



BARBARIAN REGIONAL PACKET

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Wild, uncivilized brutes little better than the beasts of the woods; roam the wilds of Jhoril. At least that's what the civilized folk believe. Yet the barbarians of Jhoril have one of the oldest, richest cultures among the nations. Once scattered clans throughout the land, the barbarians of Jhoril have since consolidated themselves into a single tribe. The barbarians are a diverse group that almost constantly war among themselves. Despite this the barbarians feel a closer bond of kinship to each other than they ever could with any "civilized" people.

Barbarians often live mere miles from their sophisticated betters. They have as much or as little contact with civilized society as they wish. Some choose to remain aloof, sometimes only seeing a Freilan trading family once or twice a year, subsisting off of hunting and gathering or selling furs and carved bone and wood. Others are more hostile, waging war on not only other nearby tribes but towns and villages as well. Many regional leaders disapprove of the barbarians, who contest their ownership of the land, a concept the Free People do not recognize.

Barbarians band together in clans that follow the teachings of a specific spirit. Animal spirits are the most common totems though nature spirits can be found as well. Each totem has certain traits and lessons that he or she favors. They also have a particular trait or circumstance that they abhor, known as a taboo or ban. The spirit looks after the clan as long as they follow its teachings and taboo. The clans vary from region to region and it is not uncommon to find similar clans living in different areas. The more popular spirits look after numerous clans. When similar clans meet they fight for dominance and the losing clan is assimilated into the victors clan. The most populous totems are wolf, bear, elk, wind, ice, storm and hawk. Other totems include raven, snake, river, lynx, and mist. These are not the only totems out there, simply some of the ones that are better known or more frequently seen.

COYOTE AND TURTLE

Coyote wandered the vast of the universe feeling lonely. As he was passing by Moon she asked why he looked so sad. He told her how lonely and boring it was wandering the universe. She wisely suggested he look for something to do with his time then. Coyote thought for a while and went to see Mole. He convinced Mole to make a bet with him for a bit of dirt and won. Next he went to see Salmon and convinced him to make a bet with him for a splash of water, which took some doing. He won again and went away with his prize. He looked to Albatross next and bet him for a puff of air. He looked around for a good place to make his creation but got very tired. Turtle was passing nearby and Coyote winningly asked him for a short ride. Turtle saw that Coyote was small and agreed, continuing on his path. Coyote gleefully worked on his project while the patient Turtle plodded on. After a while Coyote finished and watched his creation proudly for a while. When nothing interesting happened he became bored and hopped off without telling Turtle. Turtle continued on his path and Sun and Moon happened to see the ball of earth, water, and air Coyote created on his back. Sun smiled gently and plants grew in profusion. Moon fetched Coyote and chided him for abandoning his creation. She made man to amuse Coyote but bid him and the rest of the spirits to look after her new children.

THE TEACHINGS OF THE SPIRITS

WOLF

Wolf teaches his clans faithfulness, sagacity, and steadfastness. He teaches total loyalty to the community but also maintaining individual identity. He teaches balance, cunning, and ferocity in defense of pack. Wolf's children are forbidden to abandon family or friends in need. Some wolf clans are the Redclaw Clan and the Blackfang Clan.

BEAR

Bear teaches his clans wisdom, leadership and healing. Bear is known for his connection to the spirits of the land. Introspection is encouraged and some of the best shamans come from Bear's embrace. Bear bids his children to never refuse healing to those in need unless they are dire enemies. Some of Bear's clans are the Mateskah Clan and the Burrpaw Clan.

ELK

Elk teaches his clans stamina, strength, and nobility of spirit. He encourages his followers to pace themselves. Most Elk tribes carry themselves with a quiet dignity and their words are often heeded with deference. Elk expects that his children will show respect to those of all walks of life. Elk's children often have the most cordial relationships with the civilized world. Elk's clans include the Velvethorn Clan and the Fleetfoot Clan

WIND

Wind teaches his clans flexibility, spontaneity, and intuition. Wind's children wander wherever the wind leads them and almost never put down roots. Wind teaches an appreciation for the chaos inherent in life and a curiosity for what is over the next horizon. Wind prefers that his children never follow any rules but the urgings of their own hearts. Wind's children include the Wayfarers Clan and the Whitewind Clan.

