

The NERO® Mystic Wood Elven Race Package©

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Table of Contents

MYSTIC WOOD ELVES - AN INTRODUCTION	3
OUT OF GAME RACIAL REQUIREMENTS	4
Makeup	4
Build Skills & Requirements	4
Disallowed Skills	5
GUIDELINES FOR ROLEPLAYING A MYSTIC WOOD ELF	5
Personality Traits	5
Garb	6
Belief Systems	6
Male/Female Interactions	6
Crafts	6
Magic	7
Political Involvement	7
THE MYSTIC WOOD ELF LANGUAGE	7
GENERAL FACTS ABOUT THE MYSTIC WOOD ELF	7
Lifespan	7
Primary Racial Traits	7
Strengths	7
Weaknesses	7
 MYSTIC WOOD/RAVENHOLT CULTURAL PACKAGE	 8
LIFE, CUSTOMS, AND TRADITIONS	8
Childhood	8
Coming of Age	8
Names and Naming Traditions	9
SOCIETY AND ITS ORGANIZATION IN THE MYSTIC WOOD	10
Lands	10
Community Structures	10
Interracial Relations	12
RAVENHOLT MYSTIC WOOD ELVEN POLITICAL STRUCTURE	12
<i>Speakers</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>Elders</i>	<i>14</i>
DEATH & THE ROAD	15
MILITARY STRUCTURE	17
SCHOOLS AND GUILDS	17
MYTHS OF CREATION	17
Appendix A: Ravenholt Mystic Wood Elven Holidays and festivals	18
Appendix B: Ravenholt Mystic Wood Elven Terminology	18

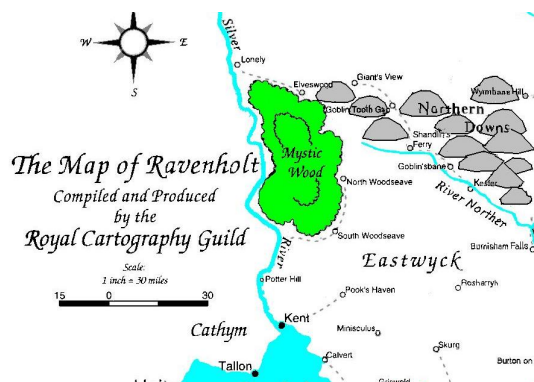
MYSTIC WOOD ELVES - AN INTRODUCTION

In the center of the Northern Marches, in northern Ravenholt, near the border of Volta, is a peculiar place, known to many as simply “the Mystic Wood.” The Woods abound with spirits and Magicks, and are peopled with a race of beings called the Mystic Wood Elves. Not deemed “true” elves by others, they are an unusual race which bears some common attributes with Wild and Quentari elves (as evidenced by the pointed ears and long lives), but others uniquely their own, as seen in the small pair of horns that sprout from high upon their foreheads. Mystic Wood Elves do, however, consider themselves to be “real Elves.”

These beings are renowned artisans and craftsmen, and can often be found outside the Wood, peddling their wares. As a race, these vital and energetic peoples are known to travel extensively, having an insatiable curiosity and mighty wanderlust, and thus are often found in remote regions of Tyrra where few other races have traveled.

Mystic Wood Elves tend to hate (or at the very least find distasteful) all forms of enslavement, from slavery and kidnapping to magical charms and alchemical controls. For example, a Mystic Wood Elf that finds a Dominate elixir will probably destroy it. They may also attempt to break charms they find on others.

The Wood itself consists primarily of white pine and sugar maple trees, while there are also large numbers juniper, comfrey, and mullein. Furthermore, the Wood is almost encircled by a ring of vast, ancient trees that are taller than nearly any others found in Tyrra. Taking up more than an eighth of the Barony of Ravenholt known as Eastwyck, the region is bounded by the Silver River and Volta to the west, and the Barbarian Northlands above Ravenholt



Although many Mystic Wood Elves can clearly trace their lineage to that of the Mystic Wood, and it is a favored travel destination at some point in most Mystics' lives, there are numerous other communities throughout Tyrra which appear to have sprung up from other sources. It is worth researching local history in the lands to which you travel to find out more about the region's cultural and historical differences.

