

# The Avariel

## Background

### People

Physically, the Avariel are taller than humans and somewhat less heavily built, this is not surprising they are actually of Elven descent. The average 6'4 to 7' tall and weigh between 140 and 180 lbs. They have male and female sexes, although both fight equally well and share equally in authority.

The wingspan of an Avariel is roughly 4 times his height. They are able to close their wings down to the width of their bodies, but they project as much as a foot above the Avariel's head when closed and extend to just below the knees. Because of the wings, Avariel never sit or lie on their backs. They prefer to squat and only the oldest Of Avariel would own a stool.

### History

The history of the Avariel is not shared with outsiders, although Avariel know it very well. At the time of the Change, the leaders of the Elven people realized that the forests were turning against them and the vast majority of Elves journeyed to far-off lands and plains hoping to escape the Change. A few Elves remained however, including a handful of powerful magicians. They studied the Change in earnest, determined that their race should not leave the world and that perhaps they would again dominate the humans. NO one is Sure which magician first thought of it, but they determined to harness the power Of the Change to give them wings. It was felt that mountainous regions would be likely to have vegetation they were familiar with and that they would be able to hold those locations.

Unfortunately, the Elves were not quick enough; slow to reproduce, it took them many years to harness the magic and make the Change work for them. By the time they were ready, the Marotians had already taken the mesas and flats they had thought would be theirs. Instead, they were forced to take places higher in the mountains, in the steepest sections where no human could travel.

Although they felt they had been usurped by the humans, the Avariel did not despair, for they were masters of the air and would one day grow to sufficient numbers to subjugate the humans to their will. The first airship changed that, as it proved the Marotians could master the sky as well. The Avariel were taken aback as once again they were beaten to the punch by the feeble Marotians.

At that time, the greatest of their priests received a visit from a priest of the new god Avernus. He spoke of the Change and of the coming of the Avariel and he foretold that they should raise a mighty army that they might one day smite their enemies. The Avariel, aware of the impact of their earlier slow responses, leapt to the challenge and so their society was reborn.

Although they had always been more militant than their Elven ancestors, the Avariel now took up arms with a direction and purpose like never before. Their whole society restructured over a period of about forty years. They are now a militaristic society working towards a single goal: World Domination.

### Culture

The Avariel are the most martial of the civilized peoples, living in a Spartan society. They are constantly at war with the Zakot and other airborne predators, and fighting skills and prowess at arms are the most important measures of success in their society. This is caused by the difficulty of their living conditions and by their certain knowledge that Avernus will one day call for them to go to war

Their diet forces them to visit the canopy often, and they gather leaves and fruit there and also hunt. This puts them in contention with the Zakot, who are essentially forced to do the same, and with the Marotians, who object to the eating of green plants. Likewise, their natural terrain, the high mountains, is a spot the Zakot fancy for themselves. The Zakot are the chief enemy Of the Avariel, and the two races war openly; all other enemies pale in comparison (at least they do until the Time of Reckoning).

Freedom is a key issue for the Avariel and they do not take well to being confined either physically or mentally. The word Of an Avariel is his bond, but it is not given lightly for it means a loss of freedom. Likewise, the Avariel despise being in Marotian towns or even in the middle of the canopy. As a rule, if an Avariel can't see the sky, he's uncomfortable.

Perhaps the strangest thing about Avariel culture is the absence of the concept of mother and father as specific individuals. All Avariel children are raised together in a single community nursery/school, and they rarely (if ever) know the names of their actual parents. Likewise, parents rarely pay particular attention to their own children. This approach helps to standardize the parenting of Avariel and to make the adults more similar in demeanor and attitude than in most other races.

## Government

The Avariel have essentially a military-style government although they title their leader King. Each settlement will have a general and several other officers who run that settlement. Every Avariel is very clear on his exact position in Avariel society, since they actually hold a military rank of some kind. Even the few Avariel who do not fight hold rank and are still considered part of the army.

