

BARBARIAN



"I don't think you understand, Uthar," began Thomas. "It's a serious crime."

"Since when is congratulating a man on his wedding day a crime?" asked the Barbarian. Uthar tugged where his leg was still pinned to the ground. His friends, the Human Thomas, Thomas's Gypsy lover Rula and Eldwyn the Mystic Wood elf stood around him.

"Since you congratulated him by spitting in your hand before shaking his and since he is the Baron."

"I gave him some of my strength to carry with him on his wedding night. He should be grateful."

"He didn't seem grateful. He seemed upset."

"Well, he'll be grateful tonight. I mean did you see the Baron? He's scrawnier than an autumn leaf on fire. And that bride of his. She could scrape the stripes off a tiger. Shame to waste a woman like that on a boy. He'll need all the help he can get."

"Thomas, maybe Uthar should spit on your hand for tonight," laughed Rula.

Thomas' face turned red but Uthar laughed.

"You're not helping, Rula." He turned back to the Barbarian. "Uthar, that boy is probably looking for a magistrate to come and take your head off."

"Well, that's silly," said Uthar. "I didn't do anything wrong."

"Can you spit in my hand?" asked Eldwyn the Mystic Wood elf.

"How can you be so calm," Rula asked.

"I didn't do anything wrong. Also, when I woke up this morning there were two partridges nesting and no crows to be seen, and that's always a good omen. And did I say that I didn't do anything wrong?"

At that moment the Baron burst through the door with a magistrate in tow. The Baron could not have been any older than seventeen, with only a handful of whiskers on his face. That face was red with anger and pride.

"This is the – the Barbarian who manhandled me!" he said, thrusting an accusatory finger towards Uthar.

The magistrate was a kindly old Elf. He looked at the Barbarian over his spectacles.

"Who are you, young man," he asked.

"Uthar of the Clan of the Stag, son of Toral, son of Megher." Uthar thumped his chest at the name of his forebears with pride.

"Well, Uthar Toralson," said the magistrate, "the young Baron here says you assaulted him. That's a very serious charge. How say you?"

"I did not. I was merely congratulating him in the manner of my people."

"He spat on me!" said the Baron.

"Is this true?" asked the Elf.

"More or less. It was my gift to the young Baron and his bride," said the Barbarian in all earnestness.

"Insolence!" shouted the Baron.

"Your magistrate," interrupted Thomas, "I am Goodman Thomas, a subject of the Baron's. I would like to point out that Uthar certainly meant no disrespect to the Baron. He is a Barbarian and ignorant of our ways. But he is a friend of the Barony. Why, only last month he helped repel the invasion of undead orcs that plagues this very village. Many villagers owe their life to this Barbarian and love him as one of their own."

The import of Thomas' warning was not lost on the Elf, who nodded. The Duke, however, was not impressed.

"I want him whipped!"

"Young Baron," said the magistrate, "I do not think that a whipping is the appropriate penalty."

"Well, what is?"

"First, my lord, we must see if he bears remorse for his

actions. Young Uthar, son of Toral, do you understand what we've been talking about?"

"Honestly," said Uthar, "I wasn't really listening."

"That's quite all right. Just answer me true. Did you intend any harm or insult to the Baron?"

"Of course not!" Uthar laughed.

"Are you sorry you did what you did?"

"I sure am! The Baron didn't deserve it."

Rula and Eldwyn chuckled at Uthar's "apology". The Baron thought it sincere (and so did Uthar, but for other reasons). Thomas just shook his head.

"Very well," said the Elf, pleased with himself. "My lord, the Barbarian is clearly remorseful and intended no insult. I propose that a censure should bring an end to this affair."

Uthar looked to Thomas to explain what was being said. Thomas waved Uthar down. "Wait," he whispered.

The Baron studied the Barbarian. "Very well, but this is not the end of the affair."

Uthar found his leg free again. He stretched the muscles.

"Thank you, Baron. Thank you very much."

The Baron stalked off, muttering to himself. Uthar turned to Thomas.

"I told you the partridges would come through," he said patting Thomas on the back. "And you were good, too."

Rula stood up and took Uthar's arm.

"I think it would be wise if we maybe took a trip out of town for a while, said the Gypsy.

"Sounds good," said Uthar. "But first I have to congratulate the bride."

RACIAL BASICS

A Barbarian is an outlander in every sense of the word. The Barbarian never feels comfortable, never feels that he "belongs" anywhere, no matter where he might travel. Even out in the wilderness, where most Barbarians dwell, the Barbarian feels a stranger in an alien land. But more than simply feeling separated from the world, the Barbarians long to find a place where they can put down roots. It is these dual feelings of alienation and yearning that define the Barbarians and most distinguishes them from the other races.

This sense of not-quite-belonging is due to the fact that Barbarians are not from Fortannis; where they do come from is not known for certain, and different tribes have different legends about this. Some feel they come from another plane, some from another world on the same plane, some simply from a mysterious land 'far away.'

The Barbarians' sense of alienation is not merely a result of their social upbringing. It is an intrinsic part of their very natures. Even an orphaned Barbarian child raised amongst humans will feel alienated from her peers, and will long to find people who feel the same way and to find a place that will feel like home.

