

WHO ARE THE KRAALING?

The Kraalings are a fantasy culture and cult loosely based on the real world Proto Norse. There are differences however between earth and Midgard, in order to create a more inclusive narrative.



CLIMATE & LANDSCAPE

The lands Myrskogur, meaning “Dark Woods”, are heavily wooded and bountiful, and far from homogenous. Evergreens and deciduous trees take up dominance in different areas, and the woods actually contain several smaller biomes, despite what the ominous green exterior would imply.

It is cradled to the north by a large mountain range, which the Kraaling refer to the Arms of the Mother, which are frequented for resources that are not available in the lowlands. Within these mountains lies a massive system of caves called the Cave of The Gods. At the mouth of this massive cave system is a gigantic Kraal, to which all the tribes travel and leave tributes and sacrifices. It is believed that these caves are where the Kraaling survived the last Daamerung. It is for this reason these caves are also known as The Mother’s Womb, as all of humanity was reborn from within. A single stout peak rests a distance from the mouth of the Cave of The Gods, nestled deep in the forest, called Uthr’s Eye, and it is from there that many of the seers and mystics travel to read the stars and interpret the signals given to us by the world.

Several small rivers roll from these northern mountains and form tributaries to a large river that runs from northeast to a massive lake near the center. This river is known as the Ageless River, and the lake the Belly of Life. It is around this lake that the largest tribes live around. Skorguroch is a looming mountain in the western section of the land, dominated by powerful and mysterious Jotun. The lands surrounding it are forbidden.

POLITICS

The Kraaling have lived as intentional outsiders for as long as the others have existed. They turn us away as savages, and refuse our teachings as “primitive.” In truth, we understand that this is the only way to survive the Dammerung, and we do not respect those that huddle in masses and cannot survive alone. We reject them almost as firmly as they reject us. Raids are not uncommon in lands that border Kraaling territory. In places where some

amount of peace has been afforded, it is tenuous and dependent on the interpretations of signs from our mystics.

Still, there are those of us who seek to teach them the way of survival. It is the nature of the Kraaling to reach a hand out to those that would listen, to adopt them into our people. However, those that turn our wisdom away face our violence.

DIET

The Utmann like to imagine that we eat only meat, but we come from a giant, lush forest. Our diet is actually more centered around edible plants and fruits, with meat as a supplement. Acorn meal, cattail stems, onions, taro, yucca, potato, tomato, beets, corn, squash, sunflowers, peppers, beans, blackberries, raspberries, cherries, and other native fruits and vegetables are bountiful and available to us. Fish and bird are often hunted, as they are much easier to gather passively with traps and lines which do not need to be attended. When we do hunt, deer, boar, and even bear and ape are common game. Counter to the beliefs of the Uudman, we do make bread. Gathering native grains and processing them into flour is resource intensive, but for many special occasions it is made with nuts, fruit and animal fat and cooked on flat stones near an open fire or within easily constructed woodfire ovens.

PROFESSIONS

We do not as easily split our people into “professions” as much as other cultures do. Everyone contributes to hunting, gathering, making our homes and starting our fires. Certainly, some of our people are more specialized into one thing or another, but there is far less focus on such things.

Each different Kraal often has a chief that leads the people (though it may not only be one person who takes up leadership in a single community) and one or more mystics that read the signs of the gods. Some are better at fishing, trapping, or hunting. Some are better at shaping stone tools, and some take pride in their ability to fight. Some have studied healing. Kraaling often are identified by what they are most skilled at. Even so, it is always important to remember that no matter our talents, we are almost most

responsible for the wellbeing and health of our fellow Kraalman. We do not farm. We do not weave cloth. We do not work with the fire-stones. Animal meat, skins and pelts, bones, plants for cordage and food, and other naturally sources materials are the mainstay of the Kraaling people. If any one resource could be said to be our most cherished and coveted, it would be a certain type of stone used for making stone tools. Eoruk stones, those that break like glass and can be used to make razor edges, are rare and very valuable. Trips into the the Mother's Arms often begin with the desire to find it.

