Lupanum

A faction primer for the world of Duality

The Republic of Lupanum is a civilisation whose military, economic and cultural power dominates a number of smaller settlements south of the Great River. Connected in mind and spirit by the power of the great wolf spirit Lupamater, Lupans see themselves as a beacon of democracy and civilisation, shining against the darkness of barbarism, ignorance and despotism. The Lupans can be a tricky but rewarding faction to play. They are a civilization apart from (and often in opposition to) Kitaland, where most Duality adventures take place, which can make cooperation with other players difficult. Lupans are, however, a diverse bunch, including stalwart soldiers, dedicated craftspeople, wise scholars and powerful mages. Lupan characters can be heroes or villains, sentinels of democracy or sneering cultural chauvinists, or all at once.

Lupan Characters

Most Lupan citizens are born the children of Lupan citizens, either in the city of Lupanum itself or in one of the Republic's various settlements, and are integrated into the Consensus (The Lupan name for their hivemind) as children. Sometimes, someone born outside the Republic will join the Consensus as an adult, sometimes through war or conquest, sometimes voluntarily as a means of social advancement in a place where the Republic dominates, but such cases are a minority. All Lupan citizens are members of one of the three orders dedicated to the three founders of the Republic: The Order of Romula (soldiers, gladiators and other martial professionals dedicated to Romula the Brave), the Order of Reman (builders, artisans and craftspeople dedicated to Reman the Builder) and the Order of Aphraus (scholars, mages, philosophers and administrators dedicated to Aphraus the Wise).

When creating a Lupan character, one should consider what their order is, and what role they fulfil within it. Are they a stoic soldier of the Legions in the Order of Romula or a curious academic from the Order of Aphraus? What led them to choose the order in which they serve? Were they born a Lupan citizen, and if not, what were the circumstances of them becoming one? What is their relationship to the Republic? Are they happy to remain a common citizen with a vote, or do they intend to advance politically and shape the Republic?

One should also give consideration to the other members of a character's Node (the group of approximately ten Lupans linked in mind and spirit to which all Lupan citizens belong). Nobody expects you to write ten characters, but some thought should be given to what kind of people the other Node members are, and how the character relates to them.

Origins of Lupanum

The Lupans claim that their first citizens (The Triumvirate of Romula, Reman and Aphraus, and their followers) were the inhabitants of a petty kingdom called Nova Aestas, which they further claim was founded by the survivors of the ancient legendary city of Aestas after its destruction in the wars of the Void and Deeps. The wizard-king of Nova Aestas, a man named Tarquinius Fortis, had four children, an elder son (Remembered as Tarquinius Fugit) and three younger children (The girl Romula, the boy Reman, and Aphraus who was both and neither). Fortis was warned by a Nameless mystic: "If you do not act wisely your three younger children shall be the end of you and your kingdom". Acting on this advice, the king ordered the three taken to the Voidscraper mountains and tied to stakes, there to have their souls pulled into the Void, ensuring they would not return as ghosts. They were close to this spiritual death when they were found by the wolf spirit Lupamater, who took pity on them, connected their remaining life force (lógos) together through her, so that the small amount could sustain them all, and raised them to adulthood as her cubs.

In adulthood, they returned to Nova Aestas with Lupamater at their back. They brought a number of unhappy subjects of the Tarquins into their hivemind, stormed the palace and killed the king. Near the site of Nove Aestas, they established a new city to be the basis of their new Republic, which was to be built on the principle of the wolf pack: That all within the pack are equal, and all without are foe or food. They named their new city Lupanum, the city of wolves.

Lupan Society

As mentioned before, all Lupan citizens are connected by the power of Lupamater in mind and soul to a Node of approximately nine other Lupan citizens (Approximately, because Nodes dedicated to particular purposes can vary in size from as few as three to as many as twenty). One member of each node is elected Princeps (First among equals) of that node, and is connected to ten other Princeps, on upwards through five (at present) tiers of citizenship, headed by the Tribunes (Of which there are thirty, ten of each Order, who act as executors of the laws the people vote for) and the Consuls (Of which there are three, one of each order, who act as civic leaders and joint heads of state). All connections of the Lupan Consensus run ultimately through the Senate, a giant node of hundreds, who serve as an advisory body to the mostly democratic affair that is Lupan politics (If the Senate condemns a proposed law, the Lupan people can pass it regardless, but tradition and courtesy dictates that if the Senate proposes amendments or the withdrawal of a law, the citizens are likely to do so).

