WAR Culture Package

PLAINS Barbarians

Society Government/Laws Personality Marriage Birth Death Leisure
History Legends/Heroes

Society: *top*

The barbarians of Dyllaria inhabit the Battle Plains that run between the Ogre's Den in the East and the Beard Mountains in the West and up to County Scenarius in the North. Settled in their lifestyle they travel freely across the waving plains. Though many wars have ravaged their population, they cling to their way of life. Constant struggles with Minotaurs for hunting ground and various forces attempting to gain dominance of the tribes has ripped the tribes apart. The people see all these things as a test of strength, however, and somehow manage to persevere. They have very set traditions they follow faithfully through the dry summers and often bitter winters. Nomadic by nature, the barbarians have no permanent settlement to call their home. Instead they have sturdy tents and little furniture, all of which is easily transported from campsite to campsite. These people follow their food, hunting and gathering what they need to survive. In response to this, they have developed ingenious ways to prepare and store the food they have providing themselves with a myriad of dietary options even through the long winter months.

Barbarians live simply, priding themselves on their strength and stamina. They are at home in the tall grasses and sparse trees, sitting on rocks and sleeping on the ground. Using the same camps season after season, they make little impact on their habitat. These people understand that the land gives to them, and if they take too much there will soon be nothing left. Always, they are respectful of the plants and animals for allowing them to be used to nourish the plainsmen. Warriors and gatherers usually give thanks silently, but Naturalists often make a more vocal tribute. Many barbarian superstitions involve the belief that all living things have a sort of spirit. For example, before picking a fruit a barbarian will walk around the tree one time to illustrate that they have thought about their action and are taking the fruit out of need and not whim.

All things in a barbarian encampment are designed economically; there is nothing that does not have at least one use. They use the animals they kill for many aspects of their life. Their tents, clothing, and even dishes and instruments are made from the skins. Bones, horns, and teeth are used for utensils and in art. Barbarian women note their rank and wealth by tying beads made of the animals their husbands kill into their hair. Feathers and precious stones are added to this, so that the wealth of a family is easily seen. It is an obvious report of credit and this display allows for barbarian women to buy things without having the trade items on hand. The scrubby trees are fairly rare on the plains and wood is therefore highly prized. Since it is not easily replaced anything made from wood is well cared for and treated with much respect. Tent poles and other frameworks are some of the things made from this material, but these can also be made from the bones of large animals. Those barbarians who have herds are able to make

clothing, fabric, and draperies from the hair of their animals. There is nothing that goes to waste, as all parts of the tribes' resources are utilized.

Even when mystical in nature these people do not create things simply to create them. Despite this fact there are many fine artisans among these people. They take the time to decorate the things they do have, creating powerful, elegant designs. Mixing paints from the land, their symbols bear bright, primary colors in adornment. Many barbarians specialize at one thing, taking pride and earning respect from others. The tribes are especially known for their work with leather, furs, and bright, patterned blankets and rugs. They also create strong, detailed sculptures of the spirits they see in the land around them. They never sell these, though, as they have deep mystical significance. Sometimes they will give them to another they have deemed worthy of being granted such a gift. These people are then regarded, albeit suspiciously, as kin to that tribe and are granted access that outsiders can never hope to have.

Only four Barbarian tribes remain within the regions of Dyllaria and Emuria. Each of these tribes is unique, but is made up of the same stock. Men, women and children all have tasks within the group to make it function. Men are usually the hunters and craftsmen, while the women gather, prepare the food, care for the children and animals, and maintain their home. Women are respected, but are seen as somewhat weaker than men, to the point that they may be used as trade in bargains. A woman can refuse this, but such an occurrence is rare. Often times an unhappy woman will even demand to be traded.

Women usually do not choose to be hunters or warriors, but those who do are granted the same tests as the men and upon passing those tests, the same standing and respect. Usually, though, women are the healers and shamans of the group. Men who are so skilled can also be Naturalists and a member of either sex can become a respected Weaving Man or Weaving Woman.

Children in the tribe are usually playful and somewhat aggressive for they often strive to emulate their elders. Each child has tasks placed upon them, but only necessary tasks. Never do they overburden a child with work. Children are often seen as having pure sight and as such often do chores for the Weaving Man or Woman.

Above all, barbarians respect the elderly. While strength is seen as the highest virtue, the very old are known to have knowledge beyond what any young person can hope to achieve early in life. Knowledge is respected, as is experience, for it helps to better the lives of all. The elders are also often seen as being close to the realm of death and as such have many unique and mystical insights. It is believed that the Elders themselves are partially dead and as such are often the first to sacrifice themselves for the good of the tribe. Such a gift is the greatest a barbarian can give. Such a sacrifice must always be on a volunteer basis and never will a member of the tribe request it of another. Those who give their lives in such a way are eternally remembered and honored by their tribe.

