

Balador

(Father Bear, the Great Bear, the Master of Mead)

Lesser Power of the Beastlands, CG

PORTFOLIO:	Werebears, protection, fraternity, mead, brewing
ALIASES:	None
DOMAIN NAME:	BruX/Ursis
SUPERIOR:	None
ALLIES:	Artemis, Beory, Ehlonna, Ferrix, Mielikki, Nanna, Nobanion, Obad-Hai, Selune, Silvanus, Soma, the Seelie Court, the Seldarine
FOES:	Daragor, Eshebala, Malar, Squerrick, the goblinoid pantheons
SYMBOL:	Pitcher of mead
WOR. ALIGN.:	LG, NG, CG

Protector of wild places and bulwark against the depredations of evil lycanthropes, Balador (BAH-luh-door) is the wise patron of werebears and other good lycanthropes. To his followers, he is known as Father Bear, a term that encompasses both a paternal protective relation as well as a spiritual leadership role. He is known as much for his great wisdom and extensive knowledge of all things natural as he is for his love of a good mug of mead and a good tale told by firelight.

Balador's origins are always inextricably linked to that of his sister, Ferrix. Most myths hold that the pair were once servitors of a powerful nature deity, although who varies by world and predominant pantheon. Due to his faithful and loyal service, this deity decides to grant him his freedom, but he will only accept it if his sister is also freed. Despite Ferrix's less reliable nature, their master is kindly, and grants both their freedom. Not all myths describe such a series of events, but even these invariably hold that the pair are true siblings, reflecting different yet complementary aspects of the goodness of nature and mankind's interactions with it. Many myths also describe a similar connection between Father Bear and Mother Tigriss and the dark siblings of Daragor and Eshebala; such myths treat each member of the pair as balancing the other, while the two pairs are balanced against each other. None of these myths seems to take into account the existence of Squerrick the Ratlord or any of the much less well-known patrons of the other lycanthrope breeds; sages are quick to note that this absence must be significant, although what it means is up for debate.

While not a particularly powerful deity, Father Bear is greatly respected by gods of nature and wild places, and feared by those who desire to despoil such lands. He is often consulted for advice, for while he is neither quick-witted nor possessing of great knowledge, he holds a great depth of wisdom about the natural world and personal motivations. Similarly, when confronting foes, he does not engage in deep strategies and favors direct confrontation, but is able to see through decoys and misdirection with apparent ease. It is these qualities that have earned him many allies among the Seelie Court and the Seldarine, as well as various nature deities in other pantheons. Older than most of his other known relationships is some sort of connection with Artemis; whether this relationship is romantic or purely platonic is unknown however. He has forged strong bonds with moon deities of a goodly nature, and with them works against evil lycanthropes. He also intercedes with many deities on behalf of their worshippers who contract lycanthropy.

Despite his relatively small following, Balador is quite active on the Prime Material Plane. He often visits with werebears, masquerading as a middle-aged wanderer, to both dispense wisdom and subtly aid his flock if they should need it. He keeps a close eye out for signs of marauding lycanthropes and goblinoids and dispatches them where he finds them.

Balador's Avatar (Ranger 27, Druid 18)

In human form, Balador appears as a tall, burly, tanned male wearing clothes suited for a wilderness lifestyle. He has short hair and a bushy beard of brownish-black, and kindly brown eyes. He is quick to laugh and has good cheer except when engaging in battle; then his demeanor changes to steely determination. In ursine form, he appears typically as a black bear the size of the largest grizzly, although he may take the form of other bears to better fit in with the local fauna. He draws his spells from all spheres save chaos, law, necromantic, numbers, and thought.

