



# VARLAK THE NORTHMAN

A rugged barbarian with a relaxed, almost graceful way of moving but a dour, unsmiling manner.

## Equipment

*Weapons:* Broadsword; Dagger; Great Axe; Javelin; Medium Shield.

*Armour:* Leather Helm; Mail Shirt; Cloth Sleeves; Leather Pants; Shoes.

*Carried:* Pouch; Personal Basics; \$5 cash.

(*Note:* With his full load of armor and weapons, Varlak usually suffers Light encumbrance, which is factored into his listed Dodge. His Move with this encumbrance is 4.)

## History

You were born and raised in what southerners call the “Nomad Lands,” and hence you learned well the warrior arts—the use of sword and axe, and enough wilderness-craft to get by. However, you were a third son with limited prospects at home, and so when your uncle offered you the chance to go further afield in search of wealth and glory, you jumped at the chance.

Your band sailed far to the south, trading and selling your fighting skills, until you came to the infernally hot islands of Araterre. There, the people of an outlying island village hired your band to defend them against a crew of orcs who had evidently, somehow, taken their violent ways to the high seas. The raiders were persistent and tricky, so you settled in the village for a while, and came to like the people; they weren’t overly weak, after all, and they honored your war-skills. Most of all you came to like one of the girls, an apprentice to the local wise-woman, who helped you master the local language – she even helped you learn a little of writing – and taught you something of southern customs.

Then one night, your band and the local folk learned the true depths of the darkness behind the orcs. They struck in full strength, which you could have defeated save that they were aided by vile necromantic sorcery. An orcish axe laid you out unconscious; you must have looked dead, because they didn’t finish you.

You recovered consciousness after they had departed, stuck under the bodies of two of your kin. Many more bodies lay around, your beloved doubtless somewhere among them, but many – most – had been mutilated beyond recognition.

Then fever and delirium took you once more. You only survived thanks to the aid of a healer who had come to the island with the first human ship to pass after the raid. She nursed you back to health, and persuaded you to live, if only that you could seek vengeance – a long but perfect vengeance.

She convinced you that to destroy a necromancer who commands an entire orc army you will need war-skill, many swords, and knowledge. So you have returned to the trade of selling your sword while you work towards this goal. You have mustered a small band – not the mighty warriors of your homeland, who are rare in these parts, but a guard for your back when you need such a thing. It seems that you even have some talent as a captain. One day, you will lead a force sufficient to destroy the mysterious Necromancer.

## The Others

Two fair fighters guard your back; Gaspard, a swordsman from the city gutters whose slender blade is swift, and Jared, a half-elf Bowman from the mainland. Gaspard is brash and becomes tiresomely cheerful in his cups . . . but has promise. Jared is careless at times, and his open-mannered youth reminds you of yourself not so long ago – but he can shoot. You also count another local among your number, Pierre, the bookman; undersized, barely a warrior, easily distracted by good food or a pretty face, he nonetheless knows much that is useful at times. He can also handle a small blade with basic competence, and has the wit and charm to deal with strangers very cleverly.

Lastly, your number includes Magda, the deformed healer-witch who saved your life; she says she likes to travel, and wants to see how your story ends, but who can fathom the ways of the witch? She’s no fighter, her eldritch arts have evidently twisted her form, and she can be irritating at times – but her spells and skills are not to be ignored.