COMMUNICATION

Kraaling are not the simple minded fools others would assume us to be. We are often quiet and stern in the company of Uudman outsiders, but we speak freely and joyfully in our own company. That being said, the Kraaling value and are far more comfortable with silence than others. When speaking to others within a group, it is important to show respect to all that you speak to. It is even more important to offer respect to those within a tribe that hold positions of authority or skill. Being brash or disrespectful will likely be perceived as a challenge to the leader of a group, not only if done directly to them but to anyone who is under their leadership. This rarely ends well for the disrespectful party.

Kraaling speak very clearly and without veiled intention. They use both positive and negative group enforcement to contain problem individuals within the tribe in order to bring them back to a place of mutual respect. This can be seen as brutish by outsiders, but direct language describing the feelings and intentions of the speaker are always appreciated if they are done so with positive intention and a willingness to work through conflicts. If disrespect is intentional or repeated, the target of the disrespect (or the individual that leads the target) will lead a challenge against them, bringing all those that have been wronged against the offending party. Many voices are stronger than one.

The Kraaling also speak the First Language, though it is not commonly spoken. It is only used frequently in ceremonies and by those that take a particular interest in it. Anyone using the first language is expected to repeat the statement using the common tongue, so that those who cannot speak it can understand them.

HISTORY

The Kraaling are as they always have been: patient, wise, and in tune with the world around them. They have known long before the Dammerung began that it would return, and they have kept their skills for survival sharp. With no written word, we have only the stories that we pass from the elders to each new generation. Each tribe has their own history, their own tales to be told, yet each tribe knows that the coming darkness is almost here. This is a time of

raiding, and bolstering our numbers. We call this The Red Song Time.

This Red Song Time however, involves the story of an Uutmann King from another land. Years ago, he treated with our tribe, and in our way we refused deal with those that relied on steel and cloth. The King insisted, and we offered him a challenge: live as we do. Hunt, eat, survive among us, and earn the right to call himself Kraaling. The King agreed. He lived with us for several weeks, and forsook the trappings of a king. He undertook the ceremonies of a child, a warrior, and a leader. He took the name of Veshugr, "Of Good Soul." He hunted beside us, killed and ate the flesh of man. In doing so, he became of our tribe, and we of his.

With the King's death, we have travelled across the world, through hostile lands, for many months. We have come to collect what belongs to our Kraal: the bones of Veshugr. From his bones, we will consecrate a new hunting ground, and form a new tribe that will survive and thrive in the coming darkness.

TRADITIONS

Sacrifice- After every meal a small sacrifice is made to the kraal. A small bone, a fruit peel, ect.

Introductions- Kraaling introductions always include their main duty to the tribe. Introductions are structured [pronoun] is [name] the [role]

Blood Oaths- Kraaling sometimes make blood oaths which are bonds that last for the rest of their lives.

Touch- Touching hands with someone is a sign of trust as it leaves you defenseless. Strangers get a nod as a greeting, family and close members of the kraal touch forearm to forearm.

Order- The first bite of any meal goes to the kraal, the second the hunter who provided, the third to one who prepared the meal.

Compliments- They are not given lightly among the kraaling. A compliment is viewed as encouraging a specific moment to happen again. It is common to praise the land, weather, and natural phenomena. A compliment to a person is much rarer and carries a lot of weight.

Cairnes- Rock cairns are made at sites where resources are abundant, both to mark them easily for other tribe members and to provide a place for totems to rest.

Gifts- It is rude to refuse a gift. A gift refused 3 times brings bad luck.

New Kraals- When a new kraal is being dug every member of the tribe must contribute, even if it is just symbolically moving a handful of dirt.

Hunting- Speaking loudly during a hunt is never tolerated. Voices can be raised once the prey is captured.

SUPERSTITIONS

Giving Thanks- It is common to thank a totem when successfully completing a mundane task associated with that totem.

Socket Etiquette- It is rude to put your fingers into the eye sockets of a skull or mask. It disturbs the spirit within and can bring bad luck.

Burial Rites- If you don't eat a bit of a family member's flesh when they die you won't inherit their strengths that you've admired, no matter how hard you work for them.

