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# QUINTESSENTIAL

# BARBARIAN II

## Advanced Tactics

A fiery, muscular ball of raging death, the barbarian is the toughest frontline fighter of any adventuring group. Quick to anger and slow to calm, he will take on any opponent, no matter the size or reputation. *The Quintessential Barbarian II: Advanced Tactics* offers a range of new concepts, skills and equipment to enrich the background and abilities of any mightily thewed hero.

With the help of this sourcebook, any character choosing to play a barbarian will find many alternatives and options for expanding his range of abilities. With Career Paths, a barbarian can customise his advancement and gain special benefits from his chosen branch of training. The Legendary Barbarian offers a subset and expansion of his combat prowess that may take him to epic levels and beyond. Multiclassing offers a barbarian a complement to his abilities, while Tricks of the Trade presents new uses for skills and details the mysterious smoke lodge spirit quest. Superior Tools and Barbarian Feats list a host of new weapons, armour types and feats to tempt any warrior. The Fury of Magic contains new magical equipment while The Unfettered Spirit gives a host of alternate rages. Finally, Survival Tactics details the techniques, advantages and disadvantages to portraying a barbarian in your game.

### Inside You Will Find:

Career Paths

New Feats

Multiclassing Variants

New Magic Items

Prestige Classes

Tricks of the Trade

Alternate Barbarian Rages

New Weapons and Armour

FOR GAMES MASTERS AND PLAYERS ALIKE

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# THE QUINTESSENTIAL BARBARIAN II: ADVANCED TACTICS

Patrick Younts

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# INTRODUCTION

**W**ildman. Berserker. Savage. Primitive. Monster. Boogiemán of the civilised peoples. The barbarian is known as all these things and more. In truth, the barbarian *is* all these things and more.

The barbarian is, arguably, *the* iconic character of fantasy, with the wizard and the knight his only rivals for the title. The barbarian is a romantic figure, a savage who knows nothing of fear, who speaks his mind at all times, who treads the length and breadth of the world doing as he will, not bound by morality or any of the mundane concerns which so trouble the civilised man. The barbarian is strength and fury, he is a survivor, a warrior who stands like a colossus above all others who dare claim the title, a man of titanic rages and passions whose animal nature can inspire awe.

The barbarian speaks to us in a way that few other archetypes do. He is a man of no contradictions, a man who does not compromise and does not kowtow to the will of the majority. He is the ultimate self-made man.

This book, the *Quintessential Barbarian II*, is your guide to creating and playing the ultimate barbarian. Read on and discover the power of instinct, of fury, of the way of the barbarian.

## THE ADVANCED TACTICS SERIES

The Advanced Tactics series takes an advanced look at the whole range of class and racial sourcebooks from Mongoose Publishing, all designed to greatly widen a Player's options for his character within the d20 games system. More than simple continuations, the second series of Quintessential books slot seamlessly into any fantasy-based campaign, giving advanced alternatives for characters of one class or race within the game, allowing both Players and Games Masters the chance to give mid- and high-level characters new options without overpowering or unbalancing the game as a whole. The Advanced Tactics series will not necessarily allow Players to make their characters even better, but they will be able to do a lot more than they ever thought possible before.

## THE QUINTESSENTIAL BARBARIAN II

Welcome to the *Quintessential Barbarian II*, the sequel to Mongoose Publishing's *Quintessential Barbarian*.

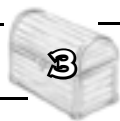
This sourcebook begins with Career Paths, new mechanics which allow you to focus your barbarian's training along specific paths. Here, you will discover the way of the stone bison, a Career Path for barbarians who cannot be tamed or humbled by any force the world has to offer. Here too is the way of wind and wave, a Career Path perfect for those barbarians who ply the trade lanes, pillaging, plundering and discovering new lands. Multiclassing comes next, a collection of pre-made multiclass combinations, complete with variant abilities that mesh the abilities of sometimes wildly divergent classes into a seamless whole. From there, you will proceed to the Legendary Barbarian, a chapter full of new prestige classes perfect for high level play. Here you will find the rider of the golden horde, a horse-borne archer whose arrows can shatter steel and the dog warrior, a tireless defender of his people, who selects a plot of ground which he will defend unto death and beyond.

