

Tales From Malatra:

Stories From The Jungles Of Southern Kara-tur.

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Welcome To Tales From Malatra!

I'm not going to take up a lot of your time. If you're here, then you're probably a long time fan of the Living Jungle. So am I. It has never left my heart. So here we are, 17 years after the official end of the RPGA setting, wanting just a little more. I intend that you get it, though it is bound to be a little different than before. I hope you approve.

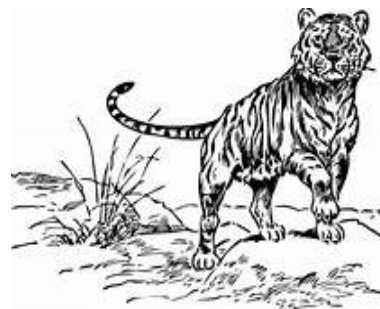
Game Well!

Leaves On The River

Haka Dawn

By Stephen H. Jay

Ffft sat on the slight rise of land and looked out over the Savanna. He closed his eyes and inhaled, enjoying the smells of the cool, early evening air as it wafted in from the direction of the jungle. It had been so long since he had taken time from his duties to enjoy such a simple pleasure. It took him back to when his father and mother would regularly take Ffft and his six siblings to visit the Rayanna Savanna. Happy times, so long ago.



Mother and father. Thinking of his mother brought a stabbing pain to his heart. The whole world had changed since then, as had he. Now, he hardly recognized himself. And the memory of the savanna now seemed barren and cold in his mind.

Almost immediately his yammering mind started in with its constant worrying. "Is the breeze chiller

than it should be? What causes it? Is it an omen of more death and destruction to come?"

"Stop it", Ffft muttered to himself in a grim, irritable voice. "Just stop." Ffft, sitting in his half nubari, half Tiger Katanga form, shook his head as if trying to rid it of his dark thoughts. But the thoughts, the memory, the worrying wouldn't stop, seemingly couldn't stop.

First came the omens for the war with the Tamara, then the terrible war itself and it's bloody, violent conclusion. So many people coming to him for advice before the war even started. Most of them were dead now. So many more now that the war was over, people who had lost their loved ones. No matter their questions, it all came down to one grand question: "Of what value is my life now?". Entire families lost, tribes decimated, by an evil that shook the very foundations of the jungle peoples beliefs. And all because the revered ancients had made enemies with the Tamara thousands of years ago.

Thousands of years? Ffft could hardly grasp the concept of so much time. All that hate. Enough hate to justify a two thousand year-old war of vengeance long after the Ancients had disappeared from the jungle. When he had discovered this knowledge, Ffft couldn't conceive of so much hate. Now he felt that same kind of hate building in him, driven by rage and despair that he didn't know what to do with.

He was so weary. Weary beyond what he had thought possible. Almost a year after their 'victory', the people were still honoring their dead with processions and ceremony.

The words of the sacred ceremonies, so often heard and spoken, had turned to ashes in his heart.

It was almost too much to bear. People came, asking him, the great Sage Of Malatra, how they might find peace and healing. Ffft answered as best he could. But what good was his counsel when a darkness born of despair filled him as well?

Barely knowing what he was doing, Ffft Let out a soft sob of pain and grief, wiping the tears from his still closed eyes.

Then, at the edge of his perception, he detected a spirit approaching. He did not open his eyes. He knew who it was. He felt her love for him like a soft pelt being wrapped around him. The spirit reached out a hand and stroked his head. It was the light and gentle touch behind the ears that he had always liked. His eyes dried up and, slowly, a purr built itself up in him, haltingly at first as if he had forgotten how to do it. It formed itself into something approaching a proper purr of contentment when Ffft said softly, "Hello Mother."



Nearby, a mere 2 spear throws away, a nubari male (nubaril) and a nubari female (nubaress) watched Ffft as he had a conversation with someone or something they could not see. The nubaress by all accounts was a jungle beauty, lean and well muscled, with a regal bearing. Like so many Malatrans she carried the not so old scars of the Tamara and their allies, the most notable those of vicious claw marks that had nearly disemboweled her. The scars were vivid, red and angry against her brown skin.

Mirmirani often dressed to show them off. Those scars had cost her dearly.

