

The Tribals

Background

People

The Tribals are the most varied of the civilized races. They are linked as much by their status as non-Marotians as by a common set of beliefs. They are darker in both skin and hair than Marotians and are stockier in build. They tend to wear simple clothing fashioned of animal pelts and are fond of natural jewelry. Almost any tribal will wear a bracelet or two as well as a necklace; Tribals who are doing well will have matching jewelry, but most have a mish-mash of pieces. Like the Wanak, they are skilled at moving through the forest, but their build leaves somewhat to be desired.

History

There are three major groups of Tribals, and each has its own history, although they begin from common start. When the Change came, not every human retreated with the Marotians or perished in the Changed World. Some survived, clawing out a place for themselves among the giant trees of the Forest. The Tribals today are descended from that original stock, although they've mostly forgotten the technology they once possessed.

The People are a group of five closely related tribes. They began shortly after the events at the Valley of Sins when several families banded together to escape. They are most closely related to the Noble tribes, although they are more nomadic. Their history is about three hundred years, although it's pretty sketchy, mostly some descriptions of lineage and wars.

The Noble tribes are by far the largest group of tribes. They actually formed a loose coalition and were the victims Of the Valley of Sins. They had been living peacefully there for many years when Marotian skytraders arrived and began taking slaves. The Tribals tried to fight back and were oil-bombed by the Marotians and their primitive airships. Since then, the Tribals have left the valley and have not returned.

The three hundred years since have left the memories somewhat distant and faded. The Tribals have softened their original hatred and now look up to the Marotians. The Noble tribes have lived in peace with the Marotians, and many have forgotten the events of the Valley of Sins.

The final group of Tribals are the Beast People. They have never been civilized and are the most savage Of the Tribals. They do not form settlements, living the most nomadic existence of any of the tribes. Their history is less than three generations, consisting solely of word of mouth handed from father to son. It is not very accurate, and no two tribesmen will have the same version of an event.

Culture

The cultures of The People and of the Noble tribes are very similar. Both groups live as hunter-gatherers travelling from place to place with the game and the crops. They have semi-permanent settlements, with many tribes inhabiting the same areas year after year. They tend to have four or five such camps and inhabit them for two or three months at a time. The Beast People are very different, they never stay in the same place twice and live a much more nomadic existence.

For the most part, the Tribals are shaped by the rigors of their existence. They tend to be honest and forthright, since there is little need for deception amongst their people. Likewise, their difficult existence and the daily rigors of their life leave them with little fear. This doesn't mean they're foolhardy, just that they aren't rattled easily.

Another distinctive element of tribal culture is a near total lack of the concept of private property. Other than clothing, which is shared freely anyway, Tribals basically believe that anything discovered by the tribe or One of its members belongs to the tribe. This concept of sharing is widespread, Tribals don't even have a concept of marriage or exclusive relationships. When a woman becomes pregnant, the tribe works to see that she survives without concern for the father's identity.

Government

All the tribes live in groups of extended families. The leadership of the tribes is nearly always the oldest male. Among most of the tribes there will be several additional leaders, including a shaman and a war chief. The other elders in each family make up the council of elders. This group makes the decisions for tribe in most matters. In times of war, the war chief will prevail. Likewise, during religious observances, the shaman will provide leadership to the tribes.

Beyond the tribe, there are no leaders. The Noble tribes and the People maintain a council of elders made up of the chiefs of the various tribes, but the council has no real authority over the tribes. Because of the distances involved, the council meets very rarely and there are no scheduled meetings. Most often, when two tribes meet, their chiefs will gather and exchange information and advice. There hasn't been much more than a group of two or three tribes gathered since the days of the Valley of Sins; the tribes have forgotten much of what happened, but its memory lingers on in the form of a general belief that large gatherings are bad.

Settlements

The Tribals don't really have long-term settlements; instead, they establish camps as they go. As they arrive at a location, they construct shelters of wood and leaves, a process made easy by the sheer volume of such materials available. Once they inhabit an area, they will do some work to make it defensible, usually putting up at least some sharpened stakes and perhaps a few trip vines. The Noble tribes often return to the same areas year after year and some of them have taken to planting appropriate vegetation in the same style as the Wanak.

The Tribals, unlike the Wanak, occupy a variety of levels within the Forest. Most Tribals live in the upper levels, typically in areas near Wanak tribes. The rest live lower with the size and number of tribes decreasing as they near the forest floor. Only the fiercest tribes daring to live in the lowest levels, and only the Shadow Clan of the People lives on the actual floor.

