

# Biata

Race Packet 2005

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# Out of Game Information

## Advantages (build cost):

Break Charm (2)  
Resist Charm (3)  
Resist Sleep (2)  
Mind Abilities

## Disadvantages:

Make-up  
Can not buy Read Magic

## Biata Abilities:

### Resist Charm:

With this skill, a Biata can resist one charm per day for each time the skill is taken. The resistible effects included are *Charm, Shun, Dominate, Fear, Enslavement, and Vampire Charm*. It does not include *Berserk, Love, or Love Potion # 9*.

In order to use this ability, a player **must** call “resist” when struck by the charm effect. The character must be conscious to use this skill. You cannot pretend to be affected by the charm effect and then call resist later. This way it is obvious to all observers that the charm effect has not worked.

If the Charm effect is from a spell or poison that would normally be stopped by a spell defense, then the spell defense will be lost before the *Resist*. You cannot save your spell defense because you would not have been affected by the spell.

This skill may also be used to protect against ingested potions, elixirs and gasses as desired.

### Resist Sleep:

With this skill a Biata can resist one sleep effect per day for each time the skill is taken. This does not include *Waylay*.

In order to use this ability, a player **must** call resist when struck by the Sleep effect. The character must be conscious to use this skill. You cannot pretend to be affected by the Sleep effect and then call resist later. This way it is obvious to all observers that the sleep effect has not worked.

If the Sleep effect is from a spell or poison that would normally be stopped by a spell defense, then the spell defense will be lost before the *Resist*. You cannot save your spell defense because you would not have been affected by the spell.

This skill can be used to protect against ingested potions and elixirs as desired.

### Break Charm:

With this skill, a Biata can break all active charm effects on another creature at the rate of one sleep effect per day for each time the skill is taken. The effects included are *Charm, Shun, Dominate, Fear, and Vampire Charm*. It does not include *Enslavement, Berserk, Love, or Love Potion # 9*.

In order to use this ability, a player **must** touch the charmed person, have his or her full attention and spend one uninterrupted minute of role-playing 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 has not been charmed will still result in the ability being used for the day. This ability does not affect and is not affected by any Spell Defenses.

You cannot use this skill upon yourself.

## Costuming:

There is no specific racial garb for the Biata. Those once of the Gryphon clan will sometimes dress like Barbarians, in furs and leather, but other than that there is no difference in any attire.

## Makeup:

Biata must have sweeping, feathered eyebrows. A good way to do this is to buy some feathers from a craft/fabric shop, cut them to size needed and use some eyelash adhesive to attach them to your eyebrows. (*Do not cover up your real eyebrows with Spirit Gum - you may find that it is then next to impossible to get the spirit gum out without removing your eyebrows*). Removing them is done by peeling from the nose out... not vice versa. Any remaining eyelash adhesive can be washed out with soap and water. Combing through your eyebrows with a nailbrush may help as well.

Recently, someone started using clear elastic with the feathers glued to the elastic, similar to a Mystic Wood Elf's horns on a string. The clear elastic is invisible against skin and can be tied in the back making it a non-issue for visibility.

Keep in mind – your feathers are not supposed to make you look like you are about to take flight. Alternately, you can draw the feathers with makeup pencils, but this tends to smear and rub off after a while, taking on the look of Hobling brows.

White Makeup on your eyelids will help draw attention to your brows as well. Remember – you need to be identifiable as your in game race from a distance.

Some Biata will wear “War Paint”, this is not to be confused with “Mark” or “Spirit Mark” Feather Colors

## Feathers:

The feathers of a Biata are generally natural in appearance. They range from robust browns and reds to black or white and a many color combinations in between.

The feather colors of a Biata may indicate their long-term emotional state in some regions of Tyrra. These colors vary from Biata to Biata, but often are similar in a given region. The colors may change over time and change only slowly. The close friends of a Biata can often tell their mood with a quick glance and do well to pay attention.

## Role-playing a Biata:

Personalities of Biata are as wide and varied as the other races. However, upon initial contact, a Biata may appear aloof and potentially an extremist in their thought process. Unless you are an immigrant character, the odds are somewhere in your recent past your home has been over-run by wildly populating, shorter-lived races. You may have an attitude problem because of that.

The life expectancy of a Biata is approximately between 750 to 1000 years. Years to a Biata are not as meaningful as to Humans. With such a long life span, Biata tend not to reproduce as often.

The level of acceptability and tolerance to celestial magics will depend on the individual Biata's physical and mental state. Those that are closer by blood to the Gryphons will find that their reactions are stronger, and you might role play something akin to an allergic reaction. How much pain and discomfort you feel is up to your own personal discretion. You can associate with Celestial casters, but will more than likely refuse any Celestial protective spells or scrolls *except in extreme life or death circumstances*.

The Biata culture would be considered a cross of the Norse and Native American cultures in Northern New England. Relatively new to the Biata is the political structure of nobility: Kings, Queens, Dukes, Counts, Barons, Knights, and Dames. Even the newer communities formed since integration with the shorter-lived races has conformed to this model. Many of the younger Biata (less than 200 years old) have also begun to obtain these ranks within the Human Kingdoms.

In the past, Biata formed a classed society based upon caste, the purer the Biata Blood, the higher the social class.

Mating outside of race was frowned upon, and the offspring were thought of as an impurity of the race. Presently, due to devastating population losses from various wars, and the slow birth rate (Biata bear children usually at a 10 to 25 year interval; more often than one every five years is not unheard of, but is not that safe for the mother), the race is in the process of redefining itself. It is coming to terms with the fact, in order to survive; the race must interact beyond friendship with other races. Although not wildly liked by all, it is an accepted but somewhat distasteful concept to many. As such the division between those of High blood and those of Low blood has vanished. No longer can Biata determine which is which and their society is slowly coming to grips with this change.

## Mental Abilities:

(These skills should be taught/learned in game – any Biata can enter a mind, but not all Biata know what to do once they are in there)

It can not be stressed enough the importance of this role-play. By attempting to get these powers off board or some other way you are cheating your self of some integral role-play.

The Biata have role-playing-only "mind" skills. If a player is voluntarily playing insanity, is upset or has other mental problems, a Biata who has been taught this mind skill might fix the problem.

