

Felis Racial Packet

History

As told by Elder Raqabash Shanti

Gaius sat in the drawing room of the great house Aelius. The proud Lions who ran this house had hired the aged Jaguar nearly 40 years ago to be their healer and to teach children of the house. He was surrounded tonight by those children sitting on the plush rugs in a semi-circle around him, Lions, Leopards, even a Tiger were there. All members of the great house in one way or another. "Tell us a story tonight," the oldest of the lion children demanded. Gaius looked at him and smiled. "Okay, one story, then off to bed with all of you." "Where should I start? Well, I guess the beginning is really the best place." Gaius looked over the expansive shelves of the room that was filled with books from floor to ceiling. He knew exactly where the book was that he wanted, but he theatrically looked around for it for a moment before grabbing a large tome with vellum pages bound in thick cloth with the large title of "The History of the Felis" by Gaius Acilius, Historian of House Aelius. "Now, I wasn't there myself, but I was told that this is how it all happened..."

At the end of the second age during the time of creation when the Titans were about to leave the world, the ones in the land of Draken wanted to leave behind someone to guard and take care of the land for them. They decided to create the Felis. The Lions came first. The Titans taught them about civilization and commerce and diplomacy so they could deal with other races and trade for things they needed. They gathered together in large social tribes and created villages and the town of Al-Asad. The Lions did well, but they had a hard time defending themselves from organized threats and were nearly conquered by invaders several times. The Titans saw this and knew the Lions would never survive alone, so they created the Tigers. The Tigers were able to organize into military units because they were more serious minded than the Lions. The Titans taught the Tigers tactics and warfare and the basics of supplying and moving an army. The Tigers built the fortress city of Al-Namir as well as several military camps to be able to protect the land from any invaders. Tigers live in very small groups and it is not unheard of for them to live alone. The Titans felt that they had created a race that could live and protect itself, but now they wanted that race to remember and revere them. The Jaguars were created to be the protectors and caretakers of the oases. These were the holy sites of the Titans and they taught the Jaguars how to be priests. With the creation of the Jaguars the Titans felt the job was done and left Draken never to return.

During the third age, the threats that affected most of the world mostly bypassed Draken and the Felis. They had learned to use the land and when enemies came, they either evaded them or hid from them. They continued to grow and evolve both socially

and physically until they became the creatures we know today. Once the dragons had been pushed back, the Felis began their return to normalcy, then the barrier broke and the fires came. A massive breach to the plane of fire. At first it was small creatures, hell hounds, some small groups of fire dwarves and such, then elementals began coming out as the rift grew larger, In other places on Draken the barrier between worlds could not hold either. Few places were safe in those days. Finally the ruin of Draken came out of the rift. His name was Pyrodeus and he was an elemental prince of fire. None could stand before him and the land itself was scorched and made barren wherever he passed. With no choice left to them, the Felis retreated to their oases and hid and waited. Generations were born, lived and died in the safety of the oases while Pyrodeus ravaged the land of Draken for nearly 100 years. Some Felis left to join the orders in their battles. Learning from them, they returned home and fought back until finally, the barrier was strengthened enough that Pyrodeus could stay no longer. With the damage done, Pyrodeus returned home. It is our greatest fear that he will return again someday and all fire creatures are to be dealt with cautiously.

Since the Lions, Tigers, and Jaguars came first, they are the great tribes. It was during the third age the lesser and minor tribes would develop. Not all oases escaped untouched, and some of these areas that had been affected by Pyrodeus and his minions had left traces of magic on the land. Tribes that settled in these areas morphed. When they left these oases, they left as the Cheetahs, Leopards, Lynx, and Cougars.

*Gaius clapped the book shut and pronounced to his audience
“and now it is time for bed, go on, off with all of you.” The
young Felis left the room, leaving Gaius with his thoughts and
his book.*

Culture **As recorded by Trademaster Vashiri Chall**

Trading is the primary form of socialization for Felis and nearly all of them engage in it in one form or another. Felis like to take the measure of the man they do business with so to speak, and getting to know the person they do business with is something that is vital to them. They normally sit down over a meal to get to know someone first before any business is discussed. How the meal goes usually dictates how business is conducted, or if it is conducted at all. Traders from the Great Houses typically know each other and are on good terms, and it is not uncommon for a trade discussion to turn into a visit of a few days during which time news is exchanged, and games of strategy are played. Felis may consider it rude to just walk up and buy something, even their markets open with everyone drinking a toast of coffee or tea to having a great day of selling and buying. They do understand other races don't stand on this convention and modify their behavior when dealing with those and typically just conduct minor trades on the spot, with major trades being discussed over a meal.