OUT OF GAME RACIAL REQUIREMENTS

Makeup

Mystic Wood Elves must wear pointed ears and a pair of small satyr-style horns as their racial identifier. Recommended colors are black, white ivory, and brown.

Latex horns are softer, and hurt less when you get clobbered in them. Horns that tie on, as well as spirit gum or latex on, are less likely to annoy you by falling off due to sweating or bumping them. Keeping spare sets of horns and ears in your gear is helpful, just in case of loss or damage.



Kestrel - Photo by Scott Erb, NERO Massachusetts

Build Skills & Requirements

Mystic Wood Elves may buy *Resist Charm* and *Charm Break* at a cost of 3 build points and 2 build points per use respectively. For each time the skill *Resist Charm* is purchased, the Mystic Wood Elves may use this ability as a standard Elven *Resist Charm* and for each time the ability *Charm Break* is purchased, the Mystic Wood Elves may use it as a special ability to dispel a charm effect, defined as per the rulebook.

PLEASE NOTE: *Charm Break* takes one full minute and must not be interrupted by other activities, does not require eye contact, and is often role-played as causing the Mystic some pain (i.e., it is a tiring and draining skill). The effects included are *Charm*, *Shun*, *Dominate*, *Fear*, and *Vampire Charm*. It does not include *Love*, *Love Potion #9*, or *Enslavement*. You must be able to touch the charmed person, have his or her attention, and spend one full minute of roleplaying conversation with the charmed victim. If you perform any other skills during this minute, if the charmed person is attacked, or if the conversation is halted, then the *Break Charm* is unsuccessful. Attempting this action on a character that had not been charmed will still result in the ability being used for the day. This ability does not affect (nor is it affected by) any *Spell Defenses*. You cannot use this skill upon yourself.

Mystic Wood Elves must buy one (1) craft-type skill per level. Applicable skills are Healing skills, Scholarly skills, Alchemy, Trades (Weapon, Armor, Scroll, Trap, Potion, and Scroll making) and Craft skills. (Spell slots and combat skills do not fulfill this requirement.) Mystic Wood Elves may buy Craftsman-Other skills at 2 build points, rather than 3. Some examples of commonly purchased Craftsman skills are: Spy, cook, bard, herbalist, tracker, dancer, torturer, storyteller, or scribe.

Disallowed Skills

Mystic Wood Elves are not considered full blooded Elves by NERO standards, but rather some sort of hybrid, and therefore not bound by the Elven disadvantages for build skills (i.e. they do not lose 1 body and can use two handed weapons). They are, however, given the disadvantage of being required to buy 1 craft/trade skill at each level.

GUIDELINES FOR ROLEPLAYING A MYSTIC WOOD ELF

Please note that these are **not** requirements for playing a Mystic Wood Elf, but rather, guidelines from the originators of the race as to how they were conceived. As with all NERO™ races, you should make your character your own.

Personality Traits

Attitude! Mystic Wood Elves don't necessarily think that they are better than everyone else, they just realize that they are in on the cosmic joke. This doesn't mean you can't take Anything seriously, but long Elven life spans grant a touch of perspective...

When journeying, remember that getting there is ALL the fun! Don't forget to stop and smell the roses! There is something new to learn just around every corner. Try not to miss these little opportunities!

Free will is a big deal for Mystic Wood Elves; both your own and that of others. This means that you will strongly avoid and disapprove of actions such as:

- a) Warding someone into their cabin "For their own good."
- b) Any form of slavery
- c) Any form of kidnapping
- d) Alchemical or magical coercion

Be sure to use your Craftsman skills(s) in game; you are what you do. Roleplay! Roleplay! Roleplay!

Read your culture package, know your basic background, and have a strong character concept. (Your character's multiple names? Your clan? Were you raised in the Wood or elsewhere? Who are your parents? Your siblings? What are your skills and goals and how did you come to choose the path you're on, especial as pertains to chosen craftsman skills? Are you already an adult or not?)

Garb

The general rule of thumb for appropriate Mystic Wood Elven garb is that it be clean, comfortable, and amusing. Clean, because it should start that way, because it isn't likely to stay that way, Comfortable, because you owe it to yourself, and Amusing, because if it isn't, why bother? Many Mystics tend to dress colorfully and with numerous places in which to stash trinkets and gear.

