

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS®

DARK SUN® CAMPAIGN SETTING



ROLEPLAYING GAME SUPPLEMENT

Richard Baker • Robert J. Schwalb • Rodney Thompson

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INTRODUCTION

"I live in a world of fire and sand. The crimson sun scorches the life from anything that crawls or flies, and storms of sand scour the foliage from the barren ground. This is a land of blood and dust, where tribes of feral elves sweep out of the salt plains to plunder lonely caravans, mysterious singing winds call travelers to slow suffocation in the Sea of Silt, and selfish kings squander their subjects' lives building gaudy palaces and garish tombs. This bleak wasteland is Athas, and it is my home."

—The Wanderer's Journal

Beneath a crimson sun lie wastelands of majestic desolation and cities of cruel splendor, where sandal-clad heroes battle ancient sorcery and terrible monsters. This is Athas, the world of the DARK SUN® campaign setting, a dying planet of savagery and desolation. Life hangs by a thread in this barren land, and now it is up to you to write your own story in blood and glory.

EIGHT CHARACTERISTICS OF ATHAS

The world of the DARK SUN setting is unique in several ways. Many familiar trappings of the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® game are missing or turned on their heads. Athas is not a place of shining knights and robed wizards, of deep forests and divine pantheons. To venture over the sands of Athas is to enter a world of savagery and splendor that draws on different traditions of fantasy and storytelling. Simple survival beneath the deep red sun is often its own adventure.

Newcomers to Athas have much to learn about the world, its people, and its monsters, but the following eight characteristics encapsulate the most important features of the DARK SUN campaign setting.

1. THE WORLD IS A DESERT

Athas is a hot, arid planet covered with endless seas of dunes, lifeless salt flats, stony wastes, rocky badlands, thorny scrublands, and worse. From the first moments of dawn, the crimson sun beats down from an olive-tinged sky. Temperatures routinely exceed 100 degrees F. by midmorning and can reach 130 degrees or more by late afternoon. The wind is like the blast of a furnace, offering no relief from the oppressive heat. Dust and sand borne on the breeze coat everything with yellow-orange silt.

In this forbidding world, cities and villages exist only in a few oases or verdant plains. Some places don't see rain for years at a time, and even in fertile regions, rain is little more than a humid mist that falls during a few weeks each year before giving

way to long months of heat and drought. The world beyond these islands of civilization is a wasteland roamed by nomads, raiders, and hungry monsters.

Athas was not always a desert, and the parched landscape is dotted with the crumbling ruins of a planet that once was rich with rivers and seas. Ancient bridges over dry watercourses and empty stone quays that face seas of sand tell the tale of a world that is no more.

2. THE WORLD IS SAVAGE

Life on Athas is brutal and short. Bloodthirsty raiders, greedy slavers, and hordes of inhuman savages overrun the deserts and wastelands. The cities are little better; each chokes in the grip of an ageless tyrant. The institution of slavery is widespread on Athas, and many unfortunates spend their lives in chains, toiling for brutal taskmasters. Every year hundreds of slaves, perhaps thousands, are sent to their deaths in bloody arena spectacles. Charity, compassion, kindness—these qualities exist, but they are rare and precious. Only a fool hopes for such riches.

3. METAL IS SCARCE

Most arms and armor are made of bone, stone, wood, and other such materials. Mail or plate armor exists only in the treasuries of the sorcerer-kings. Steel blades are almost priceless, weapons that many heroes never see during their lifetimes.

4. ARCANE MAGIC

DEFILES THE WORLD

The reckless use of arcane magic during ancient wars reduced Athas to a wasteland. To cast an arcane spell, one must gather power from the living world nearby. Plants wither to black ash, crippling pain wracks animals and people, and the soil is sterilized; nothing can grow in that spot again. It is possible to cast spells with care, preserving the world and avoiding any more damage to it, but defiling offers more power than preserving. As a result, sorcerers, wizards, and other wielders of arcane magic are reviled and persecuted across Athas regardless of whether they preserve or defile. Only the most powerful spellcasters can wield arcane might without fear of reprisal.

5. SORCERER-KINGS

RULE THE CITY-STATES

Terrible defilers of immense power rule all but one of the city-states. These mighty spellcasters have held their thrones for centuries; no one alive remembers

a time before the sorcerer-kings. Some claim to be gods, and some claim to serve gods. Some are brutal oppressors, where others are more subtle in their tyranny. The sorcerer-kings govern through priesthoods or bureaucracies of greedy, ambitious templars, lesser defilers who can call upon the kings' powers. Only in the city-state of Tyr does a glimmer of freedom beckon, and powerful forces already conspire to extinguish it.

6. THE GODS ARE SILENT

Long ago, when the planet was green, the brutal might of the primordials overcame the gods. Today, Athas is a world without deities. There are no clerics, no paladins, and no prophets or religious orders. Old shrines and crumbling temples lie amid the ancient ruins, testimony to a time when the gods spoke to the people of Athas. Nothing is heard now but the sighing of the desert wind.

In the absence of divine influence, other powers have come to prominence in the world. Psionic power is well known and widely practiced on Athas; even unintelligent desert monsters can have deadly psionic abilities. Shamans and druids call upon the primal powers of the world, which are often sculpted by the influence of elemental power.

ABOUT THE DARK SUN CAMPAIGN SETTING

The original *DARK SUN* campaign setting, by Troy Denning and Tim Brown, was published by TSR, Inc., in 1991 for the 2nd Edition *DUNGEONS & DRAGONS*[®] game. Strikingly illustrated by renowned fantasy artist Gerald Brom, *DARK SUN* offered a compelling new vision for the *DUNGEONS & DRAGONS* game, one that broke free of the traditional medieval trappings of fantasy roleplaying. Troy Denning went on to write a five-part novel series, the *Prism Pentad*, telling the story of the revolution in Tyr and the downfall of the sorcerer-kings. More than thirty game supplements, adventures, and boxed sets supported the setting, along with novels, short stories, and articles in *Dragon*[®] magazine.

This new version of the *DARK SUN* campaign setting returns to the days immediately after King Kalak's overthrow, when freedom glimmers weakly in a single city-state and ancient evils begin to stir once again.

You can still find 2nd Edition *DARK SUN* game products online or in used bookstores, but this new edition of the setting is a reimagining of the campaign world as its story begins. People, places, and events described in older products might be different (or absent) in this edition. Likewise, this edition of *DARK SUN* introduces many elements of *DUNGEONS & DRAGONS* 4th Edition—for example, new character races and classes—that were not part of the 2nd Edition setting.

7. FIERCE MONSTERS

ROAM THE WORLD

The desert planet has its own deadly ecology. Athas has no cattle, swine, or horses; instead, people tend flocks of erdlus, ride on kanks or crodlus, and draw wagons with inixes and mekillots. Wild creatures such as lions, bears, and wolves are nonexistent. In their place are terrors such as the id fiend, the baazrag, and the tembo. Perhaps the harsh environment of Athas breeds creatures tough and vicious enough to survive it, or maybe the touch of ancient sorcery poisoned the wellsprings of life and inflicted monster after monster on the dying world. Either way, the deserts are perilous, and only a fool or a lunatic travels them alone.

8. FAMILIAR RACES AREN'T WHAT YOU EXPECT

Typical fantasy stereotypes don't apply to Athasian heroes. In many *DUNGEONS & DRAGONS* settings, elves are wise, benevolent forest dwellers who guard their homelands from intrusions of evil. On Athas, elves are a nomadic race of herders, raiders, peddlers, and thieves. Halflings aren't amiable riverfolk; they're xenophobic headhunters and cannibals who hunt and kill trespassers in their mountain forests. Goliaths—or half-giants, as they are commonly known—are brutal mercenaries who serve as elite guards and enforcers for the sorcerer-kings and their templars in many city-states.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

For the Dungeon Master: To run a *DUNGEONS & DRAGONS* game in the world of *DARK SUN*, you'll need the *Player's Handbook*[®], *Dungeon Master's Guide*[®], and *Monster Manual*[®]. The *DARK SUN Campaign Setting* provides details on creating characters suitable for the deadly sands of Athas and introduces you to this savage and splendid world. Chapter 6 of this book addresses the Dungeon Master and provides specific tools for running a *DARK SUN* game. The companion book, the *DARK SUN Creature Catalog*[™], contains monsters, monster themes, hazards, and statistics for the sorcerer-kings.

For players: The *DARK SUN* setting isn't a place for the typical dwarf cleric, halfling rogue, or eladrin wizard. In this setting, the dwarf cleric might be a desert shaman or an empathic ardent. The halfling is likely a feral, stealthy killer, and the human wizard probably disguises her spellcasting to avoid being murdered by a mob the first time she reveals her arcane powers. This book expands the character-building options in the *Player's Handbook* (as well as in *Player's Handbook 2* and *Player's Handbook 3*), helping you create Athasian builds, combinations, themes, and "feel" for your characters.

A savage world waits to challenge you. Can you survive the fury of the crimson sun?

THE WORLD OF ATHAS

"Athas is an endless wasteland, yet it has a majestic and stark beauty. When first light casts its emerald hues over the Sea of Silt, or when sunset spreads its orange flame over the Mekillot Mountains, the world's feral beauty stirs the untamed heart in each of us. It is a call to take up spear and dagger, to flee the cities, to go and see what lurks out in the barrenness."

—The Wanderer's Journal

Sand, rock, sun, burning heat—these are the only properties that Athas possesses in abundance. Every living creature in the world works constantly to obtain food and safeguard water. Hunters might go days without finding suitable prey, and herders must drive their flocks from place to place to find good grazing. Water is scarce in the known regions of Athas, and those who control life-giving wells or springs jealously guard access to such riches.

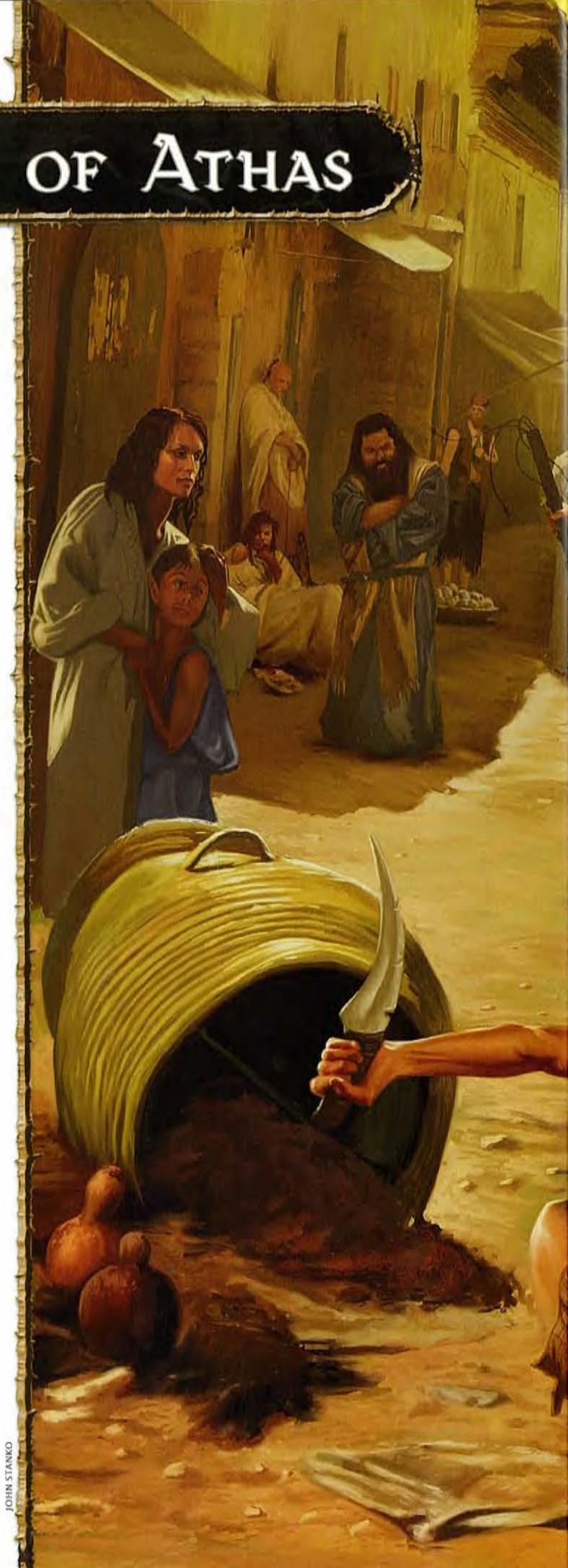
City dwellers enjoy more security than do nomads or villagers living in the deserts, but it takes legions of workers—most of them slaves—toil in the fields to support a city's population. Great and terrible sorcerer-kings rule the city-states, each a long-lived tyrant who crushes dissent. Rapacious nobles, corrupt templars, ruthless merchants, and legions of brutal soldiers profit from or support the sorcerer-kings' reigns, while the common folk groan under unjust laws and harsh taxation. Slaves survive only as long as they can earn one more day's worth of food and water with their backbreaking toil. For most people, life is a choice between struggling to survive in the wasted wilderness or trading freedom for the relative safety of the oppressive city-states.

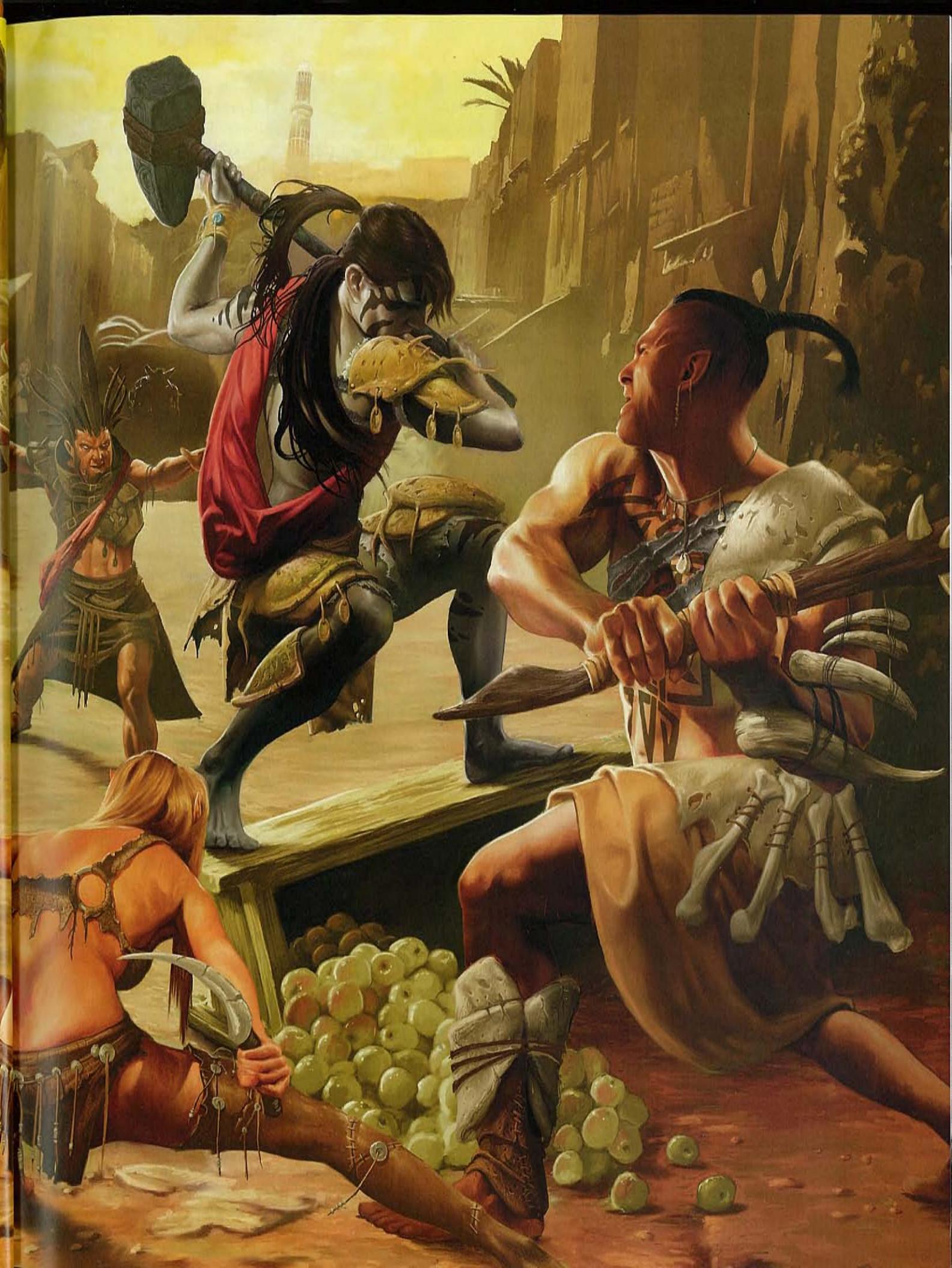
This is Athas, a world of cruelty and tyranny. Yet it is also a place of savage beauty and barbaric splendor—a world of heroes.

This chapter begins to explore the ways of Athas and its heroes. It includes the following sections:

- ◆ **Heroes of Athas:** A discussion of the bold or fierce heroes who roam this pitiless world.
- ◆ **Athasian Civilization:** An overview of culture, politics, and trade on Athas.
- ◆ **Secrets of Power:** A look at history, magic, and other matters known only to the learned.

JOHN STANKO





HEROES OF ATHAS

"Better to die with a spear in your hands than to live with shackles around your wrists."

— Elven adage

In any world, heroes are those who have the power to make a difference, the opportunity to act, and the motivation to challenge evil. Athas is no different. Fearless desert wanderers seek their fortunes in the decadent city-states, trusting to their quick wits and quicker reflexes. Wily dune traders and proud nobles venture into monster-haunted ruins to plunder the treasures of the ancient world. Clever wizards study forbidden arts, hoping to master the magic needed to survive, and ambitious templars scheme for power.

When you begin your journey beneath the crimson sun, you might be a mul fighter whose flashing sword wins her fame and fortune as a gladiator in the arena; an elf rogue whose crooked dealings in the Elven Market allow him to spy for the Veiled Alliance; a thri-kreen ranger from the Western Hinterlands, fascinated by the debauched ways of the city dwellers; or a human warlord who battles against slavers and fights to survive in the desert wastes. These heroes represent only a handful of the stories you can tell with the races, classes, themes, and backgrounds of the DARK SUN campaign setting.

Regardless of your race and class, you face the same basic questions as do all heroes of Athas. Do you fight to survive the world, to plunder it, or to better it? In a place of brutal oppression and cruel savagery, what makes you a hero?

HEROIC THEMES

Whether prowess is measured by sheer physical prowess, by mastery of the mind, or by command of the arcane arts, many inhabitants of Athas have the potential to be heroes. Mercenaries, assassins, desert raiders, escaped slaves, seraglio spies, seers, hermits, and more—the call to adventure draws Athasians to meet their destinies in the deserts or cities of the world. Very few altruists live beneath the crimson sun, however, so what motivates you to make your stand? Are you a calculating sellsword who fights only in exchange for a suitable reward? Are you driven by a thirst for vengeance or the search for a loved one taken by slavers? Do you seek to make a name for yourself as the most fearsome warrior in the wastes, or to revel in gathering loot? Or are you that rarest (and perhaps most naïve) of creatures, a hero who fights to make the world a better place?

Heroes need both the freedom to act and the desire to make a difference in the world. Although a myriad of motivational possibilities exist, the following ten heroic themes provide a good starting place. (For more on these heroic themes, see Chapter 3.)

Athasian Minstrel: Each noble house is surrounded by an entourage of entertainers and companions for hire. Athasian minstrels might be dancers, poets, musicians, artists, or tutors retained by the wealthy and powerful, or they might be performers from roving troupes hired for special occasions. Minstrels also double as spies, assassins, and agents, concealing daggers beneath fluttering silk or honeyed words.

CHARACTER CREATION

Creating a DARK SUN character is a lot like creating a character for any other DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game. Below are the steps as given on page 14 of the *Player's Handbook*, detailing the additional elements that pertain to a DARK SUN game. The Dungeon Master has some decisions to make about optional rules as well.

1. Choose Race. In addition to your usual choices, see Chapter 2 for two new races and discussions of altered roles for existing races.

2. Choose Class. Chapter 4 presents rules on defiling and preserving for all arcane characters, looks at psionic wild talents, and offers new build options for the battlemind, fighter, shaman, and warlock. If you're thinking ahead to your character's future, you might consider a racial paragon path (Chapter 2) or themed paragon path (Chapter 3). Chapter 4 presents five new epic destinies as well. **DM:** Determine if you want to allow the optional rule for wild talents.

2a. Choose Theme. Every character can choose a DARK SUN-flavored theme to complement his or her class. See "Heroic Themes" below and Chapter 3 for more.

3. Determine Ability Scores. As usual.

4. Choose Skills. As usual. This is also a good time to take a look at backgrounds (see the racial backgrounds in Chapter 2 and the regional backgrounds in Chapter 5), since they can influence your trained skill selection.

5. Select Feats. See Chapter 4 for additional options, many related to the new class builds and themes.

6. Choose Powers. The new build options (Chapter 4) include powers for the battlemind, fighter, shaman, and warlock. In addition, your theme (Chapter 3) gives you access to powers you can choose in place of class powers.

7. Choose Equipment. Chapter 4 describes new weapons, equipment, mounts, vehicles, and magic items common on Athas. **DM:** Determine if you wish to use the fixed enhancement bonus system (see Chapter 6) and let the players know, since that will impact their equipment choices. Chapter 4 also offers optional rules for weapon breakage and heavy armor.

8. Fill in the Numbers. As usual.

9. Roleplaying Character Details. As usual. Between your character's theme and backgrounds, you probably have a pretty good idea of who your character is already.

Dune Trader: Dune traders frequent the city-states and the wild lands, following the ancient caravan routes. The great merchant houses of Athas provide opportunities for ambitious and capable people to make their fortunes. Serving as a mercenary, advisor, or agent to a merchant house might provide a character with the ability to travel on his patron's behalf and live in comfort.

Elemental Priest: In the absence of gods and divine magic, many people of the deserts turn to primal magic. Elemental priests are no friends to the sorcerer-kings or templars, but the residents of rural villages and nomadic tribes hold the priests in high regard. Some are shamans armed with potent healing abilities, some are secret assassins, and others are fierce warriors who fortify themselves with the spirits of the world's primal elements.

Gladiator: Life on Athas is cheap, and the great city-states are renowned for their bloodstained arenas. Gladiators are warriors who fight for gold, glory, or survival in the arena. Many are slaves, trained from childhood to fight for the entertainment of the masses. A prized gladiator often receives better treatment than the typical arena fodder and might enjoy considerable freedom despite his or her slave status. Some gladiators are free beings who choose to fight, lured by the rich prizes and promise of glory.

Noble Adept: Naturally, people of wealth and high station have more choices in life than others, and noble adepts have access to the finest tutors in swordplay and psionics. What they lack in practical experience in the deserts or arenas, they make up for with years of leisure to master the martial, psionic, or magical arts. Free to follow the dictates of conscience or indulge their wanderlust, noble adepts choose their own fates—a rare luxury on Athas.

Primal Guardian: Although elemental priests wield the powers of the desert—sun, sand, fire, and wind—a few primal devotees cling to the powers of life that remain on Athas. These primal guardians wield the strength of forest and oasis against those who would bring further ruin to the dying world. Like devotees of the elements, primal guardians oppose the sorcerer-kings and the minions of these tyrants, and they command the fear and respect of the desert peoples.

Templar: Templars practice arcane magic. As agents of the sorcerer-kings, they maintain order in the city-states. Many templars use their positions to ruthlessly oppress the common people, and they have their sorcerer-king's sanction to use defiling magic at will. However, a few are a cut above their fellows. They might be patriots loyal to their city above their king, reformers who seek to correct oppressive practices, or secret revolutionaries who desire to put an end to the tyranny of the despots. In some cities, templars serve as "priests" to sorcerer-kings who claim godhood, even though Athas has no real gods. Divine magic is unknown, remembered only in tales of ancient days.

Veiled Alliance: Although many Athasian heroes excel at physical combat or the mental arts, magic is a rare talent. Arcane player characters often belong to the Veiled Alliance. On Athas, arcane magic is perilous in the extreme. Used carelessly, it defiles the surroundings, destroying life and leaving barren zones where nothing can grow again. As a result, those who study the arcane arts are feared and persecuted. The Veiled Alliance protects arcanists who choose the way of the preserver, learning to cast spells with the care and sacrifice needed to spare the surroundings from the damage of arcane magic.

Wasteland Nomad: Gladiators aren't the only warriors on Athas. The people of the desert are perhaps the freest inhabitants of Athas; the world is theirs to wander as they will, as long as they have the strength and luck to avoid monsters, bandits, and slavers. Wasteland nomads might be hunters, scouts, or wild raiders with no formal training, but the Athasian wasteland is a harsh teacher. Wanderers don't last long without some skill with spear or sword.

Wilder: Psionic power is widespread on Athas, and many privileged nobles and commoners of exceptional ability receive formal training in the Way (the Athasian term for the study of psionic disciplines). Wilders are those who lack formal instruction in psionics and master their powers on their own. Most come from the poorer classes in the city-states, the outlying villages, or the tribes of the desert. It's not unusual for a skilled fighter or an agile rogue to have a potent, self-taught psionic power with which she can surprise careless enemies.

DIVINE CHARACTERS

The gods who once influenced Athas are long dead and nearly forgotten by the people of the world. Therefore, heroes who draw on divine power are rare indeed. You won't find temples or priests of your god. You'll probably never meet another person who believes in *any* god. Still, if you really want to play a divine character, you and your Dungeon Master might be able to make it work. Here are some suggestions for how your character might know about divine magic and gain access to divine powers.

- ◆ You have come to own a relic from an ancient age that grants you odd powers. You're unsure of its origin or what the strange symbol emblazoned on the relic's surface represents.
- ◆ You are a descendant of a long-forgotten demigod whose lineage has survived across the centuries. You draw divine power from your holy blood, disguising it as psionic or primal magic to keep your secret safe.
- ◆ Wandering in the wastes, lost and dehydrated, you collapsed and heard a voice that promised to save you in exchange for your devotion. You awoke in a tribal camp, parched and burned but alive. You can't be sure exactly what saved your life, but you do your best to hold to the bargain you made.



ADVENTURES ON ATHAS

Athas is a world ripe with possibilities for adventure.

Countless ruins litter the deserts and badlands, each mute testimony to a different world that is lost in the past. Abandoned cities lie half buried in sand or brood beneath barren, rocky hills. Crumbling castles perch atop windswept heights or guard old passes that now lead nowhere. Magnificent palaces and ominous towers dot the wastelands, each the former retreat of a great noble or mighty archmage whose name and realm are long forgotten. Farmhouses and villages lie in the middle of stony wastes with nothing more than a few bits of masonry or a lonely fragment of a wall to mark the spot where people once lived. Many ruins have been cleaned out over the centuries, but others conceal hoards of ancient treasure or valuable debris such as tools and weapons of metal. In addition, it's not uncommon for extensive caves and vaults to run beneath the sandy streets of ruined cities and towns.

Since ruins offer shelter from the sun and might have old wells or cisterns that still reach water, they are highly desirable lairs for desert raiders and dangerous monsters. However, ruins that lack water and shelter aren't necessarily safe. Many such places are haunted by undead, the hateful spirits of their long-vanished people. Zombies, ghouls, specters, and worse might be found in the wreckage.

If the idea of risking life and limb in monster-infested ruins doesn't appeal to a hero, Athas holds plenty of other perils. Simply surviving in the harsh wilderness poses its own challenges. The Tyr Region—the part of the world that includes all of civilized Athas—is plagued by brutal raiders, greedy slavers, bloodthirsty savages, and roaming packs of gnolls and thri-kreen that won't hesitate to eat anyone they come across. A hero might take up arms against these predatory bands to protect a location or its people. Of course, most Athasian heroes are pragmatic and want to be paid for their efforts. A mercenary might be hired to protect a caravan passing through the territory of dangerous bandits or commissioned by a merchant house to find and punish a band of raiders who plundered a house outpost. Heroes who don't care to serve as someone else's muscle can try to establish their own venture by taking on a route or a trade that others consider too dangerous.

The city-states of Athas are little safer than the ruins or the countryside. Each groans under the oppressive rule of a despotic sorcerer-king and his or her templars. Nobles jockey for influence, scheme against their rivals, and amass treasures. Merchant houses engage in silent trade wars in the markets and alleyways, conflicts that can include poisonings and assassinations. A hero might battle for fame and fortune in an arena (or try to survive being sentenced to fight), serve as a hired blade in a noble intrigue or a merchant feud, or break into a templar treasury. A character could explore forgotten undercities where the sorcerer-kings buried



secrets centuries ago or seek a higher station by taking on missions useful to the tyrants. Whether a hero serves his or her own ambitions or hopes to one day strike a blow for freedom is up to you.

ADVERSARIES

Heroes are measured by the foes they confront. The lands of Athas are overrun with desert predators, vicious tribes, inimical rulers, and people devoted to serving the causes of oppression and tyranny.

RAIDERS AND SAVAGES

In most of the world, civilization hangs by a thread. The city-states are reasonably secure, but within one or two days' travel lies a wilderness stalked by hungry monsters and threatened by vicious raiders and savages. Marauding giants plunder the shores of the Sea of Silt. Hordes of gith, gnolls, tareks, and thri-kreen roam the barrens, searching for villages or outposts to assault. Monstrous humanoids aren't the only raiders to threaten the desert people; many of the worst aggressors are motley assortments of humanoids united only by their desire for easy prey. The battle to defend civilization's borders against the reavers of the wastelands never ends, and with each passing year, civilization loses a little more ground.

OPPRESSORS

Each sorcerer-king is an evil tyrant who wields awesomely powerful defiling magic. Scores, sometimes hundreds, of templars serve each ruler. Most templars are ambitious, corrupt, and cruel. They exact brutal taxation from the city folk, ferret out forbidden practices such as reading or studying arcane magic, and stamp out sparks of rebellion.

Battling a sorcerer-king's regime means fighting soldiers, elite guards, monsters, and the occasional spy or informant, all under the command of ruthless templars out to prove their loyalty to their master. Within a city-state's walls, heroes who openly challenge the king's templars will be overwhelmed; to survive, characters who strike down a templar must vanish into the populace quickly.

Only the greatest heroes could face a sorcerer-king in person and hope to triumph. Even then, they would have to contend with hundreds of elite bodyguards, cadres of fanatically loyal templars, and centuries' worth of carefully prepared defenses. Sorcerer-kings give little thought to guarding themselves against disloyal subjects, trusting their templars to enforce civic order, but they fear their fellow monarchs and protect themselves accordingly. Any defense that can foil the attacks of another sorcerer-king can block those from lesser mortals as well.

ANCIENT HORRORS

The distant corners of Athas harbor many dark secrets, including inhuman monsters worse than any murderous raider or cruel templar. Shadow giants

and yuan-ti lurk in old palaces or strongholds far from the city-states, weaving dark spells that threaten anyone nearby. In caverns beneath the desert sands, the wormlike psurlons use their mind powers to dominate humans and kindred races.

In the absence of gods, Athas has become a place where elemental powers hold sway. The world is just as hostile to elementals as it is to the mortal races, but creatures such as archons, salamanders, and drakes haunt the vast deserts ringing the Tyr Region. Twisted beasts suffused with the elemental power of the desert roam unchecked, working their capricious will on the shape of the world.

DESPERATE CAUSES

Athas is a callous world in which many would-be heroes are motivated by self-interest and personal ambition. However, a few of the best rise above such attitudes and come to champion great causes.

First and foremost is the Veiled Alliance. In cities and villages throughout Athas, a secret society of arcane spellcasters (and a few others who share their interests) practices the forbidden arts. The Veiled Alliance rejects defiling, and all arcanists in the group are preservers. They avoid the quick and easy route to power, learning to cast spells with care and personal sacrifice to spare the world around them from the damage of arcane magic. The Veiled Alliance opposes defilers everywhere, in particular the sorcerer-kings and their templars. Alliance members work against the oppression of the regimes and safeguard knowledge that the tyrants' agents try to eliminate or bury in templars' vaults.

Another cause to which heroes might rally is that of supporting a benevolent patron or an ethical merchant house. This objective might lack the grandeur of fighting sorcery and oppression, but it remains a worthy goal. Some of the powerful entities on Athas are more benign than others, and heroes might help an idealistic noble reform a city's power structure or assist a trading house against its unscrupulous rivals.

The end of slavery is another cause worth the battle. More than a few heroes join the struggle against slavers when someone dear to them is kidnapped or pressed into service—or, for that matter, when the heroes themselves are enslaved. In the city-states, slave traders are protected by their wealth and the patronage of the sorcerer-kings, but slave tribes and vengeful freelancers strike at slaver outposts and caravans in the desert wilds.

Last but not least, heroes can strive to understand the injuries done to Athas and heal the dying world. Over many centuries, the true history of Athas has been buried by the tyrants and their allies. One could hardly find a more noble cause than piecing together the long-lost truth and searching for a way to slow or stop the desiccation of the world.

ATHASIAN CIVILIZATION

Development and progress in the known lands of Athas rely heavily on the presence of water and food. Most oases can support no more than a few hundred permanent residents, but in a handful of verdant areas or very large oases, bigger settlements can grow. Such is the case with the Seven Cities that still stand (the great city-states of Tyr, Balic, Draj, Gulg, Nibenay, Raam, and Urik), as well as others that have fallen into ruin. Reliable water supplies and wide tracts of arable land provide (or once provided) for a large population. Without water, life is a hardscrabble existence that requires moving from location to location in search of limited resources. Barbarity is all too common in the wastes; a stranger is likely to be an enemy willing to take what he or she needs at weapon's edge.

SOCIAL ORDER

Within the walls of a city-state, every person has a specific place in the social order. Sorcerer-kings rule, supported by nobles and templars—the priests and warriors of the monarchs. Merchants and craftsfolk, as well as warriors in their employ, enjoy positions slightly higher than those of beggars, farmers, herdsmen, and laborers. Slaves toil in the lowest level of society, giving their lives in forced labor, gladiatorial spectacles, or outright sacrifice.

On the other hand, those who dwell in villages or nomadic tribes in the wilderness value freedom and competence, and they believe, perhaps rightly, that city residents lack both. (Of course, the most independent tribes still have leaders and members with more wealth or status than others.) Liberty comes at a high price, however, since the wastelands of Athas are treacherous even for the well prepared.

SORCERER-KINGS

The sorcerer-kings at the center of urban life are sovereigns who rose to power long ago through unchecked arcane might. In all remaining city-states except Tyr, the monarch has ruled for generations; each sorcerer-king is a formidable defiler and employs magic to prolong his or her life to near-immortality. In some cities—most notably Draj and Gulg—the people view the sorcerer-king as a divine being. Worship of and obedience to the ruler is usually mandatory, with templars tasked to enforce this state religion.

Within his or her city, each sorcerer-king has absolute authority. Most reside in fortified palaces teeming with minor officials and intimidating sentries, and they rarely emerge without grand entourages and marching files of watchful guards. In the face of the king's power, common citizens can ask for

nothing more than to be defended, fed, and sheltered. The sorcerer-kings fiercely protect the secrets of arcane magic and brook no rival mages in their cities.

TEMPLARS

Directly under the authority of the sorcerer-king are the templars: priests, officials, and disciples loyal to their ruler. Although a sorcerer-king can be expected to defend and nurture his or her city, the templars manage its day-to-day necessities, from law enforcement to religious services. Some templars wield magical power granted to them by their monarch, but even if they lack such might, all templars enforce the will of the sorcerer-king. They can punish law-breakers, dismiss complaints against favored citizens, detain and abuse those they wish to harass, and seize materials for the good of the state. They are hated and feared by commoners, and in any given city-state, the templar organization is rife with corruption and perfidy. The sorcerer-king seldom intervenes in templars' affairs, no matter how crooked they might be.

NOBLES

The aristocrats of Athasian society usually control farmland and water through hereditary titles that the sorcerer-king granted to their ancestors long ago. They are expected to maintain their holdings and to have private military forces ready to maintain order and repel invasion when necessary. Most noble houses keep large stables of slaves as laborers, soldiers, and gladiators. Competition among the nobles, as well as between nobles and templars, is fierce.

In some cities, the heads of the noble houses form a council that advises the sorcerer-king. At any time, the monarch can call upon the resources, living and otherwise, at a noble's disposal.

MERCHANTS

Athasian merchants as a group include merchant dynasties, tribal merchants, and independent merchants (or free citizens, discussed below).

Merchant dynasties (or houses, as they're often called) are a class of free folk who maintain emporiums, resource-gathering outposts, and trade routes in the city-states and across the hostile wastes. They are citizens of no city and exist outside the normal power structure, although their wealth and influence rivals that of the most prominent nobles. Each merchant house is a family or an alliance of dealers with its own small army of guards and slaves that keeps goods flowing from one region to another. Intrepid dune traders and larger caravans carry merchandise from place to place. Merchant dynasties operate large emporiums in various city-states and pay taxes to the

sorcerer-kings in return for this privilege. Even the most rapacious templars avoid harassing members of merchant houses without good cause. Doing so would risk not only the templars' personal buying power but also the welfare of the city-state.

Tribal merchants operate in a commercial manner similar to that of a merchant house. Many elven tribes are merchants of this type. Some forge alliances with merchant houses, whereas others compete with the great dynasties. Unlike merchant houses, mercantile tribes rarely establish headquarters and outposts. Instead, they travel as an eternal caravan, gathering and selling wares all over the region.

The bazaars of merchant tribes—especially those run by elves—are good sources of illegal or exotic items and experiences. Such marketplaces are also reputed to be shady in other ways, selling shoddy products, running confidence schemes, and committing outright robbery. Merchant tribesfolk try to avoid engaging in too much behavior that might invite the scrutiny of the templars. When a settlement becomes too unfriendly to a particular tribe, the tribe moves on and avoids that place for a few years.

SLAVES

Slaves make up a large portion of the urban population. Some are born into slavery, and others are tribal folk or villagers from distant lands who were seized by slavers and sold into captivity. Templars and nobles also have the power to condemn debtors and criminals to slavery (although dangerous people are executed if enslaving them is considered too risky).

Wealthy Athasians keep slaves as a show of prosperity as well as a source of cheap labor. Most slaveholders have few moral qualms about the practice, arguing that it is better to enslave others than to allow them to starve in freedom. A slave's treatment depends on his usefulness and the affluence of his owner. Reliable and loyal slaves are likely to receive better treatment. Prosperous owners often see their slaves as disposable, whereas poorer owners take better care of their slaves to look after their investment. High-minded folk sometimes crusade to end slavery or at least guarantee standards of decent treatment, but callous brutality toward slaves is commonplace. In many areas of Athas, a slave's life is regarded as belonging to the owner, who can dispose of it as desired.

Each slave is afforded a place according to his or her talents. Most are farmers, laborers, or servants. Those with fighting skills end up as soldiers or gladiators. (The best soldier slaves are trained as such from birth.) A few slaves have talents that earn them spots as artists or entertainers in a household. Skilled slaves can enjoy comfortable lives, but they are always at risk of falling out of favor. Few slaves earn lasting freedom.

FREE CITIZENS

City dwellers who aren't templars, nobles, affiliated merchants, or slaves are citizens. Independent merchants and artisans make up the bulk of this class. Mercenaries, minstrels, monks, priests, masters of the psionic arts, and adventurers or others who wield extraordinary powers make up the rest.

These people are free, but only until a capricious templar or noble judges them guilty of a crime. When that happens, a free citizen becomes a slave. However, this fate usually befalls only the powerless citizens. Those who can defend themselves are rarely harassed by templars, who do not wish to risk losing several soldiers just to acquire one slave.

VILLAGERS

In the unforgiving desert, villages exist only in locales that have valuable resources, important trade crossroads, or defensible positions. A mining settlement, a raiding tribe's base, and a merchant trading post all are considered villages. Independent villages, especially those built by escaped slaves or members of a particular race, are chaotic, colorful places. They have strong or charismatic leaders and allow practices that are frowned upon in city-states (such as the use of primal magic). Of course, given the dangers of the wilderness, any village can disappear or become abandoned overnight.

Some villages are client settlements maintained by city-states, merchant houses, or nobles to provide resources such as minerals or food. Client villages vary in the level of governance (and thereby the oppression and corruption) imposed by the founders. These places are more orderly than independent villages; each has a capable governor, a standing fighting force, and spellcasters or psions who act as guards.

NOMADS

Any people who live a mobile existence can be considered nomads. They survive by moving to wherever the resources are. Some nomadic tribes or bands are racially diverse, and others are racially homogenous. A few tribes enjoy the sponsorship of (and provide services to) a patron, such as a city-state, but most survive independently by herding, hunting, or raiding. A single tribe might resort to all these methods.

Survival on the move isn't easy. Some tribes, especially those made up of raiders, aren't shy about taking what they need from established locals and strangers. Slave tribes raid outlying city-state holdings and caravans in a guerrilla war against their former oppressors, and bandits prey on whomever they perceive to be weak. Most other tribes—those that consist of herders, hunters, merchants, or scavengers—are more likely to trade than to steal.

Like independent villages, nomadic tribes usually have strong leaders who boast military or magical skill. Unless tradition forbids the use of magic, most nomads tolerate it, along with other practices that would get one killed within the borders of a city-state, such as defying authority.

HERMITS

Outcast by choice or by decree, a hermit lives alone in the wastes. Such a person usually settles in one place and survives on what the land offers. His or her residence is hidden, as is any source of water.

ATHASIAN COINAGE

Ceramic coins marked in various denominations are the most common form of money in civilized areas of Athas. Each city-state strikes its own coins, sculpting, glazing, firing, and treating them in specific ways to discourage forgery. The typical ceramic coin—or bit, as it's sometimes called—weighs approximately one-sixth of an ounce and is equivalent in value to a metal coin type: copper bit, silver bit, or gold bit. (For convenience, this book uses the standard DUNGEONS & DRAGONS abbreviations of cp for copper piece, sp for silver piece, and gp for gold piece; just remember that these denominations refer to ceramic, not metal, coins.) Ceramic coins equivalent to platinum pieces are simply gold bits marked with a higher value, and no one issues ceramic coins equivalent to astral diamonds. Talented criminals can make good profits counterfeiting ceramic coins, but if they are caught, the penalties are severe and usually affect the counterfeiter's entire family.

Sorcerer-kings back their cities' ceramic coins with royal wealth and carefully regulate the currency as a means of controlling the population. In merchant emporiums, travelers can exchange the coins of one city-state for those of another for a fee of 5 percent. In practice, few people bother swapping their currency, since most merchants accept coins of any city (though the templars might start cracking down on that custom).

Metal coins exist on Athas, having been found in ancient treasure troves and circulated now and then. Very old coins attract unwanted attention unless the owner pays "taxes" to the right templars and nobles. In addition, merchant houses and minters who serve the sorcerer-kings strike small amounts of metal coins, which have the normal value. Real coinage is a necessary guarantee against the possibility of a monarch abruptly devaluing the ceramic currency or banning the coins of an enemy city. Real coins are also useful for dune traders who deal with villagers or tribes in the wastes, where ceramic coins are just pretty clay chips. Merchant houses prize metal coinage and exchange local ceramic currency for it at full value, but city officials watch these transactions closely. Only merchant houses, nobles, or travelers who deal with such individuals can trade large amounts of ceramic coins for metal equivalents (or vice versa) without arousing suspicion.

Some hermits avoid contact with passing travelers, but others welcome visitors who seem harmless or potentially helpful. Many hermits have forgotten the social graces and come off as endearingly strange, but some are deranged or downright treacherous. A few have real insight or power, and among these are the hermits who have useful secrets to share—if offered sufficient compensation.

MATTERS OF LEARNING

In the urban societies of Athas, knowledge—especially information about arcane magic—is tightly controlled. Those who rule know that truth and enlightenment make the governed less likely to accept the status quo. People who gain abilities that allow them to challenge or escape authority become threats to the stability of the system.

LITERACY

In most city-states, the templars restrict reading and writing. Common citizens and slaves can be executed for being literate. Merchants can be educated enough to keep accounts, although most are fully literate and seldom face repercussions. Nobles, templars, and other servants of the sorcerer-kings are allowed the privilege of reading and writing without fear. Some nobles teach these skills to their most valuable retainers and slaves as well.

Outside the oppressive city-states, literacy is not constrained. Although few denizens of the wastes bother to learn to read and write, the ability is more common in the wilds than in urban areas. The skill becomes a problem only if one is caught and sold into slavery. Then, literacy is best kept secret.

Athasian player characters are assumed to be literate in the languages they speak unless they choose not to be; a character's theme or background might explain how he or she learned to read and write. Literate characters who were not born into nobility probably should not reveal their skill to the templars.

LANGUAGES

Athasian civilization is old, and the Common language is nearly universal. It came into being in ancient times before the peoples of the world divided into different races. Almost every natural creature capable of speech can speak at least a little Common. The table below shows languages known to exist on Athas.

Deep Speech once served as a shared tongue among Underdark races. Many of these races are no more, but the gith—the degenerate descendants of servants to the now-vanished illithid race—still speak that language.

Draconic is an artificial tongue devised to serve as the language of arcane magic. The creator of the dragonborn race gave it to his children as their own.

Dwarven has its roots in Primordial, leading some to speculate that the dwarves came to Athas from the Elemental Chaos long ago. The history of the dwarven people has been lost. No one alive on Athas can read the Davek script, and dwarves are illiterate in their own native language. The hejkins speak a debased form of Dwarven.

Elven developed in the Lands Within the Wind (see “Cosmology,” page 17) as a form of Common, and it survives today among the elven tribes. The elves find it useful to have a language they can use to communicate with one another without being understood by strangers and travelers.

The Thri-Kreen language, unique to the mantis-folk, includes rasps, buzzes, and clicks that members of other races find difficult to duplicate. Most thri-kreen in the Tyr Region do not read or write; the Chachik script is an art preserved only in the thri-kreen homelands in the far west.

LANGUAGES

Language	Spoken by	Script
Abyssal	Demons, gnolls	Barazhad
Common	Humans, halflings, most speaking creatures	Common
Deep Speech	Gith, anakores, psurlons	Rellanic
Draconic	Wizards, dragonborn	Iokharic
Dwarven	Dwarves, hejkins, muls	Davek
Elven	Elves, eladrin, other fey	Rellanic
Giant	Goliaths, minotaurs, giants, tareks	Barazhad
Primordial	Elementals, genasi	Barazhad
Supernal	Devils	Supernal
Thri-Kreen	Thri-kreen	Chachik

THE MARCH OF TIME

The sorcerer-kings make sure that hardly anyone knows the true age of Athas. Regardless, most Athasians are too concerned with day-to-day living and survival to wonder about what happened in the past. People suppose that things are more or less as they have always been.

Years on Athas are named, not numbered, and recorded by the Calendar of Kings. By this calendar, the current year is the Year of Priest's Defiance, in the 190th King's Age. Last year was the Year of Desert's Slumber, and next year will be the Year of Wind's Reverence. Every 11 years an eclipse occurs, and every 45 years the Messenger—a comet that turns night to day—blazes through the sky. Most Athasians find this complicated calendar less than useful; they rely on the templars to tell them about important events related to the passage of years.

Months and seasons are commonly counted in a simple calendar known as the Merchant's Year, which is based on the subtle motions of the sun and the weather that comes to the Tyr Region. This 375-day year has three “seasons,” each with four 30-day months and one five-day festival week in the middle.



High Sun

- Sorrow
- Smolder
- Festival of the Highest Sun (start of the year)
- Scorch
- Morrow

Sun Descending

- Rest
- Gather
- Festival of the Cooling Sun
- Breeze
- Mist
- (Lowsun, the midpoint of the year)

Sun Ascending

- Bloom
- Haze
- Festival of the Soaring Sun
- Hoard
- Wind

During the three festival weeks, celebrations and gatherings differ from locale to locale and range from pleasant fairs to grim sacrifices. Merchants use festival weeks to take stock, unload unwanted or overstocked products, and prepare for the next third of the year. A festival is a time of good deals in the emporiums.

SECRETS OF POWER

The sorcerer-kings and their templars strive to keep the people of Athas ignorant of the true history of the world and the secret forces that move through it. The effort is in vain, for Athas is an innately magical world that offers many paths to power. Wise druids guard their sacred groves and hidden oases with the powers of the primal spirits; brilliant psions study the mental arts and learn to slay with a thought.

HISTORY OF ATHAS

Since common Athasians are forbidden to read or write, few people know the annals of their world. They do know that Athas used to be lush and green, rich with water and thronged with cities and realms. This knowledge is no secret; any traveler can see the evidence of the former world crumbling in the deserts. Ancient bridges span empty watercourses, dilapidated castles sag on hilltops over deserted towns, shrines to vanished gods lie dusty and silent, and the ruins of great cities are filled with sand and monsters—all remnants of the time known as the Green Age. Fleeting tales whisper of eras that preceded the Green Age, leaving older and even more mysterious ruins, but no definite knowledge of such fantastically ancient days remains in the world unless the sorcerer-kings know more.

The circumstances that ended the Green Age are unclear. Some say that the kingdoms of that era fell into centuries of vicious conflict, wars in which spells of nightmarish power spread destruction throughout the world. Others say that the fearsome Dragon of Tyr came to Athas in a falling star and laid waste to all domains. What is known for sure is that the Red Age followed, centuries of chaos and suffering in which the civilizations of the Green Age died. Cities such as Bodach, Celik, and Waverly fell during this time. Eventually, the wars of the Red Age guttered out, leaving a blasted and desolate world that endures today. Many people refer to the current period as the Desert Age.

The details of the calamity that befell Athas are not the only facts in dispute. Some say the Desert Age began a few centuries ago, while others claim that it is two or three thousand years old. In some stories, the current sorcerer-kings are the same immortal rulers who battled one another long ago. According to other accounts, they are the descendants of the sorcerers who put an end to the Red Age wars and founded the known city-states in the few habitable spots left in the world.

PSIONICS AND MAGIC

Psionic power is prevalent on Athas, and many natives practice the psionic arts. Widely known as “the Way,” psionics serves the same purposes that arcane and divine magic serve on other worlds. It offers a potent weapon against enemies, a sturdy shield against harm, and the ability to perceive hidden things. Most nobles and merchants employ talented psionic masters to advise them, spy for them, and foil the efforts of masters who work for their rivals. Poor or nomadic Athasians who miss the chance to train their powers formally can develop wild talents, psionic abilities that can be surprisingly powerful. More than one gladiator has died in surprise after a foe in the arena used a wild talent to telekinetically grab a discarded weapon or teleport a potion fruit to a wounded ally.

