

Dwarf

"The worst thing you can say to a dwarf is 'It can't be done.' If he's already decided to do it, he may never speak to you again. If he hasn't decided to take up the task, he may commit himself to it simply out of spite. 'Impossible' is not a concept most dwarves understand. Anything can be done, with enough determination."

– Sha'len, Nibenese trader

Dwarves form a good part of the people encountered in the Tablelands. These strong and devoted beings live to fulfill their focus, a task they choose to devote their lives to. Stubborn and strong-minded, dwarves make good companions, even though their usual focused nature can tend to be bothersome.

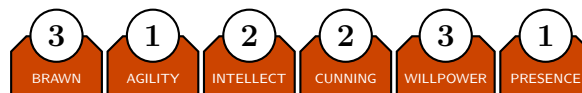
Personality: Dwarves prefer to occupy themselves with meaningful tasks, and often approach these tasks with an intensity rarely seen in other races. As such, dwarves make excellent laborers, and take great pride in their accomplishments. However, their stubbornness can lead to difficulties. Dwarves will sometimes fail to listen to reason, attempting to accomplish what are impossible tasks. Dwarves live for their focus. Dwarves that die while being unable to complete their focus return from the dead as banshees to haunt their unfinished work. A dwarf also rarely divulges his focus to anyone.



Names: A dwarf's name is usually granted to him by his clan leader after he completes his first focus.

Male Names: Baranus, Biirgaz, Bontar, Brul, Caelum, Caro, Daled, Drog, Fyra, Ghedran, Gralth, Gram, Jurgan, Lyanius, Murd, Nati, Portek.

Female Names: Ardin, Erda, Ghava, Greshin, Gudak, Lazra, N'kadir, Palashi, Vashara.

Roleplaying Suggestions: Remember the intensity of your focus. Breaking or ignoring a focus has social, philosophical and spiritual repercussions. For someone to stand in the way of your focus is an assault on you. There is no greater satisfaction than fulfilling a difficult focus. Keep a serious, sober attitude nearly always. The only time you show your festive side is when you have recently fulfilled a focus, during the hours or days until you set a new focus. Only during these brief days of fulfillment, and only to other dwarves and your most trusted non-Dwarven friends, do you show your full joy and sense of humor. But these days are also a time of vulnerability, for until you set a new focus you lose all of your special focus related bonuses.



- **Wound Threshold:** 10 + Brawn
- **Strain Threshold:** 10 + Willpower
- **Starting Experience:** 90
- **Special Ability:** When Dwarves focus on one task that takes more than a week to complete they gain a  on all checks directly related to their focus.
- **Night Vision:** Dwarves may remove  imposed by concealment due to darkness.

Elves

"Honor? The word does not exist in the Elven language."

– Tharak, Human guard

Athas' deserts, plains, steppes and badlands are home to the elves, a long-limbed race of trading, raiding, thieving sprinters. Running is the key to acceptance and respect among elves. Elves that are injured and cannot run are often left behind to die.

Personality: Other races see elves as dishonest and lazy; generally a fair assessment. Elves idle around their time for days until compelled by need to exert themselves, but they can run for days without complaint. No self-respecting elf will consent to ride an animal. To do so is dishonorable; Elven custom dictates that individuals keep up or be left behind. Elves prefer to lead short, happy lives rather than long, boring ones. Seeing the future as a dark, deadly place, they prefer to live in "the now," enjoying each fleeting moment. They thrive in open spaces, and tend to wither in captivity.

Names: Whether slave or free, elves prefer to keep Elven names. Tribe members take the tribe name as surname. Elves treat the naming of young runners as a sacred responsibility, naming the children of the tribe after the first interesting thing that they do while learning to run. Elves believe with the appropriate name, a child can grow to greatness, but with the wrong name, the elf may vanish in the wastes. Sometimes a child's name is changed because of an extraordinary deed performed during an elf's rite of passage.