The barbarians see magic as a craft, such as weaving a rug, one which involves many different elements. It takes a person of skill to bring all the factors together and become both wise and skilled. Earth and Nature magics are both taught, earth more predominantly as healing is frequently needed. All barbarians shun celestial magic. They have an intense dislike of it that is very difficult to overcome. They see these "sky magics" as distrustful and unnatural, and find it hard even to remain in the presence of

celestial casters. With frequent exposure, a barbarian can become used to the presence of these wizards, but will never become one himself. Nor is it likely that they will ever trust or call upon the services of a wizard, including for the creation of magical items or wards.

Ruling Structure and Laws: *top*

Each tribe is ruled primarily by the strongest member. Often the new leader is appointed by the council, but a leader can be challenged and overthrown at any time. Strength is the primary virtue of a barbarian, but if the leader is known to be unfit or makes bad decisions, they will be overthrown. This can lead to tumultuous periods in a tribe's history, but the method is usually a fairly stable one, for it is understood that the good of the tribe is paramount. The leader guides the tribe, makes decisions of war and trade, and settles all disputes. Always, he is expected to take the counsel of both the Weaver Man/Woman and the Eldest. The Eldest is the oldest member of the tribe, and their blessing is sought for most matters. If they in their wisdom approve of a plan, it is considered to be a good course of action. Any plan the Eldest disapproves of is almost always abandoned. The Weaver Man represents the mystical and magical aspect of barbarian life. He consults the spirits before any great endeavor to see what might happen and how Tyrra will be affected by their actions. A weaver man, though not possessing as strong a voice as the Leader or Elder when it comes to decision-making, usually holds much influence over the declarations made by the others.

Other members of the tribe hold varying degrees of respect based on their strength, skill and age. All members of a tribe are treated with respect unless they are weak in such a way as to be useless to the tribe, or have dishonored themselves or the tribe as a whole. Women are often treated with somewhat less respect and many warriors view women as expendable resources. Often they will not go so far as to say such a thing, as the women are known to have command over healing magics and food. And no warrior wants to fall asleep after a hearty meal and not wake up in the morning! Unless consulted by the ruling council no others have a say over the actions of the tribe as a whole.

Even in times of peace the tribes send their chieftain and Weaver Man/Woman to a great council once a year. The Eldest will sometimes accompany them, but only if there is some question that requires the wisdom of the older tribesmen. Though only four tribes remain, they honor this tradition as they did in times of old. During this time, treaties are negotiated, trade set up, and other business is tended to. These meetings usually last a fortnight, during which time all feuds are ceased and a general peace falls upon the tribes. Those tribes who are at war do not attend the meetings, but honor the peace pact to protect the other tribes. The meeting of the chieftains is the highest form of government in barbarian life. Any overreaching decrees or decisions are made here and then followed throughout all the tribes.

Laws are basic and are taught as morals to all the children as they grow. The reliance on all members of the tribe is very important and this concept of family is one that few barbarians will ignore. They will do their utmost to further their goals, but will never cross their tribe. Some rare occurrences are recorded where barbarians denied and betrayed their tribe. If this were to happen the offending member would be dead to the rest of the tribe and to any allies of that tribe. Murder, stealing, and assault are the basic crimes a barbarian can commit. Any undermining of the tribe will also be cause for exile

or death. Causing another tribe member to loose honor is cause for reparations. The two involved will proceed to fight in an Honor Circle . The combatants will fight with whatever method the challenged decides. It is dishonorable to choose a weapon that neither party is familiar with or unable to use. They fight until one party concedes defeat, is clearly beaten, or (in rare instances) is dead. A fight to the death is a form of Honor Combat that must be agreed upon by both fighters. To kill someone in the Honor Circle who has not agreed to a Death Fight is seen as very dishonorable. Though the loser is seen as wrong in the altercation, they have managed saved their honor by fighting. Questions of ownership and brawls are usually settled in this manner.

The leader of the tribe has two Second-Men who act as his councilors, protectors, and enforcers. If a law is broken, the Second-Men bring the perpetrator to justice before the leader. A decision of what to do is then made by the council and carried out by the Second-Men. Because honor is so important to a barbarian, laws are seldom broken. Those that are broken are usually taken care of in the Honor Circle .

