Kvetha Fricai! Greetings Friend!
You have been chosen to become a Junior Rider—a great honor indeed! Completion of your training is essential to foster your skills and understanding of the world around you.

In addition to mastering one’s fighting and language skills, a Junior Rider must possess a keen knowledge of each of the main races in the world of Alagaësia. The activities or “warm-ups” included in this section of your training will help you to achieve true understanding of the elves, dwarves, Urgals, and Dragons with whom you will surely come in contact. Only when you truly understand the other races in Alagaësia can you become a Junior Dragon Rider.
A heron, for example, may represent watchfulness, stealth, patience, and cunning. Elven family crests often include birds chosen for their perceived qualities. Birds are commonly given as gifts, with the species chosen to reflect the giver’s feelings toward the recipient. Birds are sacred symbols to the elves, in general representing peace and long life.

Elf Rites and Rituals

1. Eragon’s Notebook: Oromis taught Eragon to observe nature, from the tiniest ants to the largest of trees. Go outside where you can find a patch of land and sit for a while. Be still and observe the ground, the plants, the sky. Record what you see in a notebook. Write your observations as poetry, or scientific observation, or draw illustrations. Add as much detail as you can. Tape samples of plants into your notebook when possible.

2. Group Activity: Oromis instructed Eragon in the ancient art of the Rimgar, the Dance of Snake and Crane. Invite a yoga instructor to guide your group in Sun Salutation (similar to the Rimgar) or do the same with Tai Chi.

3. Training: Elves are renown for their physical prowess. Practice your skills with a game of darts (use safety darts).

4. Food: The elves respect all animals around them, from the smallest ant to the largest dragon. This is reflected in their food and drink, as they are strict vegetarians. Make an elven festival drink: Blend milk (dairy, soy, or almond), strawberries, almonds, and honey, with a touch of almond extract (optional).
The dwarves are clever and love working with their hands. Upon marriage, the dwarf husband and wife choose the colors they will use in the family rug that will lay before the fire in their home. By custom, they take turns braiding the cloth for the rug, their joint effort representing the entwined commitment to each other and their family to be.

**Dwarf Rites and Rituals**

1. **Braided Hearth Rug:** Make a dwarven hearth rug in any style and size you choose. It could be doll-house size or big enough for a real hearth. Choose colors that best represent your hopes, and then fashion the rug using the material of your choice. You can cut fabric into strips, then fold, braid, and stitch them together into a traditional rug or you can sew from fabric or felt, knit or crochet it, paint it, or craft it from paper or leather. When you are done, write a short paragraph or poem describing each color’s meaning.

2. **Rock Soap:** When Eragon entered the cave in Tronjheim to bathe, he found a bar of dwarf soap. He couldn’t see it in the dark, but when he later had the opportunity to examine a similar one in the light, he was astonished to see that it looked just like a rock! Ask a grown up to help you make rock soap. Grate a bar of soap and add bits of crayon to make it look like stone. Melt the mixture in a can set over boiling water, allow it to partially cool, then beat it and then shape it into balls with your hands.

3. **Favorite Pastime:** The dwarves delight in carving and often sculpt Shrrg, Nagra, or other animals that live in the Beor Mountains. Practice your skills by carving bars of soap.

4. **Food:** Since the dwarves spend much of their time underground, mushrooms are an important part of their diet. Make “mushroom” snacks. Tear a marshmallow in half to form a mushroom stem. Smash and pull another marshmallow into a cap shape. Run a toothpick through the two and dip the top into cocoa powder or press in bits of dried cranberry. Eat immediately, but remove the toothpick first!
Urgal clans hang large knotted ropes outside their huts. These ropes can be up to nine feet in length. Every clan uses a different pattern of knots. The knots represent the unique patterns of whorls that ridge each Urgal’s horns, particularly those of the female Urgal (dam) who founded that clan. At the time of their matriarch’s death, the clan adds her whorl pattern to the rope. The length of the rope indicates the age of a clan, and also how many of their matriarchs they have been unfortunate enough to lose. If the ropes become damaged, one clan member is given the solemn duty to knot a copy. Warriors often wear wristbands knotted with the family pattern.

Urgal Rites and Rituals

1. **Urgal Sash:** During the cold winter months, Urgal dams (females) and rams (males) weave sashes in shades of yellow, orange, green, brown, and black. Rams wear them like a baldric an over the shoulder belt that holds a sword; dams wear them around the waist. The bold designs indicate status: single, married, parent, grandparent, clan elder, or rank. Choose colors and create your own design to indicate what's important in your life. Weave or knit your sash, or make it from cloth or paper, stamping or drawing on designs. Include a brief description or poem to indicate what your sash represents.

2. **Group Activity:** Strength of Kull: Urgals engage in contests of strength, which determine their clan rank. The strongest and largest become Kull. Organize a tug-of-war game and arm wrestling matches with your friends.

3. **Strategy:** Urgals use games to teach their children skills of strategy. A favorite is the old fox and hens board game. Practice your strategy in games such as chess and battleship.

4. **Food:** As Urgals often find themselves on long journeys, they are adept at finding their own food. They are especially fond of honey, and are always on the look out for the nests of honey bees in tree hollows: Bake a honey cake, or pour the batter into a muffin pan and make mini-cakes.
Now that you’ve reached true understanding, you may move onto the next task. A Junior Rider must become one with his or her dragon. The relationship between Junior Rider and dragon is the closest relationship each will ever have. In order to bond with your dragon, complete the tasks below.

Junior Rider Tasks

1. **Dragon Eggs:** Dragon eggs are extremely rare and precious. Using papier-mâché or other materials, make and decorate a replica of your dragon’s egg, showing what it looked like before it hatched for you. Include a poem or paragraph describing what the hatchling looked like.

2. **Anatomy:** Dragons are known for their beautiful scales and their impressive strength. Draw, sculpt, or form your own unique dragon, using craft items of your choice.

3. **History:** Dragons have a very long and fascinating history. Learn more about them by reading *Eragon*, *Eldest*, *Brisingr*, and other dragon books.

4. **Food:** To keep up their strength, dragons must eat large amounts of fresh meat. Eat barbecued burgers and steaks for dinner to get in touch with your inner dragon.