

Shahmaran

We will all be gone one day. Not as a negative thing - as a positive thing, too, you know, and we should leave something behind ourselves. – *Irina Shayk*

It's sad when someone you know becomes someone you knew. – *Henry Rollins*

Quote: Close your eyes, and I will sing you a song of Cold unforgiving sands, and Silent Stars who turn away from your needs.

While the Abgal are cheerful and animated chroniclers of knowledge, the Shahmaran serve by singing of a painful past. As they tell the story, their Mother was a Kurdish Goddess hidden deep in a desert cave. This cave was filled with song and music, honey, and cold-clear water (and some postulate a portal to a long-lost Arcadia). This was all for naught as some mortals escaping from the world of men found their way into this cave, married their mother, and then ate her flesh and made a broth from her bones.

This is why the Shahmaran sing such sad songs. Not just for the death of their mother, but because the Desert Dreaming always comes with a price. The true sadness is that so few of the Apkallu seem to realize this. Only the females of the Khânevâde (Kith) truly can comprehend what it is to live according to the true tenets of *Me*, tenets which leave only bones behind. While the Shedû, the Abgal, and the Kusarikku boast of the wonders of the Desert and its inexplicable knowledge, the Shahmaran sing songs of Mother's sacrificed, honey long taken by greedy mortal mouths, and the men who are blind to it all.

With this bearing they serve as Lore-keepers akin to the Abgal, but in a far more poetic sense. Justice is as blind as the Desert is lonely, and no amount of frivolity or joy will change that. Let Abgal teach, let the Shedû lead, and let the Kusarikku disentangle, the *Me* will still be unfair.

Appearance: In Qayd Qashra (Mortal Mien), the Shahmaran appear as Persian Women, with long graceful limbs, and long faces. Their olive skin is dark, with the occasional dusting of cocoa freckles, and their hair is thick and lustrous: reds, blacks, and even the occasional strawberry gold are all present. Though beautiful, there is a hint of sadness in their deep eyes, eyes usually the green, grey, or pale-blue seen only in certain Kurdish peoples. In Mok Qashra (Fae Mien), these colors seem to grow even more pronounced, as their eyes glow without any discernible white. Their long arms become longer with delicate and graceful fingers. Their legs however, become scaled, and taper into two snake-like appendages, that writhe and undulate in time to an unheard song. The colors of the scales are all the colors of the desert, from the Reds of sunset, to the blue of the morning sky. Some are black and speckled with white, giving the appearance of a star-lit sky, and some are as green and blue as a desert oasis. These tails are impossibly long, easily 3 times as long as the Shahmaran herself is tall.



Lifestyle: The Shahmaran gather in circles of up to 7 sisters, and find cool desert caves in which to house themselves. While they can maintain holdings in the great cities of the deserts, they rarely do so. The water in a 5-star hotel pool just doesn't merit the same gravity as a dark cave's underground grotto. These circles of 7 keep abreast of each other, even if individual members seek out motley's with other Khânevâde. They try to meet once a month at least, to share knowledge and songs, stories, or riddles that they have learned. The eldest of these

Shahmaran meet with 7 more eldest of other Circles, whose eldest meet with 7 more and so on

until they hold council with the eldest Mâdarbozorg Shahmaran still living. It is she who is responsible for the welfare of the Shahmaran as a whole.

Dokhtar Shahmaran are quiet and shy little girls. They hide behind their elders and speak only when asked to. The sadness shows early in their faces, but their eyes light up when the music or stories begin.

Mâdar Shahmaran quietly and patiently serve whenever they are bidden. They understand their roles and perform the best that they are able.

Mâdarbozorg Shahmaran Serve as grand matrons to the Apkallu, and chronicle all the history of the Deserts in stories and songs. This sometimes is in contradiction to what others recall, but the eldest know that their versions are the ones that will be remembered in the long cold nights.

Glamour Ways: Shahmaran regain Mok whenever they tell a sad story, sing a sad song, or relate a sad anecdote that reminds their audience that life is fleeting, and it's not always rainbows and sunsets out there.

Unleashing: Cantrips cast by the Shahmaran are accompanied by the slightly musty perfume of snake, and a cold clammy feeling on the skin, as well as in the heart.

Affinity: Fae

Birthrights:

Land and Sea legs: The Shahmaran spends most of their time in the deep-water pools of hidden caves, but have no problem

with the human form. It costs nothing to take this form, and it lasts indefinitely. In addition, the Shahmaran may also take the form of great snake. The species of the snake matches the species of the tail the Shahmaran manifests, although things such as color and size are muted. One rarely sees a 10-meter-long Rainbow colored Cobra slithering about the Deserts of Jordan after all.

Mind and Body: The Shahmaran are born of Man's imaginative expression of heaven, and as such are the best heights of beauty a *(wo) man* can get. At character creation they gain +2 dots of Appearance (even above 5), +2 dots of Charisma (even above 5), and receive an extra dot in Intelligence.

Acumen: All Shahmaran have one art that they excel in (Painting, storytelling, music...) and are able to add 3 to their dice-pool whenever a roll is required using that applicable skill. (Performance for singing, crafts for painting, empathy for storytelling, etc). They cannot botch this roll.

Frailties:

Me (Moral Code): The Shahmaran has a moral code that they must strictly adhere to. If they fail to live up to these components, then they lose one willpower a day until they can find restitution. Seelie, Unseelie, it doesn't matter. It is up to the player at Character Creation to craft out the exact details of the *Me*, but some aspects might be *"To always aid an ally, to never use initiatory force, to Never lie, Steal, hurt the innocent, be pushy with their knowledge, etc....."*

Inquisitiveness: The world outside of the Apkallu's courts is a strange one, and the Shahmaran seek to explore it as much as possible. If the opportunity presents itself to study a new Kith, a piece of literature concerning the Fae, or any other new situation involving the Dreaming, the Shahmaran must make Willpower roll (difficulty 8) to avoid exploring.

Born of the Sea: The Shahmaran may be able to go for long periods on land, but that doesn't mean that they don't need their water. Every day, a Shahmaran must immerse himself in water for at least an hour. Hopefully something cool and natural, like a deep pool in a dark cave. The Shahmaran will take one health level of damage per day that she can't immerse himself thusly.

Bilqis, Storyteller and song-singer, conveys the certainties long thought forgotten

- Abgal:** Finding the history isn't the same as finding the truth.
- Apsasu:** Their rage comes from somewhere, but you don't bother to see.
- Girtablullû:** They don't need an *other*, they are strong enough alone.
- Humawa:** You asked for monsters, what you received was a chance.
- Kusarikku:** Proof that one of us is balanced enough.
- Shedu:** As large as their mouths are, the truth could never fit.
- Nagah:** In the lands of the Perfumed Empire, lived daughters of the Moon and River, who were the Mothers of Kings. I remember