Arcane magic is dangerous and uncommon. Without taking special care—by using the technique of “preserving”—an arcane spellcaster can defile the immediate surroundings by casting a spell. Fundamental vitality is leeched away: Plants wither, animals and people suffer crippling pain, and the soil at the site of the casting is drained such that nothing will grow in that spot again. Because of this harm done to the world, those who use arcane magic are hated and persecuted across Athas. They must practice their arts in secret or seek the patronage of a sorcerer-king and gain the ruler’s sanction for their spellcasting.

Primal magic is more widespread than arcane magic, although it is rarely practiced in the cities. Out in the barrens, wielders of primal magic serve as healers and defenders of their villages or tribes. Shamans, druids, wardens, and other primal wielders are regarded with deep suspicion by the templars, who dislike the notion of magic that lies outside the control of their tyrannical overlords.

Divine magic is virtually unknown on Athas. The gods of old have been silent for dozens of centuries. The ruins of ancient shrines and fragments of crumbling texts in the sorcerer-kings’ libraries suggest that the gods were more active in the past. In the absence of true divinities, Athasians turn to other types of gods. Some sorcerer-kings pretend to godhood and build false mythologies, encouraging their subjects to worship them. Other Athasians venerate the primal spirits of the world or turn to cults of demons or primordials. Unfortunately for worshipers, a primordial makes for a grim and uncaring deity, taking little notice of its mortal servants.

COSMOLOGY

Most Athasians know nothing of the worlds and planes that exist beyond their own. Very few scholars have studied such topics at length, and their writings are locked away in the vaults of the sorcerer-kings.

All Athasians know the night sky and its familiar constellations, and many peoples assign different meanings to the motions of the stars and planets. Athas has two moons, Ral and Guthay. Ral, a mottled green in color, is the closer of the two. Sages who have scried Ral report that it is covered in great green seas and mountain-islands of dizzying heights. Guthay, the smaller and more distant moon, is a golden orb mantled in steaming mists beneath which lie scarlet jungles and marshy seas. Stories tell of ancient moon-gates on Athas that lead to both Ral and Guthay, but they function only at unpredictable intervals.

Travelers in the wastes tell of the Lands Within the Wind, an otherworld of magic and enchantment that exists alongside the material world. Known in some ancient texts as “the Feywild” or “the Kingdoms Invisible,” this otherworld seems to be an echo or reflection of Athas. It is absent from most places around the planet, but pockets of this realm lie in remote deserts and mountains, especially the Forest Ridge. These pockets are small; scholars believe that the total amount of the plane remaining in existence, combining all fragments scattered across Athas, would fit inside the walls of Tyr. The Lands Within the Wind are home to the eladrin, an elflike race of mysterious powers. A traveler could walk right past an eladrin palace and never see it because it lies in the other plane instead of on Athas.

The Gray is another echo of Athas, an otherworld of shadows and ghosts. In this realm, the restless spirits of the dead linger amid the haunted ruins of great cities. Some sources call this otherworld “the Shadowfell” or “the Plane of Shadow.” Like the Lands Within the Wind, the Gray is home to strange and powerful creatures, including mighty shadow giants, fearsome nightmare beasts, and a race of devils that traveled to the Gray when the connection between their home plane and Athas withered. Unlike the eladrin of the fey realm, the denizens of the Shadowfell are much more hostile to mortals who venture into their domain.

Many erudite thinkers believe that the Gray acts as a barrier between Athas and other realms beyond, and that long ago, the domains of the gods could be found in starry seas beyond the Gray. But the Astral Sea has been empty for ages. No godly domains remain within reach of mortal travelers, and the easy connections between the plane and Athas have been severed. The few Athasians who have journeyed beyond the Gray into the depths of the Astral Sea (usually agents of the sorcerer-kings, dispatched to seek long-lost treasures) have found little more than desolate ruins and terrible abominations.



Underlying the rest of existence is the Elemental Chaos, a vast, churning realm from which all the energy and elements of the world were formed. Some sources call this realm “the Elemental Planes” or “the Inner Planes.” In cosmological terms, Athas is close to the Elemental Chaos, and vortexes such as volcanoes, sand gyres, and desert flats known as “anvils” link the planet to corresponding parts of the seething realm. Elemental influences grow steadily stronger and more chaotic as one travels farther away from the Tyr Region, suggesting that the presence of civilization or natural life holds true elemental power at bay (or that in the distant past, the region was shielded from unchecked elemental manifestations). In the depths of the Elemental Chaos lies the Abyss, from which come the demons that plague Athas when they are summoned by reckless rituals or planar rifts.

RACES OF ATHAS

"Until you learn otherwise, it's best to assume that everyone you meet intends to rob you, enslave you, or eat you."

— Zandar, mul mercenary

Savage, exotic, and unforgiving, the world of Athas is unique. This harsh environment has given birth to a number of new peoples and monsters, including two character races: muls, an incredibly tough race of half-dwarves, and the mantislike thri-kreen, a swift and deadly insectile race.

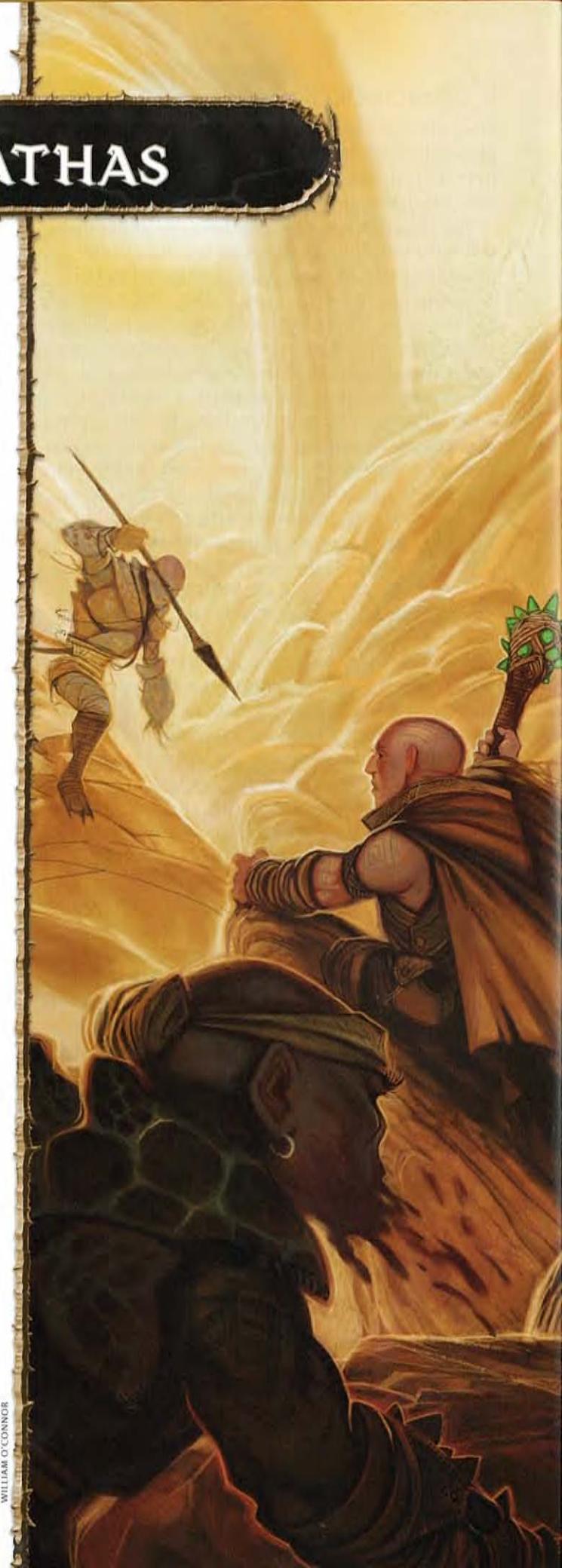
Many of the more familiar races of the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game roam the wastes of Athas. However, these beings have adapted over the centuries to their brutal home and bear little resemblance to their counterparts on other worlds. For example, the elves of Athas aren't flighty forest dwellers who dance in the starlight and celebrate the living world around them. Athas has few forests to speak of, and its elves are thieving nomads and raiders who wander the deserts and wastes. Similarly, halflings aren't good-natured riverfolk known for their amiability and pluck. They're fierce savages and headhunters, primal warriors who are notorious for indulging in cannibalism. Other races have similar variations from their expected roles.

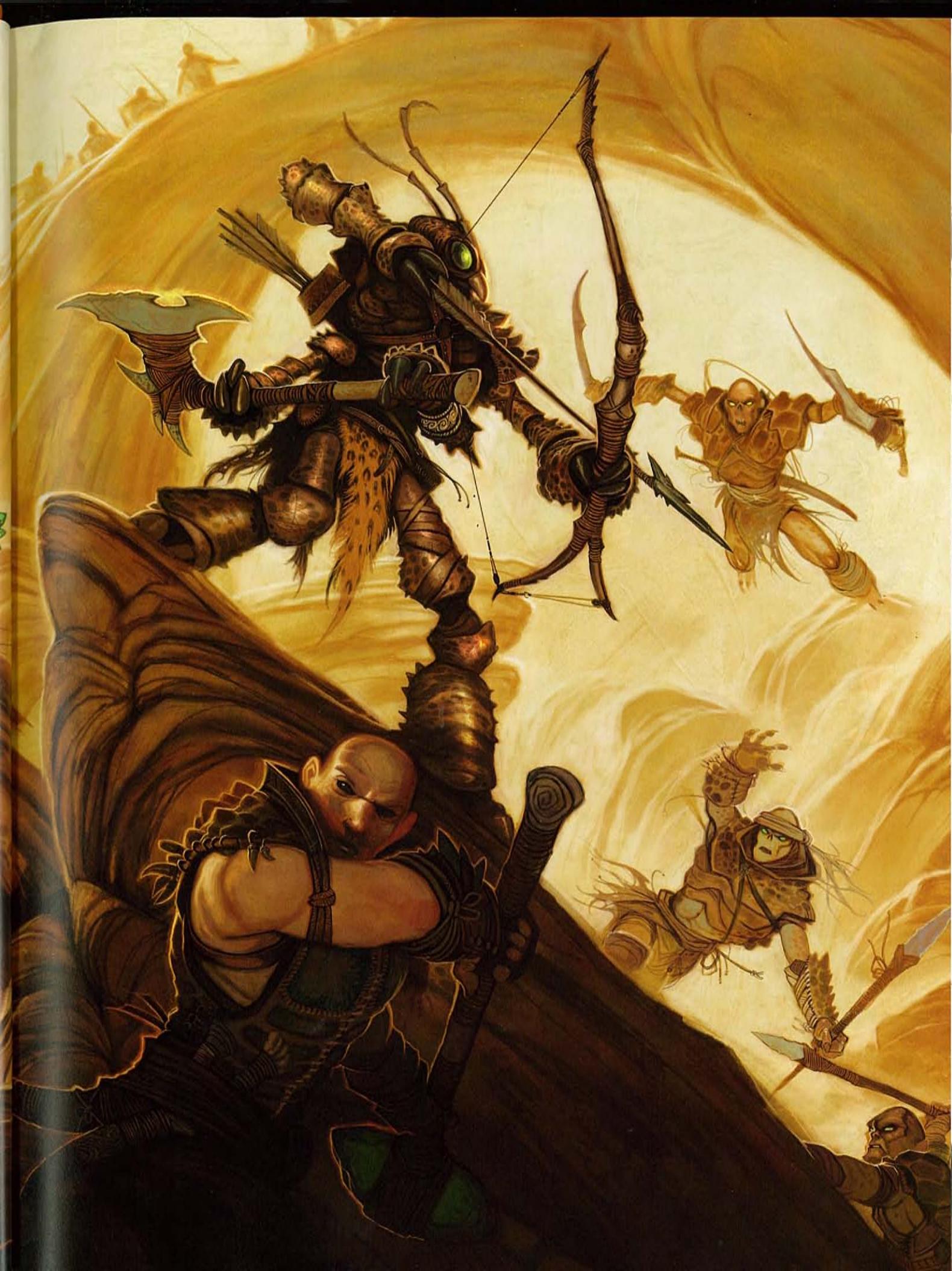
This chapter's races follow the same format as the ones in the *Player's Handbook*. However, instead of describing example adventurers, the entries in this book provide racial backgrounds, following the background rules in *Player's Handbook 2*.

This chapter looks at new character races, new approaches to familiar races, and new racial paragon paths. It includes the following sections.

- ◆ **Mul:** A mix of dwarf and human bloodlines, muls combine the hardiness of the former race with the drive and flexibility of the latter race. Muls are phenomenally tough and enduring.
- ◆ **Thri-Kreen:** Insectlike hunters of the wastelands, the thri-kreen are quick and deadly warriors.
- ◆ **Peoples of Athas:** The world is home to cultural variants of familiar character races such as elves, dwarves, and halflings.
- ◆ **Racial Paragon Paths:** The mul battle slave and the thri-kreen predator are the epitomes of the races they represent. In addition, a new goliath paragon path, the half-giant thug, provides goliath characters with a distinctively Athasian option for their paragon tier.

WILLIAM O'CONNOR





MUL

Tireless and unyielding, born to fight



RACIAL TRAITS

Average Height: 5' 8"-6' 4"
Average Weight: 200-300 lb.

Ability Scores: +2 Constitution; +2 Strength or Wisdom

Size: Medium

Speed: 6 squares

Vision: Normal

Languages: Common, Dwarven

Skill Bonuses: +2 Endurance, +2 Streetwise

Born of Two Races: Select either human or dwarf. You can take feats that have your choice as a prerequisite (as well as those specifically for muls), as long as you meet any other requirements.

Mul Vitality: Increase your number of healing surges by one.

Tireless: You need to sleep 6 hours in a 72-hour period (instead of a 24-hour period) to gain the benefit of an extended rest.

Incredible Toughness: You have the *incredible toughness* power.

Incredible Toughness

Mul Racial Power

Through dogged determination and sheer physical hardness, you shrug off an effect that would daunt a lesser person.

Encounter

No Action

Personal

Trigger: You start your turn.

Effect: You end any ongoing damage or any dazed, slowed, stunned, or weakened condition currently affecting you.

Muls are half-dwarves, descended from the union of a human and a dwarf. They have the stature, agility, and mental flexibility of humankind, coupled with the physical resilience and endurance of dwarves—a rare combination of qualities that makes muls more than a simple blend of the two races.

Because they are strong, tough, quick, and blessed with fantastic endurance, muls are highly prized as slaves. In fact, most muls are born into slavery.

Play a mul if you want . . .

- ♦ to be tough as nails.
- ♦ to play a hero who fought his or her way out of the bonds of slavery.
- ♦ to be a member of a race that favors the fighter, barbarian, and battlemind classes.



PHYSICAL QUALITIES

Muscular and fit, muls resemble powerfully built humans. Although one might expect muls to average somewhere between dwarf and human stature, they are taller than most humans. Male muls have truly heroic proportions—broad shoulders, narrow waists, powerful thighs, and thick arms. Females, while not as heavily muscled, are tall, strong, and athletic. Many muls of both genders are hairless, although some grow topknots of dark hair. Their faces hint at their dwarven ancestry, with strong, stern features and small, swept-back ears that come to subtle points. Mul skin and eye colors are as varied as they are in humans, but many muls have a copper or deeply bronzed complexion, and a few have eyes of a startling honey-gold or green-gold color.

Muls have little collective racial identity and adopt the dress and fashion of their homes. However, they are fond of tattoos and favor simple geometric patterns rather than depictions of creatures or objects. In this way, they honor their dwarven heritage with designs reminiscent of dwarven motifs.

Muls have life spans comparable to those of humans.

PLAYING A MUL

Most muls begin their lives as slaves. Slaveholders throughout the Tyr Region have long known that tremendous hardiness and stamina result from mixing human and dwarven lines. Muls make outstanding gladiators, slave warriors, and heavy laborers, enduring toil and hardships that would kill lesser folk.

Muls who set their hearts on freedom are difficult to keep in chains. Some escape to the wilds and become raiders or join tribes of ex-slaves, whereas others who escape become mercenaries and sell their fighting skills to whomever they can. Muls who don't flee captivity can win their freedom in the arena or by completing a dangerous task for their masters. A few highly prized gladiators receive so many privileges and comforts that they are effectively free, enjoying great latitude to go where they want and do as they wish. The Dungeon Master might have mul heroes start the campaign as slaves. If not, assume that your mul character has already won his or her freedom by the time the game begins.

WHY ARE THEY CALLED MULS?

The word “mul” is derived from the Dwarven term *mul-zhennedar*, which means “strength.” Pronunciation varies throughout the Tyr Region; the word can be pronounced as *mool*, *mull*, or *mule*, although this last variation is considered derogatory and might start a fight. Given the derivation of the name, sages who care about such matters regard *mull* as the most accurate pronunciation.

Muls are hard, driven, pragmatic folk with little remorse or sympathy in their hearts. Many grow up under the lash, having been taken from their parents while very young and subjected to brutal training for the arena or grinding toil in fields or quarries. Consequently, muls have a hard time offering friendship and trust to anyone. More than a few muls, scarred by the hardships of their upbringing, spend their days as bitter, violent misanthropes. Others are suspicious, grasping mercenaries who have learned never to lift a finger on behalf of another person without establishing what they will gain from providing aid. Despite their tendency to be sullen or self-centered, muls can learn to work alongside others. Growing up in the slave pits and the underclass of society taught them how to forge alliances and understandings; their survival demanded nothing less.

Mul Characteristics: Angry, blunt, callous, driven, fierce, honest, skeptical, stern, stoic, stubborn

Male Names: Aram, Borthomar, Bost, Darok, Darus, Durn, Eben, Erekard, Gard, Harask, Marok, Morg, Rikard, Rikus, Sanozar, Uskan, Zedath, Zorus

Female Names: Aisa, Aivel, Brithis, Callia, Demosis, Elina, Faivel, Himithis, Laivi, Narisel, Niva, Raina, Reshel, Saditha, Tirshel, Uisel, Zerima

MUL BACKGROUNDS

Combining dwarven toughness and human ingenuity, muls inherit the best features of both races. Although muls can serve in many ways, most find their lives shaped by a noble's desire to create a worthy champion or a merchant's calculated investment in a gladiator for the arenas.

Broken, Beaten, Scarred: Your scars and battered features tell your tale. You have known little more than abuse and hardship in your life, your bones broken and your spirit tested as you toiled for cruel masters. What sort of work did you do? Were you a common laborer, or did you fight in the arenas? Why were you targeted for so much abuse? Were you insubordinate, or did you suffer under a tyrannical master? How did you escape your tormentors?

Associated Skills: Endurance, Heal

Freedom's Call: You have been a slave all your life, and now you want nothing more than to be free. Who owns you? What are you prepared to do to win your freedom? What will you do once you have it?

Associated Skills: Endurance, Intimidate

Tattooed Warrior: Most enslaved muls bear tattoos that designate ownership, occupation, victories, or training. These decorations separate the seasoned muls from the green ones and help owners identify their chattel (since few owners bother to learn their slaves' names). What sorts of tattoos decorate your body? Do you have only a few, or many?

Associated Skills: Intimidate, Streetwise

THRI-KREEN

Alien to most people of Athas, these desert-dwelling creatures live for the thrill of the hunt

RACIAL TRAITS

Average Height: 5' 4"-6' 6"

Average Weight: 180-240 lb.

Ability Scores: +2 Dexterity; +2 Strength or Wisdom

Size: Medium

Speed: 7 squares

Vision: Low-light

Languages: Common, Thri-Kreen

Skill Bonuses: +2 Athletics, +2 Nature

Multiple Arms: Once per turn, you can draw or sheathe a weapon (or retrieve or stow an item stored on your person) as a free action instead of a minor action.

Natural Jumper: A thri-kreen is always considered to have a running start when jumping.

Torpor: Rather than sleep, thri-kreen enter a torpid state. In this state, you remain aware of your surroundings, and you require only 4 hours of torpor (rather than 6 hours of sleep) to gain the benefit of an extended rest.

Thri-Kreen Claws: You have the *thri-kreen claws* power.

Thri-Kreen Claws

Thri-Kreen Racial Power

You quickly lash out with all your claws, tearing at nearby enemies.

Encounter

Minor Action

Melee 1

Target: One, two, or three enemies

Attack: Strength, Dexterity, or Wisdom + 3 (6 at 11th level and 9 at 21st level) vs. AC

Hit: 1d8 + Strength, Dexterity, or Wisdom modifier damage. You gain a bonus to the damage roll equal to the number of targets.

Level 11: 2d8 + Strength, Dexterity, or Wisdom modifier damage.

Level 21: 3d8 + Strength, Dexterity, or Wisdom modifier damage.

Thri-kreen are mantislike humanoids that hunt in packs throughout the wastes of Athas. They have adapted to the harsh climate and are experts at surviving with only scarce resources. Thri-kreen are nimble, and many also have psionic abilities.

Play a thri-kreen if you want . . .

- ♦ to be a pragmatic hunter who knows how to survive in a harsh world.
- ♦ to roleplay a race with beliefs and practices far different from those of humans.
- ♦ to be a member of a race that favors the monk, druid, and ranger classes.

PHYSICAL QUALITIES

The insectoid thri-kreen have six limbs and are covered in tough, sandy-colored chitinous plates. Their lowest pair of limbs is used as legs, and their upper pair of limbs serves as arms. The middle set of limbs is small but dexterous, and the thri-kreen use them for fine manipulation, leaving heavy work to the stronger upper arms. Both the middle and the upper pairs of limbs have three clawed fingers and one opposable thumb. In combat, thri-kreen hold weapons or shields in their upper limbs, since the middle pair lacks the strength for this purpose and using both sets of limbs would be awkward and unwieldy.

Swift and athletic, thri-kreen are natural climbers and jumpers. Their wedge-shaped heads have large compound eyes, two (mostly vestigial) antennae, and powerful mandibles. They can speak an accented form of Common but prefer their own language, which is easier to pronounce with their mouth parts.

Thri-kreen have short life spans and rarely reach 30 years of age.

PLAYING A THRI-KREEN

Thri-kreen minds, behavior, and physiology often seem bizarre to members of other races. But despite their fierce appearance, the insectlike humanoids can be loyal and courageous companions. Thri-kreen have most of the same needs and morals as do other races; they simply prioritize those needs and morals differently. Most important, thri-kreen judge others solely on physical and mental ability. The lazy and weak deserve contempt, regardless of race; likewise, strength and cleverness merit respect no matter who demonstrates these qualities.

Thri-kreen view everything through the lens of the hunt and the predator-prey relationship. Their basic social units are the clutch and the pack. A clutch is a small group (no more than six) to which an individual kreen has a close bond. The concept of the clutch combines "team," "friends," and "family." Every thri-kreen has a birth clutch that consists of all surviving members of the group of eggs from which it hatched. Later in life, each kreen forms one or more other clutches, perhaps centered around adventuring groups or specialized hunting parties. A pack is a larger social unit that consists of any number of clutches. If deprived of a clutch, a thri-kreen is biologically compelled to seek out a new group to join.

Obeying their pack instincts, thri-kreen try to find their place in any group. They use a series of challenges to determine the pecking order, assessing their possible clutchmates in secret or, when necessary, demanding trial by combat. Thri-kreen seize



leadership of groups in which they're the strongest members, but they are willing to accept subordinate roles in the presence of powerful allies. They take orders from the pack or clutch leader without hesitation, eager to fulfill the duties of their position. Despite the apparent autocracy of a kreen group, any member is free to voice its opinion and offer advice. Indeed, each thri-kreen is expected to have expertise in matters the others do not. All must contribute to the good of the clutch and the success of the hunt.

In thri-kreen culture, combat is just another kind of hunt. Thri-kreen rarely fight out of malice and see no need for aggression unless it is the best means of obtaining the resources they need to survive. Self-defense is another matter—a thri-kreen who has been attacked can't fathom any response other than a violent counterattack. After a victorious battle, a kreen's first instinct is to collect any useful possessions that belonged to the attacker or (in the case of beasts) to harvest the body for food.

Many thri-kreen develop psionic abilities. Those who fully pursue these gifts often become monks or battleminds, taking advantage of their physical talents. Some attribute this natural ability to racial memory. Each member of the race is born with the clutch mentality and an innate knowledge of the Thri-Kreen language. When a thri-kreen encounters a place or an item that played an important part in kreen history, it might see flashes of the past—an upwelling of racial memories long suppressed but present in all kreen.

Thri-Kreen Characteristics: Distinctive, dutiful, inscrutable, observant, predatory, single-minded, tough

Male and Female Names: Cha'ka, Chuka-tet, Drik-chkit, Hakka, Ka'cha, Kacht-ta, Ka'tho, Lakta-cho, Pak'cha, Pik-ik-cha, Sa'Relka, T'Chai, Tak-tha

THRI-KREEN BACKGROUNDS

Thri-kreen are a people of the deep desert. Most are nomads of the Western Hinterlands and have little experience in cities, but some come from large packs of raiders that plague the Ivory Triangle and the Tablelands. Kreen estranged from their people form new clutches with companions of other races.

DUTIES OF A CLUTCHMATE

The clutch mindset influences all thri-kreen actions, and the duties to the clutch are many.

- ◆ Accept your place in the clutch and follow the leader's commands, for the clutch must be orderly.
- ◆ Challenge a weak leader, for the clutch must be strong.
- ◆ Offer advice to the leader, for the clutch must be wise.
- ◆ Protect the clutch and clutchmates, for the clutch must endure.
- ◆ First fulfill your duty to the clutch, then to the pack, then to other kreen, then to intelligent creatures, and then to prey, for the clutch must be foremost.



Last of the Clutch: As a result of battle or tragedy, the other members of your birth clutch were slain or captured, and you are the only one left. Do you look for new allies worthy of being in your new clutch? Do you try to find and rescue your imprisoned clutchmates? Was it your failure that led to your clutch's fate? Has it been difficult to survive on your own?

Associated Skills: Endurance, Insight

Explorer of the World: The odd creatures around you are covered in soft flesh instead of chitin, and they exude a delicious scent. What more can you learn about them? Does their lack of ties to clutch and pack worry you? They might be untrustworthy. Why do they lie down and close their eyes for hours on end? Perhaps they are weak or lazy. Is it even possible for these creatures to be worthwhile clutchmates?

Associated Skills: Diplomacy, Heal

Follower of the Great One: You experienced a potent vision—a triggered racial memory that showed you images of the Great One, a thri-kreen khan who once ruled your race and worked alongside humans. Do you seek to restore the alliance between your people and other humanoids? Do you delve deeper into thri-kreen history? Has your experience awakened latent abilities and led you to become a psionic character?

Associated Skills: Diplomacy, History

PEOPLES OF ATHAS

Many different kinds of intelligent creatures populate Athas, and the streets of the city-states are crowded with folk of a dozen kindreds: humans, dwarves, genasi, elves, goliaths, muls, shifters, tareks, tieflings, thri-kreen, and more. The typical city dweller rarely gives a second glance to fantastic or monstrous individuals as long as they seem willing to trade or talk instead of fight and they don't act in a threatening manner.



CHARACTER BACKGROUNDS

You can pick as many background elements for your character as you like, but three is usually a good number. When selecting elements, choose from the following categories.

Racial: Racial backgrounds show how a *DARK SUN* race differs from the familiar presentation in the *Player's Handbook*. They also help decide why you became an adventurer and establish your character's personality.

Regional: Choosing a homeland gives your character grounding, helping you establish his or her perspective and knowledge about the world. See Chapter 5 for regional background elements.

Other: Other background elements, such as those found in *Player's Handbook 2* and other sources, can put the finishing touches on your character, offering key facets that help make your character unique.

Regardless of how many background elements you select, when you create a character, choose one of the following benefits (with your Dungeon Master's consent):

- ◆ Gain a +2 bonus to checks with one of the skills associated with your background.
- ◆ Add one skill associated with your background to your class's skill list before choosing your trained skills.
- ◆ Gain one language associated with your background.

DRAGONBORN (DRAY)

Created many centuries ago by the sorcerer-king of Giustenal (page 162) to serve as a race of sorcerous warriors, dragonborn—or dray, as they call themselves—are a strong, resilient race of dragonlike humanoids. Most dray were cast out of their home by their creator, Dregoth, and a handful of dragonborn survived when Giustenal was destroyed. From those ancient refugees arose a race of mercenaries, sorcerers, and slave traders known for their calculating (and sometimes duplicitous) ways.

The dragonborn are not a numerous people. They live in tight-knit clans that often share a secret citadel or tower in the wastes. Clan members roam far from their mysterious retreats, looking after the group's interests. Some dragonborn clans take part in the slave trade, hiring raiders or mercenaries of other races to serve as their slave catchers. Dragonborn who object to trafficking in slaves often earn a living as deal brokers, moneylenders, or speculators. They are also renowned as sorcerers for hire. Dragonborn clans strike deals with the sorcerer-kings of various city-states, paying richly for licenses or dispensations to practice arcane magic in those locations. Nobles, wealthy merchants, and templars have need of a

sorcerer clan's services and pay very well for them. Naturally, members of the Veiled Alliance (and anyone else suspicious of arcane magic) regard dragonborn with suspicion.

Dragonborn live by a brutally pragmatic philosophy rooted in their exile from Giustenal. They tend to be avaricious, sly, and amoral, although they carefully observe the exact wording of any deal or bargain they strike, since it's good business to have a reputation for living up to agreements. The dray learned long ago that they can rely only upon one another, and they are fiercely loyal to their clan brothers and sisters. A clan gathers from far and wide to avenge an insult or an injury to one of its own, and the group won't rest until the vendetta is settled.

DRAGONBORN BACKGROUNDS

Your clan likely has business dealings—some legitimate, and some less so—in several city-states. Not all dragonborn are slavers and defilers, but most people you meet assume that you might be.

Clanblade: You grew up in an insular dragonborn clan. Early in your youth, you were apprenticed to an older relative who taught you how to make a living as a smuggler, mercenary, or slaver. Who was your mentor, and is he or she still alive? To whom have you sold your skills since? Did you treat your employers fairly, or did you cheat them in some way?

Associated Skills: Insight, Streetwise

Spellscale: You are heir to a tradition of arcane magic dating back to the earliest days of your race. You sell your magical talents openly, bearing a dispensation purchased by your clan. Are there city-states where you are not permitted to practice? How do you react when people scorn you for your magic?

Associated Skills: Arcana, Intimidate

DWARF

The dwarves of Athas have the stature of their kindred in other worlds—short, sturdy, and thickly muscled. Most dwarves have deep tans from lives spent toiling in the hot sun, with wide, callused hands and feet. They usually have little or no hair; the flowing beards that are the pride of male dwarves on other worlds are never seen on the Athasian variety.

Dwarves are known for their stoicism and single-mindedness. They fix their minds on the task at hand, whether it is a challenging feat of engineering, an intricate work of craft, a struggle for survival, or a quest for revenge. It's just not in their nature to abandon a task or leave work half done; dwarves set aside the object of their focus only after much grumbling and coercion.

Dwarves have no lands of their own and live among the other folk of Athas. They reside both in cities and in the countryside, and they tend to be builders and farmers instead of nomads or raiders.

Despite the current absence of dwarven cities or strongholds, dwarves have a rich cultural history passed down from generation to generation in great sagas and secret traditions. Long ago, dwarven cities were the marvel of the world, and the dwarves keep the tales of their past glories and bitter defeats alive across the centuries.

DWARF BACKGROUNDS

Although the dwarves of present-day Athas carve no great citadels and retain few of their ancient holdings, your people remain the most talented stoneworkers and engineers in the world. Dwarf-made wells, cisterns, and canals are marvels of design, and dwarven metalwork—rare though it might be—is the finest to be found.

Desert Miner: Great toil often yields great rewards. You come from a clan of miners who laboriously scratch and claw buried treasures from the bones of the earth. Perhaps your clan's mine is played out, and now you search for a new deposit to work, or maybe raiders destroyed your family's holdings and scattered your group to the four winds. Do your kinfolk still wait for you somewhere? Are you motivated by the dream of founding a rich holding of your own someday?

Associated Skills: Dungeoneering, Nature

Skilled Artisan: Your clan resides in one of the city-states, where its members are respected as expert artisans or engineers. Perhaps you left the clan after striking back against the oppression of the templars or nobles, or maybe you discovered that you had no passion for the work and left to find your fortune elsewhere. What trade do your kin follow—are they armorers, stonemasons, or well diggers? Are they free or slave, poor or well off? Why did you leave?

Associated Skills: Insight, Streetwise

THE VANQUISHED PEOPLES

Long ago, other races lived on Athas, races that do not exist today. Some were eradicated in ancient wars, some were hunted down by agents of the sorcerer-kings, and others died out with the passing of the old world. Devas, gnomes, kobolds, ogres, orcs, and trolls are among the races that no longer exist on Athas.

However, the Dungeon Master is free to modify this list of vanquished peoples in his or her own *DARK SUN* campaign. Even if a race was wiped out long ago, it's possible for members of that race to appear as exceptions (with the Dungeon Master's consent). For example, if you want to play a gnome, your character might be a planar explorer stranded on Athas or a hero from the past who was hurled forward to the current age by a magical convulsion. You might be the only one of your kind in the world, but there's no reason you can't play the character you want to play.

ELADRIN

Dune traders spread tales of cities hidden in mirages, oases that vanish with the rising sun, and travelers carried off to noble palaces invisible to the mortal eye. The stories of hidden kingdoms in the desert are true—in part. They describe the realms of the eladrin, denizens of the Lands Within the Wind (also sometimes called the Feywild).

Eladrin are almost completely unknown to most Athasians. They are thought to be a perilous race of enchanters who ward their secret towers and unseen palaces with madness and illusion. In truth, the fey realm has all but vanished, and the few eladrin outposts that remain there are crumbling into ruin as their land is burned away by defiling magic.

Eladrin regard their hidden realms as the last vestige of civilization remaining in (or near) the world. This attitude makes eladrin haughty, condescending, decadent, and demanding. The race abandoned arcane magic long ago, viewing it as the agency by which their home plane was destroyed. Instead, they turned to psionic power and delved deeply into the Way; eladrin psions are among the most knowledgeable and dangerous individuals on Athas. The very concept of using arcane magic is anathema to eladrin, and they fiercely guard the remaining fragments of their home against reckless spellcasting.

Eladrin adventurers are rare in the mortal world. Some are exiles, driven out of their native realms under a death sentence for practicing forbidden magic. Some are spies or messengers, tasked with watching the sorcerer-kings or rallying opposition to the tyrants. Most are refugees who have left their fading homelands behind in search of a new way of life.

ELADRIN BACKGROUNDS

Behind you lies a childhood in the fabled Lands Within the Wind amid the fading splendor of a dying world. For good or for ill, your fate now lies in the mortal realm.

Haunted Survivor: The ancestral realms of your people are collapsing and decaying. Every year, more and more of the Lands Within the Wind vanish forever. You have become a rootless vagabond, your own home already destroyed. Are you a grim avenger, determined to exact meaning from that destruction? Do you hope to find another home to call your own, or are you content to live for the moment, taking what pleasure you can from a world soon to pass away?

Associated Skills: Endurance, Nature

Veiled Warrior: In a few places, the ancient lords of the eladrin maintain their shrinking fey domains and guard them from mortal knowledge. To ensure that the secret doors to those realms remain hidden, the eladrin dispatch spies and watchers into the mortal world. You are one of these veiled warriors, and it is your duty to study mortal affairs—and, when you can,

to act against those whose defiling or recklessness puts your homeland at risk. Whom do you serve? What enemies do you oppose to keep your home safe?

Associated Skills: Nature, Stealth

ELF

Elves are tall, long-legged desert rovers whose tribes wander the face of Athas. Traders and herders, elves rarely stay in one place for long. They are also charlatans, entertainers, thieves, and raiders. Each of the great city-states hosts a branch of the Elven Market—a never-ending bazaar where the elves (and others who deal in goods of dubious origin) sell their wares. Many elven goods are cheap baubles of little worth or were stolen from their rightful owners. Still, elves have a knack for being in the right place at the right time to peddle their wares, and even the most officious templar appreciates the selection of goods in the elven market.

Elves run swiftly and with great endurance. Tribes can manage forty miles a day or more, day in and day out. Elves consider it shameful to ride an animal such as a crodlu or a kank, and one does so only if ill or gravely wounded. Normally, such mounts are used as beasts of burden to carry the tribes' goods and tents. If a sorcerer-king sends his soldiers to punish an elven tribe for a brazen act of theft or lawlessness, he might find that not even kank-mounted cavalry can catch a tribe that has a mind to be somewhere else.

Most Athasians consider elves lazy and deceitful. It's true that many elves dislike hard work and prefer to live in the moment, avoiding unpleasant tasks and drudgery. They have little regard for anyone who isn't a member of their tribe. Elves happily take advantage of, steal from, lie to, or misdirect outsiders, not out of malice so much as a desire to separate the gullible from their items of value. When it's important to maintain a valuable trading relationship, elves honor their word and barter in good faith. But the moment they perceive an opportunity that is too good to pass up, they abandon their previous deals.

Although elves are fickle business partners, they can be true and loyal friends to those who win their trust. But few outsiders gain the friendship of an elven tribe.

ELF BACKGROUNDS

Herding, trading, thieving, raiding—your people do what they must to survive, and you have pursued many occupations in your time. Some Athasians regard elves as vagabonds or vermin and hold your people in contempt, but you are free in a way that few others can understand.

Market Thief: From your early childhood, you mastered the arts of chicanery, deceit, and petty theft. Your tribe roamed from village to village, establishing a short-lived elven market wherever it pitched its tents. Were you a pickpocket or a burglar, preying on the dull-witted locals? Were you an entertainer who



distracted the crowds so that other elves could steal from them? Does your tribe still wander from place to place, or did some disaster befall the group, sending you out into the world alone?

Associated Skills: Streetwise, Thievery

Sand Raider: Life in the desert is hard. You come from a tribe of nomadic herders, a desert people who must move from place to place constantly to survive. When times grow especially hard—or when opportunity arises—your people take spear and bow in hand to raid for what they need. Whom did you steal from? What led you to leave your tribe behind and set out on your own?

Associated Skills: Endurance, Stealth

GOLIATH (HALF-GIANT)

Centuries ago, sorcerer-kings magically combined giant and human stock to breed powerful minions, creating the hardy race of towering warriors known as goliaths (commonly called half-giants). Most sorcerer-kings have hundreds of goliaths in their armies and shower the mighty warriors with luxuries in exchange for their loyalty. Other half-giants become urban thugs or mercenaries. They adopt the culture and traditions of the cities in which they dwell.

Over the years, many goliaths have found their way into the untamed reaches of Athas. Wild goliaths are fierce, mountain-dwelling barbarians who raid the people of the lowlands in search of plunder, captives, and prestige. Half-giant tribes are fractious and quarrelsome as a rule; ambitious young warriors challenge established chieftains, and long-remembered slights and insults threaten to erupt into deadly feuding. Shamans, druids, and others who wield the power of the elements or nature lie outside the bounds of such disputes and rivalries, and they serve a vital role as peacemakers and advisors. Regardless, a goliath sometimes leaves his or her enemies behind for a few years and seeks out new opportunities elsewhere. After all, returning to the tribe as a wealthy, successful warrior with an impressive train of treasures and captives is the best revenge.

Half-giants are often violent and short-tempered, but their moods are mercurial. They can pass from frothing rage to gales of laughter in the blink of an eye.

GOLIATH BACKGROUNDS

Because most goliaths fight or toil for a living, others sometimes assume that you're a simple-minded thug. You can fight very well, of course, but there's more to you than your muscles. Whether you live down to others' expectations is up to you.

Feral Raider: You were a merciless raider, plundering villages and settlements for water, food, and other supplies. You might have continued in this manner, but something changed your course. Did your band cross paths with a powerful enemy? Did you abandon your tribe after realizing how much

suffering you had caused? How did your time as a raider shape your present views?

Associated Skills: Intimidate, Stealth

Half-Giant Laborer: You spent your life toiling for a master, using your great strength in a stone quarry or your mighty endurance to work the fields. Whom did you serve? Were you a slave, or a free laborer? What sort of work did you do? How did you escape your drudgery?

Associated Skills: Athletics, Endurance

Noble's Guard: You served in the war band or palace guard of a great noble. In which city-state did you serve? Was your service voluntary? Were you a personal guard? A soldier? Who was your patron, and how did you come to leave his or her employ?

Associated Skills: Intimidate, Streetwise



HALF-ELF

Born from two worlds but welcome in neither, half-elves struggle to find their place in a hostile land. Humans and elves rarely share trust or affection, but they travel many of the same roads on Athas, and sometimes romance follows. However, the children of unions between elves and humans are rarely happy. Half-elves typically face intolerance and prejudices throughout their lives. A tribe of elves might go so far as to cast out a female elf who bears a half-elf child, letting the desert dispense with the object of their shame. Humans care less about elven ancestry, but most assume that half-elves are every bit as clever and dishonest as their elven forebears.

Because they must contend with hostility from both sides, half-elves are a people without a homeland, forced to endure on society's fringes. Some half-elves live as loners in the desert, surviving as herders, hunters, or employees of more tolerant merchant houses. Other half-elves adjust by developing confident, assertive personalities, transforming themselves into people who win friends and engender trust. Ironically, they are treated better by unrelated races than by their own kin. Dwarves, halflings, thri-kreen, and others have no particular reason to dislike half-elves and judge them on their merits and character, not their ancestry.

As one might assume of a race of loners, half-elves hold self-reliance as their highest virtue, never expecting or asking for help no matter what their situation. Self-taught and naturally adept at learning, half-elves dabble in a variety of areas, mastering the skills they need to survive on their own. Some half-elves are bitter and sullen, but most seek to make the best of their circumstances. More than anything, half-elves take pride in defeating expectations.

HALF-ELF BACKGROUNDS

Caught between two worlds, you find few friends among your human or elven kin. If you want to survive, you must depend on yourself and no one else.

Charlatan: You respond to widespread scorn and suspicion by using your talents for ill gain. Defrauding the people who disdain you is a sure way to make them pay for their offenses. At what point did you decide to become a con artist? What sorts of ruses do you employ? Have you made any dangerous enemies? If so, who are they?

Associated Skills: Bluff, Streetwise

Exiled Survivor: Elves often drive out a tribe member who gives birth to a half-elf child, a fate tantamount to a death sentence. How did you and your mother survive? Did you join a slave tribe? Did you scrape by in the slums of a city-state? Did your mother blame you for her fate?

Associated Skills: Endurance, Nature

Heartless Mercenary: Finding no practical line of work in your community, you resorted to less noble means to make ends meet—you became a professional killer. Did you operate in the open, or did you conceal your true work behind a cover profession? Do you still kill for coin? If not, why did you stop? How do you think of your time as a sell-sword when you look back on it?

Associated Skills: Acrobatics, Stealth

HALFLING

Most halflings hail from the Forest Ridge, a mysterious and legendary jungle said to crown the Ringing Mountains. Halflings live apart from other races, divided by their stature and odd customs, but no one can deny their bravery and cunning. The savagery for which they are feared masks a deep and abiding reverence for the natural world and an uncommon connection to the land's spirits. Halflings live throughout the Tyr Region—some as slaves, others as mercenaries, and still others as raiders. Regardless, all halflings look to the Forest Ridge as their homeland.

The halflings are an ancient people; according to their myths, they are among the oldest in the world. Once stewards of all the land, the halflings retreated when dark magic came to power, and they built a civilization at the roof of the world. Over the ages they have forgotten much of their learning, but they remain a spiritual people, and their connections to the natural world are the strongest of any civilized race in the Tyr Region. These connections make it hard for them to establish productive relationships with other races. For example, halflings place little emphasis on the individual; each halfling is merely part of the overall race, which itself is part of a much larger organism—the world. This view makes it nearly impossible for halflings to deceive or betray one another.

Halflings see all creatures as potential sources of sustenance. After all, living beings compete to survive, and halflings think nothing of eating their enemies, for doing so ensures their own survival.

HALFLING BACKGROUNDS

Your people are feared and misunderstood across the Tyr Region, and you find the ways of the so-called "civilized races" arbitrary and confusing. They call you a savage, but at least your people don't confine one another in cages or submit to the rule of desilers.

Nature's Protector: You commit your life to protecting the few natural resources left in the world. Is this task inherited from a predecessor, or did you assume the burden on your own? How do you protect nature? Do you guard a particular site, or do you watch over all lands through which you travel? In your mind, what is the greatest threat to nature?

Associated Skills: Heal, Nature

Hunter: Your people believe that all creatures are either predator or prey, and you consider yourself to be the consummate predator. You eat what you kill, including vermin, beasts, and humanoid enemies. To do otherwise is wasteful; one must respect nature's bounty. How do you justify this behavior to your companions? Do you hide this custom, or revel in it?

Associated Skills: Endurance, Intimidate

Renegade Mercenary: You have turned away from the old ways, abandoning your people to find your fortune in the lowland cities. Deemed a renegade by your kin, you sell your skills to merchants, sorcerer-kings, slave tribes—anyone who meets your price. Why did you break from your people? Do you feel guilty for having done so?

Associated Skills: Perception, Stealth

HUMAN

A resourceful and hardy race, humans are the most numerous and diverse people in the Tyr Region. They can be found in every social stratum and situation: city dweller and desert villager, nomadic herder and merchant trader, pampered noble and wretched slave. Humans' drive, ambition, and ingenuity help the race survive on the dying world and thrive under the rule of the sorcerer-kings.

Athasian humans come in all shapes and sizes, but they reflect certain predominant traits common to particular city-states. Humans in Draj, for example, have broad chins, bronze skin, and black hair that hardly ever grows on their faces. Humans from Gulg have dark brown skin and rounder features with thick, curly hair. Tyr's humans are varied because that city-state's population is a conglomeration of humans from throughout the world. Regardless of their origins, all humans are given to unusual traits—such as odd skin or eye color, exaggerated features, or lack of body hair—that might be effects of the magic that brought ruin to the land. Such traits are common and rarely elicit more than a glance.

More humans live in the city-states than they do anywhere else. Although humans are resilient and adaptable, the city-states offer shelter, water, and food—commodities that are rare outside their walls. From Tyr to Draj, humans are the dominant people, dwarfing other populations in the city-states. They are the most likely to be free citizens, merchants, nobles, slaveholders, and landowners; most templars are human as well. Outside the city-states, human numbers fall off, eclipsed by the other peoples of the deserts, but even in the wastes humans are common. They seem able to scratch out a living no matter where they reside.

As a people, humans are bereft of a past. Flooded with propaganda and prohibited by the sorcerer-kings and templars from keeping written histories, most humans know only the stories told in their



communities. These tales paint the despots as saviors, gods, or anointed champions who, through selfless actions, saved Athas from certain destruction. Many humans chafe against tyranny's chains but hold their tongues, seeing no reason to jeopardize the shelter, water, and food they receive in return for their loyalty. However, although the sorcerer-kings have great influence over the city-states and their human populations, the rulers' control is not as secure as it once was. When Tyr's champions assassinated King Kalak and liberated the city, they sparked the fires of rebellion across the region, opening people's eyes to the possibility of a world free of the oppression that has defined life on Athas for so long.

Humans typically have backgrounds based on their home region.

TIEFLING

The people of the desert settlements have much to fear from the wastes. Predators snatch livestock and children, sandstorms destroy homes, and the punishing heat and scarce water make life miserable. However, all these dangers pale before the merciless desert devils that emerge from the night, bent on murder and mayhem. They are remorseless raiders, taking no slaves and leaving no survivors. They are the tieflings, and they are death incarnate.

Tieflings are descended from humans who bargained with dark powers for the strength to survive on Athas and destroy their enemies. Most tieflings lurk on civilization's fringes in nomadic bands, drifting through the wastes in search of victims to rob and kill or hiring themselves out as vicious mercenaries. Small bands sometimes settle in the city-states, where they find work as enforcers, overseers, gladiators, and assassins. In cities where status is determined by personal merit, tieflings can become templars or rise to the nobility.

Many tieflings believe that they carry a blood debt—the price to be paid for their ancestors' bargain—and face an eternity of torment unless the debt is paid in their lifetime. Some assume that the debt can't be paid and live in debauchery while they can, whereas others lead lives of virtue in the hope of breaking their patron's hold. The most dangerous tieflings are those who believe that their debt must be paid in blood, and that each soul they send into death reduces their own burden.

TIEFLING BACKGROUNDS

Your people have a reputation as dealers of death.

Feed the Debt: A debt hangs over you, one that can be satisfied only with blood. Before you die, you must send a worthy offering to the dark master of your race, or you will be condemned to torment for eternity. Whether you pay your debt with wanton slaughter or seek other means of redemption is up to you. Are you selective about your victims? Do you feel remorse for your killing, or do you see it as a means to an end? How far would you go to escape the fate of your people?

Associated Skills: Intimidate, Stealth

Seeking Redemption: Killing others to settle your debt only reinforces the evil that stains your soul. There must be a better way to escape your doom. In what ways do you try to free yourself from your debt? How do you control the darkness within you? How do you see other tieflings?

Associated Skills: Diplomacy, Insight

OTHER RACES

The races described above account for most of the civilized peoples on Athas, but the world is home to minor races as well, including genasi, kalashtar, minotaurs, and more. These races exist in such small numbers or live in lands so remote that they have little influence on the world at large. Before choosing a minor race for your character, talk with your Dungeon Master to see if it is suitable for the campaign.

Genasi: Also known as half-elementals, genasi typically reside in the depths of the wastelands and on isles in the Sea of Silt. Their elemental nature gives them the ability to endure environmental conditions that other humanoids find intolerable. Most genasi are devoted to the elemental spirits of the wastes, and they bitterly resent defilers, especially the sorcerer-kings and agents of those tyrants.

Kalashtar: Psionic study has long been a part of Athasian culture, and some humans are living embodiments of the Way. The kalashtar, a race of psionic beings, evolved from masters who trained in remote monasteries long ago. Most kalashtar are indistinguishable from humans and are, more or less, a psionically adept subset of the human race.

Minotaur: Centuries ago, minotaurs were derived from beast-headed giants by the priests of a cult that sought to harness elemental power to use against the sorcerer-kings. The cult was stamped out, but the savage warriors they created survived and eventually spread across Athas. Today, minotaurs are a race of feral, violent reavers that lurk in the badlands and barrens. On occasion, less brutal members of the race seek employment or adventure in the Seven Cities.

INTRODUCING OTHER RACES

Many races in the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game have no explicit explanation for their presence in the DARK SUN campaign setting. If you want to introduce a new race to Athas, you can use several possible entry points to make it fit with the rest of the world. Here are a few examples of how to bring your chosen race into the campaign.

