

Barbarian

Common Alignments: CE, CN, NE

Common Tongues: Dominion, Giant, Gnoll, Goblin, Orcan

Divine Patrons: Belemnos, Kaerul, Malakon, Xordaelos

Races: Gnolls, Hobgoblins, Orcs

Regions: Eldanor, Orcan Hold, Vananore

Prestige Classes: Xo'qui-l Vhak'han

Wild-men. Hulking brutes in skins. Warriors possessed of a primal fury. All could describe this class, but none grant insight beyond the surface. Barbarians are more than warriors rushing down the hillsides, screaming the names of their ancestors and war-cries to terrify their opponents. Though they are disposed towards combat moreso than other groups, barbarians learn to wield weapon and don armor to defend their families and possessions against the threats stalking the wilder places of the world. They live in extremely hostile territory untamed by the hands of men, roaming over savage lands populated by vicious monsters and far, far worse. They shun the unnecessary trappings of civility, teaching their children how to hunt and perform crafts rather than write their names. Barbarians praise self-sufficiency and in their tightly knit bands, everyone performs a number of tasks to keep the group healthy and safe.

Barbarians rarely wander into towns or cities; when they do, they often earn blatant stares and open looks. Their presence stirs up news for the next few days, sometimes inciting fearful rumors of impending invasions or war. Some barbarians suffer from claustrophobia within the walls and small buildings, so they prefer to stay away when possible. In the natural world, though, their mastery goes nearly unchallenged. Only rangers and druids can make their way with greater ease. Barbarian bands are noted for their crafts fashioned from bone, sinew and leather. They fetch a good price on the market, when they can be had, and distinctive barbarian art is becoming increasingly popular as an exotic commodity. Some barbarians trade their tooled vests and blankets with villages in their range, establishing closer connections with otherwise uncertain neighbours. Nevertheless, most barbarians would rather roam in the wild than sleep beneath the roof of an inn.

Races

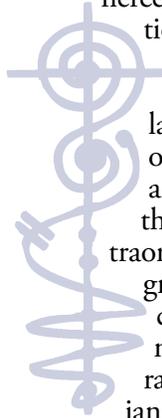
Few races would appreciate being identified as 'barbarians,' for such a term brings to mind an image of fierce warriors living in relatively primitive conditions. In the millennium of recorded history, the dominant peoples of Ennersea have established sophisticated cultures which largely marginalized or negated the presence of barbarians in their civilizations. The orcs are a notable exception; due to their lifestyle, they embrace the uncontained rage and extraordinary martial prowess of a barbarian with great fervour. Many of their finest warriors could harness a frenzy and terrorize opponents on the battlefield. Other "savage" races such as gnolls have numbers of barbarians, and those hobgoblins trained with orcan legions may find such a path desirable as well. In ages past, dwarves of Delak-zul and humans of Firandir occasionally reverted to barbarism but such trends are increasingly rare today.

Organizations

There are no infamous groups of barbarians known in the southlands. Few bands would bother to congregate into named associations, although they do keep loose communications between other groups connected to them in kinship ties or religious and military alliances.

Regions

Open plains and desolate moors, high mountains and old-growth forests beneath the open sky: these are the elements calling to the barbarian heart. The howl of the wind across the empty wilderness quickens the pulse, and the drum of the rain reaffirms a primordial link to a world of harsh contrast. Barbarians prefer the places labelled by townsfolk in their comfortable manors as wasteland. The glow of lanterns against the signboards of inns and the clatter of carts over cobbled roads make them uneasy, and noisy mobs are so far beyond their experience as to make them frustrated and agitated. Most barbarians live on the fringes of settled areas, their communities (if any) situated far from well-trod roads. Their presence is most notable in the far north of Orcan Hold, where barbarians comprise large portions of the native population. They become increasingly scarce the farther south and west one moves, although a notable exception to that trend is Vananore. Here, where untouched forests spread across the peninsula, some small numbers dwell in great seclusion. Other isolated barbarian groups may be found through the Dragonspine Mountains and into Mhorzal and Kheirze, forced out of Firandir after the Rhydemunite dynasty's fall.