Technology

The tribes have little time to devote to technology; instead, they work hard just to scabble out an existence. Tribals basically utilize the natural world for all their survival needs. They do not work in metal or stone and only the Noble tribes even work in clay.

Arts

Tribals decorate many of their possessions with painted pictures. The paints are made of natural dyes. They also decorate their homes with pictures. The symbols used are usually animals or other objects in the sky or the Forest which they believe will bring them good luck or make them more powerful.

The only other decorations they fashion on a regular basis are clothing and jewelry. Generally, the more powerful a tribal is, the more elaborate the decorations of his clothing and jewelry will be. Necklaces and bracelets are the most common forms of jewelry. Necklaces are most often made of wooden beads strung together. The Beast tribes usually include a tooth or claw of some hated enemy or great beast.

The Tribals are very fond of singing, drumming and dancing. Such activities play a part in all their religious observances, regardless of tribe or God. The songs of the Noble tribes are sometimes historical, but most of the songs are actually prayers.

Leisure and Recreation

The only recreational activities for adult Tribals are dancing and singing. The children play a variety of games most of which provide them with skills they'll need later in life. Tag and Hide and Seek are popular, as are foot races, wrestling and archery contests. The latter three persist into adulthood, although adults find much less time to practice these activities just for fun than children do.

Fashion

Tribal fashions tend to very simple; they generally wear only a breechcloth and shoes. Women usually add a vest to this simple outfit. During the winter, Tribals add shoes and fur to this typical outfit. Tribals decorate their outfits according to their status in the tribe. The more elaborate the decorations, the higher their status in the tribe.

Politics

Tribals don't really believe in politics as such; they generally interact only within their own tribes where there really isn't much opportunity for political skullduggery. Since they generally don't lie, politics aren't a big issue for them. When two or more tribes come together, they exchange information and supplies as far as they are able. The only potential political conflicts are over use Of specific regions Of land, but generally, the tribes are small enough that two can share the same area with little ill effect.

Societies, Orders & Groups

Within the society of the Tribals, there is little opportunity for cliques and other orders. The only groups they tend to form are related to their occupations. The sole exception to this is among the Noble tribes, where a few of the leading warriors and priests have gotten together to form a group of tribal police known as the Huarong. The Huarong travel from settlement to settlement carrying news and settling disputes. The Huarong are expected to renounce their original tribes and give themselves over to the service of the greater good of all the peoples.

Religion

The Noble tribes and the people worship the same gods as the Wanak, but they do not believe in the trinity; they lack the philosophical background to see the three as one. Nonetheless, they are dedicated in their worship of the gods, and their priests tend to worship one, but know the rituals of the others.

The Beast peoples worship the god Ukterra, the animal lord. They believe in reincarnation and that some people become animals and some animals become people. They venerate the animals and look to their spirits for guidance. members of the tribe will each venerate a specific animal, known as their totem or guide. It is believed that the guide chooses the person, not the reverse, and there is much disagreement over the reasons a guide selects a specific person. Some say the guides choose those who are like them, others say the guides select those who need to learn their lessons. There are examples in both directions.

All Tribals take their religion seriously, and they do very little without thinking about their gods. They have nightly religious observances in the form of dancing and singing, and their lives venerate their gods. The Tribals don't understand how the Marotians can worship their gods only once a week; since the gods are everywhere all the time, they should be worshipped all the time.

Passages

Tribals, like all societies, have certain milestones in their lives which are accompanied by celebrations and changes in status. Tribal celebrations always include music and dance and are basically religious observances. The following are the most common passages:

- **Birth** like most societies, the Tribals recognize the birth of a new member as an auspicious occasion. They celebrate the anniversary of the birth each year.
- **Finding** — observed only by the Beast people, finding is the day the shaman cast the spell to find the Tribals' spirit guide.
- **Adulthood** Tribals are considered adults with adult responsibilities at age thirteen. Most of the time, their harsh existence leaves them ready for the additional responsibilities. Passage to adulthood is celebrated with a new name.
- **Death** For the Tribals, death is a celebration. They don't worship death or seek it, but they believe that it comes when it is due and that it leads to rebirth as a different, better

Playing a Tribal Character

Common Roles

Within an adventuring party, tribal characters can serve in a variety of roles. Their fearlessness makes them excellent scouts. They are not good as leaders or spokesman, since they don't practice those skills much in their home environment. They also work well as warriors and snipers. Shaman sometimes work well as advisers, but they tend not to think deeply on things; on the other hand, their alien perspective sometimes allows them to see things in ways that Others might not even consider.

