Superstitions

Introduction

The subject of "superstitions" includes far more than could be held in a single book. It is the intent of this book to focus on beliefs of an odd or unusual nature that present particular opportunities for RPGing. To avoid repetition, few references are mentioned where simply seeing some creature in a mundane moment can be an omen. Frankly, research has made plain that for some folks absolutely anything can spell victory or doom.

So what makes this product different and useful to you? Aside from the flavorful superstitions, some based on real world imaginings and others conjured up whole cloth, the opportunity has been taken to present many Advanced or Templated creatures, unusual Magic Items, and interesting Spells. While the backdrop of superstition is used as a premise to introduce and integrate these new or modified game components, one can certainly pick and choose which components suit your game then plug and play.

If, however, a GM chooses to stay mainly within the parameters of this volume, but doesn't wish to introduce too many of the additional mechanical elements presented herein, the superstitions detailed on the following pages can be used as pure flavor. Your NPCs can claim to believe in the various superstitions even if you decide there is not a good or ill in-game effect associated with them.

One of the advantages for your campaign in using the various animal superstitions is getting to increase the number of appearances of fauna without making the game seem too mundane. How many times has a GM described an overland trek in mechanical game terms and not mentioned a single plant or animal? Too often, campaign games don't allow opportunities for plain, non-threatening or non-predatory animals to make an appearance. By having a number of superstitions built up around them, it's much easier to spotlight them in the game.

You'll find that the quotes and excerpts in the shaded boxes can serve a number of purposes. You can use them to find immediate inspiration of your own or use them to inspire your players. Alternately, you can use them in-game and attribute them to a favorite NPC as a way to add some interesting depth. If you have the time, I urge you to follow up on these tidbits and explore how a lead or subject can expand your own knowledge base and broaden the scope of your campaign as a whole. I have found that the more well-rounded a GM becomes, the greater the fun he can instill at the game table.

Albatross

This long-winged seabird spends most of its life in flight. Perhaps this is why sighting an albatross circling your ship is considered a sign of bad weather. If an albatross is looking for somewhere to land then a fierce storm must be approaching.

Some sailors believe that the spirit of long dead seamen inhabit the albatross and their following a sailing vessel gives protection to the ship and crew.

Feather Token: Albatross: A command word turns this token into an albatross that flies in front of a ship towards the nearest habitable landmass. If a ship is becalmed, the albatross will circle and not disappear until habitable land is within sight from the ship.

Strong conjuration; CL 12th; Craft Wondrous Item, *major creation*; Price 350 gp.

The ice was here, the ice was there,
The ice was all around:
It cracked and growled, and roared and howled,
Like noises in a swound!

At length did cross an Albatross,
Thorough the fog it came;
As if it had been a Christian soul,
We hailed it in God's name.

It ate the food it ne'er had eat,
And round and round it flew.
The ice did split with a thunder-fit;
The helmsman steered us through!

- from The Rime of the Ancient Mariner