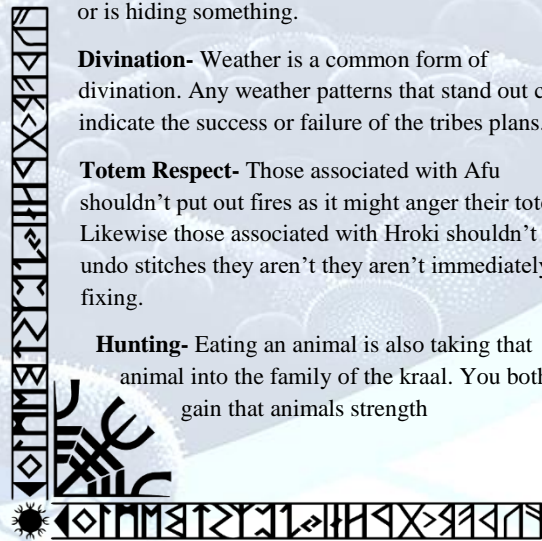
The Quiet- When the animals all go quiet a totem is watching the area closely. Whatever you do is under intense scrutiny.

Guilt- Smoke from a fire chases someone who feels guilty or is hiding something.

Divination- Weather is a common form of divination. Any weather patterns that stand out can indicate the success or failure of the tribes plans.

Totem Respect- Those associated with Afu shouldn't put out fires as it might anger their totem. Likewise those associated with Hroki shouldn't undo stitches they aren't they aren't immediately fixing.

Hunting- Eating an animal is also taking that animal into the family of the kraal. You both gain that animals strength



THE KRAALING RELIGION

Kraaling worship a variety of Totem animals that represent different aspirational qualities. Individual kraaling usually align themselves most closely with one particular totem but are still expected to respect and sometimes seek advice from other totems. Spiritual leaders are often those who can connect more closely with multiple totems, giving tribes balanced advice and guidance.

Kraaling value each member of the tribe based on what skills they bring. Every kraaling is expected to benefit the community in some way. They are focused on how useful people are to survival, but all skills that add to survival are viewed equally. Cooking, hunting, sewing, foraging, storytelling, medicine, and spiritual practices are all essential to surviving in a harsh environment. Funerals are one of the biggest celebrations that kraaling have. Funerals involve the tribe ritually preparing and consuming the body of the one who has died. Consuming the dead is meant to imbue the tribe with their strength and skills as well as solidifying their memory within each person. When the flesh is gone the bones are added to the tribe's kraal so that the totems may also draw on their strength and use it to protect and guide the tribe. The longest night of winter is the biggest yearly holiday. On that night none of the kraaling work except to keep a massive bonfire alive. Every member of the tribe that is old enough to have a totem stays up the whole night eating, dancing, singing, and storytelling to ward away the dark.

The first successful hunt of the summer is also fiercely celebrated. The body of the animal is prepared carefully and the whole tribe eats it together. The totem that the animal was caught under is the one watching over the tribe most closely for the following year.

TOTEMS AND TRIBES

No tribe worships only one totem, but there are many that venerate one above all the others. In tribes like these, one can generally find values and skills that apply to the kraaling that make up its body. Even those tribes that have deep variation will find individuals that embody each totem as best as they are able.

Canu the Wolf is wise and alert, He demands that his Children raise a Sacred Den and defend it against all outsiders so his spirit may rest there in peace. He asks his Children to howl and sing to the moon, his first, lost love. All canids and small predators fall under his domain. Wolves are driven to perfect their skills and to pass them onto younger generations. Wolves chase new heights of perfection in what they do. Wolves also are good at recognizing skills that don't announce themselves loudly, appreciating and utilizing them.

Ursul the Bear is stalwart and unbending, Ursul makes her Children strong but demands that they never attack an enemy dishonorably, but meet it in an open test of might. Just as Ursul arises each winter from the realm of death she bestows unnatural resilience and physical power to her Children to survive. Ursul oversees those beasts that survive and strive for life: Bears and aurochs are her favorite children. Ursul is also associated with motherhood and fierce protection of the young of the tribe. Bears are known to take parenting roles as well as ones on the battlefield and to resolve issues with children strictly but fairly.