Belief Systems

Honor - General Racial Honor Code

1. Your word is your bond. Promises are kept. Promises extracted under threat, torture, or coercion are not valid promises. It is considered dishonorable to set up a situation where one must knowingly break an oath.
2. Truth is stranger than fiction, and usually less believable. The best lie is partial truth or truth told so as to be unbelievable.
3. Use of Charm affects is indicative of, at the very least, a woeful lack of imagination, and worse, moral and ethical dissolution. Why deny another's free will when reason or trickery can bring them to a course of action that they believe is their own, and is not dispel-able.
4. Clan equals Family. Likewise, Clan Elders are equivalent to parent figures. Of course, you don't have to like all of the members of your clan, but blood is somewhat thicker than water.
5. Vendettas are between 2 parties, the offender and the offended. If uninvolved parties are injured during the course of revenge, appropriate recompense must be made.
6. Never seek revenge immediately. Wait for the proper moment to present itself. Revenge is dish best served cold.
7. Seek to help those who help you. No kindness is too small to be unworthy of reciprocation.
8. Money is less important than favors owed and received. (Barter makes the world go 'round.)
9. All living creatures are worthy of respect until they prove themselves otherwise. Do not seek to strike the first blow, but the last.
10. Anything worth doing is worth doing correctly. Your creations and actions are manifestations yourself, and your skill and dedication as a craftsman. You are what you do.

Male/Female Interactions

Mystic Wood Elves are lively and spirited, and often perceived as having very open and friendly relations, both among themselves and with others. As always, such choices are up to the comfort factor of the players involved.

Crafts

Mystic Wood Elves excel at all craft-related skills.

Magic

Other than a strong aversion to Magicks that prohibit another's freedoms, such as Charm spells, Mystics are no more or less interested in magic than any other race.

Political Involvement

The Mystics of the Mystic Wood are rarely pressed to become involved in kingdom or local politics, unless there is an immediate danger to the Wood or its people.

THE MYSTIC WOOD ELF LANGUAGE

Mystic Wood Elves generally speak Common, although due to their scholarly ways, many have an aptitude for other race's historic languages.

GENERAL FACTS ABOUT THE MYSTIC WOOD ELF**Lifespan**

Mystics do not mature slower than other races; they are simply long lived, sometimes reputedly reaching as advanced an age as six hundred before suffering death from age alone.

Primary Racial Traits

Mystic Wood Elves have pointed ears and a small pair of horns on their foreheads.

Strengths

Mystic Wood Elves are superb crafters and traders, excelling in any production and scholarly arts.

Weaknesses

Mystic Wood Elves may in certain circumstances become angry to the point of berserker fury. Known as a "Blood Rage," this condition has specific triggers for each Mystic, as a roleplay choice by the player. Blood Rage grants no advantages in terms of increased combat ability and, in fact, can hamper performance, as strategy and rational thought are forgotten. Blood Rage may be entered by choice, but takes time, restraint or a state of unconsciousness to leave. Don't over do the Blood-Rage thing, kill-crazy scholars are fun to watch but they aren't conducive to a long lifespan for your character.

MYSTIC WOOD/RAVENHOLT CULTURAL PACKAGE

Out of Game Note: Please be sure to check with your local chapter for suitable regional culture packages. If your chapter has such a package, they should submit it for inclusion in future revisions of this package.

LIFE, CUSTOMS, AND TRADITIONS

Childhood

Mystic Wood Elves have long been thought to be a dying race. While their attempts to breed are fairly continuous and enthusiastic, their birth rate remains somewhat low. It is difficult to gauge at any time, the actual population numbers for this race. Children are a rare and precious thing among Mystic Wood Elves. They are supported in their endeavors by the family, clan and race. Young children are often kept within the safety of the Wood itself. They are fostered within the clan during their parent's travels, as a way to learn more varied skills and gain connections. Children are defended unconditionally as the race's hope for the future, and given all possible room to learn and grow.

