

# Otso

**The bear, he says, is many animals in one. Like a lion, he downs mammals much bigger than he; like any ruminant, he pillages crops; he steals grapes and fruit like a monkey; nibbles on berries like a blackbird; plunders anthills and beehives like a woodpecker; digs up tubers and larvae like a pig; and catches fish with the dexterity of an otter. And he eats honey like a man.** The Fault Line: Traveling the Other Europe, From Finland to Ukraine— *Paolo Rumiz*,

**Quote:** Ho there, mortal person! Enter freely into the wild places of the Väki! Enjoy the green and the cool and the blessings of the world around you. But come not near the bees, nor ththeir honey. For that is the stuff of Queens!

In Finnish mythology Otso, Ohto, Kontio, metsän kuningas (the king of the forest), and mesikämmen (honeypalm) are some of the many rarely uttered periphrastic epithets for the spirit that was never directly named. These were the Otso – the Bear royals of the Hiidet (Changeling) Tribes.

Keiju (Seelie) to a fault, the Otso are mighty Bear spirits, masters of the forest, and friend to all. Even to many mortal Tribes of the Kingdom, they are ancestors given form. Some consider them mortals who were called by the wild places themselves, and transmogrified bodily to better fulfill their roles. Origins abound, but mortals still call them for blessings and protection.

Yet they are never called on by name. The true name of this Väki (Kith), as well as any individual names, are secrets never to be uttered. Such is the reason for their many many nicknames. But call them Honey-paws, or Green-Sister, or Forest-King, the Otso will hear and come to help.

**Appearance:** The Kasvot of the Otso is unusually animalistic. The *Mies Kasvot* (Mortal Mien) is that of a largish mortal with shaggy hair and a large smile. Their *Mies karhu* (Mortal, but bear) form is that of a large bear with unusually amber eyes and something of a smile on their snouts.

The Lumoava Kasvot (Fae Mien) is an amalgamation of their *Karhu* and *Mies* forms. They are upright bears, easily 13 feet tall, with thick limbs and thicker hair. Their long claws are unusually hand-like capable of fine manipulation belaying their great size. The eyes glow as gold as honey, and that same smile shines with a mouth full of thick fangs.

Despite what should normally be frightening, this Lumoava Kasvot projects an aura of welcome, and to friends of the forest, there is nothing safer than an Otso,

**Lifestyle:** The Life-style of the Otso is one of deliberation. They are the kings and queens of the wild Väki – and masters of the forest. Any adventures that they do undertake are for the betterment of the whole Kingdom of Magicians. Still, they make time for fun, and who doesn't love a little honey a the end of the day?

*Pieni Otso* are bright-eyed and inquisitive. The first time they put on the form of a mortal they lumber about, laughing at their skinny little legs. For all their innocence and naïveté, however, they are still wild kings and queens of the Forest, and should never be underestimated.

*Oikukas Otso* have worn the skins of men enough that they understand the ugliness of the human spectrum. When around



happiness, they are wonderfully happy. But if evil or greed should present itself, the Oikukas has no trouble enacting a quick solution to restore the happiness – whatever this means to the evil.

*Järkevä Otso* are surprisingly spy and young-at-art, despite their getting-on-in-years. They serve as seasoned stewards of the Finnish Dreaming, and simultaneously preparing their own funerary rites. Death comes to us all and so the Otso ensure their later years are filled with joy and happiness.

**Glamour Ways:** Otso regain Lumoava(Glamour) whenever mortals act in accord with nature. Children picking up litter, elderly enjoying the stillness of the forest, anytime a human participates with the wilds in away beneficial to nature, an Otso refuels her magic.

**Unleashing:** Cantrips cast by the Otso are rife with the smell of rich loam and cool forest, and the sticky sweet taste of honey coats the tongue.

**Affinity:** Fae

**Birthrights:**

**Bear-Skin (*Karhuntalja*):** The Otso isn't a fairy wearing the form of a Bear. They are Bear-Kings and Queens of the Kingdom of Magicians and the mortal trappings is just something to ease the tensions with other Väki. At character creation an Otso has 5 extra points to spend on any physical attributes – Especially if this brings them above 5. In addition, the nose of the Otso (and bears in general) is highly advanced, and any rolls involving the sense of smell are always at a -2 difficulty.

**Frailty:**

**Circumlocutory Epithets (*Epäsuora Lempinimi*):** No Otso can be called by their name. They are always Honey-Paws, or Goldilocks, or Lord Green-Bough. Every Otso can have a slew of epithets, but can never be directly called by their secret birth name. To do so will cause every-thing they are to become undone. If someone other than another Otso calls them by their real name, (Mortal or otherwise) then every roll the Otso makes afterwards will be at a +2 difficulty. In addition, every roll will automatically receive one botch (Treated as every roll has a 1 on a dice, no matter what). The only way to negate this is to silence the one who uttered the name (open for debate as to what this entails), and then to receive a new name from a higher-ranking Otso (an ordeal in and of itself).

**Lady Honey-Paws, Queen of Ähtäri, sits on her wooden throne by the lake, and offers a ruling on her fellows – Väki and otherwise.**

**Haltijas:** They are tied to the elements in ways that no other Väki could be. They are wilder than us. If they chose, they could easily outmaneuver the strongest of us. I am glad that we are friends. They would prove to be horrible enemies.

**Pääpiru:** Hah! What you call evil, they call guile. They are quick witted and dashing, lovers and scoundrels... but not as evil as they say. Keep them close and watch your coins, but otherwise you can dance and laugh to your hearts content.

**Paasselän:** They are strange. Even vexingly strange perhaps, but not evil. Just different.

**Peikko:** Unlike the previous two, these are devils. They are hungry and greedy and seek to shove innocence into their gullet. I am Queen of these parts, and if one hair on one child is harmed, then I will eat the Peikko responsible. I will smother them in butter and honey, and eat them whole.

**Füchse:** They were forced out of the Swartzvald for their greediness, and now seek shelter here. I do not trust them, but have no reason to drive them further away. Yet. We are kinder than the Swartzvald, but do not mistake our kindness for weakness.

**Gurahl:** Always welcome at our revels. Though they walk the paths of their great green mother, they are family and always will be.