ICE

Ice teaches his clans clarity, level-headedness, and order. Ice loves the beauty of perfection and drives his clans to excel at whatever they seek to accomplish. Possessing a brilliant intelligence, Ice's children sometimes seem coldhearted and indifferent towards the plight of others when seeking to achieve their own goals. Ice dislikes displays of emotion and commands his children to steel themselves against displaying strong emotions. Ice's clans include the Frostshard Clan and the Iaodin Clan.

STORM

Storm teaches authority, passion, and change. Storm's children are known for their forceful opinions and sometimes hotheaded impetuosity. Never doing anything by halves, Storm encourages the chaos they often bring with them. Storm demands that his children never hold in their anger and never hesitate to wreak havoc. Change is necessary to promote growth. Storm's clans include Thunderscry Clan and the Darktide Clan.

HAWK

Hawk teaches guardianship, clear-sightedness, and courage. Hawk's children often act as messengers. Hawk's children pride themselves on their ability to move quickly and quietly, missing no details in their surroundings, and unafraid of what stands before them. Hawk trusts

his clans to never give in to cowardice. Hawk's clans include the Swiftwing Clan and the Redfeather Clan.

RAVEN

Raven is associated with mystery, death, and transition. Raven's children often appear as they are not. Seemingly boisterous and superficial, Raven is also the keeper of secrets and teaches his children the value of silence and reflection. Some of Raven's children are rumored to serve Death. Raven bids his children to never tell a secret unless absolutely necessary and to leave him small offerings of shiny objects from time to time. Raven's tribes include the Sootfeather Clan and the Brighteye Clan.

SUN'S CHILDREN

Sun looked upon Coyote's creation and saw Moon's children and became jealous. He decided to make children for himself and asked each of the spirits for advice. Peacock advised him to make them beautiful. Owl to give them wisdom, Panther to give them grace, and Griffon advised him to give them diversity. He took all their advice and created the Nunnehi. Earth saw the Nunnehi and also grew jealous so he decided to make children too. He asked around for advice from the other spirits. Lion suggested he make them strong. Badger told Earth to make them stubborn, and Dog told him to make them loyal. Earth created his children and called them Firbolg. Wind and Water also grew jealous and wanted to make even better children of their own. They agreed to work together to make an even better scion than Moon, Sun or Earth had. They traveled far and wide to ask for advice. Fox suggested they make them cunning. Camel told them to make their children tireless and Monkey bade them give them the gift of curiosity. Hence were the Freilan created. Eventually Fire created the Drakkon. But that is another story, young one.

HISTORY

The Free people are the original great human nation. Before the Tærus Empire was even a kingdom, before the Dun had established their great cities, barbarians roamed the lands of Jhoril freely. Following the herds, hunting and gathering just enough to live well off of, the barbarians lived fairly peacefully with the Sidhe and Firbolg. Over time people settled and began to build towns and cities, cutting down swaths of forest for building and farming. Eventually the villages grew to towns, and the towns grew to cities. Cities became kingdoms and kingdoms began to expand. The barbarians watched in contempt as those who once understood and knew how to live with the land abandoned it. Even as the new kingdoms warred for land and power among the other races, the barbarians began its millennia long war with the civilized world.

The tribes were scattered back then and had no guardian spirits to watch over them. They often fought as fiercely with each other as with their mutual foes. Their territory shrinking, they fell upon each other for land to travel and live off of. Eventually the animal spirits the barbarians had lived with for so long took a hand in the matter. They would look after and teach the barbarians tricks to survive in the changing world. In return the barbarians would always respect the land and nature and keep to the old ways. There were four tribes back then, each quite populous though often scattered over large territories. Each tribe became adopted by a certain totem. Wolf, Bear, Raven and Hawk were the first totems. Treaties were made and uneasy truces forced by the totems allowed the barbarians to keep from annihilating each other.

Things continued in this vein for some time. Without any overall leadership other than the wisdom and advice tendered by the totems the tribes were pushed to the fringes of society. Constantly fighting for survival against the goblane and trolls, fighting against the civilized kingdoms who sought to take what land they had, and fighting against their neighboring tribes who held to different views forced the barbarians to become tough, self-reliant, survivalists with a strong mistrust of the civilized folk. Unfortunately there was much distrust among each other as well.