The Biata must sit quietly, holding hands with the other person. Both should concentrate. If disturbed, they should both be upset and perhaps take some "mental damage." *Note: This is a role-playing thing only!* Both parties must want to do this; you cannot force this onto someone. Further, this can never be used to get rid of any in-game mental problems such as curses or diseases or anything! It can only be used if the player has chosen to have a mental problem and now chooses to "fix" it. If/when in doubt, **don't**. Ask your local Biata Race Marshal or Rules Marshal for clarification.

To role-play properly, one must maintain constant physical contact, be it through holding the person's hand or placing your hands on the head of the person: WHISPER TO THEM WHAT THEY ARE SEEING. (Have them whisper what they are seeing) Anyone around you who hears what I said will know what you are doing as the energy of the meld leaks into the surrounding area. If you wish privacy, it is highly recommended to conduct such sessions away from others so they do not overhear the meld. Should your hands disconnect, you need to start over again. The person whose mind is being read will respond as they choose and may lie, or make up memories or responses as they wish. Make sure your subject is aware of this; if they do not want you to see that section of their memories, they can say that the section of memory is clouded, blocked or disjointed.

## Family Structure:

While Biata tend to only have one true love there are 2 different types of weddings.

### *Life Mating:*

This is done with the assistance of an elder that both parties trust. It requires the use of a Biata Stone and the willingness for both parties to allow an elder supervise a complete mental sharing. There are no secrets from each other in this type of a wedding.

### *Contractual Wedding:*

This marriage is usually anywhere from one to ten years long and has set contractual obligations, usually to provide an heir to a family or for elevation in societal station.

# Commonly asked questions:

## ***How long do Biata Live?***

Biata live between 750 to 1,000 years.

## ***How old is the race:***

No one knows truly how long the race has lived.

## ***What is a Homestone?***

The Homestone is a repository of knowledge and wisdom for the Biata people. Made of Hematite or Jade, it stores within it the memories of the Biata elders. Many of them were shattered and destroyed over the years.

## ***Is there more than one Homestone?***

Yes... there were... how many there are now is unknown.

## ***Where are they?***

Find out in game.

## ***What does a small Homestone do?***

It is believed that it assists in the returning of a Biata's spirit to the Homestone

## ***What is a Rider?***

In essence they are those who are said to Ride Gryphons. They are mostly legend and do not walk among the Biata people anymore.

## ***What is a Hunter?***

A legendary group whose purpose has changed dramatically across Tyrra. In some places they are those picked by the Gryphons to hunt for them, in others they are those who are dark enough to hunt the Gryphons themselves. However, they too do not walk amongst the Biata people anymore.

## ***What is with the blood thing anyhow?***

In times past the Biata were separated into High and Low Blood. This division was the basis of their class system of rulers and ruled, but now there is no more such division. While some Biata still believe themselves High Blood, there is no way to tell and no way to prove it and so they the society has abandoned such pretenses.

## ***What is the fuss about Honor?***

Biata are single-minded and stubborn. Their word matters a great deal and they will persevere to keep it.

## ***How does one lose their honor?***

Lying, betrayal of the race...betrayal of racial secrets (this could easily become a death sentence for the offending party).

## ***How do you act towards a Biata who has lost its honor?***

They are completely shunned. They are invisible to you. You would not help a dying Biata if they were branded honor-less.

## ***How does one get its Honor back?***

A petition to the local council is the first step. The local council will determine how your honor is restored. Through questing or atonement and in rare extreme cases through a resurrection.

## ***What does drinking one dose of Gryphon blood do?***

For the most part, it might make you a little sick. Local plot committees may designate other effects and legends speak of prophetic properties.

## ***How much do Biata talk about their heritage?***

Not much...many communities are still extremely isolationistic and may have good reason to not speak of their heritage. Biata hold their racial secrets very sacred. However, it is commonly believed that Biata are the offspring of Gryphons. Be wary when traveling as some communities will hold a person honor-less for telling its secrets, while other communities are very open about their histories in order to show that they are not without Honor. The settlers of New Home are a good example for a need for openness, as are the survivors of Ashbury. The level of discussion is still held in tight control however.

## ***Can more than one Biata mind meld into someone's head?***

Yes. Biata can even mix with Stone-elves in this way.

## ***Can a person whose mind is being affected resist?***

The player is always in control. The subject (player) has the right to decline entry. It is an OOG decision by the player.

## ***What is a 'Prophecy Dream'***

It is a vision of the future, but only a piece of the puzzle. The Biata people are sensitive to prophecy and have a history of being guided by them, sometimes to their own dismay.

## ***What is the Council***

It is the ruling government formed by the people in a given area. Their structure is different in different localities but usually there is some kind of upper council consisting of three to seven members. They make the decisions that affect the race locally. Their authority is respected; however it extends only to Biata and they still must answer to the laws of the land they reside in.

### ***What is the High Council***

They are the ruling body that makes decisions for the whole race. They do tend to be regional in nature. They are made up of representatives from the local councils. The local Councils defer to their judgment. When you meet a High Council member, there will be no doubt of whom you are speaking with. It is said that they have the ability to cause enough mental pain with just a flick of a finger that they could bring a person to their knees in agony. All High Council members are NPCs controlled by the NERO International Plot Council.

### ***What are common last names?***

See page "Family Lines" starting on pg. 7

### ***What is a Blood Oath?***

A Blood Oath is an oath made with total commitment and honor to a cause. This is never given nor taken lightly.

### ***How is a Blood Oath Given?***

Methods for giving a blood oath vary from region to region. They are ceremonial and solemn with vows exchanged upon the oath giver's blood and family and are held in the highest esteem among the Biata people.

### ***What is the effect of Alcohol on a Biata?***

Alcohol (IG) does not intoxicate a Biata, nor does Dark Elven wine. The only substances that will intoxicate a Biata are an ingested intoxicant (Alchemical) and Fudge. Different Biata have differing levels of susceptibility and it has been noted that oftentimes a richer chocolate will cause a greater effect.

### ***Is Avalon the only continent that Biata are found on?***

No, Biata are found on all continents, and on several islands. They are known to colonize in "Migrations" and will migrate when faced with a social schism in preference to thinning the numbers of their race.

## **FAMILY LINES – Core Families**

- You do not have to be of any of these families – this is a listing of some of the original Avalonian families.
- What your character's family is can say a lot about your character's personality.
- The names are listed by approximate location but this does not mean that your character's parents could not have moved.
- Generally the families that have the the suffix "-ik" are the oldest families, and are closer to their ancestors, the Gryphons.

