

Ravenkin

By Jason Reilly

Release 3

Copyright © 2020 Jason Reilly

Art by John Fredericks

All Rights Reserved

Distributed under the terms of the Open Game

License version 1.0a

A Basic Fantasy Role-Playing Supplement

INTRODUCTION

This supplement provides information for playing Ravenkin, an additional demi-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.

NEW CHARACTER RACE

Ravenkin

Description: Ravenkin look like humanoid ravens, and are dominated by their avian features. Fully feathered, they have longer feathers on their arms and head, while their face and body have much smaller feathers. They have a fan shaped tail.

Ravenkin typically are entirely black, though in bright light parts of their feathers might shimmer dark blue. However, white splotches are not uncommon on some while others will have a range of colors from light gray to soot black. They have bifocal vision, like most humanoids, but their face is dominated by a large beak that matches their plumage. The typical Ravenkin stands from four and a half feet up to six feet in height, with females being generally smaller than males.

Ravenkin have oddly shaped bodies, and while mostly humanoid on top, they have retained the legs of their bird cousins, including the longer feet, elevated ankle, and digitigrade walking. Although their wings remain, they are non-functional, and have returned to being more humanoid arms with exceptionally long fingers. Due to this oddity they typically keep their hands curled up under their wing feathers, and from a distance look like they are huddled in a cloak.

Restrictions: Ravenkin can take any class, and fighters and clerics are particularly common. Magic users are also known to the race, while thieves are exceptionally rare. There are rumors of Ravenkin murders that buck this trend, but they are generally rare.

Ravenkin are not restricted by class, but they are restricted by their odd proportions. This make finding and using arms and armor difficult. Most must use specially designed equipment which, if purchased outside of their homelands, increases the cost of their equipment by 10%. This is for clothing, arms, and armor.

Ravenkin generally are wiser then average, and must start play with a wisdom of at least 11. They also tend to be more intelligent on average, and must have an intelligence of 11 or higher.

Ravenkin are physically as strong as any other humanoid. Despite that, their bones are lighter and weaker. Any attack which causes max hit die damage has a 1 in 6 chance of shattering the bone. This is a crippling injury and reduces speed by 1/2 and requires a save vs death to avoid passing out. Only healing magic can heal such an injury.



Special Abilities: Ravenkin traditionally have been associated with divine intervention in their creation. As a result are always considered to have the abilities of a level one cleric (if you allow clerics to cast spells at level one, they cannot cast spells). If they are a cleric, they are considered one level higher. They can turn undead, and use whichever saving throw is better.

Ravenkin wings do not work for flight, but they are strong enough to slow their fall. If lightly encumbered they can glide from heights, traveling 15 feet for every 10 feet in height. A Ravenkin can also spiral going down in a somewhat straight line to land within 15 feet of their launch point. They cannot do this if crippled.

Thief Skill Adjustments: Ravenkin get a +10% to listen. They get a +10% to Open Locks and Remove Traps as well. They get a -20% to pick pockets, due to their odd shape.

Saving Throw Adjustments: A first level Ravenkin can use the better saving throw between their class and the Cleric class.

RAVENKIN IN HISTORICAL SETTINGS

Ravenkin are based off of the mythological “Tengu” of Japanese mythology. However, there are a number of other potential sources for this creature. This section will include options and suggestions for incorporating the Ravenkin into your game world no matter the historical background of your game.

African: Axum, Benin, Ghana et al

Although there is no specific mythological or monstrous creature that combines the features of human and bird in African settings (please note, Egyptian has been moved to Mediterranean), the crow does have a place in their mythology. The role of the crow is that of guide, and in that sense we can create and derive a Ravenkin form.

In this setting Ravenkin would associate with human groups but stay on the outside edges living between the wilderness or bush and the cities and villages of the people. In this sense they would take on the role of rangers, scouts, and bushmen who live on the edge of civilization and act as protectors and ambassadors between the civilized states of Axum, for example and the wild lands.

The emphasis would be greatly on maximizing their awkward gait and extending and emphasizing their legs and arms as long and lanky, with their beaks being prominent features of their faces – heavily decorated in the same style as their local tribes.

Personality: Isolationist, aloof, and agitated would probably be good descriptors of the average African Ravenkin. They are happiest when wandering the wilds, and see their time with humans and civilization to be a bother. They will, however, be friendly with more tribal people and perhaps demi-humans that embrace a similar lifestyle.

