend to bring the weapon up from below them, but when you actually through it using a swinging underarm technique you guarantee it will strike their lower regions.*

You may, at any time, choose to underhand any thrown weapon attack of ENC 1 or less. The attack will automatically strike them as if they were mounted and being attacked by someone on foot, limiting the number of Hit Locations potentially struck to just a few.

**False Tracks**

**Skill:** Tracking

*By knowing what good tracks look like, you are an expert at leaving meandering and false tracks to mislead others trying to find your trail.*

So long as you are the last person in a travelling line, you can choose to pass a Tracking Skill Test each day to make sure you are adequately covering your tracks. It requires a critical success on a Tracking roll to defeat this Knack unless any of the tracks are being covered are made my wagon or cart wheels – at which point it is useless.

**Suckerpunch**

**Skill:** Unarmed

*No one ever expects a duck to deliver the first punch in a fist fight – especially not one that hurts so bad as this one.*

So long as you instigate the combat with an Unarmed or Martial Arts attack you may hit an unwary target automatically and roll twice for the Hit Location (choosing whichever suits you at the moment!).

**Draw Without Threat**

**Skill:** Weapon Skill (any)

*You are so used to the feel of your weapon in your hands that you can get it ready to wield without anyone really noticing, even if they are looking right at you!*

So long as you (or something else) can keep them occupied, onlookers will not react to you drawing and preparing your chosen weapon (the one whose skill qualified for the Knack), so long as you can pass an Influence, Stealth, or Sleight Skill Test with a +10% bonus. Of course Games Masters might feel this is impossible in certain circumstances (a stormbill drawing his greatsword in the Dara Happan cathedral, for instance).

# THE LESS-IGNORABLE

*'A duck legend, you say? Some interesting colourations in your feathers and suddenly a hero you become? Well, I am blonde of mane and fair of skin, does this make me a hero of the Yelmelion Legion? No! My spear and my bravery, those are a hero's food and drink!*

*To think a duck like you could ever dare wear the title of anything but...pest. Pick up that blade and prepare for the end of your silly delusion.'*

*— last speech of Brighte Resarian, Carmanian Knight, before being killed by Lyra Silverplume in an honour duel*

This chapter is a collection of several important (relatively speaking to the rest of Glorantha) Durulz personalities from the Imperial Age. It is to be considered a good resource for Games Masters in order add new allies, enemies, assets and potential mentors to their chronicles.

The characters presented here are all individually more experienced and powerful compared to a normal starting *RuneQuest* player group but they were not presented solely to be the 'bad guy' in which the players go and seek out before doing battle. Most of them are far more useful as allies or even friends if the players can manage to see past the stereotypes and social stigmas that are attached with their being ducks or keets. The Games Master should not need their actual game play statistics in encounters dealing with them, so we have omitted them in favour of more roleplaying and background notes concerning their day-to-day existences. If a Games Master does need to have statistics drawn up for these personalities, they should all be built using the *Hero* level of experience as described in the *RuneQuest* core rulebook.

## Yuri All-Cares-Taken

Runedrake of Canarda's Motherwatch, Mothersnest Temple

*Looking up from her desk of scattered notes, half-filled jars and flasks is a mottled woods duck with a pair of silver-rimmed spectacles sitting awkwardly on the bridge of her bill. Her feathers are a bit ruffled and her eyes speak of many recent sleepless nights but there is the shine of will behind them. When she stands she walks with a bit of a limp but her movements are steady enough to compensate for them. Around her waist is a leather apron fitted with several interesting tools, many which look medical in design. She goes about her business mixing tinctures and remedies as she talks to you over her shoulder.*

Yuri All-Cares-Taken is the highest ranking member of Canarda's cult, helping hundreds of duck hatchings go smoothly and hopefully without loss of life to mothers or ducklings. Even though she rarely leaves the confines of the huge two-story nesting place in Mothersnest, she is a well-known member of society throughout most of Maniria. Even non-ducks are aware of her and all of the ducktowns in the area herald her as the single reason why the ducks have been able to thrive in such a dangerous stretch of territory. Without her and her Motherwatch followers, there would be many more empty beds and nests throughout the Manirian ducktowns.

She has a firm rule that she will help *anyone* give birth or pass a hatchling – so long as they come to the temple and ask her for aid. This includes non-ducks. Although she would be hard pressed to allow an Uz entrance into her temple with all of the defenceless mothers and ducklings around to potentially be snacked upon, she has stated that she would somehow make it work if one came calling for aid. Yuri is a skilled runecaster as well as a divine conduit for her ancestor-goddess, so she feels that her and her cult could manage things in most circumstances.

When the first emissaries from the Empire of Wyrms' Friends came through Maniria looking for recruits and new initiates, Yuri tried to have an open mind and get

her fellow elders to at least listen to the Big Dragon People but too many have already seen or heard what destruction and devastation their Thunderers bring and how those who turn to the Dragon soon forget Grandmother Duck and her teachings. The Wyrmspeakers were greatly ignored except for a few rebellious drakes here and there, who soon left to become Wyrmbills. Yuri wonders if perhaps making allies with the EWF would not have been a better answer than just shooing them away but the Council was Grandmother's way and it had spoken. As the first encroachments from the west by the God Learners started to appear in the area, again she pleaded that perhaps an alliance of sorts would be the best course of action. Unfortunately she was again overruled by visiting coastal ducks, who know how the Middle Sea Empire treated the Waertagi and would not want to end up in chains like so many of those people were. The Malkioni sorcerers and the God Learner questing teams were met at the borders of the ducktowns and dissuaded from entering. The result is as Yuri feared; both empires are crashing towards a penultimate conflict along the meeting places of their territories – one such place being all the lands around Maniria!

In preparation for this inevitable conflict that would surely raze most of the ducktowns to the ground she and her son Whisperquack have begun to build a secret ducktown in the heart of Dragon Pass. Whisperquack's dark spiritual prophecies have foretold that this ducktown would be the centre of duck territory in centuries to come, long after the imperial wars of the Big People will have come and gone.

#### **Roleplaying with Yuri All-Cares-Taken**

As one of the most influential ducks in all of Maniria, perhaps all of Glorantha, Yuri is extremely important to the overall future of the duck race on Genertela. It will be her actions that will eventually bring the ducks to the infamous Third Age cities in Dragon Pass and her magic will keep many of the race safe through the harshest parts of the Dragonkill Wars. Even with such power at her fingertips, she still relies very heavily on her cult and fellow ducks to interact outside of her temple – there is just too much to do for one duck to accomplish.