Coming of Age

Creativity and diversity are encouraged as tools they will need for that learning, and skills that they will need to survive and prosper. A mystic child has truly only one responsibility. That is to learn and grow into an adult, capable of returning the support of the group. This ability to return support to the group defines adulthood among Mystics. Each contributes to the welfare of the group according to his skills or talents. Each contribution has value, as does each individual. Not matriarchal or patriarchal as a whole Mystic society stresses individuals and their abilities. Individuals belong to families, and families to extended families, and clans.

Mystics reach adulthood between the ages of forty and seventy-five years of age. Mystics do not mature slower than other races, they are simply long lived, sometimes reputedly reaching as advanced an age as six hundred before suffering death from age alone. They are therefore less hurried than some races about their rites of passage. Every youngster deemed ready to claim adult status is sent on a first journey, usually immediately after a festival, with the successes of their elders to inspire them.

Away from familial supports they are to find within themselves and in the world, their contributions to the group to justify their claim of adulthood. Usually this will take in the range of a month, however anything longer than a week would not be viewed with scorn, nor is a trip of many years or even decades unheard of. When the child returns, they are sponsored by an adult member of their clan, and expected to exhibit their gifts to the group and gain acceptance by telling a tale that exemplifies those contributions. They are awarded their adult road name or names and introduced to the clans at the next festival as full members of the community.

At the time of their acceptance within some clan as an adult, Mystics are also given a clan tattoo and investiture into their clan's earth circle. This tattoo is almost of any design; save that Daemonaean clan tattoos will include a triangle motif, Jongleur, a circle, and

Ahora, a square. These tattoos are usually not displayed lightly, just as a Mystic Wood Elf usually does not share his or her Elven name with the general public.

Adult Mystics travel all over Tyrra, supporting themselves in their travels as itinerant tradespeople. During these travels, they learn new tales and skills, and earn goods and make connections that would be unavailable to them as a people if they maintained a cultural isolation.

Names and Naming Traditions

Mystic Wood Elves use multiple names to denote the same individual. These names are of two types, the *Elven Name*, and the *Road Name*.

Elven Name

This is given to them by their parents at birth and used most often by Mystics from the same clan or area. Powerful or binding oaths can be sworn on the Elven name. It is considered neither necessary nor rude to tell or not tell one's Elven name to another, however it does make for a formal introduction. To tell one's Elven Name to an outsider implies a level of trust and respect.

The form of the Elven Name is [Name] + [Clan Name]

For example:

Kendorian Tzuris Ahora

Road Name

The common alias or “Road Name,” is significant in that it is usually based on a telling event in the Mystic's life, or an ideal or attitude that the Mystic projects or personifies. It may also refer to outward physical appearance of the Mystic in question. Examples of these are: “Antithesis,” “Curious,” and “Greybear.”

Road names are either chosen by the Mystic, or given to them by friends, family and acquaintances. Each Mystic may be known by several road names dependant upon context. The Road Name is how Mystics commonly introduce themselves.



Anwyn - Photo Courtesy of Scott Erb, NERO Massachusetts

SOCIETY AND ITS ORGANIZATION IN THE MYSTIC WOOD

Lands

The homeland of the Mystic Wood Elves is the Mystic Wood in Evendarr (specifically, in the Duchy of Ravenholt, on the border of Volta). However, numerous clans have sprung up from those Mystics who have traveled to other regions around Tyrra.

An unusual element of the Wood is its sentient Clan Circles. The Clan Circles of the Mystics within the Wood are sentient, and able to communicate at times, albeit not always directly. This is not common knowledge outside the Wood, although it is not a jealously guarded secret either. Most individuals who have never met one of these sentient circles simply consider this to be a fairy tale, but those with Speaker training know better.

Community Structures

The primary communal structure amongst Mystic Wood Elves is one of loosely integrated Clans. There are five major clan groupings within the Mystic Wood. They are usually well disposed and cooperative with each other.

Clan Ahora

Clan Ahora enjoys all forms of communication; they are spinners of tales and often teachers, diplomats, bards or performers of some sort. They are in general a verbose, but well spoken lot. The name "Ahora" has been said to translate to "aware". The Ahora are typically sharp of sight and vision. They are often first to notice anything and quick to inform others. They are by nature a mercurial lot, given to sudden reversals of affect. If you don't like their mood, wait a minute, it'll change. Baron Munchausen is a good example of classic Ahora thought/behavior patterns.