In this setting, Ravenkin will primarily be fighters (rangers, scouts, hunters) and thieves, followed by clerics (shamans) and few magic users.

Culture: They live in small mobile tribes that typically are found on the outskirts of civilization. They rarely visit cities and prefer to avoid contact with city dwellers. Their tribes will follow wild herds of elk or zebras, with specific nesting places where they gather when not hunting.

Due to their nomadic nature, they have very few structures and what they do have will be rudimentary – tree houses made of hides and branches woven into strong trees. These homes serve as place of rest, place of worship, and place of gathering and can be quickly taken down, wrapped up and carried to new places.

They are happiest when out in the bush, stalking their pray and signing the songs of their faiths to the spirits of the world. Ravenkin are least happy when they find civilization has encroached on their ancestral lands and often find themselves watching the expansion of the human cities with growing concern. They continue to push further and further into the bush as a result.

Weapons & Equipment: The African Ravenkin traditionally use a very large bow with arrows made from woven grass. Arrow heads are bone and often poisoned. The bow itself is a combined weapon that is strong enough to be used as a spear and often has a bone or sometimes metal tip that can be used to stab at a target. For armor, they typically prefer light armor, and wear a type of sash made out of multiple folded pieces of cloth that acts as padded armor. This acts as both armor and as a backpack allowing them to carry things.

East Asia: Japanese, Korean, Chinese or Indian

The most traditional place for the Ravenkin (known in these setting as “Tengu”), and the mythological source for this material. Ravenkin in this setting actually can be evil – represented in early mythology as demonic invaders; or good – represented as protectors of the people from demonic invaders depending on what period of history you’re in.

When “Good”, Ravenkin would be considered to be a fusion between man and nature, and are likely to be fighters (Samurai) or Monks/Clerics. This is especially true as they are closely associated with the religious tradition of Shugendo.

In the Asian tradition, such creatures can be presented as a number of types of birds – not just ravens. Hawks, kites, eagles are all potential and historically accurate. Specific crow aspects are depicted in historical records however.

Personality: Ravenkin are going to be more reserved than most, and also isolationist, preferring to stay in their mountain homes and temples instead of being out and about with everyday people. However, when needed, they will rally in large numbers.

Ravenkin will typically be Samurai, Monks, and Clerics, and practice many aspects of an ascetic life style. They tend to be isolationist but will work in small bands when needed.

Culture: Ravenkin live in small colonies in mountainous regions. Typically, these will be small walled villages built close to a mountain spire. These villages will be centered around a temple, as well as a training yard for martial arts. Living areas will be in the spire above the main village area. These isolated fortresses allow the Ravenkin to view and see all potential approaches to their community.

Ravenkin very rarely allow visitors to stay longer than a few hours. If there is an inn or other place to stay, it is typically at least an hour's walk away from the village and further down the mountain side.

For the Ravenkin, when not engaged in war against demonic threats, they spend their time focused on spiritual development. Often local human and demihuman leaders will invite the Clerics and Monks of nearby Ravenkin communities to consult with them on issues of governance of war.

Weapons & Equipment: Ravenkin in an eastern setting will tend to wear long flowing robes and sashes, favoring blues, yellows, and greens. Clerics and monks, however, will wear much more simple fare, such as basic raw linens tied with hemp rope. Both Clerics and Monks typically use a pewter staff (Khakkhara). Fighters/Samurai will typically wield the katana/wakizashi.

European: Norse, Celtic, Greek

Ravens and crows are very common motifs in northern European mythology, and though the idea of a humanoid bird creature doesn't exist, the source is easy to imagine

through the legend of Odin, Huginn and Muninn. These two ravens represented Odin's helpers and spies, gathering information.

For example, an origin story could be such that the Ravenkin were created through divine intervention. Huginn and Muninn, in serving Odin also had children: the First Born. A clutch of 100 eggs hatched and were born, and emerged as beautiful ravens willing and able to serve Odin. Yet, Huginn and Muninn were so good at their jobs, there was no role for the fledglings. But Odin had an idea, for a noble vanguard, and he gathered the 100 to him, and 100 of the best warriors within the halls of Valhalla and brought them together. The souls of the heroic fallen merged into the ravens blessing them with valor and courage, and their bodies grew to match their souls, shifting and changing to merge together. Thus the Ravenkin were created and sent to the world to be the Vanguard of Ragnarök. The Ravenkin are proud of their origin and gleefully throw themselves into battle; knowing that even if they die, they'll be resurrected again as the Chosen.