A suitor once told her, “Scars are where beauty meets the world.” Mirmirani liked that. But Reesta once said, “Scars are the story of your life, of your victories over death.” She liked that one better. Around her wrists she wore the bracelets that her former husband, the now deceased Reesta Nefari, had found in the Jungle Of Lost Tribes and given to her as a wedding gift.

Mirmirani wore the ceremonial garb of a Saiyaman dignitary. Unlike all but a few of the members of her tribe, she also wore the headdress of former Big Chief Bagoomba, her deceased father. Resting easily in her hands was a high ceremonial spear of the Simbara, a gift from the Simbara elders to one they held in deep respect. Such was her reputation that Mirmirani was the closest thing to a Queen the jungle had. But the last thing Malatra needed now, in her respected opinion, was a Queen.

The nubaril next to her was also Saiyaman. Fetishes adorned his hair in the form of feathers and beads. His chest was adorned with ceremonial paints. Surprisingly, this witch-doctor of the Saiyama also bore a tattoo of the Simabara on his upper right arm. It was his unspoken commitment to the welfare of the Simbara people, and so he came and went across Simbaran lands as easily as his native Saiyaman, unchallenged by Nubari or spirit alike. Though not on the Council of Elders, it was expected that he soon would be – if he would sit still long enough to win political support.

Mirmirani spoke without looking away from what was transpiring on the next rise. “What is he doing? Is he talking to someone?”

S'tuth nodded and said, “Yes. A very special someone.” S'tuth had witnessed multiple conversations between the two over the last six months. He paused, not wanting to reveal too much about Ffft's private life, but many had already come to realize that his dear friend was heartsick. No, it was even worse than that. S'tuth had, in his mind, come up with a new word to describe what was happening to Ffft, as well as to so many other Malatrans since the war. “He's talking to his mother. Ffft....is soulsick.”

“My poor little fuzzball,” Johara said gently as she continued to stroke his head. “Always trying to carry the burdens of the entire world.”

“I'm just trying to help people,” Ffft said. “That's all I ever tried to do.”

Johara moved to his side and sat down next to him. “That old argument? Are we going to walk down that path yet again?” She paused a few moments. When Ffft didn't respond, she said, “Well, I'm not. Round and round, like a water spout. All you end up with is feeling more disoriented and emotionally wounded than before. I won't bring you down this path again, no matter how much your misplaced guilt desires it. It is not your time to walk to the clearing in the trees. The Beastlands don't need you. Malatra does.”

“Was it your time to time to walk the path? Was it really anyones? This war was so stupid and hateful and unnecessary. *It wasn't our war.* It belonged to the Ancients. That such monsters like the Tamara even exist makes me doubt everything. If they can exist and travel here from realms unseen and unheard of, why can't others? It's pointless.”

"It's not pointless. *Life* is the point. And you're right. There are other realms with creatures just as evil. There are also realms with beings of light. We can't see them from the Beastlands, but we can sense them. The question isn't "Is there evil in the world?" You already know there is. The question is, "What are you going to do about it?". It's your duty as one of the living to make life as good, as meaningful, as you can, for yourself and others. It's what being a hero is about." She paused. "You used to know that."

Ffft shrugged. "I was never a hero. I was a servant, a helper, a source of knowledge for those that needed it. Yet people still died, for all I tried to help them. Maybe.....*because* I helped them. We weren't ready, mother. For all my supposed knowledge and wisdom, we still weren't ready when they finally came. I wasn't ready. How many died because I wasn't ready?"

"How many lived because you were as prepared as you could be?"

The two didn't speak for some time after that. They just watched as the sun started to approach the horizon, enjoying each others presence. But far too soon, Ffft could sense her fading. She would have to go soon. And then, he would be alone. Again, alone.

She turned to him then and said, "I have something to tell you." She smiled. "Something wonderful."

"I don't understand," Mirmirani said. "I thought ancestor spirits were bound to where their people lived and prayed to them?"

"Usually," S'tuth replied. "But they can also be found where they died, particularly when someone they love is so close."