Still life was often peaceful and fulfilling among the spirits of the land and it was not until a quarter of a century before the Grand Convocation that the Free people were truly thrown into turmoil. It was at this time that the near genocide of the Wolf Tribe occurred. A series of lightning fast, incredibly brutal attacks by an unknown force decimated the Wolf Tribe, wiping out over three fourths of the tribe. At the time all evidence pointed to the forces of the sidhe Prince By-Tor as having been responsible for the attack. The barbarians in the area reacted violently and began a guerilla war against By-Tor's forces and the jointly held settlement of Alejandro's Ridge.

Two years later Tyee of the Bear Tribe slowly gained a reputation as a charismatic leader among the barbarians. Within the year he became the first person in the Free People's history to unite the barbarians under one leader. A year later Tyee ended the warring against By-Tor and in a complete reversal brought the united Free People to Prince By-Tor's banner in his battle against the King's forces. Prince By-Tor, leading forces comprised of his own sidhe troops, the Barbarians, companies from Dun Haventhal, and Fflor mercenaries decimated the King's forces and peace was once more restored, though tragically only for a short time.

The Shadow War began twenty one years before the New Era. Four years into the Shadow Wars Tyee was killed in a large engagement between one of the Shadow Prince's Darkened and Elemental armies and a combined force of Dun, Sidhe, and Barbarians. The Barbarian people began to fragment back into their separate tribes, held together only by the

efforts of Vlad of the Hawk Tribe. The Alliance of Light was formed and the barbarian people joined under the joint leadership of Snow Dog, one of the last remaining members of the Wolf Tribe, and Vlad. Fourteen years later the final battle was joined against the Shadow Prince. Snow Dog called upon Wolf himself to avenge his lost children and sacrificed himself to allow the destruction of the Shadow Prince.

The land was decimated by the Shadow Wars and most of the lands conquered by the Shadow Prince and his forces remained tainted and inhabited by all manner of monsters. At the Grand Convocation held in 0 NE the firbolg stepped forward and become the guardians of the borders to the Wastelands, as the tainted land became known. The barbarian people, no longer held by the charismatic force of Tyee, fragmented once more into three much subdued tribes, with the scattered remnants of the Wolf Tribe struggling to survive. The following hundred years were hard ones for the Free People. With the formation of the Wastelands, wild untamed nature reclaimed many fallen villages and even greedily ate at the edges of those civilized cities still standing unharmed. Yet even outside the Wastelands more monsters than ever before roamed the land. Inside the Wastelands was a constant struggle for survival and only the bravest of the Free People endeavored to do so.

Scattered and broken, despite the world's victory against the Shadow Prince and the Darkened, the barbarian people almost disappeared into the annals of Jhoril's history at that point. Fortunately one who would become the greatest shaman in the Free People's history was born almost two hundred years after the new era. Achak Qaletqa took thirty years to fully gain his powers as a druid. His greatest achievement was two-fold in changing the Free people. He convinced the three barbarian tribes to become one great tribe consisting of many smaller clans. He then petitioned the great spirits of nature. He eloquently convinced the three great spirits that they alone could no longer look out for the welfare of all the barbarian people. Instead the people would continue to hold up their end of the ancient pact, but should be allowed to petition any of the spirits of nature for guidance and teaching. From his efforts the current clan system and way of life for the barbarian people was born.

BEAVER AND STORM'S MISTAKE

Beaver was admiring his dam one day when a man happened by. He asked Beaver how he managed to create such a wondrous abode and Beaver blushing told the man his secret of building. Discontent with always having to move around to gather and hunt food, the man began to construct his own abodes of wood and mud. Other men, discontent with the old ways joined him. The Elders warned them of their folly, that Man was not meant to steal Beaver's secret. The men ignored them. Soon afterwards one of the men saw Storm attempting to hit Coyote, who annoyed him with yet another of his pranks. Where Storm's wrath hit fire blossomed and ate at the plants. The man admiringly asked Storm how he managed to focus his anger so stunningly. Storm was wary at first but warmed up to him as the man commiserated with him about the latest trick Coyote had pulled on himself. Sadly the man concluded he had no wonderful means of venting his anger as Storm. Storm, bragging of his prowess, told the Man of the secret of fire. The Man told the rest of his people the secret and the numbers of Men who lived in the abodes stolen from Beaver increased.

THE OLD WAY

Barbarians try to live in harmony with the land. Unlike the digewi asgaya , the blind men (the Free People's term for the civilized world), the Free People live with the land, they do not try to subjugate the land to their will. Barbarians have a very close relationship with the spirits of the land. Every creature, every plant, every rock has a spirit. The barbarians live in balance with the spirits of the land. If an offense is committed, an animal killed, a tree cut down, or a river spirit affronted, then balance must be restored and amends offered. Once the liable party has accepted their responsibility and the cost been paid balance is restored and the affront forgotten.