These Ravenkin would be most like the Tengu that they are pulled from in the East Asian tradition – humanoid, but emphasis on bird features, and a similar concept of being divine champions that battle to defend the world from evil.

Restrictions: Thieves would not be allowed in such a setting. They see themselves as the fused soul between noble warriors from Valhalla itself and the children of Huginn and Muninn. To desecrate that ancestry by thievery would be anathema to everything the Ravenkin stand for. Magic users would also be rare.

Personality: Boastful, proud, brave – all are fair descriptions of Ravenkin. They are friendly and cheerful, often seeking out adventure. They're always looking for their next challenge, their next opportunity to prove their value and worth as champions of Odin. However, they also know that it is important to celebrate. Feasts are common, as is heavy drinking. Friends of the Ravenkin usually have strong constitutions.

Culture: Ravenkin in this setting are militant and organized. They typically establish themselves around a mountainous “Grand Hall” where a fire is always burning. They are a loud and boisterous people, and typically an adventurer will know from miles away that they are close to a Ravenkin Hall.

Their propensity for food and drink is also combined with celebration. They see themselves as reincarnated warriors of old, and so love to sing songs praising the deeds of

those warriors on the off chance they are there with them. Songs, dancing, physical competitions such as wrestling and feats of strength are common. Flutes, drums and singing are the most common instruments used.

Despite this, they can be serious as well, and take responsibilities such as maintaining homes and farms seriously. They are generally good neighbors, though your appetite for mead might sour after a few weeks.

Middle Eastern: Mesopotamia, Central Asia, the Caucasus

There is no specific Ravenkin type mythological creature in the Middle East. However, ravens do play a role in the mythology as do human/bird hybrids. In these traditions, ravens have a trickster component, stealing knowledge and power from the Gods. In these roles, Enki becomes their patron.

In some cases the Ravenkin might be seen as some kind of Genie or Jinn or at least descended from and will often be associated with helping people through tricks and outwitting enemies of the people.

For example, Enlil wishes to flood the earth and does so. Enki conspires with a pious man to save the animals and in so doing angers Enlil. As the floods begin to recede, the pious man is led to safety with a raven. They land upon the side of a mountain and begin to sacrifice to the Gods. This draws the attention of Enlil, who is outraged at Enki. However, the trick works and through his trickery he justifies saving the world, and ravens played a role in that.

In other myths they steal knowledge or power from the Gods and use it to help men. In that sense, their role as a modified Anzû makes sense in the cultural setting.

Restrictions: When running Ravenkin in such a setting, replace the wisdom score with dexterity. Thieves become the most common class, and fighters become a minority. Additionally, their ability to turn undead is removed as well as other Clerical powers, and instead, all Ravenkin are considered to have the abilities of a first level thief.

Personality: Ravenkin are more outgoing and friendly, freely mingling with humans and demihumans – though they love large cities. They generally prefer to be as high as possible, preferring to set up their homes in towers and minarets. They chaff at laws and regulations and so although welcome in the cities by some, they are generally a source of endless frustration for governing bodies.

Culture: Ravenkin do not seek out isolation and instead seek out the chaotic din of large cities. Port cities are their favorites, and they love the sound of varied languages, the bounty of novel and unique goods, and the opportunity for adventure.

That said, they do make cities their own – often commissioning large towers to call home, or finding the highest points in the city to take over. With their intelligence and quickness, they are often skilled merchants and or highly ranked in the local thieves guild, and use that wealth and power to their advantage.

That said, at any given moment in time, Ravenkin are coming and going – either returning with great stories to share or off to make their own. Ravenkin rarely stand still for long.

Weapons & Equipment: Ravenkin in a Middle Eastern setting will prefer daggers, knives, and cudgels. They will wear a wide variety of clothing and often decorate it with beads and jewelry. This is also true for armor, and although they prefer light leathers and padded vests, they will still make them high quality and decorate them liberally.

North American Native: Iroquois, Cree, First Nations

Ravenkin in North American Native cultures is considered part trickster, part champion of humanity. The foundation myths of these tribes generally have the raven playing a role – either directly as a creator, or as a key messenger of the Gods. In many ways, the trickster element of the Raven within NA Native peoples mythology is closest to the classic fantasy projection of the Ravenkin in role playing games.

In almost all cases, a Ravenkin will be seen as close to the spirit world and potentially as a source of information for what is on the other side, or the expectations of the Gods. Ravenkin will hold a very special status to the human and demihuman population as participants – even if they are held at somewhat arms length due to their reputation as tricksters.