The general and his key officers are nearly always priests of Avernus, although sometimes a particularly capable warrior or mage can seize power. The Avariel make good use of their wings, and their central government is the best informed and has the best command and control structure of any on Torok.

## Settlements

Most Avariel settlements are built in caves near the tallest and steepest mountains. The size of a settlement will vary from about 20 to 100, depending on food and shelter. Avariel settlements are led by a general and his officers. The settlements are rigidly organized and carefully structured. The citizens are all aware of defense plans and assignments and attacking an Avariel settlement usually brings swift and sure death.

There are a few Avariel settlements located on the ground or in the trees, but these are smaller than normal and usually do not have any children of their own to care for. These war settlements are made to secure positions and to establish the right Of Avariel to claim land on the floor or in the canopy.

## Technology

The Avariel, like their Elven ancestors, are not great believers in worldly possessions and, as a result, they are well behind the technological curve. There are few, if any, Avariel inventors; they prefer not to rely on created items, instead preferring to hone their own skills and to do things manually. Avariel believe that too much reliance on tools is one of the causes of the Marotians decline.

Within their settlements, there is little technology in use. Most Avariel make their homes comfortable, with plenty of pillows and blankets, but they do not use stools (they prefer to squat) and they do not believe in using complicated machines to do things they could easily do themselves (regardless of the amount of time they might save).

The only exception is in weaponry. The Avariel are fond of new weapons as they recognize the potential advantages of being better armed than their opponents. They have not yet embraced the smoke powder weapons, which they consider clumsy and unreliable, but they are masters of the bow and of most other weapons. Like the Marotians, they prefer lighter weapons.

## Arts

Avariel do not waste their time on the artistic pursuits common to other races. For them, the only art is a well-fought battle or a functional sword. They consider great art to be something that kills an enemy well and quickly. They tend not to see value in artistic pursuits, even music, and frequently scoff at those who disagree with them.

## Leisure and Recreation

All Avariel activities are geared towards war and fighting. The games they play are usually physical and involve the application of combat or flight skills. They enjoy games like Follow the Leader, Tag, and Mock Combat. They play

other games only if they perceive a clear military application for the skills involved. They do not respect those who play games or who spend too much time engaged in idle activities.

Generally Avariel prefer games which test their personal skills to those which rely on the efforts of a group. The sole exceptions to this are military exercises and precision flying contests. These two see team events as well as individual competitions.

## Fashion

Fashion for an Avariel is generally a well-pressed uniform and cunningly made weapons. Most Avariel encountered by other races wear clothing similar in appearance to that worn by Marotians but adapted for the unique Avariel physique. They do not wear uniforms in public (unless known to be guards) and they try to blend in as much as possible.

Most Avariel consider it good fashion to wear a necklace or bracelet with your rank and unit designation on it. For non-Marotians, the information is practically worthless, since no Avariel will explain what the symbols mean.

## Polities

Internally, the Avariel are a very well-organized and disciplined group. Lawlessness is virtually unknown, and Avariel leaders lead well in pursuit of their goals. Individual Avariel, while intensely proud of their own achievements and fiercely competitive will nearly always set aside personal goals to pursue those of the group.

To the world, the Avariel present themselves as a ready source of disciplined crewmen, guards and soldiers. Few realize the true goal of Avariel — world domination. Many of the Avariel working with Marotian airships and near Marotian towns are actually spies for the Avariel army. They provide intelligence regarding Marotian capabilities and goals and work hard to insure that the Marotians complete very few of their grandest plans.

## Societies, Orders & Groups

Within the ranks of the Avariel, there are three groups. The vast majority of Avariel are good citizens and soldiers who basically follow the orders of their commanders. They believe that the Time of Reckoning has not yet come, but that it will. They do not push hard in any direction, satisfied that the status quo is working.