Male Names: Botuu (Water Runner), Coraanu (First Elf, the Warrior Thief), Dukkoti (Wind Fighter), Haaku (Two Daggers), Lobuu (First Runner), Mutami (Laughs at Sun), Nuuko (Sky Hunter), Traako (Metal Stealer).

Female Names: Alaa (Bird Chaser), Ekee (Wild Dancer), Guuta (Singing Sword), Hukaa (Fire Leaper), Ittee (Dancing Bow), Nuuta (Quiet Hunter), Utaa (Laughing Moon)

Tribe (Clan) Names: Clearwater Tribe (Fireshaper, Graffyon, Graystar, Lightning, Onyx, Sandrunner, Seafoam, Silverleaf, Songweaver, Steeljaw, Wavedivers, Windriders clans); Night Runner Tribe (Dark Moons, Full

Moons, Half Moons, Lone Moons, New Moons, Quarter Moons clans); Shadow Tribe; Silt Stalker Tribe (Fire Bow, Fire Dagger, Fire Sword clans); Silver Hand Tribe; Sky Singer Tribe (Dawnchaser, Dayjumper, Twilight-catcher clans); Swiftwing Tribe; Water Hunter Tribe (Rain-dancer, Poolrunner, Lakesinger clans); Wind Dancer Tribe (Airhunter, Breezechaser clans)

Roleplaying Suggestions: Rely on Elven combat skills (distance, bows, and fighting by the light of the moons and stars). Use Elven noncombat skills and philosophy (running, escape from entangling situations or relationships). When someone professes to be your friend, dismiss them at first and then later, offer them a test of trust. Don't tell them that it is a test, of course. Ask them to give you one of their prize possessions, for example, or leave your own valuables out and see if they take advantage of you. Pretend to sleep, and find out what they say about you when they think you are not listening. Some elves go as far as to allow themselves to be captured to see if the presumed friend will rescue them!



- **Wound Threshold:** 9
- **Strain Threshold:** 10 + Willpower
- **Starting Experience:** 100
- **Special Ability:** Elves may remove ■■ from checks to resist arid or hit environmental conditions.
- **Thieves:** Elves gain one rank in skullduggery, they may not train Skullduggery above rank two during character creation.
- **Elven Run:** Elves gain a ■ on any Athletics test concerning running and may remove and ■ due to exhaustion caused by running.

Half-Elf

"People are no good. You can only trust animals and the bottle."

– Delmao, Half-Elven thief

Unlike the parents of muls, elves and humans are often attracted to each other. Half-elves are typically the unwanted product of a casual interracial encounter.

Personality: Half-elves are notorious loners. Many Athasians believe that half-elves combine the worst traits of both races, but the most difficult aspect of half-elves - their lack of self-confidence - comes not from their mixed origins but rather from a life of rejection from both parent races. Half-elves try in vain to gain the respect of humans or elves.

Names: Half-elves nearly always have human names. Unable to run as elves, they never receive Elven given names, or acceptance in an Elven tribe that they could use as surname.

Roleplaying Suggestions: Desperate for the approval of either elves or humans, you are even more desperate to appear independent and self-reliant, to cover your desire for approval. As a result, you tend towards a feisty, insecure, sullen self-reliance, refusing favors. You take every opportunity to show off your skills in front of elves and humans, but if an elf or a human were to actually praise you, you would probably react awkwardly or suspiciously. From your childhood, your closest friendships have been with animals. Other half-elves do not interest you. As time goes by and you learn from experience, you will find that you can also get along with other races neither human nor Elven: dwarves, muls, even thri-kreen. You don't feel the terrible need for their approval, and yet they give it more readily.



- **Wound Threshold:** 10 + Brawn
- **Strain Threshold:** 10 + Willpower
- **Starting Experience:** 100
- **Special Ability:** Half-Elves begin the game with one rank in one non-career skill of their choice. They may not train this skill above rank 2 during character creation.
- **Companion:** Desperate for companionship, half-elves often find companionship in small animals. You gain 1 rank in the Animal Companion Feat.
- **Adaptation:** Half-Elves begin the game with either one rank in Survival or in Skulldugger. They may not train that skill above rank 2 during character creation.