Yuri All-Cares-Taken often requests adventuring groups (predominantly ones populated by ducks) to do Canarda's will in the expanse of the world outside of the

ducktowns. She sponsors young Motherwatch initiates and frequently sends them to fetch ingredients or send messages to other shrines and temples, arranging for suitable escorts whenever possible.

She has a secret alliance with Whisperquack of the Shadowswimmers, who is actually Yuri's first-hatched son. The enigmatic shaman chieftain has told Yuri many secrets of the possible future to come; of dragons and False Life Ones and of the deadly sorcerer Delecti – who will bring death untold to the ducks of Genertela. Whisperquack's prophecies are enough to make Yuri enact her hidden plan to one day escape Maniria and take the ducks to what his spirits say is safe ground. When the dark runedrake comes with a message for Yuri, she always takes it as quickly as she can and soon after she has work for others to aid her with.

Although she does not get along very well with the Deathdrake Disciples or the Stormbills, who she believes are far too ready to waste duck lives in battles they have no reason being in, she knows they fill a necessary role in the duck community. Of all of the runedrakes in the Maniria area, she is the most willing to set aside her people's bitterness and cynical views upon the world in order to possible help heal it.

#### **Lyra Silverplume**

Stormdrake of Prax

*Removing her gilded silver helmet, the bull's horns of which are capped in iron, this white-feathered duck is small even for a duck's standards. Barely a metre in height, her grey head has matted feathers from being trapped under her helm but her brilliant blue eyes make her face striking to look upon. She wears a simple tabard of woven reeds, upon which she has hung several small bones and teeth from her various kills. Her hip holds Nightlance, her mystical onyx rapier and when she speaks you wonder which is sharper – her blade or her tongue?*

Being born into her lifelong role as a hunter of the Faceless Enemy on account of her hatching as an ivory mallard, Lyra was trained to overcome her small stature with speed and ferocity. Coming from a tiny ducktown called Earthfall in Kethaela, she passed her rite of passage into adulthood at the youthful age of thirteen years. She grabbed up a rapier from her

father's collection, slung a satchel filled with food over her back and headed east into Prax.

It was in the Praxian wastes that her youthful enthusiasm and naiveté got her captured by Wymfriend food gatherers for a nearby dinosaur farm. With aid from an unlikely group of easterners that included the future zebraur Duckfriend Baudica, she was broken free and the EWF forces put to the blade. Seeing the evil carelessness that the Wymfriends represented to the already treacherous area, she chose to take up her blade to not only seek out Chaos but to also ensure that the EWF does not expand too far easterly. Lyra and her allies would travel for many months throughout Prax, Kethaela and up into the eastern boundaries of Dragon Pass fighting the Wymfriends and destroying anything she determined was tainted by the Faceless Enemy.

In Four Peaks, an area in the Stormwalk mountains considered holy to the Uroxi and the minotaurs devoted to Storm Bull, Lyra found a small and dilapidated duck shrine to the mightiest Chaos killer of this or any other time – Stormbill. She took leave of her friends and began to clean the area so as to be able to worship there again. She defended it against trolls, broo and even a few surly minotaurs looking for a quick duck-meal and eventually she had constructed a sizeable temple around the old shrine's site. The Uroxi looked on in part disbelief and part pride, seeing that she was more than 'just a duck'. Her temple at Four Peaks has served as the main Stormbill routing point for those journeying east from Maniria and Ralios ever since and Lyra herself grew to be one of the most powerful and respected Stormbills in all of duck-kind.

After a post-battle celebration at Four Peaks that included a wrestling pit with Baeron Nine-Hammers of the Woolyhide minotaur clan, an Orlanthi drinking contest and a travelling Troubaduck from the cult of Eggbeater, Lyra discovered that she would soon be with egg. One of her Stormbill brothers that she had celebrated with apparently sired her a laying, as her abdomen began to ache with the growing inside of her. Knowing that she could not hope to have an easy or safe hatching in the height of the Fire Season at Four Peaks, she travelled to Mothersnest to be placed in the care of the Motherwatch there. While she was nesting, word reached her that the outlying ducktown of Sheerbanks was under attack by servants of Wakboth. Ignoring her

pending hatching she threw aside her Motherwatch attendants and ran out to deal with the Faceless Enemy. The battle was long and hard, with Lyra and a dozen Deathdrake Disciples turning back the tide of Chaos snakes and broo after several hours of brutal fighting. She was wounded in the battle, her egg breaking and her duckling lost. Although she claimed that it was worth the cost to defeat the Faceless Enemy, it was soon after that she chose to move her base of worship to the Stormbill temple in Mothersnest – where she can protect other would-be mothers.

### **Roleplaying with Lyra Silverplume**

Being Stormdrake of arguably the most zealous and devoted duck cult, Lyra is constantly looking for reasons to get away from her temple and fight against her chosen foes. Joining up with adventuring groups is as good a reason as any when she feels like getting her blade wet and there is never any shortage of occasions when she is itching for a fight.

Lyra always makes sure to be around Mothersnest when Ducksday approaches, as it is the only time that her and all of her old travelling companions from Prax get together. They come to the ducktown to enjoy the festivities and the Stormdrake's company but they also take the time to meet any other non-ducks that might happen to be in Mothersnest at the time.

Personally, Lyra is loud-mouthed and profane like any other duck but she also knows when to shut her bill, have a drink and enjoy her life. When she is not training Stormbills or seeking out enemies to kill with her shadow-blessed rapier, she can often be found in her own private drinking hall inside the Stormbill temple with a horn of bittermead in one hand, a pipe of fresh duckweed in the other and courting drakes all around. She is a seasoned warrior and a pillar of the duck community, even if she frightens most of the other ducks that meet her by reputation alone!

### **Zachar Boltfeather**

Baron of the Highwayducks

*Clad in jet spidersilk, masked in blue velvet and armed with the deadliest poisons known to Glorantha, this dastardly rogue has dark feathers and eyes the shade of violets. His voice is full of hatred and bitter spite towards anyone he does not control and his deft hands are never far from his ebony crossbow. He appraises*

*you carefully, looking at each portion of you as if trying to weigh your worth in comparison to the effort it will take him to deal with you. Something sinister ruffles through his feathers as the side of his dark grey bill curls into a sneer.*

Laying claim to the highways and roads throughout Carmania and Peloria, Zachar is a spiteful and hateful bandit that has looked to make the Big People suffer for his own pains and discomforts. The humans of Dara Happa, travellers that happen to be journeying through his hunting grounds or far away traders laden with goods that Zachar believes would be better served in duck hands; these are all his prey. He takes whatever he can and kills anyone that gets in the way of he and his band of highwayducks.