Hroki the Crow is a cunning trickster and opportunist, Hroki demands that their Children leave out food for their kin as they wing through the world bringing them secrets.

Hroki is associated with storytelling and passing on the history of the tribe. Those who follow Hroki are known for their eloquence that allows them to mediate social problems within the tribe and to make shrewd deals with those on the outside. Crows are also known for being good at treating and tanning skins, and sewing with precision.

Afu the Ape is jealous and bloodthirsty, Afu demands that his Children eat the flesh of their vanquished enemies, consuming their spirits to empower themselves against the Shadow, Fire and Ice. Afu lends the tribe the ability to see what there is in the world that could benefit them and to pursue that relentlessly. Afu is often the totem who is called upon during raids or when interacting with those outside the tribe. Afu is associated with fire starting, cooking, and preparing meals especially meat.

Sefka the Serpent is as ancient as the earth itself. She demands that her Children seek out secrets and truths and reveal them to her, granting them an unflinching gaze that few can out-stare. Serpents are known for being careful and decisive. They know when conserve their energy and wait for a better moment to strike. Sefka is associated with medicine and identifying plant life. Those who follow sefka often are skilled at foraging mushrooms, berries, and plants for use in poultices and poisons.

Artok the auroch is determined and enduring. They demand that their followers do not waste and don't bend in the face of adversity. They can discover food in places that others would pass it by, and make use of things others would not see value in. They are known for enduring physical hardship without complaint and for moving steadily forward no matter the conditions. The boar is associated with those best at foraging and finding new resources for the clan.

KRAALING BACKGROUNDS

AVAILABLE BACKGROUNDS



THE RAIDER

The raider embraces the Red Song Time, proving to the uutmann that they are weak, and their ways are folly. Bloodthirsty and brutal, they see the world not in black and white, but as predator and prey. They may belong to a warband, or perhaps even acting alone- but in the end they consider themselves as the strong, and those that would hide in their caves and pits, waiting out the Red Song Time as weak- wasting their natural gifts, and the spoils of the world around them. *(Reminder: depiction of sexual assault are never permitted in the Dammerung experience.)*

Suggested Roleplay:

- ❖ Irritation those who you would see as prey, or unnecessarily merciful.
- ❖ Utilitarian world views. The strong survive, the weak perish.
- ❖ Stolen equipment from other cultures; human bones and trophies.

THE CONVERT

The Convert has known another way of life, but has forsaken their culture and embraced the Kraaling way of life in order to face the coming Dammerung. Strong in their belief that worshipping the beast gods is the only way to survive; they have left behind one of the 'civilized' cultures in an attempt to face the Red Song Time as a predator, rather than prey.

Suggested Roleplay:

- ❖ Pick a few traits from another culture. Do your best to work them into your character as a holdover.
- ❖ You belong to two worlds. Try as you might to belong to the tribe, you are still an outsider of sorts.
- ❖ You are eager to prove yourself and be accepted.

THE HUNTER

The hunter provides for their tribe, winning food and fame for their people. They have left their tribe in search of stories, glory, and sometimes even an open mind; hoping to spread the word of the Red Song Time, and gather converts to their cult, or tribe. They are consummate predators, skilled with spears, bows, and are relentless in pursuing their goals.

Suggested Roleplay:

- ❖ Scars, Animal Trophies, and other totems reflecting your victories and hunts.
- ❖ You are a hunter, whether you use a bow or even words, traps and planning are everything.
- ❖ Patience in all things: A good hunt does not happen in an instant.

THE SEEKER

The seeker sees beyond, attempting to learn the lessons that the natural world of the totems can provide. They are adept at navigating both spiritual and physical matters, and face the coming Dammerung with humility and quiet strength. They are not on Midgar merely to fight or survive- but rather to learn. They act as guides and leaders more often than not; helping to make sense of an increasingly dangerous world.

Suggested Roleplay:

- ❖ Mystic Accoutrement, bones, and other items of a questionable nature.
- ❖ The seeker is always looking to find meaning in the world around them, rather than react out of ignorance or fear.
- ❖ You seek out signs and portents, telling anyone and everyone who will listen