Half-Giant

"Mind of a child, strength of three grown men. I've seen a Half-Giant tear the walls out of a building because he wanted a better look at the tattoos on a mul inside."

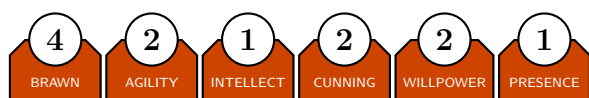
– Daro, Human trader

Legend has it that in ages past, a sorcerer-queen used wizardry to beget a union of giant and human in order to create a race of powerful slaves. Whatever the truth of this legend, the Half-Giant race has increased in number and is now fairly common especially in human controlled lands near the shore of the Sea of Silt. Half-Giants gain great strength, but dull wits, from their giant heritage, and are nearly as agile as their human forbearers.

Personality: Because of their artificial origins, there is no half-giant culture, tradition or homeland. Half-giants readily imitate the customs and cultures of their neighbors. Half-giants often display curiosity, a willingness to learn, and a general tendency towards kindness.

Names: Enslaved half-giants often have human names, and because of this they vary greatly. Free half-giants are likely to borrow the naming conventions of the race or people they are imitating at the time their child is born.

Roleplaying Suggestions: Always remember how much bigger and heavier you are than everyone else. Take advantage of your height in combat, but remember the disadvantages. Between your size and your lesser wits (even if you are a relatively intelligent half-giant people will assume you to be dull), you find yourself an object of comic relief. You are used to being teased and will endure more witty remarks than most people, but when you have been pushed too far your personality can suddenly shift, and you can unleash astonishing violence on your tormentors and any who stand in your way. Less frequently, these shifts can happen to you without provocation - you just wake up with a different ethos and altered disposition. Remember you are influenced by powerful personalities, and can shift your personality and ethics. You tend to imitate the tactics, clothes and demeanor of your 'little master.'



- **Wound Threshold:** 14
- **Strain Threshold:** 10 + Willpower
- **Starting Experience:** 80
- **Special Ability:** Half-Giants are capricious and unpredictable. They gain 1 rank in intimidate. They may still not raise intimidate above rank 2 during character creation.
- **Large:** Half-Giants have Silhouette of 2.

Halfling

"Be wary of the forest ridge. The halflings who live there would as soon eat you alive as look at you. Chances are you won't even notice them until you've become the main course."

– Mo'rune, Half-Elven ranger

Halflings are masters of the jungles of the Ringing Mountains. They are small, quick and agile creatures steeped in an ancient and rich culture that goes back far into Athas' past. Although they are not common in the Tablelands, some halflings leave their homes in the forests to adventure under the Dark Sun. As carnivores, halflings prefer to eat flesh raw.

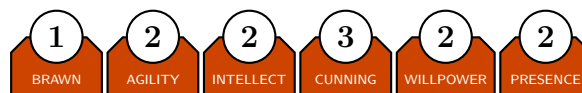
Personality: Halflings have difficulty understanding others' customs or points of view, but curiosity helps some halflings overcome their xenophobia. Little concerned with material wealth, halflings are more concerned with how their actions will affect other halflings.

Names: Halflings tend to have only one given name.

Male Names: Basha, Cerk, Derlan, Drassu, Entrok, Kakzim, Lokee, Nok, Pauk, Plool, Sala, Tanuka, Ukos, Zol.

Female Names: Alansa, Anezka, Dokala, Grelzen, Horga, Jikx, Joura, Nasaha, Vensa.

Roleplaying Suggestions: Remember to consistently take your height into account. Role-play the halfling culture described above: eating opponents, treating fellow halflings with trust and kindness, suspicion of big people, and general lack of interest in money.