Worshipping no cult that he speaks of, he does not live in a ducktown community or feel that he has to have any real connection with most townsducks and average souls. He is happy running a band of 20 or so like-minded rogues, thieves and bandits from ducktowns all over Genertela against the worshippers of the god that cursed the ducks. Having set up his secret hideout in a series of hidden caves along the Yolp Mountains, Zachar formed his new friends and allies into a society of deadly thieves and killers. From their hidden fortress in the mountainside they strike out in small bands to pillage the many roads and pathways between the towns. Boltfeather and his band are actually one good reason why the Big People of the area hate ducks as much as they do.

Zachar himself is a masterful tactician and a cold-hearted killer, fletching all of his bolts with his own plucked feathers and coating their heads with poisons he purchases from dragonewts in the Pass. He has made allies within the War Dragons of the EWF as well, dealing under the table with agents of Hargrath Golden-Scale to potentially root out and eliminate Karvanyar in exchange for access to EWF resources and pathways. Zachar is aware that he is being used by the War Dragon general but as a duck he comes to expect such things from Big People anyway, so he simply makes the best out of it. So long as his highwayducks and assassins can get their hands on dragonbone weapons and vital supply line information about the Dara Happans, he will swallow his bitterness toward being used and continue his grisly work.

The Dara Happans generally ignore most ducks as a rule but those that have crossed paths with Zachar or his highwayducks have a completely different view. The Big People that have heard the stories about dark-clad ducks that slaughter travellers watch the roadside ditches and anywhere thick scrubs could hide them. The self-proclaimed 'baron' has somehow managed to make ducks even more hated in Yelmholme than ever before.

### **Roleplaying with Zachar Boltfeather**

The baron of the highwayducks is a self-absorbed killer, plain and simple. He tells his fellow ducks that he does what he does in order to 'get even' for so many generations of hatred and mistreatment but in truth he is simply a sadistic and cruel creature. He enjoys nothing more than turning his own hate and spite on others, always quietly smiling as he sinks poisoned bolt after bolt into them.

Not always *completely* homicidal, when Zachar deals with outsiders he generally asks them to meet him in some neutral place, somewhere that he can already have scouted, trapped and manned. He is a coy duck that believes he is untouchable by anything but fate; that he can kill any enemy that he has to. He never talks to anyone without his crossbow in hand and his speed to its trigger has never let him down before. Of course, he has no qualms about taking a pre-emptive shot.

Of all the Big People he deals with, Zachar prefers the awkward strangeness of dragonewts and Wyrmspeakers. Although he would never choose to become a Wyrmbill, his dealings with Golden-Scale's agents have given him a somewhat begrudging respect to what the EWF is trying to do. If they succeed and the world is returned to the Dragons, Yelm and his worshippers will surely be subjected to pain, torment and eventual destruction – exactly what Zachar wishes upon all of Shinyhead's cronies.

### **Ferron the Iron Mallard**

Zistorduck Traitor

*A horrifying and awkward presence, the strange combination of duck and metal before you is a travesty to everything that Grandmother Duck taught her children. Large for a duck, the thing has one arm made of white-feathered flesh and another of polished steel. His bill is of riveted bronze and long feathers of brass*

*cover much of his body. His webbed feet are covered by yellow skin but traces of pipe and wire can be seen running up into the rest of his body. It seems that little remains of the duck that was, only the Zistorite that it became...until the thing turns its glassy blue eyes – the eyes of an ivory mallard – toward you, speaking somewhat against its apparent soulless nature.*

One of the first brave ducks to venture into the tunnels reaching into the Clanking City, this tragic soul was originally called *Nerrill Axefeather*, an ivory mallard that volunteered to forge the way into the kingdom of brass and steam. When he reached the inside of the city and began his scouting, he found himself awed by the mechanical splendour of it all – and it made him sloppy.

He was soon captured by Zistorite guards and brought before *Delgod Goldgrip*. It seemed that the Machine Lord had a strange curiosity to the ducks as a species and he did not simply want *Nerrill* destroyed. Instead he sat down with the furious mallard and began to seduce him. Promises of a body made of weaponry, ageless and able to thwart Chaos forever, began to make the ivory mallard see that perhaps that Zistorite would not make such a bad ally after all. *Delgod* continued to tempt the duck and before a fortnight had passed – *Nerrill Axefeather* had forgotten why he had come and was ready to meet the Iron God.

No more was ever heard of *Axefeather* but in less than a season later duck scouts that were sneaking into the Clanking City claimed to see someone else – a half-metal duck calling itself an ‘Iron Mallard’ – walking with the sorcerer *Delgod* through the streets and alleys. *Delgod* managed to use the emptiness found in all ducks to turn an *ivory mallard* from his quest to the mechanical god of the Clanking City, making him the first of his kind; a traitor to the Nest of Eight.

Luckily for those ducks still engaged in their efforts sneaking in and out of the Clanking City, the transformation into *Ferron* clouded much of the original duck’s memories; they may continue their scheming without fear of the Iron Mallard turning them in. The half-duck abomination instead was sent to the frontier of God Learner territory, to fulfil the promise that *Delgod* made to him. *Ferron* marches up and down the front of the war zone to scour the God Learners’ path of any Chaos it may encounter.

Of course, anything else that the Middle Sea Empire chooses as its enemy will soon be part of *Ferron*’s relentless hunt.

The creature itself is built for war. With augmented strength, hardened flesh and mechamagic weaponry packed into several implants throughout its body, the Iron Mallard is as deadly an adversary as 10 armoured Malkioni crusaders. Ducks all over the world have heard frightening stories about this traitor to their ways and many roaming duck warriors seek it out to end what they believe must be a hopeless and painful existence. None have ever returned to their homes to speak of.

*Delgod* keeps a close eye on the activities of the Iron Mallard, occasionally recalling him to the Clanking City for ‘guidance’ but something else keeps the sorcerer interested in the inner workings of the half-duck creature. The God Learners have yet to meddle in the cursed myths of the ducks; perhaps it is this fresh ground that has *Delgod* so concerned. Or perhaps he knows something about them that even they are as yet unaware of?

#### **Roleplaying with Ferron the Iron Mallard**

*Ferron* is a killing machine that holds so little of his original self in his mind and soul, having been fully reprogrammed by *Delgod*’s machine-sorcery and now is little more than a tool of the Zistorite war engine. He is fully capable of sentient thought and decision-making but pure God Learner logic rules where he once let emotions guide him.