## **The North:**

### **Varik:**

For the longest time, this family was believed to be missing or all dead. It is said they are the original family descended from the Gryphons, but there is no proof. They are open-minded and tend to be even handed. They judge based on the individual, not what someone else has told them about another.

### **Vardik:**

This family is responsible for the Biata council working as we know it. They are also responsible for the joint goals and workings of the Hunters/Riders with the Elder, High, and High Elder Councils.

### **Vargik/Varda/Vasskal**

This family is split off the Vardik line. They refuse to deal with Gryphons and see them as the enemy for creating the Biata race and meddling in its evolution continually. Most Vargik were killed by Sessuar Assassins, and most of their offspring have changed their names and gone into hiding. The Vasskal are more open and spend their time training their people to hate and assassinate Sessuar.

### **Vardick/Vard/Vord**

This family line is responsible for the Biata being in control of their own lives. They urged separation from the Gryphons and to this day still despise them. Many dedicate their lives to eradicating their former oppressors.

### **Vorgik/Vorg**

These families insist on mating only with other Biata. They are a fierce warlike family who take great pride in their battlefield skills, and scouting abilities. Many migrated to Volta and the far west, refusing to live in the land of the Evendarrian invaders.

### **Vorg/Vaug/Vang/Vag**

Little is known of this warlike family line. They were abundant in the early years in the Northern Homelands and during the war against Evendarr. They were the fiercest fighters. They never showed compassion for the enemy, unlike other Biata, they seldom take Biata as their mates.

# The South

## **Merik**

The Merik family almost died off to a man after the Evendarrian race war. The family never mates with other Biata families unless there is a great deal of trust between the families. Do not assume that they are friendly, good in nature, or kind if they are being soft spoken.

## **Merdik**

This family is perhaps the most reactionary (next to the Vardiks). They are noted for their mental torture of the Evendarrian hunters during the race wars.

## **Merdick**

Like the Merdik, this family is reactionary and are skilled at mental torture. To them, the race wars never ended and they have decimated their numbers in guerrilla style warfare.

## **Merrik/Corak**

This line is noted for being specialists in Alchemy and Herbal Lore. They are known mostly for having hidden the recipe for the North Homeland Briar Poison. This recipe was reportedly stolen in 512.

## **Merrick/Curak**

This line was almost as large as the Vardik line once was. They are calm, calculating and cold in their acts.

## **Thardik/Torak/Thrommel/Thormek**

These families are known for their skill in double talk and subterfuge. They are very loyal to whom they trust and can be vicious fighters if need arises. They are even known to kill their own disloyal family members.

# The West

## **Lovik**

This family line has never been known to produce a low blood. General hypothesis is that they are either all Gryphons or will not lay with a shorter lived race, even if the continuation of the race is at stake. They are from the far west past Quentari. They are obsessed with keeping a stone on them, next to their skin at all times. They are also obsessed with keeping the Biata secrets from reaching non-Biata. They are true Racial purists, believing that those who change from Biata to another race are insane or diseased.

## **Lorik/Laone/Lorak**

This family line is rather snobbish as Biata go and are just as obsessive about Biata secrets as are the Lovik line. They have been known to strike down their own family mid sentence to keep a secret from being revealed. This family is responsible for leading the westward Biata to the east.

## **Orvik/Thromek/Thorvek**

This family line despises Gryphons, seeing them as cruel masters who treat Biata as their toys. They associate freely and aggressively with Gryphon hunters of the east and west.

# The East

## **Norik**

Presently this family has only been found in the Ashbury area. They consider any Biata with celestial protectives spells to be insane. They have been known to risk their lives killing these "Tainted" Biata. This family considers themselves completely good and honest.

## **Norick**

This family line is very close to the Norik. They are known to have been very close to the Norik. They are known to have been near when a Biata with Celestial protectives "disappeared" suddenly.

## **Nordik/Nord**

This family line is close to the Nordik and Norick family lines, and are just as obsessive, but they try hard to understand and tolerate the ways of other races. They will not have close personal contact with celestial casters.

## **Norvik/Naultik/Nault**

This family line is also very concerned with Biata ways. They tend to be sadistic pranksters. They have been over heard calling the shorter lived races as "Pets".

## **Durik**

This family is close to the Thardik family, and freely mingles and mates with non Biata. (they have even been known to take on Scavenger mates.) Because of their tolerance for other races, they are not treated too well by other Biata.

## **Durick/Dorak**

This family despises the Thardiks and Duriks even though they share many of the same views towards the other races.

## **Borik**

This family is from over the seas. They are very secretive in their business dealings and are stern about the Biata way of life. People who stand in the way of their business dealings are, well, dealt with.

## **Borick/Borack**

This family is fudge-obsessed like a drug addiction. Many tend to be candy makers. They love to party and socialize with other races, however they rarely mate with non Biata.

# QUICKIE BIATA HISTORY:

*Note that your character may not be aware of any of this history or may have some information wrong. Infact, the history printed here, like any history, is based on conjecture in large parts and is not necessarily all-true.*

*It is understood that several migrations would have happened and other regions would have modified cultures due to time, distance and geography.*

The origin of the Biata race is lost in antiquity, but some legends hold that they are the product of some sort of Earth Magic Formal Magic spell involving Barbarians and Gryphons. The Biata tribe lived among the other northern Barbarians and was considered by the other Barbarian tribes as being different in many respects. Although, like the Barbarians, they had no knowledge of Celestial magic's; the Biata stressed learning and "civilization." Legends are legends and there are Biata in other places than the "Homelands."

Before the great Celestial Change, Biata looked Human to all outward appearances. The Biata tribe was comparatively small and primarily lived in caves to the north of Ravenholt and Volta. In those days before the Great Celestial Change of 590, Biata had the ability to do all sorts of mind control. They could charm like vampires and control others, read minds through mind contact, and otherwise "mind blast" and the like. *Other Biata taught these skills, they were not innate.* There are rumors of very ancient high elder Biata that still possess these skills, (NPC's in other words).

