

Those Who Serve the Laughing Madness

Description: Remarkably civilized cult worshipping a cosmic horror whose mere sight drives men mad.

On paper, this cult should be prettily straightforwardly awful. Those Who Serve the Laughing Madness are devotees of, well, the Laughing Madness, which is a fairly standard Elder God from another reality whose presence sends mere mortals down the spiral of madness, etc etc, and he will surely come at the End Times, yadda yadda, there is no defense against his majestic insanity, blah blah blah. All of that previous sentence was *literally* taken from a fairly famous sermon done by a high priest of the cult itself, complete with various mildly obscene hand gestures at appropriate points to indicate particularly self-indulgent passages.

As the above might suggest, Those Who Serve the Laughing Madness are a good deal calmer and socialized about their odd theological leanings than most cults. They don't go around sacrificing people, or indeed do anything else that's particularly anti-social; and their attitude about the end of the world is largely that it's going to happen when the Laughing Madness decides that it's going to

happen, and there's nothing to be done about it, so why get so exercised over the matter?

It's important to note at this point that Those Who Serve the Laughing Madness **is** an actual cult, with access to a fraction of the power of their mind-warping master. Their priests have a particular talent for mind-warping magic; a skilled priest can cause hallucinations, knock victims out with sheer sensory overload, and even impose various sorts of insanities. Plus, they can turn Undead, bless weapons, heal people, and the rest of that sort of thing. In worlds with alignments Those Who Serve the Laughing Madness typically clock in at Chaotic Good, with the occasional acolyte drifted halfway to Chaotic Neutral. They're largely considered bizarre, but not immediately dangerous.

As for the Laughing Madness: it *does* drive men mad. Fortunately, it does not seem to drive them into **violent** madness. Delusions and hallucinations, to be sure -- but you can generally trust a madman touched by the Laughing Madness with knives. They usually seem quite happy, really. And it's that last bit that makes people wonder whether Those Who Serve the Laughing Madness might be less benign than the cult generally seems. Not so much the cult itself, but how it affects the world around it.

Regular madness isn't particularly intriguing or, well, attractive.

But the madness that surrounds Those Who Serve can sometimes seem **tempting**.

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