Elements of divinity are here, but not as directly divine as east Asian or even Norse peoples would see it. They would instead see Ravenkin as a people from the spirit world who have come into our world. Exotic, yes, more closely connected to the divine, yes, but not directly divine as in descended from demons or created by divine action.

Restrictions: When running Ravenkin in such a setting, fighters are a minority. Thieves are the most common, followed by magic users, followed by clerics. Characters

would need a strong reason to prefer fighters over thieves. Their ability to turn undead as a first level cleric is removed. Instead, they can use their voice exceptionally well, able to preform mimicry and ventriloquism tricks. This is called "*Cast Voice*" and uses the Listen thief skill – all Ravenkin have this ability. Ravenkin under the proper guidance of a Shaman can also travel into the Ethereal and Shadow realms without requiring special preparation and are at home in both places, suffering no penalties. They cannot do this on their own without powerful magic.

Personality: Fun loving. Engaging. Charming. All describe a Ravenkin. Although they do not freely mingle with humans and demihumans due to their reputation as tricksters, they do admire them and like them and try to get as close as possible. They have a penchant for games and play, and are generally much more casual then most – however, they can be serious when the situation calls for it. Ravenkin are a valuable addition to a community.

Culture: Culturally, Ravenkin often are found living on mountains and close to areas where the barrier between the living world and the spirit world are thin. Many claim they can see into the spirit world, and they can when

properly prepared by a shaman. Unlike many other species, their presence in the ethereal or shadow realms is unremarkable to those residents, and in fact, some Ravenkin villages are entirely in those places.

They take their standing as a bridge between the spirit world and mortal world very seriously, and when they discover important information they move quickly to get that information out to their neighbors. This is one of the reasons why people are so standoffish, because the appearance of a Ravenkin can indicate trouble.

Weapons & Equipment: They generally prefer bows and javelins, any kind of ranged weapon. They also like to wear colorfully dyed textiles.

MAKE THEM YOUR OWN

Ravenkin are an interesting species concept and well liked by players. Above are some examples of how you can modify the race to better fit your campaign setting. You can use these or other abilities to make this race your own!

Open Game License

INTRODUCTION

BF Race Supplement - Ravenkin (hereinafter "the Supplement") is based on the System Reference Document v3.5 ("SRD"), which is Open Game Content. The text of the Open Game License itself is not Open Game Content. Instructions on using the License are provided within the License itself.

Designation of Open Game Content: The entire text of the Supplement (except the Open Game License, as noted above) is Open Game Content, released under the Open Game License, Version 1.0a (reproduced below) as described in Section 1(d) of the License. Artwork incorporated in this document is not Open Game Content, and remains the property of the copyright holder.

Designation of Product Identity: Product identity is not Open Game Content. The following is designated as product identity pursuant to OGL v1.0a(1)(e) and (7): (A) product and product line names, including Basic Fantasy Role-Playing Game, Basic Fantasy RPG, and BFRPG, as well as the phrase "make mine Basic"; (B) all artwork, logos, symbols, graphic designs, depictions, likenesses, formats, poses, concepts, themes and graphic, photographic and other visual representations, including the "eye" logo, which is the personal mark of Chris Gonnerman for his various products, and which is Copyright © 2002 Chris Gonnerman, and the "Scribbled Dragon," which is Copyright © 2005 Erik Wilson; (C) logos and trademarks, including any trademark or registered trademark clearly identified as product identity by the owner of the product identity, and which specifically excludes the open game content.

More information on the Open Game License can be found at:

<http://www.wizards.com/d20>

OPEN GAME LICENSE VERSION 1.0A

The following text is the property of Wizards of the Coast, Inc. and is Copyright 2000 Wizards of the Coast, Inc ("Wizards"). All Rights Reserved.