Mental Powers governed the Biata society. The Biata had magical items (known as the Homestones) that apparently were sentient and could be used as a library or storehouse of sorts to gather information. These stones were hidden deep within the Biata's Mountains. Over months of experimenting and trying various methods, they found that the stones could communicate with the Biata when they touched it and concentrated. It would answer certain questions, but would refuse to answer others. It said that it was a relic of the Great Gryphons but would reveal no more of its origins, powers, or purpose.

The more powerful in these skills became the tribe's leaders. Certain Biata who were purer in blood were known as the "High Blood" and at that time they were considered a "superior" version of the race and had more powers - they usually ruled, the "Low Bloods" had more fun with life, and tended to be friendlier. This caused some dissension among Biata, of course. (It was not a perfect society - there's no such thing as a perfect society. The Biata had plenty of minor political squabbles and arguments.)

As Evendarr began to expand into Barbarian held lands in the mid 500's, many minor skirmishes ensued in which the Barbarians almost always lost. Finally, in the late 560's, the Biata leader, a man named Thorheim Vardik (who was known to the Humans by his alias Theodorik), managed to gather all the Barbarian tribes together to fight against the intruding Humans. He did this primarily by charming the Barbarian tribe leaders who didn't join on their own. This gave the Barbarians a better advantage as they were now fighting under one leader instead of many.

It was still a hard fought battle. However, because in those days, Biata took damage from any Celestial spell cast at them. The Humans were still winning the battles.

Thorheim heard that King Roderick of Evendarr was traveling the front lines and managed to capture him. He had hoped to both use him as a hostage as well as try to convince him that the land could be divided up so that both Humans and Barbarians could live peacefully. However, before he could do any of this, the Humans made a great attack on the Biata camp (there was traitor somewhere in the midst). This battle later became known as the Battle of the Blood River. The leader of the Humans was Captain Basil Ravenhurst. The battle was long and heavy until Basil (on horseback) spotted Thorheim (also on horseback).

Basil shouted "Prepare to Die!" and spurred his mount towards Thorheim. Thorheim fell as Basil's blade was thrust into him, and before any Biata could reach him with a Life spell, Thorheim died his final death. (The Biata were able to retrieve the body and Basil's weapon, however.) King Roderick was saved. The loss of the Biata leader signaled the end of the war. (Ironically, when Basil entered the mystical Hero's Graveyard, many years later, he was surprised to find a grave marked for Theodorik Vardik.)

The once numerous Biata were now down to a few hundred in number and were leaderless. Various political struggles ensued for control over the tribe and a very bitter exchange between Thorheim's widow, Arni Vardik and another leader named Luka Akira caused a definite split in the tribe, and many members left to try to hide themselves in Human society (stealing Biata stones to have for their own councils).

The Great Celestial Change of 590 had many profound effects on the Biata. Within a year or so, all were now showing signs of not being Barbarian (eyebrows, claws, whatever). They completely lost many of their powers and skills.

Fortunately, they also lost the disadvantage of taking damage from Celestial spells although they still became uncomfortable when these spells were cast.

*That's the basic history with lots of stuff left out for you to find out in game if you're interested. Your character is probably not very old (since you're starting at first level) and probably knows little about many of these subjects. It is possible your character was raised as a Human and nearly had a nervous breakdown when the feathers started to sprout. It is up to you. The myths of creation follows, but your character may not be aware of much of the information, and not all of it may be correct...*

## The Myths of Creation

### From the Gryphon Clan

#### As told by Gilcori Vardick

This is certainly a viable account of the Gryphon Tribe's creation, keeping in mind that all Gryphons can change shape at will and more than likely had infiltrated the tribe to begin with to help the adaptations that were occurring mentally. These adaptations were more than likely helped through crossbreeding with the Barbarians.

Originally, Biata were all Barbarians of the Gryphon Clan. They seemed no different than the other clans except that they were larger and more organized than most. Perhaps there was some difference that even they did not know about. Perhaps it was just unyielding loyalty and devotion to their totem that led to their transformation. Whatever the reason, they were chosen to travel a different path from that of the rest of the barbarian clans. Many hundreds of years ago, during the night of a full moon, the Gryphon clan barbarians were performing the tribal ceremony of adulthood, performed many times before and by many generations.

They gave praise to their totem the Gryphon, a symbol of strength and wisdom. They asked that the Gryphon accept a group of adolescents as adults of the tribe. As the new adults, painted and feathered for the ceremony, danced around the great stone, the sky suddenly darkened overhead. As each there looked they were rewarded with the vision of a great Gryphon circling above, yet very close. As the creature descended, the ceremony froze.

Landing on the great ceremonial stone, the Gryphon surveyed the ceremony participants. As his eyes met with one, and then another, a voice spoke in each of their heads. It was friendly and comforting, perhaps even paternal. It was the Gryphon, touching their minds and joining with them. Changing them in a way, which they could not even begin to expect.

As the Gryphon spoke, it welcomed them as children and congratulated them at this first step. It told them they had been chosen... accepted as part of a new way. It called them "Biata", meaning in their tongue "of the mind".

Suddenly, his voice was gone, replaced now by dozens of other voices. The voices of the minds of all assembled. As thoughts flew like seeds on the wind, seconds seems like minutes or hours. Communication took place at the speed of thought. Slowly, the voice faded away, until all any could hear was deafening silence. Their minds, now returned to normal, seemed lonely places. After agonizing seconds, the Gryphon again touched their minds. It promised to never leave them and make for them a place where they could always be. It spread one great wing and the wind touched each person like a mothers kiss.

The noble creature raised its head and broke the silence with one great shriek, causing many to release a breath they did not know they were holding.

It spread its wings, but did not fly away. Instead, it lay down on the rock, closed its eyes, and stopped moving, even breathing, though some say they could hear the creature's heart beat. Its form then shifted, sinking into the great ceremonial stone and melding with it. As the stone consumed the Gryphon, it changed. No longer a dull gray it swirled with many colors, eventually settling on a cloudy marbled white. All stared, frozen in disbelief. If not for the change in the stone, they probably would have attributed it all to a shared vision. Finally, one brave woman stepped forward to touch the stone. Others watched, and then jumped backwards at her gasp. Seconds later she turned her head, and tears of joy running down her face.

"He will never leave us", she said. As others touched the stone they too discovered its wonders. Warm to the touch, it invited each of them in and spoke with them. It guided each of them through its mind, a slow process compared to the mind talk of earlier. It began to teach them the ways of mind speech and mind healing.

