



MINOTAURS



JOURNAL of the WORLD'S ENDING

Entry 1249 - Of Man and Beast.

Archeological records suggest that the Beastmen are an ancient species, perhaps predating mankind itself.

Indigenous to the outwash plains of the savage north, early Beastmen clans were once locked in a perpetual state of endemic warfare with the nomadic humans that cohabited the area.

Yet in modern ages, Bestmen clans tend to distance themselves from human society, preferring to avoid conflict instead.

This aversion to humanity is likely for the better as the Church of Azerai has declared the species to be unclean, a monstrous bastardization of man and beast, and beyond the graces of civility. Generally, they are slaughtered on sight by the agents of the Church.

In recent years, there has been an alarming increase in encounters with the species. Where once sightings might have been recorded once in a decade, now they are commonplace, occurring monthly or even weekly in some regions.

Most disturbing are the testimony of feral beasts overtaken by a savage bloodrage, something that has not been seen before.

Caravans, villages, and entire towns are disappearing in the northern sections of west where the land abuts the Savage North.

What could be causing this strange aggression and driving the beastmen into the realms of man?

These are the words of Dreyen Solius,
Chronicler of the Realm's Ending.



THE BLOODFEVER

Beastmen are an ancient species that have walked the wilds long before the coming of man. Following a contentious history with the early nomadic northmen that shared their territory, they have learned to exist in nature far from the dominion of man, where they may avoid conflict.

However, in recent years there has been an alarming escalation in the encounters with these beasts. Survivors describe attacks by feral bullmen overtaken by a savage rage, rabid beasts ambushing caravans and slaughtering villages, leaving behind nothing but corpses and demolished structures.

Unknown to the humans, the Beastmen tribes are suffering, their clans plagued by myriad issues. Food grows scarce as corruption spreads deep into their plains and forests. A wasting sickness has culminated over many generations, causing widespread infertility and decimating their young populations. Worst of all, a new infection, the Bloodfever, spreads among their numbers, causing the infected to become feral, succumbing to a blinding rage that leads to a devastating loss of mental control and eventual death.

A team of rangers has traveled north to investigate the reports of these attacks, but have not been heard from in over a week.



THE BLOODFEVER

The Beastmen of Doaden are an ancient species with tribal culture and beliefs that are little known to man.

However, they share common gods and customs with the barbaric clans of northmen who have coexisted in the wild lands beyond the civilized empire for untold ages.

It has even been observed that some Beastmen may speak or understand a limited amount of Gaurric, the language of wildmen that inhabit the area.

LIFE & CULTURE

Few Beastmen clans survive today, rarely convening unless faced with the most dire of circumstances.

Life is centered primarily around smaller tribes led by a chieftain and shaman.

These tribes are generally multi-species populations.

Most dominant are the Aurox, a mixture of man and bovine beast that can live for hundreds of years.

However, other species exist as well such as the smaller goat-like Capra and the rare and solitary lionfolk, Leonids.

RELIGIOUS BELIEFS

Beastmen worship Mologh, a primordial earth spirit who they believe, like nature itself, is a source of both bountiful blessing and terrible calamity.

Willing sacrifices are made to petition its benevolence and appease its wrath.

It is also believed that the kindling of Mologh's fire shall bring about the end of the world; a chaotic flame consuming all so that life may sprout anew from the glowing cinders.

THE BLOODFEVER

Beastmen face many problems today.

Aurox populations are dwindling as they are unable to birth healthy offspring, their unborn calves infected by a wasting illness that nearly always results in stillbirth.

Moreover, their resources dwindle as Doaden falls ever further into decay.

As a result, they encroach further and further into human lands in search of food, leading to escalating conflicts and even consumption of human flesh by some desperate tribes.

Most recently, adult Aurox have been afflicted by the degenerative disease known as the bloodfever.

As it progresses, infected individuals begin to exhibit strange behaviors including aggression, anxiety, nervousness, and inevitably succumbing to a mind-consuming frenzy, leading to coma and death.

