

A NEW PC RACE FOR USE WITH 4TH EDITION



"We are the People. As fire, we dance. As water, we flow. As wind, we fly. As earth, we endure. We are the People. We are the First." *Traditional Arak Chant*

RACIAL TRAITS

Average Height: 5'4 - 6'2 Average Weight: 125-200 lbs.

Ability Scores: +2 Constitution, +2 Wisdom

Size: Medium

Speed: 7 squares

Vision: Low-light

Languages: Common, Arak

Skill Bonuses: +2 Nature, +2 Perception, +2 Stealth

Arak Quickness: You gain a +1 Racial Bonus to your Reflex defense.

Furious Hunter: Once per round, when you have combat advantage against an enemy and are using a weapon that you are proficient with, an attack you make against that enemy deals an extra 1 [W] damage if it is a weapon or 1d8 if it isn't.

Poverty: Because of your relative poverty, you cannot start with metal armor or shields of any kind, regardless of class.

In the language of the Arak, the word "*arak*" means "the First." This is the source of their pride, their noble carriage and their isolation.

According to the other races of the world, the Arak are little more than blue-skinned barbarians who live in the outskirts of the world. If during a conversation with an Arak you were to call him a barbarian, he would probably snort and mutter, "What do you know? You are but a simple *T'endrak*." Unless you spoke Araki, the fact that you had just been given the worst insult that one of the Arak can utter would be lost on you. If you did speak it, you'd know that he had just called you "*a Second*."

That is the core of the Arak worldview. You are either one of the Arak, or you are just a Second...simple, foolish and one of the lost.

Play an Arak if you want . . .

- to be a member of a race proud of your ancient heritage.
- to be tough and wise.
- to strike your enemies with the skill of the expert hunter.
- to be a member of a race that favors the barbarian, ranger, shaman and warden classes.

Physical Characteristics

All Arak have blue skin, black hair and reddish colored eyes, with almost no variation among them. Most wear their hair long and warriors wear a single long braid with bands of color that signify the battles they have won. Women, if they do not wear their hair long and loose, will wear two braids and if married, will wear the same bands as their warrior husband, but only in the right braid. If their husband is killed, the bands are then transferred to the left braid.

Arak stand between 5'4" and 6'2", with males tending toward the higher end. Due to a lean diet, they usually weigh less than humans of the same height. You will see few bulky Arak...even the strongest men in the clan tend to be thin and wiry rather than bulky. They move with



practiced grace and have excellent balance.

They tend to wear leathers or simple loincloths for clothing and warriors and clan shamans always drape themselves in the skins of their clan animal. (In the case of the Dragon clan, how they get their skins is a mystery known only to them and perhaps the clan elders of the other clans.) Women sometimes wear a shift or a halter, but sometimes not. Warriors, chiefs and women rarely wear any jewelry, save for the most special of occasions. Shamans, however, always have pendants, teeth, fetishes; bits of carved bone - the usual tools of the trade.

Relations

The Arak keep to themselves and rarely interact with the rest of the races of the world. However, they have some limited trade with peaceful societies, regardless of race. Merchants will occasionally be allowed into Arak lands, but only under heavy escort and only for a limited time. Generally, no priests or religious evangelists of any kind are allowed into Arak territory, while Gadianti are hunted and killed whenever they are found.

Arak Lands

Most of the clans live on the broad, grassy steppes of northwest Diomin. The Dragon clan lives in the mountains and the Bear clan lives near the sea. Most places in Arak territory have mild summers and cold but not harsh winters, save for the Dragon clan, given the altitude of their main city and the Wolf clan, who winter on the shore.

Religion

All religious life focuses on the reverence of a diety known as the One. An important aspect of this is the pantheistic thread which winds through Arak religious belief. They believe all things have essence of the One and because of this, all things are sacred. There is as much reverence given to building a stone wall as to a marriage ceremony. All things in Arak life draw strength from their belief of the One and the reverence for the One's creation. They view themselves as the Custodians of Diomin and as such, are very serious folks.

Names

All Arak names relate to some sort of event or quality. Since the Arak language is not fully detailed within this worldbook, DMs and players should feel free to be creative. Watch for full linguistic details in the upcoming Arak Sourcebook. Male and female names are similar in this way.