After that, you will find new skill uses and barbarian specific abilities in the Tricks of the Trade chapter, new tools and weapons for high level play in Superior Tools, a collection of new feats ideal for creating barbarians of all cultures in Barbarian Feats and an arsenal of new magical armours, weapons and wondrous items in the Fury of Magic.

The Unfettered Spirit is your introduction to alternative forms of rage, in the form of environmental, spiritual and elemental expressions of fury which completely transform the nature of the barbarian class. Here, too, are rules for magical tattoos and woad, as well as rules for calling upon the favour of totem animals, spirits who cloak themselves in the guise of beasts.

So, read on and enter the gateway to a wilderness full of adventure, danger, unfettered might and all things barbarian.





*It stood above him, taller than two men but with no humanity in its features, its skin, bright and crimson as blood even in the depths of the shadows. It had no eyes and no nose but its mouth was wide and deep, fixed with rows of teeth like ivory daggers, each thick as a strong man's wrist. Rothgar stared at its arms, so thickly muscled its forearms were wider than his own chest and he saw that its right arm ended in a stump, capped with a bowl of radiant jade and gold.*

*For a time he lay transfixed by its awful majesty, heart caught up in his throat, pounding like that of the wounded tiger. Then he was seized up by an awful rage and threw himself backwards, heedless of the agony in his legs and side. His muscles bulged and he strained against the shackles with the fury of a man given over to madness, giving voice to a primal howl that echoed through the labyrinth and sent shivers of terror through the hearts of guards and prisoners alike.*

*The beast smiled, its mouth a horror. It crouched at his side and plucked him up, as one might grab an errant child. 'Do not fear me, Northman.'*

*'I fear nothing,' Rothgar spat in its face and heaved his body up, breaking free of the beast's terrible grip. He fell heavily, his head striking the stone floor so hard that he lay stunned for a moment. Then he pushed himself onto his feet. 'You'll not kill me on my knees. I am no dog, I do not grovel for mercy.'*

*'Yes, yes,' the beast thundered, stamping its feet. 'There is the fury of the Northman. There is the courage I seek.' The beast sat back on its haunches, its legs stretched to either side of Rothgar. 'Know this, Northman. The priest gave you to me, as offering and appeasement for broken promises. Give me your oath now, Northman, that I will not harm you.'*

*Rothgar laughed and then spat again, a tooth falling to the floor in a crimson goblet. 'Oath? The broken oath of the priest is what brought me here. What worth then the word of a demon? I am sick of false oaths, beast. Come now and test your strength. You will not find me wanting.'*

*The beast reared up and Rothgar saw that all the power of time and night was in its aspect. Its shadow filled the cell, darkening even those far corners which had known nothing but the deepest shadow since the labyrinth's creation. 'Do not dismiss my word so lightly. I am bound by oaths older than time and it is nothing but my own honest word, freely given, which holds me to this place. The priest has no power over me save that which I have given him.' It lashed out with its stump, quick as a striking snake, and Rothgar was thrown back, striking the prison door with force enough to bend it. 'I will not suffer your disrespect.'*

*Rothgar staggered up and braced himself against the door, gathering himself for the attack he knew must soon be coming. He strained again at his shackles but they stood firm against even the full weight of his fury.*

*But the demon did not attack and instead folded its arms across its chest. 'We need one another, Northman. You cannot escape your bonds but I can shatter them without effort. I cannot escape this cell but you can free me with ease. We must help one another.'*

*'Why?' Rothgar relaxed a little, but did not give up his wariness, staying on the balls of his feet, legs tensed to spring forward. 'Why should I help you?'*