The Iron Mallard is a unique roleplaying opportunity for duck characters, particularly Stormbills and ivory mallards. He is a traitor to the ongoing battle against the Faceless Enemy but not one that has gone over to it. If a duck goes to Chaos it is easy enough to write it off as lost and killed as any other minion would but *Ferron* still shows the desire to destroy Chaos whenever it can. It is more machine than duck but it still bears the eyes – windows of the soul – of its original self; a lot can be portrayed in those eyes.

Games Masters could involve entire quests around duck Player Characters trying to remind *Ferron* who he really is (or was), perhaps trying to vilify the Zistorites that turned him into the creature he has become. The turning of the Iron Mallard against the God Learners

could be a tremendous plot device. Whether or not Ferron can be ‘un-programmed’ is arguable, as the mechamagic that transformed him is very strong but it could be a grand adventure figuring that out.



**Qhuang Thrice-Tongued**  
Enlightened Wyrmbill, Wyrms’ Claw of Guiching

*The strangely lithe figure before you is wrapped in elegant crimson satin robes; 13 panels of woven material, each piece embroidered with a different symbol of draconic mystery. His bill is not smooth like other ducks, scales have appeared at its base and a greenish tint has leached across it. His emerald-crowned head is heavily oiled flat, along with the rest of his feathers wherever visible. A slender dagger of jade sits tucked into a silken sash and his eerily reptilian eyes peer out from under his wide-brimmed hat, seeming to watch you for sudden movements or threats.*

The most prestigious Wyrmbill in all of Kralorela, Qhuang has managed to create quite an empire for

himself in Green Contemplation. Volunteering to serve as a voice for the EWF in Kralorela in order to achieve his first rank as a Wyrmspeaker, Qhuang has since added several hundred ducks and Hsunchen to the ranks. He has a witty way with words unlike most of his kind and has used it to great success for himself and the Empire.

Besides being the chief recruiter for Kralori Wyrmbills and other ‘low’ races (enlo, Hsunchen and so on), Qhuang has also created a sizeable duckweed business for himself. Mixing expertly grown duckweeds from his own plantation paddies with the powerful hallucinatory drugs used by some Kralori monastic cults, he has created a powerfully addictive drug that he distributes to the masses. Calling this mixture ‘dreamsmoke’, it is supposed to show the user possible futures and make them feel confident about their decisions. Some question if it is actually this drug that has brought so many recruits to the EWF, *not* his duck social skills.

Using the veritable fortune that Qhuang has amassed, he made generous donations to the ShangHsa’s court and eventually bought himself a sizeable palatial estate in the outskirts of the City of Palaces. He wants for nothing and has dozens of Wyrmbill devotees and servants to wait on him hand and foot. Qhuang spends most of his time in his study, reading mystic scrolls and practicing his growing Draconic Illuminations. He can be found occasionally walking the gardens of the estate, plucking his favourite flowers as snacks, on his eventual way out to the duckweed paddies to check upon his workers.

Although Qhuang is not a powerful person in the greater scheme of the Empire of Wyrms’ Friends, he is a symbol to many ducks that see what he has created for himself. So many ducks are forced to live in squalor and steal their livings from the Big People, they cannot help but wonder if becoming a Wyrmbill would do the same for them as it has the Thrice-Tongued?

Still only a duck to the rest of the world, Qhuang lives in a sort of delusional state of disbelief, denying that his neighbours despise and hate living next to an ‘uppity duck’. He tells himself the sabotage his paddies sometime suffer or the vandalism his estate is plagued with are God Learner attacks instead of what is actually taking place – his fellow land owners in

Guiching trying to scare him out. He simply repairs the damage and uses his collection of runic spells to keep his crops flourishing, sending messengers back to Tarkala Wyrmsdottr about the increasing aggressions toward his 'position' – who promptly ignores them as the prattling of a drug-addled duck who somehow fooled her brethren into learning the Tongue.

### **Roleplaying with Qhuang Thrice-Tongued**

Qhuang has a highly over-inflated sense of self, edging on delusions of grandeur. He tends to flaunt his fortune and his extravagance, spending money like it was worthless to him and freely inviting outsiders to come and stay in his palace-estate. Although it will be small to any Big People, it fits the smaller races perfectly and was built with a duck's body in mind. Qhuang is also a firm believer in mystic spiritualism and a somewhat karmic cycle, which is why he tends to be so generous and free-giving – he knows that one day his good deeds will return to him in kind.

Thrice-Tongued is very talkative, especially when speaking of his 'lives-long eternal connection' to the Great Dragon. He knows how difficult it is for ducks to be accepted anywhere and considers what he has accomplished to be a major feat for all of duck-kind. Although he is fast to evangelise upon the Draconic Illuminations, he does not deny the existence or the importance of the duck ancestor-gods – especially when discussing things with fellow ducks. It his belief that Yelm's Sentence was actually a *blessing*. If it was not for the dire position that the Sky Gods placed them in, the True Durulz would have never fallen to the Inner World and the Great Dragon would never have managed to acquire their aid in the form of the Wyrmbills. This view, of course, does very little to enamour most ducks to the EWF's cause.

When dealing with Qhuang, adventurers must always remember that he might look like an important noble or a powerful member of the EWF in comparison to other Wyrmbills – but he is still just a duck. The Great Dragon could not return him wings, nor could it erase generations of hate and ridicule. Qhuang has simply managed to lie to himself of his importance for long enough that he sometimes can make others believe he is something *more*.

### **Opterius the Gilded One**

High Flamingo Lord of the Phoenixs

*Standing tall and impressive on his throne of whale ivory and rival chieftain skulls, the high flamingo lord is the image of keet rulership. His brilliant pink feathers are somewhat muted compared to his polished gold breastplate and flowing cloak of silver scales and his eyes shine like obsidian. His downward curving bill is decorated with bright enamels, patterns painted from ancient carvings to make him look as much like the Grandfather as possible. It works to a certain degree, of course, because when his musical voice commands...the Phoenixs obey.*

Never seen without the magical keetspear Vengiorr, which he claims to have 'inherited' from the former high flamingo lord, Opterius the Gilded One is the personification of nobility and control. From his



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palace of sandalwood and ivory on the western shore of Haragala, he rules all of the Phoenic tribes as if they were truly some form of empire or kingdom. For the most part, they choose to agree. Then again, those tribes that would choose to stand against the Gilded One would soon find their tribe's island or territory overrun with his warbird shock troops.