AC 0; MV 12; HP 180; THAC0 -6; #AT 2 or 3
Dmg 1d8+10 (*longsword* +3, +7 STR) or 2d8+6/2d8+6/4d4 (claw/claw/bite)
MR 15%; SZ M or L (6 feet tall or 11 feet long)
STR 19, DEX 13, CON 18, INT 14, WIS 18, CHA 16
Spells P: 10/10/9/9/6/4/2
Saves PPDM 3; RSW 5; PP 4; BW 4; Sp 6

Special Att/Def: In human form, Balador wields *Lyconos*, a *longsword* +3 said to have been infused with an ancient and potent strain of wolf's bane during the forging. Said to have been crafted to strike true against Daragor, this blade deals double damage on evil lycanthropes and goblinoids. In ursine form, he pulls opponents into a powerful hug if both of his paws hit in the same round; each round thereafter, he automatically deals 2d12+7 points of damage, as well as maximum damage with his bite. To break free, an opponent must roll against one-third of their bend bars percentage.

Three times per day, Balador can *cure disease* or *cure critical wounds* by licking while in ursine form. In addition, he can roar to cause *fear* (as the wand) once per day, but only in bear form. In any form, he can automatically *pass without trace* while in natural surroundings, and can summon 2d6 bears (of a type appropriate to his surroundings) once per day for 6 turns.

Father Bear is immune to poison, disease, paralyzation, and illusion/phantasm spells. He can be struck only by weapons of a magical nature or those forged of silver; in the latter case, he suffers only half damage from a strike.

Other Manifestations

Father Bear does not often manifest his power to aid his followers, favoring direct appearances. When he does, he grants them the ability to resist silver weapons should they be battling foes armed with such; while under this power, his followers appear to be illuminated by a faint silver radiance, similar to moonlight and they suffer only half damage from silver weapons. He also appears to followers as a faint, ghostly bear who leads them to some creature in need of aid. Finally, he may grant a double-strength *aid* spell to followers who are in desperate fights against evil despoilers of nature, especially if those creatures are evil lycanthropes.

Balador is served primarily by bears of all sorts and ursinal guardinals, as well as aasimar, aasimon, alaghi, asuras, einheriar, hollyphants, and owlbears. He expresses his favor through the discovery of amber stones, especially those with bees preserved within, honeysuckle flowers, beehives, and unusual flight patterns of bees that have a subtle musical tone. He expresses his displeasure by causing mead to spoil and bees to swarm and sting.

The Church

CLERGY:	Cleric, specialty priest, ranger
CLERGY'S ALIGN.:	LG, NG, CG
TURN UNDEAD:	C: Yes, SP: Yes, R: No
CMND. UNDEAD:	C: No, SP: No, R: No

All clerics, druids, and specialty priests of Balador receive religion (lycanthrope) as a bonus nonweapon proficiency.

Those faiths that love and respect nature and wild places hold followers of Balador in high regard. They are known to always make space at their tables for friendly wanderers, and they are quick to lend aid and succor to the lost and injured. Against threats that their lands face, they are known as implacable and fierce foes, especially if those threats come from evil lycanthropes. The Baladoran faith is also called upon by those infected with lycanthropy who do not wish the curse to force them down the path of evil.

As a rule, the Baladoran faith does not build temples, and no great congregation of them is known to exist outside of the Beastlands. Individual priests maintain small, simple shrines in their homes, often decorated with dried or fresh berries in an open wreath; the more artistically inclined may instead carve wooden representations of berries to decorate their small shrines.

Novices in the service of Balador are known as Cubs; full priests are known as Ursid Protectors. There is no formal hierarchy amongst the priesthood as all members of the clergy are nominally equal, although

younger priests tend to defer to their elders. As such, no titles are used, and members of the priesthood refer to each other simply as Brother or Sister. Specialty priests are known as arktors. The majority of Balador's priesthood consists of clerics (40%) and specialty priests (35%), with smaller numbers of rangers (20%) and druids (5%) filling out the rest. The vast majority of Father Bear's clergy are werebears (90%), with significantly smaller contingents of other good- and neutrally-aligned lycanthropes (8%) and humans and demihumans (2%) as well. Balador's clergy draws many more males (75%) than females (25%).

Dogma: Guard and protect the vulnerable, the inexperienced, and the precious. Offer succor to those in need. Battle fiercely to defend the weak, especially against the depredations of evil werebeasts. Build camaraderie and friendship with allies. Few things in life are as affirming as sharing good tales and good drink with good friends around a table or fire.