Personality: *top*

Barbarians are seen by others to be crude, ignorant, and openly hostile. Though they live in apparent poverty, there is respectfulness to their habits found in few other intelligent races. Lacking the grace of the elves, the barbarians nonetheless live in harmony with their world as best they can. They have the utmost respect for what nature gives them and will never desecrate any plant or animal. Often, unless attacked, they try to avoid killing these creatures. Then it becomes a test of strength and skill, something that the plainsmen love above all else. Known for their tempers, barbarians can be volatile when situations confuse or frustrate them. They are loud, boisterous, and enthusiastic in all they do. Barbarians have a zest for life and see no problem in enjoying it whenever possible. They have a weakness for drink and love to taste different ales. Unlike dwarves, though, they have a much lower tolerance.

Barbarians see most challenges as tests. Defeating the challenge makes them stronger, and worthy of more praise and respect. Being defeated is not necessarily a loss in honor, so long as the barbarian tried, but it is cause to redouble their efforts. Barbarians take great joy in practicing the savage swing of the sword or in improving their aim with spell and bow. All magic users test their minds with puzzles and games. Different puzzles, often made of interlocking bits of wood, are exchanged between tribesmen and tribes with delight. They see this as a way to make themselves stronger, though cannot see the similarity between these mental exercises and scholarly research. Instead, such puzzles are used only in training or to pass the time. Though they believe in using all resources to their advantage, they see no use in reading and writing and learn only enough to cast their magic. Passing on their stories and knowledge orally, they often see writing things down as admitting that your mind is too weak to remember it!

Refined through the recent hostilities in the plains, barbarians are known for their ferocity in battle. Most men in the tribe are warriors of some sort and all are eager to defend their homes and families against any external threat. Barbarians are often said to go to the war at the drop of a feather and their thirst for the thrill of battle is indeed great. Even with this fact and their lack of education, barbarians will not walk into something that is suicidal, unless to protect their loved ones. While they often underestimate a foe and overestimate their own strength, a barbarian will not enter into a situation that is

hopeless if it is avoidable. If not, then it is far better to die fighting then to surrender. It is this attitude that has led to the destruction of so many of the barbarian people.

Barbarians are a simple people. They live for the adrenaline of battle and the hunt, the feel of the wind across the plains, and the love of their family and tribe. Though not known for their negotiating or shrewd mental abilities, these plainsmen have the capacity to be very patient when waiting for tricky game moves or when improving their craft. They understand the tangible rewards these things bring, but cannot so easily see why one should study simply for the knowledge they gain. Such book-learning cannot, after all, bring down an antelope or build a stronger home. And as far as diplomacy goes, barbarians know that the spirits will not support those who are wrong and see no better way to find out who is right than through combat. Why spend time on words, when actions speak so much louder? They do not like to complicate their lives and so often deal with problems head-on to get them solved more quickly. Many a barbarian has walked to their own doom in just this way, though just as many have walked out by being so brave. Fear is something that is not often found in a barbarian. So long as there is something to do, there is no reason to be afraid. It is only when there is nothing left for a barbarian to put his hands to that he becomes afraid. Many traveling warriors have taken up skills that can be undertaken while traveling so that they are never caught without something to occupy their hands. Common hobbies are whittling, leatherworking, and bone-carving.

One of the most obvious traits of the barbarian people is their superstitious beliefs. Each tribe has a different set of beliefs, which appear very strange to outsiders. The plainsmen themselves have lost the reason for many of their practices. There are too many to list, but most have to do with plants, animals, or other outdoor pursuits.

All barbarians will give thanks for any living thing that they harm or kill. To not do so is to curse the spirit to wander Tyrra, a fate reserved only for their most hated enemies. Any who show disrespect are looked at as bringing harm to the tribe. For instance, a barbarian will not eat an animal that he finds dead. If he comes upon such a corpse the barbarian will drive wood through its eyes and cut of its legs. The reason for this particular belief is if left dead then evil will be attracted to it, perhaps to go as far as to reanimate it. Other superstitions involve meetings and partings. At a crossroads, most barbarians will turn in three full circles before choosing his path. If a tribe member is leaving on a long journey, it is considered a curse to turn your back on them before they have passed out of sight. A raven sighted on a journey is a good thing, while a raven idle at your camp is considered a bad sign. The beliefs of the barbarians are many and complicated.