- ◆ The deep deserts of Athas produce mutated offshoots of existing creatures, spawning short-lived races that grow and fade away in a matter of years. Perhaps you and others of your kind evolved as a result of this mutation or through contact with the ancient site called the Pristine Tower (page 163).
- ◆ The world was not always as it is now. You and your kind are relics of a bygone age, preserved for eons by magic or psionics. Now, you emerge into a world far different from the Athas you once knew.
- ◆ The mightiest beings on Athas wield arcane, primal, and psionic powers that rival those held by the gods of other worlds. Perhaps these beings infused existing creatures with some of their power, warping the original specimens into a new race and creating you and your kind. Goliaths and minotaurs share this kind of origin.

RACIAL PARAGON PATHS

Racial paragon paths serve as examples of unique, distinctive qualities of a character race.

Choosing a Racial Paragon Path: When you reach 11th level, you can choose a racial paragon path instead of another paragon path. The only

prerequisite is that you must be a character of the appropriate race.

Implements: If your racial paragon path includes powers that have the implement keyword, you can use implements of your class and implements you gained through a feat for those powers.

HALF-GIANT THUG

"Oh, did I get in your way? This alley is too narrow for my bulk. I guess you'll have to go through me to get where you're headed."

Prerequisite: Goliath

In the city-states, some enslaved goliaths work as enforcers, and the other residents know better than to say no when half-giant thugs come looking for goods or money. The physical might of these thugs ensures that they receive better treatment than most other slaves do, and sometimes their children are set free (to appease the parent and guarantee loyalty).

Whether you serve as a slave or seek your own livelihood as a mercenary, violence and intimidation are your most useful tools. You get what you want by using your size, your attitude, and your keen knowledge of the back streets and seedy locations of your city-state. Anyone who has heard of you clears the way for you to pass, and thanks to your stature, they always see you coming.



WANTE ENGLAND

HALF-GIANT THUG PATH FEATURES

Urban Skills (11th level): You gain a +2 racial bonus to Intimidate checks and Streetwise checks.

Half-Giant's Retaliation (11th level): When an enemy hits you while you have resistance to that attack because of your stone's endurance racial power, that enemy grants combat advantage to you until the end of your next turn.

Gigantic Action (11th level): When you spend an action point to take an extra action, you can either increase your melee reach by 1 for any attack you make with the extra action, or you can regain the use of stone's endurance.

Untouchable Athlete (16th level): You gain a +5 bonus to all defenses against opportunity attacks while jumping 4 or more squares or while climbing.

HALF-GIANT THUG POWERS

Towering Presence

Half-Giant Thug Attack 11

You slam a foe to the ground and stand astride it, preventing the enemy from rising until it has dealt with you.

Encounter ♦ Weapon

Standard Action **Melee 1**

Target: One creature

Attack: Strength, Constitution, or Dexterity vs. AC

Hit: 3[W] + Strength, Constitution, or Dexterity modifier damage, and you knock the target prone. Until the end of the target's next turn, it cannot stand up until either it attacks you or you are not adjacent to it.

Sudden Endurance

Half-Giant Thug Utility 12

Your enemy might be attacking you, but you barely notice.

Encounter

Immediate Interrupt **Personal**

Trigger: You are hit by an attack.

Effect: You gain resist 10 to all damage against that attack.

Rockslide Stance

Half-Giant Thug Attack 20

You use techniques you learned through a lifetime of brawls to become tougher and meaner than anyone else around.

Daily ♦ Stance

Minor Action **Personal**

Effect: You assume the rockslide stance. Until the stance ends, you gain resistance equal to your Strength or Constitution modifier to all damage. Once per round when you hit with a melee weapon attack or a close weapon attack on your turn, each enemy adjacent to you takes damage equal to your Strength modifier, plus 1[W] extra damage if you have combat advantage against that enemy.

MUL BATTLE SLAVE

"On my seventh birthday I was taught how to kill a person with a knife. For the next twelve years my keepers trained me in every known form of personal combat. Now I am free to choose my fights, but I cannot escape what I am."

Prerequisite: Mul

Like many muls, you were born into slavery and as a youngster received brutal training for the arena or the armies of your noble house. For years you endured painful lessons, grueling conditioning, and the occasional lethal test of your skill until you became a killing machine. But despite everything that was done to you, your spirit remained free and unbroken. In time you left your owners' slave pens behind and set out to find your own fortune beneath the crimson sun.

Perhaps you are truly free, the master of your fate after years of bondage. Maybe you remain enslaved, but as a successful battle slave, you have almost all the rights and luxuries of a wealthy free citizen. Whether you are a warrior who calls no one master or a prized champion who is a slave in name only, you carry the harsh lessons of your upbringing. Now it is your choice whether to fight for gold, for glory,



for love, or for hate, but regardless of your motivation, you cannot escape the simple fact that fighting is what you do best.

MUL BATTLE SLAVE PATH FEATURES

Pain Is Weakness (11th level): You gain a +2 bonus to saving throws while bloodied.

Battle Slave Action (11th level): When you spend an action point to take an extra action, you also gain a +4 bonus to melee basic attack rolls until the end of your next turn.

Battle Experience (16th level): If you miss all targets when using an encounter attack power and you have no other encounter attack powers remaining, you do not expend that encounter attack power.

MUL BATTLE SLAVE POWERS

Challenge of Blades

Mul Battle Slave Attack 11

You plunge into the fray with a strike at the legs of one foe, then shift and make a second strike at another foe.

Encounter ♦ Weapon

Standard Action Melee weapon

Primary Target: One creature

Primary Attack: Strength, Constitution, or Wisdom vs. AC

Hit: 2[W] + Strength, Constitution, or Wisdom modifier damage, and the target is slowed and marked by you until the end of your next turn.

Effect: You shift 2 squares and make a secondary attack.

Secondary Target: One creature other than the primary target

Secondary Attack: Strength, Constitution, or Wisdom vs. AC

Hit: 2[W] + Strength, Constitution, or Wisdom modifier damage, and the target is slowed and marked by you until the end of your next turn.

Sudden Strength

Mul Battle Slave Utility 12

You exert all the power of your mighty frame.

Encounter

Free Action Personal

Special: You can use this power only on your turn.

Effect: Until the end of your next turn, you gain a +5 power bonus to Strength checks and Athletics checks, and your successful attacks also push the target 1 square.

Made of Iron

Mul Battle Slave Attack 20

You shrug off attacks; pain only makes you stronger.

Daily ♦ Stance, Weapon

Standard Action Melee weapon

Effect: You can assume the iron body stance. Until this stance ends, you have resist 5 to all damage.

Target: One creature

Attack: Strength, Constitution, or Wisdom vs. AC

Hit: 3[W] + Strength, Constitution, or Wisdom modifier damage, and if you assume the iron body stance, you mark the target until the stance ends.

THRI-KREEN PREDATOR

"My clutchmates and I, we learned to hunt to survive. In these days, I hunt those who speak and think. But I must do so, for I must survive."

Prerequisite: Thri-kreen

Some thri-kreen fully hone their natural physiology, turning their bodies into weapons deadlier than the gythka. They strengthen their extra arms for making claw attacks, practice graceful jumps with their powerful legs, and augment their natural venom so it is potent enough to take down tough prey. Because of their battle prowess, these kreen often become the strongest members of their packs. It is the thri-kreen way to challenge weaker leaders, and the greatest hunters rise to positions of leadership.

As you grow into the role of thri-kreen predator, you become larger and tougher, with thicker chitinous plates and stronger limbs. Along with these physical changes, your instincts and racial memories become more acute. You sense the long lineage of the kreen, and you understand the great hunts of the past and the long-forgotten tactics that enabled your race to survive the most dangerous periods of Athasian history.

For some thri-kreen, these changes are natural—a hereditary gift. Others use psionic powers or martial training to strengthen themselves. Some find the predator's path after being exposed to sites or objects of power that stirred deep racial memories. No matter what triggered your transformation, you have become a predator among predators.

THRI-KREEN PREDATOR POWERS

Capturing Claws

Thri-Kreen Predator Attack 11

You snag your foe with one of your claws and rend the enemy with your weaker claws as long as it remains in your grasp.

Encounter

Standard Action Melee touch

Target: One creature

Attack: Strength, Constitution, or Dexterity + 6 vs. Fortitude or Reflex

Level 21: Strength, Constitution, or Dexterity + 9 vs. Fortitude or Reflex

Hit: 3d8 + Strength, Constitution, or Dexterity modifier damage, and you grab the target. Until the grab ends, the target takes 5 damage at the start of each of its turns.

Special: While grabbing the target, you can use a move action to move half your speed and pull the target with you.

Insect's Spring

Thri-Kreen Predator Utility 12

You suddenly leap across the battlefield, moving too quickly for your enemies to react.

Encounter

Minor Action Personal

Effect: You make an Athletics check to jump. This jump does not provoke opportunity attacks.



Paralyzing Bite

Thri-Kreen Predator Attack 20

In the adrenaline rush of combat, your mandibles fill with a toxin that paralyzes a foe that you bite.

Daily ♦ Poison, Reliable

Standard Action Melee 1

Target: One creature

Attack: Strength, Constitution, or Dexterity + 9 vs. Fortitude

Hit: 2d6 + Strength, Constitution, or Dexterity modifier poison damage, and the target is stunned until the end of your next turn. The target also takes ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends).

THRI-KREEN PREDATOR PATH FEATURES

Strong Claws (11th level): You gain a climb speed equal to half your speed. You also gain a +2 bonus to damage rolls with your thri-kreen claws racial power.

Leap into Action (11th level): When you spend an action point to take an extra action, you can make an Athletics check to jump as a free action either before or after your extra action. This jump does not provoke opportunity attacks.

Entrapping Pack (16th level): You flank an enemy as long as both you and a nonadjacent ally are adjacent to the enemy.

CHARACTER THEMES

"Noble, slave, templar, merchant—all are menaced by the sorcerer-kings. If we are to have any hand in throwing off the shackles of tyranny, we must not turn on each other first."

—Nori, Tyrian gladiator and revolutionary

This chapter introduces a new option for character building: your character's theme. A theme is a career, calling, or archetype that might include characters of several different classes and roles. Just as race and class help to identify who your character is in the world, theme adds a third character component to help refine your story and identity. You might be an elf rogue, but are you an elf rogue dune trader, an elf rogue nomad, or an elf rogue who spies for the Veiled Alliance? Each theme offers a different story for the same basic character concept. If a background describes how or where your character grew up, a theme describes how and why your character became a hero.

A theme embraces characters of almost any class. For example, many templar characters are warlocks, but a templar who serves chiefly as a commander of the sorcerer-king's troops might be better described by the warlord class, whereas a templar who is part of the sorcerer-king's secret police could easily be a rogue. Similarly, gladiator characters are often fighters—but barbarians, battleminds, rangers, rogues, and warlords can be just as successful in the arena as a fighter can be. "Templar" and "gladiator" are therefore themes that extend beyond the warlock and fighter classes, even though they're particularly appropriate for warlocks and fighters respectively.

This chapter covers the following topics.

- ◆ The basics of character themes, including rules for choosing your theme and how themes work.
- ◆ Ten character themes for a DARK SUN campaign from Athasian minstrels to wilders, each including a granted power and a number of theme powers.
- ◆ Two paragon paths for each theme, including paths such as the caravan master, jaszt dancer, rainbringer, and veiled guardian.



KEREM BEYIT



CHOOSING A THEME

You can have only one theme. To select a theme, all you have to do is choose one at the time you create your character. You don't have to select a theme if you don't want to.

Once you select a theme, it grants you the following benefits:

- ◆ You automatically gain the theme's granted power.
- ◆ You can choose to take additional theme powers when you reach the appropriate level.
- ◆ You unlock feats or paragon paths that use the theme as a prerequisite.

The themes presented in this chapter are summarized below.

Theme	Description
Athasian minstrel	Entertainer, advisor, or assassin
Dune trader	Agent of the merchant houses
Elemental priest	Worshiper of the primal elements
Gladiator	Warrior forged in the arena
Noble adept	Privileged and tutored in the Way
Primal guardian	Protector of oases and forests
Templar	Agent of a sorcerer-king
Veiled Alliance	Secret practitioner of magic
Wasteland nomad	Raider or scout of the desert
Wilder	Hero gifted with psionic talent

GAINING AND USING THEMES

Choosing a theme provides you with a number of new options.

GRANTED POWER

Each theme includes a power (usually an attack power) associated with it. You gain that power when you select the theme.

THEME POWERS

Theme powers are added to the list of powers you can choose from as you gain levels. Whenever you reach a level that grants you a power from your class, you can choose a theme power in place of a class power. The theme power you choose must be of the same level as or lower in level than the class power you would have gained. For example, if you have just attained 3rd level as a fighter with the wasteland nomad theme, you can choose a level 3 fighter power or a level 3 wasteland nomad power.

You cannot choose a theme attack power in place of a class attack power if you have no other class power of that type. For example, at 13th level you can replace your level 1 encounter attack power. If you have no other encounter attack powers of that class

(because you have chosen theme powers at earlier levels), you can't choose a theme power at 13th level; you must choose a class power as normal instead.

Ability Scores: Whenever you make an attack with a theme power, you use the modifier for your highest ability score when making the attack. So, for example, if Strength is your highest ability score, when a power says, "Primary ability vs. AC," you make a Strength vs. AC attack. Most powers of this kind express damage or effects in the form of " $3[W] + \text{ability modifier damage}$ " or "shift a number of squares equal to $1 + \text{your ability modifier}$." In such a case, use the modifier for the same ability you used to make the attack.

Implements: Theme powers that have the implement keyword can be used with any implement you are proficient with, regardless of class. If you aren't proficient with any implements, you can still use the power—you just won't be able to add an implement's enhancement bonus or properties to the power.

Higher-Level Versions: All theme attack powers have higher-level versions built into them. To use a higher-level version of a power, you must replace the lower-level power with the higher-level version when you reach the appropriate level. For instance, if you have a level 3 theme power, it includes an entry for a level 13 version. If you choose to replace the level 3 power with the level 13 version, you have the same power but it now uses the particulars for the level 13 version. Your theme powers don't automatically improve because you reach the level at which the replacement becomes possible.

Retraining: You can use retraining to replace a class power with a theme power or vice versa, exchanging one at-will attack power, encounter attack power, daily attack power, or utility power for another power of the same type. The new power must be of the same level as or lower in level than the old power—a level 5 daily attack power for a level 5 or

NOT PROFICIENT IN AN IMPLEMENT?

Don't rule out themes that rely on implements for your weapon-using character. First of all, you can gain proficiency in an implement by choosing a feat that grants an implement (some multiclass feats do this). Second, your Dungeon Master might use a version of the fixed enhancement bonus rules introduced in *Dungeon Master's Guide 2* for a DARK SUN campaign. Under these rules, a character without an implement still gains an enhancement bonus to implement attacks. Since theme powers use the modifier for your best ability score, your attacks with those theme powers won't be much less effective than your normal best attack.

lower daily attack power, for example, or a level 10 utility power for a different level 10 or lower utility power. You can also replace a theme power with a different power of the same theme, as long as the new power is lower in level than the old one.

You cannot replace a class attack power if doing so would leave you with no attack powers of that class.

FEATS AND PARAGON PATHS

Themes often act as prerequisites for feats, just as classes and races do. (See Chapter 4 for feats associated with themes.) Many feats that have themes as prerequisites help tailor that theme to work better for certain classes or races.

Each of the themes presented in this book includes two paragon paths. To choose one of a theme's paragon paths, you must also meet any other prerequisites of the paragon path. Many of the themed paragon paths also use "Primary ability vs. AC" for their attack powers, as described above.

CHANGING THEMES

Your character might discover a different calling at some point in his or her career and wish to change one theme for another. If you have no powers or feats that use your theme as a prerequisite other than the theme's granted power, you can retrain your theme choice when you gain a level, losing your first theme's granted power and gaining the new one's granted power. If you have feats or powers that require your existing theme, you must first retrain those feats or

powers to choices that don't have your theme as a prerequisite. Then you can change your theme by retraining at the next opportunity.

USING THEMES TO CREATE CHARACTERS

Themes offer a wide array of character creation tools. You might choose a class that is strongly identified with the theme already, and reinforce your character's role with the powers that are available. For example, the primal guardian offers a number of theme powers that work well for defender characters, so if you're playing a fighter or warden, the primal guardian theme powers let you put a new spin on your role. A warden is already a primal character, but a fighter who becomes a primal guardian learns to wield a power source that most fighters never master.

You could also use a theme to take your character in a new direction, adopting a secondary role your class otherwise wouldn't provide. For example, an infernal pact warlock who invests in the elemental priest theme can gain some useful leaderlike powers. This sort of unusual combination is a natural tool for building the story of your character; why would a warlock be an elemental priest? Elemental priests are normally opposed to defiling, so your warlock is most likely a preserver ... but maybe he's a defiler trying to mend his ways, or an elemental priest who has adopted the ways of his enemies to meet fire with fire.



ATHASIAN MINSTREL

"Set aside your cares for a time, my lords and ladies, and lend an ear to my song. Tomorrow is for toil and worry; tonight we make revel!"

The minstrels of Athas are entertainers to the wealthy and powerful elite of the city-states. Singers, acrobats, poets, dancers, and storytellers, minstrels tour the cities of Athas in troupes or individually, making a living with their wits and talents. The civilized peoples of Athas have long celebrated minstrels, and by tradition all but the poorest or most suspicious of hosts are proud to open their doors to traveling performers. Hosting a minstrel or sponsoring a troupe's performance reflects well on the host, and most Athasians are eager to forget their troubles with a few hours of song and dance. Nobles often send troupes of minstrels to one another as gifts; it is seen as a great insult to refuse such a gift, even when all involved know that minstrels are often spies or assassins.

The most skilled (or fortunate) minstrels are highly paid companions to nobility, trusted advisors or agents who enjoy the most intimate confidences of their patrons. Minstrels are often retained by noble houses to tutor young nobles or teach them about the world. They might serve as bodyguards and fighting instructors at the same time. Minstrels who belong to a troupe lack the comfort and trust bestowed on a kept minstrel, but they enjoy the freedom to travel and the aid of a network of informants and allies throughout the Tyr Region. The poorest and most humble minstrels are simple wandering storytellers or jugglers who perform for their supper from night to night.

Many minstrels have a dark side they conceal beneath their charm and talent. Those with ambition and ruthlessness find opportunities in the employ of the elite classes. Minstrels often lead double lives as blackmailers, thieves, spies, or assassins; a minstrel's visit or a troupe's performance might conceal a mission of espionage or murder. They are renowned as masters of poison, concealed weapons, and subtle trickery. Even the humblest wandering minstrel with threadbare cloak and battered lyre might be more than he or she seems—there's no better spy than someone who seems harmless and is welcome wherever he or she goes.

BUILDING AN ATHASIAN MINSTREL

All minstrels are skilled performers or artists. Naturally, many are bards. However, you might be an assassin or a rogue who conceals your true talents with dancing or juggling, a battlemind specializing in tricks of the mind, or even a fighter or a warlord

whose musical ability is secondary to your talent for teaching young nobles how to look after themselves.

ATHASIAN MINSTREL TRAITS

Secondary Role: Striker

Power Source: Martial

Granted Power: You gain the poisoned strike power.

ATHASIAN MINSTREL POWERS

The following powers are available to any character who has chosen the Athasian minstrel theme.

Poisoned Strike

Athasian Minstrel Feature

You splash a few drops of poison on your weapon from a vial at your belt, and slash at your foe. The pain can bring your target to its knees.

Encounter ♦ Martial, Poison, Weapon

Standard Action Melee or Ranged weapon

Target: One creature

Attack: Primary ability vs. AC

Hit: 1[W] damage plus 5 poison damage. Until the end of your next turn, if the target willingly moves more than 2 squares or makes an attack, it then falls prone, and it is immobilized until the end of its next turn.

Level 11: 2[W] damage plus 5 poison damage.

Level 21: 3[W] damage plus 5 poison damage.

LEVEL 2 UTILITY EXPLOIT

Concealed Weapon

Athasian Minstrel Utility 2

You have learned how to keep a weapon completely hidden from searching eyes.

Encounter ♦ Martial

Minor Action Personal

Target: One weapon you're holding

Effect: The weapon is invisible until you are no longer holding it, until the end of the encounter, or until you attack with it. The first creature you attack with a weapon affected by this power grants combat advantage to you for that attack.

LEVEL 3 ENCOUNTER EXPLOIT

Fever Poison

Athasian Minstrel Attack 3

You draw a hidden vial and sprinkle its contents on your weapon just before attacking. This poison disorients your foe.

Encounter ♦ Martial, Poison, Weapon

Standard Action Melee or Ranged weapon

Target: One creature

Attack: Primary ability vs. AC

Hit: 2[W] damage plus 5 poison damage. Until the end of your next turn, if the target willingly moves more than 2 squares or makes an attack, it is dazed until the end of its next turn.

Level 13

Hit: As above, but 3[W] damage plus 5 poison damage.

Level 23

Hit: As above, but 4[W] damage plus 5 poison damage.

LEVEL 5 DAILY EXPLOIT

Draining Poison

Athasian Minstrel Attack 5

A splash from a tiny vial coats your weapon with a lethal venom that cripples the target with cramping muscles.

Daily ♦ **Martial, Poison, Weapon**

Standard Action Melee or Ranged weapon

Target: One creature

Attack: Primary ability vs. AC

Hit: 2[W] damage, and ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends). The first time the target takes the ongoing poison damage, it takes a -4 penalty to its next saving throw against the ongoing damage. The target is also slowed until the start of its next turn.

Level 15

Hit: As above, but 2[W] damage plus 5 poison damage, and ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends).

Level 25

Hit: As above, but 2[W] damage plus 10 poison damage, and ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends).

LEVEL 6 UTILITY EXPLOIT

Envenomed Weapon

Athasian Minstrel Utility 6

You smear prepared poison on your weapon to erode your enemy's stamina.

Encounter ♦ **Martial**

Minor Action Melee touch

Target: One weapon you're wielding

Effect: The next creature hit by a melee attack using this weapon before the end of the encounter gains vulnerable 5 poison until the end of your next turn.

LEVEL 7 ENCOUNTER EXPLOIT

Crystal Spider Poison

Athasian Minstrel Attack 7

You splash a few drops of a debilitating poison on your blade before striking. The poison briefly weakens your foe.

Encounter ♦ **Martial, Poison, Weapon**

Standard Action Melee or Ranged weapon

Target: One creature

Attack: Primary ability vs. AC

Hit: 2[W] damage plus 5 poison damage. Until the end of your next turn, if the target willingly moves more than 2 squares or makes an attack, it is weakened until the end of its next turn.

Level 17

Hit: As above, but 3[W] damage plus 5 poison damage.

Level 27

Hit: As above, but 4[W] damage plus 5 poison damage.



ATHASIAN MINSTREL

3

LEVEL 9 DAILY EXPLOIT

Insidious Poison

Athasian Minstrel Attack 9

You envenom your weapon with a lethal poison that is exceptionally difficult to shake off. Few survive its touch.

Daily ♦ **Martial, Poison, Weapon**

Standard Action Melee or Ranged weapon

Target: One creature

Attack: Primary ability vs. AC

Hit: 2[W] + ability modifier damage, and ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends). The first time the target takes the ongoing poison damage, the target cannot make a saving throw against the ongoing poison damage on its turn.

Level 19

Hit: As above, but 2[W] + ability modifier damage plus 5 poison damage, and ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends).

Level 29

Hit: As above, but 2[W] + ability modifier damage plus 10 poison damage, and ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends).

LEVEL 10 UTILITY EXPLOIT

Framing Assassin

Athasian Minstrel Utility 10

You have mastered a fighting technique in which you lunge swiftly toward one opponent to strike at other foes behind it.

Daily ♦ **Martial, Stance**

Minor Action Personal

Effect: You assume the stance of the framing assassin. Until the stance ends, you can use a square adjacent to you that is occupied by an enemy as the origin square for your weapon attacks.

ARMS-TROUBADOUR

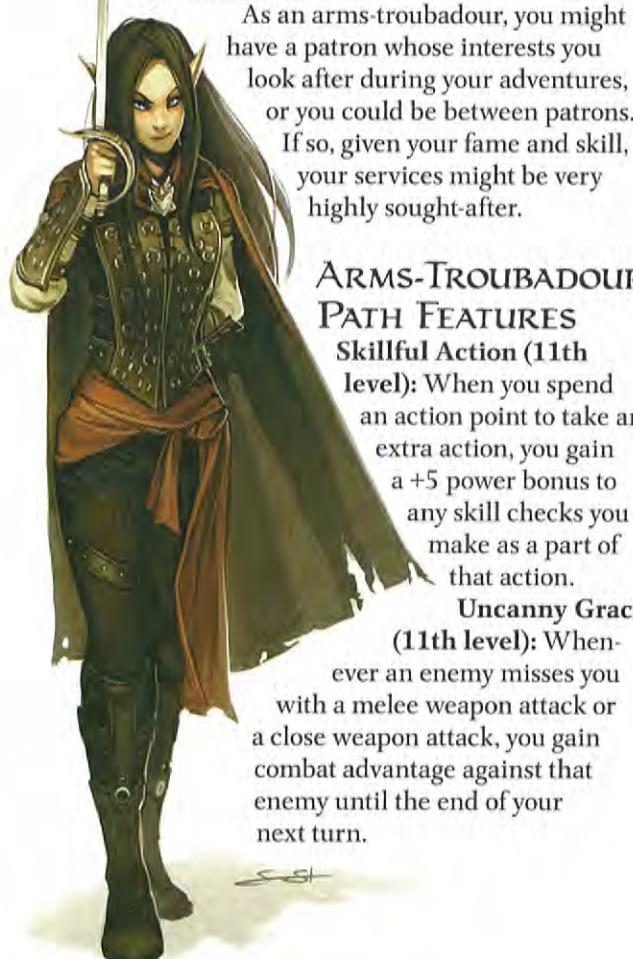
"Artistry can be found in anything, young lord—especially swordplay. My earnest advice is to do nothing that you cannot do well."

Prerequisite: Athasian minstrel theme

Throughout the Seven Cities of the Tyr Region, nobles surround themselves with retainers of good education, charming manners, and mastery of the arts. Many of these kept artists are just fops or decoration, but some are more than entertaining companions—they are skilled duelists and treasured advisors, deadly warriors never more than a few steps from their patron's side. In addition to beautifying the noble household with poetry and song, troubadours of this sort often serve as arms instructors to young nobles and elite bodyguards.

Arms-troubadours are typically well educated, literate, skilled in an instrument or two, noteworthy poets, and equipped with aristocratic manners and refinement. Some begin as minor nobility attending wealthier and more important nobles; others are descended from well-off merchants or commoners who set out to master the courtier's skills and seek noble patronage.

As an arms-troubadour, you might have a patron whose interests you look after during your adventures, or you could be between patrons. If so, given your fame and skill, your services might be very highly sought-after.



ARMS-TROUBADOUR PATH FEATURES

Skillful Action (11th level): When you spend an action point to take an extra action, you gain a +5 power bonus to any skill checks you make as a part of that action.

Uncanny Grace (11th level): Whenever an enemy misses you with a melee weapon attack or a close weapon attack, you gain combat advantage against that enemy until the end of your next turn.

Clever Footwork (16th level): Whenever you make an Athletics, Acrobatics, or Stealth check, you roll twice and use either result.

Also, you never incur failures in a skill challenge for Athletics, Acrobatics, or Stealth checks you fail by 5 or less.

ARMS-TROUBADOUR EXPLOITS

Elegant Blade

Arms-Troubadour Attack 11

A well-aimed blow briefly confounds your enemy as you easily slip into a better position.

Encounter ♦ Martial, Weapon

Standard Action Melee weapon

Requirement: You must be wielding a light blade or a heavy blade and use it to attack with this power.

Target: One creature

Attack: Primary ability vs. Reflex

Hit: 3[W] + ability modifier damage, and you shift 3 squares. Until the end of your next turn, you can make the following attack against the target.

Immediate Interrupt

Trigger: The target willingly moves to a square that is not adjacent to you or makes an attack.

Attack: Primary ability vs. AC

Hit: You slide the target 3 squares, and you shift 3 squares as a free action.

Deadly Deflection

Arms-Troubadour Utility 12

With expert timing, you deflect an enemy's attack so that it misses you or your ally and targets another foe instead.

Daily ♦ Martial

Immediate Interrupt Melee 1

Trigger: An enemy adjacent to you targets you or an ally with a melee attack.

Target: The triggering enemy

Effect: Choose a different creature within the target's reach. The target now attacks that creature instead.

Poetic Flourish

Arms-Troubadour Attack 20

You perform a striking flourish after a successful attack and inspire your allies with a defiant swipe.

Daily ♦ Martial, Stance, Weapon

Free Action Melee weapon

Requirement: You must be wielding a light blade or a heavy blade and use it to attack with this power.

Trigger: You hit a creature and deal damage to it with an at-will melee weapon attack.

Target: The creature you hit

Effect: You deal 2[W] extra damage, and the target is dazed (save ends). In addition, you can assume the stance of the arms-troubadour. Until the stance ends, you can make the following attack.

Free Action Close burst 3

Trigger: You hit with a melee weapon attack.

Target: Each ally in burst

Effect: Until the end of your next turn, the target can reroll one damage die, using either result, each time he or she hits an enemy with an attack.

UNWELCOME GUEST

"Would you deny shelter to a simple entertainer?"

Prerequisite: Athasian minstrel theme

People in the Tyr Region learn not to trust a performer blindly. An ordinary minstrel, a graceful dancer, or a honey-voiced singer might well be a killer sent by a bitter rival. Custom demands, however, that no entertainer be refused entry. The household should welcome such a guest regardless of any suspicions. Nevertheless, paranoid nobles might turn away one of these entertainers for fear of poison in their drink or a knife in their back.

Those who refuse entry to a performer do so at risk to themselves. Even if the new arrival did not have malicious intent, a refusal is an insult few performers can bear, and such an affront makes enemies where there were none before.

An unwelcome guest is a talented entertainer who uses his or her performer's status to infiltrate a target's house and get close enough to make the kill. Unwelcome guests master the use of poisons, hiding venoms and toxins about their persons for easy access when the opportunity to kill presents itself. Some unwelcome guests work alone, but many claim membership in an entertainer's troupe, an organization often rife with murderers, thieves, and saboteurs. Bards make the best unwelcome guests, but rogues, fighters, and assassins might find something in this path for themselves as well.



DAVID RAPPOZA

UNWELCOME GUEST PATH FEATURES

Condemning Action (11th level): When you spend an action point to make an attack, each target you hit with that attack is immobilized and grants combat advantage until the end of your next turn.

Duplicitous Nature (11th level): You gain the Alchemist feat (*Adventurer's Vault*, page 21) as a bonus feat. You also gain a book containing the formula for bloodstinger poison (*Adventurer's Vault*, page 26) and two other formulas of your level or lower. At 21st level, you can add two additional formulas to your book.

Also, whenever you make a Bluff, Stealth or Thievery check, you roll two dice and use either result.

Foolproof Poison (16th level): Your Athasian minstrel and unwelcome guest powers that deal poison damage now deal acid and poison damage.

UNWELCOME GUEST EXPLOITS

Noxious Strike

Unwelcome Guest Attack 11

A light wound belies the virulent poison you just introduced into the target's system.

Encounter ♦ Martial, Poison, Weapon

Standard Action **Melee or Ranged weapon**

Target: One creature

Attack: Primary ability vs. AC

Hit: 1[W] + ability modifier damage plus 5 poison damage.

Until the end of your next turn, if the target willingly moves more than 2 squares or makes an attack, it is subject to one of the following effects: The target takes 2d10 poison damage; the target takes 1d10 poison damage and is immobilized until the end of your next turn; or the target takes 1d10 poison damage and is dazed until the end of your next turn.

Pernicious Poison

Unwelcome Guest Utility 12

The vile substance you apply to your weapon muddles your enemy's senses and keeps it weak for the killing strike to follow.

Daily ♦ Martial, Poison

Minor Action **Melee touch**

Target: One weapon you're wielding

Effect: Before the end of the encounter, the next creature hit by a melee attack using this weapon becomes weakened until the end of your next turn. That creature is also dazed (save ends).

Burning Venom

Unwelcome Guest Attack 20

The special recipe dripping from your weapon burns the flesh as it works quickly to kill your foe.

Daily ♦ Martial, Poison, Reliable, Weapon

Standard Action **Melee or Ranged weapon**

Target: One creature

Attack: Primary ability vs. AC

Hit: 2[W] + ability modifier damage, and ongoing 15 poison damage (save ends). In addition, the target loses any immunity or resistance to poison until the end of the encounter.

DUNE TRADER

"I've crossed the Tablelands, survived the Ivory Triangle, slipped away from Hamanu's half-giant thugs, and sold sand to a tarek. I've seen it all, and there isn't much left that can surprise me."

Dune traders roam every civilized corner of the known world. From crowded marketplaces crawling with thieves, to caravans wending across difficult wastes, to the isolated settlements and trading posts found in the places between the great city-states, dune traders are everywhere, pushing their wares on anyone they encounter. Dune traders bring needed goods to remote areas, offering water, food, arms, and more, but their work is not charity. Such offerings come at the highest prices a merchant can ask and still be able to move the merchandise. It's all about making a profit, and no one does a better job at looking out for themselves and their wealth than the dune traders of Athas.

Many small traders and merchant cabals exist, but they pale next to the dynastic houses that dominate trade across the Tyr Region. These houses are nations unto themselves, sworn to no sorcerer-king but allied with all. They field their own armies, hold their own lands, and take an active part in political and social developments affecting the region. A merchant house's leadership might rest in one family's hands, but these houses readily accept new members, always looking for new talent to bolster their presence and influence in the Tyr Region. Regardless of the position sought, candidates must swear several oaths to the house leaders. In exchange, a candidate receives protection, status, and regular pay. The particular oaths vary from house to house, but the following are common to them all.

- ◆ Forsake any citizenship or membership in a city-state or tribe.
- ◆ Swear allegiance to the merchant house.
- ◆ Always act in the merchant house's best interest.
- ◆ Deal honestly with stranger, friend, and foe.
- ◆ Flaunt no wealth gained through employment by the house.
- ◆ Uphold the local laws and always act in accordance with them.
- ◆ Protect your own, lending help to merchants in need and refusing to deal with those who unjustly imprison or harass any merchant.

In contrast to the great dynastic houses of the city-states, elven merchant tribes are small and mobile. They do not enjoy the peaceful relations enjoyed by the dynastic houses and, for this reason, they are not beholden to any oaths or promises. They foist off junk, deal in contraband, and sometimes resort to base

robbery if given sufficient cause. Elven houses tend to be tribal in structure, but they are as widespread and as dangerous as any human organization.

BUILDING A DUNE TRADER

The merchant houses populating the Tyr Region welcome anyone with talent into their fold. Rogues and bards have the most to offer merchant houses, since they have the abilities most useful for negotiating and bargaining in the marketplaces. Warlords are excellent caravan leaders, and psionically gifted characters use their subtle arts to ferret out secrets and gain the upper hand over rival houses. Finally, merchant houses frequently recruit muscle such as fighters, wardens, and barbarians to ensure that caravans arrive at their destinations.

DUNE TRADER TRAITS

Secondary Role: Leader

Power Source: Martial

Granted Power: You gain the *quick formation* power.

DUNE TRADER POWERS

The following powers are available to any character who has chosen the dune trader theme.

Quick Formation

Dune Trader Feature

You lash out at your enemies and move your allies into a defensible position.

Encounter ♦ **Martial, Weapon**

Standard Action **Melee or Ranged weapon**

Target: One creature

Attack: Primary ability vs. AC

Hit: 1[W] + ability modifier damage, and either you shift 4 squares, or each ally within 5 squares of you can shift 2 squares as a free action.

Level 11: 2[W] + ability modifier damage.

Level 21: 3[W] + ability modifier damage.

LEVEL 2 UTILITY EXPLOIT

Slick Negotiator

Dune Trader Utility 2

You don't let a gaffe sabotage your negotiation, moving on as if the misstep never occurred.

Encounter ♦ **Martial**

Free Action **Close burst 5**

Trigger: You or an ally in burst makes a Bluff, Diplomacy, Intimidate, or Streetwise check and dislikes the result.

Target: The triggering creature

Effect: If you are the target, you gain a +3 power bonus to the skill check. If an ally is the target, the ally can reroll the skill check, using either result.

LEVEL 3 ENCOUNTER EXPLOIT

Delaying Strike

Dune Trader Attack 3

A painful hit against your opponent helps you make good your escape.

Encounter ♦ Martial, Weapon

Standard Action Melee or Ranged weapon

Target: One creature

Attack: Primary ability vs. AC

Hit: $2[W] +$ ability modifier damage, and the target is slowed until the end of your next turn.

Effect: Either you shift your speed, or each ally within 2 squares of you can shift half his or her speed as a free action.

Level 13

Hit: As above, but $3[W] +$ ability modifier damage.

Level 23

Hit: As above, but $4[W] +$ ability modifier damage.

LEVEL 5 DAILY EXPLOIT

Blunt Force Strike

Dune Trader Attack 5

Your weapon strikes with a satisfying crunch, leaving your opponent unable to defend itself.

Daily ♦ Martial, Reliable, Weapon

Standard Action Melee or Ranged weapon

Target: One creature

Attack: Primary ability vs. AC

Hit: $2[W] +$ ability modifier damage, and the target is dazed (save ends). In addition, either you make a basic attack against the target, or two allies within 5 squares of you can each make a basic attack against different creatures (but not against the target) as a free action.

Level 15

Hit: As above, but $3[W] +$ ability modifier damage.

Level 25

Hit: As above, but $4[W] +$ ability modifier damage.

LEVEL 6 UTILITY EXPLOIT

Deft Avoidance

Dune Trader Utility 6

You duck out of the way, slipping to where you can best land your next attack.

Encounter ♦ Martial

Immediate Reaction Close burst 2

Trigger: An enemy in burst you can see misses you with a melee attack.

Target: The triggering enemy

Effect: The target grants combat advantage until the end of its next turn. In addition, either you can shift 2 squares, or each ally in the burst can shift 1 square as a free action.

LEVEL 7 ENCOUNTER EXPLOIT

Sly Gambit

Dune Trader Attack 7

Your quick strike lures your enemy into a rash counterattack.

Encounter ♦ Martial, Weapon

Standard Action Melee or Ranged weapon

Target: One creature

Attack: Primary ability vs. AC

Hit: $1[W] +$ ability modifier damage, and the target makes a melee basic attack against a creature of your choice as a free action. Until the end of your next turn, either you gain a +4 power bonus to AC, or the target provokes opportunity attacks when shifting or making melee attacks.

Level 17

Hit: As above, but $2[W] +$ ability modifier damage.

Level 27

Hit: As above, but $3[W] +$ ability modifier damage.

LEVEL 9 DAILY EXPLOIT

Hounding Presence

Dune Trader Attack 9

You step in close to your enemy to land your attack but stay in motion, using its proximity to your advantage.

Daily ♦ Martial, Weapon

Standard Action Melee or Ranged weapon

Target: One creature

Attack: Primary ability vs. AC

Hit: $2[W] +$ ability modifier damage, and the target cannot shift (save ends).

Miss: Half damage.

Effect: Until the end of the encounter, while you are adjacent to the target either you gain a +4 power bonus to all defenses, or the target grants combat advantage.

Level 19

Hit: As above, but $3[W] +$ ability modifier damage.

Level 29

Hit: As above, but $5[W] +$ ability modifier damage.

LEVEL 10 UTILITY EXPLOIT

Command Decision

Dune Trader Utility 10

As your enemy's blade comes down, you are forced to decide—your life, or that of your ally?

Encounter ♦ Martial

Immediate Interrupt Close burst 1

Trigger: You are hit by an attack.

Target: You or one ally in burst

Effect: If you are the target, you lose a healing surge and gain temporary hit points equal to your healing surge value. If an ally is the target, that ally is hit by the triggering attack instead of you.

CARAVAN MASTER

"Raiders? We stand to make a killing if we can get our kank nectar to Tyr before the Vordons bring in theirs. I haven't got time for raiders!"

Prerequisite: Dune trader theme

Caravans are the vital links in the chains of commerce binding outposts of civilization together across the wild wastelands of Athas. They come in many different forms—long files of slave porters, pack trains of heavily laden crodlus and kanks, wagons drawn by snorting inixes, and of course the towering mekillot-drawn wagons that are wooden fortresses on wheels. Regardless of the beasts of burden or the goods carried, caravans are crucial to maintaining Athasian civilization. Not only do they carry valuable goods, they also carry rumors and tales of doings all across the Tyr Region to people thirsty for news of other places, provide travelers with the opportunity to surround themselves with the safety of numbers, and feed scores of desert outposts and settlements with a steady stream of supplies.

Leading a successful caravan is no mean feat. Peril in a hundred guises waits in the desert—hungry monsters, savage raiders, ruthless competitors, scouring sandstorms, unreliable wells, mutinous drivers, and the possibility that the caravan's goods, if they reach market, turn out to be worth less than one paid for them. A caravan master might have to lead the caravan's guards and drivers in battle, search out a new



CHAPTER 3 | Character Themes

path when a familiar road becomes buried in the shifting sands, bribe greedy officials, or enforce brutal discipline on a rebellious underling. It takes a rare combination of character judgment, business acumen, and physical courage—attributes you have cultivated for years. On the open desert, you are the master of your fate, and you wouldn't have it any other way.

CARAVAN MASTER PATH FEATURES

Road-Hardened (11th level): You gain a +1 bonus to speed. Each ally that starts his or her turn within 5 squares of you gains a +1 power bonus to speed until the end of his or her turn.

Master's Action (11th level): When you spend an action point to take an extra action, you gain a +2 power bonus to all defenses until the end of your next turn. In addition, you or one ally within 5 squares of you can make a saving throw.

Sharp Customer (16th level): Whenever you make an Insight check or a Perception check, you roll two dice and use either result. Also, you never grant combat advantage by being flanked.

CARAVAN MASTER EXPLOITS

Desert Skirmish

Caravan Master Attack 11

You direct your allies to form a hasty skirmish line, foiling your enemies' advance for a moment.

Encounter ♦ Martial

Standard Action Close burst 5

Target: You and one ally in burst, or two allies in burst

Effect: As a free action, the target can shift 2 squares and make a basic attack against an enemy of his or her choice. Until the start of your next turn, any enemy that willingly moves to a square adjacent to the target must stop moving.

Merchant's Strategy

Caravan Master Utility 12

You do not allow others to set the terms of your defense, ensuring that you and your comrades are free to act as needed.

Encounter ♦ Martial

Minor Action Close burst 5

Target: You and one ally in burst

Effect: If the target is marked, the marked condition ends. Until the end of your next turn, the target does not grant combat advantage.

Fighting Retreat

Caravan Master Attack 20

You make an attack to hobble an enemy, then direct your allies to fall back in a fighting retreat.

Daily ♦ Martial, Weapon

Standard Action Melee or Ranged weapon

Target: One creature

Attack: Primary ability vs. AC

Hit: 2[W] + ability modifier damage, and the target is slowed (save ends)

Effect: Either you and each ally within 5 squares of you can shift his or her speed as a free action, or you and one ally within 5 squares of you can shift 2 squares and make a basic attack against different targets as a free action.



SHADY DEALER

"Honest merchants are as rare as water."

Prerequisite: Dune trader theme

A merchant house has power and influence, soldiers and workers, but everything the house depends on its representatives' efforts. The shady dealer represents one breed of dune trader, a skilled and treacherous agent specializing in intrigue and manipulation. Some shady dealers work as independent speculators, and others act on a larger house's behalf. They still travel as dune traders, shepherding goods to places in need, but they always have an ulterior motive, seeking some rumor or bit of gossip to benefit themselves or their house.

The image you cultivate masks a devious mind and a propensity for doing whatever you must to survive. Your skills at negotiation and intrigue serve you well; they let you confuse enemies and lure them into traps where your allies can strike. In time, your words and movements make fools of everyone you meet.

SHADY DEALER PATH FEATURES

Well Traveled (11th level): Whenever you make a Bluff, Diplomacy or Streetwise check, you roll two dice and use either result.

In addition, choose two languages. You can now speak, read, and write those languages. At 21st level, you can choose two more languages.

Swindling Action (11th level): When you spend an action point to take an extra action, that extra action does not provoke opportunity attacks.

Skilled Negotiator (16th level): You never incur failures in a skill challenge for Bluff, Diplomacy, or Streetwise checks you fail by 5 or less.

SHADY DEALER EXPLOITS

Rope the Mark

Shady Dealer Attack 11

Making yourself appear vulnerable lures your enemy into danger.

Encounter ♦ Charm, Martial

Standard Action **Ranged 5**

Effect: Before the attack, you shift 1 square to a square not adjacent to any enemies.

Target: One creature that can see and hear you

Attack: Primary ability + 6 (9 at 21st level) vs. Will

Hit: You pull the target 5 squares. In addition, choose one of the following effects: Either you make an at-will melee attack with combat advantage against the target, or one or two of your allies can make ranged basic attacks against the target as free actions.



Convincing Deception

Shady Dealer Utility 12

You spew a stream of prattle to give your allies the opening they need.

Encounter ♦ Martial

Standard Action **Close burst 5**

Target: One enemy in burst you can see

Effect: The target grants combat advantage to one ally in the burst until the end of your next turn. In addition, a different ally in the burst can shift 3 squares to a square adjacent to the target as a free action.

Unwitting Ally

Shady Dealer Attack 20

Careful manipulation and patience turns an enemy into your dupe.

Daily ♦ Charm, Martial, Reliable

Standard Action **Ranged 5**

Target: One enemy that can see and hear you

Attack: Primary ability + 9 vs. Will

Hit: The target is dominated (save ends). Until the end of the encounter, the target takes a -4 penalty to attack rolls against you and your allies, and the target counts as one of your allies for the purpose of flanking with you or your allies. In addition, until the end of the encounter you can make the following attack against the target.

Standard Action **Ranged 5**

Attack: Primary ability + 9 vs. Will

Hit: The target makes an attack as a free action against an enemy adjacent to it with an at-will attack power of your choice.

ELEMENTAL PRIEST

"I hold the wrath of fire in my grasp, the endurance of rock in my shoulders. None can outlast me in battle."

The gods of Athas are little more than half-remembered myths, but many of those who live beneath the crimson sun give their devotion and worship to other powers. Some worship sorcerer-kings who claim to be divine, or the false deities some kings purport to serve. Some worship demons or primordials—malevolent patrons that frequently demand terrible rites or acts of sacrifice. But most Athasians venerate the living elements as they manifest in the world.

Elemental priests are those who serve these sullen and fierce spirits. They have a special kinship with the primal elements, a connection so close it's as if they stand in two worlds: that of mortals, and that of raw elemental power.

Many elemental priests revere the nameless, formless principle of all living elements together, making no distinction between one manifestation over another. However, others give themselves to more specific examples of elemental power. For example, the Smoking Crown is home to dwarf priests who serve the spirit of the volcano, whereas the mountain known as An-Bezzumar, the Crown of Heaven, is sacred to goliath wind shamans. The wandering thriekin mystics known as the Rainspeakers venerate the rare, blessed showers that fall a few times each year during the cooler months and often make pilgrimages to places where rain is soon to fall.

Many heroic elemental priests are leaders of the village and wasteland folk and enemies of the sorcerer-kings and their templars. Some elemental priests instead follow a monastic or ascetic tradition instead of the more common tribal or village traditions of elemental worship.

BUILDING AN ELEMENTAL PRIEST

Elemental priests include wandering healers, mad hermits, secretive cultists, and grim warriors—any character who venerates the elemental spirits of Athas might become an elemental priest. Desert-dwelling dwarves, elves, goliaths, and humans become elemental priests to gain access to a few primal powers, and they identify themselves as servants of the desert spirits. Druids and sorcerers choose this theme to gain powers of healing and protection. Finally, many animist shamans are elemental priests, and they add the potent conjurations of this theme to their own powers.

ELEMENTAL PRIEST TRAITS

Secondary Role: Leader

Power Source: Primal

Granted Power: You gain the spirit of Athas power.

ELEMENTAL PRIEST POWERS

The following powers are available to any character who has chosen the elemental priest theme.

Spirit of Athas

Elemental Priest Feature

A spirit appears, defending you and your allies with its body.

Encounter ♦ Conjuration, Implement, Primal

Minor Action **Ranged 5**

Effect: You conjure a spirit of Athas. You and your allies gain a +1 power bonus to all defenses while adjacent to it. As a standard action, you can dismiss the spirit and make the following melee 1 attack from the spirit's square.

Target: One enemy

Attack: Primary ability vs. Reflex

Hit: 1d10 + ability modifier damage, and the target takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls and all defenses until the end of your next turn.

Level 11: 2d10 + ability modifier damage.

Level 21: 3d10 + ability modifier damage.

LEVEL 2 UTILITY EVOCATION

Scion of Stone

Elemental Priest Utility 2

The ground trembles as a misshapen hulk forms from rocks and dirt to shelter your companions from harm.

Daily ♦ Conjuration, Primal

Minor Action **Ranged 5**

Effect: You conjure a scion of stone that lasts until the end of the encounter. You and your allies gain a +1 power bonus to all defenses while adjacent to it. As a minor action, you can dismiss it to grant you and each ally adjacent to it temporary hit points equal to 5 + one-half your level.

LEVEL 3 ENCOUNTER EVOCATION

Bloodthirsty Elemental

Elemental Priest Attack 3

A spirit made of bones, blood, and sand savages your enemy.

Encounter ♦ Conjuration, Implement, Primal

Minor Action **Ranged 5**

Effect: You conjure a bloodthirsty elemental that lasts until the end of your next turn. Enemies grant combat advantage while adjacent to it. As a standard action, you can dismiss it and make a close burst 1 attack centered on its square.

Target: Each enemy in burst

Attack: Primary ability vs. Reflex

Hit: 1d10 + ability modifier damage, and the target cannot shift until the end of its next turn.

Level 13

Hit: As above, but 2d10 + ability modifier damage.

Level 23

Hit: As above, but 3d10 + ability modifier damage.



LEVEL 5 DAILY EVOCATION

Vengeful Elementals

Elemental Priest Attack 5

Warped elementals pull themselves from the landscape and scuttle forward to engage the enemy.

Daily ♦ Conjuration, Primal

Standard Action **Ranged 10**

Effect: You conjure four vengeful elementals in four different squares. The elementals last until the end of the encounter. Allies gain a +1 power bonus to attack rolls and a +1d6 bonus to damage rolls on melee attacks while adjacent to a vengeful elemental. As a minor action, you can dismiss one vengeful elemental and let one ally adjacent to it make a basic attack as a free action.

Level 15

Effect: As above, except as a minor action, you can dismiss one vengeful elemental and let one ally adjacent to it make a basic attack with a +3 power bonus to the damage roll as a free action.