Day-to-Day Activities: The Baladoran clergy generally favors solitary life away from civilization, inhabiting isolated cabins in forests and on mountain slopes in temperate to arctic zones. They tend to wander for days at a time, monitoring the health and well-being of their land and spending time with sylvan neighbors. In their spare time, many brew mead or ale, tend beehives or orchards, engage in gardening, or fish. Those few who choose a more social life tend to live in small villages, taking on jobs as brewers or tavern keepers, while also keeping a secret watch over their community to guard against attacks by evil creatures, especially lycanthropes.

Important Ceremonies/Holy Days: No holy days are observed by the Baladoran priesthood, although the night of the full moon is considered sacred. Priests hold silent vigils on these nights, offering prayers of thanks to Father Bear for the power their lycanthropic blood gives them, and requesting guidance on how best to use that power.

Major Centers of Worship: While werebears do sometimes congregate into small villages, such as Beltander in the Gnarley Forest on Oerth, temples devoted to Balador are nonexistent. The priests do not feel a need to construct permanent shrines to Father Bear, for the way they live their lives is the only show of devotion he requires. Sylvan streams that teem with fish and caves are considered sacred to Balador, however, although few visible signs are left by the clergy besides claw mark patterns on nearby trees. Such signs are instantly recognizable to the clergy, but few others will see them as anything other than normal bear claw marks.

Affiliated Orders: Balador's clergy sponsors no holy orders, although individual rangers are sometimes drawn to his tenets and try to live as they believe he would have them live. In some northern cultures, warrior lodges dedicated to bear totems are in fact dedicated to Balador by other names; such warriors often fight with berserk fury while wearing bear skins. Not all such warrior lodges are dedicated to Balador, however.

Priestly Vestments: Priests of Father Bear have no particular ceremonial garb, since they do not lead public ceremonies in worship of Balador. They generally wear simple outdoor garb suited for their location and season, with good travel leathers, strong boots, and warm jackets common. Male members of the clergy are commonly quite hirsute, and they always wear a beard of considerable thickness, although they never let it grow too long. If not balding, they keep their hair to a medium length, neither too short nor too long. Female clergy tend to wear their hair long, never shorter than shoulder length, with braids or buns very common. The holy symbol of the priesthood is typically a small model mug made of pewter or polished amber holding a bee.

Adventuring Garb: Balador's clergy favor travel clothing in browns, blacks, and dark greens suited to the weather they are living or traveling in, unless such garb would stand out. They always have extra sets in case an unexpected need to transform into their animal or hybrid form arises, and for the same reason rarely wear armor. For weapons, they prefer axes and spears for melee and slings and bows for ranged combat or hunting.

Specialty Priests (Arktors)

REQUIREMENTS:	Strength 16, Wisdom 12, Charisma 11
PRIME REQ.:	Wisdom, Charisma
ALIGNMENT:	CG
WEAPONS:	Any
ARMOR:	Any up to chain mail and shield

MAJOR SPHERES:	All, animal, charm, combat, creation, elemental earth, healing, protection, time, travelers
MINOR SPHERES:	Divination, guardian, necromantic, plant
MAGICAL ITEMS:	As clerics and druids
REQ. PROFS:	Brewing (PHBR10)
BONUS PROFS:	Fishing