The largest minority group within the Avariel are the hawks who claim between 10 and 15% of all Avariel. These soldiers believe that the Time of Reckoning is upon them (or perhaps overdue). They constantly attempt to stir the pot between Marotians and Avariel. Many hawks find themselves drawn into secret groups which carry out terrorist attacks against Marotian targets. Most of these groups are known to the leaders Of the Avariel and some are even secretly supported by sympathetic officers.

The least numerous group within the Avariel are the doves who comprise less than 5% of all Avariel. They believe that the Avariel and Marotians can and must co-exist. They counsel that the Time of Reckoning is a myth and that Avernus either never foretold it or that the foretelling has been flawed. Dove groups are usually very vocal, and they work hard to establish good relations between the Avariel and the Marotians. Overall, the doves are well-connected and provide the Avariel with much more information about the Marotians than they would otherwise have.

## Religion

The Avariel worship the God Avernus whom they believe was spawned by the gods to lead the others into the ways of the Changed world. They believe that one day they will be numerous enough to supplant the Marotians and the dwarves and then they will rule. Until then, they must destroy the Zakot who threaten their homeland. Although not an especially spiritual culture, most Avariel will invoke the name of Avernus when swearing an oath.

## Passages

Avariel are not as concerned with the passage of time as many other races; likewise, they are less concerned with random events (such as birth) than with choices. Consequently, birthdays are unknown to them, and they concentrate their observances on other passages:

**Adulthood** — Avariel become adults at the age of 16. On this same day, they are assigned to a unit and made members of the regular army. The first day of Adulthood is exciting, as the young Avariel is given all the equipment he needs to become an effective soldier.

**First Kill** — Avariel celebrate the memory of the first enemy they kill in battle annually. They drink toasts to their enemies and thank them for the opportunity to test their mettle.

**Best Kill** — This day changes as Avariel get Older, but it is the day they killed the most powerful enemy or participated in the most challenging battle in their lives. It is celebrated with toasts to the fallen enemy and prayers to Avernus that many more should join this one.

## Playing an Avariel Character

### Common Roles

Avariel characters make great spies and couriers and are often called into such roles by adventuring parties. They are also good warriors and fighters, easily able to hold their own in outdoor combat. They can make excellent war leaders but are not as good at more loosely defined positions; a group of adventurers led by an Avariel would come to resemble an army in discipline and tactics if the Avariel is given the chance to establish their procedures.

### Adventuring Archetypes

Like the members of any race, Avariel adventure for many reasons, but a few Of the most common reasons are listed below:

**Political Outcast** — some Avariel, especially those with strong allegiances to either the hawk or dove viewpoint find themselves forced to leave their home settlements. In most cases, these individuals will be rejected by other Avariel, but some of them band together to form independent cells with their own political agenda.

**Brash Youth** — the brash youth resents authority and has left the Avariel with the intention of proving his own worth without all the discipline of his fellows. Brash youth almost always mature into a different type of character.

**Spy** — many Avariel adventure among Marotians simply to gather information about them for the Time of Reckoning. Sometimes they are actually assigned this task to report their findings to a superior officer; other times, the mission is more personal, and they seek to understand their enemies.

**Mercenary** — some Avariel find themselves drawn to the easy life-style and quick rewards of Marotia. Advancement in Avariel society tends to be slow and is based largely on military prowess. Those who wish to have things more quickly or whose skills are less martial in nature Often leave their own homes to enjoy the pleasures of the easy life.

### Role-Playing Hints

Avariel like to fight and they are prone to decide things with force. They do not necessarily come to blows on every issue and are often content to merely bully people into submission. Conversely, they have little respect for those who do not stand up for their own beliefs and do very little to hide it. They believe that might makes right.

Avariel like to know what the rules are in advance and will make it clear which ones they intend to follow. Once they agree to do something, they will do it; if they change their minds, they will announce it before taking action. Avariel like to have and keep secrets; they do not share information with non-Avariel.

