

The Volhelm

A Basic Fantasy RPG Supplement

Basic Fantasy Website: basicfantasy.org

Release 1

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INTRODUCTION

This supplement provides information for playing The Volhelm, an additional human race, under the Basic Fantasy Role-Playing Game rule system. If you do not already have a copy of the Basic Fantasy RPG rules, please visit the website and download a copy.

The Volhelm

The Volhelm (translation: “Descendants of Fire”) are a warrior tribe living in the massive valley that rests between the two ranges of the Demonfrost Mountains. Before one can understand the religion of the Volhelm, one must first understand its people.

The Volhelm are a tall and mighty race of people, with the average adult standing well over 6 feet (1.8m) tall. All of the Volhelm have fair skin and hair that ranges from bright orange to deep red. Upon meeting the Volhelm for the first time, Feoras the Wise described them as thus:

“As the snow lifted, I found myself confronted by an unusually tall group of men. Each of these warriors had pale skin, with hair like fire – bright as the setting sun.”

It is this account that first gave the Volhelm their “common tongue” name to the people of the south: Flamebeards.

To those who have never traveled north of Ravenstone, the notion of a large group of people thriving in such an unforgiving climate seems far-fetched. However, the key to the Volhelm’s survival rests in the vast caves and hot springs that run along the base of the northern range. In fact, many southerners would find the climate within these caves to be uncomfortably humid and hot. But considering the harsh alternative, the Volhelm have turned these caves into massive indoor communities.

The largest of these caves is named Halastor, and could be considered their “capital city.”

A Warrior’s Code

The Volhelm, while seemingly bred to pillage and plunder, have an unusual sense of morality and honor for a warrior tribe. The Volhelm believe that victory without sacrifice is no victory at all. In combat, an enemy killed without effort or injury is not worth plundering. To the Volhelm, any valuables taken from an enemy who died in this fashion would not be seen as honorable, and any such valuables would be considered worthless or cursed. The Volhelm only take what they have earned through blood, might, and honor. It is safe then to assume that an affluent warrior earned his wealth through strength in battle – not theft or thrift.

Before any Volhelm warrior engages in battle with an individual or an army, he or she always self-inflicts a small cut of some kind, usually on the chest or upper arm. By preemptively spilling blood, they ensure that even the most flawless of victories still earns them honor and the spoils of war.

Additionally, women who display skill with the sword are also raised as warriors, allowing them to contribute to their family’s fortune as well. The Volhelm have a saying among themselves: “*Korvah eld vol secht*,” which loosely translates to “The flame of the warrior may catch fire in any soul.”

It is no surprise then that the pantheon of gods the Volhelm worship are taught to have established these laws of honor and battle.

THE DEITIES

Volgav

Their chief deity is named Volgav, which roughly translates to “The Gift of Fire.” To the Volhelm, Volgav also bears the honor of their greatest folk hero – an ordinary man who achieved godhood through his mighty deeds. In the epic poem that bears his

name, Volgav was offered the gift of fire by the Eldgalt (“Spirit of the Boar”) when he was found freezing in the Northern Wastes. However, he couldn’t bear the thought of surviving at the mercy of another being. Therefore, he asked to earn the gift of fire through a series of challenges that tested his might and his honor. These tests became known as the Vol-Utjöförd, or “The Challenge of Fire.” A less deadly version of these tests still exists today, and must be completed by any adolescent wishing to become a warrior.

Volgav is regarded as the patron god of honor and battle. He is sometimes portrayed as a warrior with a boar’s head. Other times, he is depicted as a muscular man with an axe in his left hand and a fireball in his right.

Hedara

Hedara, which means “Beauty and Honor,” was created from the first fire that Volgav ignited in Halastor. Again, we turn to the Epic of Volgav for an indication of Hedara’s character:

When thus the flames grew
tall and mighty in Halastor,
From the fire walked
a fair woman of crimson locks.
Volgav beheld this maiden
and thought her a god-gift,
And he cried Eldgalt!
I want nothing I did not earn!

The woman heard this
and struck him with a fearsome blow,
And she stood above him
and said, I am Hedara!
I came here not to be had
by you or any man,
I am a companion
who walks beside – not behind!

Hedara serves as the ideal template for the women of the Volhelm: Proud, lively, honorable, and an equal among men. Hedara eventually married Volgav and it is said that the Volhelm are all descendants of that coupling. This is also used to explain why red hair is so dominant among the people.

Hedara is considered to be the patron goddess of honesty and grace. In most depictions, she is seen as a tall, beautiful woman in a long dress, with one hand open and the other hand in a fist.

Klarbryn

Klarbryn, meaning “the Ready Sword” was initially Volgav’s elusive enemy who later became his closest friend. Klarbryn was an accomplished weapon-smith who brought with him the secret of steel to the Volhelm.

As a note of interest, Klarbryn’s death inadvertently began an odd tradition: Volgav had his old friend’s ashes forged into a new sword that he kept as a family heirloom. This tradition has carried on to this day, but it is an honor reserved for truly great warriors upon their death.

Klarbryn is the patron god of weapons and craftsmanship. He is often portrayed as a dirty man with a wild beard, holding a hammer in one hand and a flaming sword in the other.

THE AFTERLIFE

The Lugnang

The Volhelm believe that death is simply one’s spirit answering a summons from The Eldgalt. It is before the Spirit of the Boar that a life is judged, taking into account every one of the deceased’s actions and deeds.

If a Volhelm’s life is found to have been one of honor, then he or she is given a key to The Lugnang, or “The Quiet Meadow,” where they spend the next thousand years in the peaceful company of the other honored dead.

However, if he or she is found to have lived a life of dishonor and cowardice, a less agreeable fate awaits them.

The Kvalagrav

The Volhelm believe that the dishonored dead are banished to the deepest cave beneath the earth, in which there is no physical way in or out. This Tomb of Pain, known to the Volhelm as The Kvalagrav, is their interpretation of Hell.

THE VOLHELM

The Kvalagrav is governed by Grundtvig, who was the first banished there. He is often depicted as a naked, hairless human with black eyes. When it comes to his powers and abilities, the Volhelm regard Grundtvig as the least of the gods, but they still acknowledge his formidability.

It is often seen as bad luck to say Grundtvig's name. However, a popular curse said in anger or vengeance is *Grundtvig Bjorova*, which loosely translates to "The devil take you." It should be mentioned that the curse also carries the connotation of physical violation in addition to abduction.

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