Level 25

Effect: As above, except as a minor action, you can dismiss one vengeful elemental and let one ally adjacent to it make a basic attack with a +6 power bonus to the damage roll as a free action.

LEVEL 6 UTILITY EVOCATION

Retrieving Elemental

Elemental Priest Utility 6

The wind elementals gather to form a dust devil that can whisk an ally to safety.

Daily ♦ Conjuration, Primal

Minor Action **Ranged 10**

Effect: You conjure a retrieving elemental that lasts until the end of the encounter. You can push any creature that ends its turn in a square adjacent to the retrieving elemental 1 square. When you start your turn, you can move the elemental 1 square before you take any other actions. As a minor action, you can dismiss the elemental, and an ally adjacent to it can shift 5 squares as a free action.

LEVEL 7 ENCOUNTER EVOCATION

Elemental Justice

Elemental Priest Attack 7

When an ally falls victim to an attack, the elementals leap to your companion's defense.

Encounter ♦ Conjuration, Implement, Primal

Standard Action **Ranged 10**

Effect: You conjure an elemental that lasts until the end of your next turn. You and allies gain a +1 power bonus to attack rolls while adjacent to the elemental. As a standard action, you can make a melee 1 attack from the elemental's square.

Target: One creature

Attack: Primary ability vs. Will

Hit: 2d8 + ability modifier damage, plus 2 damage for each bloodied ally with line of sight to the elemental. In addition, you slide the target 3 squares to a square adjacent to the elemental.

Effect: The elemental is dismissed.

Level 17

Hit: As above, but 3d8 + ability modifier damage, plus 3 damage for each bloodied ally with line of sight to the elemental.

Level 27

Hit: As above, but 4d8 + ability modifier damage, plus 4 damage for each bloodied ally with line of sight to the elemental.

LEVEL 9 DAILY EVOCATION

Primordial Retribution

Elemental Priest Attack 9

Horrific elementals spring forth from the ground and latch onto your enemies, holding them fast and rending their flesh.

Daily ♦ Conjuration, Implement, Primal

Minor Action **Ranged 10**

Effect: You conjure four tortured elementals in four different squares. The elementals last until the end of the encounter. As a standard action, you can make the following melee 1 attack from each elemental's square.

Target: One, two, three, or four creatures, each adjacent to at least one tortured elemental

Attack: Primary ability vs. Reflex

Hit: The target is restrained and takes ongoing 5 damage (save ends both). Remove one tortured elemental from play.

Miss: Slide the target and the tortured elemental each 1 square.

Level 19

Hit: As above, but 2d6 + ability modifier damage, and the target is restrained and takes ongoing 5 damage (save ends both).

Miss: As above, plus half damage.

Level 29

Hit: As above, but 5d6 + ability modifier damage, and the target is restrained and takes ongoing 5 damage (save ends both).

Miss: As above, plus half damage.

LEVEL 10 UTILITY EVOCATION

Elemental Boon

Elemental Priest Utility 10

The favor of elemental powers shines across your allies, transforming their strength into vitality.

Daily ♦ Conjuration, Healing, Primal

Standard Action **Ranged 10**

Effect: You conjure a rewarding elemental that lasts until the end of the encounter. You and each ally that spends a healing surge while adjacent to the elemental regains additional hit points equal to your primary ability modifier. When an ally you can see fails a death saving throw, you can dismiss the elemental as a free action to allow the ally to spend a healing surge and gain a +4 power bonus to all defenses until the start of its next turn.

CONJURATIONS

All of the conjurations for the elemental priest theme have some common mechanics. You must always bring forth a conjuration or conjurations in unoccupied squares within range, and they always occupy a square. Also, as a move action you can move each conjuration 5 squares.

RAINBRINGER

"It is a cruel world, but that is all the more reason to show mercy. To heal one injury or sickness is to heal the whole world in some small part."

Prerequisite: Elemental priest theme

On Athas, the rarest and most honored wielders of primal magic are those who evoke the spirits of elemental water. Healers of unmatched skill and bestowers of the blessed rains, they are held in reverence and awe by the common folk. Even vicious raiders and the cruelest slavers hesitate to harm or obstruct a rain priest, understanding that one who follows the rainbringer's path might save their lives someday by calling the rains to a parched desert or granting the gift of healing.

You are one of these rare healers. Like many elemental priests, you are no friend to the sorcerer-kings or any other defilers. The sorcerer-kings resent any who wield magic outside their own control, and you can expect to be watched closely by templars—or even arrested—if you are careless about revealing your abilities. However, the people of the desert and the poor commoners of the cities revere your gifts and often go to great lengths to help you against the sorcerer-kings, the templars, and their informants.



Although many rainbringers are pacifists, you are under no particular obligation to avoid violence or to bestow your healing on those who are not worthy of it. Sometimes the lesser harm lies in destroying a creature that otherwise would go on to inflict greater harm on others—or, in the case of defilers, on the world itself.

RAINBRINGER PATH FEATURES

Rain Blessed (11th level): Whenever you make an Endurance, Heal, or Nature check, you roll two dice and use either result.

Also, when you use a power that has the healing keyword, each ally adjacent to you gains temporary hit points equal to half his or her healing surge value.

Rainbringer Action (11th level): When you spend an action point to take an extra action, each ally within 2 squares of you regains 3d6 hit points and can shift 1 square as a free action.

Soothing Presence (16th level): Bloodied allies gain regeneration 2 while adjacent to you.

RAINBRINGER EVOCATIONS

Hailburst

Rainbringer Attack 11

You evoke an elemental from the high mountains and deep sky, creating a short-lived shower of magical hailstones to impede your foes.

Encounter ♦ Cold, Implement, Primal

Standard Action Close burst 1

Target: Each enemy in burst

Attack: Primary ability vs. Fortitude

Hit: 1d8 + ability modifier cold damage, and the target is weakened until the end of your next turn.

Balm of Rain

Rainbringer Utility 12

Gentle mist forms around your allies, concealing them. The touch of the mist brings healing to one of them.

Encounter ♦ Healing, Primal

Standard Action Area burst 3 within 10 squares

Target: Each ally in burst

Effect: Each target gains concealment until the end of your next turn. In addition, one target can spend a healing surge.

Rain Serpent Elemental

Rainbringer Attack 20

You evoke a mighty elemental spirit, the legendary Rain Serpent. Its lightning tongue strikes down your foes, while its primal power heals your allies.

Daily ♦ Healing, Implement, Lightning, Primal, Zone
Standard Action Area burst 2 within 10 squares

Target: Each enemy in burst

Attack: Primary ability vs. Reflex

Hit: 2d8 + ability modifier lightning damage, and the target is dazed (save ends).

Effect: The burst creates a zone that lasts until the end of your next turn. You can move the zone 4 squares as a move action. All squares within the zone are lightly obscured. Bloodied allies who start their turn within the zone gain regain 10 hit points. Each enemy that starts its turn within the zone takes 2d8 lightning damage and grants combat advantage until the start of its next turn.

Sustain Minor: The zone persists.

SMOKING CROWN INITIATE

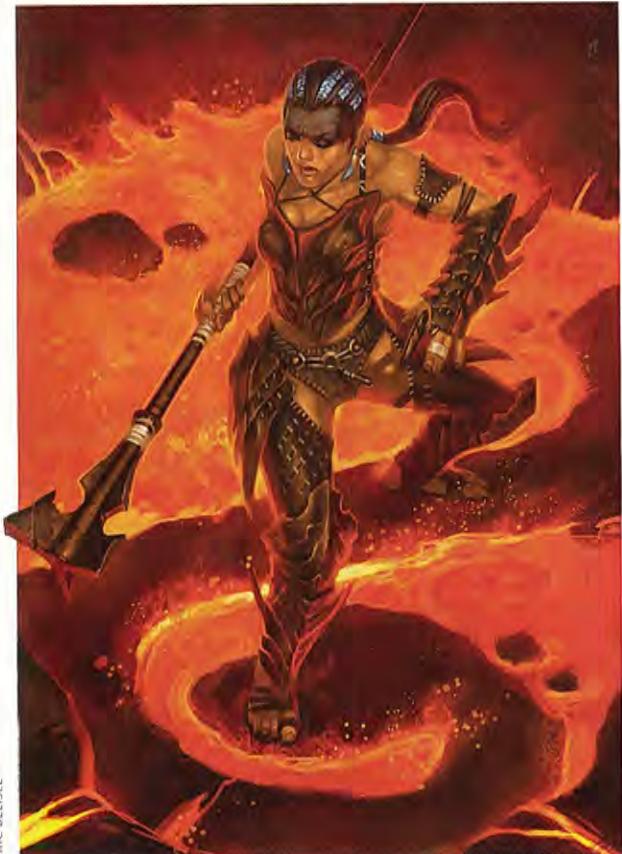
"I have been chosen by the Smoking Crown to strike down the wicked, the defilers, the unbelievers. Do not hinder me."

Prerequisite: Elemental priest theme

A number of cults, sects, and secret societies devote themselves to the mighty elemental spirits of Athas. The priests of the Smoking Crown are one such sect. They are servants of the great fire spirit that dwells in the Smoking Crown, the largest volcano on known Athas; by extension they are servants of volcanic spirits everywhere in the world.

As a Smoking Crown initiate, you are one of the elite members of the priesthood. You carry a large burn scar on your chest, face, or hand as the sign of your allegiance. You are under no one's orders, nor do you command any lesser priests—all Smoking Crown priests are free to serve as they see fit. Many are wandering, fire-scarred lunatics shouting wild prophecies in the wastes; others are highly effective assassins, champions, and revolutionaries (you likely fall in the latter group). The only member of the priesthood who has any special authority is the Keeper of the Smoking Temple, who guards a shrine hidden in the fiery depths of the mountain. Most Smoking Crown priests give aid and protection to other members of the sect when needed.

The Smoking Crown is large and active by the standards of most elemental sects. Initiates travel widely throughout the Tyr Region, teaching people to respect the elemental spirits, exposing iniquity,



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and defending the weak against the depredations of the strong. Most of the Smoking Crown's wrath is directed in particular at Hamanu of Urik, because of the damage Urik's miners have inflicted in the obsidian quarries of the Smoking Crown.

SMOKING CROWN INITIATE PATH FEATURES

Fireblessed (11th level): You gain resist 5 fire. If you already have fire resistance, it increases by 5.

Earthwrath Action (11th level): When you spend an action point to make an attack, choose one ally within 5 squares of you. Any enemy hit by your attack is marked by that ally until the end of the enemy's next turn. Also, all squares adjacent to you become difficult terrain until the end of the encounter.

Flameshield (16th level): While allies are adjacent to you, they gain fire resistance equal to your fire resistance.

SMOKING CROWN INITIATE EVOCATIONS

Fuming Cloud Smoking Crown Initiate Attack 11

You scour your foes with the breath of the volcano.

Encounter ♦ Fire, Implement, Primal

Standard Action Close blast 3

Target: Each creature in blast

Attack: Primary ability vs. Reflex

Hit: 3d8 + ability modifier fire damage.

Effect: Choose one ally within 5 squares of you. The target is marked by that ally until the end of your next turn.

Blasted Ground Smoking Crown Initiate Utility 12

You call up broken, red-hot rubble from below the ground in a wide circle around you, creating a formidable obstacle.

Daily ♦ Fire, Primal, Zone

Minor Action Close burst 3

Effect: The burst creates a zone that lasts until the end of the encounter. The zone is difficult terrain for your enemies. Any enemy that ends its turn within the zone or that falls prone within the zone takes 1d10 fire damage.

Magma Fissures Smoking Crown Initiate Attack 20

Jagged fissures full of spouting lava surround your ally, searing your foes and trapping them close to that ally.

Encounter ♦ Fire, Implement, Primal, Thunder, Zone

Standard Action Area burst 2 within 10 squares centered on one of your allies

Target: Each enemy in burst

Attack: Primary ability vs. Reflex

Hit: 3d8 + ability modifier fire and thunder damage, and the target is slowed (save ends).

Effect: The burst creates a zone centered on your ally that lasts until the end of your next turn. The zone moves with your ally. The zone is difficult terrain for your enemies, and any enemy within the zone that moves away from your ally on its turn takes 2d10 fire damage and is slowed until the end of its next turn.

Sustain Minor: The zone persists.

GLADIATOR

"I have no quarrel with you, friend, but circumstances make us enemies. Only one of us will leave the arena this day, and it's going to be me."

Life under the sorcerer-kings is hard. But the sorcerer-kings know that even with loyal templars and vast armies at their command, they rule with their subjects' consent. To distract the masses from their misery, to divert public attention from oppressive laws and heavy taxes, the sorcerer-kings decree the incessant spectacle of gladiatorial games.

Each city-state boasts an impressive arena, with enough seating to hold most of its citizens. Each week, or more often depending on weather or political conditions, nobles and commoners gather to watch the drama unfold, cheering madly as their favorite warriors duel with other gladiators, work in teams to claim the contest's great prize, or fight en masse to defeat whatever new horror the arena masters have plucked, no doubt at great expense and loss of life, from the desert wastes.

Naturally, most gladiators are slaves. Chosen for this fate because of their strength or skill, they live and die at the crowd's favor, pitting what training they acquire against myriad foes, never knowing when they will face an insurmountable foe, never sure when their opponent will be their equal. Arena masters

understand that their warriors fight with passion when they have something to fight for, and so they offer freedom, wealth, pleasure, or some other incentive to stoke the fires and keep their captive warriors eager for victory. Freedom is the greatest prize, of course—but the games are so violent that few gladiators live long enough to earn the victories they need to escape.

The life of a gladiator is brutish and brief, but it is the one occupation a slave can hold that also brings respect. Gladiators are heroes to the common people. Their trials and victories are the stuff of legend, and many slaves grow comfortable from the accolades their conquests bring.

BUILDING A GLADIATOR

Some gladiators are born to the arena, raised from an early age to fight in front of the crowd. Others find themselves in the pit through no intention of their own—sentenced for a crime or sold into slavery, perhaps—only to discover that they were meant for the blood-soaked sands. A few individuals volunteer to fight in the arena, desperate (or cocky) enough to risk life and limb for a purse of high value.

The gladiator theme is a common choice for fighters, battleminds, and other defenders. The theme powers offer several good options for establishing control over enemies in close combat, a useful talent for any defender. In addition, any tough melee combatants—for example, barbarians or melee rangers—interested in locking down enemies in melee can benefit from these powers.

GLADIATOR TRAITS

Secondary Role: Defender

Power Source: Martial

Granted Power: You gain the *Disrupting Advance* power.

GLADIATOR POWERS

The following powers are available to any character who has chosen the gladiator theme.

Disrupting Advance

Gladiator Feature

With an attack followed by a violent shove, your enemy flies backward. As it flails for balance, it loses its footing and stumbles into the creatures around it.

Encounter ♦ **Martial, Weapon**

Standard Action **Melee weapon**

Target: One creature

Attack: Primary ability vs. AC

Hit: 2[W] + ability modifier damage, and you push the target 2 squares. The target and each enemy adjacent to the target at the end of the push are slowed until the end of your next turn.

Level 11: 3[W] + ability modifier damage.

Level 21: 4[W] + ability modifier damage.



LEVEL 2 UTILITY EXPLOIT

Go with the Flow

Gladiator Utility 2

You adjust to the shifting battlefield to position yourself where you can resume your bloody work.

Encounter ♦ Martial

Immediate Reaction Personal

Trigger: An enemy within 5 squares of you that you can see moves willingly.

Target: The triggering enemy

Effect: You shift half your speed and gain combat advantage against the target until the end of your next turn.

LEVEL 3 ENCOUNTER EXPLOIT

Savage Sweep

Gladiator Attack 3

You whip your weapon around you, cutting a swath of bloody carnage.

Encounter ♦ Martial, Weapon

Standard Action Close burst 1

Target: Each creature you can see in burst

Attack: Primary ability vs. AC

Hit: $1[W] + \text{ability modifier damage}$, and the target takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls until the end of your next turn.

Level 13

Hit: As above, but $2[W] + \text{ability modifier damage}$.

Level 23

Hit: As above, but $3[W] + \text{ability modifier damage}$.

LEVEL 5 DAILY EXPLOIT

Infuriating Challenge

Gladiator Attack 5

With one precise strike you find your foe's weak spot, both physically and mentally, and put it off guard for the rest of the battle.

Daily ♦ Martial, Reliable, Weapon

Standard Action Melee weapon

Target: One creature

Attack: Primary ability vs. AC

Hit: $3[W] + \text{ability modifier damage}$, and the target grants combat advantage to you until the end of the encounter.

Level 15

Hit: As above, but $4[W] + \text{ability modifier damage}$.

Level 25

Hit: As above, but $5[W] + \text{ability modifier damage}$.

LEVEL 6 UTILITY EXPLOIT

Bloodborn Menace

Gladiator Utility 6

Your skill at the kill gives your enemies pause.

Encounter ♦ Martial

Free Action Personal

Trigger: You bloody an enemy or reduce an enemy to 0 hit points with a melee attack.

Effect: Each enemy within 10 squares of you that can see you grants combat advantage to you until the end of your next turn.

LEVEL 7 ENCOUNTER EXPLOIT

Murderous Rampage

Gladiator Attack 7

The path to victory lies through your opponent. With a devastating strike, you take a step toward that goal.

Encounter ♦ Martial, Weapon

Standard Action Melee weapon

Target: One creature

Attack: Primary ability vs. AC

Hit: $2[W] + \text{ability modifier damage}$.

Effect: Until the end of your next turn, whenever any enemy starts its turn adjacent to the target, that enemy takes damage equal to your primary ability modifier.

Level 17

Hit: $3[W] + \text{ability modifier damage}$.

Level 27

Hit: $4[W] + \text{ability modifier damage}$.

LEVEL 9 DAILY EXPLOIT

Bloody Blades

Gladiator Attack 9

You whip your weapons around you to keep your enemies from blocking your progress to a swift victory.

Daily ♦ Martial, Stance, Weapon

Standard Action Close burst 1

Effect: Before the attack, you move your speed. Each enemy that makes an opportunity attack against you during this movement takes damage equal to your primary ability modifier and is pushed 1 square after its attack.

Target: Each enemy you can see in burst

Attack: Primary ability vs. AC

Hit: $2[W] + \text{ability modifier damage}$.

Effect: You can assume the stance of the bloody blades.

Until the stance ends, as a free action you can deal damage equal to your primary ability modifier to any enemy that starts its turn adjacent to you. Any enemy you deal damage to cannot shift until the end of your next turn.

Level 19

Hit: $3[W] + \text{ability modifier damage}$.

Level 29

Hit: $4[W] + \text{ability modifier damage}$.

LEVEL 10 UTILITY EXPLOIT

Perceive Weakness

Gladiator Utility 10

You spot the flaws in your foe's technique and can bring this knowledge to bear during your next attack.

Encounter ♦ Martial

Immediate Reaction Personal

Trigger: An enemy you can see misses with a melee attack.

Target: The triggering enemy

Effect: Your next melee weapon attack against the target before the end of your next turn gains a +2 power bonus to the attack roll and deals $1[W]$ extra damage.

Special: If your next attack against the target misses, you regain the use of this power.

GLADIATOR CHAMPION

"I have left blood in every arena in the Seven Cities; there is little that can surprise me now."

Prerequisite: Gladiator theme or fighter

The people need heroes. They need brave individuals to show them that adversity can be overcome no matter how tough the opposition. They need to witness battle to slake their thirst for blood, to vent their frustration and anger about their own lives. They need gladiators, for these bold warriors give them all they need and more.

You are the champion the people demand. You might have come from humble roots, having grown up as a slave or a criminal, or you could be a professional who chose this dangerous life for glory and coin. Regardless, something about you and your courage resonates with the people, and you become more than just another warrior fighting for your life in the pit. You are their hero.

GLADIATOR CHAMPION

PATH FEATURES

Undaunted Action (11th level): When you spend an action point to make an attack while you are bloodied, you roll two dice for one attack roll during that attack and use either result.



Halo of Destruction (11th level): Whenever you bloody an enemy with an attack, each enemy adjacent to you (other than the one you bloodied) takes damage equal to your Strength modifier.

Whirlwind of Destruction (16th level): Enemies adjacent to you cannot shift to a square that is not adjacent to you.

GLADIATOR CHAMPION EXPLOITS

Opening Ploy

Gladiator Champion Attack 11

An attack against one of your enemies reveals weakness in all of them, helping you seize whatever advantage it might grant you.

Encounter ♦ Martial, Weapon

Standard Action Melee weapon

Target: One creature

Attack: Primary ability vs. AC

Hit: 2[W] + ability modifier damage, and you slide the target 2 squares. Until the end of your next turn, you and your allies gain combat advantage against the target and a +4 power bonus to damage rolls against enemies adjacent to the target.

Fail to Disappoint

Gladiator Champion Utility 12

No matter how grim the situation, you find a way to snatch victory from the jaws of defeat.

At-Will ♦ Martial

Free Action Melee 1

Trigger: You are hit and damaged by an enemy's attack while you are bloodied.

Target: The triggering enemy

Effect: You shift 1 square as a free action. You slide the target 1 square into the square you just left, and you gain combat advantage against it until the end of your next turn.

Finishing Strike

Gladiator Champion Attack 20

You close in for the kill when you sense your enemy's reserves failing, then compel the foe's allies to stay for the slaughter.

Daily ♦ Martial, Reliable, Stance, Weapon

Standard Action Melee weapon

Target: One bloodied creature

Attack: Primary ability vs. AC

Hit: 4[W] + ability modifier damage. You can assume the finishing strike stance. Until the stance ends, whenever you deal damage to a bloodied enemy with an attack, each enemy adjacent to the bloodied enemy is immobilized until the end of your next turn.

JAZST DANCER

"Every drop of blood that falls on the sand seems like applause."

Prerequisite: Gladiator theme

Just as the sun breaks the horizon, sending lambent waves washing across the countryside, the stands fill with eager spectators, pushing and shoving for the best view to the stage where the day's dramas will unfold. Suddenly, a half-dozen warriors explode from the gladiator gates. They flip and spin, their bone and obsidian blades flashing in the morning light. The crowd roars with delight, welcoming the jazst troupe to the city once more.

Suddenly, a grating sound breaks through the cheers as a heavy gate lifts. The ground trembles, quieting the audience. The jazsts feign concern with exaggerated expressions, calling out to the crowd for aid. The beast gate yawns wide, birthing a ferocious creature, its horny carapace fitted with blades to catch and slash. It looses a thunderous roar as it charges. Before it can connect, the dancers scatter, tumbling away in a dazzling display that leaves the beast confused, blood streaming from a dozen cuts it never saw land.

You have mastered the cruel techniques of the dangerous performers known as the jazst dancers. Unmatched in their skill with the blade, they weave a deadly dance on the arena floor, tumbling and capering as they deliver rapid-fire cuts and slashes to



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weaken and confuse their opponents. Your skills only improve in time, eclipsing those masters who first taught you as you became the greatest in the Seven Cities. Like your fellows, you draw out your fights, repeatedly springing into danger to impart a painful injury before slipping away.

JAZST DANCER PATH FEATURES

Dancer's Grace (11th level): When you make a charge attack, run, or move as part of an attack power, you ignore difficult terrain.

Slicing Action (11th level): When you spend an action point to make an extra melee attack using a light blade, one target you hit takes ongoing 10 damage (save ends). The ongoing damage increases to 15 at 21st level.

Painful Wounds (16th level): When you make an attack that deals ongoing damage, the target of the attack also takes a -2 penalty to saving throws against that ongoing damage.

JAZST DANCER EXPLOITS

Principle of the Razor

Jazst Dancer Attack 11

You know where to place your blades to cause the most pain.

Encounter ♦ Martial, Weapon

Standard Action Melee weapon

Requirement: You must be wielding a light blade and use it to attack with this power.

Attack: Primary ability vs. AC

Hit: 2[W] + ability modifier damage, and the target is dazed until the end of your next turn. If the target is already dazed, you deal 2d6 extra damage instead.

Arena Dancer

Jazst Dancer Utility 12

Sinuous movements and practiced steps make it hard for your enemies to pin you down.

Daily ♦ Martial, Stance

Minor Action Personal

Effect: You assume the stance of the arena dancer. Until the stance ends, you gain a +2 power bonus to AC and Reflex. Also, whenever an enemy misses you with a melee attack, you can shift 1 square as a free action and gain combat advantage against that enemy until the end of your next turn.

Dance of the

Jazst Dancer Attack 20
Whirling Razors

Jazst Dancer Attack 20

You run at your opponent, leaping at the last moment, then spin through the air and carve a bloody path through your enemies.

Daily ♦ Martial, Weapon

Standard Action Melee weapon

Requirement: You must be wielding a light blade and use it to attack with this power.

Effect: Before the attack, you shift your speed.

Target: One, two, or three creatures

Attack: Primary ability vs. AC

Hit: 2[W] + ability modifier damage, and the target takes ongoing 10 damage and is dazed (save ends both).

Miss: Half damage, and ongoing 5 damage (save ends).

NOBLE ADEPT

"Sometimes I envy the little people—the common citizens and slaves. No need to worry about political assassinations, no lessons to keep up with, no property to protect. All they need to do is survive."

Within the city-states, noble castes own more land and more slaves than anyone except the sorcerer-kings. The members of this social class are largely ineffectual puppets who have no real power, and only rarely do they muster the courage to oppose the plans of the sorcerer-kings. Even when they do so, it's not for the greater good. Most nobles watch out only for their own interests. They care nothing about what happens to people of lower castes, with the possible exception of people they own.

Though nobles lack true power, they gain many advantages due to their wealth. Nobles can read and write and can easily acquire food and water, which isn't true for much of the Athasian population. Every noble receives a basic education in psionics, either through a school or from a tutor hired by the noble's family, learning an array of psionic talents to better defend himself or herself against enemies or to command minions. Most lose interest in their training and fall into the same decadent malaise that pervades the noble caste. Only a rare few nobles fully develop their psionic talents, but those who do so are among the most capable and dangerous practitioners of the Way.

PSIONIC SCHOOLS

Each city-state contains one or more schools to teach the Way to wealthy nobles and merchants.

Balic: Dictator Andropinis sponsors the city-state's lone psionic university, the Cerebran.

Draj: Sorcerer-King Tectuktital commands that children who exhibit powerful psionic talent are sent to the House of the Mind and rigorously tutored.

Gulg: Children who show exceptional psionic ability are given to the teachers at the seer dagada, who patiently train their students and treat them like family.

Nibenay: Several schools thrive here. They range from the powerful, highly commercial School of Augurs to the monasteries of the Exalted Path and Serene Bliss.

Raam: Among the dozens of schools here stands the greatest psionic university of the Tyr Region, the Psiumarkh, which has lasted for centuries by remaining neutral in city affairs.

Tyr: The relatively new School of Thought trains the nobles and merchants of Tyr. The city also houses numerous individual masters who provide private lessons.

Urik: King Hamanu's orders dictate that any commoner or slave child be sent for training at the King's Academy, and no other institution can teach psionics.

BUILDING A NOBLE ADEPT

Usually, nobles who become adventurers do so after being expelled (or removing themselves) from society. Your character might be a fugitive hiding from assassins working for other noble families or for the templars, a combat leader for your house who seeks new troops or more combat experience, or a rebel who left a noble family because he or she felt sympathy for common people.

Power Points: If you choose a noble adept attack power of level 3 or 7 instead of a nonaugmentable encounter attack power at that level, you also gain 2 power points. If you do so with a power of level 13 or 17, you instead gain 4 power points, and if you do so with a power of level 23 or 27, you instead gain 6 power points. If you later relinquish your noble adept attack powers through retraining, you lose the power points you gained from the earlier choice.

NOBLE ADEPT TRAITS

Secondary Role: Controller

Power Source: Psionic

Granted Power: You gain 1 power point and the adept's *insight* power.

NOBLE ADEPT POWERS

The following powers are available to any character who has chosen the noble adept theme.

Adept's Insight

Noble Adept Feature

With a mental focus, you enhance the underiability of your actions.

Encounter ♦ Psionic

Free Action **Close burst 5**

Trigger: You or an ally in burst makes an attack roll, saving throw, or skill check.

Effect: You add 1 to the triggering roll.

Augment 1

Effect: You instead add $1d4+1$ to the triggering roll.

LEVEL 2 UTILITY DISCIPLINE

Slave's Sacrifice

Noble Adept Utility 2

Your ally takes your place, emboldened by a sudden notion that you are too important to be harmed.

Encounter ♦ Psionic

Immediate Interrupt **Close burst 1**

Trigger: You are hit by an attack.

Target: One willing ally in burst

Effect: You swap places with the target. The target becomes subject to the triggering attack instead of you and gains a +2 bonus to all defenses against the attack.

LEVEL 3 ENCOUNTER DISCIPLINE

Unnerving Suggestion Noble Adept Attack 3

You stagger an enemy with a mental attack, then send your underling forth to take advantage with a well-timed attack.

At-Will ♦ Implement, Psionic, Psychic
Standard Action **Ranged 10**

Requirement: You must expend 2 power points each time you use this power.

Target: One creature

Attack: Primary ability vs. Will

Hit: $1d8 + \text{ability modifier}$ psychic damage, and the target is dazed the end of your next turn. In addition, one ally within 3 squares of the target gains a $+1d6$ bonus to damage rolls against the target until the end of your next turn.

Level 13

Requirement: You must expend 4 power points each time you use this power.

Hit: As above, but $2d8 + \text{ability modifier}$ psychic damage and a $+2d6$ bonus to damage rolls.

Level 23

Requirement: You must expend 6 power points each time you use this power.

Hit: As above, but $3d8 + \text{ability modifier}$ psychic damage and a $+3d6$ bonus to damage rolls.

LEVEL 5 DAILY DISCIPLINE

Imperious Torture Noble Adept Attack 5

Every thrilling strike and victorious attack your allies make tortures your enemy even more.

Daily ♦ Implement, Psionic, Psychic
Standard Action **Ranged 10**

Target: One creature

Attack: Primary ability vs. Will

Hit: $2d6 + \text{ability modifier}$ psychic damage.

Effect: The target is affected by imperious torture (save ends). While the target is affected by imperious torture, once per round whenever an enemy within 5 squares of the target takes damage, the target takes psychic damage equal to your primary ability modifier. If the enemy was bloodied by that damage, the target also falls prone.

Level 15

Hit: $4d6 + \text{ability modifier}$ psychic damage.

Level 25

Hit: $6d6 + \text{ability modifier}$ psychic damage.

LEVEL 6 UTILITY DISCIPLINE

Enforced Competence Noble Adept Utility 6

At your urging, your allies work harder and better. There might be some drawbacks, but none you need to suffer.

Encounter ♦ Psionic, Psychic

Immediate Interrupt **Close burst 10**

Trigger: An ally in burst makes a skill check or a saving throw and dislikes the result.

Target: The triggering ally

Effect: The target rerolls the check or the saving throw. If this second check or saving throw is not successful, the target takes psychic damage equal to half your healing surge value, and this power is not expended.

LEVEL 7 ENCOUNTER DISCIPLINE

Cruel Decree

Noble Adept Attack 7

With the voice of authority, you call for your allies to take the fight to your enemies.

At-Will ♦ Implement, Psionic, Psychic

Standard Action **Area burst 1 within 10 squares**

Requirement: You must expend 2 power points each time you use this power.

Target: Each enemy in burst

Attack: Primary ability vs. Will

Hit: $2d6 + \text{ability modifier}$ psychic damage, and the target is slowed until the end of your next turn. Each ally in the burst gains a $+2$ power bonus to damage rolls against the target until the end of your next turn.

Level 17

Requirement: You must expend 4 power points each time you use this power.

Hit: As above, but $3d6 + \text{ability modifier}$ psychic damage and a $+4$ power bonus to damage rolls.

Level 27

Requirement: You must expend 6 power points each time you use this power.

Hit: As above, but $4d6 + \text{ability modifier}$ psychic damage and a $+6$ power bonus to damage rolls.

LEVEL 9 DAILY DISCIPLINE

Face of Defeat

Noble Adept Attack 9

You make your foe believe defeat is imminent, and your point is reinforced by well-aimed attacks from your followers.

Daily ♦ Implement, Psionic, Psychic

Standard Action **Ranged 10**

Target: One creature

Attack: Primary ability vs. Will

Hit: $2d6 + \text{ability modifier}$ psychic damage.

Effect: The target is dazed (save ends). If the target is hit by an attack while dazed by this power, it instead becomes stunned until the end of your next turn.

Level 19

Hit: $4d6 + \text{ability modifier}$ psychic damage.

Level 29

Hit: $6d6 + \text{ability modifier}$ psychic damage.

LEVEL 10 UTILITY DISCIPLINE

Psionic Sustenance

Noble Adept Utility 10

Your ally sacrifices his or her well-being to renew your psionic strength.

Daily ♦ Psionic

Minor Action **Ranged 5**

Target: One willing ally

Effect: The target loses a healing surge, and you regain 2 power points.

Level 23: The target loses a healing surge, and you regain 4 power points.

MIND GENERAL

"You should all be proud of your place as our soldiers. To die for our illustrious family is the greatest honor you will ever know."

Prerequisite: Noble adept theme

In the interest of protecting the city-states, the sorcerer-kings allow noble families to keep small armies of slave soldiers. Frequently, they use these soldiers to take action against other nobles or to protect their property. A sorcerer-king can, of course, call upon the nobles' soldiers to fight for his or her interests. And it's best to follow the sorcerer-king's commands.

As one of your duties to your family, you were given charge of a legion of slave soldiers. You trained with them, developing your psionic talents so you could command them silently. (Though sometimes shouted commands and threats can intimidate your enemies far better than eerie silence.) The most skilled mind generals can keep up a continuous mental link, sharing sights and combat instincts with all the troops in the legion.



MIND GENERAL PATH FEATURES

Commanding Action (11th level): When you spend an action point to take an extra action, one ally within 10 squares of you can shift half his or her speed as a free action and also gains a +2 bonus to AC and Reflex until the end of your next turn.

Reward Victory (11th level): When an ally whom you can see within 10 squares of you reduces an enemy to 0 hit points, you can slide that ally 1 square as a free action.

Paragon Power Points (11th level): You gain 2 additional power points.

Telepathic Gestalt (16th level): You can link minds with your allies, splitting their focus and perceptions as you see fit. At the start of each of your turns, choose two conscious allies within 20 squares of you. (You don't have to be able to see them.) One of them gains a +2 bonus to Fortitude, Reflex, and Will, and the other takes a -2 penalty to the same defenses.

MIND GENERAL DISCIPLINES

Direct Order

Mind General Attack 11

You stagger the target with a mental attack, either to provide your ally with a vulnerable target or allow the ally to get away.

Encounter ♦ Implement, Psionic

Standard Action **Ranged 10**

Target: One creature

Attack: Primary ability vs. Will

Hit: The target is dazed until the end of your next turn.

Effect: As a free action, one ally adjacent to the target can either take a move action or make a melee basic attack with a +2 power bonus to the attack roll.

Augment 2

Effect: As a free action, two allies adjacent to the target can each either take a move action or make a melee basic attack with a +2 power bonus to the attack roll.

Legion's Press

Mind General Utility 12

You send out a telepathic command for your allies to get into position.

Encounter ♦ Psionic

Minor Action **Close burst 5**

Target: One ally in burst, or each ally in burst if this is your first turn of the encounter

Effect: Each target can shift half his or her speed as a free action.

Unequaled Command

Mind General Attack 20

You extend your psionic influence to everyone nearby, continually shifting the field of battle to perfect its arrangement.

Daily ♦ Implement, Psionic, Psychic, Stance

Standard Action **Close burst 3**

Target: Each enemy in burst

Attack: Primary ability vs. Will

Hit: 4d6 + ability modifier psychic damage, and you slide the target 3 squares.

Effect: You can assume the stance of unequaled command.

Until the stance ends, at the start of your turn you can either slide each ally within 5 squares of you 1 square or slide each enemy within 5 squares of you 1 square.

PSIONIC SCHOLAR

"The vast stores of knowledge at the Psiumarkh unlocked the true potential within my mind. Your crude attempts at psionics amuse me, but won't prove much of an obstacle."

Prerequisite: Noble adept theme

Psionic power has an infinite number of uses, but few people on Athas develop more than a passing familiarity with their innate talents. Within the psionic schools of the city-states, or with private tutors, noble children are expected to hone their psionic powers. As with any type of study, most students don't put forth much effort, and therefore don't learn much. The average noble retains the barest vestiges of psionic training, just enough to overhear gossip from a distance or to telekinetically move a cup a few inches.

While your peers shirked their studies and neglected their psionic gifts, you devoured every piece of lore and technique you could. Fascinated by the capabilities of the mind, you practiced constantly and delved deep into the secrets of the Way. Every time you outmatched another student with your gifts, every time you tricked someone into giving you what you wanted, you felt a thrill you couldn't find anywhere else. The world and your society reward the most cunning and the strongest, and you live up to those ideals.

PSIONIC SCHOLAR PATH FEATURES

Dazing Action (11th level): When you spend an action point to make an attack, one enemy you hit with that attack is also dazed until the end of your next turn.

Guarded Mind (11th level): You gain resist 10 psychic, increasing to resist 15 psychic at 21st level.

Scholar's Analysis (16th level): Once during an encounter when you hit an enemy with an attack, you can learn that enemy's resistances. You also learn which of its Fortitude, Reflex, and Will are highest and lowest.

PSIONIC SCHOLAR DISCIPLINES

Psionic Capture

Psionic Scholar Attack 11

You compel your foe to remain still as you probe its mind and erode its defenses.

Encounter ♦ Implement, Psionic, Psychic
Standard Action **Ranged 10**

Target: One creature

Attack: Primary ability vs. Will

Hit: 2d6 + ability modifier psychic damage, and the target is immobilized until the end of your next turn. In addition, until the end of your next turn the target either loses one resistance of your choice or takes a -2 penalty to the defense of your choice.



Mental Juxtaposition

Psionic Scholar Utility 12

By predicting your enemy's next attack, you devise the perfect strategy to both avoid it and retaliate.

Daily ♦ Psionic

Immediate Interrupt **Close burst 5**

Trigger: An enemy in burst hits an ally with an attack.

Target: The triggering enemy

Effect: The target takes a -5 penalty to the attack roll and takes a -5 penalty to the defense the attack was made against until the end of its next turn.

Perfected Discipline

Psionic Scholar Attack 20

Using your knowledge of all types of psionic power, you attack your enemies' minds and construct ethereal chains and enervating spikes.

Daily ♦ Implement, Psionic, Psychic

Standard Action **Area burst 3 within 20 squares**

Target: One, two, or three enemies in burst

Attack: Primary ability vs. Fortitude, Reflex, and Will

Hit (Fortitude): The target is weakened (save ends).

Hit (Reflex): The target is restrained (save ends).

Hit (Will): The target takes ongoing 15 psychic damage (save ends).

Special: One saving throw ends all effects on a single target.

PRIMAL GUARDIAN

"The world has suffered more than any slave, yet life still flowers in a few places. I have vowed to protect these places of pristine nature, and it's a promise I intend to keep."

Much of Athas is desolate and defiled, but the life of a world is difficult to quench altogether. In spite of the supernatural ruin visited over so much of the planet thousands of years ago, the vital force of Athas still flourishes in a few places—the rain-misted jungles of the Forest Ridge, the green palm groves of hidden oases in the Tablelands, the majestic stands of giant cactus that dot the stony barrens in the wilds south of Tyr, creek-fed mountain vales, the dazzling blue waters of the Dragon's Bowl, and a thousand more secret refuges and lost springs.

Across the Tyr Region, sentinels stand watch over these surviving treasures, protecting them from pillaging or defiling at the hands of people too careless, desperate, or wicked to care whether their actions might murder one more piece of a gravely wounded world. These watchers and sentinels are the world's primal guardians, chosen by the spirits or self-appointed to defend the life of Athas.

Many primal guardians are hermits who live in or near the lands they guard. Legendary druids such as Enola, the mul guardian of the Dragon's Bowl, and Mearedes, the protector of the island of Shault, are excellent examples. Some of these individuals choose their tasks for themselves, freely taking up the mantle of guardianship over some rare and precious verdant patch hidden in the desert. Others are possessed by the primal spirits, haunted or maddened by visions and bound to the place of the land's need. Still other primal guardians belong to circles or brotherhoods collectively sworn to defend a wide area. Several such circles, consisting mostly of halfling druids and wardens, are scattered throughout the Forest Ridge. Another band known as the Crescent Circle works to defend the Crescent Forest between Gulg and Nibenay. Finally, a few circles are free-roaming orders or societies that keep watch over the whole of the Tyr Region, passing messages to each other and gathering to oppose great dangers when they arise.

Even if a primal guardian chooses a single locale to protect, he or she is free to wander the rest of the world. In fact, many guardians begin their careers with an extended time of wandering, learning the secrets of nature's balance throughout Athas and searching for the place of their calling. But even after this time comes to an end, the needs of all of Athas often draw a primal guardian into long journeys away from the place he or she wards.

Even more so than elemental priests, primal guardians are people of the deep desert and the remote wilderness. Where the elemental priests seek

to instill reverence for the primal elements in the peoples of Athas, primal guardians seek to keep verdant lands hidden and unspoiled. Some conceal trails or wield magic to obscure their warded places, some lure dangerous beasts to lair in the right spot, some spread rumors of death and desolation, and a few kill anyone who comes across the place they are sworn to protect. A few lives are nothing when weighed against the life of the world, after all.

BUILDING A PRIMAL GUARDIAN

Druids, shamans, barbarians, rangers, and wardens are most likely to become primal guardians. They are already attuned to the primal spirits, and they can easily see the worth in defending a place where nature still flowers. Likewise, rangers and preservers—including sorcerers, wizards, and fey pact warlocks—are often close to nature and dedicated to its defense. However, the primal spirits sometimes move through unexpected heroes.

PRIMAL GUARDIAN TRAITS

Secondary Role: Defender

Power Source: Primal

Granted Power: You gain the *mark of thunder* power.

PRIMAL GUARDIAN POWERS

The following powers are available to any character who has chosen the primal guardian theme.

Mark of Thunder

Primal Guardian Feature

You invoke the fading power of the world as you strike.

Encounter ♦ Primal, Thunder, Weapon

Standard Action **Melee weapon**

Target: One creature

Attack: Primary ability vs. AC

Hit: 1[W] + ability modifier thunder damage.

Level 11: 2[W] + ability modifier thunder damage.

Level 21: 3[W] + ability modifier thunder damage.

Effect: You mark the target until the end of your next turn.

Until the mark ends, if the target makes an attack that does not include you, it takes 5 thunder damage.

Level 11: 10 thunder damage.

Level 21: 15 thunder damage.

LEVEL 2 UTILITY EVOCATION

Sandstep

Primal Guardian Utility 2

In a swirl of wind-driven sand, you move across the battlefield, and the sand obscures you and nearby allies.

Encounter ♦ Primal

Move Action **Personal**

Effect: You shift 3 squares. Until the end of your next turn, you gain concealment, as do your allies while they are adjacent to you.



LEVEL 3 ATTACK EVOCATION

Armor of the Land

Primal Guardian Attack 3

The land's blessings wrap themselves around you, encasing you in a shell of wood and stone and thunder.

Encounter ♦ Polymorph, Primal, Thunder, Weapon
Minor Action Personal

Effect: You assume the armor of the land form until the end of your next turn. While in this form, you gain resist 5 to all damage. Once before the end of your next turn, you can make the following attack as an immediate interrupt.

Trigger: An enemy adjacent to you moves willingly.

Target: The triggering enemy

Attack: Primary ability vs. Fortitude

Hit: $2[W] + \text{ability modifier}$ thunder damage, and you knock the target prone.

Level 13

Hit: As above, but $3[W] + \text{ability modifier}$ thunder damage.

Level 23

Hit: As above, but $4[W] + \text{ability modifier}$ thunder damage.

LEVEL 5 ATTACK EVOCATION

Storm of Debris

Primal Guardian Attack 5

Splinters of wood, serrated leaves, and thorny brush whirl around you with thunderous fury, striking your foes and preventing their escape.

Daily ♦ Polymorph, Primal, Thunder, Weapon

Minor Action Personal

Effect: You assume the form of a storm of debris until the end of the encounter. While you are in this form, each enemy that starts its turn within 2 squares of you takes 5 thunder damage and is marked by you until the end of your next turn.

Once during the encounter while in this form, you can make the following attack.

Standard Action Close burst 2

Target: Each creature in burst

Attack: Primary ability vs. Reflex

Hit: $1[W] + \text{ability modifier}$ thunder damage, and you slide the target 1 square. The target is also slowed (save ends).

Level 15

Effect: As above, but 10 thunder damage.

Hit: As above, but $2[W] + \text{ability modifier}$ thunder damage.

Level 25

Effect: As above, but 15 thunder damage.

Hit: As above, but $3[W] + \text{ability modifier}$ thunder damage.

LEVEL 6 UTILITY EVOCATION

Lifting Winds

Primal Guardian Utility 6

Primal spirits riding fierce winds propel your ally into battle.

Encounter ♦ Primal

Move Action Close burst 10

Target: You or one ally in burst

Effect: The target flies a number of squares equal to your primary ability modifier and lands at the end of this movement. Until the end of your next turn, when the target hits an enemy with a melee attack, he or she also pushes the enemy 1 square.

LEVEL 7 ATTACK EVOCATION

Armor of Living Dunes

Primal Guardian Attack 7

Primal spirits of sand, stone, and wood infuse your body with energy, transforming you into a creature of desert life and giving you the ability to hurl a blast of sand from your weapon.

Encounter ♦ Polymorph, Primal, Weapon

Minor Action

Effect: You assume the armor of living dunes form until the end of your next turn. While in this form, you are immune to forced movement. Once before the end of your next turn, you can make the following attack.

Standard Action Close blast 3

Target: Each creature in blast

Attack: Primary ability vs. Reflex

Hit: $1[W] + \text{ability modifier}$ damage, and you push the target 2 squares. In addition, the target is blinded until the end of your next turn.

Level 17

Hit: As above, but $2[W] + \text{ability modifier}$ damage.

Level 27

Hit: As above, but $3[W] + \text{ability modifier}$ damage.

LEVEL 9 ATTACK EVOCATION

Of Wood and Stone

Primal Guardian Attack 9

Angry primal spirits bind themselves to you, transforming your body into a hulking mass of rock and wood.

Daily ♦ Polymorph, Primal, Weapon

Minor Action Personal

Effect: You assume the form of wood and stone until the end of the encounter. While you are in this form, you and all allies adjacent to you gain resist 5 to all damage and cannot be pulled, pushed, or slid unless you or the ally adjacent to you chooses to be.

Once before the end of the encounter while you are in this form, you can make the following attack.

Standard Action Close burst 1

Target: Each enemy in burst you can see

Attack: Primary ability vs. Fortitude

Hit: $2[W] + \text{ability modifier}$ damage, and the target is weakened until the end of your next turn.

Level 19

Hit: As above, but $3[W] + \text{ability modifier}$ damage.

Level 29

Hit: As above, but $4[W] + \text{ability modifier}$ damage.

LEVEL 10 UTILITY EVOCATION

Balm of the Guardian

Primal Guardian Utility 10

You leech the moisture from the area around you, directing it to your allies and creating kindling for the fire.

Daily ♦ Healing, Primal, Zone

Minor Action Close burst 3

Effect: You spend a healing surge. You regain hit points as normal, and each ally in the burst gains temporary hit points equal to one-half your level. The burst creates a zone that lasts until the end of your next turn. Each enemy within the zone gains vulnerable 5 thunder while it is within the zone.

GUARDIAN OF THE LAND

"Who better to protect the land than the land itself?"

Prerequisite: Primal guardian theme

There is no greater calling than to protect the land, to shelter it from those who would exploit it for the power it contains. Your long associations with the spirit world revealed to you the fragile balance that allows life to continue despite the hardships. Only if this balance is maintained can life and the world recover, and so you make this your work, devoting your life to its protection.

The primal spirits are not blind to your sacrifice, and they respond to your efforts by lending aid where and when they can. Whenever you choose a land to guard, the spirits emerge from the broken landscape to add their strength to your own. They slow enemies as they approach and punish the trespassers.

As your bond with the land grows, so too does your understanding of its power. You can draw primal magic into yourself when you assume bestial forms, growing your strength and vitality. Within your guarded sites you can move from place to place, ensuring that nothing under your stewardship comes to harm. And if you face a dire threat, you can call forth the ancient spirits to harry and kill any you name as your enemy.

GUARDIAN OF THE LAND PATH FEATURES

Guarded Land (11th level): Your connection to the world lets you form bonds with the land's spirits. You gain the *guarded land* power.

Guarded Land

Guardian of the Land Feature

The land's spirits awaken, answering your plea for aid.

Encounter ♦ Primal, Zone

Minor Action Close blast 3

Effect: You mark each enemy in the blast until the end of your next turn. The blast creates a zone that lasts until the end of the encounter, or until a creature uses *arcane defiling* within the zone. The zone is difficult terrain for your enemies. You can move the zone 1 square as part of a move action, or 3 squares as a move action.

Land Guarding Action (11th level): When you spend an action point to take an extra action, you can move the zone created by *guarded land* 3 squares. After the move, any enemy within the zone takes damage equal to your primary ability modifier.

Nature's Steward (11th level): Once per day, you can use the Speak with Nature ritual without expending components.

In addition, you no longer need to eat or drink.

Watchful Wrath (16th level): Once per round on your turn, as a free action you mark every enemy within the zone created by *guarded land* until the end of your next turn.



GUARDIAN OF THE LAND EVOCATIONS

Land's Rebuke

Guardian of the Land Attack 11

The land is your ally, and at your call it rises up to smash your enemies.

Encounter ♦ Primal

Immediate Interrupt Area special

Trigger: An enemy within the zone created by your *guarded land* and marked by you makes an attack that does not include you as a target.

Target: Each enemy within the zone created by *guarded land*

Attack: Primary ability + 6 (9 at 21st level) vs. Fortitude

Hit: 2d10 + ability modifier damage, and you slide the target 3 squares to a square within the zone created by *guarded land*.

Land Stride

Guardian of the Land Utility 12

While on or near the lands you guard, nothing can hold you.

At-Will ♦ Primal, Teleportation

Move Action Personal

Requirement: You are within the zone created by *guarded land* or adjacent to it.

Effect: You teleport 3 squares to a square within the zone created by *guarded land*.

Awakened Fury

Guardian of the Land Attack 20

The land stirs to violence, snatching and rending your enemies.

Daily ♦ Primal

Standard Action Area special

Target: Each enemy within the zone created by *guarded land*

Attack: Primary ability + 9 vs. Reflex

Hit: 3d8 + ability modifier damage, and the target is immobilized and takes ongoing 10 damage (save ends both).