Most Avariel place little value on worldly possessions, and they have no patience for those who do. They consider it unwise to own too many things because it makes you vulnerable — things can be taken, lost, or broken, and to rely on them is to court disaster. They do, however, value their weapons and armor and will rarely be seen without them. For the most part, Avariel will take their share of treasure, but they have little use for it and will convert it into gems or other items. They tend to spend their money on new weapons and on consumable supplies. Some will funnel it back to their home settlement either as cash or weapons, depending on what is most needed.

## Relations

**Marotians** - the Avariel see the Marotians as a vain and worthless people. They don't understand why Marotians are so driven to own things and to dominate others; the Avariel's own plans for world domination have more to do with survival than glory. The Marotians are an obstacle in the path of their obvious superiority and they will eventually be returned to the Forest where they belong.

**Wanak** - the Avariel don't understand the Wanak very well. It is clear that they could be the dominant force on the surface of the planet and yet they seem content to play second-fiddle to the Marotians. To an Avariel, Wanak appear to be soft and lazy; the only thing that makes them any better than the Marotians is that they don't have anything the Avariel want.

**Tribals** - Avariel like Tribals and would like to make the Marotians more like their tribal cousins. They generally encourage Marotians they encounter to emulate their tribal brethren. They admire the fighting spirit and toughness of the Tribals and would love to see them someday serve as masters of the enslaved Marotian race.

**Dwarves** - Avariel treat dwarves like the pets they are. They believe the dwarves to be lackeys of the Marotians and generally consider them to be stupid and weak. Dwarves spend too much time working to make things and keep things and own things and not enough time trying to improve their situation.

## Creating an Avariel Character

### Naming Conventions

Avariel names tend to be short and to the point. Usually, they are one or two syllables, and they sound very harsh to non-Avariel. The two syllables will either start or end with a hard consonant. Softer consonants, like s or f are nearly unheard of, unless combined with a harder consonant; Skarup would be unusual, but acceptable, Sarup would not.

Most Avariel also have a military rank, although these are rarely used in public. Some Avariel will have an epithet, usually related to a deed of military or martial prowess. Among Marotians, Avariel often adopt the name of their home settlement (Skarup of Windy Ridge).

### Racial Abilities

**Height:** Male Avariel begin at 74" and females at 70". Both add 2d6" to determine their final height.

**Weight:** Male Avariel begin at 135 lbs. and females at 120 lbs. Both add 4d8 lbs. to determine their final weight.

**Age:** Avariel begin play at 14 + 2d4 years old. They typically live to be about 150 years old.

Avariel characters share the following traits & abilities:

They can fly at a rate of 15" and with maneuverability class B; once they take more than 75% of their hit points in damage, they may only glide to a landing.

They roll once on the Hidden Powers table for Changed characters.

### Character Class

Avariel characters may advance to unlimited levels as a fighter. They may obtain 1 level as Rangers, Specialist Mages, Thieves or Bards. They may Obtain level as Specialty priests or Mages. Like their Elven ancestors, they may be multi-classed as Fighter/Mage, Fighter, Thief, Mage/Thief or even Fighter/Mage/Thief. In no case may they be multi-class bards, specialty priests, or specialty magicians.

### Equipment

Avariel have access to any equipment available to the Marotians and can usually get it at the normal price. Due to their physiology, armor is rather problematic for them and they tend to wear leather if any armor at all. They tend to favor weapons like bows and slings which allow them the luxury of "losing" shots. Spears and other expensive weapons which could crash to the canopy and be lost are less common. Likewise, nearly every Avariel has a thong

connecting his weapons to his belt. They also favor weapons like the net and lasso which can be used to entangle flying opponents and then bring them down.

For the most part, their equipment is minimal they will not Own more than they can carry (other than the bedding of their homes) and they do not believe in the acquisition of things as a sign of power — in fact, they consider it a weakness to own many things, since those things must be cared for and protected and usually offer little reward for the effort involved.

## Avariel Legends, Heroes, Celebrities, and Landmarks

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