THE BLOODBRAND CULT

As populations dwindle and signs of Mologh's benevolence grow ever scarcer, many tribes have been torn apart by dissent.

The rising voice of the Bloodbrand cult garners ever more favor.

Branding themselves by carving painful symbols into their own flesh, the Bloodbrands openly pact with the dark gods of Doaden, proclaiming that this is the only way to avoid extinction.

They use their newfound demonic powers to control and direct the bloodfever, and necromancy to raise their dead so that they may never die.



MOUTH of MOLOGH

The Beastmen worship Mologh, a primordial earth spirit who they believe, like nature itself, is the source of both bountiful blessing and terrible calamity.

But nature can be capricious; and its manifestations difficult to identify and harder yet to decipher.

The Mouths of Mologh act as each clan's spiritual leaders, shamans dedicated to conducting the necessary ceremonies to ensure Mologh's blessing, often involving sacrifice of flesh and the ingesting of psychoactive medicines.

It is their duty to divine the signs of the earth and to speak Mologh's will, advising the tribal chieftains of their sacred duties, both physical and spiritual.



SLAUGHTERHORN CHIEFTAIN

Each Beastman tribe is led by a great chieftain who commands absolute authority, dictating all significant decisions that will affect the tribe's life and future.

Generally the strongest of the Aurox, chieftains are formidable foes in combat, forged by the many battles with rival clans and deadly duels with would-be rivals that seek to usurp their power from within.

A successful chieftain may rule for centuries, becoming ever more wizened by the years of council from the Mouths of Mologh and from the mentorship of the clan war chiefs.

However, age inevitably brings feebleness of the body, and no matter how great they may be, every chieftain will eventually be defeated by a young bull who seeks glory and power, or who disagrees with their decisions and believes they can lead the tribe to a greater life.



BLOODBRAND MATRIARCH

Many Beastmen tribes are torn apart by dissent as leadership wavers. Aurox calves die at an alarming rate due to a wasting disease.

Food grows ever scarcer as corruptions of the earth spread through the wilds of Doaden.

And the Bloodfever, a degenerative disease of the mind, has caused many of the remaining Aurox to fall into a savage, feral insanity.

The Bloodbrands are a rising voice of dissent, speaking out against the Mouths of Mologh.

Their cults believe it is time for the old ways to die and for a new path to be forged to preserve the existence of their race.

The Bloodbrand Matriarch leads this movement, making pacts with demons and dark entities, and binding their followers by carving the Bloodbrand marks into their skin.

Through their dark pacts, the Matriarchs are gifted with demonic and necromantic powers, granting a degree of control over the Bloodfever so their followers may harness and channel the disease for their own purposes, and the ability to raise the dead Aurox so that the lost may never die, serving their tribes for all of time.



ROCKGUT RAIDER

Great quadrupeds with gnarled horns, the rockguts wander the plains and mountainous regions of the north.

Their name derives from the copious amounts of stones they eat, which tumble in their stomachs and grind the tough plant matter they swallow into a digestible paste.

Their herds may be tracked by the great quantities of manure they leave behind, which, when it decays, leaves behind large stacks of stones which have grown smooth from years of tumbling.

The Beastmen have domesticated these great animals, using them for meat, milk, beasts of burden, and even as war mounts.

Rockgut Raiders train for years to build a bond with their mounts so that they may grow fearless and unperturbed by the visceral sounds and smells of combat, allowing them to charge into the middle of the fight.



AUROX WARRIORS

Aurox are the most dominant of Beastmen species.

They are sturdy and muscled, great bovine hybrids that naturally tend towards great combat capability.

Aurox may live for several hundred years, most dying from inter-clan warfare rather than growing to an old age.

This is as it should be, as in their culture, the lifeblood they spill appeases Mologh and nurtures the earth, where new life may sprout once again.



AUROX BLUDGEHORN

Bludgehorns are the strongest of the Aurox warriors.

It is a title conferred to an individual only after great displays of strength and bravery, following countless battles to prove their mettle.

