

Leshiye

We Russians have no system of social upbringing. We are not mustered or drilled to become champions of "social principles" or other principles, but simply left to grow wild, like nettles by the fence. That is why there are few hypocrites among us, but many liars, empty-headed bigots, and babblers. We have no need of playing the hypocrite for the sake of social principles, for we know of no such thing as social principles. We exist in perfect liberty, that is, we vegetate, lie, chatter quite naturally, without regard for principle." - Mikhail Saltykov-Shchedrin

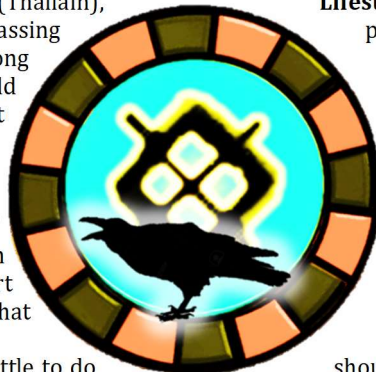
Quote: "What the hell are you doing here? This is my forest; these are my trees. I swear to the Old Gods that I will rip out your tongue, wipe my ass with it, then shove it down your throat far enough to be pushed out your own ass. What? You have Vodka? Why didn't you say so? Come on in.

Always Zima (Unseelie), if not quite Chert (Thallain), the Leshy (plural Leshiye) have been harassing mortals and stealing babies for Millenia. As long as the Thrice-Tenth Kingdom has had the wild places, the Leshiye have been there to haunt those wild places. Perhaps the oldest of the varied Plemya (Kith), the Leshiye hold a special place in the Empire. They are the last gatekeepers of the wild places. Too many of the Karlik (Changelings) have been modernized and urbanized or lost that wild part of themselves. The Leshiye refuse to let that happen to their own.

Of course, their surly personalities have little to do with such refusal. No, the Leshiye are assholes because they are assholes, and always will be. Yet they are proud assholes and cling to their wild existence with a fervor as deeply powerful as their own wild domain. Their own domain is that stretch of wild forested land that each of their number claims as their very own. No two Leshy could stand living close to each other, let alone other Plemya. Even if they are a married couple (of which there are plenty of Leshy couples), the partnership is rife with arguments, bitch-fests, and lengthy periods of sullen ignoring of each other.

But of course, there is also a deep love and respect there, not just for each other, but for the domain itself. It should be stated that if someone, mortal, fae, or otherwise, can show a deep respectful reverence for the Leshy's forest domain, and can put up with the lengthy string of ugly expletives spewing out of the Leshy's gullet, or even hope to match it, then that person has a friend for life. (It also hopes if that person has brought some liquor, but that is neither here nor there...)

Appearance: The Lik (Mien) of the Leshiye is always that of a bushy, backwoods, beast of a body. Their Okovy Lik (Mortal Mien) is larger than most mortals, usually upwards of well over 2 meters. They have long beefy limbs, and even the women of the tribe have something of a beard. One sure way to sniff them out is their different colored eyes, one an ice blue, the other a deep forest green. The Karlik Lik (Fae Mien) is just as hairier (if it can be believed) but that fur is now a mossy green. Long blue hair cascades down their back, and two large horns, maybe made of wood, maybe of bone, juts from their heavy brow. There is something unmistakably animalistic and wild about their appearance, and no right-minded person can mistake just how dangerous they are when faced with their true form.



Lifestyle: The Leshiye need to stay in the wild places, as their native forests, devoid of any mortal homesteads, are the only places where they can get some peace and quiet. If a Leshy deigns to have a mortal life, it is always that of a lone cantankerous hermit. They may occasionally travel to cities and the like, if only to complain about them, and return to their boonies as soon as possible.

Their fae existence is spent harassing travelers, abducting hikers for fun, and generally being as large an ass as possible. It should be said, however, that a few may form pseudo-friendships with the occasional mortal. A drifter who spends time traveling through the forest every now and again, or the keeper of a small cottage just on the edge of a Leshy's territory may just earn some respect. Though the Leshy would never admit it.

Zuitbotschnick Leshiye are angry, squabbling, mewling, catankerous, and nasty little bastards. They will whine and complain about any and everything, even if they have no idea why they are complaining.

