

CHARM WARS

by Dan Lutts

Family Ties

Like the Iroquois, Caldon society is matrilineal. Families trace descent through the woman's line, not the man's. Even though specific details in how both societies operate might be different, the basic concept is similar. In Caldon, the oldest woman from the oldest generation in a household is the matriarch, who is the head of the household. Her word is law.

When a Caldonian woman marries, she keeps her last name and the husband keeps his. The bride doesn't go off with her husband to establish her own household. Instead, she remains at home and her husband moves in with her family. When she and her husband have children, the mother teaches her daughters the "womanly" things they must learn and her brothers — not her husband — teach her sons the "manly things." (The wife's husband, in turn, teaches his sisters' sons.)

The children take their mother's last name. If the wife and husband divorce, the wife keeps their children and the man returns to his mother's household.

Clan mothers were Iroquois women who were co-equal with clan chiefs. These women wielded great power. For example, clan mothers chose and installed their clan chief and could remove him if he wasn't governing properly. They also selected the fifty sachems who ran the Iroquois League. And they made important tribal decisions such as whether or not to go to war or to end a war.

Caldonian matriarchs have similar decision-making powers. They might call a matriarch's council in their matriarch's chamber to discuss issues, but the matriarch makes the final decision. Matriarchs are also the "power behind the throne," telling the men in their families who are magistrates specific issues to bring up in the Magisterium and how to vote on them. (As the old Caldonian saying goes: "The men receive the honors, but the women rule.") When a matriarch dies, her oldest daughter generally becomes the new family matriarch.

Commoners don't have clans, only individual families.

In ancient Rome, patricians, who were the ruling class, often sealed political alliances through marriage. Divorce happened as alliances continually shifted from family to family and from political party to political party. Caldonian noblesse follow the same practice.