- Arktors must be natural or infected werebears (including giant polarweres).
- Arktors are not allowed to multiclass.
- Arktors may select nonweapon proficiencies from the warrior group with no penalty.
- Arktors may move silently or hide in shadows as a ranger of the same level.
- Due to their hatred of evil lycanthropes, arktors gain a +4 bonus to hit, and suffer a -4 penalty to their reaction checks with any known evil lycanthrope.
- While in bear or hybrid form, arktors may lick a wound to confer a *cure light wounds* effect (as the 1st-level priest spell) once per day.
- At 3rd level, arktors can cast *hibernate* (as the 1st-level priest spell) once per day. Note that Balador takes a very dim view of an arktor slaying a creature in this state, even if evil.
- At 5th level, arktors can roar in hybrid or bear form at a single creature within 10 yards once per day; such a creature is affected by *cause fear* (as the reverse of the 1st-level priest spell *remove fear*).
- At 7th level, arktors can cast *enlarge* (as the 1st-level wizard spell) on themselves once per day at half their level (rounded up). In addition, they can brew special mead that mimics common priestly potions. The brewing takes one month to ferment, creates 2d4 doses, and must be used within three months or it loses its potency and becomes normal mead. A successful proficiency check is required at the end of the fermentation period to verify success; a failure indicates it is just normal mead.
- At 7th level, arktors can make three melee attacks every two rounds in humanoid form.
- At 9th level, arktors can cast *bear hug* (as the 4th-level priest spell) once per day. This can be used in any form.
- At 11th level, arktors in bear or hybrid form can lick a wound to confer a *heal* effect (as the 6th-level priest spell) once per week.
- At 13th level, arktors can make two melee attacks per round in humanoid form.
- At 15th level, arktors can roar in bear or hybrid form to instill *fear* (as the 4th-level wizard spell) in those within the area of effect; saving throws against this fear suffer a -2 penalty. They may perform this roar once per day.

Baladoran Spells

2nd Level

Skin of the Bear (Pr 2; Alteration)

Sphere:	Animal
Range:	Touch
Components:	V, S, M
Duration:	2 rds./level
Casting Time:	5
Area of Effect:	1 creature
Saving Throw:	None

This spell magically enchants a touched creature's skin to be tough and thick, protecting them in much the way a bear's natural skin does. The target gains a natural Armor Class of 7, which is cumulative with shields, Dexterity, magical protections, but not armor. In addition, they are completely immune to the stings and bites of normal insects and arachnids; a creature protected by *skin of the bear* could walk through a buzzing cloud of angry wasps and emerge unscathed on the other side. This protection also extends in a limited way to any attacks that would inject poison: If subjected to such attacks, a protected creature suffers only half damage and is immune to the injected poison. This applies to the stings of giant bees and giant scorpions, the bites of normal and giant poisonous snakes, *daggers of venom*, and the like. Other attack forms

employed by the creatures deal normal damage, and they are in no way protected against contact, inhaled, or ingested poisons.

The material components for this spell are the priest's holy symbol and a bee's stinger.

3rd Level

Mead of Healing (Pr 3; Enchantment/Charm)

Sphere: Healing
Range: Touch
Components: V, S, M
Duration: 1 day/3 levels
Casting Time: 1 turn
Area of Effect: 1 mug or bottle of mead
Saving Throw: None

With this spell, the caster is able to enchant a mug or bottle of mead with great healing powers. This healing ability duplicates the effects of a *potion of extra-healing*; thus a creature can drink the whole portion down to heal 3d8+3 points of damage, or drink it in three separate portions to heal 1d8 points of damage per quaff. At the expiration of the spell, any unused portion of mead disappears entirely. This spell does not protect the drinker from any intoxication that may arise from drinking the mead.

The material component for this spell is the mug or bottle of mead to be enchanted, and the container must hold at least six ounces of fluid. The caster must have brewed the mead himself.

4th Level

Ursid Courage (Pr 4; Enchantment/Charm)

Sphere: Charm
Range: Touch
Components: V, S, M
Duration: 1 rd./level
Casting Time: 7
Area of Effect: 1 creature
Saving Throw: None

By means of this spell, the caster imbues a creature with the courage of a mother bear defending her cubs. An affected creature enters a near-berserk state, making them completely immune from fear and granting them an effective morale rating of 20. In addition, they gain 3d4 temporary hit points, a +2 bonus to their saving throws, and deal an extra +3 damage with their melee attacks, but suffer an Armor Class penalty of 2. If actually protecting other creatures, they can voluntarily leave this state and retreat should their wards successfully leave the area of their own volition.

Creatures in this state never risk accidentally attacking allies, but suffer a -2 penalty to their attack rolls and ability checks for one hour after the expiration of the spell due to the energy expended.

The material component for this spell is a tuft of hair from a female bear.