

Ænurin

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The Races of Men

After the sundering, the races of men quickly forgot what it was to be Ænurin. They had no memory of ever being Nurin's bride, but each and every one of them had a feeling, deep down within themselves, of loss, of being incomplete, and of a golden age long gone. The races of men created myths and epic stories to retell the past and reconstruct this "golden age" that they so longed to reclaim. All the myths took on the color and character of their respective races, and yet were similar, in that the races of men were recalling the same collective past, but retelling it in different ways. One race's mythology was the most accurate and the most complete, thanks in part to Jarnok the Gray. It belonged to the Rostic.

The Rostic and Jarnok the Gray

The Rostic lines were founded by Roseth and Rotic, two of the original twelve that were once Ænurin. Upon the sundering, Roseth and his wife found themselves near the center of the world. The land was densely forested with thick fir trees all covered with snow, and it was rocky and rough. They found a river that gave them cool drinking water, and the two followed it. They climbed up and up until the tree line ended, and the couple saw before them the great shape of a massive, snow-capped mountain. Perhaps it was the vague memory of a beautiful pendant encased within the bosom of such a mountain that made the pair feel at home, for they had indeed come across the Mountain of Kindlings, though they didn't know it. Instead they called the great mountain Snowcap the Old, and made it their home.

Over the course of many generations, Roseth and Rotic gave birth to a people that were quite at home in the cold and snow. Their people were rather short and chubby. Their hair was white like the snow, except for the women, whose hair could be

both white, gold and very light blue. They were strong in the arms and very swift, able to move amongst the trees like the deer. They were a dexterous race and in their earlier years were fond of making trinkets out of bone and stone. They made their homes in the snow, forging strong and sturdy homes and palaces out of nothing but ice. It wasn't until the Rostic met the Favish that they learned the highly skilled craft of hewing stone, but once they acquired the art, they climbed to the very pinnacle of Snowcap the Old and carved grand palaces into the rock, though many of the Rostic retained their snow-molding roots. It was then that the Rostic began to look towards the skies. They saw the stars and the Kalani and marveled in awe at their beauty, desiring to reach out and touch them.

When Jarnok the Gray was sent to the world, he arrived in the snowy places near the mountain. He walked amongst the trees and came upon the Rostic, building snow-houses and hunting game. He greeted the Rostic warmly and the men gazed at him in wonder. He looked like one of them but was much larger. He had a full head of gray hair and wore a short gray beard. About his neck was a gray cloak that spilled over his shoulders and down his back. He wore a gray suit that seemed to be carved from stone, and at his side he wore a spyglass. He asked where he might find the leaders of the Rostic, and the men pointed up the slope of Snowcap the Old.

Jarnok followed the river up the mountain, passing many men and small ice-villages as he went. The men and women were busying themselves with daily life, and lived off of game. The Rostic looked happy and seemed to take great joy in whatever they did, from hewing large blocks of ice to construct a home, to tanning and cleaning skins to turn into clothing. Upon seeing Jarnok they rushed up to him and touched him, examining his clothes and staring in awe at his great size, thoroughly curious and, seemingly, not at all afraid.

At length Jarnok left the forest and stood face to face before a magnificent palace, carved in the very side of the mountain. He entered through the massive gate. There were no guards for the Rostic had no enemies, nor even the concept of "enemy". Jarnok passed many rooms filled with people who were playing games, weaving beautiful

blankets and tapestries, cooking food, making sculptures out of ice and rock and otherwise entertaining themselves with matters of play, not work. At the end of the hall was a large round chamber, and inside were many people who were, evidentially, putting on a play. The roof of the hall opened up with a long slit in the stone, revealing the night sky, at which all of the Rostic were fond of gazing. Two of them sat in seats of honor and watched the play with great enthusiasm, laughing and clapping, and they would hold hands and look on at the actors with great fondness. These were the two leaders of the Rostic, Roseth and Rotic.

“Greetings Roseth and Rotic, mother and father to the Rostic people. My name is Jarnok the Gray and I have come from afar to help your kind!”

“Come from afar!” said Roseth happily. “You most certainly did, for I have never seen a fellow like you before. I’ve been here for countless generations and know the names of all of my sons, and you certainly aren’t one of them!”

“And I have been around for just as long,” said Rotic harmoniously, “and know the names of all my daughters. You are far from one of them!”

Jarnok laughed heartily.

“Of course not! I’m not really what you would call... human. But I have been sent to be your guide, and I have wonderful things to teach you.” With that, Jarnok looked to the sky and pointed at the stars. With his finger he drew a line between them and the stars he touched twinkled brilliantly in the night sky. Slowly shapes emerged from the stars and the Rostic gazed at the new constellations wide-eyed.

“Images in the stars!” said Roseth in amazement. “I would never have guessed such a thing!”

“And I have much more I can teach you my fiends. I can show you how to map the sky so that you never lose your way. I can show you how to build contraptions that can help you from day to day. I have devised a script for you so that you can write down your histories, for to forget the past is a horrible crime and a great shame. Follow me, and I will help you become a great people!”

The Rostic were very impressed with the knowledge Jarnok demonstrated and readily accepted his leadership. Under Jarnok, the Rostic developed warped glasses that could peer at the stars. With Jarnok's help, the Rostic cataloged hundreds of constellations and made detailed maps of the sky which have yet to be rivaled. The Rostic became lovers of gadget and made intricate boxes for hiding things, turning even the most mundane of everyday objects into amazing toys and works of ingenuity. Jarnok told them the tales of all that had transpired in the past, from the creation by Nurin to the sundering of Ænurin, and though Jarnok's recollection was imperfect, it is believed that the Rostic have the best account of the ancient days, far exceeding that of the other races of men. And so the Rostic and Josak lived within and around Snowcap the Old, exploring the heavens and building things new.