Some traditions that nearly all of the tribes follow are described here. When two barbarians are strangers and meet for the first time, there are certain protocols that are followed. Two men will grip each others' biceps to show their strength. Two women gently tug each others' hair to take stock of the items woven into it. A man and woman who do not know each other never touch, as barbarians can be jealous when it comes to their wives. Instead, they display their right palms to show whether or not they are married so that they will treat the other accordingly. Any touching or flirting seen as "excessive" can be considered by a woman's husband as a direct challenge to him. Unless the man and woman are family, they will only bow to each other. If they are

related, they kiss on the left cheek. The left side symbolizes the natural family of a person, while the right shows the family a barbarian marries into.

Above all, the good of the tribe is paramount to the good of the individual. Young barbarians are ingrained with the desire to do what is best for their extended family, even to the extent of self-sacrifice. Any who disrupt the harmony of life is exiled. Some barbarian adventurers are found away from the plains due to this reason. Still others leave on quests or missions and plan to return upon completion, always remembering from whence they came. Often a barbarian leaves his or her tribe to make themselves a more productive member of that unit. They adventure to gain experience that will help to protect and promote their home group and also to bring the barbarian fully to maturity. The hot blood of young tribesmen sometimes feels stifled in the routine and regimented existence found on the plains.

Though the remaining four tribes of barbarians share many similarities, they also have different ways of life.

Children of the Black: As mentioned, this group was created from prisoners of war when Tilicaf began exerting his power over the plains. The Overlord led a campaign against all of the different tribes, killing many leaders and warriors, taking enough to create this group. The Children of the Black are known for adorning their faces in black tattooed markings. These are the most aggressive of the remaining tribes, making a living off of war. They are mistrusted by the other barbarians and by most other peoples of Tyrra. Their morals twisted from their indenture under Tilicaf, this tribe often allies itself with the forces of evil. Children of this tribe are trained to kill from a very young age and are often seen as mercenaries. They are some of the best and most feared, warriors on Tyrra. Frequently dressing in black with shocking rough and red markings, the Children of the Black enter recklessly into battle. The sight of their standards and the sound of their brutal chants drive fear into nearly every enemy they face. Though still maintaining the basic societal structure of other barbarians, they have become brutal and often unmerciful creatures. Not inherently evil, they are the most easily swayed by money. The Children of the Black still stay loyal to their tribe and hold nature sacred.

Goblin Eaters: Every member of this tribe is trained from birth to loathe and destroy Goblinoids (Goblins, Hobgoblins, Bugbears and Trolls). Rumors that this tribe eats the flesh of these creatures are true and they hunt them like any other game. Goblin jerky, roasted Bugbear, Troll knuckles, and Hobgoblin stew are some of the favored recipes. The meat is surprisingly palatable, tasting like pork or beef depending on how it is prepared. Many outside the tribe refuse to eat it for the grisly nature of its origin. This tribe is known for piercing its flesh with jewelry made from the bones of Goblinoids. Piercing of the lips, eyebrows, tongues, ears, and nose are common, as well as other parts of the body.

This tribe is well known for its hunting and tracking ability. They take great pride in their strength and elite skills. Goblin Eaters are rumored to be able to track a flea in the desert, and to move unnoticed even in the bright noon sun. Harsh trials are presented to test tribe members when they reach maturity to ensure that only those who meet the tribe standards are allowed on the hunt. Any who do not pass and are of no use are cast out of the tribe. Living largely as any other tribe, this group is more mobile than the

others, ready to leave in pursuit of their prey at a moment's notice. They are also the most driven, seeing the hunt of Goblinoids as a needed task and themselves as the chosen warriors to carry it out against any Goblinoid incursion. The Goblin Eaters provide a solid blockade against Goblinoid movement in or around the plains.

Karani: The Karani are a warlike people that have inhabited the Karani Plains of eastern Emuria for as long as anyone can remember. They know little other than war and they have by far the fewest number of craftsmen of any of the tribes. From an early age Karani warriors (both men and women) are taught how to fight with clubs and throwing hatchets. Shamans are not common, and they greatly prefer earth magic for its dual nature of damage and healing.

The Karani death ceremony is one of the more peculiar traditions that is a commonality throughout the scattered clans. In the ceremony, the dead are wrapped in furs by their loved-ones and placed within a massive stone oven known as a Nallak (nah-lak). While in the Nallak the deceased is slowly burned until the body dries to a shell. This grisly process culminates with a ceremony in which the seared body is laid upon the ground and the entire tribe surrounds it. The adult Karani the take turns striking the body with their war clubs, starting with the oldest member and following a progression to the youngest. Each person takes only one swing per turn, and they take as many turns as is necessary to completely disintegrate the corpse. If the burning has been performed properly the body will be completely intact at the beginning of the ceremony and will be nothing more than a dark spot of ash at its conclusion. This entire process, known as receiving the *Final Blow*, is used to symbolize the dominance of the strong (who have survived) over the weak (who have died). Non-warriors among the Karani never receive the *Final Blow* and are typically left to decompose naturally.

