



Cults of the Known World

A Supplement for use with 0e Fantasy Roleplaying Games

What is This?

Cults of the Known World is a short series of free supplements that can be used to spice up your own 0e fantasy games.

Each 'issue' of Cults of the Known World examines a new cult cast in the mold of Swords & Sorcery genre fiction.

Brotherhood, The

Alignments Allowed: Neutral
Classes Allowed: Fighting Man
Races Allowed: All
Gender/s Allowed: Male
XP/Level Reqs: Level 4

The Brotherhood is a secretive political cult composed of battle-hardened soldiers who serve as assassins, spies, personal guards, and military advisors for some of the world's most powerful leaders. In this capacity The Brotherhood has offered their martial expertise for over five centuries while using their vast influence to ensure that a relatively stable balance is maintained between the forces of Law and Chaos.

The Brotherhood's internal hierarchy of power begins at the top with a mysterious group of seven shadowy individuals known as the Inner Circle. Each member of the Inner Circle is responsible for governing Brotherhood operations in a geographic area that can be considered the equivalent of a medieval kingdom or small country. The identities of these individuals are very closely guarded, though conspiracy theories abound.

The Outer Circle is the next tier in The Brotherhood's hierarchy of power, answerable only to the Inner Circle. There are 13 members of the Outer Circle, each of whom is responsible for overseeing Brotherhood operations in a geographic area roughly the equivalent of a medieval shire. As Outer Circle members must work with local lords and other officials in order to perform their duties as assigned by the Inner Circle, their identities are not secret.

At the local level, The Brotherhood attempts to maintain a lodge (i.e., a large, dedicated, meeting space) in each geographic area the size of a medieval hundred, over which presides a Lodge Master. As a rule such lodges are located in urban areas such as cities or towns though, when such a venue is unavailable, great halls at the manors of local lords affiliated with The Brotherhood have been reserved for such use (with the local lord who owns the manor serving as both host and Lodge Master).

Individual members gain power within the ranks of The Brotherhood by exhibiting skill in combat, prowess in politics, and personal sacrifice on behalf of The Brotherhood. Perhaps this last thing is valued most, as The Brotherhood relies upon an unbreakable bond of trust between its members and the ability to keep secrets from non-members in order to survive.

How to Join

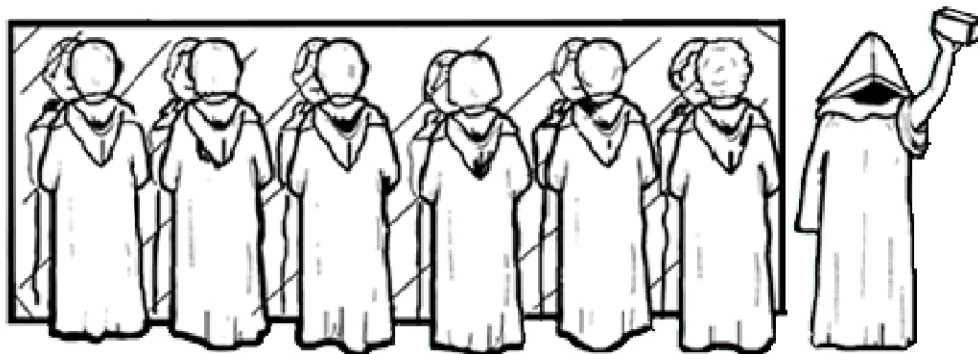
In addition to meeting all of the aforementioned mechanical (i.e., game rule) requirements for membership, a candidate for indoctrination into The Brotherhood must be nominated by a current member of the cult *and* best an opponent of the local Lodge Master's choosing in armed (or unarmed) man to man combat in an arena (or, lacking an arena, in a chalk circle).

If the candidate for membership manages to beat their assigned opponent in combat, they will be asked to swear an oath of loyalty to The Brotherhood and Brotherhood members before all others. To ensure that members take this oath seriously, there is one last thing that a candidate must do to prove their commitment – they must sever the ring finger of their left hand (this causes 1d4 *permanent* Hit Point loss). This ritual mutilation symbolizes that nobody, not even a wife or lover, will supplant sworn loyalty to The Brotherhood in the life of their newest member.

Benefits of Membership

The most obvious benefit of membership in The Brotherhood is that the organization has a great deal of political clout, no small measure of which may be wielded by the individual member. For example, if a member of the Brotherhood is arrested for a relatively minor infraction and the sheriff of the shire in which he is arrested is a fellow lodge member, the sheriff may overlook this infraction as a favor to his brother. Similarly, a member of the Brotherhood who serves as an advisor to a local lord may convince that lord to employ local lodge members as part of his personal guard retinue or as roaming peacekeepers in the shire.

A member of The Brotherhood can also make good use of the organization's extensive information network to convey important messages, uncover secrets, or divine the current political climate of a given duchy, province, shire, etc. Indeed, the information network cultivated by The Brotherhood is matched by few others. The Brotherhood uses a combination of written codes, lantern signals, and arcane hand gestures to communicate with one another, while utilizing a sprawling network of horseback riders, trained falcons, and hidden drops to quickly convey messages over great distances and through hostile territory.



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