The name of Clan Ahora's Circle is *Harmony*.

Clan Jongleur

Clan Jongleur is the most puckish and the easiest perhaps to interact with. The name Jongleur has been jokingly translated as, an ancient word meaning, "curious one who will eat all your food." Members of this clan are often cheerful, and curious to a fault. Most of them seem to have a ready knowledge of the local food chain and resources. If they don't have what you need, they probably know where to find it, for a price, but you are likely to get nowhere with them if you are rude. Jongleur Mystic Wood Elves often become traders, bartenders, sages, or masseuses. Indiana Jones is a good example of Jongleur thought and behavior patterns.

The name of Jongleur's Circle is *Friendship*.

Clan Daemonae

Clan Daemonae is best described as "Affected" They suffer from an excess of attitude. They are not truly as pompous as they often act, and love to poke fun at themselves--and

hate it when others join in. Members of clan Daemonae tend to be decisive, opinionated, and quick to act. Reacting on an almost instinctive level, they are rarely at a loss for a firm reaction or a snappy comeback. This gift of instant reactivity allows their allies the luxury of time for measured counsel, and throws their enemies to rout and confusion. Members of clan Daemonae often become bodyguards, diplomats, or mercenaries. Don Quixote or Londo Molari (Babylon 5) are good examples of classic Daemonae thought/behavior patterns.

The name of Daemonae's Circle is *Opportunity*.

Clan Venteen

The Venteen are an old and long established clan, their roots can be traced through stories to the earliest days of the Mystic Wood. They generally have a more serious and sedate outlook on life than the other clans. They tend to be the planners and the organizers of situations, taking a few extra moments to think before rushing out to do something. They are generally slow to anger and much slower to cool down.

The Venteen are very family oriented, any family, Mystic or not, if they take you, into their family or call you friend it's for life. They were the originators of the present child rearing techniques including their education. The Venteen's strong family ties make them hesitant to involve themselves in others personal business, but they will offer all help if asked.

Their greatest achievement is they are the Keepers of the Library of the Mystic Wood. A large collection of information gathered by Mystic Wood Elves of all clans and brought together for the betterment of all. It includes copies of many journals of different Mystic Wood Elves that have been given to the library. Their devotion to the library has affected their entire outlook, they prefer honesty and straight forwardness to any form of subterfuge, preferring to tell you the absolute truth than trying to explain a lie later.

A Venteen will always carry a diary and document in if-events that happen around them, they are natural catalogers. When a diary or journal is finished they will try to get it back to the library when they can so that it will be included in the body of knowledge. This diary is a most treasured possession and worth more than any other.

The Venteen clan tattoo is a set of parallel lines, in any kind of series or design as long as the ends remain open.

The name of the Venteen Circle is *Reason*.

Clan Entenari

Little is known about this tiny clan, but their most renowned member was Shatter Entenari (believed to have race changed in recent years). He was deemed "tame" by comparison to some of the more violent and aggressive members. This clan tends to attract the most socially maladapted (by Mystic Wood Elves standards) of the race.

The name of the Entenari Circle is *Vengeance*.

Interracial Relations

Mystic Wood Elves tend to believe in a live and let live policy for all other races, taking issue with individuals, rather than entire cultures.

RAVENHOLT MYSTIC WOOD ELVEN POLITICAL STRUCTURE

Among Mystic Wood Elves there are two kinds of community leaders. There are the *Speakers* and the *Clan Elders*.

Speakers

Speakers are concerned with the moral upbringing of individuals and the people as a whole. The Speaker is equivalent to the tribal shaman. Speakers hold clan and race history by a complex system of oral traditions and storytelling. To aid them in holding and keeping this set of oral traditions, speakers have the magical ability to speak with the permanently dead. This enables them to recover information that might otherwise be lost by such permanent death, allowing them to retain vital information even in times of great upheaval. Since any information thus gleaned from the otherworld may, of necessity, require interpretation, Speakers became a strong moral defining force within the social structure.

Originally the Speaker ability was an inborn trait, but years of study have allowed the learning and teaching of proper mind techniques necessary to activate this power.