Adventuring Archetypes

Tribals adventure for a number of reasons, some of which are detailed below. It is important to note that these aren't the only reasons a tribal character might be adventuring, just some of the most common.

Searchers - Searchers are looking for someone or something, usually in order to meet or learn about that thing. In some cases, the Tribal will be looking for lost members of his tribe.

Lost Some Tribals actually wind up separated from their tribes and end up spending time as adventurers while looking for their families.

Bright Lights Some Tribals grow tired of their difficult existence and they become attracted to the easier lifestyles of the Marotians and their allies and join them hoping to find the easy life.

Avengers - Avengers have been wronged by someone in the past and they seek to find that person and punish them. This is not a common reason for adventuring among Tribals; they tend to let most transgressions go.

Brash Youth - The strain of being under the yoke of the elders is too much for some Tribals and they leave their families to pursue their own goals. Most often, these are hot-blooded hunters and warrior-types; less often they hold beliefs that run counter to those of the elders.

Role-Playing Hints

The key thing to remember when playing a tribal character is an almost complete lack of the concept of ownership. Tribals have great difficulty respecting the property of others and expect to freely use any piece of gear belonging to any member of their adventuring group (which becomes a de facto tribe for them). They are not great planners and generally do not stick to things the lack of permanence in their homes and relationships makes them less concerned about seeing things through than most of the other races.

Tribals also tend to be overly impressed by Marotian technology and gadgets. They don't have anything like it in their world, and they enjoy playing with them. They tend to buy or get an item, then use it for a while and leave it somewhere. They don't necessarily expect to find it again, but if it isn't useful, they leave it where it is.

Tribals have a hard life and they don't have time for deep philosophy. They tend to be very direct and honest and to evaluate things only on the surface. They are very practical and are more concerned with doing a thing than with looking good doing it. For them, style is not really a concern.

Relations

Marotians — Tribals tend to be very impressed with Marotians and their civilized ways. They generally will go to great lengths just to spend time with them, suffering whatever abuse the Marotians choose to heap on them.

Avarel -- Tribals don't understand why the Avarel are so driven to do things. Things will happen soon enough or they won't, and the effort could be better spent doing something easier. They admire their skill at arms though, and most Tribals would love to be able to fly.

Wanak — Tribals admire and respect the Wanak. They wish they could be more like them, lords of the Forest.

Dwarves — Even more than the Avariel, Tribals have trouble understanding the Dwarves. The dwarves are dour and humorless and they spend far too much effort at building things that take way too long. On top of that, they never seem to go anywhere. Tribals and Dwarves have almost opposite cultures.

Creating a Tribal Character

Naming Conventions

Tribal names vary greatly depending on the tribe. Members of the Beast Tribes nearly always include the name of an animal in their name. Like the Wanak, they have a birth name and an adult name. The birth name is usually related to the name of the father and is sometimes as simple as "Son of Strong as Bear". At adulthood, the child takes a new name based on some attribute or image associated with him. This adult name is chosen by the new adult.

Within the other tribes, names still reflect the natural world. Some tribals will insist on using their names in their native tongues, others will convert to a Marotian translation. In either case, they choose the same sorts of names. By and large, females are named after flowers, shrubs and smaller animals; men tend to be named for trees, geographical features and predatory animals.

Racial Abilities

Height: Tribal humans start at 58" for men and 57" for women. Both sexes roll 2d10 for additional height.

Weight: Males start at 150 lbs. and females at 120 lbs. Both sexes add 6d10 lbs. to this starting figure.

Age: Tribal humans begin play at 13+ Id4 years of age. They live to roughly 55 years of age.

Tribal humans have the following abilities in common:

- +4 on any save vs. fear- based attack
- Brachiated movement of 2"

Character Class

Tribal characters can be of nearly any class. they may advance as fighters, rangers, thieves, bards or specialty priests without limit. They can also become specialty mages but are limited to 12th level. Tribal characters may not be multi-class.

Equipment

Tribal characters are limited to weapons of wood and bone. They may begin play with leather armor and wooden shields. Besides their weapons, they may choose up to ten items from the list of equipment available to Stone Age cultures. There are no restrictions on the kind of equipment they may acquire during their adventuring careers, but they tend never to have too many things.