Opterius has a standing agreement with the Malkioni of Chartam; he gives them some of the riches he accumulates from his inter-tribal wars and they do not try to overtake his keet palace for *all* of the ancient treasures inside. He commands nearly three-thousand flamingos, peacocks and auks in the surrounding islands; all of which wear bright pink crests of feathers on their spears and shields as heraldry. Those who ally themselves with the high flamingo lord must declare it, lest they soon become the target of his conquering.

Roughly half of the keet tribes throughout the keetslands pay any attention at all to the claims of Opterius' royal destiny, most of which ignore it as little more than a tyrant's rise. The rest do their best to defend their territories from all threats, whether or not it comes from a single source or not. Opterius himself views these 'ignorant masses' as unfortunate casualties to his gods-given destiny and that Grandfather Flamingo would inform those who he deemed worthy of serving in the final Empire before Opterius would come for them. If they were worthy they would accept his divine ascension; if they do not, they simply will be crushed underfoot by his growing empire.

Having no patience for Savage keets at all, Opterius has created a special faction within his warbirds called the Auden Sahk (Gilded Guard) made entirely of devoted flamingos who have sworn their blades to the extinguishment of all Savage keets. They roam the keetslands looking for swordbills, penguins and sorns and cutting them down without so much as hearing a single plea. They are ruthless killers that live for one goal – clearing the path for Lord Opterius' rise.

#### **Roleplaying with Opterius the Gilded One**

Opterius is made of tyranny and nobility, forcing others to bend their knee and kiss the head of his mystical spear. He is nothing if not regal and socially unblemished, Whether it is simply his nature or some

magical gift, Opterius radiates power and royalty unlike any other Phoenic known to the Inner World. He knows the power and sway he has over others and it fuels his lust for servitude. The more someone seems to desire to be ruled, the more the high flamingo lord desires to rule them.

He is also aware that his royal destiny is only ordained to *keets*. When dealing with Vithelans or God Learner sailors he keeps his royal persona but he tries to make sure that everyone knows who he is and who they are dealing with. Other noblekeets might be willing to set aside their nobility for the Big People but not Opterius. He does not mind sharing the centre stage, as long as he is still in it.

He maintains the largest temple to Grandfather Flamingo in recorded history, something that shows the world his riches and wealth. Because of this, many of the mercenary groups on Haragala have connections to Opterius' rule, performing favours for the high flamingo lord on the mainland for payments of gold and silver. Other adventurers and travellers could just as easily petition him for work; he is likely to hire any outsider who would come to him – their asking only validates his position as a figure of royalty and leadership.

#### **Captain Jarle Redbeak**

Penguin Keet Pirate

*Short and thickly muscled, this savage warrior might only be half as tall as a man but he looks as though he could tear a dozen of them limb from limb if given the chance. His white and black body lies in stark contrast to the bright green wooden shield he wears on his arm or the red splotches of warpaint he commonly places on his face and beak. When he moves he moves with animal grace and with a deliberate function that takes away any doubt that his savage nature denotes a lack of wisdom. His eyes dart from the possible places attacks could come from, but his calloused hand is never far from his axe.*

Captain of the pirate keetship *Hullrender*, Captain Jarle Redbeak is one of the most feared and hated sailors found on the Neliomi Sea, his red-painted sails having been spotted off the coasts of Fronela and Seshnela

and as far south as Justelan waters. Always hell-bent on making others pay for his own deficiencies, Jarle has never thought about anyone's interests in his life but his own. He just only ever wanted to make others feel powerless – like how it feels to be a keet in a world of Big People. When his enemies were all alone on the open sea, nowhere to run and no one to turn to, he relished how *small* they felt amidst the expanse of the ocean.

The *Hullrender* is home to a crew of mostly penguin and seagull keet pirates, a few Fronelan ne'er-dowells, and his ship's seer – a waertagi Oceanist named Turoig that swam up to the boat nearly a decade ago. It was Turoig that first told Jarle about how the Middle Sea Empire had betrayed his people and how they had the power to alter and butcher other peoples' myths. So incensed with rage over the audacity of the God Learners' ambitious schemes he became, the penguin keet immediately told his crew that they had two choices: stay on and sink God Learner ships; or jump off and swim back to shore. One ship's keet chose the latter and to prove his conviction to the task – Jarle split his skull as soon as his back was turned.

Ever since Turoig opened his eyes, Jarle's *Hullrender* has made its living targeting God Learner sea vessels, boarding them to steal anything not bolted down (and some things that are) and sending the ships to Magasta's Pool. He uses the magical loot and mechamagic artefacts that he finds on the ships to further arm his crew and ship, selling what he cannot use to treacherous pelican merchants back in the keetslands. Oddly enough, Jarle does not keep any of these things for himself. He prefers his bronze axe, sharp beak and iron-capped spurs to anything that some God Learner would forge and he would never taint himself with mechamagic when his own body is what he envisions to be perfection already.

Jarle keeps good relations with several waertagi corsair ships that he occasionally joins on raids and shoreline

attacks, mostly arranged through Turoig's Oceanist magics. His ship and crew are well armed and well trained, using magic and raw skill to stealthily sail up to the side of a ship and waylay it. Some pirates use archery and spellcraft to deal with their enemies from afar, but Jarle believes in the purity and surety of close quarters combat above all else. When Jarle Redbeak and his crew board your ship, he leaves victorious or he does not leave at all.

### **Roleplaying with Jarle Redbeak**

The captain is a seasoned veteran of seaside combat and a thickly Savage keet. He lives for the thrill of the kill and the rush of chasing down the supposedly 'superior' Middle Sea Empire ships, often bragging in portside taverns and drinking halls throughout Fronela's coast. He knows that he is already a tremendously wanted criminal and anyone who knows why also knows *better* than to dare cross the fiery little penguin.

Although he is half as tall as a normal human, he is made of fury and stubbornness. He is very quick to draw his axe and quicker even to sink in it his enemies. Jarle believes that most Big People are against him unless Turvoig stays his hand and dealing with the penguin is difficult at best unless the waertagi is around. This is why the Oceanist rarely lets the captain go ashore without him and never for longer than a few days.

Jarle does not like working with anyone but his crew but obviously has to when dealing with something deeper into the mainland. He will generally send a seagull or even Turoig to a port city with a few sacks of God Learner loot to hire someone to do what must be done but they never get to know exactly *who* is hiring them for fear of agents of the Middle Sea Empire catching wind of when they are to return and possibly trap the *Hullrender* just off shore. Jarle has been a successful pirate a long time and he is not soon going to make amateur mistakes that would end his oceanic vendetta against the Middle Sea Empire.

