

The Anak Free Families

To the east of the Hadstone mountains lies a great steppe, upon which reside the so named Free Families of the Anak. Composed mostly of Hobgoblins, though with a not insignificant amount of goblins, bugbears, orcs, and half orcs, the Free Families are a nomadic people who keep mostly to themselves except during major religious holidays.

Most in Ovenica consider this steppe, and the lands around it, as a country unto itself out of respect for the people living there. However, the Free Families don't share this outlook. They have little interest in organizing borders and drawing lines when all the families are constantly on the move from place to place as their needs change throughout the year.

There are five main families that are well known to the people of Ovenica: Yertfen, Brotfaie, Tarwid, Abastnes, and Harndae. These families preside over and protect several smaller families who fall under the same larger banner.

As an unwritten rule, the Free Families do not enter into open war with one another ever. If there are conflicts and disagreements, these are always brought to the leaders court of any families involved and the matter is settled in silver, trade, chains, or blood. Punishments can be very severe even for small disagreements so it is rare for things to make it so far as to be brought to the court.

Burn Bright, Unyielding Might.

The **Yertfen** family worship fire primarily. They believe in the cleansing power of flame and ember. Most rituals within the Yertfen family involve dancing and pyrotechnics. The Yertfen's art reflects their religious culture and most of them are skilled glassblowers who create intricate sculptures and artpieces. Yertfen maintain a single matriarch or patriarch who, along with a chosen council of advisors from the smaller families, works hard to make the best decisions for their family. In addition, they are skilled metalworkers and trade mainly in weapons and armour as well as jewelry. If there is conflict within the Yertfen and the families below them, the conflict is solved with trials of fire, courage, and strength.

Rooted in Nature, United in Spirit.

The **Brotfaie** family follow the will of the natural world. Some Ovenican scholars claim that this puts them under the same religious views as followers of The Mother. The family has a deep connection to nature and practice druidic magic, and conduct ceremonies to ensure plentiful harvests and protection from natural disasters. Brotfaie are talented bonecarvers, creating detailed animal totems and masks which are often used in their druidic ceremonies. The Brotfaie have no true leader, and instead shuffle decisions around a group of elders who communally work together to maintain order within the family. All members of the Brotfaie family are expert herbalists and gatherers. They trade in rare herbs, fruits, and even magical ingredients. When conflict does arise within the family, it is usually resolved with meditation by the elders as well as

nature-based rituals with a focus on restoring harmony.

Moonlit Paths, Eternal Journeys.

The **Tarwid** family worship The Three Moons of Ovenica and are known for their nocturnal rituals and lunar calendars. They have a strong affinity for celestial magic and most consider themselves skilled astronomers. The Tarwid family are exceptional painters who create beautiful lunar themed murals and intricate celestial maps. The leaders of the Tarwid family are those who can prove themselves as prodigious astronomers who contribute heavily to their community. Members of the Tarwid family can often be found among other families offering navigational services as astronomers and guides, they are also the most likely to be found outside the steppe. When conflict arises within Tarwid communities they consider no other option but to sit down and talk for sometimes days on end, and consult celestial omens until a solution presents itself.

Ancestors' Embrace, Legacy Unbroken.

The **Abastnes** family revere ancestral spirits in their worship. They build and maintain elaborate tombs all across the steppe and organize grand commemorative feasts to honour the dead. The Abastnes are master weavers, they produce colourful tapestries featuring the tales of their ancestors. The Abastnes follows the guidance of a high priest and his acolytes who speak to their ancestors to determine what's best for the family. The Abastness offer their skills as masons creating tombs and other similar constructions for the dead of other families as well as other funeral related services. Conflict in the family is usually resolved with seances and communing with the ancestors of those involved to determine a solution.

For Glory, For Victory, For Harndae.

The **Harndae** family is devoted to Drorkol the Behemoth and venerate him above other objects of worship. As part of this worship they often hold gladiator style competitions and prioritize military training. Harndae are renowned blacksmiths who craft impressive suits of armour and weapons, which are often decorated with engravings of Drorkol fighting or killing dragons. Harndae society is structured as a military and is led by a general who enforces strict training and discipline. Harndae offer their services as Mercenaries and Swords for Hire who offer protection and military advisement in exchange for silver and resources. Conflict in Harndae almost always ends with a duel of some kind or another. If you're not willing to spill blood or break bone, it's not worth arguing about.

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