- **Wound Threshold:** 10 + Brawn
- **Strain Threshold:** 10 + Willpower
- **Starting Experience:** 100
- **Special Ability:** Halfling gain ■ on all Charm check when dealing with other races.
- **Keen Senses** Halfling add ■ to Perception Checks.
- **Small Halfling** have a Silhouette of 0.
- **Proud to be Small** Halfling add ■ to checks to which their small size is an advantage, for example Stealth and Skullduggery.

Human

"Humans are fools, and hopelessly naive as well. They outnumber us; they are everywhere, and yet they have no more sense of their strength than a rat. Let us hope that the Datto remain that way."

– Dukkoti Nightrunner, Elven warrior

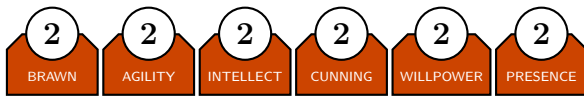
While not the strongest race, nor the quickest, humans have dominated the Tablelands for the last three thousand years.

Personality: More than other races, human personality is shaped by their social standing and background.

Names: Nobles, artisans and traders use titles or surnames; others some simply use one name.

Male Names: Agis of Asticles, King Tithian, Lord Vordon, Pavék, Trenbull Al'Raam'ke

Female Names: Akassia, General Zanthiros, Lady Essen of Rees, Neeva, Sadira



- **Wound Threshold:** 10 + Brawn
- **Strain Threshold:** 10 + Willpower
- **Starting Experience:** 110
- **Special Ability:** Humans start the game with one rank in two different non-career skills of their choice. They may not train these skills above rank 2 during character creation.

Mul

"See, the trick is to break their will. Not too much, mind you. Nobody wants to watch a docile gladiator, and muls are too expensive to waste as labor slaves. But, you don't want them trying to escape every other day. Would you like to tell the arena crowd that their favorite champion will not be appearing in today's match because he died trying to escape your pens?"

– Gaal, Urikite arena trainer

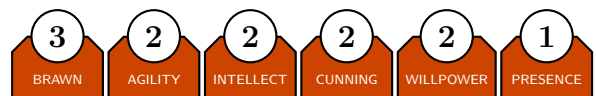
Born from the unlikely parentage of dwarves and humans, muls combine the height and adaptable nature of humans with the musculature and resilience of dwarves. Muls enjoy traits that are uniquely their own, such as their robust metabolism and almost inexhaustible capacity for work. The hybrid has disadvantages in a few areas as well: sterility, and the social repercussions of being created for a life of slavery. Humans and dwarves are not typically attracted to each other. The only reason that muls are so common in the Tablelands is because of their value as laborers and gladiators: slave-sellers force-breed humans and dwarves for profit. While mul-breeding practices are exorbitantly lucrative, they are often lethal to both the mother and the baby. Conception is difficult and impractical, often taking months to achieve. Even once conceived, the mul takes a full twelve months to carry to term; fatalities during this period are high. As likely as not, anxious overseers cut muls from the dying bodies of their mothers.

Personality: All gladiators who perform well in the arenas receive some degree of pampered treatment, but muls receive more pampering than others. Some mul gladiators even come to see slavery as an acceptable part of their lives. However, those that acquire a taste of freedom will fight for it. Stoic and dull to pain, muls are not easily intimidated by the lash. Masters are loath to slay or maim a mul who tries repeatedly to escape, although those who help the mul's escape will be tormented in order to punish the mul without damaging valuable property. Once a mul escapes or earns his freedom, slavery remains a dominant part of his life. Most muls are heavily marked with tattoos that mark his ownership, history, capabilities and disciplinary measures. Even untattooed muls are marked as a potential windfall for slavers: it is clearly cheaper to

'retrieve' a mul who slavers can claim had run away, than to start from scratch in the breeding pits.