Relationships

Barbarians tend to get along very well with other classes of a similar scope and focus. Those from Orcan Hold keep shamans in very high regard, giving them great deference in spiritual matters. Barbarians go to great lengths to protect shamans, even if their tribal totem is not the same as the one the shaman generally deals with. Outside of the Hold, they grant the same regard to druids. Druids -- or shamans, in the Hold -- tend to form the spiritual heart of the band, if it has any spellcaster at all. Outside of these groups, relationships vary from tepid to disdainful. Barbarians get along fairly well with fighters and rangers, although the latter tend to be too focused upon a particular enemy or region. They dislike members of the urban classes, often in reaction to the negative attitudes they receive in turn. Barbarians disdain courtiers and wizards in particular, their haughty arrogance and disconnection with nature too difficult to bear. Alas, the feeling is generally mutual.

Reputation



Bards: Ruffians with that woody smell, they'll cheer at any old war ballad you can scrounge up but when it comes to tip, don't expect much! And their taste furs. They're probably far beyond hope to clean up, but listen to what they say. They may be simple, but their stories can be useful material. They remember what others don't or won't.

Black-knights: Brutish, superstitious and ignorant; they have all the makings for trouble for the unwise. Thankfully, the Prince instilled me with greater sense than these buffoons tramping about the countryside. Is there any question why some are destined to rule and others to follow? Can you imagine a society where they commanded? It would degenerate into absolute chaos with no respite. Barbaric men and women, babbling fools, they buck and rebel against the very foundations which mean to improve their lot. Not that it would take considerably much, given how utterly primitive their conditions are. Some even resist belief in the Veluakir, no matter how simply I try to explain it to them. No matter. It's much easier to rouse a small, rag-tag army of them to madness and let them crash upon their dooms to my Lord's benefit than bother.

Clerics: Our views change from faith to faith. Some accept barbarians into the fold; Malakon's ilk are one who feel at one with them, and are likewise welcomed in return. Servants of the nature deities shouldn't find them uncomfortable, for their ways are nearly the same. The rest of us though, we hold them in a more wary light. For the less restrained, they are wonderful forces of destruction, whether it is to bash down a door or through the enemy's camp. I find them too wild and unrestrained, distrustful of common things. They cling to their superstitious beliefs with an extraordinary resilience, though. Shake a bone rattle and mutter a few words, then expect to see portents. Even so, they still value... and fear, maybe... the gods. Bring one 'round to your way of thinking and you can earn a stalwart ally, or just another fairweather worshipper.

Courtiers: Spare me. If I didn't already have enough to deal with, the last thing I need is a filthy, stinking wild-man, who last washed at his coming-of-age ceremony, disturbing a quiet evening! These rude, uncouth creatures lack even the decency to cover their mouth when they chew. They lack anything resembling a form of government and if you want an example of what happens without order, look only so far as their society. Do you want to degenerate into that? I thought not.

Druids: We who walk beside the waves and through the meadows know far more of these people than you ever will. They are considered uncivilized thugs, brutes without an understanding of precious etiquette and decorum. Does it matter, really, that they do not use three spoons at a meal or cannot tell Cydonian lace from Isaleneese? They defend their families valiantly, and leave the land unspoiled in their passing. Could you do that? Their stories tell more than your empty written words. You see violence, we see undying spirit and untainted wisdom. So laugh of these bestial ruffians from within your painted palaces and gilded lofts. They live for life itself, and glory in the moment. Can you say the same?

Fighters: Hrmph, not much to say about them. They're more than adequate with a weapon and you're not like to find another who hefts an axe with as much force and glee. They're not especially committed warriors on the whole, and they run into the fray without a thought for the rest behind them. A bit of a loose cannon, to coin a term. They're unpredictable and I can't tell you what they'll do when confronted with something they probably can't beat. I've seen them run away from an organized unit of peasants, then beat on a wyvern single handedly until I couldn't tell whose blood was whose. And to make it worse, the damned guy killed it. Yeah, I drowned my frustration in a glass of ale that night. Several, actually.

Monks: Their path is far indeed before they reach mastery over themselves. It seems as though they do not wish to find it or the comfort of serenity. Their minds are not still pools, but turbulent seas rocked by violent storms. Their hearts struggle and burn with great exertion when, by simply slowing down, they would not be so burdened. They use a punch where the lightest touch would do, then amaze at the results of their actions. Do they not

understand restraint gives far more benefits than the terrible cost of the passionate fury they sink into with such readiness? Beware these madmen, for they throw caution to the wind until they are blinded by their rage.

Paladins: Though I do not discount the intelligence or faithfulness of these people, it is by no means easy to observe their callous disregard for the laws of my land. They move as they please, do as they please, and be damned to those who would tell them otherwise! They care even less for order essential to a stable, prosperous society. Confront them about violating the codes of the city and they are as like to spit on your shoes as shrug or apologize. Confusing, but terribly different on the battlefield. Rouse their anger and you will meet no harsher foe. Earn their respect and they honor you with great determination and resilience. If only they would give the same quarter to the credos of the church, the magistrates and the guilds!