The Less Ignorable

The less ignorable



# THE DUCKS SPEAK

This chapter gives sample 'interviews' with several different members of the Durulz species from across Glorantha, asking them to describe themselves, their people and what makes them good adventurers in the Second Age.

## Duckland Townsduck

*Who am I?*

Who am I? What a seriously ignorant question to ask a duck. Well...my name is Waldrow Nestingforge. I'm the chief craftsduck in my ducktown.

*Where do I come from?*

I hatched in a tiny ducktown called Whiteshores in Maniria but after I proved I could walk on my own two feet I headed northwest into Ralios. I heard it was a better place to ply my family trade, smithing. Now I have my own little corner of the duck blocks of Drom. It is not much to speak of but I have an anvil and a roof over my head.

*What have I done?*

To deserve this life? I ask myself that every day, friend. Seriously though, I have lived most of my life doing what my fellow ducktown relatives have needed me to do. Crossbow bolt heads? I pour them. Dagger blades? Yeah, those too. I have made more than a few breastplates in my time and one halberd head for that ivory that came through last year. I have gone on a few adventures with a few of the ducklings I swam around with when I was young but now I think I serve the community better by arming those better suited to do the questing.

*What is my future?*

If I were a betting duck, I would say either 'lunch for an Uz' or 'trampled under the God Learner war machine'. If I am lucky enough not to get squashed, eaten, skewered or blasted by some dragon's spell, I'll probably find a good hen down in Maniria that will give me a few ducklings. I need to make sure that the Nestingforge family business does not fade away. Who knows, maybe I will try my hand at the whole adventure thing again someday...but I have never been very skilled with a sword; just a hammer and tongs.

*What do I believe?*

There is no easy answer to that. I believe that the Big People will never give us a break and that Grandmother Duck should have never said no to old Shinyhead. We were dealt a pretty bad hand and we have had to deal with it as best we could. I hope that there is some light at the end of our tunnel, us ducks, but I am pretty sure that things are going to get a lot worse long before they ever get better.

*Why do I adventure?*

Well...I...do not often adventure at all; I am just not suited for it. When I have picked up the old sword and shield it is normally because one of my ducktown friends has asked me to join him for a jaunt or because business has been too bad to say no to a quick loot run into the Big People blocks. Perhaps the Hurtler's pull on my feet? I am not all that sure why I have adventured when I have but I know I do not do it often.

*What secret can I share?*

The world surrounding us is filled with abundant enemies and precious few friends, most of which are only really just allies of convenience for them anyway. If you make a true friend in this short and difficult life we lead, stick by them through it all. Suffering through all the times that they do not want you around for the few precious ones that they do is worth every painful moment.

Trust me.

## Praxian Stormbill

*Who am I?*

I am Tanner Foecleft, ivory mallard and stormbill warrior. Serving the great Chaos Killer as one of his descendants and worshippers, I am the embodiment of our battle against the Faceless Enemy.

*Where do I come from?*

I do not know exactly where I was hatched, born to a mother who knew her duty to give me to the cult when my feathers came in. She saw my white plumes and grey crown and knew that I belonged to the struggle, not the family. I remember training in the Stormwalks,

...serving much of my life under the Thunderbills from Four Peaks. I am from wherever the battle has ended to wherever the next is to begin.

*What have I done?*

I have taken up arms against the Faceless Enemy, crossing blades with all of Chaos' vileness that I have found lurking in the grasslands of Prax. It is my duty and charge to seek it out and send it back to Hell and that is what I have devoted my entire life to. I have walked with Uroxi, Humakti and even a follower of the Hungry warrior Zorak Zoran. Together we have fought many battles and ended many foes and I would dare say that they did no better than I.

*What is my future?*

I will surely die someday, hopefully with my blade buried in my enemy's gullet or it having bitten off enough of me for it to choke. I seek the glory of battle and the honour of making the world safer for our children in the ages to come. My sword will taste more blood before my life is out; that I can promise you.

*What do I believe?*

We may not be the awakeners of a Great Dragon or the rulers of a sea empire but we have a role in this world. We are the downtrodden and the whipped, the forgotten and the stricken; and we were placed here for a reason. The bottom is where the evil dwells and lives, where it can hide. The Big People look down from on high and miss the dark places at the bottom where evil truly lurks. We were put here so we could hunt the Faceless Enemy in its home and fight it wherever we find it. We ducks were cursed from the Sky but it was not without its purpose.

*Why do I adventure?*

Adventure? I do not call what I do adventure; I call it duty. Urox and Humakt taught Stormbill about the growing threat of the Faceless Enemy and he in turn taught us. We go into the world to fight our people's enemies and we protect our communities from their threat. We try to find likeminded folk for our battles, Big People or not and we go to the places where the Enemy dwells and we destroy it. There is no other reason for adventure; not for us.

*What secret can I share?*

Dragons and God Learners can tear the world apart for all it will matter if the Faceless Enemy is not fought.

We may only be ducks but at least we are doing our part in stopping Chaos from growing too strong. Everyone else is too occupied in the war between the empires, so it is up to us to try and save the next generation from a stronger foe than what anyone has faced. Chaos is the real enemy, not ambitious Big People.

## Initiate Wyrmbill

*Who am I?*

I am nothing in the shadow of the greatness that is the coming Dragon. You may choose to call me Derridaea Choice-Unto-Forever. I am a Believer.

*Where do I come from?*

Originally I am from the ducktowns of Peloria, moving with my mother from place to place through her calling but now I live in Contemplative Nest with my brothers and sisters. On a more cosmic scale I come from the Dragon, live within its graces and will one day go back to it.

*What have I done?*

In my first life, the one before I learned my true calling, I was nothing more than a labouring duck in a world of Big People that hated him. Once I heard the calling of the Wyrmspeakers I became a talon on the outstretched claw of the Great Dragon, doing whatever is needed of me. Where I was once nothing, I am now an *integral* part of everything. I have been asked to deliver goods and escort messages from Wyrmspeakers to the Orlanthi and sometimes even to the dragonewts. Joining the EWF was the best thing to ever happen to me and every duck should be so lucky.