The people noticed one other wonder, while in contact with the stone, they could enter the mind of another willing person. Each mind was portrayed differently with a mind totem representing each person. Usually a person's mind totem was an animal to which they felt represented themselves, but this differed, as greatly as there were people. Some were plants or even a voice on the wind. The people practiced and probed through the next day and late into the next night. Exhausted by this new form of exercise, they went home to rest tired muscles within their minds. As each left they were given a parting gift, a small piece of the stone. With this, they could continue to enter each other's minds and explore the fascinating new world within themselves.

The Biata slowly drifted apart from the other Barbarian tribes. It seems they had been given a second gift, that of an extended life span. Combined with their new strange ways, they shunned the other Barbarians, guarding their new secret as if it were the greatest of treasures. To them, perhaps it was. For generations the young were brought to the stone for their "first touch".

As the Biata grew and "evolved", councils were formed, each representing a different Gryphon known to the clan. These councils took the place of the tribes that had earlier divided the clan up into smaller sections. Not all agreed, but most felt the council heads spoke with the voice of the Gryphon, which they represented. None would speak out against the great lion-birds.

## How we lost the war (Snake nation perspective)

As told by the Wise woman 'Shoud'

Theodoric Vardik, leader of the Gryphon Barbarian Clan, ran an amazing gambit to unite the entire Barbarian clans. As a Biata, he used his mind powers to gain influence over many clan chieftains, persuading them to his cause. His bid for unity almost worked. Only through the Southmen's (citizens of the duchy now called Ravenholt) recognition of the threat that a united barbarian front could cause, and their willingness to rise up to war, was this unity squelched. Theodoric, a good and virtuous man, meant only for peace through his actions. He wished to make clan territorial disputes a thing of the past. Fighting over seasonal hunting privileges and such was only weakening and dividing the clans. Theodoric, seeing the growing number of Southmen as a threat to his people and their society, attempted to bond the Northmen together into one people; a force, which could not be undone.

Unfortunately, not knowing what motivations drove these barbarians; the Southmen saw their actions as preparations for war (understandably) and did likewise. Although it is unclear who actually cast the first spell (each side blamed the other), it is only known that war broke out between the Snake Nation and the united Southmen. Many on both sides actually welcomed this war and that is most likely where the bloodshed began.

As celestial filled armies marched north, the barbarians rose from the woods in sporadic and brutal attacks. The Southmen were better armed, armored, and prepared but the barbarians fought with the vigor of people for their homelands. The biggest force for the south was their Mages. The powerful sky magic (as the barbarians called it) of the celestials was a foe unlike any the Northmen had ever known. They called lightning from the sky and made even their tents impenetrable strongholds. With these on their side it seemed obvious the Southmen would eventually win, though perhaps many bloody years down the line.

Remembering his original quest for peace, his people unwilling even to consider surrender, Theodoric set out for a cure to the bloodshed. Using information gained by his scouts of the Southmen's leader's (King Roderick) whereabouts, Theodoric set up an ambush. He took a group of his most trusted, skilled, and stealthy men on a dangerous quest to kidnap the King. Unfortunately, for the Northmen, they were not the only ones with spies. The information of this plan was discovered, although not in time to stop the kidnapping. It was, however, in time to alert local forces to the King's plight. So, a contingent of Southmen, led by a young Captain Basil Ravenhurst, rode off to the king's rescue.

The two forces met and the results are history. Southmen, well armed and rested, on fresh horses came face to face with the wounded, bedraggled members of Theodoric's raiding party. The raiding party had but one advantage, the captured king. Knowing the king's death would likely make him a martyr and spur the Southmen on, Theodoric knew he must find a resolution involving as little bloodshed as possible. He challenged young Captain Ravenhurst to single combat with the king as the reward. Refusal of this challenged promised death for the king. Needless to say, the Captain accepted.

At the end of a quick but skilled battle, Theodoric lay dead and Ravenhurst and his forces had rescued the king. The remainders of Theodoric's personal group were allowed to escape and carry the word of his death with them. The leader of the great Snake Nation lay dead, and with him, his dream for a united people. Without his leadership the barbarians quickly scattered back into their own tribes. As smaller groups they found safety in the woods and mountains. Some

even escaped south into the Evendarrian lands taking up the seeming of Southmen. Whatever the choice the result was the same, the war had ended and the Southmen were victorious.

## Other story tellers have shared this, tying the Creation of the Biata and the Gypsies...

In the beginning there was the nothing. And the nothing was called Hjemstein. What does Hjemstein mean? Brimming with magical potential, River of tears, the Mighty Beginning; these are a few of the educated guesses. Along with the nothing existed Autifan-Daugh the land of fog and ice in the north and Caereinan. the land of fire in the south. There seems to be a bit of confusion as to whether or not these existed after Hjemstein or along side of it from the beginning.

In Autifan-Daugh there was a spring from which the Davat (eleven rivers - Sol, Jarvi, Fiorm, Talo, Kalevala, Triune, Flweuim, Guafi, ) flowed. The Davat froze layer upon layer until it filled in the northerly portion of the gap. Concurrently the southern portion was being filled by sparks and molten material from Caereinan. The mix of fire and ice caused part of the Davat to melt forming the figures Pedar the primeval giant and the cow Camilina. The cow's milk was Pedar's food. While Pedar slept his under arm sweat begat two stone giants, one male one female, while his two legs begat another male.

While Pedar was busy procreating Camilina was busy eating. Her nourishment came from licking the salty ice. Her incessant licking formed the first Biata named Gryhesse. He had a son named Varik who was the father of Vardik, Merik, Lovik and Nault. Son, Daughter, Son and Daughter.

For some reason the children of Varik decided to kill poor Pedar. His blood caused a flood that killed all of the stone giants except for two, Yens and his wife, who escaped the deluge in their boat. Vardik, Merik, Lovik and Nault put Pedar's corpse into the middle of Hjemstein and created the earth and sky from it. They also created the stars, sun, and moon from sparks coming out of Caereinan.

Finally, the children of Varik happened upon two of their children lying on the beach, entwined with each other and half drowned, they encircled them with flowers, wine, music and sparks from Caereinan and created the first two Gypsies "Inder" and "Rusilia" from them.

## In our beginning...

We simply were. The Biata were part of Tyrra at it's very essence.