Mirmirani looked about the land, looking all the way to the horizon. "Your talking about the first great savanna battle, aren't you? She died when the southern clan of Lion Katanga were wiped out. The battle came very close to here before they were forced back. Ffft's mom died somewhere near here."

"Yes, this is where she died," he said grimly. "Ffft found her body after the battle." He paused and look down. Softly he said, "Then he found the bodies of all of them."

"What? You mean...." Mirmirani's mind reeled at this revelation of someone she thought she knew so well.

"Yes," said S'tuth. "his entire family. Ffft lost his entire family that day."

"It's called the 'Haka'," Johara said, "and it is joyous."

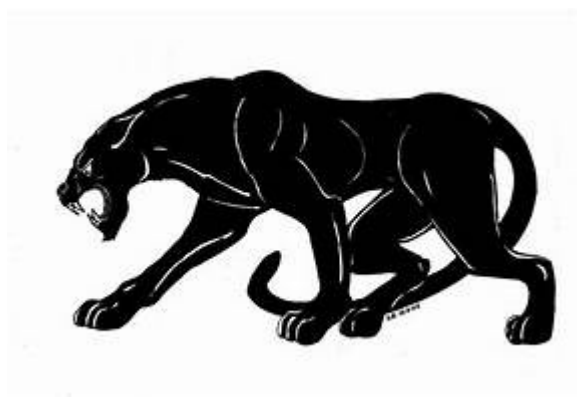
"The Haka," she continued, "is a powerful ritual of life and renewal, created many generations ago by a revered shaman of the of Black Leopard People."

"This is their great gift to the Simbara? Another pointless ritual? It doesn't sound like it helped them much", Ffft said. "They lost a larger portion of their people than any people that actually survived. If

the Simbara are risking extinction, the Black Leopards are almost certain to experience it.”

“You don't listen to the information your own scouts and diplomats tell you, do you my little fuzzball?” Johara gently admonished.

“Sure I do. The Black Leopard People refused to leave the Jungle Of Lost Tribes because of their code of laws and traditions. They believed to do so would have permanently diminished them. So they stayed and let the Tamara do it. Their campaign of guerrilla warfare helped hinder the Tamara a little, but it cost them three out of four of their entire population. Hardly a wise move.” He shook his head. “They would have been much more effective on the battlefield.” He breathed deeply and said, “If they had been on the battlefield the day the Southern clan of Lion Katanga had been wiped out, maybe..... maybe”. Ffft's voice caught in his throat. “M-maybe the battle would have t-t-turned out differently.” He paused. “Maybe you and dad..... and little Kirani.....”. He started to weep again. “Would have..... would have.....”.



“They all died as heroes that day,” S'tuth said. “They were part of a hastily organized reserve fighting force, placed near the village of the Simbara as a last line of defense, if it came to that. It did. The Tamara were here to wipe out all references to the Lion totem, and the Simbara was one of their targets. As the main battle raged into the evening, they sent a spearhead of 10 Kretch and 90 Hyena katanga toward the village. One of the Kretch was an Elite. One of the Hyena People was their High Witch-Doctor. 30 Simbaran's and 30 katanga, including Ffft's family, stood to protect the Simbarans who weren't trained in war, as well as the sick, elderly and infirm.”

“During the battle, Ffft's father, mother and all six of his siblings maneuvered there way into a clever position to attack the Kretch elite. It was no less than brilliant. They worked as a unit, knew each others fighting styles, strengths and weakness. They were, according to a witness, a force unto themselves, silent and deadly. The Elite never saw them coming.”

“When the opportunity came, they struck the enemy with impressive ferocity and precision of tactics; his family had clearly fought together before. Their attack was savage, showing a brutality that Tiger Katanga reserve for their most bitter and dangerous enemies. The enemy had come to kill the most defenseless of the Simbara; Ffft's family was determined that just wasn't going to happen. There was only one possible outcome: either they or that Kretch and his guard were going to die that night.”

“That initial ambush shocked the enemy, leaving them stunned and motionless for those first few critical seconds of battle. When the battle was over, the Elite, two soldier kretch, and 16 Hyena Katanga's were dead. The Tamaran force lost their confidence and soon scampered out into the darkness.”