*What is my future?*

If I am lucky I will survive to understand more of the Draconic Illumination and I will become more than I am already. I will serve my fellow Wyrmspeakers to the best that my duck body can allow and eventually I will be chosen to become part of the Great Dragon. Now that I am on the path to my destiny, the future is certain for me. I only weep for the rest of my kind; they are too stubborn to recognise the Hell they are resigned to if they do not choose the right path?

*What do I believe?*

I am part of a much larger plan. I may have hatched inside of a duck mother, raised in the ducktowns of my people but I know that I have always been special.

I believe that the world is destined to be the feeding grounds for Dragons and that I and all Wyrmbills have always been part of that plan. Grandmother Duck might not have ever planned on her children becoming dragons but I think she would be proud of us becoming so much more than she ever imagined.

*Why do I adventure?*

I go where my superiors require me to go. If that means I must don my armour and travel with the Thunderers as their scout or seek out the ducktowns and garner support amongst my former people, then I will do so. If it means I must tolerate ridicule and ire at the hands of the Big People in order to make sure that the EWF succeeds, so be it.

*What secret can I share?*

Being a duck is a miserable and horrid existence for us; do not let the dry laughs and dark humour fool you. It is lonely at the bottom and misery does not always love company. Joining the Wyrmspeakers is the only way to leave it behind and become something... something *more*.

## Ralios Highwayduck

*Who am I?*

That, my friend, is a dangerous question for you to ask of me. If it were not for this mask, the dimmed lanterns and the twenty paces between us, I would not be here at all. So, if you must ask, I will tell you only this. I am Shadow. I am Moonlight. I am your empty purse and your cold body bleeding out in the ditch. Is that a good enough answer for you, big man?

*Where do I come from?*

Again with the hard questions. Ducks like me pop up from place to place wherever ducktowns suffer under the exploits of Big People. I come from the depths of sadness and the heart of tyranny, from a ducktown a few hours away from a large human city. When we had suffered and lost enough, the *real* me appeared and began to empty their pockets...and their veins.

*What have I done?*

Done? Done? I have done nothing that has not been done to my kind by yours for thousands of years. I practiced in a Ralios slaughterhouse, knee deep in pig filth and entrails for over a year, learning how to wield

a sharp knife. I have tried to make it painless for those I take from, even urging them not to struggle when my mates and I are fleecing them. Sometimes they listen. To answer your question, I have stolen and extorted thousands of clacks and bolgs from the people of Ralios over my seven year career, giving most of it to the ducktowns of the area and keeping enough to bribe who I need to and pay for what I cannot steal. *That* is what I have done.

*What is my future?*

I hope to live a long and happy life in a homestead somewhere, living off the coin and goods that I have squirreled away far from where the Big People can reach me – if that is even possible in this forsaken life. I suppose I will just keep on stealing, looting and ambushing my enemies until I get too hurt one of these nights to go on...or worse.

*What do I believe?*

I believe that Canarda should have begged Yelm for a little mercy, because this life is not much to speak of because of her tenacity and stubbornness. She just could not leave well enough alone and not only did we lose our wings but the world hates us. Because the Egg Mother just had to get tough with the Sky Gods, we get dealt a life of misery and torment.

I believe we got the raw end of the deal to be sure.

*Why do I adventure?*

Some might call it adventure but I call it living. Face it. Being a duck means that the world is out to get you from the time you hatch in your mother's womb. If it is not the Hungry Folk, it is the Big People. If it is not the Big People, it is the Faceless Enemy...if the 'bills can be believed, anyway. We are forced to do whatever we can to survive in a world bigger and tougher than the best of us. If we have to push ourselves past the boundaries of law and order to make sure we are not swallowed up or bled out, then we do it.

*What secret can I share?*

Just because we are small and our walk a bit clumsy, never discount what we can do with a sharp blade or a well-made crossbow. I mean it. I relish the look on Big People faces when they are bleeding out from my knife. Okay, that is my secret; you all make the stupidest faces when you die on a duck's blade.

## Jrustelan Seeker

### *Who am I?*

Please, call me Nygella Longswimmer. Although I am not Malkioni, nor am I God Learner, I understand the trappings of both and wish them the best of luck.

### *Where do I come from?*

I live in the Rook for most of the year, just outside Piskosol. I live in the ducktown but I actually only stay there for the Earth, Dark and Storm seasons each year. The rest of the time I wander Jrustela in the cities and compounds of the God Learners. So I suppose you could say that I come from the Middle Sea Empire, even if most of them never even notice that I am around.

### *What have I done?*

As a duck, I know all too well the trappings of myth and the desire to make more of what we have been dealt. It is really all the God Learners want to do, take a look at the myths of the world and see how they can make the best of them, right? I have helped them where I could, told them what they need to hear. I have never told them anything that might bring the Yelmites down on top of us but when they wanted to know the differences between the Deathdrake and Stormbill, I happily explained it to them. After all, we *are* seeking a betterment to our people, are we not?

### *What is my future?*

This I cannot say. A great deal of what happens to me will depend on what happens to the Middle Sea Empire. If the EWF wins and heads toward Jrustela in force, be sure our ducktowns will be served up as kindling for their fires. I cannot say that it would be much better for my cousins on the mainland if the God Learners push that way either but I know that I would much rather be ruled by logically-thinking problem-solvers than a bunch of zealous dragon-fanatics.

### *What do I believe?*

Grandmother Duck said it best when she told us, 'Survive. Above all else, survive.' I believe that we must try to find every tool we can in this difficult and dark place we have been hatched into that might help us fix what was broken. All of our past generations have claimed that nothing can change our curse but I think that has everything to do with the right tools not being available...yet. The God Learners are our best chance, I wager, to repair the rift between us and Shinyhead. They have only recently come to their height of power; I think that is why we have not found our way back to the Sky. We *needed* them to help us.

### *Why do I adventure?*

I travel and work within the territories of the Middle Sea Empire in order to hopefully find a way to undo our curse. I have to find something or someone that knows more about this than we do. Even if I cannot find the way for myself, perhaps the next generation will be hatched into a better world? The generation after that? My journeys and my questing might not amount to anything but I have to try. If I did not even do that much, I would cry myself to sleep every night.

There has to be a way to make things better; this world cannot hate us forever...can it?

### *What secret can I share?*

I think that the God Learners know more than they are letting on about their war. I have heard things here and there when they are not aware of me listening in and I think that they are capable of things we have never even dreamt of. If we try to help them though, will they reject us or accept our aid?

## Regal Noblekeet

### *Who am I?*

Orgenick of Rockcliff Sands, herald to the chieftain and father to half the warbirds on our isle. I am a red-

tailed heron, a keet of honourable and dignified birth destined to one day lead this tribe.

