

KORDI

"From unity, comes strength"

The Kordi have never truly known a time of peace. Their deep-seated traditions and beliefs lead to conflicts even before the formal cementing of the now powerful nation. The land was once divided between dozens of squabbling clans, each fighting for control of precious resources and manpower. Although many hopeful warlords sought to conquer their neighbors and emerge a great ruler, it took the united force of several strong clans to ultimately choose a leader that all would follow. Those clans supported the rise of the young warrior mage, Sihala, into her would-be position as the founding Archos. She would later expand the reach of Kordi influence and bring about the inclusion of the Bari people onto Kordi lands. Despite their vast influence and strength, the Kordi are still a relatively young nation whose cultural identity is still evolving.

LANDSCAPE & CLIMATE



Kordi is an expansive country located centrally in the known world. The large swathe of land supports a variety of landscapes, although the areas around the south-western capital and south-central region are dominated by low, rolling hills, valleys, meadowlands, and grassy plateaus. To the north, the land is shaded by thick temperate forests of rowan, beech, ash, yew, and oak trees. To the east, the smooth ground gives way to greater, tree-covered hills and several mountains, divided

up by numerous winding rivers.

The long days of sunlight and warmth through spring and summer give rise to plentiful harvests in the south and fine lumber in the north. Fall and winter are marked by a period of heavy rainfall that often leads to flooding in the valleys, and a time of crisp wind and a thin blanket of snow, respectively.

GOVERNMENT & SOCIAL STRUCTURE

The Kordi Nation is led primarily by the twin Archos, *Etelin & Leon janSihala*, with the guidance of newly formed Arlos Council, and the support of the five Great Houses. The Council advise on various topics of state and culture, and represent the heads of the four major branches of government, and selected experts in related fields. The first of the branches is the Conslos, which

oversees the military and acts in matters of foreign affairs. There is the Myschos, the source of magical development and research. The Domelos oversees public works, national provisioning, and the general well-being of the populace. Finally, the Pelos oversees the operations of the Temple of the Five, and the education of the populace. Iarlos Council members include *Sane & Kete Lanton* (Conslos), *Lorcan Posa* (Domelos), *Pulis Wisinha* (Pelos), *Rodjer Kewi* and *Cara Wason* (Myschos).

The Archos are aided in their rule of the land by the leaders of the Great Families, each overseeing a region of the nation named for their original clans. They are: Ard Tiarni *Alekander & Deirdre Wishinha*; Ard Tiarna *Sorcha Lanton*; Ard Tiarni *Rodjer & Keaton Kewi*; Ard Tiarni *Cara & Aidan Wason*; and Ard Tiarni *Lorcan & Ailis Posa*.

Each region is home to a number of cities, each lead by a specially appointed landed noble, a Tiarna, who oversees the goings-on of the city and its surrounding territory, and grants land in the city at their discretion. Basic landed citizens are known as Lairds, and possess a small manor house and a set amount of land that may be rented out to citizens for farming or other means. Those who have managed to grow their lands are appointed to Ard Lairds, who often compete amongst themselves in a ranking system of power within their city, each seeking to acquire more land, the support of vassals, and working tenants.

The everyday citizen of Kordi enjoys a great deal of freedom in forging their own life. Many citizens choose to enter into the military, where they may serve the nation and its populace through both martial and magical protection, and contribution to public works and recovery from the war. Others choose to enter into tenancy with landed nobility, setting contracts to attain housing, a small workshop or land to work, and pay in exchange for work. Due to the prestige associated with having dependable and talented tenants, those who excel in their work are highly sought after and may continuously negotiate their contracts for better terms, or work for a new house entirely. Craftsmen who wish to work out on their own often experience a bit more difficulty, as many more established cities have high rental prices for workshops and rooms, and depend on the local populace buying their goods for their income stream.

NAMING CONVENTIONS

Kordi naming custom follows several unique rules,

- The letters that comprise the average person's name are limited to those from the original Kordi language. Eight letters of the common alphabet are excluded (b f g m q v y z), as names are often ancestral and those letters were not yet in use at the time of creation.
- The letter *j* is pronounced much like the English *y*.
- The vowels are often pronounced as follows: *a* (as in: *father*), *e* (*met*), *i* (*peel* or *in*), *o* (*more*), *u* (*food*).

A strong tradition has formed for a child's surname to denote their parentage through their birth-giving parent using the old Kordi word "jan". For example, Kata's son, Tekail, would be Tekail Kataja, or Tekail jaKata. However, citizens who are landowners of the "*Ard Laird*" class take on a "family name", often stemming from place names, nicknames, or some reference to their

occupation. These names are passed down through the line so long as the family maintains their land.

BELIEFS & RELIGION

Personal practices and beliefs are considered a private affair. While the average Kordi citizen will visit their local shrine for prayer or to leave offerings, it is not uncommon for people to have small shrines within their own homes. Offerings and pleas are made for good harvest, luck in love, and any number of reasons, but it is best to keep requests reasonable, as great requests may illicit an even greater exchange from the Gods, and it is considered unwise to draw too much attention.

The Temple of the Five serves as both the home of Kordi faith, and as an archive of the history of the extant Clans. Although the Kordi revere the five Gods, they also firmly believe that the best way to navigate the future is to examine the past, and that the Gods are only to be consulted or pleaded with in times when their own history may not serve as aid. Patroned by the Great Houses, the keepers of the Temple are raised with years of instruction in the history of the many clans that blended to become the Kordi, and the practices that made them strong. They are considered enlightened in their intelligence, and are often consulted in matters of economics and civil disputes. Their intimate connection and service to the Gods garners them great respect, and, although they are not infallible, their advice is generally respected and rarely questioned.

