

Bel Am'cay

The Bel Am'cay are a humanoid species native to the Beta Quadrant and, in 2260, (tentatively) allied with the United Federation of Planets. The Bel Am'cay are generally peaceful- a culture built upon tradition and stability, but with a genuine curiosity about the universe around them.

History

Now the dominant culture on Bel Abis, the Bel Am'cay were (for thousands of years) slaves and laborers for the Bel En'cay elites. As slaves, the Bel Am'cay had no civil rights and were taught (generation after generation) that this was the right and natural order of creation; and that the Bel En'cay were “benevolent protectors” of their “less-evolved” brethren.

Three hundred years (roughly eleven generations) ago, a new cultural and religious movement – the Usari (named for its semi-mythical first prophet/adherent)- took hold among the Bel Am'cay, fashioning both a new social order and a new language from his example. Linguists to this day remain puzzled because the Usari language shares few similarities and fewer roots with the dominant tongue of the time. Some of the grammatical structure and words are similar to both ancient Vulcan and Andorian- but neither species visited the planet before 2256.

The Usari movement proclaimed the emancipation of the Bel Am'cay and demanded an equal place in society, and was brutally persecuted. Speaking the Usari tongue or possessing its teachings or manuscripts (even by Bel En'cay) were both punishable by death.

Despite the harsh attempts to suppress the new religion, the Code of Usari spread like wildfire, leading to large-scale revolts and eventually to civil war. Desperate to regain control and retain power, the Bel En'cay used nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons to commit atrocities which scar the planet to this day. Within months of the opening of the civil war, however, the Bel En'cay were overthrown and their culture and language quickly became extinct.

Homeworld

Bel Abis is a moderately large Class M world (roughly eighty percent of Earth's diameter, but with a slightly denser core) with terrestrial gravity. Roughly 64% water, Bel Abis has a slightly drier ecosphere when compared to Earth, and many regions enjoy what humans would call a “Mediterranean” climate.

Roughly a third of the planet's surface is either uninhabitable (or merely very dangerous) due to the atrocities committed by the Bel En'cay. Their indiscriminate use of weapons of mass destruction has left large swaths of the world poisoned, irradiated, scorched, or simply barren. Much of Bel Am'cay industry and attention are invested in reclaiming these “lost lands”.

Physiology

The Bel Am'cay are humanoid in nearly all respects, with silvery-blue skin, dark eyes, and prominent cranial ridges on their temples, cheeks, and chins. These fluid-filled ridges help control the Bel Am'cay balance and provide superior hearing compared to humans.

As a species, the Bel Am'cay tend to be both tall and slender, and trend towards fluid and graceful movement. Bel Am'cay biochemistry is unique- they both possess organs unique to their species and lack certain organs common to humanoids (primarily a liver and spleen). There are also several blood-chemistry incompatibilities which prohibit transfusions from most other species.

Government

In accordance with the Code of Usari, the Bel Am'cay set up a theocratic republic, with a bicameral planetary legislature (most often styled as “a Duma”) comprised of equal parts



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religious leaders and elected officials. The Duma selects a Prime Minister and Cabinet Ministers (who are, in turn) ratified by popular vote and “set apart” by the Usari for their roles and official duties. All of the elected officials may be recalled at any time by either by the Duma or by popular vote.

The Bel Am'cay follow common-sense laws and jurisprudence; law enforcement and judicial functions are handled by the priestly class (though always subject to appeal to secular authorities). Corruption and abuse of power are the most heinous crimes among the Bel Am'cay- and the penalties for either are harsh.

By law, lethal force and deadly weapons are restricted to the Usari priestly class- who are held to even higher standards of conduct than the average citizen.

Members of the Usari are expected to take a variety of vows and oaths (primarily eschewing most material possessions and indulgences, as well as pledging their service as protectors and servants of the Bel Am'cay people). Most receive basic training in some form of martial or military skills, but nearly all are required to be scholars and teachers, as well). Although not required, many Usari lead an ascetic lifestyle, pledge celibacy and refrain from marriage (either for a set period or for life). Others serve for a number of years before relinquishing their priestly status and “settling down” and raising a family.