*Where do I come from?*

My tribe of herons live on Rockcliff Sands island, one of the larger keet islands outside of Haragala itself. It is a paradise of freshwater pools and cool, spring-fed streams that all lead out to the sea. We share the island with a small tribe of Vithelan warrior-women but they do not hunt in our grounds just as we do not hunt in theirs. For 100 years we have had this arrangement and I hope to carry it forward for all of mine.

*What have I done?*

I grew up from a keetling knowing that I would one day rule this tribe; that I would grace the chieftain's nest and be responsible for everyone in my tribe. I learned how to fight for my position against other nesting lines and how to use my spear to keep my chicks and hens safe. My magic is strong, although admittedly not as strong as the redfeathers. I have been called to court on three occasions to speak against my fellow keet, those who have transgressed against the tribe and I cannot count the number of times that I have crossed blades or beaks with the Savages from Blackshore island. They have always been our greatest rivals, and they will not stop until either they are extinct or they take our beautiful little island from us.

*What is my future?*

I will one day rule this tribe. I hope to be the chieftain that finally eliminates the Blackshore auks or perhaps I will manage to get those Vithelan jungle queens to swear allegiance to us. I would like to give eggs to all my hens at least once more before I have to wear the mantle of quills. I should practice my Heronic spells more, my connection to the great Prince but my duties rarely give me time to do so. When the tribe is mine, I will not lose my mantle because Prince Heron deems me unworthy.

*What do I believe?*

Grandfather Flamingo is a fool and Prince Heron should have killed him and his Phoenics off long before the old man could have made us Sacrifice our wings. Our dumb cousins, without voice or reason, flying through the air in unknowing mockery, are a reminder that the Sacrifice was Flamingo's idea. When he came to Prince Heron with his foolish idea to save a people that have never once thanked us for it, Heron should have driven his bill into the Grandfather's heart. Because he did not, because he chose to help the Vithelans, we are now grounded. May every Phoenic suffer and die for what Flamingo did to us. That is what I believe.

I have met the diminutive little curs that share our lineage or so the seers say, these 'ducks' from the mainland. If we have a common ancestor, I am glad that it must be Grandfather Flamingo...as it must kill him daily to know his line is shared by such pathetic little beasts.

*Why do I adventure?*

I do not exactly 'adventure', as you say. I conquer when I can, move when the tribe needs me to and sink my spear into my people's enemies. I travel to the other islands, often as a friend to an allied tribe or the Vithelan jungle-queens but never simply because I seek excitement or treasure. Gold and silver is far less important in the wild keetslands, so we fight for survival and our right to our territory.

*What secret can I share?*

Every keet tribe is held together through a bond of a common nest at the centre of our tribal territory, the place where the chieftain holds his court and communes with the ancestors. Any keet found shedding blood near the common nest will soon know the chieftain's wrath. It is our one rule that crosses all tribal boundaries, even the Savages.

## Savage Tribeskeet

### *Who am I?*

Takkikko Hundred-Kills, formerly Takkikko Fifty-Kills. I am the oldest Bloodbeak of the Rivercrest swordbills and I hope to one day be known as Takkikko Thousand-Kills.

### *Where do I come from?*

Rivercrest is a small tribesland on the southern edge of the Big People's island, a place where most keets wear lead and bronze as armour instead of wood and bone. They share their hunting grounds with other tribes, making deals and promises that they can only keep if they forget their instincts. I have not. I remember. I live where the tribe lives and any keet that crosses our line of skulls and feathers will know my beak's sharp point.

### *What have I done?*

I am Bloodbeak. I hunt. I protect. I kill. More than all else, I kill. My beak is strong and sharp, long and deadly and it has tasted more flesh than the claws of the jungle cat. I wrap my body in bones and leather and I rub featherblend into my orange places to cover my hunts. I fear nothing on this island or any other; not keet, nor man, nor dragon.

### *What is my future?*

I live to protect the tribe and bring back meat for our nests. I will do so until some beast or keet finally

overcomes me or until age takes my sharpness away from me. Ours is a pure and simple life.

### *What do I believe?*

I do not believe. I know what I have been taught and what the shamans share with us at the banquets. Heron gave us birth, gave us our beaks and Sunbill fought for our right to wield them. Flamingo's laws would have us serve and be bound...so I hate him and his children. He has already cost us our wings, may we never let them forget.

### *Why do I adventure?*

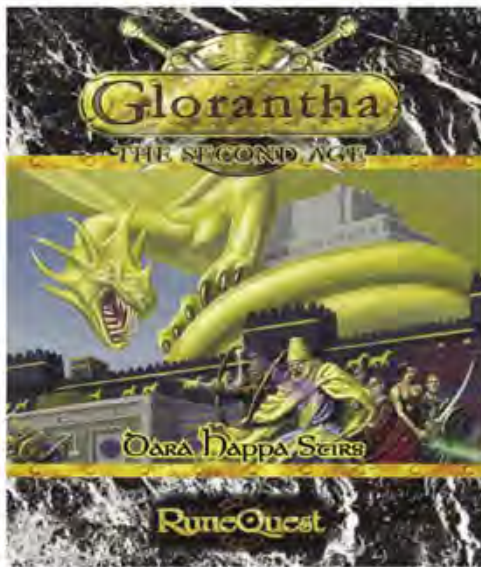
What a strange word for survival you have...*adventure*. Glory, flesh and more skulls for my trophy field. That is why. The taste of hot blood in my beak and the rush of the spirits in my heart when I have added another flayed one to the border totems. That is why. I know nothing else. I am swordbill; I am adventure.

### *What secret can I share?*

I bear no secrets. Lies are the province of Phoenics and men. I will tell you what I feel to and nothing more or less. This is the way of true keets, those who have not forgotten what we are and have donned the Vithelan masks and armour. Let *them* tell you their secrets and while they pluck their feathers and wash their skin to look pink and soft like men...it will make them that much easier to roast over our nesting fires.

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Dara Happa Stiris is a Gloranthan sourcebook and campaign setting of epic proportions. Within its pages you will find detailed information concerning Yelm's empire: history, myths, and political structures for the empire in Glorantha's Second Age. You will also find new cults, new magic, expanded character creation for Dara Happa adventurers, a full campaign spanning 10 years of Dara Happa history and numerous story seeds for additional action and intrigue.

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# Glorantha

## THE SECOND AGE

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To use this supplement, a Games Master will require *RuneQuest*,  
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