Name:	Translation:
Zah'ven	Winter-son
Alin'zabam	Dew-of-the-morning
Se'veli'tavaum	He-who-walks-in-Shadow
Ser'veli'laum	She-of-the-rain
Mat'zejin	Eater-of-dust
Zezhe'syvin'faltzin	Fluffy-bunny-feet

A word about surnames:

Children under the age of nine are referred to as a son of or daughter of their mother, as such:

Zah'ven ser'Zele'ni would translate as Winter-son, son of Zele'ni, while Alin'zabam sera'Zeleni would translate as Dew-of-the-Morning, daughter of Zele'ni. After the age of nine, there is a coming of age ritual. Boys who pass through the ritual are referred to as a son of their father. Girls retain their mother's name, but they change the 'sera' to "seri":

Zah'ven ser'Se'vel'tavaum would translate as Winter-son, son of Se'vel'tavaum, while Alin'zabam seri'Zeleni would translate as Dew-of-the-Morning, daughter of Zele'ni.

During marriage, a woman will traditionally join the pride of her husband and will add the matriarch of the pride's name to her own; Alin'zabam seri'Zeleni ser'Zezhe'syvin'faltzin - Dew-of-the-Morning, daughter ofZele'ni, wife in the pride of Fluffy-bunny-feet.

Because of the complex naming structure, children are required to learn the family trees of their clan, leading back as far as the oral history can reach.

Adventurers

Most of the time, Arak do not adventure. However, on occasion an Arak will feel that he is called to venture forth. Common reasons can be a quest, being exiled, rebellion against the social order within Arak society, revenge or Holy War. Like the Native Americans during the mid-1800's, they are a fairly insular society.

Three sample Arak adventurers are described below.

Zah'ven is an Arak fighter who was exiled by his people for falling in love with a chieftan's daughter and now makes his home at the Tirasim Outpost in Qether. After discovering a group of cultists dedicated to *The Shadow Above*, he took on the cult with a group of friends and nearly lost his life. When he regained conciousness, he found himself the only survior of his adventuring group and now harbors a hatred that can only be asuaged when that foul goddess is brought to divine justice.

Se'veli'tavaum is an Arak rogue who could no longer suffer his people's primitive ways. He traveled the world for years, finding adventure and coin wherever he could. When he returned home a few years ago, he found his brother was exiled for workshipping *The Silent Maw*. He is now searching the world for his wayward brother with the hope that one day he will admit his mistake and come home.

Alin'zabam was always taller than all the boys and could beat them all at 'tal, an Arak ball game similar to soccer. Her mother tried to stop her from playing, but Seri'ulk 'savin really didn't care. As she grew older, the boys stopped allowing her to play with them and instead would ridicule her. She still didn't care, but someone else did and one night he and his friends showed her their anger. Battered and broken, she quietly left before anyone found her. If it hadn't been for Seri'veli'prathlem ("She who walks backwards"), she would not have survived the season. Seri'veli'prathlem taught her to survive both in the wilderness as well as in the clans. She taught her to pass herself off as a warrior. Now she's tough, toughter than any man she's ever come across. It doesn't endear her with the men, but then again, she really doesn't care. After being attacked by the young men of her original pride, she's become very aware of her surroundings. Even though she is ever watchful, she is a boisterous person who enjoys life. She feels equally comfortable drinking the local men under the table as she does spitting in the face of her current enemy.

HISTORY

At the dawn of time, before the common gods were worshipped, there stood One above all others. He has no other name, just the One and He can be found in all things, from the smallest insect, to the largest creature in the multiverse. All are part of the One and in these modern times, only the Arak seem to worship Him.

When the One created the world, He created a race of people to tend to it. These were the Arak, or the First in their language. They were given the entire world to tend, hunt and live upon. They were faithful and did their duty. Thus it was for thousands of years until Cedron the Jackal, of whom *The Shadow Above* is but an Aspect, came. The Jackal brought change and change is rarely a good thing.

The Jackal brought to the Arak the Fallen Path, a way of thinking alien to the clans and at odds with the One. At first the Clan Shamans stood strong against him, but the Jackal waited while his lover, the Adder, sought to bring the Spirit World into her embrace. After a time, one of the shamans allowed himself to be corrupted by the Jackal and he swayed the chieftain of the Jaguar clan and the first son of the Tiger Clan. Like a mold, a sickness, the Fallen Path was embraced and the seeds of conflict were sown between the clans.

At that time, the shaman of the Dragon clan was a man called Kensin. As the Fallen Path began to spread, he was given a vision by the One and saw how the clans would be split by the Jackal's treachery. War was coming, so, in secret, he contacted the shamans of the other faithful clans to form the first and thus far only, *Shen'dra'ken*, or Spirit Circle.