The belief in balance does not mean that the Free People must live in complete seclusion, unable to harvest even the smallest plant. It is part of the natural cycle that the land is meant to nurture life. Everything has a place, prey animals for food and leather, plants for food and alchemy, the free people to benefit from the fruits of the earth. As long a proper thanks is offered to the spirits for fulfilling their path, then mutual respect has been maintained and the balance kept. Only what is needed to live comfortably is taken and respect for the land is maintained. This is the old way as has been taught by the elders.

The Free people live as hunters and gatherers. Few clans live sedentary lives. Most choose to live in defined territories but all move around to a certain degree. Some, like the Wind Clans, travel extensively. They trade furs, carved bone and horn, and leathers for vegetables, grains, and worked metal. Meat makes up the majority of the barbarians diet with a healthy spattering of fruits and bread thrown in. Simple fare is best appreciated though herbs are often used to spice up dishes.

MOON'S CURSE

Moon was watching Coyote's creation when she noticed something odd happening to a section of the woods. Some of her children were cutting down the woods, ignoring the cries of the Oak and Pine who they were killing. Moon watched in horror as they continued obliviously in their building and clearing to make fields to plant seeds in. She turned away in tears and saw others of her children following the old ways still. She came to the Elders and blessed them for keeping to the old ways. Those who turned from the old ways she cursed to lose their connection to the land, to no longer see the beauty of the spirit ways. They shall be hunted by the skinchangers, the first children of Moon and Sun. They continued in their building, blind to the true world around them and the grieving mother they abandoned in favor of comfort.

THE FREE PEOPLE AND THE DIGEWI ASGAYA

Barbarians have long waged war among each other. The spirits can be as capricious as any human and bickering among the spirits is common. This bleeds over into their children who tend to take up their quarrels in addition to testing the strength and courage of neighboring clans. Usually the fighting, while fierce at times, is usually on friendly terms, much like sibling rivalry. Possessions may be taken, lives may taken, but never atrocities committed. Single combats between champion warriors and mages of the clans often occur with the best being heralded throughout the nearby clans for his or her prowess.

When the barbarians raid against the villages and towns of the civilized world, it is a much different matter. The digewi presume to own the land, to crush the life from it and shape its dead carcass to their will. They take and take, but do not give respect to the spirits. As such, the balance of the old way is lost and in order to restore harmony the barbarians seek to free the spirits stuck wandering the world due to the abandonment of the old ways. It is believed that the murdered spirit is forced to wander the earth, unable to continue along the wheel of creation. The death of the killer or one of his relatives restores balance by freeing the innocent spirit, allowing it to return to the wheel of the cycle. That is why it does not matter who paid the cost for the act of the wrongful killing. Any death from the responsible town, since obviously each town is a sort of clan, suffices to free the innocent spirit.

To most of the digewi, one barbarian is the same as another, but not all the clans wage war on their civilized neighbors. Storm, Wolf, and Ice clans are the most fervent believers that civilized folk need to pay for their transgressions against the land. Some like Wind and Hawk vary from clan to clan in their opinions. Others such as Elk, Bear, and Raven understand that the Free People's way is not the only way. The digewi asgaya are not called the blind men for nothing. They do not acknowledge the spirits of the land. As such it is futile to attempt to punish them for crimes they don't even understand they committed. Moreover, these clans understand that not all digewi are alike. The sidhe, called nunnehi by the Free People, have a much better understanding of the ways of the land than most civilized folk. Particularly the dryads and satyrs, who are often as fiercely protective of the land under their protection as even the most fanatical Storm clansman could wish. The Firbolg bear a similarly strong connection to the rocks and the earth that the People who follow Mountain often wonder at.

Raven's Curiosity

Raven was flying in the forest one day when he saw a body lying on the ground. Curious, he landed and hopped over. Tipping his head from side to side he saw it was a dead Man, staring blankly upwards with a dagger sticking out of his chest. The Man wore plain travelers clothing but had a rich gold necklace with an eye on it and a ring inscribed with runes. Raven stared and pondered the Man. His curiosity ate at him for he wanted to know the Man's story. A black robed figure wandered up. Raven looked at Death and asked him if he knew why the Man wore what he did and how he died. Death chuckled and told Raven he would help him find out the story if Raven would promise two things. Raven must give some of his children to Death's service, and he must never tell the secrets Death revealed unless he had no other choice. For a long Raven contemplated the Man. Finally he agreed. Death bade him to eat one of the Man's eyes and his curiosity would be fulfilled.