Requirements for Training to Become a Clan Speaker

Teacher

One must have a Teacher. This does not apply to those born with the talent, (approximately 1 % of the population), but even these must have a teacher to use any skills beside the communicational variety. Each teacher cannot train more than two students in a year, and they may not be of the same clan as the teacher, as inter-clan experiences become important to the training process.

Storyteller

One must learn by heart, ten stories demonstrating proper virtues. These virtues include but are not limited to, Imagination, Insight, Adaptability, Self-Reliance, Co-operation, Humility, Respect, Humor, Tradition, Introspection, Leadership, etc. These stories may come from any source, and reflect a tradition of oral history.

Lineage

One must be able to recite one's Lineage in Full. This is a social requirement to prove oneself worthy of sponsoring the Clan. (Local Race Marshal assistance may be necessary to establish the family line).

Community Services

One must fulfill various Community Services. The Speaker is to exhibit a concern for the well-being of the community on both a spiritual and moral level. Their job is not only to

talk to the dead, but to aid the living in finding their place in the scheme of things. These activities could include, but are not limited to, donating time at town guilds, giving away protectives and healing, taking personal risks to protect members of their community, donating the teaching of useful skills to others within the community.

Survive a Walk Upon the Road

One must survive a visit to the Road, to ensure one's ability to travel it. This trip should involve demonstration of virtues (leadership, cooperation, and so on) and may be traveled alone, or with a small group, understanding that the trip holds considerable risk, potentially even proving permanently lethal, should the trainee not be fully ready.

Powers of Experienced Speakers

(OOG Note: These are ROLEPLAY ONLY abilities, used at the discretion of local plot.)

These powers are the direct result of the Mystic Wood Elves' special relationship to the Clan Circles.

May Speak with the Dead

This acts similarly to a Spirit Farewell effect, but does not manifest the form of the spirit, nor always come through clearly or for any consequential duration. This applies only to the permanently dead, and not to any transitional spirit phase. This is at plot or module marshal discretion, as no information may be available for the dead character.

Commune with Sentient Mystic Circles

Speakers may be contacted by the Circles at any time. Speakers may also attempt to contact the Circles at any time, but are not guaranteed success. There is no distance limit to this type of telepathic transmission. Speakers act as a form of resonating antennae for the consciousness of the Circles. This allows for plot attention and support of plotlines as needed. An advanced form of this ability would be being able to get the Circles to broadcast a message for you to every clan member within range.

Travel the Road

Speakers may travel the Mystic Wood Elven "Spirit Road." This is accomplished by a complex and dangerous mental exercise which can unhinge the spirit from the body for short periods of time to visit the other side. These trips are for information purposes, and are not to be used indiscriminately. A trained and experienced Speaker may also help to draw other people along with him. These people must be willing, and unconscious (their physical form), and may end the journey at any time by deciding to return (if the spirit form is conscious upon the Road). The dangers associated with this are that while the spirit is absent from the body, it may be possessed by a "walk-in." These are lost spirits (quest haunts, untimely deaths etc.), which may invade the body and attempt to use it to finish some task. The longer a spirit is absent, the greater the chance that it may forget to return to the body, causing the need for a registered death and resurrection. Granting these abilities to a PC should only be at the discretion of a plot committee, ensuring that PC has spent the required time and effort needed to learn the appropriate skills over a matter of many events, with plot guidance.

May Use Self as Channel for a One-shot Spirit Farewell

With permission of the local Plot team, the Speaker may choose to expend ALL his remaining life energy into activating himself as a once-ever Spirit Farewell item. This requires no casting ability, and a Circle of Power will form around the Speaker and his target. The formal will begin, but the target is not guaranteed to appear. (As per standard Spirit Farewells, the character has the right to refuse it.) No matter what, at the end of the formal (2 hours, maximum) the Speaker will move permanently to the spirit world, taking his/her final death.

Elders

Each Clan has a Council of Elders which settles in-clan disputes, and oversees the welfare of the clan at large, as wiser heads, or "parents" to the "family". Each is made up of 6 members who are usually older than most, however ability counts for a great deal. It is not unheard of for a young clan member to sit on the council of elders by virtue of great skill or wisdom (or sense of humor).