*'Because we both hunger for vengeance but it cannot be found here. He hungers for your death because that will free him from mortality. I hunger for his because it will free me from my foolish oath. Give me your oath as a Northman that you will kill the priest and I will break your bonds and shatter the doors of this cell.'*

*'And if I do not?' Rothgar asked. 'If I refuse?'*

*'Then you die here and whatever destiny your gods intend for you turns to dust in these shadows.'*

*Rothgar bowed his head in thought, then nodded. 'What must I do?'*



# CAREER PATHS

In d20 fantasy gaming, the word 'barbarian' has a very specific connotation. The barbarian is the outsider from the edges of civilisation; half animal, half howling madman, he is wild eyed and uncontrolled, uncomfortable in the trappings of modern man and disdainful of urban decadence. Brave to a fault, ferocious in battle and blessed with the wisdom of the old world, he is the epitome of the grace and purity of the natural man.

Of course, like all stereotypes, this one is just as much a lie as it is the truth.

In reality, the barbarian is nothing more and nothing less than a man who was born into a society which does not share the values of mainstream culture. While the typical society in a fantasy setting values technological advancement, leisure and lives of peace and safety, barbarian tribes prefer to live close to nature, surrounded by wilderness and taking what they need from the land and no more. The barbarians of fantasy have their own codes, their own desires and their own peculiar expressions of passion.

This chapter attempts to address those peculiar expressions. Though this chapter is known as Career Paths, it is really more of a discussion of life paths. The barbarians who choose to follow these paths have focused their whole being on that choice; they do not follow these paths because they wish to, they follow them because they must.

## CAREER PATHS

Career Paths are a core idea for the *Quintessential II* series of sourcebooks from Mongoose Publishing and provide a range of templates for each character class and race that will allow a Player to plan his character's advancement following a given concept. While a Career Path focuses on the mechanics of advancement by providing a small benefit and disadvantage to the character's abilities, it also serves as a roleplaying aid to guide the character's progress and goals through his adventuring career, shortening the time spent choosing new abilities and powers during level advancement.

Any one Career Path may be applied to a character when he gains a new level. The listed benefits and disadvantages are applied, any roleplaying description modified and adjusted to take into account the template and then the character is ready to follow his chosen path. From this point forth, both the Player and the Games Master should be aware of the selected Career Path and take steps to ensure the character is played accordingly. It

must be stressed that Career Paths are a roleplaying tool, not simply a method to gain lots of new abilities!

## FOLLOWING A BARBARIAN'S CAREER PATH

A character can tread onto a barbarian's Career Path at any time he gains a new level. The character *must* possess at least one level of barbarian in order to follow a barbarian's Career Path. In each path's description, the advancement options section describes a number of skills, feats or other choices that serve both as a route map and a list of prerequisites for that path. The character must possess the following requirements:

- + Two skills at the requisite rank from that path's advancement options.
- + Two feats from that path's advancement options.
- + The minimum ability requirement (if any) for that path.

A character may only follow *one* path at any time. In addition, the path he has chosen must be maintained. Every time the character advances a level, he must do at least one of the following:

- + Select a new feat from the Career Path's advancement options (only available if his level advancement grants a feat).
- + Increase the ability listed as the minimum ability for that path (only available if his level advancement grants an ability increase). Not an option for Way of the World paths.
- + Increase a skill from that path's advancement options. If the character is taking a barbarian level, he need only spend 1 point. If he is taking any other class level, he must spend 2 points, though he may split this among two different path skills if he wishes.