THE RAVEN TRIBE

The Raven Tribe has long held one of the best kept secrets in Jhoril. While it has long been rumored that the Raven Tribe has some connection to Death little is known beyond that. Even the majority of the Raven Tribe knows nothing of the true relationship between the two. Those of the Raven Tribe who serve Death are chosen from the doyen of the tribe. Doyen are those barbarians who have passed the test of youth and are respected as adults. They are watched by the nakoya kanega or death speakers, those who serve Death. If one of the doyen proves himself to be capable and of interest and proves himself to the satisfaction of the nakoya kanega then he is initiated into the nakoya kanega. For the most part the nakoya kanega live normal lives, yet they often disappear from time to time, presumably carrying out their services to Death. Any absences or strange behavior is never questioned by the Raven clan who see it as their duty to aid the nakoya kanega with unquestioning dedication.

SHADOW'S REVENGE

Moon was watching over her children when she saw something that alarmed her. Wolf and some of her children who followed him, were desperately fighting against a Dark being, formed of malice and Shadow. Moon watched as all but one of those children fell and finally the creature was defeated by Wolf and the remaining Man. Wolf approached Shadow and asked why he had created a child with such hate. Shadow simply laughed and disappeared. Some time later she noticed that Hawk and some of her children with him were assaulted by similar beings. Moon herself approached Shadow and demanded he stop his children. Shadow told her that Coyote had played a trick on him and in revenge Shadow wanted to destroy Coyote's creation. Shadow attacked Moon without warning and attempted to consume all of her light. Sun saw what was happening and banished Shadow to a land he could make all his own so he could not seek revenge on Coyote. Shadow railed at being denied access to Coyote's creation and swore that he would never stop until he had destroyed Coyote's creation.

RANGERS AND DRUIDS

There are those of the woods who not only serve the land, but serve the people as well. While many of the Rangers come from the barbarian people there are also many who come from the lands of 'civilization'. Rangers understand the land and help protect its people, all people, from the dangers that reside in the wilds. They serve as scouts, guards, guides, and hunters. They strive to spread awareness and respect for the land and tend to its needs. They also fight against goblane, darkened, and the other monsters that threaten Jhoril's people. Since they are pledged to protect everyone the Rangers remain neutral when warfare tears apart the land. Rangers are taught by other Rangers and by the spirits. They are guided by the Druids. Little is known about Druids other than they tend more towards the spiritual needs of the land and its people and guide the Rangers in their tasks.

Moon's Solution

Shadow continued to send his children through the cracks in Sun's light. His children continued to kill the children on Coyote's creation. Moon looked around and found that not only were her true children being killed but the hives of her children who had abandoned her were also being destroyed. She went to her children and sought those who would step forward and fight to protect their kin. She then went to Wolf, Bear, Hawk, and Raven and asked them if they would lend their aid to those of Man who were brave enough to help protect her children. They agreed. To her surprise even some from one of the destroyed cities found her and asked for her guidance in aiding their kin. Gladly she welcomed them back to her fold and commanded that all who would serve her thus must guard not only the land, as the old ways decreed, but also her children, even those who were lost to her, for even they might once more find her light.

THE BARBARIAN REGION FOR NON-HUMANS

The Nunnehi are those Sidhe who reside among the Barbarians. They come in all shapes and forms but all have a deep respect and understanding of the land. Most clothe themselves in furs and leathers and abide in joint clans with their human brethren, following their traditions. As such most barbarians refer to all Sidhe as Nunnehi.

Firbolg can occasionally be found in the Barbarian clans. While barbarians, especially rangers, often join the Firbolg fighting in the borderlands, it is a rare Firbolg who abandons their duty to join the clans. Those who do tend to join the more militaristic clans such as Storm and Wolf.

Freilan are often welcomed among the clans. Wind in particular often adopts Freilan families. Freilan often join the clans to gain the greater sense of community and family that it provides.

The Drakkon can easily find a home among the Free People. Like the Firbolg they tend to gravitate towards the more militaristic clans, indeed there are rumors of a barbarian clan comprised entirely of Drakkon who follow Dragon.