Miss: Half damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends).

VOICE FOR THE RAVAGED

"You speak of suffering? Look around you. Can you not see that the world cries in agony, too?"

Prerequisite: Shaman or primal guardian theme

The primal spirits all bear scars from the ancient conflict that led to the world's devastation. Many vanished, consumed by destructive magic. Those who remained either retreated to the few remaining havens or turned to elemental power to sustain themselves in the bitter aftermath. It is to the ravaged, the broken, and corrupted that you turn to wage your war against tyranny and right the world's course once more. You give voice to their grievances, guiding their wrath to destroy the enemy you have vowed to fight.

You have become the ally of these twisted primal spirits, who allow you to wield not only their strength but their very essence in your crusade against the despoilers. The spirits answer your commands, lending both primal and elemental power to your attacks. Their anger lets you drive your enemies to turn on one another, while at the same time sheltering your allies from harm or infusing them with elemental strength. The spirits are vengeful, and you are that vengeance personified. The most revealing aspect to your heightened connection is the ability to bind your spirit with your enemies, so that even as your companions close, your spirit rends the soul within.



JULIE DILLON

VOICE FOR THE RAVAGED

PATH FEATURES

Spirit Ride (11th level): After each extended rest, choose one of your allies and one of the following damage types: cold, fire, lightning, or thunder. The chosen ally gains resist 10 to that damage type and a +1 bonus to attack rolls with powers that deal damage of that type. These benefits last until you take another extended rest.

Wrathful Action (11th level): When you spend an action point to take an extra action, each enemy adjacent to you takes fire, cold, lightning, and thunder damage equal to your primary ability modifier.

Bountiful Returns (16th level): When you use a daily primal attack power, each ally within 5 squares of you gains temporary hit points equal to your primary ability modifier and can shift 1 square as a free action.

VOICE FOR THE RAVAGED

EVOCATIONS

Hateful Binding

Voice for the Ravaged Attack 11

You force your enemy to endure the ravages that have plagued Athas, causing it to turn against one of its allies.

Encounter ♦ Charm, Primal, Psychic
Standard Action **Ranged 5**

Target: One creature

Attack: Primary ability + 6 vs. Will

Level 21: Primary ability + 9 vs. Will

Hit: 1d10 + ability modifier psychic damage, and as a free action the target makes a basic attack against a creature of your choice, with a bonus to the damage roll equal to your ability modifier.

Restorative Wind

Voice for the Ravaged Utility 12

You summon the primal spirits of air and earth, creating a soothing whirlwind that washes over your allies to give them respite from their wounds.

Daily ♦ Healing, Primal
Minor Action **Close blast 5**

Target: Each ally in blast

Effect: Each target regains hit points as if it had spent a healing surge and gains a +2 power bonus to all defenses until the start of your next turn.

World's Vengeance

Voice for the Ravaged Attack 20

You call forth the greatest and most vengeful of your spirit allies, sending that spirit to lash out at your enemies and bring them under your command.

Daily ♦ Charm, Primal
Standard Action **Close burst 3**

Target: Each enemy in burst

Attack: Primary ability + 9 vs. Will

Hit: The target is stunned (save ends).

First Failed Saving Throw: The target is dominated instead of stunned (save ends).

Aftereffect: The target is dazed until the end of your next turn.

Miss: The target is dazed (save ends).

TEMPLAR

"I have been entrusted with the full power and authority of our king. Where I am, he is too. What I deem right and just, he approves. What I condemn as seditious or criminal, he also condemns. I am the law."

Judges, officials, and enforcers of the king's laws, templars are the embodiment of civic authority in the great cities of Athas. They form a privileged meritocracy of individuals who serve as the sorcerer-king's eyes, ears, and mouth among the populace—and, as circumstances require, the heavy hand of crushing tyranny. Given broad discretion to enforce the king's will as they see fit, templars are often brutal and corrupt, using their positions to wring ruinous taxes and bribes from all who fall under their power. A sorcerer-king doesn't care about templars being corrupt, as long as they keep the city in good order.

Templars commonly enjoy broad powers to arrest wrongdoers, impose fines, and command soldiers or city guards to do their bidding in their home cities. Of course, higher-ranking templars can countermand these orders, so a low-ranking templar can't just commandeer the half-giants guarding a city gate and march off into the desert with them—he would have to appeal to his superiors to approve his mission and request that guards be assigned to his command. Likewise, templars of a particular city-state have no civic authority in other cities or in places not under the direct rule of their king. Though the civic powers granted to templars are formidable in their own right, templars are not simply bureaucrats—many are also formidable spellcasters, sanctioned to wield the terrible magic of the sorcerer-kings in the pursuit of their duties. In many cities templars are trained in arcane magic in formal academies and are bestowed with the ability to call upon their sorcerer-king's magical might through lengthy pacts.

The exact ranks and customs of the templar hierarchy vary widely from city to city. In Balic, templars are known as praetors and are elected to their positions (although a few elections end in unexpected upsets). The templars of Nibenay are exclusively female and are ceremonially wedded to the sorcerer-king. In Draj, templars are known as the Priests of the Moon and are charged with observing the civic worship of the king Tectuktital, who claims to be a god. Notwithstanding specific customs, all templars constitute a powerful, wealthy social class within their cities—a social class highly invested in keeping each sorcerer-king the supreme master of his or her city-state.

Most templars revel in their positions and ruthlessly exploit the weak and the poor. However, a few are patriots who are truly concerned with what's

best for their city and their fellow citizens. Some are reformers who seek to moderate the excesses of the system, and a rare handful are rebels seeking to effect change from within. Heroic templars likely hold these convictions.

BUILDING A TEMPLAR

All templars are members of the templar hierarchy and have some skill in the use of arcane magic—especially magic that is useful in compelling obedience or punishing lawbreakers. However, a templar need not be a member of a spellcasting class. A templar might be a rogue who serves as a spy or an investigator, a psion jurist or scholar, a warlord who holds a post as a commander or an administrator, or even a fighter who serves in an elite palace guard.

TEMPLAR TRAITS

Secondary Role: Leader

Power Source: Arcane

Granted Power: You gain the templar's fist power.

TEMPLAR POWERS

The following powers are available to any character who has chosen the templar theme.

Templar's Fist

Templar Feature

You command your foe to submit, crushing its spirit and slowing its flight. The same power that compels your foe to despair fills a nearby ally with brutal zeal.

Encounter ♦ Arcane, Implement, Psychic

Standard Action Close burst 5

Target: One creature in burst

Attack: Primary ability vs. Will

Hit: 1d10 + ability modifier psychic damage, and the target is slowed until the end of your next turn.

Level 11: 2d10 + ability modifier psychic damage.

Level 21: 3d10 + ability modifier psychic damage.

Effect: The next ally who hits and damages the target before the end of your next turn gains a +3 power bonus to attack rolls until the end of his or her next turn.

LEVEL 2 UTILITY SPELL

Reward the Obedient

Templar Utility 2

You call upon your subject to slay the enemies of your master, drawing your ally onward into the fray.

Encounter ♦ Arcane, Healing

Standard Action Close burst 5

Target: One enemy in burst

Effect: The next ally who ends his or her turn adjacent to the target before the end of your next turn can spend a healing surge and make a saving throw.

LEVEL 3 ENCOUNTER SPELL

Fearsome Command

Templar Attack 3

You cause your foes to hesitate with a spell of magical terror, but your ally takes heart from your authority.

Encounter ♦ Arcane, Fear, Implement, Psychic
Standard Action Area burst 2 within 10 squares

Target: Each creature in burst

Attack: Primary ability vs. Will

Hit: 2d6 + ability modifier psychic damage, and the target is slowed until the end of your next turn.

Effect: The next ally who hits and damages one of the targets before the end of your next turn automatically succeeds on any one saving throw at the end of his or her turn.

Level 13

Hit: As above, but 3d6 + ability modifier psychic damage.

Level 23

Hit: As above, but 5d6 + ability modifier psychic damage.

LEVEL 5 DAILY SPELL

Glare of Oppression

Templar Attack 5

You create a wave of blistering sunlight and mental oppression. It saps your enemies' will to fight while renewing the vigor of those you command.

Daily ♦ Arcane, Healing, Implement, Radiant

Standard Action Area burst 2 within 10 squares

Target: Each enemy in burst

Attack: Primary ability vs. Will

Hit: 2d10 + ability modifier radiant damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends).

Miss: Half damage, and the target is slowed until the end of your next turn.

Effect: The next ally who hits and damages one of the targets before the end of your next turn gains regeneration 3 until the end of the encounter.

Level 15

Hit: As above, but 3d10 + ability modifier radiant damage.

Level 25

Hit: As above, but 4d10 + ability modifier radiant damage.

LEVEL 6 UTILITY SPELL

Mantle of Might

Templar Utility 6

An invisible aura of power protects you from enemies that dare to approach.

Daily ♦ Arcane, Fear

Minor Action Personal

Effect: Until the end of your next turn, enemies grant combat advantage and take a -4 penalty to attack rolls against you while adjacent to you. The next ally who hits and damages an enemy adjacent to you before the end of the encounter gains 1 action point.

LEVEL 7 ENCOUNTER SPELL

Fettering Glare

Templar Attack 7

You create ghostly, constricting iron manacles to pin your foe in place. The manacles draw an enchantment or blight affecting one of your allies away from him.

Encounter ♦ Arcane, Implement, Psychic

Standard Action Close burst 2

Target: Each enemy in burst

Attack: Primary ability vs. Will

Hit: 2d8 + ability modifier psychic damage, and you knock the target prone.

Effect: The next ally who hits and damages one of the targets before the end of your next turn rolls twice on any one attack roll made before the end of his or her next turn, using either result.

Level 17

Hit: As above, but 3d8 + ability modifier psychic damage.

Level 27

Hit: As above, but 5d8 + ability modifier psychic damage.

LEVEL 9 DAILY SPELL

Imperious Gaze

Templar Attack 9

You fix your eye on a foe or a friend, driving your ally onward with magical compulsion or crushing your enemy's will.

Daily ♦ Arcane, Implement, Psychic

Standard Action Close burst 2

Target: Each enemy in burst

Attack: Primary ability vs. Will

Hit: 2d10 + ability modifier psychic damage, and the target is dazed (save ends).

Effect: The next ally who hits and damages one of the targets before the end of the encounter can regain any one expended encounter attack power of this power's level or lower.

Level 19

Hit: As above, but 3d10 + ability modifier psychic damage.

Level 29

Hit: As above, but 4d10 + ability modifier psychic damage.

LEVEL 10 UTILITY SPELL

Berate the Weak

Templar Utility 10

You lash your failing allies with words of scorn, driving them back into the fray with renewed determination.

Encounter ♦ Arcane, Healing

Minor Action Close burst 5

Target: Each bloodied, dazed, stunned, or prone ally in burst

Effect: Each target can choose to spend a healing surge, automatically remove one dazed or stunned effect, or stand up. In addition, each target in the burst can move his or her speed as a free action, as long as this movement ends with that target adjacent to an enemy.

MASTER DEFILER

"What does it matter if a few plants die to fuel my ambitions?"

Prerequisite: Arcane defiling power

The lowly and the ignorant see defilers as craven and corrupt—little more than thieves with magical talent. It's true that the defiler's path is selfish in its way: A defiler requires energy from associates and the living world nearby to power his or her greatest spells. And it is also true is that defiling can corrupt the body and mind. But only a fool could fail to see the power that defiling offers, and you are not a fool.

Most who openly defile enjoy the protection of high station or powerful patrons. Perhaps you are of noble birth, and your family's wealth protects you from the consequences of your actions. You might have been chosen for an arcane education while still young and tutored in the ways of magic by templar instructors, or perhaps you gained the king's sanction by other means—as a reward for some great service to the king or the city, through bribery, or by the manipulation of powerful nobles or senior templars exercising the king's favor. If you are not a native of a city-state, the only sanction you require is sheer power: You can defile freely if your tribe protects you, or if you are so powerful that no one dares to challenge you.



If you are one of a sorcerer-king's sanctioned defilers, you might be expected to make yourself available for special tasks or duties as needed. Such assignments are rare, however; most sorcerer-kings allow master defilers in their cities to do more or less as they wish, trusting that they won't jeopardize the city or themselves. After all, master defilers are universally loathed, and if anything ever happens to the king, even a master defiler wouldn't last a day.

MASTER DEFILER PATH FEATURES

Defiler's Action (11th level): When you spend an action point to make an extra attack, you can use *arcane defiling* on that attack even if the attack is not an arcane daily power.

Offensive Defiling (11th level): When you use *arcane defiling*, one nonminion enemy within 20 squares of you takes damage equal to half your healing surge value.

Defiler's Addiction (16th level): You can use *arcane defiling* on one arcane encounter attack power per encounter.

MASTER DEFILER SPELLS

Defiling Alacrity

Master Defiler Attack 11

Your mastery of defiling with simple spells allows you to cast them with alarming quickness.

Encounter ♦ Arcane, Necrotic
Standard Action **Personal**

Effect: You can use one of your at-will arcane attack powers as a free action. If the attack hits, the power deals 1d10 extra necrotic damage to one target hit by the attack. In addition, the next time you use an arcane attack power before the end of your next turn, you roll two dice for one attack roll and use either result.

Defiling Recovery

Master Defiler Utility 12

You quickly defile your surroundings to conserve the energy of a failed spell.

Encounter ♦ Arcane
Free Action **Personal**

Trigger: You miss every target with an arcane encounter attack spell.

Effect: The triggering power is not expended.

Enemies to Ashes

Master Defiler Attack 20

Like defilers of legend, you steal life force from your enemies, wracking them with pain and turning their bodies into lifeless ash in the process.

Daily ♦ Arcane, Necrotic
Standard Action **Personal**

Effect: You can use one of your at-will arcane attack powers as a free action. If the attack hits, one creature hit by the attack also takes ongoing 20 necrotic damage (save ends). Until the ongoing damage ends, the creature hit is considered to be your ally for the purpose of taking damage from *arcane defiling*. If the attack misses, this power is not expended.



PRAETOR LEGATE

"Sometimes hard decisions must be made to further the interests of the State. The dictator trusts my judgment in these matters."

Prerequisite: Templar theme or sorcerer-king pact class feature

Through a combination of personal talent, family connections, wealth, and loyal service to Dictator Andropinis, you have won a high office among the templars of Balic. Most praetors are magistrates, overseers of commerce, or military commanders—they lack your personal might and are simply high-ranking officials and administrators. You, however, aren't saddled with mundane duties. Instead, you are a personal representative of the dictator, vested with the power to further the interests of the state in whatever manner you deem appropriate. As a badge of your special office, you are entitled to wear a cloak or tunic with a purple stripe or border.

As a praetor legate, you might spy on Balic's enemies, investigate corruption, look after the defense of the life-sustaining trade routes throughout the Forked Tongue, track down criminals, or search for ancient artifacts in ruined cities. You answer only to Andropinis himself... and if you are a true patriot, you might find that the interests of the dictator and the interests of Balic are not always one and the same.

Balic is friendlier to trade than any other city in the Tyr Region is, and several important merchant houses are based here. Consequently, praetors find that their duties often lead them to distant villages and even other cities, watching over Balic's trade affairs. Most praetor legates are natives of Balic, but capable and trustworthy foreigners occasionally rise high in the ranks of Andropinis's templars.

PRAETOR LEGATE PATH FEATURES

Praetor's Censure (11th level): Whenever you bloody an enemy with an attack, that enemy grants combat advantage until the end of your next turn.

Praetor's Action (11th level): When you spend an action point to make an attack, the next ally who hits and damages one of the targets of your attack before the end of your next turn gains an action point.

Chosen of Andropinis (16th level): Whenever an enemy starts its turn adjacent to you, you can slide that enemy 1 square as a free action.

PRAETOR LEGATE SPELLS

Obsidian Javelin

Praetor Legate Attack 11

You create a black, ghostly javelin of magical force. Its concussion drives your foe back and makes it a tempting target for your ally.

Encounter ♦ Arcane, Force, Implement

Standard Action Melee touch or Ranged 10

Target: One creature

Attack: Primary ability vs. Reflex

Hit: $3d8 + \text{ability modifier}$ force damage, and you push the target 3 squares.

Effect: The next ally who hits and damages the target before the end of your next turn gains resist 10 to all damage until the end of that ally's next turn.

Dustwalk

Praetor Legate Utility 12

You stride through the air in a whirling cloud of dust.

Encounter ♦ Arcane

Minor Action Personal

Effect: Until the end of your next turn, you can fly (hover) at your speed. You have an altitude limit of 1 square. You have concealment while flying or hovering.

Dictator's Judgment

Praetor Legate Attack 20

You channel the power of Dictator Andropinis to pronounce a dire judgment on your foe. Your spell roots the target to the spot and crushes its will to resist you, and you offer a bounty of vitality on the head of the damned.

Daily ♦ Arcane, Healing, Implement, Psychic

Standard Action Close burst 10

Target: One creature in burst

Attack: Primary ability vs. Will

Hit: $4d8 + \text{ability modifier}$ psychic damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends).

Miss: Half damage, and the target is slowed until the end of your next turn.

Effect: The next ally who hits and damages the target before the end of the encounter regains hit points as though he or she had spent three healing surges.

VEILED ALLIANCE

"For centuries, the sorcerer-kings have perpetrated a great lie. They claim that arcane power is innately evil, and all who wield it without their supervision must be destroyed. The truth is that arcane magic is a weapon, and like any weapon, it can be used for good or ill."

Arcane spellcasters are feared and reviled throughout Athas, but a secret society protects those who choose the path of the preserver: the Veiled Alliance. Cells of this cabal are located across the Tyr Region, mostly within the city-states. Each cell is independent and does not answer to any central authority. Leaders of each cell oversee and train a network of warriors, spies, and other capable agents—especially those who use arcane power.

All Veiled Alliance activities are directed toward the protection of preserving and the downfall of defiling. Although individual members might take up other tasks, the organization holds no other purpose as more important. The boldest of these aims is direct opposition to the sorcerer-kings. The Alliance is therefore a rebel movement—the only rebel movement worth speaking of in some cities. As such, members of the Veiled Alliance are eagerly hunted by the templars and agents of every surviving sorcerer-king and those who wish to curry their favor.

Any preserver who comes to the attention of the Veiled Alliance earns a degree of aid. Membership is another matter. A potential recruit must be trustworthy and gain sponsorship of an existing member.

The Veiled Alliance holds the following tenets:

- ◆ Protect the path of arcane preserving, its practitioners, and those who support preservers—especially the Veiled Alliance itself. Teach, aid, and liberate preservers and their allies. Do nothing that brings danger to a preserver's door.
- ◆ Defilers are abominations that steal that which rightly belongs to everyone. In their weakness, they ruin the land and bring hostile attention to

THE ALLIANCE AND DEFILING

The Veiled Alliance abhors defiling, and most of its members literally wouldn't defile to save their own lives. But sometimes a dedicated preserver might panic or weaken in his resolve when faced with an overwhelming challenge, and give in to the easy path. A character who makes this mistake isn't disqualified from the theme; however, if others witness the act of defiling and word gets back to the local Veiled Alliance cell, the character will be thrown out (and possibly hunted down and killed, if he or she knows too much). A fallen preserver can try to start over with another Veiled Alliance cell in a different city... but someone who repeatedly turns to defiling isn't living up to the society's ideals, and might be better off with a different heroic theme.

those who use arcane magic properly. Convert a defiler to the right path, or thwart and destroy the defiler without revealing the Alliance.

- ◆ The greatest defilers, the sorcerer-kings, must be brought down. Only they have the power to destroy our path.

BUILDING A VEILED ALLIANCE CHARACTER

Most Veiled Alliance characters are preservers—sorcerers, wizards, and occasionally warlocks who have sworn never to defile and to do everything in their power to protect fellow preservers and safeguard knowledge that otherwise might pass from the world. However, not all Veiled Alliance members are primarily spellcasters. It's not unusual for an Alliance cell to include a sprinkling of psions, ardent, and other people of psionic talent, as well as spies and guards who have no magical talent at all. Veiled Alliance agents come from all classes, and some never master anything more than a taste of arcane power.

VEILED ALLIANCE TRAITS

Secondary Role: Controller

Power Source: Arcane

Granted Power: You gain the *Excise from Sight* power.

VEILED ALLIANCE POWERS

The following powers are available to any character who has chosen the Veiled Alliance theme.

Excise from Sight

Veiled Alliance Feature

Magic removes all evidence from your foe's senses that you or one of your allies exists.

Encounter ◆ Arcane, Implement, Psychic

Ranged 10

Special: You can spend a minor action when you use this power to enhance it. If you do so, you can also slide the target 1 square on a hit.

Target: One creature

Attack: Primary ability vs. Will

Hit: 1d10 + ability modifier psychic damage, and you or one ally within 10 squares of you becomes invisible to the target until the end of your next turn.

Level 11: 2d10 + ability modifier psychic damage.

Level 21: 3d10 + ability modifier psychic damage.

LEVEL 2 UTILITY SPELL

Veiled Arcana

Veiled Alliance Utility 2

You distract observers to conceal the use of arcane power, sometimes catching them off guard.

Encounter ◆ Arcane

Minor Action

Close burst 5

Target: You or one ally you can see in burst

Effect: The target gains combat advantage on his or her next arcane attack before the end of your next turn.



LEVEL 3 ENCOUNTER SPELL

Dazzling Flash

Veiled Alliance Attack 3

Unleashing a flash of arcane magic, you escape your enemies' clutches.

Encounter ♦ Arcane, Implement, Radiant
Standard Action Close blast 5

Special: You can spend a minor action when you use this power to enhance it. If you do so, the target cannot make opportunity attacks or immediate action attacks until the end of your next turn instead of taking a penalty to attack rolls.

Effect: Before or after the attack, you can shift 3 squares.

Target: Each enemy in blast

Attack: Primary ability vs. Fortitude

Hit: $1d8 + \text{ability modifier}$ radiant damage, and until the end of your next turn the target is slowed and takes a -4 penalty to opportunity action and immediate action attack rolls.

Level 13

Hit: As above, but $2d8 + \text{ability modifier}$ radiant damage.

Level 23

Hit: As above, but $3d8 + \text{ability modifier}$ radiant damage.

LEVEL 5 DAILY SPELL

Psychic Veil

Veiled Alliance Attack 5

A buzzing shroud issues from your mind, convincing your foes that you are a powerful user of psionic power.

Daily ♦ Arcane, Implement, Psychic

Standard Action Close burst 5

Special: You can spend a minor action when you use this power to enhance it. If you do so, the target takes 5 psychic damage each time it fails a saving throw against this power.

Target: Each enemy in burst

Attack: Primary ability vs. Will

Hit: $1d10 + \text{ability modifier}$ psychic damage, and the target is deafened and takes a -2 penalty to opportunity action and immediate action attack rolls (save ends both).

Miss: Half damage, and the target takes a -2 penalty to any check made to discern your use of arcane power until the end of the encounter.

Level 15

Hit: As above, but $2d10 + \text{ability modifier}$ psychic damage.

Level 25

Hit: $3d10 + \text{ability modifier}$ damage, and the target is dazed (save ends).

LEVEL 6 UTILITY SPELL

Veiled Escape

Veiled Alliance Utility 6

Your subtle magic lends speed to an ally's feet and calls up dust to conceal your ally's movement.

Encounter ♦ Arcane

Minor Action Ranged 5

Target: You or one ally

Effect: The next time the target shifts before the end of your next turn, he or she can shift 2 additional squares and gain concealment until the end of his or her next turn.

LEVEL 7 ENCOUNTER SPELL

Sandman's Veil

Veiled Alliance Attack 7

A spray of mind-stinging particles covers your flight from danger.

Encounter ♦ Arcane, Implement, Psychic, Teleportation
Standard Action Close blast 3

Special: You can spend a minor action when you use this power to enhance it. If you do so, you can teleport 2 squares instead of shifting 2 squares.

Effect: Before or after the attack, you can shift 2 squares.

Target: Each enemy in blast

Attack: Primary ability vs. Reflex

Hit: $1d10 + \text{ability modifier}$ psychic damage, and the target cannot see anything farther than 2 squares away until the end of your next turn.

Level 17

Hit: As above, but $2d10 + \text{ability modifier}$ psychic damage.

Level 27

Hit: As above, but $3d10 + \text{ability modifier}$ psychic damage.

LEVEL 9 DAILY SPELL

Sequestering Veil

Veiled Alliance Attack 9

A sparkling mist covers your foes and swirls around them, locking them in place and obscuring their vision.

Daily ♦ Arcane, Implement, Psychic

Standard Action Area burst 1 within 10 squares

Special: You can spend a minor action when you use this power to enhance it. If you do so, the target takes a -2 penalty to saving throws against this power.

Target: Each creature in burst

Attack: Primary ability vs. Fortitude

Hit: $2d6 + \text{ability modifier}$ psychic damage, and the target is restrained and cannot teleport (save ends both). Until the target saves, all creatures that are not adjacent to it have concealment against it.

Miss: Half damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends).

Level 19

Hit: As above, but $3d6 + \text{ability modifier}$ psychic damage.

Level 29

Area burst 2 within 10 squares

Hit: As above, but $4d6 + \text{ability modifier}$ psychic damage.

LEVEL 10 DAILY SPELL

Sensory Absorption

Veiled Alliance Utility 10

Your senses ride atop your target's senses, allowing you to gain a broader perspective.

Daily ♦ Arcane

Minor Action Ranged 10

Target: One creature

Effect: You can see and hear as if you were in the target's space (save ends).

Aftereffect: You can see and hear as if you were in the target's space until the end of your next turn.

MASTER PRESERVER

"My path guides Athas back toward health. It does the opposite for those who oppose me."

Prerequisite: Arcane class

For most arcane spellcasters, the urge to defile is an ever-present temptation that whispers deep in their souls. The unseen life energy of plants and animals nearby sings with power as a spell is shaped, a ripe fruit waiting to be plucked and savored. Far too many spellcasters see no reason to resist, and they eagerly rip away the life essence to fuel their magic, but those who choose the preserver's path carefully shape their spells around this fragile aura, drawing a little energy from many different places, and never so much that the life that it emanates from is harmed or extinguished.

In this delicate give-and-take of spellcasting, the master preserver is an arcanist who has developed a perfect sense for the balance of destruction and power. Whereas other casters struggle to maintain their discipline and must consciously control their impulse to drink too deeply of the fragile energy around them, the master preserver's self-control, experience, and intuitive grasp of the subtle currents at play allow him to instantly shape his spells without fear of defiling. In fact, the master preserver's skill and precision are so great that he can often match the raw power of the most reckless defilers without harming a single blade of grass.



When you choose the master preserver's path, you turn your back on defiling forever. From that day forward, the whispers of temptation hold no more power over you. But in exchange, your sacrifices have led you to a place where you need to give less to perform your magic; the world now gives you a little back. If this situation isn't confirmation of your path's integrity, what else could be?

MASTER PRESERVER PATH FEATURES

Blessing of the Land (11th level): You can no longer use *arcane defiling*. In addition, you gain a +2 bonus to Endurance, Nature, and Perception checks.

Master Preserver's Action (11th level): When you spend an action point to make an arcane attack, you can choose to reroll one attack roll or damage roll and use either result.

Surging Vitality (16th level): Whenever you spend a healing surge, one ally within 10 squares of you regains hit points equal to twice your primary ability modifier. In addition, you gain a +1 bonus to attack rolls with arcane attack powers until the end of your next turn.

MASTER PRESERVER SPELLS

Vital Spell

Master Preserver Attack 11

Your mastery of preserving allows you to conserve the fleeting vitality of your enemy to invigorate an ally.

**Encounter ♦ Arcane, Healing
Standard Action Personal**

Effect: You can use one of your arcane at-will attack powers as a free action. If you hit, you deal 1d10 extra damage, and you or one ally within 10 squares of you can spend a healing surge.

Life Shield

Master Preserver Utility 12

You shield your ally's life with your arcane energy.

Encounter ♦ Arcane

Immediate Interrupt Close burst 5

Trigger: An ally in burst takes damage from an attack.

Effect: The damage the ally takes is reduced by 10 + your primary ability modifier.

Light of the Lost Sun

Master Preserver Attack 20

You radiate scintillating light that burns into the minds of your enemies and fills your allies with light and life.

**Daily ♦ Arcane, Healing, Implement, Radiant, Zone
Standard Action Close burst 5**

Target: Each enemy in burst

Attack: Primary ability vs. Will

Hit: 2d10 + ability modifier radiant damage, and the target takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls and cannot recharge powers (save ends both).

Effect: The attack creates a zone that lasts until the end of the encounter or until you dismiss it as a free action. When you move, the zone moves with you, remaining centered on you. Any ally within the zone who hits with an attack deals 2d6 extra radiant damage or regains hit points equal to your primary ability modifier.



VEILED GUARDIAN

"Arcane power steadies my mind and focuses my defenses. Those who are with me need not fear the battle's outcome."

Prerequisite: Veiled Alliance theme

Preservers of the Veiled Alliance lead the way for spellcasters everywhere, keeping the only honorable path of arcane power alive. And yet as powerful as they are, most of them need stalwart warriors to hold back the enemy while they work their magic. Protecting preservers is a duty of all who consider themselves members of the Veiled Alliance.

You have taken this tenet to heart and become its embodiment. Involvement with preservers has taught you much. Your training with the Alliance has honed your skills so that you can disable any adversary. This practice might have even made you into a preserver proper, if you weren't one before.

Now you are an elite defender of the Alliance and its goals, an ideal example of the preserving way. You weave arcane power to give your allies the openings they need. So that you and your allies can succeed, you hinder the enemy with specialized techniques. Victory is sometimes defined as mere survival or a daring escape, but preventing enemies of the Alliance from doing harm or making their own getaway is even better. Few do that better than you.

VEILED GUARDIAN PATH FEATURES

Alliance-Trained Mind (11th level): You gain a +1 bonus to Will and a +2 bonus to Insight checks and Perception checks.

Veiled Defender's Action (11th level): When you spend an action point, one enemy adjacent to you is marked by you and grants combat advantage (save ends both).

Marked Preservation (16th level): When an ally makes an arcane attack against a creature adjacent to you, you can mark that creature until the end of your next turn.

VEILED GUARDIAN SPELLS

Soul-Veiling Strike

Veiled Guardian Attack 11

Using special techniques, you deliver a blow that wounds the body, mind, and soul.

Encounter ♦ Arcane, Weapon

Standard Action **Melee weapon**

Special: You can spend a minor action when you use this power to enhance it. If you do so and your attack hits, one ally adjacent to the target can shift 1 square.

Target: One creature

Attack: Primary ability vs. AC

Hit: $2[W] + \text{ability modifier}$ damage, and you mark the target until the end of your next turn. Until the mark ends, the target can use only at-will powers and cannot recharge powers.



Guardian Dash

Veiled Guardian Utility 12

Your eldritch might threatens to knock aside those who stand in your path as you chase down a chosen adversary.

Encounter ♦ Arcane, Weapon

Move Action **Personal**

Effect: You move your speed to a square adjacent to an enemy. You mark that enemy until the end of your next turn. You have resist 10 to all damage during this movement, and each enemy that makes an opportunity attack against you during this movement is knocked prone.

Veiled Guardian Stance

Veiled Guardian Attack 20

With a vicious sweep of your weapon, you attract the attention of all nearby enemies. Leaving your presence is asking for swift punishment.

Daily ♦ Weapon, Stance

Standard Action **Close burst 1**

Special: You can spend a minor action when you use this power to enhance it. If you do so, you gain a +2 power bonus to the melee basic attack rolls granted by this stance.

Target: Each creature in burst

Attack: Primary ability vs. AC

Hit: $2[W] + \text{ability modifier}$ damage, and you mark the target (save ends).

Miss: Half damage, and you mark the target until the end of your next turn.

Effect: You can assume the veiled guardian stance. Until the stance ends, when a target of this power marked by you leaves a square adjacent to you, you can make a melee basic attack against the target as an opportunity action. If your attack hits, the target cannot leave the square until the start of its next turn.

WASTELAND NOMAD

"I would rather die in the desert free from tyranny than die under a sorcerer-king's booted heel."

Civilization huddles behind the towering walls of the Seven Cities, citizens and slaves alike subject to the tyrannical sorcerer-kings and their power-mad templars. Life in the dusty streets of the cities might be easy compared to the harsh barrens of Athas, but the comfort and security the sorcerer-kings offer come at a terrible price. Freedom is just a dream, and countless thousands endure crushing poverty and injustice because it is the only way they know how to live. Only in the wide deserts and trackless wastelands beyond the grasp of the sorcerer-kings' rule can people truly be free. The nomads' lives are hard, but they are theirs to lead—or spend—as they see fit.

The Tyr Region is home to hundreds of wandering bands of herders, hunters, and scavengers eking out hardscrabble lives from the deserts. Nomadic tribes roam the stony barrens and crisscross the sandy wastes as they follow kank herds or seek out new water sources. Owing no allegiance to any but themselves, they are the only Athasians (other than the recently freed people of Tyr) who know freedom's sweet taste. Many nomadic tribes have rejected the city-states for generations, surviving despite the hardships by learning the desert's secrets and mastering the survival techniques needed to provide the bare essentials.

In addition to those who are born to the nomadic life, there is no shortage of fugitives from the cities who hope to join them. Deserters, escaped slaves, and other refugees flee their homelands and the fate they would face if they stayed, preferring to risk their lives in the certain hardship and probable death the wastelands promise. Some find new homes alongside the nomadic tribes. Others go it alone, becoming hermits. But the desert claims most, with thirst, hunger, and exposure taking their toll until nothing remains but a slow, lingering death. Those who survive this grim test of survival are the toughest, the strongest, and the most willing to do what they must to meet whatever struggle they face.

The sorcerer-kings loathe the wasteland nomads, seeing them as nothing more than rabble and brigands who thieve and murder to make ends meet. In their eyes, the nomads are a cancer, weakening the sorcerer-kings' legitimate governments. Nomad tribes must contend not only with the environment, but also with the city-states' armies and patrols, which range the lands to round up new slaves to toil or fight or die, depending on the templar who seizes them. For this reason, and of course the never-ending quest for food and water, nomads must stay on the move.

BUILDING A WASTELAND NOMAD

You come from the deadly lands beyond the Seven Cities, and you derive power from the primal energy that still thrives in those regions. Barbarians, seekers, and other primal characters are common among the wasteland nomads, but heroes of any power source can emerge from the deserts of Athas. Rangers and rogues rely on their tricks and talents for survival. Monks appreciate the solitude of the wild. Ardents, battleminds, and psions perfect their mental disciplines away from the rule of the sorcerer-kings.

WASTELAND NOMAD TRAITS

Secondary Role: Striker

Power Source: Primal

Granted Power: You gain the *wasteland fury* power.

WASTELAND NOMAD POWERS

The following powers are available to any character who has chosen the wasteland nomad theme.

Wasteland Fury

Wasteland Nomad Feature

You catch the merciless sun's cruel radiance in your weapon and redirect it to dazzle your foe, covering your movement.

Encounter ♦ Primal, Weapon

Standard Action Melee or Ranged weapon

Effect: If you use this power while you are not adjacent to any of your allies, you can shift 1 square before or after the attack.

Target: One creature

Attack: Primary ability vs. AC

Hit: 1[W] + ability modifier damage. If you have combat advantage against the target, you deal extra damage equal to your primary ability modifier.

Level 11: 2[W] + ability modifier damage.

Level 21: 3[W] + ability modifier damage.

LEVEL 2 UTILITY EVOCATION

Lone Resolve

Wasteland Nomad Utility 2

Isolation clarifies your senses, helping you to shrug off your enemies' attacks.

Daily ♦ Primal

Free Action Personal

Trigger: You start your turn while you are not adjacent to any of your allies.

Effect: You can make a saving throw with a bonus equal to your primary ability modifier. If the saving throw fails, you do not expend this power.



LEVEL 3 ENCOUNTER EVOCATION

Stalking the Prey

Wasteland Nomad Attack 3

You see a gap in your foe's defenses and deliver an attack that leaves your enemy reeling and unable to protect itself.

Encounter ♦ Primal, Weapon

Standard Action Melee or Ranged weapon

Target: One creature

Attack: Primary ability vs. AC. If none of your allies are adjacent to you or the target, you gain combat advantage on the attack.

Hit: $2[W] + \text{ability modifier damage}$, and you gain combat advantage against the target until the end of your next turn.

Level 13

Hit: As above, but $3[W] + \text{ability modifier damage}$.

Level 23

Hit: As above, but $4[W] + \text{ability modifier damage}$.

LEVEL 5 DAILY EVOCATION

Nomad's Pursuit

Wasteland Nomad Attack 5

You catch your prey's scent. No matter where it flees, you will follow.

Daily ♦ Primal, Weapon

Standard Action Melee or Ranged weapon

Target: One creature

Attack: Primary ability vs. AC

Hit: $2[W] + \text{ability modifier damage}$.

Miss: Half damage.

Effect: Until the end of the encounter, whenever you start your turn and you are not adjacent to the target or any ally, you can shift a number of squares equal to your primary ability modifier as a free action. This movement ignores difficult terrain. You must end this shift closer to the target.

Level 15

Hit: $3[W] + \text{ability modifier damage}$.

Level 25

Hit: $4[W] + \text{ability modifier damage}$.

LEVEL 6 UTILITY EVOCATION

Dune Dancer

Wasteland Nomad Utility 6

You roll with the attack, taking a better position where you are bound to make your enemy pay.

Encounter ♦ Primal

Immediate Reaction Personal

Trigger: An enemy hits you with an attack while you are not adjacent to any of your allies.

Target: The triggering enemy

Effect: As a free action, you shift a number of squares equal to your primary ability modifier. You gain combat advantage against the target until the end of your next turn.

LEVEL 7 ENCOUNTER EVOCATION

Fleeting Wind Strike

Wasteland Nomad Attack 7

Your attack creates a sandstorm around the foe, shredding its flesh until it escapes.

Encounter ♦ Primal, Weapon

Standard Action Melee or Ranged weapon

Target: One creature

Attack: Primary ability vs. AC

Hit: $1[W] + \text{ability modifier damage}$. If the target doesn't move at least 2 squares during its next turn, it takes extra damage equal to $5 + \text{your primary ability modifier}$ at the end of its turn.

Level 17

Hit: As above, but $2[W] + \text{ability modifier damage}$.

Level 27

Hit: As above, but $3[W] + \text{ability modifier damage}$.

LEVEL 9 DAILY EVOCATION

Monstrous Savagery

Wasteland Nomad Attack 9

Bloodlust drives you into a wild frenzy, and your attacks fall with shocking power.

Daily ♦ Primal, Weapon

Standard Action Melee weapon

Target: One creature

Attack: Primary ability vs. AC, two attacks. If none of your allies are adjacent to you, make three attacks instead.

Hit: $5 + \text{ability modifier damage}$ per attack, and the target takes a penalty to attack rolls equal to the number of times you hit it with this power (save ends).

Miss: Half damage.

Level 19

Attack: As above, but Primary ability + 2 vs. AC, two attacks.

Level 29

Attack: As above, but Primary ability + 2 vs. AC, two attacks.

Hit: As above, but $10 + \text{ability modifier damage}$ per attack.

LEVEL 10 UTILITY EVOCATION

Lone Nomad

Wasteland Nomad Utility 10

You're toughest when you're all alone.

Daily ♦ Primal, Stance

Minor Action Personal

Effect: You assume the lone nomad's stance. Until the stance ends, you have resist 7 to all damage. If you end your turn adjacent to an ally, this stance ends.

DUNE STRIDER

"The templars say otherwise, but there is life in the desert. More than life, there is also freedom."

Prerequisite: Wasteland nomad theme

The endless deserts, shattered mountains, and broken landscape are home to more than just rubble and debris. Life survives despite the challenges, as proven by the desert snakes, the dune mice, the scrabbling lizards, the burgeoning cacti, and more. As the nomadic tribes well know, life might be easier in some ways in the city-states, but it's not impossible in the wastelands if you know what to look for and what to do. Yet there are greater secrets than these guarded by the land's spirits. Through long sojourns in the deserted places of the world and years of studying the land's mysteries, you have acquired the skills needed to subsist in the most barren environments. No land, no matter how desolate, poses so great a danger as to bar your passage.

As a dune strider, you are the living embodiment of wanderlust. The dust of a dozen cities and villages lies under your sandals; from the Ringing Mountains to the Sea of Silt, from the Endless Sand Dunes to the Road of Fire, you mean to take in all the splendors of Athas in good time. You witness the world from a unique perspective, seeing its beauty as well as its desolation, believing the possibility that the wrongs done to it can one day be righted. The land's spirits offer you their power to aid in this restoration and



CHAPTER 3 | Character Themes

help you to punish those who worsen the world and bring it ever closer to annihilation.

DUNE STRIDER PATH FEATURES

Dune Strider Action (11th level): When you spend an action point to take an extra action, until the start of your next turn you gain a +2 bonus to all defenses and you ignore difficult terrain.

Waste Walker (11th level): You gain a +2 bonus to Endurance checks and Nature checks.

You gain a bonus to Fortitude against attacks from diseases (including sun sickness) equal to your primary ability modifier.

Finally, when traveling overland, you and all allies who can see you gain a +2 bonus to speed and need only half the usual survival day requirements (see page 198).

Shifting Sands (16th level): Whenever you shift, you gain concealment against enemies adjacent to you at the end of the shift until the start of your next turn.

DUNE STRIDER EVOCATIONS

Screaming Sand Strike Dune Strider Attack 11

The wind howls when your weapon connects, as the desert spirits clamor for blood to quench their bitter thirst.

Encounter ♦ Primal, Thunder, Weapon

Standard Action **Melee or Ranged weapon**

Target: One creature

Attack: Primary ability vs. AC

Hit: 1[W] + ability modifier thunder damage, and the target is blinded until the end of your next turn.

Effect: You gain concealment until the end of your next turn.

Dust Storm Dance Dune Strider Utility 12

You become a raging dust storm, sending your enemies stumbling as you sweep across the battlefield.

Encounter ♦ Primal

Move Action **Personal**

Effect: You swap places with a creature of your size or smaller within 3 squares of you. Then you can swap places with a different creature of your size or smaller within 3 squares of you. Each creature you swap places with grants combat advantage until the end of your next turn.

Bane of the Crimson Sun Dune Strider Attack 20

The accursed sun lends strength to your attack, leaving your enemy gasping beneath its punishing heat.

Daily ♦ Fire, Primal, Weapon

Standard Action **Melee or Ranged weapon**

Target: One creature

Attack: Primary ability vs. AC

Hit: 2[W] + ability modifier damage, and the target is weakened (save ends). Each time the target fails this saving throw, it takes 10 fire damage and is knocked prone.

Miss: Half damage, and the target is weakened until the end of your next turn.

SAND REAVER

"Before I'm done, I'll kill your friends, your family, even your kank. I'll rip up every stone, tear down every building. I won't stop until you and everyone you love are dead."

Prerequisite: Wasteland nomad theme

The deserts of Athas are breeding grounds for raiders, brigands, and bloodthirsty savages of all kinds. In a world where it takes backbreaking labor to scratch out a living from the dusty soil and countless people live under the shadow of famine and starvation, many creatures find it easier to get what they need by taking it from others. Most sand reavers operate in small bands, since large tribes can't support themselves on the slim pickings of the deserts. Other reavers move from band to band and region to region, seeking out the easiest prey and most reliable companions they can find. Life among the marauding tribes is often brutal and short; the day a warrior fails to keep up with the march or take his next meal from the tribe's latest victim is the day he is left behind, abandoned to his fate.

As a sand reaver, you are a wolf of the wilderness, a lean and hungry predator. You are familiar with the harsh laws of the desert bands and always ready to react to sudden violence—or begin it, if need be. You are regarded as an outlaw and an enemy to all civilized creatures, and your life is forfeit in any city-state you enter if you are identified for who and what you are. The best of your kind are outlaws with a glimmer of purpose and a rough code of honor, sworn to protect each other and to steal only from those who

have goods to spare. The worst are rabid jhakars and ragged kestrelks without a single redeeming virtue. Where you fall on this scale is, of course, up to you.

Whether you chose a life in the desert or found it forced on you, your experiences leave you changed. Your softness, mercy, and empathy are gone, and in their place is only ruthless determination. But your struggles leave you stronger, tougher, and better able to withstand any difficulty you encounter. Above all, you are a survivor, and the wastes are your home.

SAND REAVER PATH FEATURES

Bloodlust Action (11th level): When you spend an action point to make an attack, you gain a +2 bonus to any attack roll made against a bloodied target.

Relentless Reaver (11th level): You add your primary ability modifier to your healing surge value.

Unspeakable Bloodlust (16th level): Whenever you hit a bloodied creature with a melee attack, that creature takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls until the end of your next turn.

SAND REAVER EVOCATIONS

Reckless Fury

Sand Reaver Attack 11

Friend and foe alike must flee to escape your wild rage and whirling weapons.

Encounter ♦ Primal, Weapon

Standard Action Close burst 1

Target: Each creature in burst

Attack: Primary ability vs. AC

Hit: 2[W] + ability modifier damage. If the target ends its next turn adjacent to you, it provokes an opportunity attack from you.

Effect: You grant combat advantage until the start of your next turn.

Bloody Harvest

Sand Reaver Utility 12

Each foe you drop adds power to your destructive melee attacks.

Daily ♦ Primal, Stance

Minor Action Personal

Effect: You assume the bloody harvest stance. Until the stance ends, each time you reduce an enemy to 0 hit points with a melee weapon attack, you gain a bonus to the next damage roll you make with a melee weapon attack before the end of your next turn. The bonus equals your primary ability modifier.

Reaving Brutality

Sand Reaver Attack 20

Your brutal attack leaves the enemy with a difficult choice—stand and fight, or flee the battlefield.

Daily ♦ Healing, Primal, Weapon

Standard Action Melee weapon

Target: One creature

Attack: Primary ability vs. AC

Hit: 4[W] + ability modifier damage, and the target cannot shift (save ends).

Miss: Half damage, and the target cannot shift until the end of your next turn.

Effect: If the target is bloodied but still conscious after you use this power, you can spend a healing surge as a free action.



SARAH STONE

WILDER

"I have no idea why my mind holds such power. Some claim that everyone on Athas has a psionic capacity, but must first unlock the secrets of the Way."

Throughout the world, from city-states to slave tribes to nomadic clans in the wastes, people spontaneously develop psionic abilities. Without formal training, these wilders manifest blunt, simple disciplines. Though well-trained savants scoff at the crudeness of the wilders' techniques, they are well aware of how powerful an unleashed mind brimming with psionic energy can be. Some wilders create bursts of fire or magical force, making their thoughts incarnate. Others batter through their enemies' mental defenses and cause grievous psionic anguish. A wilder isn't limited solely to outward manifestations of power, though. Many first learn how to alter their own bodies to make them far tougher, quicker, or stronger than normal. Wilders are most potent when they harness "psychic surges," brief flashes of psionic energy that ripple through their minds and temporarily heighten their psionic abilities.

In the city-states, people see wilders as dangerous and unreliable. All too often an untrained wilder uses his or her ability against unsuspecting neighbors, or loses control of a power barely held in check—with disastrous consequences. In many cities, templars scour the children of nobles and commoners alike for signs of psionic power, and see to it that these discoveries are carefully trained to control their gifts and guard against disaster. Outside the cities, it's a different story. The psychic surges that wilders manifest are simply another advantage in the fight for survival in the savage lands outside the sorcerer-kings' domains. Each tribe treasures any wilders that appear within its ranks. As long as they help out, they're treated well.

Becoming a wilder requires no formal training. In fact, trying to control and develop psychic surges can cause those powers to function poorly. A wilder might practice blasting rocks to learn how to manifest his or her inherent disciplines quickly and in the right spot, but that's all there is to it. Concentration is vital to a wilder, but mentors and formulas are worthless.

BUILDING A WILDER

Anyone who manifests natural psionic ability without needing training could be a wilder. Wilders appear in all places and among all social strata. Your character might be a slave or a gladiator who has unnatural durability and stamina, a noble who got a head start on your psionic education by using your psychic surge, or a tribal leader who won a high place among your people by demonstrating your psionic powers.

WILDER TRAITS

Secondary Role: Striker

Power Source: Psionic

Granted Power: You gain the psychic surge power.

WILDER POWERS

The following powers are available to any character who has chosen the wilder theme.

Psychic Surge

Wilder Feature

You unleash a psychic shock wave at your enemy, hoping to harness its energy on your next attack.

Encounter ♦ Implement, Psionic, Psychic Standard Action **Ranged 10**

Target: One creature

Attack: Primary ability vs. Reflex

Hit: 1d8 + ability modifier psychic damage, and your attacks against the target before the end of your next turn can score a critical hit on a roll of 18–20.

Level 11: 2d8 + ability modifier psychic damage.

Level 21: 3d8 + ability modifier psychic damage.

LEVEL 2 UTILITY DISCIPLINE

Wilder's Armor

Wilder Utility 2

You instinctually reinforce your skin with psionic plates as strong as chitin.

Encounter ♦ Psionic

Minor Action **Personal**

Effect: You gain a +2 power bonus to all defenses until the end of your next turn. If you score a critical hit before the end of your next turn, you also gain temporary hit points equal to 5 + your primary ability modifier.

LEVEL 3 ENCOUNTER DISCIPLINE

Wildfire Bolt

Wilder Attack 3

Your mind unleashes a tearing rift of fire that sears your enemy and scatters a cloud of embers into the air.

Encounter ♦ Fire, Implement, Psionic, Psychic
Standard Action Ranged 10

Target: One creature

Attack: Primary ability vs. Reflex

Hit: 2d6 + ability modifier psychic damage. If you score a critical hit with this power, the target and each enemy adjacent to the target take ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends).

Level 13

Hit: 3d6 + ability modifier psychic damage. If you score a critical hit with this power, the target and each enemy adjacent to the target take ongoing 10 fire damage (save ends).

Level 23

Hit: 4d6 + ability modifier psychic damage. If you score a critical hit with this power, the target and each enemy adjacent to the target take ongoing 15 fire damage (save ends).

LEVEL 5 DAILY DISCIPLINE

Psionic Shelter

Wilder Attack 5

A shield of force erupts from your thoughts, protecting you and slamming into your foes.

Daily ♦ Force, Implement, Psionic, Psychic
Immediate Reaction Close burst 2

Trigger: An enemy in burst damages you with an attack.

Target: Each creature in burst

Attack: Primary ability vs. Will

Hit: 2d8 + ability modifier force damage, and you push the target 2 squares.

Miss: Half damage.