Current Members of the Councils of Elders:

Clan Ahora-	Clan Jongleur-	Clan Daemona-	Clan Entenari	Clan Venteen
Tayo Not-From-Here (H)	Clever Mirabelle (H)	Darkmoon (H)	Revok (H)	None
Greybear	Dowser	Finder	Calamity Impending	
NoNoNo	Trip-Kicker	Crowsong		
Builder Stoneshaper	Dancer Wiles	Waterwalker Gatherer		

Lost from the Council of Elders in Recent Decades

Clan Ahora-	Clan Jongleur-	Clan Daemona-	Clan Entenari	Clan Venteen
Antithesis	Curious	Medea	None	None
Foundling	Cat-Wise	Grins		
Packrat	Reynard	Tirce Two-Dooms		

The Great Council settles inter-clan disputes and sends (appoints? obvious--but worth stress) appropriate ambassadors and diplomats to further causes of concern to Mystic Wood elves as a race. It is made up of 6 members. 2 members are sent from each clan, none of whom may be members of their clan's council of elders. The Great Council meets four times a year, at Festival time, and may be called into emergency session at any time if needed.

Current Members of the Great Council

Clan Ahora	Clan Jongleur	Clan Daemona-
Coyote Tale	Cambrion Woolgatherer	Mourning
Saion WordWeaver	Foxglove (aka Belladonna)	Quiet

Lost from the Great Council in Recent Decades

Clan Ahora	Clan Jongleur	Clan Daemonae-
None	Solstice	None



Jester - Photo Courtesy of Scott Erb, NERO Massachusetts

DEATH & THE ROAD

A strong cultural “myth” among Mystics refers to “The Road,” the “Spirit Road,” or “The Long Road.” This Road is a visualization for what becomes of a spirit upon the death of the body that houses it. It manifests according to the strength of those believing in it.

Thus are children taught:

“In olden days, each death was a permanent death, for creatures were unable to find their ways back to the lands of the living. Thus was built the ‘Long Road,’ and the spirits of many creatures gave up their chance to return to the lands of the living so that they could be markers along the path for others. All peoples walk the long road back to life, not only Mystics. It was built as an act of peace, broad enough for all, that death shall have no dominion.”

It is common usage for a Mystic to refer to a final death as "Walking the Long Road." The strongest oath a Mystic could make, might involve reference to this, as in: “May I walk the Long Road if I <...>.”

Within this mental geography, the Road runs between the lands of the living, and the "Sea of Dreams." This sea is the ultimate destination of those who have suffered their final death, and the repository of all racial memory.

Rules Governing Activity on the "Spirit Road"

There are two ways to travel on the Road, either in spirit manifestation or to travel in actual physical form. Actual physical manifestation is much more dangerous and the techniques for entering the Spirit Road takes extensive training and the guidance of experienced Speakers. The experiences of some travelers may vary, for better or worse, depending on their understanding and any added dangers upon the Road or on the path thereto, when they attempt to travel it.

Some of the most common experiences include:

When Traveling in Spirit Form

1. Binding Magicks cannot be summoned on the Road nor will these Magicks remain on any spirit brought to this place. No pin, bind, web, imprison, confine. This also means that any spirit brought here will be freed from these Magicks and also the effects of charm-like spells cast on them before entrance - this only applies to battle magic equivalent spells.
2. Poisons have no effect on spirits on the road.
3. There may be unpredictable character alteration at various points, these can include change of shape, appearance, or the raise or loss of body points, all of which usually return to normal upon successful return from the road.
4. Characters presence on the Road depends on their maintaining consciousness; if it is lost, the character has a one minute count at the end of which the spirit will return usually to the body outside of the Road.
5. A Life spell cast while on the Road will restore an unconscious person to full body and wakefulness, Death spells will blow a spirit off the Road and back to the body (there is often some form of backlash or damage to the physical form caused by this).
6. Any necromancy cast on the road will cause major fluctuations in all states of being. Effects may range from massive appearances of Guardians (who will attempt to clear all from the road) to rifts to other planes or dimensions.
7. Speakers have free passage on the road but any non-speaker must be maintained on the road by a Speaker. They must be maintained either by constant reinforcement of his or her presence and attention, or a Speaker may grant a small piece of his life essence to bolster the "reality "of the non-Speaker. If the Speaker is rendered unconscious, all those s/he "carries" will vanish, but any who have some of his/her essence will have the one minute to revive the Speaker.

