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Kithbook: Eshu *OP (Changeling: The Dreaming)



Synopsis

Book by Woodworth, Peter

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

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Great stuff!

One of the final books in the Changeling line, I was so excited that this book even managed to come out. Unlike most other Changeling books (which are often excessively Western, particularly Celtic, based), this book focuses on the Eshu, the wandering kith from Africa, the Mid-East and Asia. After a cool, African-styled story, we get into Eshu history, from the Orisha's creation of the world, to the negative meetings with the European fae, to the modern era. Following this is an Eshu lexicon (of mainly Yoruban, Rromani and Creole words). The next chapter goes into the diversity of Eshu society, including not only African, Mid-Eastern, Indian and Rromani Eshu, but also "western", Native American, Aboriginal and even Asian Eshu. Eshu Birthrights, traditions and lifestyles are all explored in depth, from their love of wandeing, carousing and telling good stories, to their reverence for Uhuru (freedom) and their devotion to the Orisihas. This is continued in the next chapter, which covers Ojo (Seelie) and Iku (Unseelie) courts, as well as Eshu stereotypes, both on

the Kithain and on other, stranger beings they've encountered on their travels. The next chapter goes into depth on two important sub-kiths as it were: the Oba, royal caliphs and chieftens (easily rivalling any Sidhe) who remain exclusively in the Eshu's homelands of Africa, the Middle East and India; and the Aithu, corrupt Thallain mockeries of the Eshu, noted for their greed and cunning, who have thus far remained in Africa, but slowly creeping into the Mid-East and Eastern Europe. In addition, there are a some NPCs, including legendary tale-teller Scherezade and Voudon Queen Marie Laveau. These are followed by some original templates, like the Wandering Capoeira Teacher. The book closes out with some nice Eshu-specific mechanics, like tribal tattoos, Eshu-specific Merits and Flaws, two new backgrounds (Royal Lineage for the Oba and the Orisha Bond for Eshu to have African-style totems), treasures (like a blessed opa and Scherezade's circle) and a new Art: TaleCraft (basically enchanting an audience). Over all, most of these mechanics are pretty cool too. I think that any fan of Changeling, particularly those seeking something new or exotic, should check this book out while you still can find it.

I admit, I only recently got into Changeling, after the whole "World of Darkness ending" deal, and several years after most of the books went out of print. But something in the setting called to me, and when I read the core description of the Eshu, I thought that I'd found it. Here was an entire 'race' of Fae storytellers, tricksters who always showed up at the most dramatically appropriate moment, with a tale for any occasion. I considered the Eshu to be the best kith in the game, hands-down. So, it was with great hope that I opened up my copy of "Kithbook: Eshu", and began reading. Boy, was I disappointed. The book, rather than trying to expand what we knew about the Eshu, goes in an entirely different direction, choosing to portray them as wanna-be Sidhe. Now, I'm sure that some Eshu will enjoy playing their character this way, but an entire book dedicated to "The Sidhe suck. Boy, do they suck. I mean, we're SO much better suited to rule than they are"? NOT my cup of tea. Not to mention, the character concepts in the back are best ignored. Anyway, here's a quick rundown of the various sections. 1) The traditional WW story introduction. And it's pretty fun to read, combining myth with the portrayal of Eshu as a trickster spirit. Got my hopes up for the rest of the book. 2) The history of the Eshu. It's interesting how they tie the Eshu/Sidhe conflict into the conflict between Europe & the rest of the world, but the chapter mostly comes off as an Eshu elder whining about how nothing is their fault, since they've been screwed over by the Sidhe since forever. (Frankly, I think the Eshu would've been less likely to whine, and more likely to use guerrilla tactics & trickery to spite their enemies. But that's just me.) 3) Eshu culture. This isn't that bad, detailing the "typical" Eshu from different regions of the world. The best part of the book, really, is

the section explaining and expanding Eshu customs and traits.)4) The rest of the fae world. ...and we're right back in the "we're SO much better than everyone else, and here's why" stuff.5) Eshu variations. First, the Oba, or the Eshu Sidhe. Then, the Aithu, or the evil Eshu. There's also a few notable Eshu (I like that Scherazade is one!), and some generally useless character templates (I mean, eternal warrior Eshu? Get a Troll, people.)6) Eshu treasures, merits, etc. A couple of the less-powerful Treasures & merits look interesting, but tribal tattoo Treasures? Royal Lineage (so you can be even more of a Sidhe, without being a Sidhe)? Eesh. So, to summarize: Boy, am I disappointed. I might refer back to this book once in a while, but I think I'll generally stick to the core book. After all, the 2 pages of material there made me love the Eshu, while the 100 pages in this book inspired nothing but annoyance.

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