Each scar a Bludgehorn carries tells a tale of their glory, and their strength and combat expertise may rival even that of some chieftains.

Bludgehorns often serve as elite guards to their tribe leaders, wielding great totems and hand-held ballistas which none other possess the strength to carry.



SLEEPING AUROX

Like all living beasts, Aurox must sleep.

It is a good thing too, for it is far easier to pass by a sleeping bull than one who is charging at you or swinging a great metal blade at your head.



SLAYED AUROX



BUTCHER'S STATIONS

As natural resources decay in the wilds, many Beastmen tribes have been forced to march south in search of food and sustenance.

As times grow tough, the desperate consumption of human flesh grows ever more common, though the act was once considered repulsive and unthinkable in the past.

It is speculated that the Bloodfever is a side effect of consuming contaminated human flesh; the cross-species transmission of a human disease which manifests in the Aurox as degenerative blood-rage, and has evolved to grow more contagious, spreading between their populations in a way not seen before.



ALTAR OF MOLOGH

The Beastmen worship Mologh, a primordial earth spirit who they believe, like nature itself, is the source of both bountiful blessing and terrible calamity.

Sacrificial rituals are conducted at the altars of Mologh, where blood is spilled and allowed to soak into the earth so that the spirit may be appeased.

After the sacrifice, a great fire is lit, symbolizing the kindling of Mologh's Fire, which they believe will one day consume the world and render it to ash, allowing life to sprout anew from the cinders.

These beliefs hold a remarkable similarity to those of the northern tribes of men, who hold similar rituals dedicated to their earth goddess Morra.



BLOODFEVERED BRUTE

The Bloodfever is a degenerative disease; the most recent malady to plague the Aurox species. As the infection accumulates in the bloodstream, individuals begin to exhibit strange behaviors including increased aggression, anxiety, and nervousness.

The result of the Bloodfever is a mind-consuming frenzy which may be inhibited for some time through rigid mental discipline and restraint. However, as the call to savagery grows ever stronger, infected individuals inevitably succumb to the disease, erupting in a feral rage and becoming an unstoppable juggernaut known as the Bloodfevered Brute.

For some time, a Brute may retain limited control over their actions, and may even be used by their tribes in combat to great efficacy, so long as they are able to redirect their aggression towards the enemy. However, such tactics are dangerous and risky, as the Brutes may quickly turn their gaze onto their allies as well.

Eventually, the infection consumes the brain, eating away at the flesh and leaving behind nothing but a spongy mulch of soupy protein. Once the bloodrage dies down, the Aurox falls into a deep and irreversible coma, before organ failure and death.



AUROX BLOODBAND

The Bloodbrand Cult is a rising voice of dissent against the traditionalist worshippers of Mologh.

They believe that the old gods have died, or no longer listen to their pleas.

Now, they swear fealty to demonic entities, carving painful symbols into their skin and binding themselves to dark pacts.

In exchange for their allegiance, these demons imbue the Bloodbrands with the ability to control the Bloodfever, granting them increased strength and savagery without losing their minds.

Though twisted in form, the Bloodbrands believe such dark alliances are the only way to prevent their species' extinction, pointing towards the demonstrable evidence of their new gods' benevolence as opposed to the waning and silent voice of Mologh's in light of their generations of suffering.



YOKEN

Though the Bloodbrands' demonic pacts have granted them control over the Bloodfever plague, the solution to the waning Aurox populations has not yet presented itself.

The wasting disease persists, resulting in incredibly low birth rates and high infant mortality.

To bolster their forces, the Bloodbrand Cults have turned to necromancy, bargaining for powers over death so that their lost warriors may rise from the earth and serve again.

The result are the Yoken, risen beasts who are chained by magic, yoked to the will of the one who has raised them.

Though not as strong as a healthy Aurox bull, these risen monsters are nearly impervious to damage, marching ever forward even with missing limbs, hanging guts, or other grievous injuries.







BESTIARUM
GAMES