“The Kretch Elite was found with his throat torn out by Ffft's father. He died at the same time the Kretch did, both still locked together in a death grapple. They seem to have bled out together. The rest of his family lay nearby. All of them had dozens of wounds on them. More than one of the wounds on each was mortal.”

“The defenders, almost decimated themselves, stopped the enemy just one spear throw away from the village edge and had killed almost all the attacking force. But like the battle everywhere that day, the cost of victory was terrible.”

“Ffft blames himself for not being there. But he was in council with the elders, planning strategy. And no one saw the attack coming so soon. The strength of the enemy was appalling, and the speed at which they organized their new allies took us all by surprise. We had underestimated the Tamara, even with all our study and lore and the information gathered from scouting Hyena Katanga lands. We were humiliated by our lack of understanding. But Ffft took it hardest of all. He was devastated.”

“The Simbaran's buried Ffft's family with honor, and have wanted to express their appreciation and honor to Ffft formally. But his grief and guilt just won't let him accept it. Ffft still feels like he failed them all that day.”

Johara reached out and cradled his head in her hands, “Shhhh, my poor, poor child. You can't change the past, and the Black Leopard People did what they thought was best. You did all you could. But each tribe decides their own destiny, and the role they play in the destinies of others. No one can truly know the future.” She kissed his forehead twice. “And just so you know: You blame yourself, but no one in the Beastlands blames you for any of your decisions, least of all your family.”

“Then why are you the only one that comes to me? I bid them to visit. I keep coming here just to do that. But only you answer my call.”

“Ah, at last he asks an obvious question,” she teased. “You were always the smartest of us. You got that from me, by the way,” she joked. “Your father was just very good to look at.”

This got a laugh out of him. “So you have said before.”

Johara continued. “But so often you didn't ask some of the more obvious questions. Your mind was always so far ahead that the closer you were to the problem, the longer it took for you to think of what was obvious to the rest of us. You mostly out-grew that, but sometimes you still do it. In fact this time, you have done it a lot.”

“Listen, my dear,” Johara said. “I must speak quickly because my time is almost up. But first, let me say that your Father and Brothers and Sisters love you and no one blames you for anything. We miss you and Malatra. The more you learn about the Haka, the more you witness it, the more joy and revelation you take from it, the clearer your mind will become. You will discover the obvious questions again and see the obvious answers, and will know that they are true and not just an attempt by a doting mother to heal her battered child. Now, listen closely.”

A swell of music came to them just as two dark shapes bounded up the rise to Mirmirani and S'tuth. Both the shapes and the music came from the direction of the village. Drums and pipes, voices uplifted in celebration, and in joy.

The two shapes came, black leopards jumping and springing as if in play. Within two spears they stopped and changed into a form half black leopard, half nubaril. They greeted Mirmirani and S'tuth. "Greetings honored ones! We of the Black Leopard People see you and bring happy news."

Though frequently viewed as adversaries, even enemies, today the Black Leopard People were invited guests. Such was the rule of honor between two respected rivals, they and the Simbara. It was because of that honor that they had asked to be invited to the wedding that had just concluded, and that the invitation had been sent. The Black Leopard People had claimed to bring a great gift, a gift of healing to the Simbara and all those who had suffered so much from the ravages of the Tamara.

Ffft heard the music and sighed, shaking his head. "I have missed the wedding ceremony," he said. "Now I will have to make my apologies to the families of bride and groom. Thoughtless of me."

"They will understand," Johara said. "Listen. Do you not hear how the music grows louder? They come to you."

Mirmirani and S'tuth bowed their heads respectfully. "Greetings T'Kal, M'bata. I take it things went well," S'tuth said.

The one called T'kal grinned. "Indeed it did, as we knew it would. The Simbara have taken to the Haka ritual with fervor. It will take time, and the words may need to be adjusted to fit the Simbara people more. But they took to it well, and made many fine changes. I have no doubt their ancestors will hear them this day and begin to find their way back to them." T'kal nodded to the hill where Ffft stood. "It will start with that one."

The music grew louder. The villagers approached. Ffft refused to look as the first of the Simbaran's appeared around the rise.