The Barbarian longing commits this race to a nomadic life. They cannot live in any one place for long. Soon, restlessness sets in and the compulsion to search for a better place, forces them to pack their belongings and move on. Barbarians live in the wilderness, but they are not of it and they are constantly searching for a place where they belong. Sometimes this behavior results in raiding other cultures, which gives the Barbarians a bit of a reputation in that occupation.

Often, nomadic Barbarians band together in "clans". They often name those clans after the animal with which they most closely identify. All of these customs are attempts by the Barbarians to find a place for themselves in this world.

Barbarians have an innate aversion to Celestial Magic, which is sometimes tied into their 'otherworldly' origin tales. This distaste does not manifest in physical pain, and it is even possible for Barbarians to learn to cast Celestial Magic, but such Barbarians are virtually unique.

For some Barbarians, this aversion to Celestial Magic turns into outright hatred. Some Barbarians compete to see who can destroy more Celestially based magic items. Other Barbarians understand that their aversion to Celestial magic is a problem with the Barbarians, not with Celestial magic.

Barbarians' thought processes are direct and focused, which tends to make it difficult to adapt fully to outside cultures or to learn how to read (since this is a rather abstract concept.) This focused type of intellect has its advantages, however. Barbarians can train their minds and steel themselves against any sort of unnatural fear, gaining the skill resist fear. Where others might lose their heads in terror, a Barbarian can generally stay calm, observe the situation strategically and then take direct action against the threat. Barbarians rarely panic and they rarely flee (although they will retreat when appropriate).

This peculiar mindset also explains the Barbarian predilection for unusual rituals and omens (what the other races might term "superstitions"). However, a Barbarian knows that these customs work. They are as effective as any so-called Celestial Magic and the fools who cannot see the truth of the matter are merely closed-minded cynics. Of course, there is no in-game benefit to following these superstitions. It is purely role-play.

Although a Barbarian visually appears no different than a Human, from the moment of birth, a Barbarian's skin is more durable than a Human's, granting the Barbarian an additional two Body Points. The Barbarian skin's coarseness also makes the Barbarian more resistant to the elements. This resistance can actually be encouraged through application of the Barbarian's formidable will, to allow the Barbarian to resist even magical elemental attacks in the form of the skill resist element.



COSTUMING

The costume requirement for a Barbarian is a bit difficult to explain; it should look 'barbaric.' Most Barbarians prefer to wear rough animal skins and leather, but even if they wear silks, they will create a garment that is dramatically wild in appearance; good ideas can be found from researching the Mongols, Norse, Huns, Gauls, Cossacks, and Picts. Much of the specific flavor will rely upon your local chapter's decisions about the tribes in the area.

Although the Barbarians have unnatural resistance to the elements, they still dress appropriately for the weather because even the Barbarian's heartiness has its limits. Many male Barbarians prefer long hair and beards. Females often braid their hair. However, this is not always the case and your Campaign race packet should describe the specific cultural costumes appropriate for Barbarians.

ROLE-PLAYING

Barbarians are unhindered by any sense of propriety or fear. They should be role-played as the ultimate paragons of confidence and pride. This does not mean they are necessarily boastful (although some are). They have no need to brag because they know what they can do and they don't care if other people recognize it or not. They don't care what others think of them.

This does not mean that Barbarians are anti-social. On the contrary, Barbarians long to feel accepted in a group. Many of them seek out the companionship of other races and make strong friendships with them. However, no matter how close a Barbarian becomes with any individual (even another Barbarian),

the Barbarian will never truly feel comfortable in any one place.

The essence of playing a Barbarian is to not fit in with non-Barbarians. Be obvious. Be very obvious. This doesn't mean the Barbarian should act rashly or foolishly. Barbarians are 'uncivilized' but they are not stupid. A Barbarian is always trying to make wherever she currently is her home and thus she will always act as if the spot where she stands is hers.

The Barbarian should always act uncivilized. The very concept of complex civilization is alien and incomprehensible. It is this behavior, more than the clothing, that distinguishes a Barbarian from a Human. Barbarians have little patience for complicated social niceties and protocols. They tend to speak plainly and directly. More sensitive races might think of the Barbarians' demeanor as insulting or presumptuous, but Barbarians tend to regard such foolishness with contempt.

One of the central role-playing aspects of Barbarians is their "superstitions". You should feel free to make up your own. However, as important as the details of the superstitions are, even more important is the Barbarians' attitude. A Barbarian does not fear a bad omen although he is instilled with additional confidence by the fulfillment of an auspicious omen or ritual. The Barbarians' so-called superstitions are not a weakness; they are a source of strength and should be played as such. The Barbarian should act out his superstitions and rituals with such bravado, with such utter self-assurance that the other players will wonder if perhaps they shouldn't join in as well.

Of course, the most important part to playing a Barbarian is to have fun, in game and out of game. Barbarians love to enjoy life. Death is not an end to a Barbarian; it is only a trip to the next world, perhaps a world where the Barbarian can finally find a home.