Lupan citizens retain their individual personalities as part of the Consensus, and so Lupan society is, in a lot of day-to-day ways, similar to any other. Lupans live, work, pursue their interests, love, play and adventure just as people elsewhere do. They just do so with a different set of assumptions and priorities that come from sharing one's most intimate thoughts with nine others.

Lupan Religion

The Lupan religion defies categorisation in the terms of Kitaland and the Grand Congregation. Lupans worship the gods, make offerings to the spirits, and practice philosophies of the Void, in all imaginable combinations, and see no distinction between them. The only enforced point of orthodoxy in Lupan religion is thar Lupamater is the greatest of all gods, and the greatest of all spirits, and that as her chosen nation, the Lupan Republic itself is divinely ordained.

The ecumenism, and apparent contradiction, of Lupan religion is reconciled by their belief in a concept called lógos. Lógos, the Lupans believe, is the metaphysical force that acts on matter to create life. All things that live, from the smallest insect to the mightiest gods, are animated by lógos, and all lógos is of the same basic substance, though it exists is different states and quantities. This is how they reconcile the idea that Lupamater is both a spirit and a god: The difference between a spirit and a god is merely the quantity of lógos.

When a Lupan dies, an echo of their memories remains within the consciousness of the Senate. To the consternation of non-Lupan theologians Lupans insist that this truly captures their soul whilst merely their lógos departs to the void. They may, of course, be correct.

Lupans in Play

Of all factions, Lupanum may be the most disliked by outsiders. Most Lupans hold the common attitude that outsiders are all "barbarians" who would be better off either indoctrinated or eliminated. They tend to have especial distain for the Lords of the Sea (who they view as common pirates), the Grand Congregation (who condemn the godhood of Lupermater as heresy), and the King's Reeves (who they consider to be little more than glorified bandits). From the outside, the Republic is often viewed, not necessarily incorrectly, as a violent expansionist force Deeps-bent on the destruction or assimilation of everything that isn't them; even a century and a half later, the memories of the war between Kitaland and Lupanum run deep both north and south of the river.

Whether you're playing a Lupan or alongside one, you will have to strike a balance with regards to this antipathy. As with most things, your character's opinion will likely boil down to their personal experience and beliefs rather than the broad generalisations. It is by no means impossible or even unlikely for a Lupan character to work with Reeves or Lords of the Sea: you may want to discuss with the other player out-of-character (and maybe the ref as well) why you are working together either in any given situation. After all, even the most arrogant of Lupans know better than to start fights with armed strangers or when far from home, and they will always need allies if they are to accomplish their aims.

Due to the skill of the order of Romula in keeping order, adventures tend not to take place in the heartlands of the Republic without some reason, such as needing a favour from a powerful patrician or to delve into the imp-infested catacombs beneath the great city itself. However, the frontier with the Free Towns is a land of constantly shifting allegiances and intermittent violence, and of course the coast of the Shadowed Sea is often visited by all manner of strange and terrifying things. More likely, Lupans can be encountered across the world for the purposes of trade, diplomacy, treasure-seeking, or pilgrimage to the holy site in the Voidscrapers at which Lupermater first appeared. Their relative wealth and reticence to leave their homeland make well-off Lupan citizens ideally posed to engage the services of the player characters in carrying out their aims, whilst Lupan characters may be called on to help serve the glory of the Republic, such as by finding lost knowledge for the Order of Aphraus or helping the Order of Romula fight against a troublesome Free Town. Those players who transgress the laws of Lupanum or actively work against it may face the might of Lupan soldiers, who usually fight with swords, shields, and discipline; Lupans have a distain for firearms and if they ever use them then they insist on strict rules of safety which are alien to outsiders. It is common for non-Lupans subdued by Lupan soldiers to be offered a simple choice: assimilation or death. You may even wish to extend this courtesy to your enemies if you play a Lupan character.

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