Vistaran: This tribe of noble savages is allied with the Dyllarian Dwarves and Shanduin Humans. The Vistaran are tradesmen, craftsmen and hunters. The fabled Vistaran city is the closest thing to a permanent settlement that the barbarian people have. Settling in the same spot each winter, or in times of drought or other dilemmas, this tribe sets up a fabulous dwelling of peaked tents. Intricate tapestries and bright rugs hang on the insides of the tents, while traders move throughout the "streets". The Vistarani are famous for their weavings, using the hairs of a peculiar, silky haired goat they herd as the thread. They are also the most open of the tribes and when in their tent city they will allow outsiders to move among them. They are also the most likely to move into the cities and trading places of other races. The Vistaran concentrate on their crafts and trade baskets, jewelry, furs, and other goods in addition to their rugs and tapestries. The Dyllarian Dwarves are the most frequent visitors to this tribe, giving the barbarians food in exchange for their goods. Others must usually first prove their trustworthiness before being allowed within the city, for even in their own lands the Vistaran do not trust easily.

Vistarani dress in the patterned weaves they are known for, covering most of their skin against the harsh climate of the plains. Their clothes are adorned with tassels and fur trim, with peculiar round hats created to block the sun completing the ensemble.

White Stag: Beginning as a small tribe in the Galavast region, this group has swelled its numbers since the Horde War. Now claiming the southwestern section of the Battle Plains as their exclusive hunting territory, the White Stag often comes into conflict with the Children of the Black and the Goblin Eaters. In addition to their shaky relationship with those two tribes the White Stag must constantly battle Dyllarian Minotaurs for the same grounds. These barbarians are skilled at combating the Minotaurs and often send groups of their warriors on key strikes against the beasts to keep them in check.

This tribe keeps most firmly to the ancient traditions and beliefs, and is the most in touch with their natural surroundings. It is also known for the large number of Naturalists and Weaver Men it produces. Many consider the White Stag tribe to be the wisest of the barbarians.

Marriage: *top*

As in all things barbarians have a very practical view of marriage. If a man takes an interest in a woman, he approaches her father and asks to prove himself. The father will then set three tasks to see if the man is worthy of his daughter. If the father favors the man or his worth is generally known, the tasks will be trivial. If he dislikes the man, the duties will be more difficult. Frequently, the prospective groom's hunting ability, crafting ability, and mental capacity are all tested. If the man is found to be worthy, the father gives his permission. The woman in the situation may give her opinion and if she seriously protests the father will often refuse the suit. However, girls are raised to be dutiful and practical, and will usually see a match in the light of the material situation it may provide instead of her emotional attachment to her husband. Men may have more than one wife, in fact having two wives is considered standard. The very wealthy or powerful have as many as six. Vistarani are especially well-known for polygamy. Women do not have more than one husband; such an idea would be inconceivable. However, it is expected that she re-marry if her mate is killed. Love among barbarians is more often a mutual alliance built on respect and compassion. Passion is not unknown, as shown by some barbarian stories, but it is rare. These stories usually show a conflict between passion and dutiful practicality, with the practicality almost always winning.

The marriage ceremony is brief. The groom gives the father gifts in return for the loss of his daughter, while the father is expected to provide his daughter with the things necessary for her to care for her husband. Bowls, utensils, bedclothes, and other household goods are often given as wedding gifts to help the father with this task. The bride dresses in her best clothes, painted ceremonially in the bold method of the plainsmen. The Weaving Man presides over the traditional evening. At sundown, the tribe sits down to a meal prepared by the tribe's women for the occasion. A huge fire is lit and each member of the tribe gives a blessing, piece of advice, and/or a gift. Women and men sit separately, with the Weaving Man in between. Once each member of the tribe has spoken, the meal is finished. The bride and groom stand before the Weaving Man, who crowns the bride with flowers or plants to represent her femininity. The groom is struck a great blow in the shoulder with a staff to show that he is strong enough to stand up for his wife. The traditional words and blessings are spoken, then the right hands of the couple are pierced and those hands tied together so that their blood can mingle. The newlyweds are expected to keep their hands bound for the rest of the night.

The newly joined couple may only retire when the last of the guests have done so. It is often a great game among barbarians to keep the couple from their bridal bed for as long as possible. After the joining, the men and women may mingle. Many dance and tell stories for the rest of the night.

