

**The Reformed
Ascension High Ogres
OFFICIAL ASCENSION RACE PACKET**

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The cave lit with a kaleidoscope of colors from the Life Engine as it rumbled to life, seemingly unprompted. A shine focused it, and the light twisted and curled until the circle was complete.

Ma're'leth stirred and slowly rose to his feet. The large Ogre looked better suited for battle rather than his chosen path of educator and healer. He moved deftly to the circle and felt the sensation of passing under a thin waterfall while crossing over its threshold. He knelt carefully and closed his eyes, focusing on the world beyond and the whispers of those who were.

His eyes snapped open with the same speed as his reaching hand. Hovering slightly above the ground, a ball had formed and was gaining mass and flesh. Muscles knit themselves together and skin coursed over the tiny yellowy form as a Reformed was given to the world. The whispers of shards of the spirits that were being knitted together to make this new little champion were nearly at a shout in Ma're'leth's ears.

His hands formed a cradle for the child as he examined it, healthy and of course, navelless. He spoke softly, listening to the names of who they were, and draw from them to name that who now is. "Welcome to the world Sul' Un'Jarl. We have much to do." The babe's eyes opened lazily and focused on the old ogres grizzled visage, then gave a small tusky smile.

High Ogre Racial Basics

Also known as the Reformed (to themselves) or the Circle-Born (to others), High Ogres are a curious result of the Fall, an inadvertently-created race pieced together from broken bits of spirits and given flesh by the Earth. Short-lived but sturdy, High Ogres are well-suited to the harsh life of the Cairn, rapidly filling a niche in the new society as the first to react to dangers.

High Ogres' bodies do not process fruit in the way that most others do. Instead, they experience a sugar rush, filling them with an agitated energy that often makes them want to fight. Many also report a mildly intoxicated or "buzzed" feeling, with their sense of pain being slightly dulled, and their inhibitions being faintly lowered.

High Ogre History

The whispers of the dead never leave me. Not completely. They surround me, permeate me, an endless susurrus. Some of them are the ones who died near me; those who succumbed to wound or illness or age, those whom my skill or bravery could not save, those whose spirit I could not keep paired with their flesh.

Others - the stronger voices - are the ones who made me, who ARE me. Sometimes, I can almost make out their voices, can almost hear enough to learn who they were, those victims of the first assaults by the Vreech, spirits splintered and cracked and sent to the void.

As Earth circles were devoured during the attacks, those shards swirled aimlessly - not weak enough to dissipate, not strong or whole enough to reform into a person. Somehow - perhaps some subconscious wisdom to seek out others - these pieces were drawn to the Cairn. Enough managed to congregate around the Life Engine, seeking a return to the life that had been stripped of them.

Much to the surprise of the Selunari, the Life Engine responded, knitting those fragments back into a whole. The Earth itself provided a body to clothe the patchwork quilt that we had become. After the first, more came. The Reformed. The Circle-Born. The Children of the Fall. The High Ogres.

-Histories of the Reformed by Aka'zu'na

In the wake of the Fall, the appearance of the High Ogres was a surprising and at-first-disconcerting occurrence. The attacks by the Vreech had left everyone on edge, and the first Reformed to walk the Cairn quickly found themselves being interrogated at the point of several Oathsworn weapons. Though the crisis was narrowly averted, it did lead to a lingering tension between the Circle-Born and the Wardens.

Eventually, the Ogres were able to integrate into Cairn society. They quickly took to confronting danger, both in and out of combat (which further increased tension between them and the Wardens, who by this point had started to see the Reformed as family that was to be trusted but also needing protection from the intricacies of the world).

As time passed, and new generations of Reformed were born, the younger generations reported inheriting similar sensations to that of the first generation. The spirits of the High Ogres seemed permanently fragmented, some strange result of their origin that rendered them permanently a pastiche.

Recent History

The High Ogres long ago integrated themselves into Cairn society, and have taken an active role ever since. In recent years, as food and supplies have become more scarce, the Circle-born have remained steady, helping others adjust to having less and helping to share the

burden when possible. There are many who feel that the Cairn would not be as well-off as they are without the High Ogre's efforts, and they seek to keep it that way.

High Ogre Culture

Ours is a life of sacrifice and service. Many express their bravery by standing up in battle, taking up arms against a personal foe. We are experts at that, but we also face more primal and impersonal battles, protecting those from the natural world itself. Whether fire or broken limb or fierce enemy, we stand ready. Ours is a life of interruptions; interrupted meals, interrupted sleep, responding whenever the cry for help went out.

While others run away, we run towards. Armed with the strength of our arms and of our hearts, wielding weapons or magic or tools, we put ourselves at risk to save others. To the scared, we bring hope, safety. To the wounded, we bring healing, relief. And to the dying or dead, we bring respect, and a noble burial.