A longer lived race, Mother Tyrra had taken us unto her embrace and gifted us with the ability to hear better, to see the thoughts of those who lived shorter lives than us, to protect ourselves with the flick of a thought as we were her children, and she loved us.

The Sky Father however thought we were cosseted, and that Mother Tyrra protected us too well. In our arrogance we openly defied him, and the great Mother had gifted us with fecundity as well as the ability to manipulate physical objects around us with just the power of our mind.

Then one day our arrogance cost us...

In a fit of temper we openly defied the Sky father, and were punished. What we did has been lost, and may never be recovered...

As a punishment we could no longer manipulate things with our minds, and were limited to the ability to converse with Mother Tyrra through special communication stones she had created for us. We could still defend from a distance and could still affect the minds of others. Mother took pity on us and gave us lands to farm and hunt on and it was good.

Then one day a new type of shorter lived people came in to our hunting grounds, and being stronger mentally we subverted them. They were lesser creatures, like the pack animals we used, and they made labor easier as they bred quickly and their numbers could go from 10 to 100 in a very short amount of time. Our own numbers were dropping, we were not having as many children.

Not all our people agreed with this treatment of those who were called slaves. A battle ensued, and those that lost were not killed, but instead chose exile... a small hunting party from the exiles returned in the night in an attempt to take as

many of the slaves to freedom as they could. Their grief was great when they realized that their own kind had considered this tactic and had slaughtered many of the slaves while they slept. Those that they could, were rescued, those that they could not, did not resurrect at all. In grief a Grand Council was formed. They resolved to fight slavery every where they went, and decided to scatter their groups to several different continents. Not all Biata remained Biata when they got to their destinations. Tales are told of some who in their Human visage (as all Biata looked) chose to change to another race, and become a Sea-faring people.

The origination point of all is no longer remembered, and the great Earth mother no longer talks to us... it is said our spirits join her through the talking stones she created once we permanently die, and that we must carry a piece of one of those stones on us at all times or our spirits shall lose our place with her. It is she who has gifted us with the ability to do what we still can today as mental healers, as it is the Sky Father who has made Sky Magic cause us such pain, and has forbidden that we are ever able to learn to read his writings.

## The Legend of Telmar Thorek

A long time ago a young boy and his father traveled across the Great Eastern Sea to a land of great magics and mystery. There they two spent years in a place of splendor and beauty while they learned much of the Lands of the Sun.

They found employment as gardeners in the court of Prince Lockmeir and spent many an evening riding horses along the estate, watching the stars come out, and speaking of many many things. The boy, Telmar Thorek, grew up across the Sea, learning at his father's feet about all the things Biata must know, all the things they must keep close, and all the ways in which they must act. Strong, tall, and proud, Telmar grew into a young man of dignity and courage and never was his father more proud.

And so it came to pass that Prince Lockmeir lost his kingdom to invaders from across the mountains. They swarmed down from the foothills, butchering and looting as they came. The palace of the prince was soon overrun and in the chaos Telmar's father was struck a fierce lingering wound. Telmar, seeing the blow, ran to his father and dragged him to the brief safety of a nearby shed.

"My son, Telmar, my son," gasped his father, "I am dying."

"No! No you mustn't! What will become of me if you do?" Telmar replied as tears ran unheeded down his face.

His father coughed, eyes glittering in the awful agony of his last moments. "My ring, a gift given to me long ago by your mother, you must take it from my hand and bring it back home." Blood trickled from his mouth and he fought for a few more words. "Please, Telmar, bring my ring home and lay it to rest with the remains of our ancestors so that my spirit will be at peace."

Telmar wept and tried to deny that his father would die, but the old biata was adamant that Telmar swear his word to the task and so he did. At that, with a last shuddering breath, his father passed beyond.

The escape from the palace would always be a blur to Telmar in the years to come. There was fire and pain, blood and death, but in the end he ran away from the invaders, ring clutched tightly in one hand. He traveled West across the Lands of the Sun, sleeping beside the roads and asking for a place on passing carts to ease the soreness of his feet. In this fashion did he come to the sprawling port known as the City of Stars. He needed passage aboard a ship back to his homeland and so went to the docks. Again and again he asked ship captains for passage home and again and again they laughed and told him how much it would cost. Finally, in desperation and determination, Telmar chose his only option. That night, carefully done so that a watchman would see, Telmar broke the window of a blacksmith's shop and tried to steal his tools. A whistle blew, and in short order was he caught and sentenced to a slave galley, doomed to row a ship across the ocean. The ring concealed in his boots, Telmar smiled as he was led to his ship.

Life was harsh aboard the galley and daily Telmar suffered. Whips and boots would strike at any time, harder if he stopped rowing to wince. Day in and day out would the oarsmen pull, bringing the ship across the oceans from city to city. In each new port Telmar would look, hopeful to see something familiar but disappointed time and again. Years passed this way, the biata growing ever thinner and his spirit ever weaker. Deep inside burned his vow and at nights he would take the ring and clutch it close to keep determination strong.

One day the ship passed to a new port and Telmar knew. This was the time and place. This port lay near to his homeland and he must make his escape. He was known, by this time, as a docile and broken slave and no slave master worried about his behavior. So, when the keeper of the oarsmen walked past, his shock was complete as Telmar rose up to his feet, wrapped his chains around the fat stinking neck of his captor and with a cry of rage twisted until a loud crack could be heard. Quickly he snatched the key from the downed man's belt, unlocked himself, and ran. Up the

stairs and past startled sailors he flew, striding for the edge and without a pause, leaping into the cold waters so close to home.

Telmar washed ashore miles down the coast and with a grimace forced himself up. It was time to walk again for he had not yet returned to his people. Everyday he woke up and walked some more, miles upon miles he went, hungry and weak and often sick. Miles he went until he met with the bandits of the river crossing.

They were ten of them, armed with crossbows and demanding gold. Telmar had none to give and so they laughed and told him no. He asked again to be allowed to pass, pleading that perhaps he could grant them some favor in return. Amused by this the bandits agreed and set upon Telmar a task. He would go to a nearby village and bring back from it the daughter of the local merchant for the bandits. They would be able to hold her for ransom and Telmar could then pass.

He thought on this, long and hard, and in the end he remembered his vow. So, with heavy heart he went to the village. He found the merchant's house. He waited for hours until out came a beautiful child, skipping merrily along the walk as she looked for wildflowers and excitement in the bright day. He took her then, a sack over her head, and brought her back to the bandits with a curse. They laughed again at his imprecations, but let him pass as the bargain was complete.