"You are going nowhere, son. You are stuck in what was. Malatra is stuck in what was. The rift between Malatra and the Beastlands is widening. It started with the Simbarans and their ancestors, but it continues to grow. The deaths of so many, so suddenly was a shock to the living and the beloved dead. There were consequences. Neither you nor the Simbara knew how to face them. Until today."

Ffft had not moved. "Look at them, son," Johara said gently but firmly. "Face what you fear. You need this. Malatra needs this."

Slowly, begrudgingly, Ffft began to turn.

S'tuth nodded as Ffft began to turn towards the villagers. The villagers stood a mere three spears away from him, singing. As near as he could tell, every man, woman and child was there. Ffft turned until he was facing them.

The village erupted in shouts and whoops of celebration. Then, there was silence.

The Simbaran's began to move, quietly, deliberately. They organized themselves with, it appeared, mostly men in the front with women to the sides. The children were behind the group of men.

Suddenly from the silence comes a loud and vibrant war cry from the Simbaran War Leader, Ye'tokaye. Ye'tokye sprang forth, wielding a ceremonial war club. He swings it, dancing, flourishing it with great finesse' and precision. He continues his cry until the display ends in front of the crowd. Again, there is silence.

"I don't want to do this," Ffft whispered quietly. "I am sick of these ceremonies."

Johara answered, "This is not a celebration of honor, not exactly. This is something new." Her voice was growing more distant. She didn't have long before she would return to the Beastlands. "Watch. You will see."

The War Leader shouts again his battle cry, The gathered group of warriors behind him begin to writhe and scream as if in great agitation, contorting their faces as if in rage and screaming, tongues sticking out. It is as if they are on a battlefield, attempting to intimidate an enemy. It is an expression of rage and of grief.

Ffft does not flinch, but says quietly, "This is how angry they are with me. This is what I have done to them."

His mother answers, "Not at all. This is the Haka."

Ye'tokaye begins to slap his thighs in a steady rhythm. Behind him, the warriors join in.

After a few measures they puff out their chests and begin slapping there.

They bend at the knees. A few measures later, they bend slightly at the hips as the slapping continues: one-two, one-two. Each count of one coincides with a heartbeat.

The stomping begins. The Haka has begun in earnest.

“The Haka is about joy and love, my child. We all remember honor and courage at these ceremonies, but it is only the immediate families that remember the joy and the love. That is no longer enough. To heal the rift between worlds, that is no longer enough.”

Now the words of the Haka begin.

Johara's words, so faint, are almost lost among those of the ritual. “Now open all your senses, my love. Feel what is going to happen. See it for your self. And take wisdom. For this is the Battle Haka, meant for the battlefield and for honored guests. It is for you. It is for all of Malatra.”

The stomping never ceases, a stomping of fury and pure emotion. Then, spoken in Old Simbaran:

“We are the Simbara!”

“Strength in abundance!”

“We stand in courage and blood!”

“Our enemies tremble!”

“We will be victorious!”

“The Simbara live forever!”

“The People Of The Lion!”

“Come to us, friend or foe!”

“Embrace us in friendship!”

“Embrace us in battle!”

“It matters not to us!”

“Our strength, our courage, our honor!”

“The Lions Roar is in our blood!”

“Be embraced or devoured!”

“Defeated for all to see!”

“We are the Simbara!”

“The People Of The Lion!”

“You will know our strength!”

Ffft reaches out with his spirit sense...and sees.

Spirits..... spirits everywhere! The fallen brave, the ancestors, the spirits of nature and the elements. In the distance, he hears lions roaring and tontor trumpeting. The Beastlands have drawn nearer.

“It is about love and joy, my son,” Ffft whirled around. For the voice in his mind was not his mothers. It was a deep, powerful masculine voice. It was his fathers.

Standing on what appeared the next rise, but really standing, Ffft knew, in the Beastlands, was his entire family. Hazy, a bit indistinct, but clearly his Father, mother and siblings. Little Kirani was even waving at him.

Ffft waved back hesitantly, still trying to take it all in.

His father spoke again. “Why is it we battle? Why do we fight and kill and die? Because we love our families, our clans, our world. We love living and being alive. We find joy in existing in the world. The joy and memories of life sustain the dead past the end of their lives to what lies beyond. The joy is in the act, and the experience. And so we fight, for all that would live.”