-Mok'tar, High Ogre Medic

Because of the fragmented nature of their spirits, High Ogres cycle being being able to relate to others and being almost painfully awkward, the side-effect of conflicting instincts. Many report that the instincts are nearly-audible, often describing it as "whispers." Typically, these whispers are too quiet, and too overlapping, to properly hear, and so are effectively white noise to the Reformed. At times, this white noise fades away almost entirely; at other points, it gets louder, distractingly so. Some High Ogres have sought out methods of trying to make sense of these whispers; many different schools of thought exist, from calming one's mind through meditation, to breaking down mental barriers though intoxicants or other alchemical substances. Some successes have been reported, but so far, nothing has proven to be a reliably repeatable process.

Because of the strain that the whispers can have on a mind, as well as the stresses of their danger-confronting lifestyles, the High Ogres place a significant amount of importance on mental health. Many have become counselors, often pairing with Biata or Stone Elves to help deal with more difficult cases, and most Reformed are patients at least once in their lives, if not more so. Others have developed dark senses of humor, seeking to diffuse angst with biting wit. No matter which approach a High Ogre takes, an appreciation of what other races might deem the dark, the disturbing, or the macabre is fairly routine. Many High Ogres emphasize the importance of seeing the beauty in all things, even things others find distressing.

Circle-born view death as entirely natural, and embrace it as part of the cycle. Their nature, and their short lives, grant the High Ogres a practicality towards death. However, undeath (and, by association, necromancy) earns a visceral reaction from them. Strong enough necromancy (such as in the lair of a powerful undead) is a palpable sensation to most Reformed, an unpleasant prickling sensation on their skin that leaves them with a need to act, immediately. Woe betide a necromancer who has accidentally incurred the wrath of a High Ogre.

“High Ogres” vs “Monster Ogres”

Because Ogres are an amalgam of spirits, some reform... bad. More monster than person, these beings are unfit for society. The luckier ones escaped, slunk away, forming monstrous tribes in the unused sections of the Cairn. These monstrous Ogres are, at once, both brethren to and enemies of the High Ogres. Some of the Reformed seek to help their less fortunate kin, trying to teach them how to control their monstrous sides. Others view them as an existential threat, and seek to put them down.

High Ogre Holidays & Celebrations

High Ogres have few holidays of their own, though they enjoy celebrating holidays with the other races. The primary holiday that they do observe is Rha’kel’ath, the Day of Mourning. This is a day of reflection taken to honor those who had died in the past year. Stories are told of those who have passed, and toasts are raised to the fallen.

High Ogre Names

High Ogre names are diverse; some Circle-born use the naming structures of other races, or combining them, while others set off in their own direction, forging new names. A common High Ogre tradition is to use short syllables linked by apostrophes, such as Re'a'ha, Tra'khal, Du'ghan.

High Ogre Racial Notes

Due to their knitted-together nature of their spirits, Arcane magic does not flow smoothly for High Ogres; as such, they must pay double for the Read Magic skill. Their bodies are, however, physically tough and ready for battle. High Ogres pay 1 less XP for Hardy. High Ogres can purchase the skills Racial Resolute (2 XP) and Resist Necromancy (4 XP). Finally, High Ogres purchase all Weapon Skills at half cost (rounding up). High Ogres have a short life expectancy compared to other races, and they mature faster, so that your starting character may only be four years old.

Additionally, due to their nature as Circle-Born, High Ogres are oddly in tune with the Earth. This may result in, at Plot discretion, an Ogre being able to sense disturbances in the natural world, such as the presence of strong necromancy.

High Ogre Dress

High Ogre dress is consistent in its inconsistency. Some dress with a unified theme; others use whatever is available, seeing no issue pairing clashing colors or styles. Some dress to impress, while others focus on comfort above all else. The only thing that can honestly be said is that it is likely to be unique, and diverse.

High Ogre Racial Makeup

As Ogres, the Reformed have the signature tusks and yellow skin of their race. All exposed skin should be yellow, either due to makeup, or some form of lightweight “base layer” type clothing (such as Underarmor™). Tusks can either be store-bought prosthetics, or made with crafting supplies such as moldable plastic.

Interactions with Other Races

Due to the amalgam that makes up their spirits, Ogres find the other races at once exceptionally easy and exceptionally difficult to relate to, an awkwardness that comes and goes at odd moments. For the most part, High Ogres do their best to maintain good relationships with the other races, though they are aware that, to many, their tendency to talk to spirits or exhibit other odd quirks can unnerve most other races. The Sylvanborn, however, seem fairly at ease with that, given their own tendency towards quirky behavior. Of the other races, the Hobblings and the Dryads seem the most interested in the Ogres, sometimes seeming oddly obsessed with discovering what, to quote a Hobling, “makes them tick.”

This fascination is mirrored for the Ogres in their favoring Stone Elves. Ogres see Stone elves as wondrous. High Ogres are a kaleidoscope and the Stone Elves are a stained glass image. There’s something about it that most other races find faintly distressing, but the Ogres find almost comforting. The shattered wholeness of the Stone elves is beautiful to an Ogre. Ogres share a certain resonance with the Wylderkin - each can sense that there’s something faintly...different about each other’s spirits, even if neither can easily put that into words.

Finally, there are the Wardens. The Oathsworn of the Cairn have long held an almost protective nature towards the Circle-born, though their long history of working together has formed a solid partnership.