Onward went Telmar, never allowed a moment's rest. His father's ring sat heavily on a chain 'round his neck now, dragging him towards home. He never stopped and he never delayed, he just kept heading for home. Nightmares came of the things he did to keep his travels, but in the morning he always awoke and always he kept heading for home. He made it home one day, years and years later, though he could not be recognized anymore. His face was gaunt and withered his eyes aglow. He was a creature of corruption and death for in no other way could he live to fulfill his vow. In the end, his own people killed him; struck him down with sword and spell, but the ring they recognized and placed it with his ancestors. His vow was fulfilled and his spirit free.

## Legend from the barbarian people

### Creation Myth.

The children gathered around the fire in the cave. Shadows flickered against the walls, and the old weathered Keeper of the Way took his place.

"Listen my children, and I will tell you of our cousins who are no longer born with steel in their fist" He spoke with a voice that was long practiced for telling tales. "Long ago when we first came to these shores we all were separated from our totems. We failed them and were placed in this new land to learn, and to seek their forgiveness. It has been spoken that once the totems forgive us, they will let us return to the dome in the sky, and let us use the sky magic that we are now not permitted to learn; as it would be a disgrace for our people. Many years went by and we survived happily with our new mother."

"One day the Shaman of the Gryphon tribe used old magics long forgotten to this world to call upon the the Totem of the Gryphon. The Gryphon answered his call and spoke with his booming voice 'You have summoned me, why?'" The Shaman spoke with purpose, 'We have been on these new shores for many turnings of the sun. My people do not wish to return to the dome in the sky. We wish to remain.'

"Do you understand what this means?" the Gyphons voice shook the land. "You will no longer have the chance to learn what is forbidden to you."

The shaman nodded. "We understand"

"Very well. It will be made so" The Gryphon outstretched his mighty arms, and expanded his wonderful wings and took flight. With each beating of his wings his children were forced to the ground and rooted within the land.

The Keeper of the way finished his story with "This is why our cousins of the Gryphon can no longer learn the way of the Sky Magics, and why they will never be allowed to go back to the dome in the sky. Over the years the Gryphon kept watch of them, and has favored them with his Mind and Features."

## A story of our beginnings

In the beginning there was only an empty feeling. We were trapped in a void unable to move or speak. Our people slaves to the nothing, held prisoner by the evil magics of the Sky. Long ago our people were all that Tyrra knew. We loved her and she us. She bore us fruit to eat and rain to drink. We offered her thanks and lived to honor her.

This made the Sky jealous. He wanted our praise and made magnificent stars to show us his power. He made beautiful clouds to entertain our days, and a warm sun to keep us safe. We took for granted his gifts and for this he punished us. He used his Sky magic to imprison us away from Tyrra. He kept us there for so long that we forgot who we were. After a while we were forgotten. We hoped that Tyrra would remember us and save us, she did not.

One day a great hero of our people found a way to escape our imprisonment. He traversed the void and freed us all. We returned to Tyrra and she remembered us. She embraced us and we felt her love. The Sky was sad because it had left us trapped for so long. He tried to apologize and give us boons. We turned our backs on him. His cruelty would not be forgotten. This is why our people refuse to learn the magics that call upon his power. Tyrra will see us through, she is all we need.

## Sir Fenyl of the Brightheart

The moon was full and cast many eerie shadows across the field. The mist hung about knee high and the light breeze made it move as if it was alive. We had heard reports that the Black Rose would be attacking this evening so we made preparations. The Duke had requested Royal support so the 2nd Infantry was sent which is how I ended up on this field on this ominous night. Sir Fenyl, our commanding officer, stood with piercing eyes fixed on the field. The men chattered amongst themselves but he seemed to be in his own world. Sir Fenyl was an amazing warrior. Far beyond what people had come to know as talented. He claimed that seeing as most of combat is mental it makes sense that he, being a Biata, would excel. His men were proud to fight with him as he had become a legend because of his prowess. He had won the combat tourney for the last 5 years running.

A high shrill scream broke the quiet of the night, a banshee. You could see men shudder after hearing the impending death that would pour over them. Then ranks of revenants rose from the ground and started attacking. Sir Fenyl glided through the revenants as if he was running through saplings cutting a path. He was poetry in motion. He was an artist and his swords were his paintbrushes, leaving a masterpiece of destruction in his wake. He seemed to be able to feel the air around him, more than once I watched him dodge a blow that should have been impossible for him to see.

As he punched the line we followed, split and flanked the revenants lines. The banshee could be seen across the field standing with some other figures. Sir Fenyl ordered the troops to regroup and stand firm. Both sides waited, Sir Fenyl had studied the previous battles with the Black Rose and had come to realize that if they advanced they would be flanked and split then consumed by the twisted creations. It had happened that way in most reports of encounters with the Black Rose. Eventually the figures spread out and more revenants rose to attack. The banshee slowly pressed toward the line. Sir Fenyl knew that he had to be ready to punch the line and destroy the banshee before too many men die. He waited until the banshee was about 40 feet away and started his flight. He poured through the revenants in front of him and rolled left flanking down the line of the undead. He then turned back right and out into the field. He dropped and kneeled in the fog to refit his armor and check out the current situation. As he looked around he saw two figures approaching. Sir Fenyl laid down and tried to be as motionless as possible.

As he lay there the two figures got closer and he could hear their conversation. It was two of the leaders of the Black Rose. They were talking about how they hoped that this diversion would last long enough to get to the cave and set up for tomorrow. Sir Fenyl waited as they passed and then looked back to the line, half the men were down. He couldn't afford to chase the two leaders and sacrifice the men. He snuck back to the

line behind the banshee and cut it down before it could turn around. He then got the healers up and got the men back into formation. He ordered them to hold here and attack all that approach. He then ran off after the two leaders he had seen earlier. He caught up to them and carefully followed. They eventually went into a cave and after about 10 minutes he headed toward the cave. He tried to see how far they had gone in and realized that they were very deep in. He ran back to the field and grabbed a celestial scholar and again ordered the men to stay.