Honor is paramount to Felis, It is so important to them that one who violates honor may have to go before the Ministry of Justice and be sentenced depending on the offense. The Lions have Champions of Honor who fight sentenced individuals to combat

to the death in the Coliseum. Lions and Leopards care the most about honor while Tigers seem to care the least about it and Lynx have their own unique code.

Lucius the Lion Gladiator stood in the center of the Coliseum. Judgment had been passed on the honorless Tiger and he was here to carry out the sentence. He wore many scars from previous battles, both for fun and in this role as a Champion of Honor. His two-handed great sword was stuck into the ground point first and he leaned on the hilt waiting for the gate on the far side to open. Finally the gate rumbled up and out into the light came the Tiger accused of deserting his unit and breaching honor. Both Felis were dressed the same in a pauldron on the left shoulder, a bracer on their right arm and a greave on their left leg. Lucius raised his sword and snarled, "I'll give you the first ten swings, then after that I will kill you. The first swing was tentative, easily blocked. The next three were better, but the Lion defended those as well. The sixth swing caught Lucius on the shoulder, but not deep. It would be another scar for him there. Three more swings, three more blocks. The Tiger looked extremely nervous, this would be his last swing. The sword swung high, then quickly changed to low and went solidly into Lucius' thigh. The Lion roared in pain. Then he pounced. Literally. Two hundred pounds of Lion went into the air and he landed solidly on his opponent bearing him to the ground and stunning him. Lucius raked with a claw and destroyed the armor on the left side of his opponent. Rising back to his feet, he drove the large sword through the left side of the Tiger and into the ground, pinning him there. The tiger looked up at him and his eyes went glassy and dull as the sentence was finalized. Lucius limped back out of the gate, barely acknowledging the crowd.

Homecoming is a yearly event where all Felis return to their family's home den. The homecoming is so important that there is nearly no reason that Felis will not return. It is during this time of year that deaths are memorialized, births are celebrated and weddings are held. Homecoming typically lasts about two weeks with many parties and feasting occurring during that time as well as just spending some quiet quality time with close family.

Anatomy of the Felis is similar to a human, even though they have cat-like features, they are not related to or descended from cats. While this is often a confusion they created as humanoids. Felis usually live to be around 75 years old.

Great Houses of the Felis are familial estates that control an area of a 50 or 100 mile radius. Lions, Tigers, Jaguars, Cheetahs, and Leopards all have Great Houses. There are none for the Lynx or Cougars just due to basic differences in philosophy. There are a great many smaller ones with there being a few that are truly impressive.

Roles of members of a Great House include The Master/Mistress of the House, typically a patriarchal society, it is not unheard of for a House to have a female at the head. The larger ones typically do better with a matriarchal leader than the smaller ones do, this is the only role in the house which is a hereditary one, the other roles are all hired employees, but they are allowed an apartment where they stay with their families and are basically treated as members of the family of the Master of the House. House Healer/Teacher/Priest/Lawyer, although they fill all these roles, they are usually simply referred to as the House Healer. This is typically a Jaguar who serves the leader of the House and lives there with his/her family. House Mage is usually a Leopard, except in Jaguar houses where they are rarely found. House Champion is a role Lions usually serve in while Tigers will serve as the Captain of the House Guard. Cheetahs will generally fill the role of Chief of Transport for a House. The last two roles are the most influential. The Voice is always of the same kind of Felis as the Master of the House and many times is related to the Master of the House. The Voice is the House diplomat and from these are the ones chosen to serve in The Forum which is why they must be the same kind of Felis as the Master of the House. The final role is that of House Trader. This is usually a Lynx. The entire purpose of the Great Houses is trade. They were established to provide stability for the regions they control, and they found that controlling trade was the best way to do that. The House Trader is responsible for all trades and it is his/her job to ensure all rules are followed. The trader is responsible for filing grievances when a trade rule is broken which can lead to a house losing its contract. When a house loses its contract, it can conduct no trades until it gets a new one and some houses do not survive this. Finally, the Trader is generally the one who is responsible for what kind of relationship a House has with another House.