In the morning, the people of the tribe return to their normal lives. The new couple is expected to do so as well, but is often given some leeway to get used to their new situation.

Divorce may also occur and although rare is not unheard of. If a man finds his wife in bed with another man, he may throw her out of his tent. A woman, however, cannot do the same to her husband. She may refuse to remain living with him if he is unable to provide for her, or if he is shameful, dishonest, or harsh. This decision is not usually questioned. A woman will not easily give up her husband, for in most cases women in the tribe need a man to provide for them. Likewise, men need women. Therefore, most couples tolerate each other and even grow fond of one another. Even with many wives, there is always enough work to keep the relationship mutually beneficial for all.

Birth: *top*

Birth among the barbarians is considered something of a woman's secret. Men are not allowed in the tent where the woman is having a baby, with the exception of the Weaving Man. She is instead tended to by her family and healers. When pregnant Barbarian women continue working for as long as they are able, give birth, and return to their duties as soon as possible. Because of the harsh conditions the death rate of mother and child is high. A successful birth is greeted with joy, but no real ceremony. If the child is a girl, the women of the mother's family often give small gifts. If it is a boy, he is given some gifts, but in return the father must make some kind of offering to the tribe or at least to his family. The Weaving Man/Woman will give a blessing over the child and paint it with colored herbal pastes to grant it health, strength, luck, and wisdom.

Infants are carried in a type of sling by the mother until they can walk. This allows the woman to walk, gather plants, and tend to her various tasks without much interruption for the child hangs in easy reach of its mother's milk. The young barbarians are given a child's name, such as "Sun hair" or "river girl," until they mature. While young, children are immediately put to work on whatever tasks the mother tells them to do. At this young age, not much difference is made in tasks among the sexes until the child reaches the onset of puberty. Young barbarians begin their training as warriors, Naturalists, or craftsmen at the age of six.

Sometime during puberty the child's parents deem that he or she is ready. The child is then put through a series of tasks to prove they are adults. This usually occurs around the age of 15. A typical task for a young male would be to survive for a month in the wilderness with only the most basic of instruments. The boy must return not only unscathed, but with gifts for the tribe. Girls, too, are expected to survive for a month. However, they are given jerky, tools, and are left in a place of natural shelter. While on this quest of survival girls are expected to commune with the spirits of her deceased ancestors. These trials are usually held in the summer when food is plentiful and the child is not needed as much among the tribe. Usually a small group of youngsters undertake their tasks at the same time and sent in different directions. Therefore no more

than four boys and four girls may be on trial at one time. This group testing is more economical. When the girl's time is done, the Weaving Man/Woman interviews her to see if she has learned enough from the experience to be a woman. The boy's return is self-evident of his readiness. After this, the Weaving Man gives the new adult a new name. A celebration is then held to welcome the barbarian into adulthood, where the plainsman is again anointed with traditional paints that spiral along his or her body to protect and bless them in the trials of their adult life. Among the Children of the Black, the plainsman gets his first black tattoo; while Goblin Eaters have their eyebrow pierced. Vistarani men are given their own tent, usually lovingly made by the man's mother. White Stag members simply carry a ceremonial white-handled knife.

Death: *top*

Death is an expected part of the barbarian lifestyle. While not suicidal, barbarians do not fear death and will often rush to meet it in battle. They see death in battle as the most honorable and glorious way to die. It is common for tribesmen dying of some other, more natural cause, to go out on one last hunt or raid so that they might die in combat. Women, as they do not usually die violently, are not honored as men are upon their death. Still, their passing is noted. The living members of the tribe hold a ceremony to speed the deceased's spirit on its way. This usually occurs as soon as the body can be prepared.

As with birth, maturity, and marriage, the dead are painted with herbal pastes to guard their spirit from evil influences. Their body is wrapped in black hides, furs, or rugs (depending on the tribe) and the songs of death are performed. For men, ritual dances are also done to honor the man's brave deeds. As soon as these dances are finished the body is burned at some distance from the campsite.

For each person a principle mourner is appointed who will dress in black and is responsible for carrying the burden of mourning the person's passing. They do not speak for a month after the death and often fall into wild fits of grief. This person is the focus for the grief of the entire tribe. Other members are not expected to show any sadness after the dead person has been burned. Only the Black Man/Woman may demonstrate loss and suffering at the person's departure from Tyrra and is expected to honor the dead with violent displays. Pulling their hair out, cutting themselves, and screaming fits are common for this person. If a woman dies her mother or sister is usually the Black Woman unless she was the only wife of a man. In that case the husband takes the duty, but otherwise a man is supposed to stay strong for his other wives. If a man dies, his first wife is the Black Woman. If unwed his father or brother assumes the responsibility of remembering his passing. After the month of mourning, the Black Man/Woman returns to life as normal. It is assumed that this person has focused the distress of the entire tribe and expunged it through their displays. A month of this should, much like wringing water from a towel, expunge all the grief. No further sadness is ever shown.

