

## **Barbarians**

Known collectively as the “Tribes of the Northlunds” or simply Tribesmen, these proud warriors are localized in the far northwestern arm of Terna beyond the natural boundary formed by the Sandorian Mountains. In recent years, a growing number have been seen setting up residence in the deep woods surrounding central Wayside and to the far east in the Ternian Empire. While not ignorant or stupid in any way, Tribesmen are often proudly uncivilized and reject “milk-lappers” who would build permanent settlements or raise crops. Usually organized into loose-knit clans, Tribesmen put great stock in family and personal connections; while there will always be struggles within any singular group, bitter rivals will often fight side by side when the greater clan is threatened by outsiders. It is said, “The blood of our enemies washes clean the blood debts of my neighbors.”

Ternian Tribesmen have never been united under a single ruler and take pride in the fact that they have never been conquered. The Tribesmen attribute their independence to an indomitable will, while other kingdoms suggest it is the inhospitable savannahs and subarctic veldts of the Northlunds which have stopped any unifying or conquering influence.

## **The Totems**

Every clan has a totem animal from which it draws power and the clan gains an unusual bond with both animals and wylderkin related to this totem. If a clan’s totem is awakened, they gain significant guidance and power, but most totems are currently dormant, as all the greater/ascended versions of the animal in question have been killed off. As long as the tribe exists, however, the spirit realm will imbue a creature to take up the mantle of the Totem - but it takes time. The tribe and the totem are linked on a primal level, each empowering the other. This is the most basic/natural magic that can be imagined, and has some ties with earthen magic. This process of ebb and flow of power that raises new totem animals and then in turn raises the clan to new heights of power is often simply referred to as “the cycle.”

## **Celestial Aversion**

This is an innate part of who a Tribesmen is. In the end, no one can truly explain the root of this, but it is deeply ingrained and unavoidable. One of the more common reasons Tribesmen take issue with Celestial magic is the fact that it is harnessing nature in a forced and arrogant way in opposition to the Totem magics. A second reason is the persistent rumors of a type of Celestial sickness: it is believed that over-use of Celestial magic can cause madness and uncontrolled laughter. Most every Tribesmen has a friend who knows the cousin of a brother who has suffered from this. Some of the clans claim the laughing disease is a fallacy, but they instead fear some other debilitation that is even worse. In all versions of the story it boils down to a madness born of celestial power which strikes fear into all Tribesmen.

Due to the fear of the laughing disease and the ingrained mistrust of Celestial magic, the tribes as a whole outlaw its use by Tribesmen. They also look down on over-association by Tribesmen

with Celestialists. Some leeway is given to Tribesmen who choose to be adventurers, but over-association is officially punishable by drowning at the hands of any elder, shaman, or champion of the tribes. A Tribesman who actually casts Celestial Magic is considered to have gone mad with power and is put down with little remorse.

## **Lycanthropy**

Most Tribesmen consider lycanthropy to be the greatest gift of a totem: the ability to turn into the totem animal. In fact, when a totem is dormant, few if any lycans of that variety exist. Typically, lycanthropes will form their own tribe separate from the clans. These groups take in people from all races who are gifted. For instance, although the Bear Clan and the WereBear Tribe are separate in every way, the WereBear Tribe counts nearly half its number from the Bear Clan, about one third Bearkin, and the remainder from all the other races. The Bear Clan and the WereBear Tribe have historically kept very good relations with each other.

## **The Clans**

Clans exist for many different totem animals but these are the ones most commonly encountered.

-Elk Tribesmen are the most numerous of all the clans, but are wanderers who travel vast distances and are thus spread out thinly. The Great Stag was killed two years ago, weakening the clan greatly.

-Those of Turtle Clan are defenders without equal. They never retreat and have durability unlike any. The Turtle was reawakened two years ago and the clan is thriving. Since their fortunes have been favorable they have begun to keep the peace between the other clans and have brought unity amongst the Tribesmen to whole new levels.

-Tribesmen of both Wolf and Bear are hunters of chaos and bringers of order. Neither has an active totem, and they have had few lycans in recent years. Werewolves have been particularly rare and are mostly Wylderkin at this point. Wolf Tribesmen focus on the hunt of undead and other chaotic creatures, whereas Bear Tribesmen focus more on their surroundings and allies. They nurture all around them and cull the chaotic as needed.

-Crow clansmen are the bringers of death and necromancy. Their totem has guided them to destroy and hamper the cycle that would bring the other tribes into more power. They actively work to usurp order and balance in the "milk-lapper kingdoms."

-Owl clansmen are the bringers of knowledge and warning. Their totem works to block Crow's machinations, but they are the least martially minded of all the tribes and often struggle to maintain their balance against Crow.

## **Clan Ranks**

These basic roles/titles are found in every clan.

-Elders are a council of the oldest and wisest; age is considered a blessing for it brings knowledge and skill. They are the ones who declare war and peace, they are the rulers of the tribes in many ways but unlike most “milk-lapper” governments, they have served and bled for the tribe. Most Elders had served as champions for years before age or injury forced them to step down. Elders can be difficult to recognize for outsiders - the Elders of most clans don't wear ostentatious markings of their rank, since they are known by the members of their own clan by sight.

-Champions are the top rung of battle leaders and are without equal in combat prowess. They hold great sway in the way things are done and in the end are the true force of the tribes. To be a champion the elders must recognize you as one of the strongest, and the shamans must help you establish a connection to the Totems. A champion can be recognized by the tattoo of their totem animal, which glows blue with the energy of spirit and nature. Many Tribesmen sport totem animal tattoos, but none are imbued with energy like a champion's tattoo. This power multiplies the force of the champion many fold as they exhibit the aspects of a totem in their purest form - for example, the strength of the Bear or the swiftness of the Elk.

-Great Shamans are those who have a link to the Totem animal of their clan, who can commune with it, and who can channel its power to imbue others before battle, or at times foster another's link with the Totem so it may grow into something potent, as they do for champions. They advise the clans but really it is their care for the cycle that is most important.

## **Holidays**

Many lesser celebrations exist but the two most important to all Tribesmen are.

-The First Hunt is declared every April and is 7 days of hunting and celebration. The exact days change every year based on the cycle as advised by the Shamans. This is the time that children become adults as they go out and hunt a different creature each day while maintaining a fast until they have successfully killed an animal by themselves. Many have their first trance in which they meet their totem during this festival. This is a time for celebration of family and of honoring the totems.

-All Hallows is celebrated every October at the end of the month. This is mainly a celebration to remember the fallen who are no longer with the tribes. But it is also a celebration of the Great Hunt that the Fae perform. Often times champions of the awakened totems will participate in this Hunt.

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