The Great Tribes

Lions

Danette moved carefully around the House. She checked and double checked the goods that had been gathered, she made sure the Cheetahs and their animals had comfortable places to rest and plenty to eat before they began their journey. There had been losses on the convoys lately, and although they were minor, her father had decided he would send her along on this trip to look after their interests. She had only made the journey to the Oasis the year before and this was her first true adult task. She was determined not to disappoint her father. These Cheetahs seemed flighty to her and she felt that it was likely just their indifference that had cost them their due profit. They had claimed that the desert was just harsh and losses were just a part of doing business. She didn't believe that, but she still began sharpening the blade of her halberd...just in case.

Lions founded the city of Al-asad. They have large families and live in houses called dens in as much comfort as they can. They sit at the top of the government in the

role of Speaker of the Forum, a role that only votes to break ties, but decides which items are voted on and when votes are taken. They run the Ministry of Trade and grant merchant houses contracts that allow them to conduct business. A house without a contract doesn't survive long. The Lions are the great builders of society and have made some architectural marvels such as their coliseum where they hold games of speed and strength for entertainment as well as gladiatorial fights that are almost never to the death. They have a high sense of nobility and honor. Many Lion adventurers choose Gladiator as a class, but they do equally well in others.

Tigers

Alerion looked down at the valley below. He feared and hated the fiery creatures he saw. Fire elementals. There were five of them. His platoon had received a report on them and were told to verify and if needed, destroy them. They outnumbered the elementals four to one, even so, Alerion hoped they had brought enough. He had spent some time with an order called the Guardians of the Essence and had learned a few tricks from them. He would need all of those today. He gave the order and the platoon charged down the hill, their enemies turned and threw fire. His group took several hits, some of them massive, dropping the Tigers that were hit immediately. Alerion reached bottom of the hill and swung on the first one drawing on his power to return it to its home plane. That was one down, four to go and there was no telling which side would win.

Tigers built the fortress of Al-Namir. Tigers live either in pairs or very small families. Their houses resemble military barracks where they have bachelors dens and family dens. They are responsible for the defense of the land and its people. Tigers live for duty and don't focus on comfort as much as Lions do. To a Tiger, honor means doing your duty and winning wars to protect others. They have two voting members that serve in the forum and they lead the War Ministry. Tigers truly enjoy the adventuring life. They do not have the homecoming instinct as strongly as other Felis do and have been known to miss it due to an assignment, being on an adventure or being on a battlefield. Because they protect others so much, many Tigers decide to become Champions and Paladins.

Jaguars

What does it mean to get the call? To be chosen to protect and guard. To keep the greatest secret any Felis could ever be trusted with? Such is my life My name is Theodore Gaudalace and I am the guardian of an Oasis, the holiest of places to the Felis. I am the only one who knows where this place is and how to find it, I just feel it. My connection to this place is such that I can tell what it needs and how to tend to it, even before it is

apparent. I leave this place but once a year, and that is to guide young Felis who must make their pilgrimage of adulthood. To be a keeper of an Oasis is the ultimate honor for a Jaguar, and I will be worthy of that honor.

Jaguars built the city of Al-Amriki which features the Temple to the Titans as the centerpiece of it. A large oasis sits inside the temple. This is the only oasis that the location of it is known. The rest of the oases are hidden holy sites that each has only a single Jaguar that knows the location of. When some Jaguars get to the age of about 50, they get "the call." When this happens, they suddenly instinctively know the direction of an oasis, much like a Caller knows the direction of true north. They travel there immediately and arrive within a few hours to a few days of the current guardians death. The end of their life is spent training their replacement. All Felis are required to make a pilgrimage to a secret oasis before they can be considered an adult. Without the Jaguars this would be near impossible. A hidden oasis cannot be spotted from the air and is easily bypassed from a distance of just a few feet away. Tracking also cannot easily find a hidden oasis. The Jaguars have two voting members in the forum and lead the Ministry of Justice. Jaguars have written nearly all of the laws of Felis society. Jaguars who do not get "the call," typically serve as Priests, Judges, or Barristers. They live in small family dens that are comfortable, but not lavish. Their task of tending the oases and being Priest to the people is the reason many Jaguars become Callers, Guardians, and Healers.

