

"May the Maiden light your true path."



THE MAIDENS' DUCHY

{Summary} Alliance of 3 zealous towns {and many unnamed hamlets} built around massive fires said be left by the Blistered Maiden

{History} Founded 8 human generations ago by the Blistered Maiden's 3 mortal sisters, the Maiden lead her worshippers across the sea to the land of Bitterhag with hopes of escaping the looming Sovereign Wars, the people of the duchy took shelter in a torch-lit dungeon built beneath Maiden's Rest when the wars reached their shores



{Inspiring Visual} Crackling fires, firewood is rare so most fires are kept lit with hag or animal oil, braziers and torch sconces are shaped like the head of a spiked morningstar {symbol of the Blistered Maiden}

THE STRUCTURE

{Government} The duchy is ruled and protected by the Order of the Mourning Star, the order's duchesses appoint a mayoress over each settlement, laws are heavily based on scripture and/or superstition

{Symbol} A spiked sun rising over an ice and web-choked mountain range, symbolizes the prophesied return of the Blistered Maiden who will burn away the last daughters of Mother Blackweb, typically appears on red/yellow/black surfaces {colors of the Maiden}

{Capital} Maiden's Rest, well-defended town and base of operations for the Order of the Mourning Star, many attempt pilgrimages to the capital but very few survive

{Citizens} Humans {80%}, Dwarves {10%}, Half-giants {5%}, Other {5%}



{Defenses} Maidens of the Order of the Mourning Star {witch-hunting clerics}, the Torch Wardens {small town militias}, local superstition {often fear tactics to deter crime/witchcraft}

{Exports} Hag organs/secrets {accessible only through the Order of the Mourning Star}, spider silk textiles, cold iron {mined from the Crawling Crags and Frozen Saw mountains}

{Threats} Daughters of Mother Blackweb {hungry for vengeance and mortal souls}, the Wooly Clan frost giants {on the brink of declaring war}, corruption within the Order of the Mourning Star {some members are conspiring with hags as a "necessary evil" or using heretical practices to stay in power and drive out rivals}



THE PARTY ENCOUNTERS...

{Chosen Maiden} A maiden of the Mourning Star called to hunt down a young white dragon in the Altar Peaks, she is seeking allies to join her in this quest with promises of sharing the dragon's hoard, refusal to join draws her suspicions that you are conspiring with the dragon and/or hags

{Frostbite Zombies} A caravan of pilgrims was caught in a cursed blizzard and turned into zombies, the herd wanders into town in the middle of the night while the storm is still raging, the howling winds and snow makes it all but impossible for the characters to see out in any direction more than 5 feet {zombies not effected}

{Frozen Merchant} A potion merchant whose fox-pulled sled was frozen solid by an ice dragon's breath, the dragon snapped off the merchant's potion chest to take to it's lair in the Altar Peaks but a few fell from the damaged chest, one of the foxes survived and has refused to leave its frozen master's side for the past 3 days

{Concerned Citizen} Suspects they're neighbor is a warlock after discovering one of their precious few livestock slaughtered, the "warlock" in question is a blind fisherman adored by everyone in town, the culprit is the concerned citizen who doesn't know they're a polar werebear

{Sisterlimb Spider} An abomination resembling a massive spider stitched together by the daughters of Mother Blackweb using the limbs of their cannibalized sisters, tasked with fetching food and living sacrifices for its creator coven, each of its 8 "eyes" is a severed hag head that can spit occult curses

{Maiden Shrine} A forgotten shrine of the Blistered Maiden burning at the back of an ice cave, carved from obsidian to resemble a hag being burned at the stake with an iron maiden helmet bolted over her head, burning a piece of occult magic or essence of a hag at this shrine grants you a blessing from the Maiden



THE CULTURE

{Core Value} Purity, the occult forces of Doom can quickly corrupt your souls in these dark lands, the Blistered Maiden's light will guide you to truth and purity

{Customs} Gather around bonfires to make offerings and burn witches/heretics, dress in thick spider silk garments dyed black/red/yellow, keep candles burning in your windows and doorways {believed to keep hags and evils spirits away}

{Taboos} Traveling at night without a torch/lantern {leads to accusations of being a witch/warlock}, causing trouble around an open flame {disrespectful to the Blistered Maiden and can result in imprisonment}, putting out a fire rather than letting it burn out {believed to bring bad luck}