“We have always been here, son. You just couldn't see us. This is what the Haka is for.”

Sometime later, long after the sun had set, the chill breeze had set in, and the villagers took their celebration back into the village, Ffft approached Mirmirani, S'tuth, T'kal and M'bata. “You look...wonderful,” Mirmirani said.

“I feel wonderful,” he said. “Better than I have felt in a long time.”

“Perhaps it is time to rest,” S'tuth offered.

“Rest?” Ffft said. “Hardly. Now is the time for the real work. We must spread the Haka to any who would have it. It is time for Malatra to heal.”

Tales Of Malatra

The Haka

By Stephen H. Jay

“The Haka is a traditional war cry, war dance or challenge in the Maori culture. It is a posture dance performed by a group, with vigorous movements and stamping of the feet with rhythmically shouted accompaniment. War Haka were originally performed by Maori warriors before battle, proclaiming their strength in order to intimidate the opposition.” - Wikipedia.



Modern Hakas are for any special occasion – Funerals, weddings, births, deaths, war, celebration, honoring a guest, expressing contempt, etc.

The Haka in Malatra

A simplified version of the Maori Haka was introduced to the Simbara tribe immediately after the events narrated in the Living Jungle Module “Promises: Jus-Pos-Bellum” by Ryan Conrad. It is not part of the module per se.

The Haka was given to the Simbara by one of their traditional foes, the Black Leopard Katanga (Also referred to as Black Leopard People). The BLP asked to be invited to a wedding that occurred at the end of the module (As this is written before the module is run, it is assumed that most heroes will succeed and ending “C – The Good One” will prevail. Regardless of the actual ending, the Haka will be given to the Simbara and they will begin to use it.”. Despite being traditional enemies, the request was granted. In both BLP and Simbara culture, honorable foes are treated with respect.

The reason for the BLP request resides in their complicated system of laws of honor and behavior. The BLP saw that the Simbara had suffered tremendously from the war with the Tamara and were in decline. Elders throughout Malatra worried that the Simbara might even one day become extinct.

As mighty warriors, the BLP considered the Simbara mighty adversaries with which “to sharpen their claws.” In the words of one of the BLP warriors “The Simbara are honorable and mighty warriors. They make us stronger by challenging us.”

The fundamental difference between the two tribes is one of perspective and alignment. The Simbara, being predisposed to Lawful Good behavior, believe in non-lethal combat when possible with others as a way to make themselves stronger. Combat with others, even the BLP, is frequently ritualized to prevent death or debilitating injury. The Simbara consider themselves protectors of all that is good in Malatra, and took the lead in combat with the forces of the Tamara.

The BLP, on the other hand, are predisposed to Lawful Evil behavior manifested in their belief that all creatures, intelligent or not, are potential prey or combatants. So long as their laws are followed, they are free to fight or kill whomever they see as worthy. Their laws stipulate that their intelligent neighbors are to be warned via drum signaling when BLP are on the prowl looking for a kill. Thus those wishing to avoid a fight can stay safely in their homes or village, for BLP will not normally violate someone else's den. Those looking for a fight can enter the jungle and take their chances.

The Black Leopard People use their own, complicated version of the Haka ritual to maintain their connection to their lands, their ancestors and their laws. When the Tamara came, they primarily invaded the Jungle Of Lost Tribes. Many residents of the JOLT fled across the river to avoid being slaughtered by the Tamara, but the BLP stayed. Their laws forbade them from abandoning their traditional lands under almost any condition. So the BLP, already nomadic in nature, disappeared into the Jungle of their traditional home, the Jungle of Lost Tribes.

For the next two years the BLP conducted a brutal and bloody campaign of guerrilla warfare. Though never strong enough to be a serious impediment to the Tamara, the BLP, it must be said, distracted and slowed the war efforts of the Tamara. Unknown to many Malatrans at the time, the BLP bought the rest of Malatra valuable time to organize their own defense efforts, but at a terrible price. By the time the war was over and the Tamara were defeated, approximately 75% of the Black Leopard People had been killed.