Kensin then called for all of the the clans to gather at Tez'riin, the Sacred Mountain. Kensin stood before the gathering and abjured the shaman of the Jaguar clan to renounce the Jackal and his ways. The Jaguar shaman refused. Kensin and the others then released the curse that they had prepared during Shen'dra'ken. Kensin took the Jaguar shaman's name and stripped it from him. He pronounced the Jaguar clan dead and cast out those who followed the first son of the Tiger clan. Finally, he marked them all by drawing the blue from their skins and the red from their eyes, that they may be known as the *T'endrak*... the Second People. The Second People were force marched far from the centers of Arak land and cast out. Then Kensin and the other shamans were put to death for acting without the sanction of the chiefs of their clan.

Since then, the name of Kensin has been both revered and cursed. The Arak have kept their ways and their faith in the One and they watch the *T'endrak* warily, knowing that their taint is seductive.

The *T'endrak evolved* over the years. The remaining members of the Jaguar and Tiger clans fled south and remained the Jackal's children. The Jackal's servant, the Bat, twisted their form, melding them with their clan totems. They took a new name: the Gadianti. The fallen members of the Dragon clan, who so foolishly turned against their own, traveled to the furthest end of Diomin and founded cities forgetting their tribal roots. Over time, they became the Zeredites and from them other human nations have formed. Two lesser clans, the Dolphin and the Turtle, fled east in boats and settled a wild land, taking upon themselves the name of the Gnolaum, which means eternal in their language. Today, they are commonly known as the Fey. The only race that cannot in some way draw lineage from the Arak are the Hearthom, or dwarves as they are more commonly known. The origins of the dwarves are a mystery, even to the shamans of the Arak.

Society and Culture

Today, Arak society is divided into five major clans: the Bear, the Wolf, the Dragon, the Serpent and the Stag. There are several minor clans who, for the most part, are allied with the larger clans. The one exception to this rule is the people of the Tiger clan, who still bear the stigma and shame of having their first son (the next chief, should the current chief die) take the Fallen Path long ago. They are nomads who live alone and are shunned by the other clans.

Within the clans are prides, individual families that make up the clan. The pride is traditionally named for the senior female in the family, since all children can be traced to her. However, it is the pride mother's mate (or in some cases, father or brother) who runs the affairs of the pride, while the mother sees to the stability and solidity of the pride.

It is the pride mothers who, with the clan shaman, name the first son, the young man who will become the next chief. The chief is the lawgiver of the clan and is the one who leads in all matters. If, after seven years, the chief is proven to be incompetent, cursed, or not working in the clan's best interest, the pride mothers and the shaman can (if unanimous in their decision) name a new first son and demand that the current chief meet the first son in single combat. The One will choose the victor and thus, the future of the clan. The Arak capital "cities" are found in the territories of each clan, although they hardly qualify as cities, per se, as each are only slightly larger than villages and most of the clan live outside the village boundaries in loosely knit familial gatherings.

Gilgal - Tribal area of the Wolf clan

- Addan Tribal area of the Serpent clan
- Cashal Tribal area of the Bear clan
- Asshur Tribal area of the Dragon clan

Elam - Tribal area of the Stag clan



There is definite segregation of clan duties along gender lines. Men are the warriors, the hunters, the chiefs and the shamans. The women have the far more important role...seeing to the stability and health of the tribe. They are the mothers, the herbal healers and the tenders of the hearth. According to clan law women may never become warriors, chiefs, hunters or shamans. However, there is a legend of the Sisterhood of the Spider...a secret inter-clan society that takes in those women who wish to take on one of the male roles. It is, of course, strictly forbidden and members who are found are cast out and stripped of their name. No

> one talks about it and indeed, it might just be legend - but then again, it may not.

COMING OF Age in Arak Society

When a child is born, it is the custom for the tribal shaman to go into the wilderness for three days to meditate, asking the One to reveal to him the name the child will bear for their first years. Commonly, this will be revealed to the shaman by something appearing significant, like the rain upon on a leaf, or a walking bear, or a cold wind on a warm day. Most children's names are compound words. If the shaman found a cold wind on a warm day, the child might be called Coldwind (or *Thalin'serah* in Araki). The child will bear this name until his or her ninth name day (nine years not from the child's birth, but from the day the child was named by the shaman).

There are times when, if a name is not revealed or the child is sickly, malformed, or is the product of union with one of the *T'endrak*, no name will be given to the child. This is a shame to both the parents and the child and most parents will leave such children to die in the wilderness.