Rangers: I'll give them credit, these folk are one of the few out there who respect the place where they live. They don't needlessly cut down trees or cull a herd of deer, and their vigilance makes my job that much easier. They don't seem to mind when I circuit through territory they consider theirs, as long as I mind my way. I do not have an issue with barbarians, and generally they will listen to my advice when I choose to give it.

Rogues: There are two sides to every barbarian, and it's best to make sure you're firmly behind one where his club isn't likely to hit you. Dealing with one is not unlike dealing with a child; use big words, make a few gestures and you'll be able to get by. If I could feel shame for duping such a dense group... But, I can't, so why bother worrying? Don't bother checking his coinpurse, though. You don't want to know where it's been, and whatever's in

there won't be worth it. Be careful of angering a barbarian, though! They've got hair-trigger tempers and you can never be sure what'll set them off. Once they do get mad, hide in the corner and sneak away as fast as you bloody well can.

Shamans: Brothers of my tribe, they respect the totems and follow the ways of the ancestors. They have more honour than all others in battle. It pleases Redhawk and Shrike to see them achieve glory, and the Wolverine howls in delight when they sink into the frenzy as does he. They are proud warriors with sturdy weapons and the favor of the gods. Let no one stand against them, lest he know their rage.

Sorcerers: Though I'm not one to judge most people, it's hard not to feel a bit... ah... uncomfortable around a barbarian. Can you blame me? Your typical barbarian, he's got the social skills of a bear, and the general appearance to boot. Ugh, and does he have to drag that massive, horrible axe everywhere he goes? I'm sure his mother is terrifically proud to know

he cut down whatever beast it was to get it, but I'm tired of having such an awful weapon looming over me all the time! Of course, trying to tactfully bring this point up is like talking to an ox. I half suspect he's ready to chop me in half when the druid gives him the proper signal...

Wizards: Driven by superstition and utterly lacking in logic, must I give you another discourse on the fundamental errors of their society? It is perfectly fine to live in sparsely populated frontiers if you take the proper precautions and secure a decent place of habitation, but they lack even permanent shelters. Their tendency to dissolve into violent struggles over who deserves the right to eat a choice piece of liver merely proves how far they have to go before reaching a basic level of civility. And before you suggest I am speaking unfairly, consider how many barbarians roused the masses to burn us -- and the accumulated lore of an entire Age -- because they simply could not understand what it was.

History

"The voice of the barbarian peoples of Ennersea has gone silenced through the written records of history, by and large. Their parts in the grand spectacle of three Ages are largely confined to mere mentions of an isolated attack here or uprising there. The modern scholar, examining only these middling excerpts, might walk away feeling these people contributed nothing at all to the world except for an endless supply of unruly warriors to terrorize farmsteads and families on the far frontier. Most would be content to leave the issue at that, but enter into the north or the bands themselves, and the story becomes far more different.

"Most bands have their own ideas and myths of how they came to settle a location. Their oral histories passed down from generation to generation expound upon the feats of prowess and heroism performed by their ancestors. It is therefore difficult to make a broad summary of the roles barbarians, as a whole, play in the shaping of Ennersea as it is today. Undoubtedly, their greatest prominence came in the north. Barbarians in the north swept across the forbidding landscape, settling, pillaging, fighting and allying over

decades. They slowly began to merge into large groupings, identifiable today as the orcan and gnoll tribes the Serapheans and Sinomaese so fear. Their unification poses a considerable threat, especially as Orcan Hold grows increasingly more solidified as a state.

“But the barbarians of the Hold, though the most documented, certainly aren’t the only ones around to be of interest to the scholar. Nay, I personally consider the bands of old Firandir to best of special significance. Though largely displaced today, the human inhabitants of Firandir shared many of the same qualities as other less civilized peoples in Ennersea. Mhorzic dwarven records give clear insight into their almost nomadic culture. In fact, Firandir remained generally untamed until the end of the Second Age. Its communities, though fairly settled, still contained a large, mobile population roaming north towards Sinomae (where they were generally rebuffed) and east towards the dwarfholds. They confronted both raiders from Orcan Hold, feral tribes of savage creatures, like gnolls, and nearly as fierce dwarven scouts. The bands generally submitted to the rule of the Rhydemunite dynasty, although they retained their autonomy and often raided and traded along the country’s eastern border.