Yet a year after the war, the BLP are thriving. Their females were fertile, delivering an average of 4

cubs per pregnancy as opposed to the more normal 1 or 2. The people remain vigorous, the children grow strong and with little health problems. Infant survival has approached 100%. Despite the small population, the BLP look poised to remain genetically diverse.

The BLP call this phenomenon “Touched by the Ancestors.” They credit their adherence to their laws and their traditions, and their determination to never leave their lands. They also credit the Haka.

The Ailment Of The Simbara

The Simbara also bore an awful cost of blood and lives during the war. The attack of the Tamara, their servants and their allies was brutal and overwhelming, with several the Tamara taking a direct role in their battle with the Southern Clan of Lion Katanga. The Southern Clan was wiped out. Many other katanga native to the savanna suffered grievously, as well. This included many Simbara warriors, shaman and witch-doctors. The only positive aspect of that great battle was that the Hyena katanga, evil allies of the Tamara and native to the savanna, were also decimated and scattered. Not a single hyena katanga has been seen in the savanna in ten years. It is likely they are hiding amidst the animal hyena population. Rumors are they have created a new Prestige Class that aids them in their survival. Others say they have allied themselves with ancient, dark powers they found while prowling the caverns in the great rift.

Though the Simbara showed all the courage, bravery and honor they are justly famous for in their battles with the Tamara, their bloodline has become weakened. Simbara shaman say that the Ancestor spirits were so overwhelmed with grief over the huge numbers of dead that crossed over into the beastlands after that great savanna battle that they spiritually recoiled from contact with their living progeny. Even now, a year after the end of the war, the numerous funerals throughout Malatra is, according to tribal shaman and witch-doctors of nearly all tribes, a recurring shock to the ancestors and their ability to reach across the barrier between the Beastlands and Malatra. They have become untethered, so to speak, from their descendants. This allowed a gulf to open between the ancestor spirits in the Beastlands and their descendants in Malatra. The nature of this gulf is not completely understood, though Simbara shaman and Witch-doctors speak of terrible creatures in the abyss, abominations to the natural order that interfere with their calls to the Ancestor spirits. In short, this gulf seems to make it much harder for the Ancestors to hear their childrens call.

The Gift Of Communication

The Haka Ritual, as explained by the Black Leopard People, is a way for the Simbara Ancestors to hear the calls of their children and find their way back to them. Once re-written to make the Hakas a uniquely Simbaran ritual, they will reconnect the Simbarans to their Ancestors. It will strengthen the Simbara, make them more fertile and their children stronger and more vigorous. It will, over time, save the Simbara as a unique and powerful people.

Further fine-tuning and repeated use can lead to other benefits say the BLP, though they declined to explain exactly what this meant. “You will know when it happens. We have been performing our Hakas for generations. So long as we follow the law, our people become a little stronger with every generation.”

The BLP did issue one warning: “Always perform the Haka in areas devoid of taboo spirits and rich with friendly spirits. To do otherwise invites attention from spirits you'd rather not have. Sometimes they are merely mischievous. Sometimes they are malevolent.”

Simbara – The Beginning, More or Less, Of All Hakas

Participants are always adults, with one exception: children may preform a Haka at the death of a beloved teacher. With the Simbara, adults are anyone who has gone through initiation. Participants are traditionally men and female warriors, with the women of the tribe chanting the words in the background. There is, however, no prohibition for the women of any kind. Any adult can participate however they see fit or however the emotion may move them.

As the participants emotionally psyche themselves up, they may vocalize yells and display fearsome faces. Battle cries may be uttered. Hands are shaken as if in great agitation. Eyes bulge. The emotion begins to flow.

Steps of the Haka

- 1) The chant leader steps forward with a battle cry. The chant leader is often accompanied with a ceremonial weapon to display battle prowess and the chanters dedication to those they honor.
- 2) He begins to slap hands on his thighs rhythmically. (One, two, one, two, with the beat of one coming about every second). The rest join in. The movements are usually in unison, but Hakas can be free-style as the mood takes the participants. The expression of emotion and the words of the ritual are the most important parts.
- 3) The participants puff out their chest as the rhythmic slapping continues. The slapping moves to the chest.
- 4) They bend at the knees. A few measures later, the hips follow.
- 5) They begin stamping their feet to the rhythm.