Names: Muls sold as laborers will have common slave names. Muls sold as gladiators will often be given more striking and exotic names. Draji names (such as Atlalak) are often popular for gladiators, because of the Draji reputation for violence. Masters who change their mul slaves' professions usually change their names as well, since it is considered bad form to have a gladiator with a farmer's name, and a dangerous incitement of slave rebellions to give a common laborer the name of a gladiator.

Roleplaying Suggestions: Born to the slave pens, you never knew love or affection; the taskmaster's whip took the place of loving parents. As far as you have seen, all of life's problems that can be solved are solved by sheer brute force. You know to bow to force when you see it, especially the veiled force of wealth, power and privilege. The noble and templar may not look strong, but they can kill a man with a word. You tend towards gruffness. In the slave pits, you knew some muls that never sought friends or companionship, but lived in bitter, isolated servitude. You knew other muls who found friendship in an arena partner or co-worker. You are capable of affection, trust and friendship, but camaraderie is easier for you to understand and express - warriors slap each other on the shoulder after a victory, or give their lives for each other in battle. You don't think of that sort of event as "friendship" - it just happens.



- **Wound Threshold:** 10 + Brawn
- **Strain Threshold:** 14
- **Starting Experience:** 90
- **Special Ability:** Muls begin the game with one rank in Resilience. They may not train Resilience above rank 2 during character creation.
- **Tireless:** Muls add ■ to any Resilience checks.

Thri-Kreen

"This one does not speak with the quivering soft shells that lay about all night. This one might eat you, but never speak."

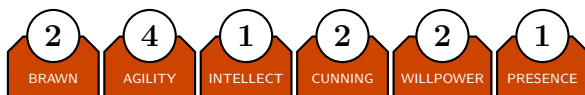
– Tu'tochuk

Thri-kreen are the strangest of the intelligent races of the Tablelands. These insectoid beings possess a mindset very different from any humanoid being encountered. They roam the wastes in packs, hunting for food day and night, since they require no sleep. Thri-kreen are quick and agile and make fearsome fighters, feared throughout the wastes.

Personality: Since Thri-kreen (also known simply as the kreen) do not require sleep, they have difficulty understanding this need in the humanoid races. They have difficulty understanding this state of "laziness" in others. Other behaviors of humanoids seem unnecessarily complex. A keen's life is simple: hunt prey. Kreen live for the hunt, and own only what they can carry.

Names: Kachka, Ka'Cha, Ka'Ka'Kyl, Klik-Chaka'da, Sa'Relka, T'Chai

Roleplaying Suggestions: You tend to rely on your natural attacks and special kreen weapons. Everything you kill is a potential dinner. You have a strong need for a party leader - obedience to this leader in the party is important to you. If you seem to be the most powerful and capable, then you will assume leadership; if someone challenges your authority then you will wish to test whether they are in fact stronger than you. It is not a question of vanity; you won't want to fight to the death, but merely to ascertain who is worthy to lead the party. You do not have the focus of a dwarf to complete a project, but you would give your life to protect your companions. If you did not trust and honor them as your own family, then you would not travel with them and work together with them. You do not understand the concept of sleep. It disturbs you that your dra companions lie unconscious for a third of their lifetimes. You own only what you can carry, caring little for money or other items that other races consider as treasure. Your philosophy of ownership sometimes leads you into conflict with presumptuous dra who think they can own buildings, land, and even whole herds of cattle!



- **Wound Threshold:** 10 + Brawn
- **Strain Threshold:** 10 + Willpower
- **Starting Experience:** 50
- **Special Ability:** Thri-Kreen are immune to sleep or effects immitating sleep.
- **Sleepness:** Thri-Kreen do not need sleep.
- **Chitin Plating:** Thri-Kreen have a defense rating of 1.
- **Multiple Limbs:** Thri-Kreen may spend ☹ ☹ on a succesfull Brawl attack to hit a second target engaged with it, dealing the same damage as dealt to the original target.
- **Leap:** Once per encounter as a manouver, a Thri-Kreen may suffer 3 strain to leap forward to any location within medium range, or vertically to any location within short range.