The Silver God, also known as the God of Magic, is considered the patron God of the Kordi Nation. It is a common belief amongst the Kordi people that the late Archos, Sihala, was favored by the Silver God.

CLOTHING

- Commoners and landed alike are known for dressing in the style of their clansmen ancestors: draped fabrics, often pinned at the shoulders and belted at the waist. This style of dress is considered best for times of leisure as it is cool and comfortable and allows for a great range of motion.
- When not robed in cloth, typical attire includes a long-sleeved shirt that ends mid-thigh and is belted at the waist, and wide-legged pants or leggings. Fitted dresses and doublets have recently gained popularity in the capital city, though not everyone is very certain the strange style will catch on. Wool or fur wraps or cloaks can be added on top of any outfit, often held in place by metal pins.
 - *The landed and elite prefer bright jewel colors or metallics and cloth of either cotton, linen, or silk. Their clothing is trimmed or embroidered, and often incorporates the colors of the family to which they are vassals. The landed of Ard-Laird rank and above wear **thin metal circlets** to denote their status, with the intricacy and width of the circlet increasing with the prestige of the family. Lairds occasionally fashion their own circlets of tooled or braided leather.*

- *Common citizens tend to prefer darker colors for their clothing, though often opt for pale dyes for their drapings. Their attire is sewn in cotton, linen, or canvas.*
- *Members of the Kordi military often add a belted tabard over their attire in the colors of their omada.*

CUSTOMS

- Personal hygiene is viewed as very important. Those who do not keep themselves clean are viewed as having no respect for the self, and thus warrant none from others.
- The Kordi society has been shaped and built by the physical and magical strength of its populace, and it is considered a great honor for both citizens and landed alike to join one of the nation's 12 military omadas (*detailed in the Professions Tigie & Soldier*), or the 13th Omada, who act as guards under each city's respective Tiarna.
- While military service and training are not mandatory, it is the norm for every child in Kordi to learn basic combat and protection, via magic or physical means, so that they may be able to protect themselves and those around them should the need ever arise. Adults will often keep up with practicing and exercises, regardless of their career, to keep their bodies and minds sharp.
- Great pride is taken in keeping a neat and smooth running household, even more so if the land is rented. It is very common for multiple generations of a family to live together such that everyone may have a task in the maintaining of the house.
- While slacking is frowned upon, the Kordi people also tend not to do anything or go anywhere in a great hurry. Doing things thoroughly, rather than quickly, is key, and as such, it is not uncommon for projects to finish slower than anticipated, meetings to run overtime, and for punctuality to occasionally fall by the wayside.
- Use of titles and formal address is key, it is expected that one will endeavor to learn the particular title of a person of note that they wish to speak with. It is also customary to announce one's full name upon introduction, to allow for some familiarity at the onset of any conversation.
- The hottest time of the day is typically used as a break from work, and most businesses - excluding inns and taverns - close down for an hour or two. Kordi take this respite to change out of their working clothes, clean their hands, and enjoy a light meal and refreshments with friends or family.
- Hard work is expected from each Kordi, whether it be from military service, a trade, or labor. Discipline is highly valued and often stressed in child-rearing. Boasting about one's work, however, is considered rude and suspicious.
- Though it may seem like common sense, it is considered taboo to place one's weapons on a table. It is customary for the family of a fallen soldier to place his or her dagger at their table

as a mark of respect, but placing one's own weapon on a table is believed to invite death upon your family.

HOLIDAYS

- **Feast of Night-Breaking** (3rd Week of Silencing): In the darkest and coldest time of the year, Tiarnas all across Kordi will organize feasts within their cities to bring the people together for a night of song and story-telling dedicated to the Gold God. Care is taken throughout the year to ensure food-stores will be prepared for this event, and it is common that other high-ranking families will compete to contribute the most resources to the festivals.
- **Festival of Magic** (4th Weekend of Springfall): A celebration of the life and sacrifice of the late Archos Sihala, and the many gifts of the Silver God. Displays of magic, both illusionary and actual, are often the main event, as well as performances of key moments in both Sihala's life and the Half Century War. In the evening, the towns illuminate their pathways and any nearby clearings with mage-lights, and often engage in "mage-light tag."
- **Night of Masks and Fire** (3rd Weekend of Summerise): To celebrate the White God, the Kordi hold masquerade parties around great bonfires. Promises made on this night are considered binding for the following year, and it is considered a lucky time for proposals. There are games of physical prowess, with the most popular being the tied-hand fight. Two opponents have their non-dominant hands roped together, and, each wielding a short cudgel, fight until one has struck three blows. The night ends with participants sharing fruit wines, sweet breads, and dried fruits around the bonfires.
- **Week of Chase** (4th Week of Autumnrise): In anticipation of the cold winter ahead, the Kordi organize large hunting parties of the town's most willing to pursue the strongest prey. The week is marked by small parties held in local inns and taverns as the hunters return home each night and tell tales of the hunt, and by the week's end, the group to bring down the greatest beast wins a small prize.
- **Night of Memoriam** (2nd Weekend of Reaping): As the sun sets, each household in the city or town is given a lantern to light and hang somewhere along the commons to symbolize the stars of the Black God's domain. After a long dinner, traditionally shared amongst neighbors, the youngest member of each household removes their lantern from its hanging place and joins the town in a procession to the graveyard. Lanterns are placed in nearby trees as the people make a spread of blankets across the graves on which to sit. Stories are told of the dearly departed, snacks and warm or spiced drinks are shared, and the people celebrate the lives of those that they have loved and lost as the lanterns burn down to reveal the stars above.