Effect: You gain a +2 power bonus to all defenses until the end of your next turn. Each time you score a critical hit while under the effect of this power, you extend the duration of the power bonus to all defenses until the end of your next turn and increase the power bonus by 1, and each enemy within 5 squares of you takes 5 psychic damage.

Level 15

Hit: 3d8 + ability modifier force damage, and you push the target 3 squares.

Level 25

Hit: 5d8 + ability modifier force damage, and you push the target 4 squares.

LEVEL 6 UTILITY DISCIPLINE

Wild Repulsion

Wilder Utility 6

Physical shields manifest around your body, dampening attacks.

Daily ♦ Psionic, Stance
Minor Action Personal

Effect: You assume the wild repulsion stance. Until the stance ends, you gain resist 5 to all damage. Once per turn, when you score a critical hit with an attack, you increase the resistance by 1, to a maximum of 10.

LEVEL 7 ENCOUNTER DISCIPLINE

Mind Clash

Wilder Attack 7

You fully unleash the power of your mind, crushing your enemy's will with your reckless, savage onslaught.

Encounter ♦ Implement, Psionic, Psychic
Standard Action Ranged 10

Target: One creature

Attack: Primary ability vs. Will

Hit: 2d8 + ability modifier psychic damage. If you score a critical hit with this power, the target takes 10 extra psychic damage and is dazed until the end of your next turn.

Level 17

Hit: 3d8 + ability modifier psychic damage. If you score a critical hit with this power, the target takes 15 extra psychic damage and is dazed until the end of your next turn.

Level 27

Hit: 4d8 + ability modifier psychic damage. If you score a critical hit with this power, the target takes 20 extra psychic damage and is dazed until the end of your next turn.

LEVEL 9 DAILY DISCIPLINE

Chaotic Thoughts

Wilder Attack 9

You assault your enemy's mind with confusing thoughts, and it harms its own psyche as it tries to break free from your control.

Daily ♦ Implement, Psionic, Psychic
Standard Action Ranged 10

Target: One creature

Attack: Primary ability vs. Will

Hit: 1d8 + ability modifier psychic damage.

Effect: The target takes ongoing 5 psychic damage (save ends). Each time the target fails a saving throw against the ongoing damage, it takes damage equal to the result of the saving throw. If you score a critical hit with any attack while the target is still affected by this power, the target is dazed until the end of your next turn.

Level 19

Hit: 3d8 + ability modifier psychic damage.

Effect: As above, but ongoing 10 psychic damage (save ends).

Level 29

Hit: 4d8 + ability modifier psychic damage.

Effect: As above, but ongoing 15 psychic damage (save ends).

LEVEL 10 UTILITY DISCIPLINE

Psychic Feedback

Wilder Utility 10

A mental shield emanates psychic feedback against those who attack you.

Encounter ♦ Psionic, Psychic, Stance
Minor Action Personal

Effect: You assume the stance of psychic defense. Until the stance ends, when you're damaged by an attack, the attacker takes 5 psychic damage. When you score a critical hit with an attack, you can end the stance as a free action to deal 10 extra psychic damage on that attack.

RESURGENT WILDER

"I will stand! I will fight! If every bone in my body breaks and the sandstorm strips my flesh, still I will stand and fight!"

Prerequisite: Wilder theme

Practitioners of the Way form connections between their minds and bodies that allow them to go beyond their physical limits. Wilders with strong inborn talents have the strongest connection, and hurting such an individual causes his or her psionic power to flare even brighter. Some wilders have returned after being exiled to the desert, walking tall when they should be nothing but piles of picked-clean bones. Others have become notorious for their battle prowess, taking on wave after wave of enemies and dispatching each more viciously than the last.

As your foes attack, your mind surges and you feel your muscles and senses burn with new strength. With every cut and bruise you suffer, more power rushes over you, making your mind more dangerous and protecting or healing your damaged body.



RESURGENT WILDER

PATH FEATURES

Reinvigorating Surge (11th level): Whenever you score a critical hit, you can spend a healing surge.

Volatile Action (11th level): When you spend an action point to make an extra attack, until the end of your next turn attacks against targets of that extra attack can score a critical hit on a roll of 19-20.

Volatile Surges (16th level): Your at-will psionic attack powers can score a critical hit on a roll of 18-20.

RESURGENT WILDER DISCIPLINES

Resurgent Repulsion

Resurgent Wilder Attack 11

After suffering your opponents' attacks, you strike back, frying one with a psychic assault that prevents it from concentrating.

Encounter ♦ Implement, Psionic, Psychic
Standard Action **Ranged 10**

Target: One creature

Attack: Primary ability vs. Will

Hit: 3d8 + ability modifier psychic damage, and the target is slowed and takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls against you until the end of your next turn. If this attack is a critical hit, the target is also dazed (save ends).

Critical Insight

Resurgent Wilder Utility 12

You foresee your enemy's doom.

Daily ♦ Psionic
Minor Action **Close burst 5**

Target: One enemy in burst

Effect: Until the end of your next turn, when you or any ally hits the target with an attack, you can choose to end this effect and make that attack a critical hit.

Shards of Strength

Resurgent Wilder Attack 20

Your psionic power overcomes all restraints, flooding out and manifesting shards of psionic force that surround your body.

Daily ♦ Force, Implement, Psionic
Standard Action **Close burst 1**

Target: Each enemy in burst

Attack: Primary ability vs. Reflex

Hit: 3d8 + ability modifier force damage. The target takes ongoing 5 damage, and attacks against the target can score a critical hit on a roll of 18-20 (save ends both).

Miss: Half damage.

WIELDER OF THE WAY

"I bind my rage to my blade, and I will bring it back within my mind only when it has slaked its thirst for your blood."

Prerequisite: Wilder theme or battlemind

The desperate conditions on Athas call for desperate measures. Wielders of the Way use slivers cut from their own minds to strengthen their armaments. The exchange is worth its price, since it lets them disorient and destroy their foes. They can always reclaim the mental fragments, though some wielders of the Way consider certain emotions to be liabilities and believe life runs smoother without those feelings cluttering their minds.

You entrust the wild, untamed parts of yourself to your weapon, mentally fracturing your personality and reinforcing your weapon—whether it's an obsidian sword, a bone axe, or a rock warhammer—with that emotion. Though you still have a faint connection to that piece of your mind (at least enough to replace it later), you do have difficulty expressing the emotion associated with that fragment. Your allies find you inscrutable, wondering how you can fight with such ferocity while keeping a placid demeanor, or why your expressions and speech seem calm while you're pursuing stronger and stronger foes.

WIELDER OF THE WAY PATH FEATURES

Fragment of the Way (11th level): You remove an aspect of your psyche and bind it to your weapon. Whenever you take a short rest, you can choose to expend 1 power point at the end of that short rest. If you do so, until you rest again the next weapon attack you make that hits deals 1[W] extra damage to one target hit by the attack.

Paragon Power Points (11th level): You gain 2 additional power points.

Wielder's Action (11th level): When you spend an action point to make an extra attack, you regain 1 power point.

The Way Made Real (16th level): When you hit a target with an augmented psionic weapon attack power, you gain a +2 bonus to saving throws until the start of your next turn. You can gain this bonus only once per turn.



WIELDER OF THE WAY DISCIPLINES

Impose Your Will Wielder of the Way Attack 11

As your weapon strikes home, the aspect of your psyche imbued into your weapon burns into your foe's mind and influences its actions.

Encounter ♦ Psionic, Weapon

Standard Action Melee weapon

Target: One creature

Attack: Primary ability vs. AC

Hit: 2[W] + ability modifier damage, and the target grants combat advantage until the end of your next turn.

Augment 2

Hit: 2[W] + ability modifier damage. Until the end of your next turn, the target grants combat advantage and any attack it makes provokes opportunity attacks.

Rebind the Will Wielder of the Way Utility 12

You imbue your weapon with more of the untamed parts of your psyche, transferring those reckless emotions to your enemies.

Encounter ♦ Psionic

Minor Action Melee touch

Target: One weapon you are wielding

Effect: The next melee weapon attack you make with the target weapon dazes any creature it hits until the end of your next turn.

Subjugate the Will Wielder of the Way Attack 20

With a vicious attack, you fully embed the facet of your soul into your foe, overtaking its mind.

Daily ♦ Charm, Psionic, Weapon

Standard Action Melee weapon

Target: One creature

Attack: Primary ability vs. AC

Hit: 2[W] + ability modifier damage.

Effect: The target is dominated (save ends). While it is dominated, the target gains a bonus to attack rolls equal to your primary ability modifier.

CHARACTER OPTIONS

"Athas is a barbaric shadow of some better world. All the races are but brutal descendants of worthier ancestors. The essence of every living thing has been warped to make it more vicious, more cunning, and more terrifying than its long-vanished forebears."

—The Wanderer's Journal

Adventurers on Athas face many dangers, from the cruel sorcerer-kings to the merciless wastes. Yet those who pursue great destinies must surmount extraordinary risks. Sometimes adventurers find gratitude from those they champion. At other times, heroes are a source of fear and suspicion, for Athas rarely rewards trust or hope.

As a heroic adventurer on Athas, you have advantages that others lack. You have developed your talents and honed your skills to set yourself apart from the average person. You are equipped to live outside the rule of the city-states, eking out an existence in the wastes or eluding your enemies in the teeming city streets.

This chapter provides more tools to tailor your character to the DARK SUN setting. You'll find these sections in the following pages.

- ◆ **Arcane Magic:** Rules for how arcane magic functions on Athas, including defiling and preserving.
- ◆ **Wild Talents:** An optional rule that provides characters with a minor psionic trick.
- ◆ **New Builds:** The wild battlemind, the arena fighter, the animist shaman, and the sorcerer-king pact warlock are new class builds suited to the DARK SUN setting.
- ◆ **Epic Destinies:** Characters who survive long enough to change the course of history gain destinies worthy of their accomplishments. A hero might bring light and hope as an avangion, or unleash destruction as a dragon king.
- ◆ **Feats:** This section includes feats for races that appear on Athas. It also provides feats to support the character themes presented in Chapter 3. In addition, an array of feats opens the door to the exotic arsenal used in the arenas of Athas.
- ◆ **Rituals:** The unusual challenges and harsh terrain of Athas require new or modified rituals.
- ◆ **Equipment:** New equipment to enable your character's survival under the crimson sun.

ZOLTAN BOROS & GABOR SZIKSZAI





ARCANE MAGIC

On Athas, arcane magic draws on the vitality of plants, animals, and minor primal spirits. But if a practitioner draws too deeply, the life form fueling the spell might be damaged or destroyed. This act of destruction is called defiling. The greater the spell, the more widespread the damage is. Defiling is a major cause for the world's foul condition. Other power sources do not have this corrupting effect on the environment.

An Athasian spellcaster has a choice between defiling and preserving. Defiling is easy and intoxicating, but it destroys or damages the life from which a spell draws power. Preserving is difficult and requires care, and it avoids harming the world around the caster. When you begin as a spellcaster, you might dabble in both arts, or you could let your morals or needs dictate your choices. Eventually, your use or rejection of defiling defines you as a defiler or a preserver.

DEFILING AND PRESERVING

When you use any arcane power, you can choose to defile, destroying mundane plant life within at least 1 square of you. When you use a daily arcane attack power, the damage to the world extends out a number of squares equal to half the level of the power you use. This destruction does not normally affect creatures or terrain, though defiled squares might become defiled terrain (described in the *Dark Sun Creature Catalog*) at the Dungeon Master's discretion. You are considered to be preserving unless you choose to defile.

If you have at least one arcane daily attack power, you gain the *arcane defiling* power.

Arcane Defiling

Arcane Feature

You draw upon the vitality of nearby life to fuel your magic, heedless of the harm you cause to the land and your allies.

At-Will ♦ Arcane, Necrotic

Free Action **Personal**

Trigger: You make an attack roll or a damage roll as part of an arcane daily attack power.

Effect: You can reroll the triggering roll but must use the second result. In addition, each ally (willing or unwilling) within 20 squares of you takes necrotic damage equal to half his or her healing surge value. This damage ignores immunities and cannot be reduced in any way.

Special: You can use this effect once for any arcane daily attack power you use, affecting any single attack roll or the damage roll for that power.

THE DEFILER'S PATH

The easiest and most expedient path to power is defiling. Characters can use *arcane defiling* to alter the outcome of their most powerful spells by ruthlessly drawing vitality from nearby life forms. Many defilers destroy their surroundings even when performing minor spells. They relish the rush of power and the intimidating effect.

Defiling transforms small plants and vital nutrients in the soil into ash. Larger plants blacken and become brittle, often dying days later. The residue of these destroyed life forms is inert, leaving defiled lands barren and scarred for decades. Creatures with whom a defiler shares a mental or an emotional connection, such as allies or slaves, are wracked with pain as a defiler draws power. The most powerful defilers can use the act of defiling as a weapon, harming those with whom they share no connection.

THE PRESERVER'S PATH

Preservers believe that preserving is its own reward, given the state of the world. Through discipline, a preserver draws arcane power carefully instead of tearing it from the environment. Thus, a preserver can use spells without harming plant life. After finishing a spell, a preserver returns any excess energy to the environment. The most committed preservers eventually give up the ability to defile.

DISGUIISING ARCANE POWERS

Arcane magic is illegal and can attract hostility, so a spellcaster often needs to conceal its use. When you use an arcane power without using *arcane defiling*, you can disguise the magic as another type of power, such as primal or psionic. Most people can't distinguish between types of magic. The Dungeon Master might require a Bluff check to disguise arcane magic when it is performed in the presence of enemies familiar with psionic or arcane power, such as templars, defilers, or nobles. If a spellcaster is defiling, he or she cannot disguise the arcane magic because of the visible effect on the environment.

WILD TALENTS

Psionic energy suffuses Athas, making it the most common and accessible power source. Most inhabitants of Athas are born with some small aptitude for psionics. In time, these abilities develop into psionic tricks called wild talents.

At the Dungeon Master's discretion, a player can select one wild talent when he or she creates a character for a DARK SUN campaign.

A character can also gain wild talents by taking the Wild Talent Master feat (page 113).

Body Equilibrium

Wild Talent Cantrip

You sense how to shift your weight from step to step, staying atop a tricky surface.

At-Will ♦ Psionic

Move Action

Personal

Effect: You move your speed. During the move, you gain a +5 power bonus to Acrobatics checks to balance and do not sink when moving over soft or brittle terrain, such as dust, silt, mud, snow, or thin ice.

Far Hearing

Wild Talent Cantrip

For a moment, you can hear even distant whispers.

At-Will ♦ Psionic

Minor Action

Personal

Effect: Choose one square you can see that is within 10 squares of you. Until the end of your next turn, you can hear as if you occupied that square.

Know Direction

Wild Talent Cantrip

With a moment's concentration, you sense which way is true north.

At-Will ♦ Psionic

Minor Action

Personal

Effect: You determine which way is north. For 1 hour, you gain a +2 power bonus to checks to navigate natural terrain using either Perception or Nature.

Mental Tools

Wild Talent Cantrip

From thought, you create matter, equipping yourself with the simple tools you need.

At-Will ♦ Psionic

Minor Action

Personal

Effect: You create a simple tool you can hold in one hand. The object appears in your hand or at your feet. You cannot use the object to attack or hinder another creature. The object lasts until the end of the encounter or until you use this power again.

Object Projection

Wild Talent Cantrip

Your force of will teleports an object a short distance away.

At-Will ♦ Psionic, Teleportation

Minor Action

Personal

Effect: You teleport an object you are holding in one hand to an unoccupied square within 10 squares of you or to a willing creature within 10 squares of you.

Psionic Image

Wild Talent Cantrip

You plant the image of an object in the minds of nearby creatures.

At-Will ♦ Illusion, Psionic

Minor Action

Close burst 5

Target: One or more creatures in burst

Effect: Each target sees the image of a Small or smaller object in your hand or in a square in the burst. The image lasts until the end of your next turn.

Psionic Spark

Wild Talent Cantrip

You focus your anger, frustration, or passion into one small object until the heat of your emotion ignites it.

At-Will ♦ Psionic

Minor Action

Ranged 5

Target: One flammable object that isn't carried by another creature

Effect: You cause the target to catch fire.

Sensing Eye

Wild Talent Cantrip

An image forms in your mind, revealing what you would see if you were standing some distance away.

At-Will ♦ Psionic

Minor Action

Personal

Effect: Choose one square you can see that is within 5 squares of you. Until the end of your next turn, you can determine your line of sight from that square.

Telekinetic Grasp

Wild Talent Cantrip

With your mental strength, you can manipulate nearby objects.

At-Will ♦ Psionic

Minor Action

Ranged 5

Target: One object that weighs 20 pounds or less and isn't carried by another creature

Effect: You manipulate the target or move it 5 squares to a square within range.

Thought Projection

Wild Talent Cantrip

You broadcast a thought or an image to nearby allies.

At-Will ♦ Psionic

Minor Action

Close burst 5

Target: One or more allies in burst

Effect: You convey either an image or a message of 10 words or fewer to each target.

RANDOM WILD TALENT

Rather than letting players pick a wild talent, the Dungeon Master can have each player determine his or her character's talent randomly, using a d10:

- | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 Body equilibrium | 6 Psionic image |
| 2 Far hearing | 7 Psionic spark |
| 3 Know direction | 8 Sensing eye |
| 4 Mental tools | 9 Telekinetic grasp |
| 5 Object projection | 10 Thought projection |

WILD BATTLEMIND

"My anger is my strength."

The use of psionic power is widespread on Athas, and many warriors take up the career of the battlemind. Battleminds are hardy and cunning, two characteristics essential to survival on Athas. Self-taught or informally trained, wild battleminds rely on instinct. These battleminds channel raw psionic energy fueled by their untamed emotions. They often develop their powers as a result of a traumatic or a dangerous experience that triggers their psionic talent as a defense mechanism.

The wild battlemind is the most common type of battlemind on Athas. These individuals live in the wastes or the slums, growing up without the privileges afforded to nobles who receive formal training in the Way. The aggressive, powerful attacks of a wild battlemind reflect the brutality of life under the red sun. It's not unusual for a wild battlemind to end up as a gladiator in the arenas of Athas.



NEW CLASS FEATURE

When you choose your Psionic Study, you can choose Wild Focus instead of other options, such as those presented in *Player's Handbook 3*.

Wild Focus: You gain the *wild focus* power, which reflects the raw telekinetic power you wield in combat.

Wild Focus

Battlemind Feature

Using a surge of telekinetic power, you yank an enemy toward you, forcing it to fight.

Encounter ♦ Psionic

Free Action Close burst 10

Trigger: An enemy starts its first turn during an encounter.

Target: The triggering enemy in burst

Effect: You pull the target a number of squares equal to your Charisma modifier and mark it until the end of your next turn.

SUGGESTED OPTIONS

The deadly and unpredictable wild battleminds are born to be warriors. From an early age, they learn the ways of psionic combat through trial and error. They often craft their own weapons, chipping away at shards of obsidian or lashing together bones and teeth. They favor two-handed weapons, which they can use to great effect in battle.

Like other battleminds, you should make Constitution your primary ability score, because you use it to make your psionic attacks. Choose Charisma as your secondary ability score. Charisma improves your Wild Focus class feature and enhances many of your battlemind powers. Select Wisdom as your tertiary ability score if you want to dabble in powers from other battlemind builds.

Suggested Class Feature: Wild Focus*

Suggested Feat: Weapon Proficiency (choose a two-handed superior melee weapon, such as the execution axe or the fullblade, both of which appear in the *Adventurer's Vault™* supplement)

Suggested Skills: Athletics, Endurance, Intimidate

Suggested At-Will Powers: *concussive spike*, whirling defense*

Suggested Daily Power: *corona of floating force**

*New option presented in this book

NEW BATTLEMIND POWERS

Your powers unleash waves of force and grant mobility. The powers in this section are optimal for the wild battlemind, though any battlemind might find them useful.

LEVEL 1 AT-WILL DISCIPLINE

Concussive Spike

Battlemind Attack 1

Your weapon shimmers with force as you bring it crashing down, clobbering your foes and driving some of them back.

At-Will ♦ Augmentable, Force, Psionic, Weapon

Standard Action Close blast 3

Target: One creature you can see in blast

Attack: Constitution vs. AC

Hit: $1[W] + \text{Constitution modifier}$ force damage. You push each enemy in the blast other than the target a number of squares equal to $1 + \text{your Charisma modifier}$.

Augment 1

Close burst 3

Target: One creature you can see in burst

Hit: $1[W] + \text{Constitution modifier}$ force damage. You push one enemy in the burst other than the target a number of squares equal to $1 + \text{your Charisma modifier}$.

Augment 2

Hit: $1[W] + \text{Constitution modifier}$ force damage, and you knock the target prone. You push each enemy in the blast other than the target a number of squares equal to $1 + \text{your Charisma modifier}$.

LEVEL 1 DAILY DISCIPLINE

Corona of Floating Force

Battlemind Attack 1

As you swing, the air around you ripples with psionic force that knocks back your enemy and levitates you.

Daily ♦ Force, Psionic, Stance, Weapon

Standard Action Melee weapon

Target: One creature

Attack: Constitution vs. AC

Hit: $2[W] + \text{Constitution modifier}$ force damage, and you push the target a number of squares equal to your Charisma modifier.

Miss: Half damage, and you push the target 1 square.

Effect: You can assume the floating force stance. Until the stance ends, you ignore difficult terrain and take no damage from hindering terrain or terrain hazards.

LEVEL 2 UTILITY DISCIPLINE

Concussive Response

Battlemind Utility 2

With a thought, you transform your injuries into energy that bolsters your attacks.

Encounter ♦ Force, Psionic

Free Action Personal

Requirement: You must be bloodied.

Effect: Until the end of your next turn, your unaugmented psionic attacks deal $1d6$ extra force damage.

LEVEL 3 AT-WILL DISCIPLINE

Wrenching Claw

Battlemind Attack 3

You manifest a claw of force around your weapon. Then, as you strike, the claw encloses your foe and drags it into position.

At-Will ♦ Augmentable, Force, Psionic, Weapon

Standard Action Melee weapon

Target: One creature

Attack: Constitution vs. AC

Hit: $1[W] + \text{Constitution modifier}$ force damage, and you slide the target 1 square to a square adjacent to you.

Augment 1

Special: Your reach increases by 1 for this attack.

Augment 2

Special: Your reach increases by a number of squares equal to your Charisma modifier for this attack.

Hit: $2[W] + \text{Constitution modifier}$ force damage, and you slide the target 3 squares to a square adjacent to you.

LEVEL 5 DAILY DISCIPLINE

Wild Speed

Battlemind Attack 5

Your strike warps temporal bonds, sapping your opponent's speed and infusing you with unpredictable bursts of movement.

Daily ♦ Force, Psionic, Stance, Weapon

Standard Action Melee weapon

Target: One creature

Attack: Constitution vs. AC

Hit: $2[W] + \text{Constitution modifier}$ force damage, and the target is slowed (save ends).

Miss: Half damage, and the target is slowed until the end of your next turn.

Effect: After the attack, you shift half your speed to a square adjacent to the target. You can assume the wild speed stance. Until the stance ends, you can move a number of squares equal to your speed + $1d4$ as a move action. You roll a d4 each time you begin the movement. If the result is odd, the movement doesn't provoke opportunity attacks.

LEVEL 6 UTILITY DISCIPLINE

Surging Durability

Battlemind Utility 6

With each attack, you use the power of your mind to bolster your vitality.

Daily ♦ Psionic, Stance

Minor Action Personal

Effect: You assume the stance of surging durability. Until the stance ends, whenever you hit with an augmented power, you gain temporary hit points equal to the number of power points you spent to augment that power.

LEVEL 7 AT-WILL DISCIPLINE

Forceful Reversal

Battlemind Attack 7

You draw the force from an enemy's attack and hurl it back at your attacker through your weapon.

At-Will ♦ **Augmentable, Force, Psionic, Weapon**
Immediate Reaction Melee weapon

Trigger: An enemy hits you.

Target: The triggering enemy

Attack: Constitution vs. AC

Hit: 1[W] + Constitution modifier force damage, and you push the target 1 square.

Effect: You don't get your normal standard action on your turn.

Augment 1

Hit: 1[W] + Constitution modifier force damage. You push the target 1 square and then shift 1 square to the square the target vacated. In addition, you gain combat advantage against the target until the end of your next turn.

Effect: You get your normal standard action on your turn.

Augment 2

Hit: 2[W] + Constitution modifier force damage. You push the target a number of squares equal to your Charisma modifier and knock it prone. The target cannot stand up until the start of its next turn.

Effect: You get your normal standard action on your turn.

LEVEL 9 DAILY DISCIPLINE

Cascade of Rippling Force

Battlemind Attack 9

Your weapon and body flare with telekinetic energy as you attack. Afterward, waves of force roll off your body.

Daily ♦ **Force, Psionic, Stance, Weapon**
Standard Action Melee weapon

Target: One creature

Attack: Constitution vs. AC

Hit: 3[W] + Constitution modifier force damage.

Miss: Half damage.

Effect: You can assume the rippling force stance. Until the stance ends, you can take the following action.

Move Action Personal

Effect: You shift 3 squares. During this movement, you can move through the spaces of enemies marked by you. If you do so, the first time you enter an enemy's space during the shift, that enemy takes force damage equal to your Charisma modifier.

LEVEL 10 UTILITY DISCIPLINE

Hands of the Titan

Battlemind Utility 10

Your arms bulge with strength, and your weapon ripples with elemental energy as your mind draws from a deep font of power.

Encounter ♦ **Psionic**

Minor Action Personal

Effect: Until the end of your next turn, your weapon attacks deal extra damage equal to your Charisma modifier and deal cold, fire, lightning, and thunder damage in addition to their normal damage types.

LEVEL 13 AT-WILL DISCIPLINE

Kinetic Fist

Battlemind Attack 13

The energy from your attack causes swirling force to gather about you, which you can unleash on an attacker.

At-Will ♦ **Augmentable, Force, Psionic, Weapon**
Standard Action Melee weapon

Target: One creature

Attack: Constitution vs. AC

Hit: 1[W] + Constitution modifier damage, and one enemy marked by you other than the target takes force damage equal to your Charisma modifier.

Augment 1

Effect: Until the end of your next turn, when an enemy adjacent to you hits and damages you, that enemy takes force damage equal to your Charisma modifier, and you can push it 1 square.

Augment 4

Hit: 2[W] + Constitution modifier damage, and one enemy marked by you other than the target takes force damage equal to your Charisma modifier.

Effect: Until the end of your next turn, when an enemy adjacent to you hits and damages you, that enemy takes force damage equal to 5 + your Charisma modifier, and you mark it until the end of the enemy's next turn.

LEVEL 15 DAILY DISCIPLINE

Aspect of the Desert Storm

Battlemind Attack 15

Your enemy flies back from your attack, and before it lands, you exchange positions so you can lash out against other foes.

Daily ♦ **Psionic, Teleportation, Weapon**
Standard Action Melee weapon

Primary Target: One creature

Primary Attack: Constitution vs. AC

Hit: 2[W] + Constitution modifier damage.

Miss: Half damage.

Effect: You push the primary target 5 squares and knock it prone. In addition, you and the primary target teleport, swapping positions. If you teleport, you then make a secondary attack that is a close burst 1.

Secondary Target: Each enemy you can see in burst other than the primary target

Secondary Attack: Constitution vs. AC.

Hit: 2[W] + Constitution modifier damage, and the secondary target is dazed until the end of your next turn.

LEVEL 16 UTILITY DISCIPLINE

Savage Intent

Battlemind Utility 16

You fix your enemies in your mind's eye, allowing you to swiftly react to their movement.

Encounter ♦ **Psionic**

Minor Action Close burst 5

Target: Each enemy marked by you in burst

Effect: Until the end of your next turn, when the target completes a willing move without teleporting, you can shift an equal number of squares as a free action.

LEVEL 17 AT-WILL DISCIPLINE

Ruinous Grasp

Battlemind Attack 17

When your strike connects, you seize the mind of a nearby foe and gain limited control over the enemy's movement.

At-Will ♦ Augmentable, Psionic, Weapon

Standard Action Melee weapon

Target: One creature

Attack: Constitution vs. AC

Hit: 1[W] + Constitution modifier damage, and you slide one creature marked by you 3 squares.

Augment 1

Effect: After the attack, you shift 1 square and gain a +2 power bonus to one defense of your choice until the end of your next turn.

Augment 4

Hit: 2[W] + Constitution modifier damage, and you push the target a number of squares equal to your Charisma modifier. In addition, until the end of your next turn, the target is immobilized and you can use a free action to slide the target 1 square whenever you take damage.

LEVEL 19 DAILY DISCIPLINE

Indomitable Presence

Battlemind Attack 19

Your wrath burns so hot it warps the air around you, causing your attackers to recoil in pain.

Daily ♦ Force, Psionic, Psychic, Weapon

Standard Action Melee weapon

Target: One creature

Attack: Constitution vs. AC

Hit: 3[W] + Constitution modifier damage, and the target takes 1d6 extra force and psychic damage from your attacks, not including this one (save ends).

Miss: Half damage.

Effect: Until the end of your next turn, any enemy that hits you takes 1d10 force and psychic damage, and you can push that enemy 1 square.

Sustain Minor: The effect persists.

LEVEL 22 UTILITY DISCIPLINE

Psychic Feast

Battlemind Utility 22

You devour your enemy's anguish as you deliver a killing blow.

Encounter ♦ Psionic

Free Action Personal

Trigger: You reduce a nonminion enemy to 0 hit points.

Effect: You gain temporary hit points equal to your healing surge value.

LEVEL 23 AT-WILL DISCIPLINE

Blade Tremor

Battlemind Attack 23

You clobber your foe with a pulverizing blow. As the enemy staggers, you wrack the earth with a wave of power.

At-Will ♦ Augmentable, Psionic, Weapon

Standard Action Melee weapon

Target: One creature

Attack: Constitution vs. AC

Hit: 1[W] + Constitution modifier damage, and one enemy adjacent to you and marked by you falls prone.

Augment 2

Hit: 2[W] + Constitution modifier damage, and one enemy adjacent to you and marked by you falls prone. If the enemy you knock prone is flanking you with another enemy, that other enemy also falls prone.

Augment 6

Close burst 1

Target: Each enemy you can see in burst

Hit: 2[W] + Constitution modifier damage, and you knock the target prone. In addition, one enemy marked by you and within 5 squares of you falls prone.

LEVEL 25 DAILY DISCIPLINE

Corona of the Sunsphere

Battlemind Attack 25

Your weapon's arc carves a red orb of force that sears your foes and sends them tumbling away.

Daily ♦ Fire, Psionic, Stance, Weapon

Standard Action Close burst 1

Target: Each enemy in burst

Attack: Constitution vs. AC

Hit: 5[W] + Constitution modifier fire damage, and you push the target a number of squares equal to your Charisma modifier.

Miss: Half damage, and you push the target 2 squares.

Effect: You can assume the sunsphere stance. Until the stance ends, you can take the following action.

Opportunity Action Melee 1

Trigger: An enemy that started its turn adjacent to you willingly moves away from you or makes an attack that doesn't include you as a target during that turn.

Target: The triggering enemy

Effect: 1[W] + Charisma modifier fire damage.

LEVEL 29 DAILY DISCIPLINE

Focused Rampage

Battlemind Attack 29

You tear through your opponent with one mighty blow, bolstering you and improving your prowess.

Daily ♦ Psionic, Stance, Weapon

Standard Action Melee weapon

Target: One creature

Attack: Constitution vs. AC

Hit: 6[W] + Constitution modifier damage, and you gain temporary hit points equal to 10 + your Constitution modifier.

Miss: Half damage, and you gain temporary hit points equal to 5 + your Constitution modifier.

Effect: You can assume the focused rampage stance.

Until the stance ends, you can use any of your at-will unaugmented psionic attack powers in place of melee basic attacks.

ARENA FIGHTER

"I live for the moment of triumph, when the crowd cheers wildly. In that moment, I hold the glory of a king, and I achieve immortality."

Years spent in death matches, squaring off against humanoid and monstrous foes, have prepared you to face any enemy. You learned to fight by scrapping in the sand and struggling against the arena-masters' pets. You are a cut above the rest, a champion born of the arenas of Athas and destined for much more.

You bring cunning and speed to the battlefield. You have a daring unknown to those whose feet have never touched the arena floor. Rather than hide behind heavy armor, you rely on agility and your mastery of weapons to deflect your enemies' attacks. Unburdened by heavy armor, you can leap into the fray to strike several enemies at once.

The arena lures more fighters to its bloody fields than members of any other class. Fighters have the weapon training, the armor training, and the adaptability to respond to a variety of threats. Any fighter build might be appropriate in Athas's arenas, but the arena fighter represents the epitome of combat in the coliseums.



NEW CLASS FEATURE

You can select the Arena Training class feature in place of the Fighter Weapon Talent class feature.

Arena Training: You treat all weapons with which you are not proficient as improvised weapons.

You gain a +2 proficiency bonus to attack rolls with improvised weapons. Your attacks with one-handed improvised weapons deal 1d8 damage, and your attacks with two-handed improvised weapons deal 1d10 damage.

While you are not wearing heavy armor, you gain a +1 bonus to AC. This bonus increases to +2 at 11th level and +3 at 21st level.

You select two weapons as your arena weapons. If you are not already proficient with these weapons, you gain proficiency with them. In addition, any of your feats that grant feat bonuses to attack rolls or damage rolls with one of your arena weapons apply to your other arena weapon as well.

SUGGESTED OPTIONS

As with other fighters, Strength should be your highest ability score, because you use it for your attack powers. You'll wear light armor, so a high Dexterity can help offset your lower Armor Class. Make Dexterity your second-highest ability score. Choose Wisdom as your tertiary ability score if you want to improve your battlefield intuition and your Will defense, or pick Constitution if you need extra hit points and healing surges. Select powers that increase your mobility and help you control the battlefield. The ideal powers let you strike or hinder several enemies. Your secondary role is controller.

Suggested Class Features: Arena Training*

Suggested Feat: Toughness

Suggested Skills: Athletics, Endurance, Intimidate

Suggested At-Will Powers: *footwork lure, vicious offensive**

Suggested Encounter Power: *goading maneuver**

Suggested Daily Power: *master's edge**

*New option presented in this book

NEW FIGHTER POWERS

Fighters defend by dominating the battlefield. Whether delivering swift strikes, shrugging off enemy attacks, or intimidating opponents through weapon mastery, the fighter is a presence who can't be ignored. This section presents new powers designed for the arena fighter, though any player might find something appropriate for his or her fighter build.



LEVEL 1 AT-WILL EXPLOIT

Vicious Offensive Fighter Attack 1

You smash into your opponent with such force that a nearby enemy can't help but take notice.

At-Will ♦ Martial, Weapon

Standard Action Melee weapon

Target: One creature

Attack: Strength vs. AC

Hit: 1[W] + Strength modifier damage, and you mark an enemy adjacent to you until the end of your next turn.

Level 21: 2[W] + Strength modifier damage.

LEVEL 1 ENCOUNTER EXPLOIT

Goading Maneuver Fighter Attack 1

After a swift strike, you step to the side and draw another one or two foes into your trap.

Encounter ♦ Martial, Weapon

Standard Action Melee weapon

Target: One creature

Attack: Strength vs. AC

Hit: 2[W] + Strength modifier damage, and you shift 2 squares. In addition, you mark one or two enemies adjacent to you until the end of your next turn.

LEVEL 1 DAILY EXPLOIT

Master's Edge Fighter Attack 1

Your extensive experience helps you pick out the flaws in your opponent's technique, letting you move to meet the enemy's attacks.

Daily ♦ Martial, Weapon

Standard Action Melee weapon

Target: One creature

Attack: Strength vs. AC

Hit: 1[W] + Strength modifier damage.

Effect: Until the end of the encounter, whenever the target willingly moves to a square adjacent to one of your allies, you can use an opportunity action either to make a melee basic attack against the target or to charge the target.

LEVEL 2 UTILITY EXPLOIT

Sidestep Maneuver Fighter Utility 2

The enemy closes to strike, but you duck away and ready a nasty counterstrike.

Encounter ♦ Martial

Opportunity Action Personal

Trigger: An enemy ends its move in a square adjacent to you.

Effect: You shift 3 squares to a square adjacent to the triggering enemy. You gain a +2 power bonus to your next attack roll against the triggering enemy before the end of your next turn.

LEVEL 3 ENCOUNTER EXPLOIT

Daunting Onslaught

Fighter Attack 3

You bring down your rage upon an enemy, frightening nearby foes with your brutality.

Encounter ♦ Fear, Martial, Weapon

Standard Action Melee weapon

Target: One creature

Attack: Strength vs. AC

Hit: 2[W] + Strength modifier damage. The target and each enemy adjacent to either you or the target take a -2 penalty to attack rolls until the end of your next turn.

LEVEL 5 DAILY EXPLOIT

Crashing Assault

Fighter Attack 5

Your opponent flies back from your attack and crashes into other foes, sending them staggering.

Daily ♦ Martial, Weapon

Standard Action Melee weapon

Target: One creature

Attack: Strength vs. AC

Hit: 2[W] + Strength modifier damage, and you push the target 3 squares and knock it prone.

Miss: Half damage, and you push the target 1 square.

Effect: Each enemy adjacent to the target takes damage equal to your Strength modifier. In addition, you push each enemy adjacent to the target 1 square.

LEVEL 6 UTILITY EXPLOIT

Kirre's Roar

Fighter Utility 6

You let out an explosive roar, diverting your enemies' attentions to you. The call steels you against the imminent assault.

Encounter ♦ Martial

Minor Action Close burst 3

Target: Each enemy in burst

Effect: You mark each target until the end of your next turn. In addition, you gain resistance to all damage equal to your Dexterity modifier until the end of your next turn.

LEVEL 7 ENCOUNTER EXPLOIT

Menacing Strike

Fighter Attack 7

You deliver a brutal blow to one enemy, causing your other foes to recoil in fear whenever you lunge at one.

Encounter ♦ Fear, Martial, Weapon

Standard Action Melee weapon

Target: One creature

Attack: Strength vs. AC

Hit: 1[W] + Strength modifier + Dexterity modifier damage. In addition, whenever an enemy ends its move adjacent to the target, you can slide that enemy 1 square as an opportunity action. This effect lasts until the end of your next turn.

LEVEL 9 DAILY EXPLOIT

Shield Ripper

Fighter Attack 9

You strike past your enemy's guard and hew through the foe's defenses.

Daily ♦ Martial, Reliable, Weapon

Standard Action Melee weapon

Target: One creature

Attack: Strength vs. Reflex

Hit: $3[W]$ + Strength modifier damage, and the target takes a -2 penalty to AC and Reflex (save ends).

LEVEL 10 UTILITY EXPLOIT

Another Day

Fighter Utility 10

After suffering a hit, you leap out of your opponent's reach to escape any subsequent attacks.

Encounter ♦ Martial

Immediate Reaction Personal

Trigger: You are hit by an attack.

Effect: You shift your speed + 4.

LEVEL 13 ENCOUNTER EXPLOIT

Menacing Surge

Fighter Attack 13

Rushing forward, your opponents recoil before your menacing presence and your fearsome attacks.

Encounter ♦ Fear, Martial, Weapon

Standard Action Close blast 2

Effect: Before the attack, you move your speed + 2.

Target: Each enemy you can see in blast

Attack: Strength vs. AC

Hit: $2[W]$ + Strength modifier damage.

Effect: Until the end of your next turn, enemies take a -2 penalty to attack rolls while adjacent to you.



LEVEL 15 DAILY EXPLOIT

Dust Storm Assault

Fighter Attack 15

You become a violent storm, flensing the flesh of all who try to stand up to your attacks.

Daily ♦ Martial, Stance, Weapon

Standard Action Close burst 1

Primary Target: Each enemy you can see in burst

Primary Attack: Strength vs. AC

Hit: $1[W]$ + Strength modifier damage.

Effect: You can assume the dust storm assault stance. Until the stance ends, you can make the following secondary attack.

Opportunity Action Melee weapon

Trigger: An enemy willingly moves adjacent to one of your allies within 3 squares of you or makes an attack that does not include you as a target while within 3 squares of you.

Effect: Before the secondary attack, you shift 6 squares to a square adjacent to the triggering enemy.

Secondary Target: The triggering enemy

Secondary Attack: Strength vs. AC

Hit: $2[W]$ + Strength modifier damage, and the secondary target falls prone.

LEVEL 16 UTILITY EXPLOIT

Tyrian Battle Stance

Fighter Utility 16

You have mastered the combat stance used by gladiators in Tyr's arenas, which lets you wade among your foes with impunity.

Daily ♦ Martial, Stance

Minor Action Personal

Effect: You assume the Tyrian battle stance. Until the stance ends, you do not provoke opportunity attacks and you gain a +2 power bonus to AC and Reflex as long as you are able to make opportunity attacks.

LEVEL 17 ENCOUNTER EXPLOIT

Cruellest Chains

Fighter Attack 17

Your words or actions cause the enemy to draw close, giving you an opportunity to attack. If your foe ignores your summons, you vow to make it pay.

Encounter ♦ Martial, Weapon

Immediate Reaction Melee weapon

Trigger: An enemy able to take actions and within 4 squares of you makes an attack that doesn't include you as a target.

Effect: The triggering enemy can shift 6 squares as a free action to a square adjacent to you. If the enemy makes this shift, you make the following attack. Otherwise, your next weapon attack against that enemy that hits before the end of your next turn deals $4[W]$ extra damage.

Target: The triggering enemy

Attack: Strength vs. AC

Hit: $2[W]$ + Strength modifier damage.

LEVEL 19 DAILY EXPLOIT

Bloodletter Stance

Fighter Attack 19

You strike at vital spots to draw your foe's blood. With each hit, you aggravate the wounds and slowly destroy your enemy.

Daily ♦ Martial, Stance, Weapon

Standard Action Melee weapon

Target: One creature

Attack: Strength vs. AC

Hit: 3[W] + Strength modifier damage.

Miss: Half damage.

Effect: The target takes ongoing 10 damage (save ends). In addition, you can assume the stance of the bloodletter. Until the stance ends, whenever you hit an enemy with a melee weapon attack, that enemy takes ongoing 5 damage (save ends).

LEVEL 22 UTILITY EXPLOIT

Urikite Warmaster Stance

Fighter Utility 22

You emulate the warmaster gladiators of Urik with an aggressive stance that lets you punish enemies that come too close.

Daily ♦ Martial, Stance

Minor Action Personal

Effect: You assume the Urikite warmaster stance. Until the stance ends, you can use an opportunity action to deal damage equal to 5 + your Dexterity modifier to any enemy that ends its turn adjacent to you. In addition, while you are in this stance and adjacent to an enemy, you can shift 3 squares as a move action to a square adjacent to that enemy.

LEVEL 23 ENCOUNTER EXPLOIT

Executioner's Gambit

Fighter Attack 23

After you hit your enemy with a telling blow, you hold your weapon ready for a killing stroke if the enemy tries to escape.

Encounter ♦ Martial, Weapon

Standard Action Melee weapon

Target: One creature

Attack: Strength vs. AC

Hit: 4[W] + Strength modifier damage. You gain a +5 power bonus to attack rolls and damage rolls with opportunity attacks against the target until the end of your next turn.

LEVEL 25 DAILY EXPLOIT

Blind with Rage

Fighter Attack 25

Your strike causes blood to flow into your enemy's face, and the foe lashes out blindly at anyone nearby as you call for your allies to back away.

Daily ♦ Martial, Reliable, Weapon

Standard Action Melee weapon

Target: One creature

Attack: Strength vs. AC

Hit: 4[W] + Strength modifier damage, and the target is blinded (save ends). Until this condition ends, whenever any creature starts its turn adjacent to the target, the target must use a free action to make a melee basic attack against that creature.

Effect: You and each ally adjacent to the target can shift 2 squares as a free action.

LEVEL 27 ENCOUNTER EXPLOIT

Demolishing Surge

Fighter Attack 27

After knocking down nearby foes once, you ready your weapon to upend any creatures that try to escape your wrath.

Encounter ♦ Martial, Weapon

Standard Action Close burst 1

Effect: Before the attack, you move your speed.

Target: Each enemy you can see in burst

Attack: Strength vs. AC

Hit: 2[W] + Strength modifier damage, and you knock the target prone.

Effect: Until the start of your next turn, any enemy that willingly leaves a square adjacent to you falls prone.

LEVEL 29 DAILY EXPLOIT

Final Challenge

Fighter Attack 29

You call out a challenge to your enemy. If it answers your summons, you bring your weapon around in a wicked strike. Otherwise, you charge toward it, delivering an assault that leaves a gaping wound.

Daily ♦ Martial, Weapon

Immediate Reaction Melee weapon

Trigger: An enemy able to take actions and within 4 squares of you makes an attack that doesn't include you as a target.

Effect: The triggering enemy can shift 6 squares as a free action to a square adjacent to you. If the enemy makes this shift, you make the following attack. Otherwise, you charge the enemy and make the following attack in place of a melee basic attack.

Target: The triggering enemy

Attack: Strength vs. AC

Hit: 5[W] + Strength modifier damage, and ongoing 15 damage (save ends).

Miss: Half damage.

ANIMIST SHAMAN

Although the world is no longer green and alive, primal spirits still haunt the land. Mesas, crags, dunes, salt pans, siroccos, sandstorms—all contain spirits just as the forests and the oases do. These spirits born of the land are deeply infused with the powers of the elements, and they care little for other creatures. They can be sullen and wrathful entities, but you are able to bend them to your will.

You know how to call forth the desert spirits of sand and sun. The primal spirits you conjure exhibit the land's characteristics. A spirit might shed rain droplets, erupt in blazing fire, or stir one's hair as winds gust around it. Under your command, the spirits rage, unleashing their fury to smash and burn everything in their path. Through force of will, you compel the spirits, binding their power to your allies' attacks or directing them to loose their anger against your enemies.

As an animist shaman, you command a spirit companion more elemental in nature than the spirit companions of other shamans. This elemental spirit might appear as a vortex of dust, a curtain of evaporating rain, a clattering gyre of pebbles, or any other desert phenomenon.

NEW CLASS FEATURE

When you choose your spirit companion, you can choose Elemental Spirit instead of another option, such as the ones in *Player's Handbook 2* and *Primal Power*.

ELEMENTAL SPIRIT

You draw on elemental spirits inhabiting the earth to give you strength and fuel the raw power of your evocations.

Spirit Boon: Your allies gain a +2 bonus to saving throws while adjacent to your spirit companion. In addition, if your spirit companion is not present at the start of your turn, you can summon it once during that turn as a free action.

Spirit's Wrath: You gain the *spirit's wrath* power, an attack you make through your spirit companion as an opportunity action.

At-Will Attack Power: You gain the *spirit infusion* power. You can choose a second at-will attack power as normal.

Spirit's Wrath

Shaman Feature

Burning hatred drives your spirit to smash into your enemy.

At-Will ♦ Implement, Primal, Spirit Opportunity Action Melee spirit 1

Trigger: An enemy leaves a square adjacent to your spirit companion without shifting.

Target: The triggering enemy

Attack: Wisdom vs. Reflex

Hit: 1d6 + Wisdom modifier damage, and the target grants combat advantage until the end of your next turn.
Level 21: 2d6 + Wisdom modifier damage.

SUGGESTED OPTIONS

You need Wisdom for your attacks, so it should be your highest ability score. Make Intelligence your next best score, because it helps boost the damage and benefits of your powers. A high Constitution increases your hit points and your Fortitude, so it should be your third-best score. Look for powers that let your allies make attacks, improve their attacks, or inhibit foes through zones and debilitating effects. Your secondary role is controller.

Suggested Class Features: Elemental Spirit*

Suggested Feat: Spirit of Vigor*

Suggested Skills: Athletics, Endurance, Heal, Nature

Suggested At-Will Powers: *spirit infusion**, *haunting spirits*

Suggested Encounter Power: *scorching sands**

Suggested Daily Power: *dust storm binding**

*New option presented in this book

NEW SHAMAN POWERS

The shaman powers included in this section reflect the desert world and the primal spirits found within it. Although designed for the animist shaman, these powers offer all shamans new ways to engage the enemy and survive the perils in the wild.

LEVEL 1 AT-WILL EVOCATION

Spirit Infusion

Shaman Attack 1

You dismiss your spirit companion, which flows into an ally and enables him or her to make a swift and sudden attack.

At-Will ♦ Primal, Spirit

Standard Action Melee spirit 1

Target: One ally

Effect: Your spirit companion disappears, and the target can make a basic attack with a +2 power bonus to the attack roll and a power bonus to the damage roll equal to your Intelligence modifier.

LEVEL 1 ENCOUNTER EVOCATION

Scorching Sands

Shaman Attack 1

Sands infused with desert fire pour out from your spirit companion, splashing an enemy with terrible flames as your companion dissipates.

Encounter ♦ Fire, Implement, Primal, Spirit

Standard Action Melee spirit 1

Target: One creature

Attack: Wisdom vs. Reflex

Hit: 1d8 + Wisdom modifier fire damage, and the target gains vulnerable 5 fire until the end of your next turn.

Elemental Spirit: You and each ally adjacent to your spirit companion can choose to deal fire damage until the end of your next turn. This fire damage replaces an attack's normal damage types.

Effect: Your spirit companion disappears.

LEVEL 1 DAILY EVOCATION

Dust Storm Binding

Shaman Attack 1

Your spirit companion explodes in an obscuring cloud of dust, sand, and silt that blinds and stings your foes.

Daily ♦ Implement, Primal, Spirit, Zone

Standard Action Close burst spirit 1

Target: Each creature in burst

Attack: Wisdom vs. Fortitude

Hit: The target is blinded (save ends).

Miss: The target takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls until the end of your next turn.

Effect: Your spirit companion disappears. The burst creates a zone that lasts until the end of your next turn. Squares within the zone are heavily obscured. Any enemy that starts its turn within the zone takes 5 damage.

Sustain Minor: The zone persists.

LEVEL 2 UTILITY EVOCATION

Condensation

Shaman Utility 2

Moisture gathers in the air around your spirit companion as you fuse its form with one of your allies to provide healing and a protective barrier against the elements.

Daily ♦ Healing, Primal, Spirit

Minor Action Melee spirit 5

Target: One ally

Effect: Your spirit companion disappears. The target gains resist 10 fire and regeneration equal to your Intelligence modifier until the end of the encounter or until you use *call spirit companion*.

LEVEL 3 ENCOUNTER EVOCATION

Granite Armor

Shaman Attack 3

Your spirit companion enters your ally's body, encasing your comrade in a stony sheath and sending rocky shards flying outward.

Encounter ♦ Implement, Primal, Spirit

Standard Action Melee spirit 1

Primary Target: One ally

Effect: Your spirit companion disappears, and the primary target gains resist 3 to all damage until the end of your next turn. Make an attack that is a close burst 1 centered on the primary target.