The Lesser Tribes

Cheetahs

Renpau slashed viciously at the giant scorpion. First had come the sandstorm, and then before the dust could settle, the giant scorpions had rushed forward. Cratano had been stung, but he seemed to be fighting through the poison. Resistance to poison was one of the gifts of the titans to the Felis and it came in handy out here in the desert where everything seemed to be venomous. Another quick slash removed the creatures claw and just as he was going for the kill, Renpau heard the scream of a pack camel behind him. It had been stung and it's belly had been sliced open by the claws of the scorpion that was on it. The camel's guts fell out all over the desert sand as it fell over. More caravan guards jumped on that one finishing it. The battle was over, but the Cheetah new that the Lion girl who joined them was unhappy with the result. The loss of the camel meant the goods it carried were lost too as everything was loaded to its limit. She looked at Renpau and said, "I guess on top of losing these goods, now you are going to tell me that the sandstorm covered everything and we are now

lost.” Renpau looked at the ground and smiled, “No, no we're not.”

Cheetahs appeared during the 3rd age. They are descendants of the Jaguars yet for some reason they changed and became different. Cheetahs are extremely nomadic and have put this to a great advantage. Cheetahs run the caravans for the Felis. While each of the great tribes have many large merchant houses that trade goods, none of those goods move without the Cheetahs. Many Cheetahs have a sense of Geography and tracking that borders on supernatural and areas of sand that look flat and indistinct to you or I, look like a major road leading into the gates of a city to them. Cheetahs have two voting members in the Forum and control the Ministry of Transportation. While they have never built any large settlements they do have many nomadic villages and have become excellent road builders. Nearly all the roads across Draken were built by the Cheetahs. Cheetahs are excellent archers and many who become adventurers choose the path of a Ranger.

Leopards

Mariposa stood at the top of a mound of sand. There was desert all around her and this piece looked as unremarkable as any other. It wasn't of course, she could feel the power that coursed through this area. Ancient power that only a few knew how to feel. She had finished her apprenticeship almost twenty years ago and now finding these spots was what she did. The House that employed her was fairly significant in status and she was glad she worked for them. Even though it couldn't be seen, there was a door here, it just needed to be opened and then their goods could be moved throughout the world. The Felis needed to sell goods to other races, simply trading back and forth among the Felis never resulted in any real profit. She checked her components and sat down. She began to feed energy into the convergence of ley lines and watched the components wear away before her eyes. A brilliant flash and the doorway opened, the convoy started moving immediately, they knew she could only hold it open for so long.

Leopards also descended from the Jaguars during the 3rd age. Leopards typically live in larger settlements with most of them living in the city of Al-Asad and some in Al-Namir. They have a natural affinity for evocation and that caused problems between them and the Jaguars until there was finally bloodshed. The Leopards were defeated and pushed out of Al-Amriki during the Oasis War. This is the only recorded major conflict between Felis in their history. The Leopards built the Mages Tower in Al-Asad, the only non-Lion structure in that city. Leopards found their niche in the trade of goods when they learned they could locate portals and open them. Anytime goods or people are moved off of Draken, portals are the preferred method. Docks do exist, but they are so other races can come and trade with them. The Felis don't have a navy or many merchant ships. Leopard families are similar to Lion families as they try hard to live lives similar to the Lions. The Leopards have two voting members in the Forum and control

the Ministry of Magic. Leopards have spent a lot of time around Lions and have picked up use of two-handed weapons from them, therefore, many of them are Spellblades or Evokers.

The Minor Tribes

Lynx

Gordon looked at the board, the small white and black discs were mostly black, not a good thing when you were playing white. "C'mon Gordo, this game is dragging on interminably," Henry said. The two Lynx had indeed been at the board most of the day, playing while they traded news back and forth and drank coffee. Henry refilled his pipe, he'd done so many times today, the advantage of being the one receiving the House's hospitality. The fact was it was a necessary evil. Henry had a large caravan outside and Gordon knew that the only reason it kept coming here to trade was because they kept him happy. It wouldn't be such a big deal, but the damnable Lynx always managed somehow to come up with the most interesting things to trade. Henry's House was located in the city of Al-Asad and they had access to a better selection of goods, but House Mara was located at a crossroads and many items never made it to Al-Asad without stopping there first. Each side had strengths and weakness that would be used and exploited, and both sides knew it. At the end of the day, a deal that was mostly fair would be reached, unless one side had something so priceless it would tip the scales heavily in their favor. Henry had traveled here to trade goods and receive their hospitality and next month it would be Gordon's turn to travel and visit. Gordon thought about next month when as guest he would demand chess be played and he would remember to pack his largest pipe.

