

TIKBALANG

It is not unusual for the eye or ear to play tricks with one, but when such illusions and delusions are taken for the Spirit forms of the departed and voices of the dead instead of being recognized as some subjective phenomena brought about by a physical cause, the situation takes on a grave aspect.

- Harry Houdini

Quote: Mommy? Is that you Mommy? I'm scared, and I hurt my leg... please hurry and save me...

Of all the Aswang (Supernatural society of the Phillipines), none have deserved their ill reputation more-so than the Tikbalang. Also called Bentohangin, this horse-headed Kapatiran (Kith) is notorious for its dark passions and depraved waylaying of mortals. While it is all too easy to paint them as Lewenri (Unseelie), to do so would be a grave injustice to the Unseelie.

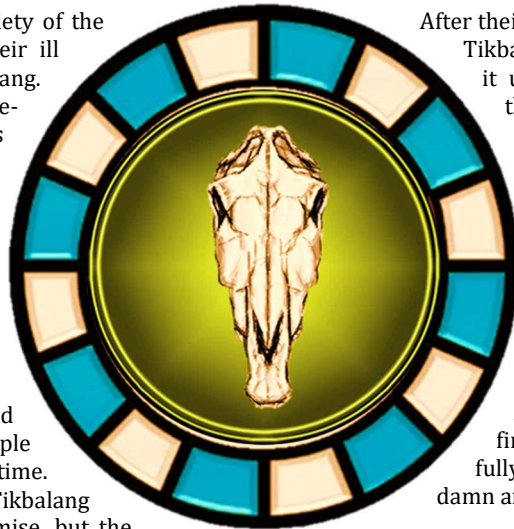
The Aswang have a special role among the Kapatiran. While the Nuno protect and Tamawo look pretty, the Tikbalang challenge. Their abilities of misdirection and subterfuge ensure that the right people are in the right places at the right time. Sure some of the more unsavory of Tikbalang led a choice few to their mortal demise, but the Tikbalang reason that this is a sure way of weeding out those who can't make the cut.

It should also be noted that while the Tikbalang may be a rough gang of upstarts, they do play by the rules to an extent. They're not sociopathic monsters, (well not by much) and aren't cold-blooded murderers (all of the time). The Tikbalang are no different than any other Aswang, they just enjoy their role as ne'er-do-wells more than most do.

Appearance: In Rupa Bassit (Mortal Mien) the Tikbalang appear as rakishly thin and dapper Filipinos. Most of the Kapatiran is male, who wear their thick hair just as long as the females, but the whole of the Kith falls into the category of Heroin chic. They have tightly defined muscles and sharp chiseled features and a penchant for cutting edge fashion. All of these traits add an air of Hollywood mystique and splendor to their already glamorous visage.

This ends in their Rupa Diwata (Fae Mien) however. The sunken and skeletal head of a horse appears, complete with beady dark eyes that leer at passersby. Their limbs are long and lanky, and their skin grey and ashy. They have two heavy hooved horse legs that witch impatiently beneath their tall and skeletal frame.

Lifestyle: The life of a Tikbalang is a strange one. While they need mortals to lead astray and confuse, they don't readily enjoy hanging out with them. And while they relish all the attention heaped upon them by their unsuspecting victims, they don't enjoy crowds. Many of them find quaint little houses just outside that liminal space between dark wood and small village. Here they ply their trade at a dark and forested cross-roads.



After their hard-day's work of misleading others, a Tikbalang can be found drinking and smoking it up with both their fellow Aswang, and those few mortals that don't warrant disgust. Local dive bars in the dirty side of town are their favorite watering hole.

Baguhan Tikbalang are little bastards. Everyone knows when they do wrong, but these smug little bastards will only grin and deny it the whole time.

Ligaw Tikbalang have little problem finding a niche for themselves. They are fully aware of the purpose they serve, and damn anyone who says otherwise.

Matanda Tikbalang are whispered about in hushed conversation. Tikbalang of this age have set themselves up as dark near-Gods in the dim forests surrounding the town. They aren't any worse than than they always have been, but now have the experience to back up any threats or promises they make. Clever and wily beyond belief, Matanda Tikbalang deserve all respect and fear awarded to them.

Revelry: Leading mortals astray, making little-kids cry, seeing the fear and confusion on the face of their victim, it's always the little things that make life so good. Tikbalang refuel heir Kahali-Halina (Glamour) with that confusion, fear, and horror assigned to their victims.

Unleashing: Anting-Anting (Cantrips) cast by the Tikbalang are accompanied by a small twinge of paranoia, but that is about it. The Tikbalang are sure to use this lack of unleashing to their advantage. They leave no clues behind as to their passing, and only the salty-sweet tears of a hurt victim the only proof of their presence.

Affinity: Actor

Birthrights:

Voice-Stealing (*Pagnanakaw ng Boses*): The Tikbalang can automatically match their voice to sound like anybody or anything. A really good Rooster crow? *They cock-a-doodle-do that one all the time.* A legit Christopher Walken impression? *"Sure...why not...so Good."* While this may be a great party trick, the serious implications involve them using the hurt voice of a

loved one to mislead strangers into dangerous territory. – a mother screaming in pain for her child to walk farther into the swamp to free her – or the whimpering sobs of a toddler son coming from in a dangerous looking hole. Will the victim go in to save their loved ones in distress? The Tikbalang must roll Manipulation + Performance difficulty 7 and must have heard the voice at least once to recreate it.

Face-Stealing (*Mukha Ang Pagnanakaw*): Not only can they sound like anybody they have heard, they can also take on the appearance of any one that they have seen. The Tikbalang must have seen the person at least once. He then spends a point of Kahali-Halina and rolls Manipulation + Performance difficulty 8. This false mask lasts for one scene.

Frailites:

Fear-Eater (*Takot sa Mangangain*): While capable of some amazingly feats of subterfuge, the Tikbalang cannot use enjoy the fruits of camaraderie that the other Aswang can boast. The Tikbalang is cursed to only certain types of Kahali-Halina: those of fright and confusion and sadness. No festivities will fuel his magics, nor dreamers replenish.

Machete Tolentino, at least it might be him... well somebody, in the woods over there... they said some things...

Duende: Boring little homebodies, hardly worthy of the title Aswang.

Kapre: These guys are great. They are loud, big, smelly, and fun. The best of us.

Nuno: Where the Duende complain, these guys do. They are the most likely to pose a challenge to our fun. And for that, I salute them.

Santelmo: With all their powers, they should be on our side a lot more than they are.

Sikoyoy: Nope. I don't go farther out for just that reason.

Tamawo: Yes your majesty. Anything your majesty. Do you want me to pain that target on your forehead for you, Your majesty?

Wakwak: We're bad, okay? We do bad things. The WakWak? They're evil. There's a difference. A *Big* Difference.