Interstellar Relations

As of 2160, the Bel Am'cay are (tentatively) allied with the Federation, enjoying healthy (if limited) trade relations and a mutual non-aggression treaty. There has- for ten years now- been a running debate in the government (and among the population at large) as to whether or not the Bel Am'cay should apply for Federation membership (and whether they would be accepted). The last poll of the population (taken in 2259) showed 15% for the proposition, 13% opposed, and the remainder undecided (or, at least, contented with the status quo).

Despite this question hanging over their relations with the Federation, a few Bel Am'cay apply to Starfleet Academy each year. So far, three have been accepted. A handful more retain their Bel Am'cay commissions, but serve alongside Starfleet through a limited exchange program.

Personality

Bel Am'cay society is diverse- ranging from nomadic tribes to settled city dwellers, but (for the most part) follows conventional family norms. Polygamy- with priestly approval- is legal (but quite rare) among the Bel Am'cay, and multi-generational families often share homes or live under one roof.

Like other Beta Quadrant cultures, the Bel Am'cay prize honor, fortitude, discipline, and intelligence; traditional trials, rites, and pilgrimages are expected and observed throughout childhood and adult life.

Personal honor- and personal integrity- are central to the Bel Am'cay psyche and culture. Personal (or professional) disgrace is generally feared more than personal injury or death- and reflects not only on themselves, but on their clan and ancestors before them. Suicide in the wake of a serious scandal or wrongdoing is not uncommon.

The Bel Am'cay tend to be neat and fastidious, craving order and stability in every aspect of their lives. Civic participation is considered a sacred duty, and take their “ordained” roles seriously.

The Bel Am'cay do not have a caste system as such, but children traditionally follow their parents footsteps- learning the same professions and joining the same guilds or trade unions. That said, children who show a particular aptitude are encouraged to develop their talents regardless of their families “traditional” roles.

One notable tenet of the Usari philosophy is the idea that patterns of behavior are “pretty much the same all over” (in accordance with Hodgkin's Law), and that by analyzing the pattern, one can predict the outcome. For this reason, psychology, history, and cultural anthropology are primary fields of study for the Usari.

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Technology

The Bel Am'Cay technological development is roughly comparable to that of Earth in the late 2160's (ST: Enterprise era). Much of this technology is focused on reclaiming and repairing the "lost lands" damaged in the overthrow of the Bel En'cay.

Attributes: +1 Reason, +1 Insight, +1 Daring

Traits:

Bel Am'cay- Bel Am'cay are humanoid, with with silvery-blue skin, dark eyes, and prominent cranial ridges on their temples cheeks, and chins. These fluid-filled ridges help control the Bel Am'cay balance and provide superior hearing compared to humans. Bel Am'cay biochemistry is unique- and incompatible with most other humanoid species.

Usari- The character is a member of the Bel Am'cay priestly class, and, as such, is one of the few among his people to be allowed to use deadly force or lethal weapons. This privilege is balanced by the obligation to be an exemplar of the Usari Code and to be both disciplined, prudent, and level-headed. The penalties for failure and/or corruption among the Usari are especially harsh.

Talents: The character receives access to the following talents:

Patterns of History- Bel Am'cay only. Once per session, the player may attempt an **Insight** + **Science (Psychology or History)** or **Security (Tactics)** test, with the difficulty determined by the obscurity of the information the player seeks. The test takes a minimum of an hour. If successful, the character gains 3 **Momentum** (which may only be spent on a *Gather Information* test). The information revealed should simple and direct, and may reveal a future scene, character motivation, or a missed clue. Examples include (but are not limited to) "the Romulans will attack us" or "Mudd sells Venus drug".

On Familiar Ground- Patterns of History (above), or Gamemaster's permission. Once per session, you may attempt a Task devoted to analyzing a planet or culture with which you are interacting. If the task is successful, you may spend 2 **Momentum** (Immediate) in order to gain an additional (appropriate) Focus for the remainder of the session. However, any Task using that Focus increases in Complication range by 1, as you are not a true expert on that subject.