Lynx are the fewest in number of the Felis and typically the smallest of them. They are descended from Tigers and appeared in the 3rd age after the Cheetahs and Leopards. There is a story about a man who conducts a trade with a Lynx. At the end of the trade, the Lynx has all the goods and all the money and the man feels lucky to still have his shirt as he walks away. This is a reputation that the Lynx have worked hard to develop. Lynx have a strange sense of honor when it comes to trading. They tend to be fair when dealing with someone who is not a highly skilled trader, but if they are facing an equal it is anything goes and the winner counts it as highly as an honor combat kill. Lynx are the trade brokers for the houses. They are almost always the reason that a contract get revoked due to dishonest dealing although this is extremely rare as houses tend to fire them and have been known to make them disappear. Lynx families usually are housed by their employers and are small in size. The Lynx have one voting member in the Forum. Lynx adventurers tend to be commoners or tricksters.

Cougars

Rani sat on the hillside, her flock of goats nearby. She worked on dress made from the hair of the goats she tended and she let herself dream, for just a moment, that she was going to one of the large social affairs held in the big cities. Across the way, down closer to the valley, she could see Toren. He kept dipping a pan in the river and washing the sand at the bottom of it. His family had the crazy idea that they could find valuable things in the river. Pickings for a mate were slim in their tiny village and Toren was really the only suitable boy close to her age. Rani figured she would likely marry him someday and tried to determine how much work would be needed fixing him up to be a proper mate. She always had the option to travel to another village or even one of the great cities in the desert to find a suitable mate, but that seemed just as much work as changing Toren. She looked up and noticed a couple of her goats had started to stray, she sighed and went to go turn the back.

Cougars also appeared during the 3rd age and are descended from Lions. No one is exactly sure when they came along as they tend to live in the mountains of Draken. Cougars are probably the most different from the other Felis, but if it wasn't for them, the Felis would have a much harder life than they do. Cougars have discovered and domesticated sheep and goats in the mountains from which they get milk, meat, hair, and wool. They have learned how to cut and preserve ice in the winter to sell to those in the desert during the summer, and some have even been rumored to try their hand at mining. The amount of goods that Cougars produce for the Felis is staggering. Having them as a resource gives the other Felis tribes more leverage when trading with outsiders as there is less reliance on outside goods. Cougars also control the mountain passes and charge tolls for their use as well as hire out as guides to lead caravans through the mountains when necessary. They live in Alpine villages and have large families to be able to share all the work they must do each day. Cougars have one voting member in the Forum. Cougar adventurers typically are Commoners or Rangers.

Desert Walkers

Renpau shielded his eyes from the sun and scanned the horizon. He always got nervous when the caravan was stopped, but for now, they weren't moving. They didn't dare. The Southern Desert was ahead of them, and you just didn't go in there, not without permission and not without an escort. Arrangements had been made, and they would be here, just in their own sweet time. You didn't rush the golden skinned ones, that was just how it was. After what seemed like an eternity an object appeared on the horizon. The sun reflected off it furiously, and that was a good thing. Anything other than a glass ship would've been trouble, but no

the desert walkers were on their way. Rempau started to breathe easier, these guys would get them safely across the southern desert to the point they needed to go. The South Shore Market, one of the largest and most multi-racial in Draken. As the sand skimmer closed the slender figures with pointed ears and golden skin came into focus. The desert elves, the guardians and guides of the Southern Desert.

The Felis believed they were alone for many years. The Southern Desert has always been hazardous and it was in an attempt to find a safer route to the southern shore of Draken that they first encountered the Desert Elves. Both races were cautious at first, but eventually, a spirit of cooperation grew between the races. Felis genuinely like desert elves, but they don't always understand them. The Felis are grateful to the desert elves though because it was them who helped establish passages through the desert to the southern shore. Such would never have been possible without them. Felis refer to these Elves as Desert Walkers.

Racial Relations

Dwarves – The Felis have an appreciation for their work ethic and the goods they produce

Elves – The Felis aren't completely sure why they look and act different from desert elves

Gnomes – Hard to understand them, they craft nice things, then blow them up

Rok'shen – Why do they have so many forms? They seem to have a kindred with nature and that is good.

Half Trolls – They don't seem to like fire too much either, but they aren't very civilized.

Humans – The most varied, it seems some can be trusted and others cannot, be careful.

Ents – Creatures of nature, they are to be revered and protected above all else.

Desert Elves – Our neighbors and friends. We work well together.