For example, a 5<sup>th</sup> level barbarian with a base Constitution of 16, Climb 6 ranks, Survival 6 ranks and the Iron Will feat decides he wants to follow the way of the stone ox Career Path. As he meets all of that path's requirements, he may start following the path when he next increases his level. When he reaches 6<sup>th</sup> level as a barbarian he must either spend one skill point on Climb, Survival or Swim, or select his new feat from the way of the stone

ox's options (meeting all the normal prerequisites for that feat). He is now a 6<sup>th</sup> level barbarian who follows the way of the stone ox path and receives the relevant benefits and disadvantages. If he chose to advance as a fighter instead, making him a barbarian 5/fighter 1, he must either spend his one new feat from the way of the stone ox's options (meeting all the normal prerequisites for that feat), or spend 2 skill points on Climb, Survival or Swim. In neither case can he opt to increase the path's required ability in order to maintain his dedication, though he could do so when attaining 8<sup>th</sup> level.

Note that skills and feats do not change their status regarding the character. Cross-class skills do not become class skills and he must still meet the prerequisites of a feat in the advancement options list before being able to gain it. The Career Path is more like a road map that restricts the character's freedom of choice in exchange for a benefit and a clearer sense of purpose.

The character immediately gains a benefit upon entering the Career Path but also suffers a disadvantage. Some Career Paths offer several benefits and disadvantages that a character can choose from, representing the different choices present to even the narrowest path. Only one of these benefit/disadvantage combinations is chosen in this case.

## Abandoning a Career Path

A character may voluntarily abandon a Career Path, and lose both the benefit and disadvantage immediately. This normally happens when the character is preparing to switch to a new Career Path (possibly not even a barbarian path). Switching paths is entirely feasible. This mostly involves time – at least 6 months minus the character's Intelligence modifier in months (minimum 1 month) between dropping the old path and gaining the new path's benefits and disadvantages. During this period, the character demonstrates how he is changing his style and philosophy through roleplay. He must still meet all the prerequisites for the new Career Path.

If the character gains a level and does not comply with at least one of the Career Path's advancement options, he is considered to have abandoned the path. He will lose the benefit (but also the disadvantage) of the chosen path, as he has allowed his top-notch skills to get rusty in favour of training in other areas. In order to regain the path, he will have to wait until he gains another level, this time complying with the path's advancement requisites, in order to walk the path and gain the benefits once more. Note that a character that has followed multiple Career Paths and then abandoned his most recent one altogether can only regain the path in this manner for the path he has most recently abandoned.

*Rothgar moved down the labyrinth, swift as a stalking cat, moving from shadow to shadow. He made no sound, even his breath was silent. His footsteps were light and assured in the darkness, his limbs, well honed from years in the wilderness, instinctively picking out the safest footing.*

*After a few seconds he came upon a split in the corridor, hallways branching to the left and right. He cocked his head in the manner of a wolf, sniffed the air and listened. His keen nose picked up the scent of sweat from the left passage and he heard the soft crackle of burning torches and the muffled sound of chain links scraping on leather coming from the same direction. He chose that path.*

*Soon after, he came upon the front door of the labyrinth. Two guards stood on each side of it and he threw himself into the deepest shadows, pressing himself against the wall as he studied them. They were inattentive, their crossbows at their crossed feet, their spears held loosely in their grips. Two of them had their eyes closed, as though sleeping on their feet. Without hesitation, Rothgar sprang into action, moving with a speed no civilised man could match. His was on them in an instant, moving with a fury that stunned them. He struck one guard in the face with his left hand and the man fell, his skull staved in as though from axe blow. He wrenched the spear from the slack hands of a second guard, and thrust it through the stomach of a third, striking with such force that the spear pierced his body fully, impaling him on the labyrinth's walls. The fourth guard fumbled for his crossbow and Rothgar knocked it aside, so the bolt shattered against the floor, then drove the fingers of his right hand into the man's wide eyes, burying them all the way to the knuckles. The last guard, the one whose spear Rothgar had taken, fell back and opened his mouth as if to scream but Rothgar seized his head and tore off his jaw before he could even draw breath.*

*The key to the labyrinth door was around the neck of the guard impaled on the wall. Rothgar took it and was through the door before the guards' bodies stopped shuddering.*

