

both suppress their emotions and set them free when it is better suited or more productive (or at least less *destructive*). With this better understanding of themselves comes a better understanding of others. They are able to know what causes anger and avoid this when dealing with others. Usually this is why, while quiet, they frequently get along with the other races better than with their own.

Maenad Life

Maenads spend a majority of their time in their villages. Tasks are given to those who are best at the task in question with some serving as fishers, others as clothiers, and so on. At a young age the maenads are taught the important lessons of their race and allowed to take a variety of tasks in order to find where each individual's interests lie. When it becomes apparent what each maenad finds appealing and has some skill doing, they are trained as an apprentice by whoever happens to be handling that particular job.

Family

The maenads live in secluded villages, often on the seacoast. Their idea of family, however, is somewhat different than most other races. Their houses are often small and simple, and they spend more time outside them than within. Because of this, though each pair of parents is responsible for raising their children, it is the entire village that aids them. An individual child spends time with their parents, but also with their aunts and uncles, grandparents, and even other members of the settlement that are not related by blood. Each has individual talents that they impress upon the child. The entire village, therefore, raises the children of maenad societies, and, as a result, every village is seen as a "family" whether or not they are related by blood. This leads to a very strong sense of community with everyone helping and aiding with their own particular talents or care, leading to a stronger whole.

Leisure

As a race with very strong passions, the maenads must often find some way of taking out aggressions and getting rid of excess energy in a way that will not end up damaging others or property. It is

because of this that much of their leisure time is spent doing some sort of physical activity. Most often this is done in an organized manner, but impromptu wrestling matches and footraces are not unheard of.

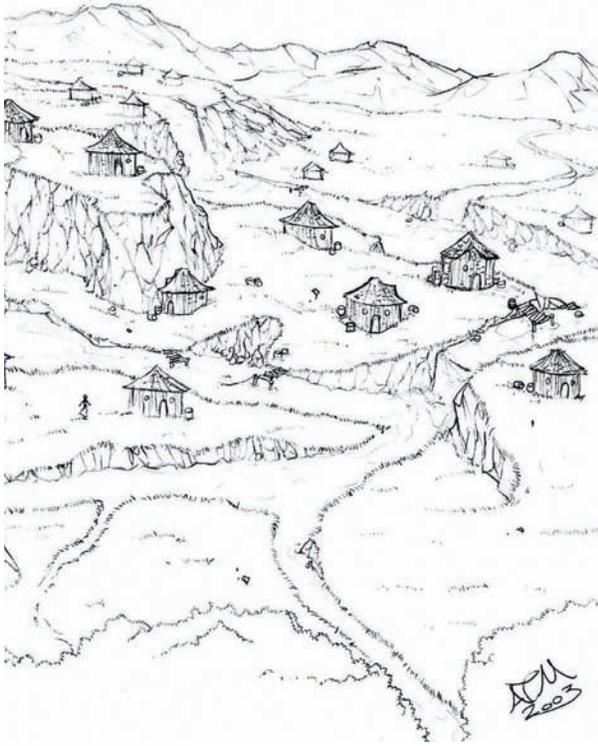
Planned events of physical, or sometimes psionic, prowess are the most common form of entertainment. Happening almost daily, maenads set up contests that are interesting both for the competitors and the spectators. Tests of acrobatics, speed, endurance, and especially strength are often used to entertain and allow the participants a structured environment to channel their passions into. Since all maenads are gifted with minor psionic talent and most are gifted with even more, contests of power are common occurrences as well. These can take the form of targets to destroy, contests of telekinetic manipulation, or even resisting another's mental (albeit non-lethal) attacks. A visitor to a maenad settlement might think there was something involved in the contests, but often the maenads compete only for pride and jealousy is rarely an issue.

Cities and Settlements

Typically a simple society, the maenads usually have houses made of easily-found materials. Mud, clay brick, and even animal skins are all used in the making of their small houses. As the maenads feel very in tune with nature, especially the sea, they prefer to be outdoors instead of cut off from it. Therefore, they spend much of their time performing activities that allow them to be in the open. Usually, they only retreat inside if they are sleeping or if the weather is inclement.

Maenads settlements are typically groups of no larger than three hundred. Their villages are always built along a coastline and one of their primary food sources is the sea itself. They gather fish, crustaceans, seaweed, and various other gifts the sea bestows.

To outsiders, a maenad village may seem small, even quaint. To the maenads, though, this is exactly what a culture requires, the basic needs of survival and a few bits of comfort. Anything more, especially the tendency to spend money on gaudy or overly ornate items or structures, is just a waste. When visiting another city or community,



the typical maenad usually notices only the destitute wandering the streets, uncared for, the rigid structure of class and government, and the high, solid buildings seemingly built to cut one off from nature.

Society and Culture

Living in small (some would say uncivilized) villages upon the coast and depending almost entirely upon the sea for food and nearly everything else, the maenads have a very tribal culture. They are led by a council of elders (usually the oldest means the wisest, but they do not discriminate against a young, but particularly wise leader) that makes decisions for the good of the community. Equal in importance, but lacking any official power, are the aatis - trained religious leaders that remember the lore of the tribe and keep the tribe spiritually healthy. Male and female maenads are not seen as different from a cultural perspective. Both are important to the tribe, and jobs and positions of leadership fall to the individual most suited, regardless of sex.

Oral Traditions

Maenads have a tradition of passing teachings,

history, and other important information to their descendants orally through stories. Almost every important life lesson a young maenad learns as she grows up will come in the form of a story heard from her parents, teacher, or another villager. These lessons are rarely explicitly stated; instead, they are often concealed within the story so that the young maenad might unravel their secrets for herself and thus learn more than she might otherwise. This has been the way of learning for the maenads for generations.

Some maenad children, especially those with a good grasp of language and an excellent memory, are trained from an early age to become aatis, the spiritual leaders of the maenads. Taught even more stories than the typical child, it falls upon the aati to learn everything they can to preserve the history and knowledge of the maenad race. There are always exactly three aatis within a community; they are the lore keepers, healers, and spiritual guides of their territory.

Celebrations

Maenads are prone to fits of passion. With their extreme emotions frothing within them constantly, it is no wonder that they find any excuse to relieve the pressure. Maenads celebrate nearly everything they can think of. Birthdays, weddings, good hunts, all of these things many races celebrate and the maenads are no exception. However, with their feelings pressing them from within, most maenads feel a constant need to use pent-up energies far more often than other races. They celebrate almost *any* change. Death is celebrated almost as fervently as a new life. Maenads rarely see an end in anything, only a new beginning.

Their parties can look like nothing more than an uncoordinated mess of dancing, music, and alcohol. However, to those who know their ways, it is apparent that there is a certain pattern to every party. These celebrations start with a simple declaration of intent. This can be as simple as "Let us celebrate the new birth!" or as complete as a full eulogy for a deceased, much like many other races' funerals. The next phase is that of music; some maenads play while others enjoy listening, letting the music loosen their normally stoic façade. When the maenads begin to revel in their loosened passions, the true celebration begins. Dancing, drinking, and