Elemental Spirit: The resistance equals 2 + your Intelligence modifier.

Secondary Target: Each enemy in burst

Attack: Wisdom + 2 vs. AC

Hit: 2d6 + Wisdom modifier damage.

LEVEL 5 DAILY EVOCATION

Shrieking Wind Spirits

Shaman Attack 5

The shrieking desert winds gather about your spirit companion, which you then dismiss to unleash a storm that leaves your enemies reeling.

Daily ♦ Implement, Primal, Spirit, Zone

Standard Action Close burst spirit 2

Primary Target: Each enemy in burst

Primary Attack: Wisdom vs. Fortitude

Hit: 2d6 + Wisdom modifier damage, and you slide the primary target 3 squares. The primary target is dazed (save ends).

Effect: Your spirit companion disappears. The burst creates a zone that lasts until the end of your next turn. While the zone persists, you can make the following secondary attack using the burst's origin square as the secondary attack's origin square.

Opportunity Action Close burst 2

Trigger: An enemy ends its turn within the zone.

Secondary Target: The triggering enemy in burst

Secondary Attack: Wisdom vs. Fortitude

Hit: You slide the secondary target 3 squares.

Sustain Minor: The zone persists.

LEVEL 6 UTILITY EVOCATION

Light of the Crimson Sun Shaman Utility 6

Your spirit erupts in flames, shining with coruscating light that empowers some of your allies' attacks.

Encounter ♦ Primal, Spirit, Zone

Minor Action Close burst spirit 2

Effect: Your spirit companion disappears. The burst creates a zone that lasts until the end of your next turn. While within the zone, your allies gain a +2 power bonus to attack rolls with fire powers and radiant powers. In addition, whenever an ally hits with a fire power or a radiant power while within the zone, he or she gains temporary hit points equal to your Intelligence modifier.

LEVEL 7 ENCOUNTER EVOCATION

Memories of Wind and Rain Shaman Attack 7

You dismiss your spirit companion and unleash wind and rain spirits that shriek as they descend on your enemies. Gusts of wind shove your allies about while slamming any enemies that come too close.

Encounter ♦ Implement, Primal, Spirit, Zone

Standard Action Close burst spirit 1

Target: Each enemy in burst

Attack: Wisdom vs. Reflex

Hit: 2d6 + Wisdom modifier damage.

Effect: Your spirit companion disappears, and you slide each ally in the burst 1 square. The burst creates a zone that lasts until the end of your next turn. Any enemy that ends its turn within the zone is dazed until the end of its next turn.

LEVEL 9 DAILY EVOCATION

Mountain's Might Shaman Attack 9

When your spirit merges with your ally, the ground trembles and knocks foes from their feet. That ally then assumes a rocky form that is slow but resilient.

Daily ♦ Implement, Polymorph, Primal, Spirit

Standard Action Melee spirit 1

Primary Target: One ally

Effect: Your spirit companion disappears. Until the end of your next turn, the primary target assumes the form of mountain's might. While in this form, the primary target is slowed, gains resist 5 to all damage, and gains a power bonus to melee damage rolls equal to your Intelligence modifier. The primary target can end the effect as a minor action. Make an attack that is a close burst 1 centered on the primary target.

Secondary Target: Each enemy in burst

Attack: Wisdom vs. Fortitude

Hit: 2d6 + Wisdom modifier damage, and the secondary target falls prone.

Miss: Half damage.

Sustain Minor: The form of mountain's might persists.

LEVEL 10 UTILITY EVOCATION

Swirling Dust Shaman Utility 10

Your spirit companion enters your ally's body, and nothing remains of either except swirling dust.

Encounter ♦ Primal, Spirit

Minor Action Melee spirit 5

Target: One ally

Effect: Your spirit companion disappears. Until the end of your next turn, the target is insubstantial, and its space and any squares adjacent to it are lightly obscured.

LEVEL 13 ENCOUNTER EVOCATION

Seething Zephyr

Shaman Attack 13

Winds gather around your spirit companion, which bursts into a zephyr that scatters your enemies and sends one of your allies flying.

Encounter ♦ Implement, Primal, Spirit

Standard Action Close burst spirit 1

Target: Each enemy in burst

Attack: Wisdom vs. Reflex

Hit: 2d10 + Wisdom modifier damage, and you slide the target 1 square.

Effect: Your spirit companion disappears. If you hit at least one target, one ally in the burst can fly 6 squares.

LEVEL 15 DAILY EVOCATION

Volcanic Circle

Shaman Attack 15

Your spirit companion disappears into the ground, where it awakens the angry earth and unleashes bubbling fire and molten rock.

Daily ♦ Fire, Implement, Primal, Spirit, Zone

Standard Action Close burst spirit 2

Target: Each enemy in burst

Attack: Wisdom vs. Reflex

Hit: 1d10 + Wisdom modifier fire damage, and the target grants combat advantage and takes ongoing 10 fire damage (save ends both).

Effect: Your spirit companion disappears. The burst creates a zone that lasts until the end of your next turn. Squares within the zone are lightly obscured. Any creature that ends its turn within the zone takes 10 fire damage.

Sustain Minor: The zone persists.

LEVEL 16 UTILITY EVOCATION

Guiding Winds

Shaman Utility 16

The gentle breeze swirling around your spirit companion intensifies, pushing your allies to confront an enemy.

Encounter ♦ Primal, Spirit

Minor Action Close burst spirit 1

Target: Each ally in burst

Effect: Your spirit companion disappears. You slide each target a number of squares equal to your Intelligence modifier.

LEVEL 17 ENCOUNTER EVOCATION

Cloudburst

Shaman Attack 17

Your spirit companion dissolves into roiling black clouds that loose lightning and slashing rain.

Encounter ♦ Implement, Lightning, Primal

Standard Action Close burst spirit 1

Target: Each enemy in burst

Attack: Wisdom vs. Reflex

Hit: 2d6 + Wisdom modifier lightning damage, and the target is immobilized until the end of your next turn.

Elemental Spirit: You and each ally in the burst can choose to deal lightning damage until the end of your next turn. This lightning damage replaces an attack's normal damage types.

Effect: Your spirit companion disappears.

LEVEL 19 DAILY EVOCATION

Sirocco Spirit

Shaman Attack 19

Your elemental spirit breaks apart to become a storm of dust and wind that blinds your enemies and makes them more susceptible to attacks.

Daily ♦ Implement, Primal, Spirit

Standard Action Close burst spirit 2

Target: Each creature in burst

Attack: Wisdom vs. Fortitude

Hit: 2d8 + Wisdom modifier damage, and the target is blinded and gains vulnerable 5 to all damage (save ends both)

Miss: Half damage, and the target gains vulnerable 5 to all damage (save ends).

Effect: Your spirit companion disappears.

LEVEL 22 UTILITY EVOCATION

Sand Summons

Shaman Utility 22

You dismiss your spirit companion, using its power to cause sand to boil up from the ground. The sands consume your allies and deliver them to safety while leaving an area of unstable terrain.

Daily ♦ Primal, Spirit, Teleportation, Zone

Minor Action Close burst spirit 2

Target: Each ally in burst

Effect: Your spirit companion disappears. You teleport each target 5 squares. The burst creates a zone of difficult terrain that lasts until the end of the encounter.

LEVEL 23 ENCOUNTER EVOCATION

Boulder Smash

Shaman Attack 23

As your spirit moves, it transforms into a rolling boulder that smashes through your enemies' ranks before disappearing.

Encounter ♦ Implement, Primal, Spirit, Zone

Standard Action Close burst spirit 1

Target: Each enemy in burst

Attack: Wisdom vs. Fortitude

Hit: 3d8 + Wisdom modifier damage, and you knock the target prone.

Elemental Spirit: The burst creates a zone of difficult terrain that lasts until the end of the encounter or until you use call spirit companion.

Effect: Your spirit companion disappears.

LEVEL 25 DAILY EVOCATION

Caustic Rain

Shaman Attack 25

Your spirit companion dissolves into acrid green clouds that wash the battlefield with acid rain and funnel life from your enemies into your allies.

Daily ♦ Acid, Healing, Implement, Primal, Spirit, Zone

Standard Action Close burst spirit 2

Target: Each creature in burst

Attack: Wisdom vs. Fortitude

Hit: 3d6 + Wisdom modifier acid damage, and the target takes a -2 penalty to all defenses and ongoing 15 acid damage (save ends both).

Effect: Your spirit companion disappears. The burst creates a zone that lasts until the end of your next turn. Squares within the zone are lightly obscured. Any creature that ends its turn within the zone takes 15 acid damage.

Whenever this zone reduces a nonminion enemy to 0 hit points, one ally you can see can spend a healing surge.

Sustain Minor: The zone persists.

LEVEL 27 ENCOUNTER EVOCATION

Immolating Spirit

Shaman Attack 27

Your spirit companion merges with your ally, causing your comrade to erupt in flames as he or she delivers a sudden attack.

Encounter ♦ Fire, Healing, Primal, Spirit

Standard Action Melee spirit 5

Target: One ally

Effect: Your spirit companion disappears. The target can use a free action either to make a melee basic attack or to charge. If this attack hits, the target deals 2d10 extra fire damage and can spend a healing surge.

Elemental Spirit: If the target's attack hits, each enemy adjacent to the target takes fire damage equal to your Wisdom modifier.

LEVEL 29 DAILY EVOCATION

Fury of Athas

Shaman Attack 29

You dismiss your spirit companion and use its power to call forth the world spirit's tattered remnants, empowering your allies to launch a brutal assault.

Daily ♦ Primal, Spirit

Standard Action Close burst spirit 2

Target: Each ally in burst

Effect: Your spirit companion disappears. Each target can make a basic attack as a free action. If this attack hits, the target of the attack is stunned and takes ongoing 10 damage (save ends both).

WARLOCK SORCERER-KING PACT

On Athas, many templars swear an oath to a sorcerer-king in exchange for arcane power. The sorcerer-king pact reflects the training and magical transformations that a sorcerer-king might provide to an individual whom he or she deems worthy. A warlock who has this pact can draw on the reserves of power that a sorcerer-king commands.

Most warlocks of this pact are templars in a sorcerer-king's service. They are often trusted members of the templar hierarchy who are expected to command the soldiers, the agents, or the underlings of a sorcerer-king. Thus, the powers of the sorcerer-king pact aid allies and work well in melee. A sorcerer-king sometimes imparts his or her power to a promising protégé or a privileged noble without making the recipient into a templar, although such instances are unusual.

NEW CLASS FEATURE

When you choose your Eldritch Pact, you can choose the sorcerer-king pact instead of another option, such as the ones from the *Player's Handbook* or the *Arcane Power*™ supplement.

Sorcerer-King Pact: You have pledged yourself to the service of a sorcerer-king. In return, your master transformed you into an arcane spellcaster by means of eldritch rituals. What you do with this new power is up to you—the sorcerer-king has no special ability to observe you or to strip you of your power. However, all sorcerer-kings are suspicious and ruthless, so if you defy one, you do so at your own peril.

Hand of Blight: You gain the *hand of blight* power.

Fell Scorn: You have the Fell Scorn pact boon, which enables you to draw upon your sorcerer-king's magical prowess and enhance a power by spending your fell might. You start each encounter with your fell might unspent. You must decide whether or not to spend your fell might when you choose to use a power, before you make any attack rolls or apply any of that power's effects.

When a creature affected by your Warlock's Curse drops to 0 hit points, your pact boon triggers, restoring your fell might, which you can spend again during the encounter. If you already have your fell might available when a cursed creature drops to 0 hit points, you don't gain a second use of it. You can have only one use of fell might available at one time.

SUGGESTED OPTIONS

The sorcerer-kings desire servants who have great stamina and force of personality, so Charisma or Constitution should be the primary ability score for someone who has this pact. Intelligence is best as your secondary ability score, because many

sorcerer-king pact powers gain a benefit from it. Charisma or Constitution, whichever you didn't pick as a primary score, is a good third choice. Choose Charisma to bolster your low Will defense if you plan to remain at range, or else use Constitution to gain extra hit points and healing surges if you intend to use your powers in melee combat.

Suggested Class Feature: Sorcerer-king pact*

Suggested Feat: Scornful Denial*

Suggested Skills: Arcana, Bluff, Insight, Streetwise

Suggested At-Will Powers: *eldritch blast*, *hand of blight**

Suggested Encounter Power: *cruel bounty**

Suggested Daily Power: *ashen scourge**

*New option presented in this book

NEW WARLOCK POWERS

These powers are associated with the sorcerer-king pact, but they also provide warlocks of other pacts with new options. They are ideal for any warlock build, because they use either Charisma or Constitution as the primary ability score.

LEVEL 1 AT-WILL SPELL

Hand of Blight

Warlock Attack 1

A crackling black sphere gathers around your outspread hand. You can smite a nearby foe with it, or else fling it at a distant enemy.

At-Will ♦ **Arcane, Implement, Necrotic, Psychic**
Standard Action Melee touch or Ranged 10

Target: One creature

Attack: Charisma or Constitution vs. Fortitude

Hit: 1d8 + Charisma or Constitution modifier necrotic and psychic damage, and the target grants combat advantage until the end of your next turn.

Level 21: 2d8 + Charisma or Constitution modifier necrotic and psychic damage.

Sorcerer-King Pact: If you spend your fell might, the target takes 1d8 extra damage.

LEVEL 1 ENCOUNTER SPELL

Cruel Bounty

Warlock Attack 1

You create a blazing sigil that flares with unwholesome light, scouring your foe and promising an obscene blessing to any of your allies who bathe in its radiance.

Encounter ♦ **Arcane, Implement, Radiant**
Standard Action Melee touch or Ranged 5

Target: One creature

Attack: Charisma or Constitution vs. Fortitude

Hit: 2d6 + Charisma or Constitution modifier radiant damage. Until the end of your next turn, your allies gain a +1 power bonus to attack rolls against the target.

Sorcerer-King Pact: If you spend your fell might, the bonus increases to +2 and the bonus affects attack rolls and damage rolls.

LEVEL 1 DAILY SPELL

Ashen Scourge

Warlock Attack 1

You lash at your foe with a whip of fire, dragging it close. The whip leaves behind a residue of necrotic ash that withers your foe's flesh.

Daily ♦ Arcane, Fire, Necrotic, Implement

Standard Action Melee touch or Ranged 5

Target: One creature

Attack: Charisma or Constitution vs. Fortitude

Hit: 2d8 + Charisma or Constitution modifier fire damage.
The target grants combat advantage and takes ongoing 5 necrotic damage (save ends both).

Miss: Half damage.

Effect: You pull the target 2 squares.

LEVEL 2 UTILITY SPELL

Assassin's Bane

Warlock Utility 2

The ground blackens as coruscating energy swirls around you, hindering your foes' movements and revealing any hidden enemies.

Daily ♦ Arcane, Zone

Minor Action Close burst 3

Effect: The burst creates a zone that lasts until the end of your next turn. Enemies within the zone cannot shift, teleport, or benefit from invisibility, concealment, or total concealment.

Sustain Minor: The zone persists.

LEVEL 3 ENCOUNTER SPELL

Sinister Extraction

Warlock Attack 3

Your enemy falters as you tear at its soul. One of your allies, seeing the foe's defiance vanish, can use the opportunity to deliver an invigorating attack.

Encounter ♦ Arcane, Implement, Psychic

Standard Action Melee touch or Ranged 5

Target: One creature

Attack: Charisma or Constitution vs. Will

Hit: 1d10 + Charisma or Constitution modifier psychic damage. The next one of your allies who hits the target with a melee attack before the end of your next turn gains temporary hit points equal to your Intelligence modifier.

Sorcerer-King Pact: If you spend your fell might, your ally's attack need not be a melee attack.

LEVEL 5 DAILY SPELL

Flames of the Smoking Crown

Warlock Attack 5

Hungry flames consume your enemy and send the creature into a panic that ignites your other foes.

Daily ♦ Arcane, Fear, Fire, Implement

Standard Action Melee touch or Ranged 5

Target: One creature

Attack: Charisma or Constitution vs. Reflex

Hit: The target is affected by the flames of the smoking crown (save ends). Until the flames end, the target takes ongoing 5 fire damage. Also, whenever the target starts its turn you slide it a number of squares equal to your Intelligence modifier, and each enemy adjacent to the target after the slide takes ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends).

Effect: 1d10 + Charisma or Constitution modifier fire damage.



LEVEL 6 UTILITY SPELL

Sand Shape

Warlock Utility 6

You transform your body into sand, allowing you to resist attacks and pass through solid barriers.

Daily ♦ Arcane, Polymorph

Minor Action Personal

Effect: Until the end of your next turn, you are insubstantial and can pass through any opening large enough to accommodate a single grain of sand. You cannot attack, pick up anything, or manipulate objects.

Sustain Minor: The effect persists.

LEVEL 7 ENCOUNTER SPELL

Sorcerer-King's Decree

Warlock Attack 7

Crackling lightning scorches your enemy with such ferocity that it sends nearby foes staggering back.

Encounter ♦ Arcane, Implement, Lightning, Psychic

Standard Action Melee touch or Ranged 5

Target: One creature

Attack: Charisma or Constitution vs. Reflex

Hit: 2d8 + Charisma or Constitution modifier lightning damage. You push the target and each enemy adjacent to the target a number of squares equal to your Intelligence modifier.

Sorcerer-King Pact: If you spend your fell might, each enemy adjacent to the target before the push takes psychic damage equal to your Intelligence modifier.

LEVEL 9 DAILY SPELL

Kalak's Burning Sands

Warlock Attack 9

You transform the ground beneath your foe's feet into seething black sand. As your enemy sinks down, the sand scorches the creature.

Daily ♦ Arcane, Fire, Implement

Standard Action Melee touch or Ranged 5

Target: One creature

Attack: Charisma or Constitution vs. Will

Hit: 2d8 + Charisma or Constitution modifier fire damage, and you knock the target prone. The target cannot stand up and has cover against all creatures except you (save ends both).

First Failed Saving Throw: The target takes ongoing 5 fire damage and is removed from play (save ends both). When the target saves, it reappears in the space it last occupied or in the nearest unoccupied space of its choice.

Miss: Half damage, and the target is immobilized until the end of your next turn.

LEVEL 10 UTILITY SPELL

King's Step

Warlock Utility 10

After an enemy misses you with an attack, you take a form of sand and ash. You then zip across the battlefield and lay your curse upon the offending creature.

Encounter ♦ Arcane

Immediate Reaction Personal

Trigger: An enemy misses you with an attack.

Effect: You fly your speed and are insubstantial during the move. After the move, you place your Warlock's Curse on the triggering enemy.

LEVEL 13 ENCOUNTER SPELL

Break the Will

Warlock Attack 13

Your magic breaks into your foe's mind and leaves the creature reeling from the experience.

Encounter ♦ Arcane, Implement, Psychic

Standard Action Melee touch or Ranged 5

Target: One creature

Attack: Charisma or Constitution vs. Will

Hit: 2d6 + Charisma or Constitution modifier psychic damage, and the target is dazed until the end of your next turn.

Sorcerer-King Pact: If you spend your fell might, each enemy adjacent to the target takes psychic damage equal to your Intelligence modifier. In addition, you place your Warlock's Curse on each enemy adjacent to the target.

LEVEL 15 DAILY SPELL

Touch of the Two Moons

Warlock Attack 15

Invoking the name of Tectuktitalay, ruler of Draj the Two Moon City, you plunge your hand into a creature's flesh and tear loose a piece of the creature's spirit.

Daily ♦ Arcane, Fear, Implement

Standard Action Melee touch

Primary Target: One creature

Primary Attack: Charisma or Constitution vs. Fortitude

Hit: 4d10 + Charisma or Constitution modifier damage.
Miss: Half damage.

Effect: Make a secondary attack that is a close burst 5.

Secondary Target: Each enemy in burst

Secondary Attack: Charisma or Constitution vs. Will

Hit: You push the secondary target a number of squares equal to its speed. The secondary target grants combat advantage (save ends).

LEVEL 16 UTILITY SPELL

Fail Me Not

Warlock Utility 16

Your magic infuses your allies' attacks with power that comes at a dangerous cost.

Daily ♦ Arcane, Zone

Minor Action Close burst 3

Effect: The burst creates a zone that lasts until the end of your next turn. While within the zone, your allies gain both a +2 power bonus to attack rolls and a power bonus to damage rolls equal to your Intelligence modifier. The bonus applies to melee attacks and ranged attacks. Also, whenever one of your allies within the zone misses every target with a melee or a ranged attack, he or she gains vulnerable 5 to all damage until the start of his or her next turn.

Sustain Minor: The zone persists.

LEVEL 17 ENCOUNTER SPELL

Obedience's Reward

Warlock Attack 17

At your command, an ally leaps forward to savage an enemy. However, that comrade suffers your ire if he or she wastes the opportunity you provide.

Encounter ♦ Arcane, Healing

Standard Action Melee touch or Ranged 5

Target: One ally

Effect: The target can use a free action either to make a melee basic attack or to charge, gaining a power bonus to the attack roll of either attack equal to your Intelligence modifier. If the target's attack hits, it deals 2d8 extra damage. If it misses every target, the target takes damage equal to the higher of your Charisma or Constitution modifiers, and you regain the use of this power.

Sorcerer-King Pact: If you spend your fell might, the target's attack also deals extra damage equal to your Warlock's Curse damage if it hits.

LEVEL 19 DAILY SPELL

Voice of the Dictator

Warlock Attack 19

When you speak, the voice of Andropinis, sorcerer-king of Balic, joins your own, giving weight and power to your commands.

Daily ♦ Arcane, Charm, Implement, Psychic
Standard Action Close burst 5

Target: One creature that can hear you in burst

Attack: Charisma or Constitution vs. Will

Hit: The target is dominated (save ends).

Each Failed Saving Throw: The target takes psychic damage equal to your Charisma or Constitution modifier, and one ally within 5 squares of you gains temporary hit points equal to your Charisma or Constitution modifier.

Miss: 2d12 + Charisma or Constitution modifier psychic damage.

LEVEL 22 UTILITY SPELL

Cerulean Shield

Warlock Utility 22

You throw up an arcane shield that catches a portion of an incoming attack and fashions it into a potent defense.

Daily ♦ Arcane

Immediate Interrupt Personal

Trigger: You are hit by an attack that deals acid, cold, fire, lightning, necrotic, radiant, or thunder damage.

Effect: You gain resistance equal to $10 +$ your Intelligence modifier to the triggering attack's damage types until the end of your next turn. In addition, until the end of your next turn, any enemy that starts its turn adjacent to you takes damage of the triggering attack's damage types. The damage equals the resistance you gained from this power.

Sustain Minor: The effect persists.

LEVEL 23 ENCOUNTER SPELL

Command of Execution

Warlock Attack 23

Your dire command staggers your foe and compels a couple of your allies to launch attacks against the creature.

Encounter ♦ Arcane, Implement

Standard Action Melee touch or Ranged 10

Target: One creature

Attack: Charisma or Constitution vs. Fortitude

Hit: The target is dazed until the end of your next turn.

One or two of your allies within 5 squares of the target can use a free action either to make a melee basic attack against the target or to charge the target.

Sorcerer-King Pact: If you spend your fell might, the allies' attacks deal extra damage equal to your Warlock's Curse damage if they hit.

LEVEL 25 DAILY SPELL

Word of the Sorcerer-King

Warlock Attack 25

With a single powerful word, you make your enemies feel the might of a sorcerer-king.

Daily ♦ Arcane, Implement, Psychic
Standard Action Close blast 5

Target: Each enemy in blast

Attack: Charisma or Constitution vs. Fortitude

Hit: $2d10 +$ Charisma or Constitution modifier psychic damage, and the target is stunned (save ends).

Miss: Half damage, and the target is dazed until the end of your next turn.

LEVEL 27 ENCOUNTER SPELL

Price of Defiance

Warlock Attack 27

A ghostly hand enfolds your enemy, wrenching it toward waiting allies who dispatch it at your command.

Encounter ♦ Arcane, Force, Implement

Standard Action Melee touch or Ranged 10

Target: One creature

Attack: Charisma or Constitution vs. Fortitude

Hit: $3d8 +$ Charisma or Constitution modifier force damage, and the target is immobilized until the end of your next turn. You slide the target 5 squares to a square adjacent to one of your allies. That ally can then make a melee basic attack against the target as an opportunity action, gaining a power bonus to the damage roll equal to your Intelligence modifier.

Sorcerer-King Pact: If you spend your fell might, after your ally's attack, you can slide the target 5 squares to a square adjacent to one of your allies. That ally can then make a melee basic attack against the target as an opportunity action, with a power bonus to the damage roll equal to your Intelligence modifier.

LEVEL 29 DAILY SPELL

Dregoth's Ashen Curse

Warlock Attack 29

You ignite your enemy with black fire that corrupts the flesh and soul. As the flames gutter out, your foe's body begins to turn to ash.

Daily ♦ Arcane, Fire, Implement, Necrotic

Standard Action Melee touch or Ranged 10

Target: One creature

Attack: Charisma or Constitution vs. Reflex

Hit: $3d8 +$ Charisma or Constitution modifier fire damage, and the target is slowed and takes ongoing 15 fire damage (save ends both).

Aftereffect: The target is slowed, is weakened, and takes ongoing 15 necrotic damage (save ends all).

Miss: Half damage, and ongoing 10 necrotic damage (save ends).

EPIC DESTINIES

The mightiest heroes of Athas have many possible destinies. By following one of these callings, a character can achieve power that rivals even that of the sorcerer-kings.

AVANGION

Arcane power sings in your soul as a blessing from the world you have helped preserve.

Prerequisite: 21st level, any arcane class

Although your magic derives from drawing energy from the world, you have gained your power through respect and compassion. The primal spirits—ancient powers of the world—have begun to count you among their kin. Through your devotion to the preserver's path, you have transcended mortal boundaries and gained magical prowess. With your newfound power, though, comes the grave responsibility of freeing the world from those who would defile it.

You feel the pulse of the world and hear the whispers of its spirits. Your soul keeps you in a constant meditative connection with creation. The life force of Athas weaves its threads into your being, linking your mind, body, and soul with the world. Using this connection, you can alter your mortal form to become a bright, winged spirit.



IMMORTALITY

As a creature that embodies preserving magic, death is meaningless to you. You no longer age, and trying to kill you is like trying to destroy the wind or the stars. Though the wind might grow calm and the stars might become dim, they always return in time. It is the same with you.

Avangion Apotheosis: As your destiny nears, words of creation enter your thoughts, teaching you how to preserve and nurture life. You gain the power and the knowledge to guide Athas into a vibrant age of verdant terrain, flowing water, and peaceful life. You become a harbinger of hope, working toward a brighter future under the red sun.

AVANGION FEATURES

Avatar of Preservation (21st level): You can no longer use *arcane defiling*. Also, you gain a bonus to death saving throws equal to half your highest ability modifier, and you no longer age.

Perfection of Mind (21st level): Choose two ability scores from among Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma. Each of those ability scores increases by 2.

Avangion Transformation (24th level): You gain low-light vision and a fly speed equal to your speed. In addition, you can speak Supernal and understand speech and writing in all languages.

You can use a free action to illuminate squares within 5 squares of you with bright light. While providing this illumination, you can choose to have your attacks deal radiant damage in addition to any other damage types they might have. For example, if your *scorching burst* normally deals fire damage, you can choose to instead deal fire and radiant damage when you hit.

Avangion Rising (30th level): Whenever you or an ally you can see drops to 0 hit points or fewer, you can spend a healing surge as a free action to restore hit points to that character equal to your healing surge value plus your highest ability modifier.

AVANGION POWER

Wings of Gold

Avangion Utility 26

Your wings become rippling waves of golden light that bolster your allies and debilitate certain foes.

Daily ♦ **Arcane, Healing, Zone**

Minor Action

Close burst 5

Effect: The burst creates a zone that lasts until the end of the encounter. When you move, the zone moves with you, remaining centered on you. While within the zone, enemies that have vulnerability to radiant damage treat their vulnerability as vulnerability to all damage. In addition, whenever any ally starts his or her turn within the zone, he or she can make a saving throw to end an effect, including one that does not normally end on a save. Any bloodied or dying ally that starts his or her turn within the zone regains 10 hit points.

DRAGON KING

You embody the path of defiling, and even the mightiest defilers pale before your new, deadly form.

Prerequisite: 21st level, arcane defiling power

You have always taken what you wanted, especially with regard to magic. Power is for the strong—for those willing to do anything to gain and maintain it. Only weaklings concern themselves with measured ascension. The defilers of legend, including the sorcerer-kings, knew that one must seize power when and where possible, regardless of the consequences.

Dark fables intrigue you, their words hinting at an ultimate transformation for Athas's most powerful defilers. Through searching or invention, you have discerned the rituals necessary to make this transformation a reality. Perhaps you reached the solution through your independence and cunning. Or maybe you relied on the methods of your predecessors, succeeding where they failed. Whatever the case, you once again proved your superiority over the defilers who came before you.

IMMORTALITY

As you grow in power, you begin to lose your human form and take on a draconic shape. At the height of your strength, you transform into a dragon, gaining the mythic power associated with their reptilian bodies. Your soul remains bound beneath your scaly armor, protected until you tire of existence.

Draconic Ascension: As your destiny approaches, you gain the final cold-blooded insight you need to complete your transformation. As a dragon, you might create a domain worthy of your ambition. You could topple the petty sorcerer-kings or fashion yourself as a god of those who don't know better.

DRAGON KING FEATURES

Skin of the Dragon (21st level): You gain low-light vision and a +2 bonus to Intimidate checks. In addition, you gain 5 hit points and add your Constitution modifier to your healing surge value.

Draconian Defilement (21st level): When you use *arcane defiling*, your reroll gains a +2 power bonus to the attack roll or a +6 power bonus to the damage roll.

Draconic Transformation (24th level): You gain a fly speed of 8 and can speak Draconic. Also, choose two ability scores from among Intelligence, Strength, and Constitution. Each of those ability scores increases by 2.

Draconic Terror (30th level): You gain the scathing breath power.

In addition, you can use *draconic rampage* once per encounter without expending its daily use. When you do so, the power's effect lasts until the end of your next turn instead of until the end of the encounter.

Scathing Breath

Dragon King Feature

You channel energy through your implement and into your draconic form, spewing forth a blinding blast of hot ash and grit.

Encounter ♦ Arcane, Fire, Implement

Standard Action **Close blast 5**

Target: Each creature in blast

Attack: Primary ability score vs. Reflex

Hit: 4d8 + ability modifier fire damage, and the target is blinded until the end of its next turn.

DRAGON KING POWER

Draconic Rampage

Dragon King Utility 26

Your animalistic rage boils over, and you transform into a draconic terror.

Daily ♦ Arcane, Implement, Polymorph

Minor Action **Personal**

Effect: You assume the form of a rampaging dragon until the end of the encounter. While you are in this form, your size increases to Large, and whenever a nonminion creature within 10 squares of you drops to 0 hit points, you gain 10 temporary hit points. In addition, while in this form, you can make the following attack.

Immediate Reaction **Melee 1**

Trigger: An enemy willingly enters a square adjacent to you.

Target: The triggering enemy

Attack: Primary ability score vs. Reflex

Hit: 2d8 + ability modifier damage, and you knock the target prone.



HORDEMASTER

Nomads and exiles, slaves and free folk—all of them rally to your banner to sweep away the corruption of civilization.

Prerequisite: 21st level

You reject civilization and the temptations of the cities. You see the city-states groan beneath the sorcerer-kings' tyrannies, and you observe how the people fear to speak out. The city dwellers, even non-slaves, give up freedom and morality for the promise of wealth and protection, but you do not make that choice. You have turned to the wilds to be your haven, abandoning "civilized" folk to the fate they deserve. You hone your body and master your techniques until the day comes when you will be powerful enough to tear down the city walls and bring an end to the sorcerer-kings' villainy.

As you embark on this destiny, your actions win you renown throughout the land. Wherever you go, people come to glimpse you. Throughout Athas, people whisper about your power and your intentions. Cities and merchant houses send envoys, bringing you tribute and seeking your favor. Raiders, refugees, escaped slaves, and fugitives flock to you. Some come to learn from you, and others come to fight on your behalf. Between your adventures, a mighty entourage surrounds you. Yet despite your acclaim, you are quick to strike out on your own or with a few trusted companions when adventure calls. Only cowards would have others fight on their behalf.



CHAPTER 4 | Character Options

IMMORTALITY

The desert tribes of your race—human, halfling, elf, thri-kreen, goliath, whatever your kind—flock to your banner. With them come exiles, brigands, mercenaries, and adventurers, all of whom sense the winds of change blowing across the deserts. A mighty storm gathers around you, a storm of war and blood that will cleanse the world of corruption. Whether you lead your horde away from the Tyr Region to found a realm elsewhere, or whether you challenge the cities of the sorcerer-kings, your decisions will forever change Athas.

Shaker of Thrones: Upon completing your final quest, you unleash the long-awaited war. Cities burn, and your warriors conquer. Whether you are a blood-soaked warrior or an inspiring liberator, your horde reshapes history. When death arrives at last, your legend survives you; for a thousand years, your name will represent ferocity and military prowess.

HORDEMASTER FEATURES

Horde Champion (21st level): Two ability scores of your choice both increase by 2.

Swarming Followers (21st level): While you are adjacent to an enemy, any ally who starts his or her turn adjacent to that enemy can shift 1 square as a minor action during his or her turn.

The Legend Lives On (24th level): If you die and do not return to life within 12 hours, a devoted follower, such as a trusted lieutenant, takes your place, adopting your identity, your equipment, and your goals. This follower is identical to you, with the same level, race, class, paragon path, epic destiny, feats, and so forth. The two of you are essentially the same person and even have the same memories and experiences, if only because your follower listened so closely to your tales. If you are revived after being dead for more than 12 hours, your trusted follower returns to his or her former role.

Horde Attack (30th level): Once per encounter, when you or an ally within 5 squares of you first becomes bloodied in an encounter, you and each ally within 5 squares of you can use an at-will attack power as a free action.

HORDEMASTER POWER

Persisting Command

Hordemaster Utility 26

Your leadership inspires your allies and ensures that they do not fall to injury or adverse effects.

Daily ♦ Healing, Zone

Minor Action

Close burst 5

Effect: The burst creates a zone that lasts until the end of the encounter. When you move, the zone moves with you, remaining centered on you. While your allies are within the zone, they gain a +2 power bonus to saving throws. In addition, when any of your allies spends a healing surge to regain hit points while within the zone, he or she regains hit points equal to twice his or her healing surge value.

MIND LORD OF THE ORDER

An unbalanced mind is as destructive and as harmful as the most reckless defiler.

Prerequisite: 21st level, any psionic class that uses power points

Through self-training or extensive study, you have learned to control psionic energy and wield it in a responsible and careful fashion. As you mastered your art, you realized that many are reckless with their talents. Like arcane magic, psionic power harbors the potential to unleash incalculable destruction. To avert catastrophe, you realized that any who dabble in these mysterious techniques must be watched, guided, and taught to control their talents.

Your revelation and growing power attracted the Order, an ancient society of psionic adepts who stand apart from the land's struggles. The Order is concerned only with maintaining balance among those who wield psionic power. As a member of the Order, you have dedicated your life to ensuring that those who wield psionic magic use their power responsibly and with restraint.

IMMORTALITY

As your exploits grow, you gain honor among other members of the Order. In time, they come to recognize you as foremost among them. Your power, wisdom, and temperance represent everything that a member of the Order should aspire to. As you face increasingly dangerous challenges, you recognize a greater destiny than containing the reckless use of psionic power.

Psionic Legions: Having accomplished all you set out to do, you are free to turn your attention toward shepherding the world into a brighter future. You believe that the key to correcting Athas's course lies through psionic power. Among the populace, you foster respect and discipline for psionic magic, ushering in a new age of psionic mastery that can break the sorcerer-kings' rule and free the world from their destructive influence.

MIND LORD OF THE ORDER

FEATURES

Ordered Enlightenment (21st level): Your Intelligence and Wisdom scores increase by 2.

Mind Lord's Armor (21st level): You gain resistance 15 psychic.

Mind Lord's Projection (24th level): Whenever you drop to 0 hit points or fewer, you can project your mind into the body of a willing ally within 10 squares of you. Your body is still subject to effects, but you ignore these while inhabiting your host body. Instead, you are subject to any effects on your host body, though you do not take damage that it takes. Your body is still dying, so it continues to take damage and make death saving throws as normal. If your body dies, you die. If your host body dies, you can project



your mind into the body of another willing ally within 10 squares of your current host. You return to your body when it is no longer dying or dead.

While inhabiting your ally's body, you occupy his or her space but otherwise continue to act as yourself, using the same initiative and with access to your class features, powers, skills, feats, power points, and so forth. You use your own attack bonuses, skill bonuses, damage bonuses, and so on, but you must still meet any requirements (but not prerequisites) of your powers or feats. If you have a power that deals [W] damage, the weapon your host body is wielding determines that value. You continue to receive the benefit of your magic item enhancement bonuses and properties, but you cannot use those items' powers.

Psionic Reservoir (30th level): The first time you start your turn without any power points during an encounter, you regain 6 power points.

MIND LORD OF THE ORDER POWER

Synchronous Minds

Mind Lord of the Order Utility 26

You cast out your thoughts, allowing your allies to communicate and act more efficiently.

Daily ♦ Psionic

Minor Action

Close burst 10

Target: Each ally in burst

Effect: Each target can immediately take a standard action as an opportunity action. You decide the order in which the targets act. In addition, until the end of the encounter, you and each target gain telepathy 10 when communicating with allies.



PYREEN

You demand nothing less than the destruction of the sorcerer-kings and a state of eternal peace.

Prerequisite: 21st level, any primal class or primal theme

The ancient, long-lived pyreens embody all life on Athas. In their features are the traits of every race. Many of them share ancestry with the primal spirits. From your early years, you felt a kinship with these rare and elusive creatures. As time went on, and your primal power grew, you became one of them.

As a powerful primal protector, you guard a vast region of land. The Forest Ridge or the Estuary of the Forked Tongue might be under your personal protection. The spirits of the land listen to your counsel and regard you as one of them. They exalt you, because you have the ability to restore the world to verdant glory.

As a pyreen, you can never die from old age. This quality gives you a perspective others lack: The things worth fighting for in the world are those that last. Though you might assist people in fixing what you regard as trivial plights, you rarely put your life in jeopardy for their sakes. You know that a much greater destiny awaits you.

IMMORTALITY

Your destiny is fulfilled as the sorcerer-kings fall. The natural forces grow strong once again, and the tyranny of defiling and slavery crumbles. You have lived up to your purpose as a beacon of hope and a sworn enemy of Athas's dark rulers.

Peace-Bringer: You contributed to the fall of the sorcerer-kings—a triumph that will allow the world to slowly renew itself. Now, your task is to serve as a caretaker for the world as it returns to its past glory. You plant the seeds and tend the shoots that will someday spread to cover Tyr and the lands beyond. While you watch over the burgeoning groves of Athas, you also keep an eye on the new civilizations that spring up from the wreckage of the city-states. You will help them move away from the dark magic and cruel practices of the past.

PYREEN FEATURES

Child of All Races (21st level): You speak Supernatural, and you can speak and understand all languages. Whenever you make a Diplomacy check or an Insight check, you roll twice and use either result. In addition, you no longer age.

Strong in Mind and Spirit (21st level): Choose two ability scores from among Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma. Each of those ability scores increases by 2.

Resurgent Spirit (24th level): Once per day when you drop to 0 hit points or fewer, at the start of your next turn you regain hit points equal to your bloodied value and become insubstantial until the end of the encounter.

Pyreen's Restoration (30th level): Whenever any ally starts his or her turn adjacent to you, he or she can make a saving throw against one effect that a save can end. If the ally fails this saving throw, you can transfer that effect to yourself as a free action. The effect you take cannot be transferred to any of your allies.

PYREEN POWER

Rejuvenate the Land

Pyreen Utility 26

A wave of primal magic spreads outward from you, wiping away the scourge of defiling magic and healing your allies.

Daily ♦ Healing, Primal, Zone

Minor Action **Close burst 5**

Target: Each ally in burst

Effect: Each target can choose to lose one or two healing surges. For each healing surge lost in this manner, one target regains hit points as though he or she had spent a healing surge. In addition, each target can make a saving throw against one effect on him or her that a save can end.

The burst creates a zone that lasts until the end of your next turn. The zone is difficult terrain for your enemies. Any ally that ends his or her turn within the zone regains 10 hit points and gains a +2 power bonus to saving throws until the start of his or her next turn.

Sustain Minor: The zone persists.

NEW FEATS

Most of the feats presented in this section use the same format as those in the *Player's Handbook*. Some feats have your character's theme (see Chapter 3) as a prerequisite. These feats augment or enhance the powers and benefits of your theme. Other feats let characters specialize in weapons or fighting styles specific to Athas.

ARENA FIGHTING FEATS

The city-states across the Tyr Region boast famous arenas where gladiators can find glory and fortune, or swift and hideous deaths. Free gladiators travel between city-states, for each location has its own distinct fighting style to offer.

The arena fighting feats in this book are similar to the arena fighting feats presented in *Dragon* #368. They provide benefits when you use martial at-will attack powers associated with them. The benefit applies to any associated power you know. You can take any number of arena fighting feats, but you can use only one at a time. If you have two arena fighting feats that modify the same power, you must decide which feat applies before you attack with that power. The arena fighting feats note which books their associated powers come from: the *Player's Handbook* (PH), *Martial Power*TM (MP), or *Martial Power 2* (MP2).

FAMILIAR FEATS

Characters who have the Arcane Familiar feat (see the *Arcane Power*TM supplement) can take a familiar feat, provided they meet any other prerequisites.

HEROIC TIER FEATS

Feats in this section are available to characters of any level who meet the prerequisites.

ADAPTABLE NATURE

Prerequisite: Goliath

Benefit: Whenever any creature you can see succeeds on a skill check, you gain a +2 feat bonus to that skill until the end of your next turn.

ADVANTAGEOUS FORMATION

Prerequisite: Dune trader theme, *quick formation* power

Benefit: When one of your allies affected by your *quick formation* shifts adjacent to an enemy, he or she gains combat advantage against that enemy until the end of your next turn.

ARENA-FIGHTER'S RECOVERY

Prerequisite: Fighter, Arena Training class feature

Benefit: When you use your second wind, you gain a bonus to damage rolls with your arena weapons until the end of your next turn. The bonus is equal to your Dexterity modifier.

BRED FOR BATTLE

Prerequisite: Mul

Benefit: You gain a +2 racial bonus to initiative checks. During the first round of an encounter, you gain a +1 bonus to attack rolls and speed.

BRUTISH DISRUPTION

Prerequisite: Con 13, gladiator theme, *disrupting advance* power

Benefit: When you hit a target with your *disrupting advance*, you push the target a number of squares equal to $2 + \text{your Constitution modifier}$, instead of 2 squares.

CAHULAKS EXPERT

Prerequisite: 7th level, proficiency with cahulaks

Benefit: You swap one of your level 6 or higher utility powers for the *drag behind* power.



HEROIC TIER FEATS

Arena Fighting Feats	Prerequisites	Benefit
Criterion of Balic Practice	Any martial class	+1 to Acrobatics and Athletics, enhance certain at-will attack powers
Draji Palatial Practice	Any martial class	+2 to Intimidate checks, enhance certain at-will attack powers
Eldaarich Guarded Practice	Any martial class	+2 to Insight checks, enhance certain at-will attack powers
Gulg Hunter Practice	Any martial class	+3 to climb or jump, enhance certain at-will attack powers
Kalidnay Pairs Practice	Any martial class	+1 to Perception checks, enhance certain at-will attack powers
Nibenay's Glory Practice	Any martial class	+2 to Endurance checks, enhance certain at-will attack powers
Raam's Maw Practice	Any martial class	+2 to Athletics checks, enhance certain at-will attack powers
Tyrian Victory Practice	Any martial class	+2 to Heal checks, enhance certain at-will attack powers
Urikite Staff Practice	Any martial class	+2 to Stealth checks, enhance certain at-will attack powers
Yaramite Giantslayer Practice	Any martial class	+2 to Acrobatics checks, enhance certain at-will attack powers

Arcane Defiling Feats	Prerequisites	Benefit
Defiling Action	Arcane defiling	On action point, use <i>arcane defiling</i> with arcane at-will or encounter power
Theft of Courage	Arcane defiling	Defiled power bestows -2 penalty to defenses

Character Theme Feats	Prerequisites	Benefit
Advantageous Formation	Dune trader, quick formation	Target of <i>quick formation</i> gains combat advantage
Brutish Disruption	Con 13, gladiator, disrupting advance	Push target of <i>disrupting advance</i> extra squares
Concealed Conspirators	Veiled Alliance, excise from sight	Excise from sight makes one extra character invisible
Defender's Friend	Elemental priest, spirit of Athas	Ally marks enemies near your spirit when you dismiss it
Disrupting Shove	Gladiator, disrupting advance	Target of <i>disrupting advance</i> falls prone on a hit
Drag to Death	Wasteland nomad, wasteland fury	Slide the target of <i>wasteland fury</i> and then follow it
Dune's Advantage	Wasteland nomad, wasteland fury	Target of <i>wasteland fury</i> is dazed if you have combat advantage against it
Elemental of Guardianship	Elemental priest, spirit of Athas	Allies near spirit when dismissed gain +2 defenses
Expanded Excision	Veiled Alliance, excise from sight	Excise from sight makes character invisible to all enemies adjacent to target
Fluid Form Schooling	Noble adept, adept's insight	Ally targeted by <i>adept's insight</i> can also shift
Guardian's Mark	Primal guardian	Mark an enemy you hit with a primal guardian attack
Inescapable Poison	Athasian minstrel, poisoned strike	<i>Poisoned strike</i> deals more damage
Lingering Surge	Wilder	Gain combat advantage against enemy when you score critical hit
Mark of Elements	Primal guardian, mark of thunder	Deal cold, fire, or lightning damage with <i>mark of thunder</i>
Mind Barrier Schooling	Noble adept, adept's insight	Ally targeted by <i>adept's insight</i> gains bonus to AC, Will
Persisting Thunder	Primal guardian, mark of thunder	<i>Mark of thunder</i> lasts until save
Quick Defense	Dune trader, quick formation	+2 to defenses for character shifting from <i>quick formation</i>
Stinging Poison	Athasian minstrel, poisoned strike	Target takes -2 to saving throws
Templar's Dazing Fist	Templar, templar's fist	You daze target of <i>templar's fist</i> on a hit
Templar's Tugging Fist	Templar, templar's fist	You slide target of <i>templar's fist</i> on a hit
Wilder Rejuvenation	Wilder	You and adjacent allies gain temporary hp when you score critical hit

Familiar Feat	Other Prerequisites	Benefit
Spirit's Reward	Arcane Familiar	Gain temporary hp if adjacent to familiar and not defiling

Battlemind Feats	Other Prerequisites	Benefit
Kinetic Reel	Wild focus	Pull target of <i>wild focus</i> 2 extra squares
Telekinetic Savant	Wild focus	Increase the forced movement of your battlemind powers by 1

Fighter Feats	Other Prerequisites	Benefit
Arena-Fighter's Recovery	Arena Training	Gain damage bonus with arena weapons after second wind
Extended Arena Training	Arena Training	Gain proficiency and arena training with two extra weapons

Drag Behind

Feat Power

Using your cahulaks, you entangle your enemy and drag the creature behind you as you move across the battlefield.

Encounter ♦ Martial**Move Action****Melee 1****Requirement:** You must be wielding a cahulaks.**Target:** One immobilized or prone creature**Effect:** You move your speed, pulling the target with you.

You do not provoke an opportunity attack from the target for this movement.

CAHULAKS NOVICE**Prerequisite:** 4th level, proficiency with cahulaks**Benefit:** You swap one of your level 3 or higher encounter attack powers for the tripping cahulaks power.**Tripping Cahulaks**

Feat Power

The weighted end of your cahulaks catches your opponent, pulling the enemy closer while you prepare for another attack if it tries to escape.

Encounter ♦ Martial, Weapon**Standard Action****Melee weapon****Requirement:** You must be wielding a cahulaks.**Target:** One creature**Primary Attack:** Strength vs. AC (main end)

Hit: 1[W] + Strength modifier damage, and you pull the target 1 square. Until the start of your next turn, you can make the following secondary attack against the target.

Level 17: 2[W] + Strength modifier damage.

Level 27: 3[W] + Strength modifier damage.

Opportunity Action**Melee 1****Trigger:** The target willingly enters a square that is not adjacent to you while you are wielding a cahulaks.**Secondary Attack:** Strength vs. AC (off-hand end)**Hit:** 1[W] damage, and you knock the target prone.**CAHULAKS SPECIALIST****Prerequisite:** 10th level, proficiency with cahulaks**Benefit:** You swap one of your level 9 or higher daily attack powers for the binding cahulaks power.**Binding Cahulaks**

Feat Power

You spin your cahulaks and hurl it at a distant foe. The weighted cords wrap around the enemy and cause it to fall.

Daily ♦ Martial, Reliable, Weapon**Standard Action****Ranged weapon****Requirement:** You must be wielding a cahulaks.**Target:** One creature**Attack:** Strength vs. Reflex (main end)

Hit: 1[W] + 1[W] (off-hand end) + Strength modifier damage, and you knock the target prone. The target is immobilized (save ends).

Level 25: 2[W] + 2[W] (off-hand end) + Strength modifier damage.

CONCEALED CONSPIRATORS**Prerequisite:** Veiled Alliance theme, *excise from sight* power

Benefit: When you hit with your *excise from sight*, you choose one additional character within 10 squares of you. That character also becomes invisible to the target of the power until the end of your next turn.

**CRITERION OF BALIC PRACTICE
[ARENA FIGHTING]****Prerequisite:** Any martial class**Benefit:** You gain a +1 feat bonus to Acrobatics checks and Athletics checks.

When you use a power associated with this feat and hit an enemy with it, you can shift 1 square, or 2 squares if you are an elf. The shift is a free action, and you ignore difficult terrain during it.

Powers: *careful attack* (ranger PH), *cleave* (fighter PH), *piercing strike* (rogue PH), *viper's strike* (warlord PH)

DEFENDER'S FRIEND**Prerequisite:** Elemental priest theme, *spirit of Athas* power

Benefit: When you dismiss the spirit conjured by your *spirit of Athas*, until the end of your next turn each enemy within 2 squares of the dismissed spirit is marked by one ally you can see and who is within 5 squares of the spirit.

DEFILING ACTION**Prerequisite:** Arcane defiling power

Benefit: When you spend an action point to use an at-will or an encounter arcane attack power, you can use your *arcane defiling* with that power.