Essence is given out in 1/2 body point increments, if a Speaker gives up their last body point, they will become trapped on the road. Whoever receives this last full body point may act as a shepherd to guide others back off the Road (he may only lead them out, not forward). Attempts may be made to lead the trapped Speaker

away as well, but at great risk to all involved, and with the likely outcome that the Speaker will lose all Speaking abilities for good upon return to physical form.

When Traveling in Physical Form

1. Anyone in physical form will be affected by binding Magicks (physical or mental) and by poisons. They will not be released from any effects if brought to the Road.
2. The body reacts as normal to attacks. A Life spell will stop a death count, but a Death spell will cause 2 deaths to the character if it is forced to resurrect. This is caused by psychic shock by death of the spirit on the spirit plain.
3. Character stats will remain the same, although physical or appearance change may still affect them.
4. Necromantic fluctuations may cause more damage to living people on the Road than to spirit forms, as well as whatever other effects happen due to the damage of such Magicks on the Road.
5. All of the other rules of the Road apply. Spirits will vanish but any who have essence will have the greatest risk.

MILITARY STRUCTURE

The Mystic Wood does not have any formal military organization, but this does not mean the Wood remains unprotected. In addition to its natural protections and the Sentient Circles, Mystics are highly protective of these lands, and come together in times of need to protect the Wood.

SCHOOLS AND GUILDS

There are no standing schools or guilds within the Wood, primarily because every situation is one in which teaching can be achieved! When someone has something to teach, they make it known to others and gather those with interest together for a “school.” However, Mystics are often found working in guilds around Tyrra, as they are well respected for their craftsmanship and scholarly ways.

MYTHS OF CREATION

Mystic Wood Elves have, within their cultural traditions, several myths that explain, for them, the origins of their race.

One such myth is that they were originally a hybrid of a tribe of nomadic Wood and Wild Elves that traveled thru the area, interbred closely with Nymphs, Satyrs, Dryads and other local land bound sprites. They cite both their strong ties to this forest as their racial home, and the insatiable wanderlust that often strikes their kind as a possible reflection of such heritage. Mystic Wood Elves are also stronger and harder than pure Elven racial stock would generally allow, possessing also two small protruding horns on their foreheads that clearly mark them as something other than common varieties of elf.

A second racial myth specifies that Mystic Wood Elves were put on Tyrra as a holding action by some larger good, to slow the advance of some cosmic evil. No one of them seems to know with certainty, or agree on the sources of these good and evil powers.

Proponents of this myth cite an almost instinctive ethical system, and a capacity for blood-rage that marks them as a potential warrior race within their distant past.

It will probably never be known as a certainty if the true origins of this race were, as speculated, in the Mystic Woods in the Northern Marches of the Barony of Eastwyck, in Dragonshire County, Duchy of Ravenholt, or elsewhere.

Of the Wood itself, there are rumors that before the land grew to what it is today, the giant trees that sit at its outskirts were actually Treants, and that they were once used for defense in time of need. The legend goes on to say that they are dormant until called upon, but how to do so has been lost to the ages.

Appendix A: Ravenholt Mystic Wood Elven Holidays and festivals

There are four festivals in the Mystic Wood on the solstices and equinoxes of each year. This is the time when Mystics commonly begin or end their journeys. Festival is a week-long bazaar of the bizarre. It is a time of justice, gift making, settling accounts, tall tale telling and re-joining. Time is taken to celebrate Mystic life, and to give and receive news of the world outside and of far off places and friends. It is a time to share the fruits of their labors and travels with the group, and to celebrate their successes. It is a beginning, and an ending, a time and place to begin a new chapter, or a new life. At best estimate, there are some 800 in residence in the Wood at any given time.



Brennie - Photo Courtesy of Scott Erb, NERO Massachusetts

Appendix B: Ravenholt Mystic Wood Elven Terminology

The polite form of address to use when speaking to another Mystic Wood Elf is “Cousin.”