Sir Fenyl and his man ran back to the cave and Sir Fenyl stepped in and ordered the scholar to ward the cave. The scholar started the spell and Sir Fenyl got ready to fight. One minute, nothing, all was quiet. Two minutes, still nothing, the scholar was visibly shaking. Three minutes, nothing, the scholar was shaking uncontrollably. Four minutes, voices and footsteps. Sir Fenyl took a deep breath and then seemed to freeze as if paralyzed. Four minutes twenty four seconds, the undead became viable in the darkness. Sir Fenyl shifted slightly raising his short sword about an inch. Four minutes 36 seconds, Sir Fenyl blocked feverishly trying to hold off these two ancient abominations getting heavily beaten in the process. Four minutes 51 seconds, "When it goes up, jump out and get the men, leave me here!" yelled Sir Fenyl. Five minutes, the ward went up and the scholar jumped back with the ward key and said "Sir I can't leave you here to die." "That's an order." groaned Sir Fenyl as he slumped down. The undead told the scholar that they would trade Sir Fenyl's life for their freedom. The scholar ran off and got the men, by the time they were back the body had dissipated and the undead were still there.

The soldiers dropped the ward and destroyed the undead. As they searched the cave they found why they were still there, they had moved their spirit bottles there and couldn't just kill themselves and leave. The spirit bottles were destroyed and the men went to the nearest earth circle to wait for Sir Fenyl. When they got to the circle they learned that the resurrection failed. They dressed in their parade uniforms and marched back to the cave. They recovered his body and dressed him in his parade uniform and carried him all the way to Evendarr City. He was buried there on June 5th, 587.

## A Treatise on the Foundation of New Home

By Kelsea Varik,

Former Ambassador to the Kingdom of Avendale from New Home,  
Biata Culturalist

Fairly well known within Biata culture is the fact that when a group of Biata can no longer stomach the activities of other members of their race, they leave to form a new society. This has happened repeatedly throughout history, and a whole Evendarrian city in Ashbury was formed from this type of a migration from the continent of Gandar to the continent of Avalon.

In the late 560s, E.R. there was a great migration. War had overrun the Homelands and several great warriors were simply tired of the fighting (especially when they could not agree on tactics used, the thought of creating Undead to fight their battles for them turned their stomachs and was not tolerated.) They wanted only to live in peace and have a sanctuary (obviously to these settlers, Necromancy was considered "Foul" and not condoned.)

These Biata were not the ones who had given the secret of the Biata's weakness to the Evendarrians during the Race wars -- those were the Biata from the Gandarrian migration of over five hundred years before. Nor did these Biata consider themselves Gryphon clan Barbarian, but rather, were a third faction that had concluded that many of their contemporaries had been driven delusional by the effect of at least one cracked Homestone. The Homestones were their link to their ancestors and culture, with one of the Stones being broken, the effect spilled into the everyday lives of the racial members associated with them.

This third faction traveled to many regions across the continent of Avalon, and some found sanctuary in the Northern Frost Peak Mountains. In this haven, they built their settlement and named it "New Home". Gryphon to Low Blood, everyone was treated equally. Whereas the Homelands had made a virtual serf class of the Low Bloods, here all were treated equally. Dignity was considered an unspoken right. The Laws of 215 were discarded, as Controlling Barbarians was considered a violation of free will. No one could tell the younger Biata WHY the horror years were that and instead of keeping blood sacred it created a class system that was oppressive. Too many of the Biata in the south had no Honor to accept their word as law. Too many of the Southern Biata saw only Biata life as honorable.

The Secret Gryphon location and home didn't really exist ... the Gryphons as a race had assimilated their numbers into the Biata race, and in their eyes all were one. Houses were built; ground was tilled for farms that terraced the sides of the mountains. Gryphons showed their desire for true harmony by being both protectors and pack creatures, importing raw materials for construction from around Tyrra. This allowed all to live in comfort in a relatively short period. Then after all appeared done and that the settlers would finally have their "Happily ever after," mayhem struck.

Six of the thirteen founding members, having recuperated from their injuries, were still tainted with blood lust for all non-Biata. In a council meeting, they demanded that all humans be eradicated and that New Home be used as a base of operations for their war machine. Six others disagreed; they had their peace and wanted only their sovereign space to have as a sanctuary for all of their kind and descendants. The argument escalated into physical combat when a seventh stepped in and declared his choice for peace. Feathers flew in deadly combat that saw the six who wanted war dead; no resurrections were performed as their bodies reformed without their spirits within.

Peace has been held for the last thirty years. As the Expansionism encroached again, (this time under the Leadership of the late Queen Naomi, of Avendale,) the cries for war were pleasantly absent. The New Home council saw the opportunity for wrongs to be set right and peace was declared. At last known date, relations with Avendale and New Home were very friendly, and New Home's sovereignty had been recognized. When Arundel (an estate within Brisbane, Avendale) was decimated by Elementals in the spring of 598, New Home's residents sprang into action. Materials for reconstruction were promptly provided and other supplies that could be offered were sent. New Home was instrumental in its allies' ability to recover from such heavy losses. Ambassador Kelsea Varik followed in her path of months before and with the financial backing of the New Home council (as she had the previous year before in Avendale City) established orphanages in the area of Arundel that were not limited to any race.

New Home has blended back into obscurity of late, and not many of the Biata race have been seen within Avendale's borders. Diplomatically, there has not been a strain, however, the Biata have been silent in the face of Avendale's expansionism.

## The Sessuar Invasion of Ashbury

### Kelsea Varik-Laone

In the spring of 598, life was not as sweet for the Biata in Evendarr, more specific – the Ashbury region. The deaths of many due to the invasion off the Sessuar have until now been unrecorded... many of our kind have pledged their loyalties to the Sessuar, forsaking their blood oaths to clan and family, in order to find prestige, power and wealth within the Sessuar society.

Having tasted the possibility of power within the Human society while the youth (Bracuar Nautic) known publicly as Brian Nordenn held the throne of Duke for several years these individuals now saw the chance to have the humans kneel to them. They seemed to have lost care and interest for kith and kin, no longer impressed with the continuation of the race, they only seem to be concerned for their own well being. Granted, the Hounds were a great problem, however the steadfast anxiety for the continuation and preservation of the race seems to have disappeared.

Once more the true colors of the Eastern High Council were shown what the true count of the survivors is may never be known. All that is known is that the High Council led its people like lambs to the slaughter. The Biata race became Elderless at that point in the Ashbury area.