On the child's ninth name day, one of three things will happen. If the child is male, he will be taken from the care of the women of the tribe by the shaman at dawn and from there taken into the wilderness for a nine-day vigil. During the first three days, the shaman will enact rites and rituals, trying to determine if the boy has the talent to become a shaman. If this succeeds, the shaman returns to the clan with an apprentice. If this fails, the second three days will be spent performing rites and rituals to see if the boy is prepared to become one of the men of the clan, with all the rights and responsibilities which that entails. If this is successful, the shaman will light a fire using specific herbs and plants that produce a white smoke. This is a signal to the men of the clan to gather at the clan's traditional place for the Rite of Passage ceremonies. At the end of these ceremonies and trials, the boy will be given his man-name, casting his birth name from him, like a man who has outgrown his childhood toys. If the rituals of the second three days fail, the boy's birth name and clan totem will be stripped from him and the shaman will spend the next three days hunting the boy. If the boy survives, he will be given a choice. He can remain within the clan as one of the *muil'sen*, which roughly translates

to Mother's boy, or he can make his way into the world as one of those most rare Arak, one of the Clanless. If the boy chooses to be *muil'sen*, he will serve the women of the tribe in their daily duties and will answer to the clan or pride's chief's wife, called the *muil'arak*.

For girls, the rituals are even more intense. To most T'endrak, Arak society appears to be patriarchal, where the women have a subservient role to the men. Say this to an Arak woman and she will likely smile a secret smile and allow you to think just that. Appearances can be deceiving. Using the Holy Words (which each shaman must memorize and recite) on holy days, a title is given by the One to the women of the Arak. It is eden'raetan and it translates to Heart of the Tribe. This is why the ritual for the girls is so much more intensive...it falls to them to keep the tribe growing, healthy and stable in day-to-day living. Hunters come can go, they are expendable, but only eden'raetan may create life, and thus bring strength to the clan.

Whereas a boy's rite of passage begins at dawn on his name day, a girl's begins at the rising of the full moon before her ninth name day. The shaman will come to her and take her to a secret place known only to the women of the tribe. There, for the next three days, the mothers of the clan will enact rituals and impart knowledge to the girl. On the first night, her birth name will be taken from her and for those three days she will exist in a place between life and death, a place that is a bridge between the worlds. There, she will be taught, through words and visions, the history of the tribe and the duties that she will be expected to know when she becomes a woman of the clan. On the second night, things turn darker, as the women of the clan psychologically assault the girl, attacking everything from her looks to her carriage in an effort to reduce her pride to a heap of rubble. On the third night, psychically battered and broken, the girl is gathered by the women of the clan who perform a most sacred ritual...the healing circle. They will pour all of their love, hopes, wishes, dreams and strength into the girl and at the end, they will present her to the One with a new name, her woman-name and she will be born anew into the clan.



HEROIC TIER FEATS

Feats in this section are available to Arak characters of any level, as long as they meet the prerequisites.

Primal Blessing [Arak] Prerequisite: Arak

Benefit: You gain a +1 feat bonus to your Reflex defense, and a +2 bonus to saving throws against primal effects.

Primal Hunter [Arak] Prerequisite: Arak

Benefit: When you wield an axe, bow, or spear, its weapon damage die increases by 1 die type.

Primal Survivor [Arak]

Prerequisite: Arak

Benefit: When you are bloodied, you gain a +2 bonus to saving throws.

PARAGON TIER FEATS

An Arak character must be at least 11th level to select any of the feats in the following section.

Primal Heritage [Arak] Prerequisite: Arak

Benefit: You gain resist 5 primal and a +2 feat bonus to saving throws against primal effects.

Primal Killer [Arak] Prerequisite: Arak

Benefit: When a bloodied foe grants combat advantage to you, you gain a 1d6 bonus to the damage roll.

CREDITS

Design: R. Hyrum Savage and Christopher T. Miller Editing: Carlos Paradinha, Jr. Typesetting: R. Hyrum Savage Art: Derek Stevens Special Thanks: Annie Savage, Stan! and Chad Cunningham

All characters, character names and the distinctive likenesses thereof, are trademarks owned by R. Hyrum Savage and licensed to Super Genius Games.

This material is protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America. Any reproduction or unauthorized use of the material or artwork contained herein is prohibited without the express written permission of Super Genius Games.

This product is a work of fiction. Any similarity to actual people, organizations, places, or events is purely coincidental. No portion of this work may be reproduced in any form without written permission.

Gods of the Shroud material is ©2008 One Bad Egg, LLC and is used with permission, http://www.onebadegg.com/egg/gods.

> ©2009 R. HYRUM SAVAGE All rights reserved. Made in the U.S.A. Visit our website at www.supergeniusgames.com