Leisure: *top*

All barbarians live a harsh existence, but still they manage to make time for games. These are usually practical in purpose and almost always played by the young. They serve to make the youth stronger, faster, and better warriors. Because of this, the games are usually violent tests of skill and all males are expected to participate upon

reaching puberty. Females play a game called Kassit that is a cross between a memory game and chess, played with a number of different items. Barbarians stop playing games and start practicing in earnest in their mid twenties. Though this training is made into contests, it is serious and straight-forward. The older members of a tribe will often wage mock battles among bone figurines to hone their strategic abilities. This is a more realistic form of chess called Rithkander and is almost exclusively played by men.

The day-to-day activities of the barbarian lifestyle take up most of the tribe's time. Gathering and preparing food is a long process, as the game has to be brought in, skinned, and prepared, while the plants must be found and properly stored. Repairs to goods and homes are often needed, due to continuous traveling and weather. They take pride in the crafts they choose, often using what free time they have to create beautiful works. As with most aspects of barbarian life, even leisure time has uses.

To make up for this, there are many festival days in the barbarian calendar. Births, maturity, marriages, and deaths make up many of these holidays. The barbarians also celebrate different phases of nature, holding day-long ceremonies and dances to honor and bless planting, growing, and the harvesting of food. They celebrate a fine hunt, a victory, finding some marvel of nature, or any other blessing they see the land bestowing upon them. Festival days are usually declared the day before by the Weaver Man/Woman or the leader of the tribe. The next day is spent in preparation for the feast and dancing in the evening. The Weaver Man says blessings to the appropriate place and presides over the night. There is almost always a large bonfire accompanied by dancing and story-telling. Any directly involved in the ceremonies cover themselves in paint. All tribe members usually wear their finest clothes, showing off new jewelry and other accessories. These celebrations are fierce, as if the barbarians wish to shove as much enjoyment into their evening as they can. They return to work as normal the next day. It is very rare for any holiday to last more than that one night.

History: *top*

Barbarians have a long and detailed history. The Battle Plains were once home to eleven distinct tribes, but that number has shrunk considerably today. The Karani have always inhabited the Karani Plains on the border between Dyllaria and Emuria, and still do to this day although their population is on the decline. Most of these people are gone now, lost in the Goblins Wars and the Horde War. The barbarians keep the memory of the heroes of old alive through song and story, but often let the facts of history fade. Too practical to dwell on matters that are over and done with, they live in the present and see the past only as a forge which has shaped and made them stronger.

In all, these twelve tribes lived as they had lived for centuries. Considered by many to be the original inhabitants of the region, the barbarians viewed all others as encroachers on their land. Though mostly content to live in the plains, there still existed a distrust of outsiders. This distrust has even flared into battle between the tribes, as the different groups sought dominance or hunting grounds. They have also fought with Minotaurs for hunting territory for so long it is an unquestionable fact of life for the barbarians.

The eleven tribes in Dyllaria were the Angor, Badger, Bear, Bristlehead, Kitik, Ostrich, Snake, Unzol, Vistarani, White Stag, and Wyvern. In Emuria, there has always only been the Karani, a harsh and violent people who had broken from the others long

ago and lived separately. Of the original Dyllarian tribes, only the Vistaran and White Stag remain, while the Karani remain in Emuria as well. The survivors of the destroyed tribes either willingly or forcefully came together to form two new tribes, the Children of the Black and the Goblin Eaters. In keeping with the barbarian view of history, they have amalgamated their ways into their new tribes, keeping pride and honor in their new identity and forgetting the old.

The Unzol, Wyvern, and Bristlehead were the most ferocious, known as formidable fighters. Many of these warriors were kept in the Children of the Black. The Vistarani and Kitik were nomadic herdsmen with no interest in war or politics and for this reason the Vistarani survived. The Angor, Bear, Badger, Ostrich, Snake and White Stag tribes were hunters and gatherers. These tribes were often identified by the hides of the beasts whose name they took. The White Stag follow this today.