1. Definitions: (a)"Contributors" means the copyright and/or trademark owners who have contributed Open Game Content; (b)"Derivative Material" means copyrighted material including derivative works and translations (including into other computer languages), potation, modification, correction, addition, extension, upgrade, improvement, compilation, abridgment or other form in which an existing work may be recast, transformed or adapted; (c) "Distribute" means to reproduce, license, rent, lease, sell, broadcast, publicly display, transmit or otherwise distribute; (d)"Open Game Content" means the game mechanic and includes the methods, procedures, processes and routines to the extent such content does not embody the Product Identity and is an enhancement over the prior art and any additional content clearly identified as Open Game Content by the Contributor, and means any work covered by this License, including translations and derivative works under copyright law, but specifically excludes Product Identity. (e) "Product Identity" means product and product line names, logos and identifying marks including trade dress; artifacts; creatures characters; stories, storylines, plots, thematic elements, dialogue, incidents, language, artwork, symbols, designs, depictions, likenesses, formats, poses, concepts, themes and graphic, photographic and other visual or audio representations; names and descriptions of characters, spells, enchantments, personalities, teams, personas, likenesses and special abilities; places, locations, environments, creatures, equipment, magical or supernatural abilities or effects, logos, symbols, or graphic designs; and any other trademark or registered trademark clearly identified as Product identity by the owner of the Product Identity, and which specifically excludes the Open Game Content; (f) "Trademark" means the logos, names, mark, sign, motto, designs that are used by a Contributor to identify itself or its products or the associated products contributed to the Open Game License by the Contributor (g) "Use", "Used" or "Using" means to use, Distribute, copy, edit, format, modify, translate and otherwise create Derivative Material of Open Game Content. (h) "You" or "Your" means the licensee in terms of this agreement.

2. The License: This License applies to any Open Game Content that contains a notice indicating that the Open Game Content may only be Used under and in terms of this License. You must affix such a notice to any Open Game Content that you Use. No terms may be added to or subtracted from this License except as described by the License itself. No other terms or conditions may be applied to any Open Game Content distributed using this License.

3. Offer and Acceptance: By Using the Open Game Content You indicate Your acceptance of the terms of this License.

4. Grant and Consideration: In consideration for agreeing to use this License, the Contributors grant You a perpetual, worldwide, royalty-free, non-exclusive license with the exact terms of this License to Use, the Open Game Content.

5. Representation of Authority to Contribute: If You are contributing original material as Open Game Content, You represent that Your Contributions are Your original creation and/or You have sufficient rights to grant the rights conveyed by this License.

6. Notice of License Copyright: You must update the COPYRIGHT NOTICE portion of this License to include the exact text of the COPYRIGHT NOTICE of any Open Game Content You are copying, modifying or distributing, and You must add the title, the copyright date, and the copyright holder's name to the COPYRIGHT NOTICE of any original Open Game Content you Distribute.

7. Use of Product Identity: You agree not to Use any Product Identity, including as an indication as to compatibility, except as expressly licensed in another, independent Agreement with the owner of each element of that Product Identity. You agree not to indicate compatibility or co-adaptability with any Trademark or Registered Trademark in conjunction with a work containing Open Game Content except as expressly licensed in another, independent Agreement with the owner of such Trademark or Registered Trademark. The use of any Product Identity in Open Game Content does not constitute a challenge to the ownership of that Product Identity. The owner of any Product Identity used in Open Game Content shall retain all rights, title and interest in and to that Product Identity.

8. Identification: If you distribute Open Game Content You must clearly indicate which portions of the work that you are distributing are Open Game Content.

9. Updating the License: Wizards or its designated Agents may publish updated versions of this License. You may use any authorized version of this License to copy, modify and distribute any Open Game Content originally distributed under any version of this License.

10. Copy of this License: You MUST include a copy of this License with every copy of the Open Game Content You Distribute.

11. Use of Contributor Credits: You may not market or advertise the Open Game Content using the name of any Contributor unless You have written permission from the Contributor to do so.

12. Inability to Comply: If it is impossible for You to comply with any of the terms of this License with respect to some or all of the Open Game Content due to statute, judicial order, or governmental regulation then You may not Use any Open Game Material so affected.

13. Termination: This License will terminate automatically if You fail to comply with all terms herein and fail to cure such breach within 30 days of becoming aware of the breach. All sublicenses shall survive the termination of this License.

14. Reformation: If any provision of this License is held to be unenforceable, such provision shall be reformed only to the extent necessary to make it enforceable.

15. COPYRIGHT NOTICE

Open Game License v 1.0 Copyright 2000, Wizards of the Coast, Inc.

System Reference Document Copyright 2000-2003, Wizards of the Coast, Inc.; Authors Jonathan Tweet, Monte Cook, Skip Williams, Rich Baker, Andy Collins, David Noonan, Rich Redman, Bruce R. Cordell, John D. Rateliff, Thomas Reid, James Wyatt, based on original material by E. Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson.

Basic Fantasy Role-Playing Game Copyright © 2006-2016 Chris Gonnerman.

BF Race Supplement - Ravenkin Copyright © 2020 Jason Reilly.

END OF LICENSE