“The overthrow of Firandir by the Eldanothi displaced a large number of these tribes. Forced into the mountains and towards Mhorzic territory, some settled in small, rugged communities. These could hardly be deemed hamlets and the Eldanori seek constantly to wipe them out, causing the inhabitants to constantly move from year to year. The barbarian tribes lost the vestiges of their cultural acclimation in Firandir and reverted to survivalist tendencies, thus producing a fascinating model for study. I only wish I could know more about these groups, but I suspect they are supported quietly by Eldanor’s neighbours. Fiercely independent and fighting a

guerrilla war, they form pockets of resistance in the otherwise subjugated nation.

“The last group with the least discussion may be the remnants of colonists from Zahnah’d deem. A reclusive, isolated group of barbarians dwells in the far southern Dominion of Vananore. They predate the establishment of Highmoon, and there are records of attacks on Zahnah’d een traders and pirates from as far back as 659 in the area. This is most curious, given few humans were known to dwell in the Nevyan Forest at the time. Could it be possible these folk are descended from raiders or a failed colonisation encampment? This group generally avoided contact with outsiders and it was only in the past two centuries, when Vananore’s expansion pushed inland, that they were discovered. They spoke a bastardised version of Dominion with many Zahnah’d een terms interspersed. The band’s numbers were not significant, although they claimed descent from the servants of Gwyneth. “The Vanan authorities claimed the territory of the Forest, and thus, these isolated barbarians became citizens, though they may not have recognized it. Rangers and druids familiar with the woodlands made great effort to communicate and establish common links between the group, with some success. The bands agreed to avoid pillaging farsteads set up in close proximity to their general hunting grounds. Two Zahnah’d een family historians successfully traced two family names back to an old merchant family in Xuil’phar. The greater importance of this group, however, lies in their actions before and during the Dragon Flights. They aided in repelling several attacks from bugbears and, later, trolls against two small villages. They fought with tremendous courage alongside the villagers, and as a result, gained free access to the town. Many of the band opted to settle down and more with warning of a wyrm-sighting. One messenger gave the message before expiring from exhaustion, and earned a commendation from the prince himself.”

Opinions

Arcane Spellcasters: “Do you remember the stories of the elders, when shadows skimmed over the rocks and fire burned away our homes, our people? Do you remember how the ancestral lands were defiled by fanged demons driven from the ocean? Weep for the ancestors and the warriors killed before their time, and in that grief, remember! It was the mages who brought this ruin upon us. It was their unnatural magic that defiled the unsullied earth and tortured it, and swallowed entire herds of animals in fanged maws. For the suffering of the past century, look only to their greed and selfishness. Their magic draws not from the spirits or the gods or nature, but from a source unknown and untrustworthy. They are weak in battle, cunning in nature and grasping, always greedily grasping. They should be destroyed, every one, until the cries of the ancestors are washed clean with magi blood.”

Divine Spellcasters: “When you see the druid coax a bear to quietly stand by

his side, do you not feel awe? The stories of the shamans in the north say they can placate the very spirits of nature with offerings and honor. We know little of their ways but they preserve the mysteries. Their knowledge keeps the forest safe and the animals fattening through the summer. Their blessings can bring success to a hunt and health to the wounded. You can see the ways of a druid before your eyes, and his gifts benefit the band. Trust him, aid him, protect him so he can pass on his secrets to the next who will serve. There are others who serve the gods and the spirits; some are benign, others not. The servants of the powers of nature can be nearly as the druids themselves, or far worse. Others hold no reverence for the forest and the marsh, and certainly not for you. Discover their allegiances quickly or you may unleash a viper in the nest.”

Rogues: “Each one you meet brings a different face, like the woodlands. Dealing with their kind is never the same

twice, and too often they rely on deception and trickery to achieve their goals. They can pretend too well, acting as your friend today and your enemy tomorrow. Their strength lies in their ability to cajole and coerce like the worst druid, but no wisdom backs up their sweetly spoken words. Never open your back to one and keep them in your sight.”

Warriors: “Bereft of magic and sly cunning, there is little separating us from them. You are on even ground, but do not assume their motives to be the same as ours. Some warriors fight with blind allegiances, cutting themselves off from the battle-frenzy you learn to throw yourself into without hesitation. Do they fear the emotion? Do they think they will be carried away on the storm of war? Perhaps their gods are not so kind as to promise safe return, or they are weak inside at the prospect of death. By and large, you may look upon a warrior as a threat in battle and an ally off the field, if their motives are right.”