Zverinyy Leshiye are just as bad, but now are gaining some salt behind the ears. When they complain, they have some idea of why they are complaining.

Serebro Leshiye are the worst of the lot. They have years of experiences, all of which are used to better convey their narrative of a shitty world.

Glamour Ways: The Leshiye regain Zhivost' whenever the rare mortal shares his time, conversation, and the occasional drink. This seldom happens, due to the Leshiye's possessiveness of their lands, and ugly attitude towards others. Still, if the right mortal comes along, with just the right amount of vodka, the Leshy might just make a friend and score some magic refill.

Unleashing: When the Leshiye cast their cantrips, twigs and dry branches are found underfoot, in the wilderness or no. There is the unmistakable dark green odor of an ancient forest, and the light of the scene darkens by just that much. For those familiar with the wilderness it is comforting, for those who prefer the urban landscapes it is threatening.

Affinity: Nature

Birthrights:

Animal Talker (*Govoryashchiy Zver'*): The Leshiye may not have many friends amongst the mortals but have a special relationship with the beasts of the wild. With a successful Perception + Animal Ken roll, difficulty 7, a Leshiye may form a sympathetic bond with any animal, domestic or no. From that point on, the Leshiye and animal can hold lengthy conversations with each other. Outsiders may simply hear the Leshy's half, but to the Leshy there is wonderful discourse to be had. Keep in mind, that animals have different needs, desires, or ways to process information, and every smart Leshy understands these differences...

Size Changer (*Smenshchik Razmera*): Traditionally, the Leshiy were devils as large as the mountains or as small as the crickets, and while none today would dispute these legends, the truth is a little less grandiose. For a point of Zhivost spent, the Leshiye can shrink down to the size of a small beast (a rabbit or the like) or as large as a small tree (nothing over 6 meters). There are not changes to Attributes with such changes, but it is a great way to awe and scare the unassuming...



Frailties:

Territorial (*Zhadnyy*): No Leshy likes others in their domains. Anybody that crosses that sacred liminal space between forest's edge and forest itself is in their crosshairs. Unless that person is one of the Leshy's special good friends (a rarity in itself) then the Leshiye will seek to harangue that individual. There is no roll for this, it is just what the Leshiye like to do. The Haranguement need not be harmful, or even malevolent, but will still be annoying. This goes doubly so for other Plemya, and triply for another Leshy. *But what about if that other Leshy is the first Leshy's spouse?* Then it goes quadrupely.

The only exception to this harassment is if that intruder arrives with strong drink...

Can't Say No (*Ne Mogu Skazat' Net*): As bitter and nasty and curmudgeonly as the Leshiye are, they cannot say no to a drink. Even if faced with an archenemy waltzing willy nilly through their domain, if that archenemy bears a gift of strong drink, then the Leshy will parley until the liquor is gone. To refuse someone who comes bearing the gifts of drink (usually vodka) demands a willpower roll, difficulty 8. To openly attack someone who comes bearing the gifts of drink may earn a point of Okovy (Banality).

Burian walks past, with nary a glance in your direction. If you ask kindly enough, he might just answer.

Dvoverie: Too many farmers, not enough farmland. They would do better out here, working for me.

Kikkimora: Chicken-Heads, a joke, yes?

Likho: There are few of us, who I care enough for to show respect.

Morozko: For a few months out of the year, I give them access to my domain. It is still mine, but I share it.

Korhorushy: I do not bathhouse, I do not care for the future, there is nothing we have in common.

Polevik: They do love to pull on their corn, don't they?

Poludnica: Hah, so many call us evil, but welcome the sunshine witches right into their kitchens with nary a thought.

Rarash: Creepy little butt sniffers

Rusalki: I don't understand their reasoning. Are they sad? Angry? Is it revenge? I do not know.

Ved: Big hearts, little brains.

Vily: Bad news these girls, no love for us, or any men for that matter.

Vodyanoi: Angry little frog-faced pissants who murder indiscriminately. I know exactly who I murder.

Zmei: Long since left us, the bastards. I wish they were still around, to kick your ass.

Ledyanoy Volshebnyk: We get the occasional ass that come through here, seeking to flush us out. They rarely make it out again.