Life changed for the barbarians when the Overlord became interested in destroying the tribes. The Overlord had moved into the region, slain the retired warlord Kaas, and taken over his fortress. In about 530, he began to press his influence outward on the tribes. The Black Guard of the Overlord Tilicaf, so named because of their black armor and dark hearts, seemed to be inhuman in nature. They attacked and killed many of the tribes and captured large numbers to act as servants in the war. Many tribes succumbed to the Black Guard immediately, while others struggled to resist or fled from their attackers.

In 535 the barbarians warned the Dwarves about the Dark Army that was spreading through the land. During the Goblin Wars that followed the Kitik, Unzol, Bristlehead, and Badger tribes were completely slaughtered. Some fought on the side of Tilicaf through ignorance and fear, while others allied with Lord Garic and the Dwarves. After the Dark Army was annihilated in 554, the tribes returned to life as they had always known it. There were far less of them and two new tribes had emerged from the ashes of destruction. These were the Children of the Black, an amalgamation of tribes who fought for Tilicaf during the wars, and the Goblin Eaters, made up of stray survivors who held a mutual hatred for all Goblinoids.

When the Horde War swept across the plains many of the remaining tribes were again forced into the fray. The Children of the Black fought with Tilicaf, while the Goblin Eaters opposed him. During these wars, the Angor, Bear, Ostrich, Snake, and Wyvern tribes lost the last of their people. The barbarians are now trying to recover their lost numbers and return to their way of life. Those who survived see themselves as stronger and though they ache with the loss of so many of their brethren, they are resolved to move on and rebuild their new tribes as best they can.

The Karani in Emuria have a bloody history. Under a vicious leader known as Rengek, they mounted a number of attacks on the wild elves of the Trun Forest . The barbarians were driven back each time, but not without great loss to the elves. Trained in the arts of war by their repeated assaults on the Trun and by their wars with the Tarandok Dark Elves along the Khala River , the Karani came to be known as a strong and experienced (if a bit undisciplined) military force. When the armies of Cornelius attacked, the Karani met a force that was as seasoned as they were, but which had a much higher level of discipline and tactics. Those tribes that resisted were quickly broken. Those that remained either joined with Cornelius's forces or fled eastward into the Orcan Lowlands to take their chances against the Orcs. As the Imperial government broke

down many of the Karani in service to its army rebelled and won their freedom once again. The plainsmen that survived their rebellion have since returned home to the Karani Plains where they live as they always have.

Legends and Heroes: *top*

The barbarian tribes are rich with stories. They have created a story to explain just about everything they see in the world around them. There are also stories behind the hundreds of superstitions the barbarians have. Animals, rivers, and even mountains have their own voices. Respect is always shown to these beings, but the barbarians are never subservient and often prove themselves better than these creatures. In addition to stories about Tyrra each tribe has a stock of tales about their own heroes and legends among their people. Exceptional feats and victories are remembered in this way, creating a rich oral history. The Children of the Black and the Goblin Eaters do not have the same richness as the other, more traditional tribes. They have forgotten their own histories in their struggle to make a new identity for themselves. New narratives are beginning to spring up, while the old stories of the tribes these people once belonged to are fading.

Dayla White Stag: This woman was said to have the ability to speak to deer. She was a simple healer who often wandered about by herself. There was a man in the tribe who wished to marry her, but she said no because he was cruel. One day while wandering in the forest, she saved a deer from being butchered by this man. The deer shook itself and was revealed to be the White Stag revered by her tribe. The stag offered for Dayla to come with him in gratitude for her intervention. Thus Dayla became a deer herself and ran with the other does of the plains. Some deer are still caught today who have her peculiar green eyes.

Rengek of the Karani: Rengek was a great warrior and chieftain. He led his clansmen through the great Sheroc Pass and into the lands beyond where they encountered the vile and sneaky elves of the Trun Forest . The elves ambushed Rengek and he and his warriors killed many of the attackers before finally retreating back to the plains. Twenty years later in a bid for vengeance, Rengek again led an army into the Trun. The warlord set fire to the woods in many places and again many elves were slain, but this time Rengek was also killed. It is said that Rengek fought like ten men, sired over 200 children, and that he never lost in one-on-one combat. Stories passed down from the time of his death tell that to look into his eyes when he was angry was to look into the eyes of death.

Vhank of the Vistarani: This man thought himself a shrewd businessman. He often used his wits to cheat people out of their money and goods. Vhank is a recurring character in many stories, always using his wits to escape a situation, and is never portrayed as being completely honest. Vhank is said to have stolen the white from the raven, the hair from the frog's back, and various other tales that explain why animals appear the way they do.