Words To The Simbara Funeral Haka, Spoken In The Old Dialect

As the funeral procession approaches, the Haka group begins to vocalize. The Haka leader steps forward and the procession stops. The Haka group approaches as the leader issues his war cry and the rhythmic slapping begins. They are symbolically confronting the fallen to express to him or her their respect, their pride, their love and their grief.

“We are death! We are death!”

“We are life! We are life!”

“Ancestor spirits, hear us!”

“Parents of our parents, hear us!”

“We are your children, heed us!”

“We are the Lions Roar, hear us!”

“A Warrior approaches, honor him(or her)!”

“A brother of Lions approaches, respect him!”

“He whose life he has given!”

“He who shed blood for your children!”
“Strength and courage and blood!”
“Honor and Blessings and Life!”

“We are death! We are death!”
“We are life! We are life!”

The entire Haka is usually repeated once before ending.

Silence now grips the Haka as they respectfully back away from the procession and make way for it to continue. No one speaks until the fallen warrior is prepared for his final disposition.

Words To The Simbara Wedding Haka – Ususally Spoken In The Modern Dialect

The Haka begins from the crowd of friends of the bride and groom. The family usually doesn't participate as the Haka is not just intended to honor and express joy to the bride and groom, but to the new combined family as well. Again, this is tradition, but no one who feels genuinely moved to participate are forbidden. As with all Hakas, only adults participate, though it is considered a blessing if the very young are moved to participate in some way.

The Haka begins after the wedding ceremony when the bride and groom are presented to the community as a new entity, that of husband and wife.

“We are life! We are life!”
“Ancestor spirits, see us!”
“Mothers of life, bless us!”
“Father protectors, strengthen us!”

“We are Simbara, heed us!”
“We are the Lions Roar, hear us!”

“A union is born, bless them!”
“A future is given, see them!”
“Life of the Lion, come to us!”
“Death no more, hear us!”

“We are life! We are life!”
“We are life! We are life!”

Typically not repeated, but there is no prohibition to doing so.

Simbara Honor or Battle Haka – Usually Spoken In The Old Dialect

This Haka is intended to honor guests, acknowledge great accomplishments, or to issue a challenge on the battlefield. Used as the latter, it is meant to be used as psychological intimidation.

“We are the Simbara!”
“Strength in abundance!”
“We stand in courage and blood!”

“Our enemies tremble!”
“We will be victorious!”
“The Simbara live forever!”

“The People Of The Lion!”
“Come to us, friend or foe!”
“Embrace us in friendship!”
“Embrace us in battle!”
“It matters not to us!”
“Our strength, our courage, our honor!”
“The Lions Roar is in our blood!”
“Be embraced or devoured!”
“Defeated for all to see!”

“We are the Simbara!”
“The People Of The Lion!”
“You will know our strength!”

Not usually repeated, though the shouting and fearsome facial actions may continue for a few minutes.

In-Game Mechanics Effect

At the moment, there is no official In-Game Mechanics Effect. This is mostly a role-playing hook that I would like to see used by authors, Story-Tellers and Heroes. If a Story-Teller chooses to have an in-game effect, I suggest a +1 situational modifier, used as the Story-Teller sees fit.

New Hakas

There is little doubt that new Hakas will be invented as needs arise. Those who create new Simbara Hakas of power can be any individual of power and wisdom, with wisdom being the prime requisite. It should be a sort of poetry, created by a Simbaran who has shed blood and tears for his/her people.

Maori Hakas

To see examples of real life Hakas, go to Youtube (or a competent search engine), and search for the following terms. Links are also provided for those who have the electronic copy of this missive.

FUNERAL HAKA

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xI6TRTBZUMM&index=2&t=0s&list=PLP64WzXdPWzFK6Oaw_AhTx_hp16iyVnwD

Search: “Fallen Comrade Haka.”

For fallen comrades of the New Zealand Defence Force

WEDDING HAKA

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QUbx->

[AcDgXo&index=3&t=0s&list=PLP64WzXdPWzFK6Oaw_AhTx_hp16iyVnwD](#)

Search “Wedding Haka.”

For comments, questions or suggestions, you can reach Stephen at: Malatra.Spirit@Gmail.Com



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