DISRUPTING SHOVE**Prerequisite:** Gladiator theme, *disrupting advance* power

Benefit: When you hit a target with your *disrupting advance*, the target falls prone at the end of the push.

DRAGON PAW EXPERT**Prerequisite:** 7th level, proficiency with dragon paw

Benefit: You swap one of your level 6 or higher utility powers for the *warding talon* power.

Warding Talon

Feat Power

Enemies trying to find an opening in your defenses face a swift slash from your dragon paw.

Daily ♦ Martial, Stance**Minor Action****Personal**

Effect: You assume the *warding talon* stance. Until the stance ends, while you are wielding a dragon paw, any enemy that hits you with an opportunity attack takes 1[W] damage (off-hand end).

Level 21: 2[W] damage (off-hand end).

HEROIC TIER FEATS CONTINUED

Monk Feat	Other Prerequisites	Benefit
Four-Armed Flurry	Thri-kreen, Flurry of Blows	One target of Flurry of Blows power takes extra damage
Ranger Feat	Other Prerequisites	Benefit
Hunting Thri-Kreen	Thri-kreen, Hunter's Quarry	Deal damage to adjacent foe when using Hunter's Quarry
Shaman Feats	Other Prerequisites	Benefit
Spirit of Vigor	Elemental Spirit	Ally gains temporary hp when you conjure spirit companion
Spirit's Step	Elemental Spirit	Ally adjacent to dismissed spirit can shift
Warlock Feats	Other Prerequisites	Benefit
Mindbite Scorn	Warlock's Curse, sorcerer-king pact	Curse deals 1d6 extra psychic damage
Psionic Scorn	Sorcerer-king pact, 1 or more power points	Regain 1 power point instead of regaining fell might
Scornful Denial	Sorcerer-king pact	Saving throw when you regain your fell might
Any Class	Prerequisites	Benefit
Adaptable Nature	Goliath	+2 to skill when you observe successful skill check
Bred for Battle	Mul	+1 to attacks and speed during first round of encounter, +2 to initiative checks
Cahulaks Novice	4th level, proficiency with cahulaks	Swap encounter attack power for tripping cahulaks
Cahulaks Expert	7th level, proficiency with cahulaks	Swap utility power for drag behind
Cahulaks Specialist	10th level, proficiency with cahulaks	Swap daily attack power for binding cahulaks
Dragon Paw Novice	4th level, proficiency with dragon paw	Swap encounter attack power for dragon rampage
Dragon Paw Expert	7th level, proficiency with dragon paw	Swap utility power for warding talon
Dragon Paw Specialist	10th level, proficiency with dragon paw	Swap daily attack power for furious dragon assault
Dutiful Servant	Goliath	+1 to attack with attacks granted by allies
Flailing Claws	Thri-kreen, thri-kreen claws	Thri-kreen claws power becomes reliable
Gouge Novice	4th level, proficiency with gouge	Swap encounter attack power for gouge sweep
Gouge Expert	7th level, proficiency with gouge	Swap utility power for gouge press
Gouge Specialist	10th level, proficiency with gouge	Swap daily attack power for gouge pin
Gythka Novice	4th level, proficiency with gythka	Swap encounter attack power for gythka claw swoop
Gythka Expert	7th level, proficiency with gythka	Swap utility power for gythka parry
Gythka Specialist	10th level, proficiency with gythka	Swap daily attack power for gythka arc slam
Humanity's Heir	Mul	+1 to one defense, +2 to one skill
Invigorating Toughness	Mul, incredible toughness	Use incredible toughness to gain temporary hp
Legacy of Stone	Mul	+2 to saving throws against poison, reduce forced movement while not bloodied
Lotulis Novice	4th level, proficiency with lotulis	Swap encounter attack power for lotulis flurry
Lotulis Expert	7th level, proficiency with lotulis	Swap utility power for lotulis parry
Lotulis Specialist	10th level, proficiency with lotulis	Swap daily attack power for whirling lotulis
Mul's Stamina	Mul	+1 healing surge, roll twice for Endurance checks
Net Novice	4th level, proficiency with net	Swap encounter attack power for net sweep
Net Expert	7th level, proficiency with net	Swap utility power for net shield
Net Specialist	10th level, proficiency with net	Swap daily attack power for net trap
Stone's Wrath	Goliath, stone's endurance	When damaged after stone's endurance, deal 1d6 extra damage
Whip Novice	4th level, proficiency with whip	Swap encounter attack power for whip snare
Whip Expert	7th level, proficiency with whip	Swap utility power for whip crack
Whip Specialist	10th level, proficiency with whip	Swap daily attack power for entangling whip
Wild Talent Master	-	Gain three wild talents

DRAGON PAW NOVICE

Prerequisite: 4th level, proficiency with dragon paw

Benefit: You swap one of your level 3 or higher encounter attack powers for the *dragon rampage* power.

Dragon Rampage

Feat Power

The enemy might have you surrounded, but a few quick strikes from your dragon paw deter foes from remaining close.

Encounter ♦ Martial, Weapon

Standard Action Melee weapon

Requirement: You must be wielding a dragon paw.

Primary Target: One creature

Primary Attack: Strength vs. AC (main end)

Hit: 1[W] + Strength modifier damage.

Level 17: 2[W] + Strength modifier damage.

Level 27: 3[W] + Strength modifier damage.

Effect: Make a secondary attack.

Secondary Target: One or two creatures other than the primary target

Secondary Attack: Strength vs. AC (off-hand end)

Hit: 1[W] + Strength modifier damage, or 2[W] + Strength modifier if you target only one creature with the secondary attack.

DRAGON PAW SPECIALIST

Prerequisite: 10th level, proficiency with dragon paw

Benefit: You swap one of your level 9 or higher daily attack powers for the *furious dragon assault* power.

Furious Dragon Assault

Feat Power

You lash out your dragon paw and deliver a swift, punishing strike against a single enemy before turning to other foes.

Daily ♦ Martial, Weapon

Standard Action Melee weapon

Requirement: You must be wielding a dragon paw.

Primary Target: One creature

Primary Attack: Strength vs. AC (main end)

Hit: 3[W] + Strength modifier damage, and you slide the target 1 square.

Level 25: 4[W] + Strength modifier damage.

Effect: Make a secondary attack that is a close burst 1.

Secondary Target: Each enemy you can see in burst other than the primary target

Secondary Attack: Strength vs. AC (off-hand end)

Hit: 1[W] + Strength modifier damage, and you push the secondary target 1 square and knock it prone.

Level 25: 2[W] + Strength modifier damage.

Miss: Half damage.

DRAG TO DEATH

Prerequisite: Wasteland nomad theme, wasteland fury power

Benefit: When you hit with your *wasteland fury*, after the attack you can slide the target 2 squares to a square that is not adjacent to one of your allies. You can then shift 3 squares to a square adjacent to the target.

DRAJI PALATIAL PRACTICE

[ARENA FIGHTING]

Prerequisite: Any martial class, trained in Intimidate

Benefit: You gain a +2 feat bonus to Intimidate checks.

When you use a power associated with this feat, the target takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls until the end of your next turn.

Powers: circling strike (ranger MP), deft strike (rogue PH), furious smash (warlord PH), sure strike (fighter PH)

DUNE'S ADVANTAGE

Prerequisite: Wasteland nomad theme, wasteland fury power

Benefit: When you hit a target granting combat advantage to you with your *wasteland fury*, the target is dazed until the end of your next turn.

DUTIFUL SERVANT

Prerequisite: Goliath

Benefit: You gain a +1 bonus to attack rolls on attacks granted by your allies' powers.

ELDAARICH GUARDED PRACTICE

[ARENA FIGHTING]

Prerequisite: Any martial class

Benefit: You gain a +2 feat bonus to Insight checks.

When you use a power associated with this feat and hit an enemy with it, you do not grant combat advantage for being flanked until the start of your next turn.

Powers: marauder's rush (ranger MP2), riposte strike (rogue PH), tide of iron (fighter PH), wolf pack tactics (warlord PH)

ELEMENTAL OF GUARDIANSHIP

Prerequisite: Elemental priest theme, *spirit of Athas* power

Benefit: When you dismiss the spirit conjured by your *spirit of Athas*, each ally within 2 squares of the spirit gains a +2 bonus to all defenses until the end of your next turn.

EXPANDED EXCISION

Prerequisite: Veiled Alliance theme, *excise from sight* power

Benefit: When you hit with your *excise from sight*, any character who becomes invisible as a result of the power's effect is also invisible to each enemy adjacent to the target. This invisibility lasts until the end of your next turn.



EXTENDED ARENA TRAINING

Prerequisite: Fighter, Arena Training class feature

Benefit: You gain proficiency with two weapons, which become additional arena weapons for you.

FLAILING CLAWS

Prerequisite: Thri-kreen, *thri-kreen claws* power

Benefit: Your *thri-kreen claws* gains the reliable keyword.

FLUID FORM SCHOOLING

Prerequisite: Noble adept theme, *adept's insight* power

Benefit: When you modify an ally's triggering attack roll, saving throw, or skill check with your *adept's insight*, that ally can shift 2 squares as a free action after that attack roll, saving throw, or skill check is resolved.

FOUR-ARMED FLURRY

Prerequisite: Thri-kreen, monk, Flurry of Blows power

Benefit: When you use your Flurry of Blows, your attack deals 2 extra damage to one of the power's targets.

GOUGE EXPERT

Prerequisite: 7th level, proficiency with gouge

Benefit: You swap one of your level 6 or higher utility powers for the *gouge press* power.

Gouge Press

Feat Power

When an enemy staggers under your gouge assault, you adroitly follow.

Encounter ♦ Martial

Free Action

Personal

Trigger: You hit an enemy with a gouge.

Effect: You shift 3 squares to a square adjacent to the enemy.

GOUGE NOVICE

Prerequisite: 4th level, proficiency with gouge

Benefit: You swap one of your level 3 or higher encounter attack powers for the *gouge sweep* power.

Gouge Sweep

Feat Power

You swing your gouge in an arc, thrusting it at a couple foes to knock them aside.

Encounter ♦ Martial, Weapon

Standard Action Melee weapon

Requirement: You must be wielding a gouge.

Target: One or two creatures

Attack: Strength vs. AC

Hit: 1[W] + Strength modifier damage, and you slide the target 1 square and knock it prone.

Level 17: 2[W] + Strength modifier damage, and you slide the target 2 squares and knock it prone.

Level 27: 3[W] + Strength modifier damage, and you slide the target 3 squares and knock it prone.

GOUGE SPECIALIST

Prerequisite: 10th level, proficiency with gouge

Benefit: You swap one of your level 9 or higher daily attack powers for the *gouge pin* power.

Gouge Pin

Feat Power

With driving force, you push your enemy down and pin it to the ground with your gouge.

Daily ♦ Martial, Weapon

Standard Action Melee weapon

Requirement: You must be wielding a gouge.

Target: One creature

Attack: Strength vs. AC

Hit: 3[W] + Strength modifier damage.

Level 25: 4[W] + Strength modifier damage.

Miss: Half damage.

Effect: You knock the target prone and grab it. Until the grab ends, the target cannot stand up. When you attack any creature other than the target, the grab ends. When you push, pull, or slide the target while it is grabbed by you, the grab does not end as a result of the forced movement, and you can shift your speed to a square adjacent to the target.

GUARDIAN'S MARK

Prerequisite: Primal guardian theme

Benefit: When you hit an enemy with one of your primal guardian attacks, you can mark that enemy until the end of your next turn.

GULG HUNTER PRACTICE [ARENA FIGHTING]

Prerequisite: Any martial class

Benefit: You gain a +3 feat bonus to Athletics checks.

When you use a power associated with this feat and hit an enemy with it while you have concealment, one ally you can see can shift 1 square as an opportunity action.

Powers: footwork lure (fighter MP), gloaming cut (rogue MP2), intuitive strike (warlord MP2), nimble strike (ranger PH)

GYTHKA EXPERT

Prerequisite: 7th level, proficiency with gythka

Benefit: You swap one of your level 6 or higher utility powers for the *gythka parry* power.

Gythka Parry

Feat Power

After delivering a solid blow, you move to a defensive position and adjust your grip to place your gythka between yourself and your enemy.

Encounter ♦ Martial

Free Action **Personal**

Trigger: You hit an enemy with a gythka.

Effect: You shift half your speed and gain a +2 power bonus to AC and Reflex against the triggering enemy until the end of your next turn.

GYTHKA NOVICE

Prerequisite: 4th level, proficiency with gythka

Benefit: You swap one of your level 3 or higher encounter attack powers for the *gythka claw swoop* power.

Gythka Claw Swoop

Feat Power

Using the off-hand end of your gythka as a distraction, you swipe at your enemy and then dart around to deliver a more decisive blow with the main end.

Encounter ♦ Martial, Weapon

Standard Action **Melee weapon**

Requirement: You must be wielding a gythka.

Target: One creature

Primary Attack: Strength vs. AC (off-hand end)

Hit: 1[W] + Strength modifier damage, and the target grants combat advantage to you until the end of your turn.

Effect: Make a secondary attack against the target.

Secondary Attack: Strength vs. AC (main end)

Hit: 1[W] + Strength modifier damage.

Level 17: 2[W] + Strength modifier damage (main end).

Level 27: 3[W] + Strength modifier damage (main end).

Effect: Before or after the secondary attack, you shift half your speed.

GYTHKA SPECIALIST

Prerequisite: 10th level, proficiency with gythka

Benefit: You swap one of your level 9 or higher daily attack powers for the *gythka arc slam* power.

Gythka Arc Slam

Feat Power

You punch your gythka into your enemy, causing it to double over in pain. You then heft the weapon up, ready to bring it crashing down if your foe tries to stand.

Daily ♦ Martial, Reliable, Weapon

Standard Action **Melee weapon**

Requirement: You must be wielding a gythka.

Target: One creature

Primary Attack: Strength vs. AC (main end)

Hit: 2[W] + Strength modifier damage. You slide the target 3 squares to a square adjacent to you and knock it prone. Until the end of your next turn, you can make the following secondary attack against the target.

Level 25: 3[W] + Strength modifier damage.

Immediate Interrupt **Melee weapon**

Trigger: The target stands up while you are wielding a gythka.

Secondary Attack: Strength vs. AC (off-hand end)

Hit: 1[W] damage, and the target cannot stand up (save ends).

Level 25: 2[W] damage.

HUMANITY'S HEIR

Prerequisite: Mul

Benefit: When you select this feat, choose one skill and one defense other than AC. You gain a +2 racial bonus to the chosen skill and a +1 racial bonus to the chosen defense.

HUNTING THRI-KREEN

Prerequisite: Thri-kreen, ranger, Hunter's Quarry class feature

Benefit: Whenever an enemy adjacent to you takes damage from your Hunter's Quarry, you can deal 2 damage to one other enemy adjacent to you. This damage increases to 3 at 11th level and 4 at 21st level.

INESCAPABLE POISON

Prerequisite: Athasian minstrel theme, poisoned strike power

Benefit: Your poisoned strike deals 2 extra poison damage. In addition, when you miss a target with your poisoned strike, that target takes 7 poison damage.

INVIGORATING TOUGHNESS

Prerequisite: Mul, incredible toughness racial power

Benefit: You can expend your incredible toughness as a free action during your turn to gain temporary hit points equal to 5 + your Constitution modifier. If you do so, you don't gain the normal effect of incredible toughness.

KALIDNAY PAIRS PRACTICE [ARENA FIGHTING]

Prerequisite: Any martial class

Benefit: You gain a +1 feat bonus to Perception checks.

When you use a power associated with this feat and hit an enemy with it, one of your allies adjacent to that enemy gains a +1 bonus to AC until the start of your next turn.

Powers: *brash strike* (fighter MP), *furious smash* (warlord PH), *preparatory strike* (rogue MP2), *strike and fade* (ranger MP2)

KINETIC REEL

Prerequisite: Battlemind, *wild focus* power

Benefit: When you use your *wild focus*, you pull the target of the power 2 additional squares.

LEGACY OF STONE

Prerequisite: Mul

Benefit: You gain a +2 racial bonus to saving throws against poison.

When an attack pulls, pushes, or slides you while you are not bloodied, you can ignore 1 square of the forced movement.

LINGERING SURGE

Prerequisite: Wilder theme

Benefit: When you score a critical hit against an enemy, you gain combat advantage against that enemy until the end of your next turn.

LOTULIS EXPERT

Prerequisite: 7th level, proficiency with lotulis

Benefit: You swap one of your level 6 or higher utility powers for the *lotulis parry* power.

Lotulis Parry

Feat Power

Spinning your lotulis, you ward off an incoming attack.

Encounter ♦ Martial

Immediate Interrupt Personal

Trigger: You are hit by a melee or a ranged attack while wielding a lotulis.

Effect: You gain a bonus to AC and Reflex against the triggering attack equal to your Wisdom modifier.

LOTULIS NOVICE

Prerequisite: 4th level, proficiency with lotulis

Benefit: You swap one of your level 3 or higher encounter attack powers for the *lotulis flurry* power.

Lotulis Flurry

Feat Power

You strike an enemy with your lotulis, bashing the foe aside or else using the distraction to move into position to attack another foe.

Encounter ♦ Martial, Weapon

Standard Action Melee weapon

Requirement: You must be wielding a lotulis.

Primary Target: One creature

Primary Attack: Strength or Dexterity vs. AC (main hand)

Hit: $2[W] +$ Strength or Dexterity modifier damage, and you slide the primary target 1 square. You can forgo the secondary attack to instead slide the primary target 5 squares.

Level 17: $3[W] +$ Strength or Dexterity modifier damage.

Level 27: $4[W] +$ Strength or Dexterity modifier damage.

Effect: After the primary attack, you shift 1 square and make a secondary attack (if desired).

Secondary Target: One creature other than the primary target

Secondary Attack: Strength or Dexterity vs. AC (off-hand)

Hit: $2[W] +$ Strength or Dexterity modifier damage, and you slide the secondary target 1 square.

LOTULIS SPECIALIST

Prerequisite: 10th level, proficiency with lotulis

Benefit: You swap one of your level 9 or higher daily attack powers for the *whirling lotulis* power.

Whirling Lotulis

Feat Power

You attack with your lotulis, giving you room to dash between your opponents.

Daily ♦ Martial, Weapon

Standard Action Close burst 1

Requirement: You must be wielding a lotulis.

Target: Each enemy you can see in burst

Attack: Strength or Dexterity vs. AC

Hit: $2[W] +$ Strength or Dexterity modifier damage.

Level 25: $3[W] +$ Strength or Dexterity modifier damage.

Miss: Half damage.

Effect: After the attack, you shift half your speed. During this movement, you can move through enemies' spaces.

MARK OF ELEMENTS

Prerequisite: Primal guardian theme, *mark of thunder* power

Benefit: When you use your *mark of thunder*, you can choose to deal cold, fire, or lightning damage instead of thunder damage.

MIND BARRIER SCHOOLING

Prerequisite: Noble adept theme, adept's insight power

Benefit: When you modify an ally's triggering attack roll, saving throw, or skill check with your adept's *insight*, that ally gains a +2 bonus to AC and Will until the end of his or her next turn.

MINDBITE SCORN

Prerequisite: Warlock, Warlock's Curse class feature, sorcerer-king pact

Benefit: Your Warlock's Curse extra damage increases by 1d6, and this additional damage is psychic.



MUL'S STAMINA

Prerequisite: Mul

Benefit: Your number of healing surges increases by one. In addition, when you make an Endurance check, you roll twice and use either result.

NET EXPERT

Prerequisite: 7th level, proficiency with net

Benefit: You swap one of your level 6 or higher utility powers for the *net shield* power.

Net Shield

Feat Power

Using your net, you tangle up the weapons or appendages of any creature that attempts to attack you.

Encounter ♦ Martial

Minor Action **Personal**

Requirement: You must be wielding a net.

Effect: Until the start of your next turn, you gain a +2 power bonus to AC and Reflex.

NET NOVICE

Prerequisite: 4th level, proficiency with net

Benefit: You swap one of your level 3 or higher encounter attack powers for the *net sweep* power.

Net Sweep

Feat Power

You sweep your net around you, smashing foes with the net's weights and batting aside their attacks.

Encounter ♦ Martial, Weapon

Standard Action **Close burst 1**

Requirement: You must be wielding a net and use it to attack with this power.

Target: Each enemy you can see in burst

Attack: Strength vs. Fortitude

Hit: $1[W] +$ Strength modifier damage, and the target is slowed and takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls until the end of your next turn.

Level 17: $2[W] +$ Strength modifier damage.

Level 27: $3[W] +$ Strength modifier damage.

NET SPECIALIST

Prerequisite: 10th level, proficiency with net

Benefit: You swap one of your level 9 or higher daily attack powers for the *net trap* power.

Net Trap

Feat Power

You fling your net so that it falls over your enemy. While you maintain a hold on its cord, the net tightens around your foe.

Daily ♦ Martial, Weapon

Standard Action **Melee or Ranged weapon**

Requirement: You must be wielding a net and use it to attack with this power.

Target: One creature

Attack: Strength vs. Reflex

Hit: $2[W] +$ Strength modifier damage, and the target is grabbed. Until the grab ends, the target takes a -5 penalty to attack rolls and attempts to escape the grab. In addition, until the grab ends, you cannot attack with your net. The grab uses the net's long range (normally 5 squares) in place of your melee reach.

Level 25: $4[W] +$ Strength modifier damage.

Miss: Half damage, and the target is immobilized until the end of your next turn.

NIBENAY'S GLORY PRACTICE

[ARENA FIGHTING]

Prerequisite: Any martial class

Benefit: You gain a +2 feat bonus to Endurance checks.

Once per encounter, when you use a power associated with this feat and hit an enemy with it, your next attack against that enemy before the end of your next turn gains combat advantage.

Powers: *brash assault* (warlord MP), *deft strike* (rogue PH), *reaping strike* (fighter PH), *slash and sting* (ranger MP2)

PERSISTING THUNDER

Prerequisite: Primal guardian theme, *mark of thunder* power

Benefit: Replace the effect of your *mark of thunder* with the following effect: You mark the target (save ends). Until the mark ends, if the target makes an attack that does not include you, it takes 5 thunder damage.

PSIONIC SCORN

Prerequisite: Warlock, sorcerer-king pact, 1 or more power points

Benefit: When a nonminion enemy cursed by you drops to 0 hit points, you can regain 1 power point instead of regaining your fell might.

QUICK DEFENSE

Prerequisite: Dune trader theme, *quick formation* power

Benefit: When you use your *quick formation*, any character who shifts as a result of the power gains a +2 bonus to all defenses until the end of your next turn.

RAAM'S MAW PRACTICE

[ARENA FIGHTING]

Prerequisite: Any martial class

Benefit: You gain a +2 feat bonus to Athletics checks.

When you use a power associated with this feat and hit an enemy with it, you can push that enemy 1 square.

Powers: *careful attack* (ranger PH), *paint the bull's-eye* (warlord MP2), *piercing strike* (rogue PH), *threatening rush* (fighter MP2)

SCORNFUL DENIAL

Prerequisite: Warlock, sorcerer-king pact

Benefit: When you regain your fell might, you can make a saving throw against an effect that a save can end.

SPIRIT OF VIGOR

Prerequisite: Shaman, Elemental Spirit class feature

Benefit: When you use *call spirit companion* as a minor action, one ally adjacent to your spirit companion when it appears gains temporary hit points equal to your Intelligence modifier.

SPIRIT'S REWARD [FAMILIAR]

Prerequisite: Arcane Familiar feat

Benefit: When you use an arcane daily attack power without using *arcane defiling*, you or one ally adjacent to your familiar gains 5 temporary hit points. These temporary hit points increase to 10 at 11th level and 15 at 21st level.

SPIRIT'S STEP

Prerequisite: Shaman, Elemental Spirit class feature

Benefit: When your spirit companion disappears as a result of one of your shaman attack powers, one ally adjacent to the companion before it disappears can shift 1 square as a free action.

STINGING POISON

Prerequisite: Athasian minstrel theme, *poisoned strike* power

Benefit: If you hit your target with your *poisoned strike*, the target takes a -2 penalty to saving throws until the end of your next turn.

STONE'S WRATH

Prerequisite: Goliath, *stone's endurance* racial power

Benefit: When you take damage from an attack while you are affected by your *stone's endurance*, your next melee attack before the end of your next turn deals 1d6 extra damage.

TELEKINETIC SAVANT

Prerequisite: Battlemind, Wild Focus class feature

Benefit: You increase the distance of forced movement for your battlemind powers by 1 square.

TEMPLAR'S DAZING FIST

Prerequisite: Templar theme, *templar's fist* power

Benefit: When you hit with your *templar's fist*, the target is dazed until the end of your next turn.

TEMPLAR'S TUGGING FIST

Prerequisite: Templar theme, *templar's fist* power

Benefit: When you hit with your *templar's fist*, you can slide the target 3 squares.

THEFT OF COURAGE

Prerequisite: Arcane defiling power

Benefit: When you use an arcane daily attack power with your *arcane defiling*, each enemy you hit with the attack takes a -2 penalty to all defenses (save ends).

TYRIAN VICTORY PRACTICE [ARENA FIGHTING]

Prerequisite: Any martial class

Benefit: You gain a +2 feat bonus to Heal checks. When you use a power associated with this feat and hit an enemy with it, you gain a +2 bonus to the next saving throw you make before the start of your next turn.

Powers: *crushing surge* (fighter MP), *disheartening strike* (rogue MP), *marauder's rush* (ranger MP2), *opening shove* (warlord MP)

URIKITE STAFF PRACTICE [ARENA FIGHTING]

Prerequisite: Any martial class

Benefit: You gain a +2 feat bonus to Stealth checks.

When you use a power associated with this feat and hit an enemy with it, the next attack that hits that enemy before the end of your next turn deals 3 extra damage.

Powers: *grappling strike* (fighter MP2), *hit and run* (ranger PH), *riposte strike* (rogue PH), *viper's strike* (warlord PH)

WHIP EXPERT

Prerequisite: 7th level, proficiency with whip

Benefit: You swap one of your level 6 or higher utility powers for the *whip crack* power.

Whip Crack

Feat Power

You snap your whip, warning your enemy not to move carelessly while near you.

Encounter ♦ **Martial**

Minor Action **Personal**

Requirement: You must be wielding a whip.

Effect: Until the start of your next turn, you can make opportunity attacks using your whip against enemies within 2 squares of you.

WHIP NOVICE

Prerequisite: 4th level, proficiency with whip

Benefit: You swap one of your level 3 or higher encounter attack powers for the *whip snare* power.

Whip Snare

Feat Power

With a deft flick of the wrist, you coil your whip around your foe's limb, tripping that creature or yanking it toward you.

Encounter ♦ Martial, Weapon

Standard Action **Melee weapon**

Requirement: You must be wielding a whip and use it to attack with this power.

Target: One creature

Attack: Dexterity vs. Reflex

Hit: 3[W] + Dexterity modifier damage, and either you knock the target prone or you pull it 1 square.

Level 17: 4[W] + Dexterity modifier damage.

Level 27: 6[W] + Dexterity modifier damage.

WHIP SPECIALIST

Prerequisite: 10th level, proficiency with whip

Benefit: You swap one of your level 9 or higher daily attack powers for the entangling whip power.

Entangling Whip

Feat Power

Your whip is like an extension of you, coiling around your enemy so you can drag that foe wherever you like.

Daily ♦ Martial, Weapon

Standard Action **Melee weapon**

Requirement: You must be wielding a whip and use it to attack with this power.

Target: One creature

Attack: Dexterity vs. Reflex

Hit: 2[W] + Dexterity modifier damage

Level 25: 3[W] + Dexterity modifier damage.

Effect: You grab the target and knock it prone. Until the grab ends, the target takes a -5 penalty to attempts to escape the grab. In addition, until the grab ends, you can pull the target 1 square as a minor action, but you cannot attack with your whip.

WILD TALENT MASTER

Benefit: You gain three wild talent powers (see page 81).

WILDER REJUVENATION

Prerequisite: Wilder theme

Benefit: When you score a critical hit, you and each ally adjacent to you gain temporary hit points equal to your primary ability modifier.

YARAMITE GIANTSLAYER PRACTICE [ARENA FIGHTING]

Prerequisite: Any martial class

Benefit: You gain a +2 feat bonus to Acrobatics checks.

When you use a power associated with this feat and hit an enemy that is larger than you with it, you can shift 1 square to a square adjacent to the enemy as a minor action until the end of your turn.

Powers: acrobatic assault (rogue MP2), dual strike (fighter MP), predator's strike (ranger MP), wolf pack tactics (warlord PH)

PARAGON TIER FEATS

Feats in this section are available to characters of 11th level or higher who meet the feats' other prerequisites.

ARENA BATTLE RHYTHM

Prerequisite: 11th level, Dex 13, fighter, Arena Training class feature

Benefit: Whenever you make a melee attack with one of your arena weapons and deal no damage, the target of your attack takes damage equal to your Dexterity modifier.

BENEVOLENT TEMPLAR

Prerequisite: 11th level, templar theme, templar's fist power

Benefit: The ally who gains the bonus to attack rolls provided by the effect of your templar's fist also gains that bonus to damage rolls until the end of his or her next turn.

DEFILER TROOPER

Prerequisite: 11th level

Benefit: Whenever you take damage from an ally's *arcane defiling*, you gain temporary hit points equal to half that damage. You gain these hit points after you take the damage from *arcane defiling*.

DEFILING ADEPT

Prerequisite: 11th level, *arcane defiling* power

Benefit: When you use an *arcane* daily attack power with *arcane defiling*, that attack can score a critical hit on a roll of 19–20. The critical range increases to 18–20 at 21st level.

DEMANDING SPIRITS

Prerequisite: 11th level, primal guardian theme

Benefit: Whenever an enemy marked by you makes an attack that doesn't include you as a target, you can pull that enemy 3 squares as an immediate reaction.

DEPENDABLE EXCISION

Prerequisite: 11th level, Veiled Alliance theme, *excise from sight* power

Benefit: When you miss a target with your *excise from sight*, you become invisible to that target until the end of your next turn.

DEVIOUS OPPORTUNIST

Prerequisite: 11th level, dune trader theme, *quick formation* power

Benefit: When you hit a target granting combat advantage to you with your *quick formation*, the attack deals 1[W] extra damage.

PARAGON TIER FEATS

Arcane Defiling Feats	Prerequisites	Benefit
Defiling Adept	<i>Arcane defiling</i>	Increase critical range on defiled powers
Victim's Defilement	<i>Arcane defiling</i>	Defiled powers deal extra damage
Character Theme Feats	Prerequisites	Benefit
Benevolent Templar	<i>Templar, templar's fist</i>	Ally gains bonus to damage rolls
Demanding Spirits	<i>Primal guardian</i>	Pull marked enemy when it attacks ally
Dependable Excision	<i>Veiled Alliance, excise from sight</i>	Target of <i>excise from sight</i> treats you as invisible on miss
Devious Opportunist	<i>Dune trader, quick formation</i>	+1[W] damage with combat advantage on <i>quick formation</i>
Distracting Poison	<i>Athasian minstrel, poisoned strike</i>	Enemies hit by <i>poisoned strike</i> grant combat advantage to you
Endurance in Solitude	<i>Wasteland nomad</i>	Gain additional hp when using second wind while alone
Enhanced Psychic Surge	<i>Wilder, psychic surge</i>	Extend crit range of <i>psychic surge</i> on a hit
Thrill of the Kill	<i>Gladiator</i>	Bloody or kill enemy and expend second wind to make a saving throw
Vanquishing Noble	<i>Noble adept, adept's insight</i>	<i>Adept's insight</i> grants higher benefit to triggering roll
Warding Elemental	<i>Elemental priest, spirit of Athas</i>	Allies near spirit gain resist 5 to all damage
Battlemind Feat	Other Prerequisites	Benefit
Thundering Force	<i>Wild focus</i>	Psionic force powers can also deal thunder damage
Fighter Feat	Other Prerequisites	Benefit
Arena Battle Rhythm	Dex 13, Arena Training	Dex modifier damage when you deal no damage using arena weapon
Shaman Feat	Other Prerequisites	Benefit
Elemental Spirit Adept	<i>Elemental Spirit</i>	You and allies gain +1 bonus to attacks against enemies adjacent to dismissed spirit companion
Warlock Feat	Other Prerequisites	Benefit
King's Wrath	<i>Sorcerer-king pact</i>	Forgo regaining fell might to deal damage to another creature
Any Class	Other Prerequisites	Benefit
Defiler Trooper	—	Gain temporary hit points when affected by <i>arcane defiling</i>
Psionic Defiling	One or more psionic daily attack powers	Use <i>arcane defiling</i> with psionic daily attack powers
Sturdy Plating	Thri-kreen	Gain resist 2 to all damage while bloodied

DISTRACTING POISON

Prerequisite: 11th level, Athasian minstrel theme, *poisoned strike* power

Benefit: When you hit a target with your *poisoned strike*, that target grants combat advantage to you (save ends).

ELEMENTAL SPIRIT ADEPT

Prerequisite: 11th level, shaman, Elemental Spirit class feature

Benefit: When your spirit companion disappears as a result of one of your shaman attack powers, you and your allies gain a +1 bonus to attack rolls against any enemy that was adjacent to the spirit. The bonus lasts until the end of your next turn.

ENDURANCE IN SOLITUDE

Prerequisite: 11th level, wasteland nomad theme

Benefit: When you use your second wind while no allies are adjacent to you, you regain additional hit points equal to 5 + your primary ability modifier.

ENHANCED PSYCHIC SURGE

Prerequisite: 11th level, wilder theme, *psychic surge* power

Benefit: When you hit with your *psychic surge*, your attacks against the target before the end of your next turn can score a critical hit on a roll of 16-20.

EPIC TIER FEATS

Arcane Defiling Feats	Prerequisites	Benefit
Arcane Leech	Arcane defiling	Defiled power prevents enemies from healing and restores hp to you
Defiler's Rejuvenation	Arcane defiling, 1 or more power points	Regain power points when arcane defiling harms allies
Character Theme Feat	Prerequisites	Benefit
Keep Them Close	Gladiator	Enemies you mark are also slowed
Any Class	Prerequisites	Benefit
Inexhaustible Resources	Mul	Gain temporary hp instead of healing with second wind

KING'S WRATH

Prerequisite: 11th level, warlock, sorcerer-king pact

Benefit: Whenever a nonminion creature cursed by you drops to 0 hit points, you can use a free action to forgo regaining your fell might and instead deal psychic damage to one enemy within 5 squares of the creature that dropped to 0 hit points. The damage equals your Charisma or Constitution modifier.

PSIONIC DEFILING

Prerequisite: 11th level, at least one psionic daily attack power

Benefit: You gain the *arcane defiling* power and can use it with psionic daily attack powers.

STURDY PLATING

Prerequisite: 11th level, thri-kreen

Benefit: While you are bloodied, you gain resist 2 to all damage.

THRILL OF THE KILL

Prerequisite: 11th level, gladiator theme

Benefit: Whenever you bloody an enemy or reduce an enemy to 0 hit points, you can use a free action to expend your second wind. If you do, you do not gain the benefit of your second wind but can instead make a saving throw against an effect that a save can end.

THUNDERING FORCE

Prerequisite: 11th level, battlemind, *wild focus* power

Benefit: When you use a psionic force power, you can choose to have that power deal thunder damage in addition to force damage.

VANQUISHING NOBLE

Prerequisite: 11th level, noble adept theme, *adept's insight* power

Benefit: When you modify an ally's triggering attack roll, saving throw, or skill check with your *adept's insight*, you add 2 to the triggering roll (instead of 1) if *adept's insight* is unaugmented, or add 1d6+1 to the triggering roll (instead of 1d4+1) if *adept's insight* is augmented.

VICTIM'S DEFILEMENT

Prerequisite: 11th level, *arcane defiling* power

Benefit: When you use an *arcane defiling* daily attack power with your *arcane defiling*, each target you hit with the attack takes 4 extra damage. This damage increases to 6 at 21st level.

WARDING ELEMENTAL

Prerequisite: 11th level, elemental priest theme, *spirit of Athas* power

Benefit: Your allies have resist 5 to all damage while within 2 squares of the spirit conjured by your *spirit of Athas*.

EPIC TIER FEATS

Feats in this section are available to characters of 21st level or higher who meet the feats' other prerequisites.

ARCANE LEECH

Prerequisite: 21st level, *arcane defiling* power

Benefit: When you use an *arcane defiling* daily attack power with your *arcane defiling*, each target you hit with the attack cannot regain hit points until the end of your next turn. If you hit at least one target with the attack, you also regain hit points equal to half your healing surge value.

DEFILER'S REJUVENATION

Prerequisite: 21st level, *arcane defiling* power, 1 or more power points

Benefit: When your *arcane defiling* deals damage to one or more of your allies, you regain 2 power points.

INEXHAUSTIBLE RESOURCES

Prerequisite: 21st level, mul

Benefit: When you use your second wind, you can forgo spending a healing surge and regaining hit points to instead gain temporary hit points equal to your healing surge value.

KEEP THEM CLOSE

Prerequisite: 21st level, gladiator theme

Benefit: Any enemy marked by you is also slowed until the mark ends.

RITUALS

Rituals in the DARK SUN setting exist in a limited form. Due to the world's cosmology, some rituals do not work or behave differently. Furthermore, Athasians use rituals that might seem worthless to ritualists of other worlds. This section presents new rituals and discusses ways to adapt existing rituals.

ALTERING EXISTING RITUALS

Some rituals are unsuitable for the DARK SUN setting. A few rituals make life in Athas's harsh environment too forgiving. Others allow travel or communication that is too easy. This section provides an overview of how rituals are harder, less useful, or unavailable on Athas.

Brew Potion and Enchant Magic Item: Water is rare and valuable on Athas, so potions and elixirs are made from fruit. When a ritual caster creates a potion, an elixir, an oil, or a similar liquid, the ritual requires edible fruit as a component. Many of the fruits used to make potions and elixirs are grown by nobles in vast orchards. These nobles employ scholars to cultivate the fruit and guards to keep these estates safe.

Controlling Weather: Rituals that create precipitation or fog are unlikely to function except in certain locations, such as the Forest Ridge, the Crescent Forest, and mudflats and salt marshes. Rituals that create wind might cause dust storms in certain terrain.

Divination: Rituals that tap the knowledge of extraplanar entities, such as gods, instead contact beings from the Elemental Chaos or the Gray (page 17). Such creatures are fickle and malicious, so divination is risky. Characters who attempt to perform these rituals should be aware of the risks before undertaking one.

Food and Water: Rituals that produce food and water are unknown on Athas. Such rituals are inappropriate for a DARK SUN game. The people of Athas associate such rituals with divine or arcane magic,

and they regard them as lost knowledge. Rediscovering a ritual such as Traveler's Feast could be the subject of an entire adventure, and its discovery could radically alter the fortunes of a community or a city-state.

Nature: Any ritual that requires the Nature skill might be more difficult in a defiled area. A character should be aware that the ritual might be harder before attempting to perform it. Rituals that affect a large area, such as Control Weather, or those that affect a specific target, such as Animal Messenger, might be possible without added difficulty.

Planar Travel: The focus of a DARK SUN game is Athas, so planar travel should be rare. Attempts to reach the Lands Within the Wind typically fail unless the caster is near a place that allows passage to that realm. The Gray is accessible, but it is considered to be a land where dead and fiendish creatures live, so few go there. Passing through the Gray is the only way to reach the Astral Sea, but such travel is risky. Reaching the Elemental Chaos is still possible. In general, planar travel is associated with arcane magic, so most people consider it evil. As with rituals that create food and water, these rituals should be the subjects of adventures and should be acquired only at the Dungeon Master's discretion.

Religion: Characters can't find rituals that require Religion and relate to the gods, because such rituals don't exist in the DARK SUN setting. If a Dungeon Master wants to make such a ritual available, the ritual can be altered to rely upon the knowledge and power of the sorcerer-kings, using the Arcana skill instead of Religion. These rituals might ordinarily be available only to templars, though adventurers could steal them.

Teleportation Circles: Teleportation is difficult because teleportation circles are rare and jealously guarded. The knowledge of how to create and use teleportation circles is mostly lost or forgotten. Sorcerer-kings control some circles, and a few such sites might exist in ancient citadels or ruined city-states. Rediscovering a teleportation ritual or a teleportation circle could be the subject of an adventure, though such a discovery would make anyone in possession of the knowledge a target of the sorcerer-kings.

SCROLLS

Despite the prevalence of illiteracy on Athas, scrolls and books still exist. However, the sorcerer-kings have outlawed these objects in their territories, so instead many ritualists use Athasian spellshards (page 129).

DUNGEON MASTER APPROVAL

In a DARK SUN campaign, the Dungeon Master should provide oversight of the rituals to which characters have access. A Dungeon Master can use this section to determine whether to allow or how to alter rituals in the DARK SUN setting, rather than providing the players with an exhaustive list of prohibited or permitted rituals. Any player whose character can perform rituals should consult his or her Dungeon Master before taking or using a particular ritual.

RITUAL DESCRIPTIONS

The following section details a few rituals that Athasians have developed to survive in the harsh environment of their world.

CREATE PRIMAL ELEMENT

The primal spirits infuse the element before you, making it harmful to unnatural creatures.

Level: 2

Category: Creation

Time: 10 minutes

Duration: 24 hours

Component Cost: See

primal element below

Market Price: 100 gp

Key Skill: Arcana or Nature
(no check)

You infuse primal energy into a small container of earth, air, or blood. The component cost is based on the level of the primal element you create, which can be up to your level. A primal element sheds light as a candle.

Primal Element

Level 2+

Creatures not of this world suffer the sting of this primal essence.

Lvl 2 25 gp

Lvl 17 2,600 gp

Lvl 7 100 gp

Lvl 22 13,000 gp

Lvl 12 500 gp

Lvl 27 65,000 gp

Alchemical Item

Power (Consumable): Standard Action. Make the following attack against an aberrant, an elemental, a fey, an immortal, or an undead creature: Ranged 3/6; +5 vs. Reflex; 1d8 damage, and the target doesn't benefit from resistances until the end of your next turn.

Level 7: +10 vs. Reflex; 1d8 damage.

Level 12: +15 vs. Reflex; 2d8 damage.

Level 17: +20 vs. Reflex; 2d8 damage.

Level 22: +25 vs. Reflex; 3d8 damage.

Level 27: +30 vs. Reflex; 3d8 damage.

CREATE TREE OF LIFE

Channeling primal forces into a sapling, you produce a magnificent tree in just a short time.

Level: 25

Category: Creation

Time: 1 hour

Duration: Instantaneous

Component Cost: 25,000 gp

Market Price: 200,000 gp

Key Skill: Nature (no check)

You empower a sapling with the mighty primal forces that remain on Athas, transforming it into a tree of life (see the *Dark Sun Creature Catalog*).

LAND WARD

You channel spiritual energy into the area, protecting it against defilers.

Level: 11

Category: Warding

Time: 1 hour

Duration: 24 hours

Component Cost: 500 gp,

plus 2 healing surges

Market Price: 2,600 gp

Key Skill: Nature

You ward the land in a 30-square-by-30 square area, up to 30 squares high. Creatures that attempt to use a power associated with defiling (one that has defile, defiling, or defiler in the name) within the warded area must succeed on an Arcana check against a DC equal to the result of the Nature check you make when performing this ritual. A creature that fails this check spends the action necessary to use the power but does not expend the power.

At the end of the ward's duration, you can spend a healing surge to extend the ward for an additional 24 hours, even if you are not near the ward's area. If the ritual's effect is sustained in this way without interruption for a year and a day, the effect becomes permanent.

REVITALIZE

You infuse the land with primal energy, healing it.

Level: 15

Category: Exploration

Time: 10 minutes

Duration: Instantaneous

Component Cost: 3,000 gp

Market Price: 8,000 gp

Key Skill: Nature

You transform an area of defiled terrain (see *Dark Sun Creature Catalog*, page 134) into normal terrain. The size of the area you transform is determined by the result of your Nature check.

Nature Check Result

Area Transformed

14 or lower

Close burst 1

15-22

Close burst 2

23-30

Close burst 5

31 or higher

Close burst 10

SILT WALK

You tread lightly across even the finest silt without danger of sinking.

Level: 12

Category: Exploration

Time: 10 minutes

Duration: 1 hour

Component Cost: 500 gp

Market Price: 2,600 gp

Key Skill: Nature (no check)

You and up to six of your allies can move on silt as if it were solid ground. Any creature affected by this ritual can end the effect on itself as a free action.

EQUIPMENT

In a world where survival always hangs in the balance, gear can be crucial. As you make your way across the Athasian wilds, your items help to keep thirst, starvation, sand, salt, and the blazing sun at bay. You need a good weapon and effective armor to fight off predators. A hardy mount can shorten your trip or, if you're desperate, serve as extra provisions. In a pinch, the beast might distract a monster, throwing it off your trail—as long as the beast is meatier than you are.

Whatever gear you carry, consider its quality and how it will fare in Athas's unforgiving environment. No one disputes that a metal breastplate is an enormous treasure and formidable protection. If you are forced to spend days traversing the scorching wastes, however, heavy armor can be a deadly burden.

In the wastes, you could uncover objects lost by travelers who failed the desert's tests. More rarely, you might come across remnants of Athas's mysterious past. These marvelous objects, perhaps meant for a gentler time, can be traded for items more suited to the age in which you live. Or, the powers and materials of these relics might be ideal for your needs or quests.

A LACK OF METAL

Athas is nearly bereft of copper, iron, silver, and other metals. Perhaps the destruction of the Red Age ruined the world's store of these ores in the same way that it ravaged the world-girding forests. Maybe these types of metal deposits were mined out centuries ago. Whatever the case, arms and armor crafted from metal appear only as ancient, enchanted heirlooms. They are well beyond the means of all but wealthy nobles or highly successful adventurers.

Most armor and weapons on Athas are made from substitute materials, such as bone, wood, or stone. With regard to cost and characteristics, these items are treated the same as normal equipment described in the *Player's Handbook* and *Adventurer's Vault*. For example, when you purchase a longsword on Athas, you still pay 15 gp, and it still has a +3 proficiency bonus, deals 1d8 damage, and has the versatile property. The blade, however, is formed from something other than steel. The longsword might be made of sharpened, lacquered bone shards carefully fitted into shape, or it might be a wooden blade edged with

MASTERWORK ARMOR PARALLELS

The following lists provide Athasian parallels to the masterwork armors presented in the *Player's Handbook* and *Adventurer's Vault*. These armors are mechanically identical to their traditional counterparts.

CLOTH ARMOR

Githweave armor
Feyweave armor
Mindweave armor
Efreetweave armor
Starweave armor
Mindpatterned armor

ATHASIAN ANALOG

Kestrel feather armor
Aarakocra feather armor
Spidersilk armor
Giantweave armor
Wyrmsilk armor
Dragoncloth armor

CHAINMAIL ARMOR

Forgemail armor
Crysteel armor
Weavemail armor
Spiritmail armor
Pitmail armor

ATHASIAN ANALOG

Obsidianmail armor
Kankmail armor
Cilops carapace armor
Templar mail armor
Kingmail armor

LEATHER ARMOR

Drowmesh armor
Feyleather armor
Snakeskin armor
Anathema armor
Starleather armor
Swordwing armor

ATHASIAN ANALOG

Inix leather armor
Baafrag leather armor
Jhakarskin armor
Ray leather armor
Drake leather armor
Mantle armor

SCALE ARMOR

Drakescale armor
Wyverscale armor
Wyrmscale armor
Stormscale armor
Nagyscale armor
Elderscale armor
Titanscale armor

ATHASIAN ANALOG

Scorpion scale armor
Mekillot scale armor
Inix shell armor
Kreen scale armor
Rampager scale armor
Elemental drake armor
Dragonscale armor

HIDE ARMOR

Earthhide armor
Darkhide armor
Feyhide armor
Stalkerhide armor
Elderhide armor
Voidhide armor

ATHASIAN ANALOG

Tembo hide armor
Kank hide armor
Kirre hide armor
Mekillot hide armor
Roc hide armor
Nightmare hide armor

PLATE ARMOR

Rimefire plate armor
Layered plate armor
Gith plate armor
Warplate armor
Specter plate armor
Legion plate armor
Godplate armor
Tarrasque plate armor

ATHASIAN ANALOG

Baafrag bone armor
Mekillot shell armor
Gith shell armor
Chathrang shell armor
Braxat shell armor
Gaj carapace armor
Drakeplate armor
Braxat lord shell armor

CHAINMAIL ARMOR

Finemail armor
Braidmail armor

ATHASIAN ANALOG

Bonemail armor
Stonemail armor

obsidian. Other than the possibility of breakage if the Dungeon Master chooses to apply an optional rule (see the “Weapon Breakage” sidebar, page 122), the different composite materials are matters of world flavor, not game mechanics.

Among the higher-level magic items, both metal and nonmetal items can be found. Magic metal armor also exists. Such items are of masterwork quality, with a minimum enhancement bonus of +2.

ARMOR

On Athas, an armorer might spend an entire career without accumulating a sufficient quantity of metal to create a suit of armor. Even if a windfall of metal were to be found, the techniques for forging such armor have largely been lost to the ages. Were these challenges overcome and the armor constructed, Athas’s ceaseless heat would leave the crafter with few interested buyers. For these reasons, Athas crafters turn to light materials, such as bone, chitin, bark, and wood, when assembling protective gear.

Cloth Armor: The feathers of avian creatures on Athas, such as the carrion-eating kestrel and the vulturelike aarakocra, are woven into cloth armor to give it masterwork quality. More advanced cloth armor is spun from crystal spider silk, giant hair, or silk wyrm thread.

Leather Armor: The leather armors of Athas are made from a variety of desert creatures. The tougher and more dangerous creatures provide skins for masterwork armor. Domesticated animals such as the inix, the baazrag, and the jhakar produce fine leathers. An armorer set on making more fantastic protective gear, such as that from the skin of a cloud ray, a drake, or a floating mantle, is hard-pressed to assemble the necessary materials.

Hide Armor: Hide armors also are formed from the skins of various desert creatures. Less dangerous beasts such as the tembo and the kank provide materials for lower-level masterwork armors. The most

OPTIONAL RULE: METAL ARMOR AND OVERHEATING

Even if a character is fortunate enough to find a suit of steel plate armor, wearing it in the brutal heat of the Athasian deserts is foolhardy. At the Dungeon Master’s discretion, characters wearing heavy metal armor take a -5 penalty to Endurance checks resulting from heat or stifling heat or any other Endurance checks made to resist the effects of heat.

advanced armors come from the hides of the Athasian roc and the nightmare beast.

Chainmail Armor: Crafting chainmail without metal is challenging. Still, Athasian armorers have managed. They adorn stiff leather jacks with small disks or squares of horn, bone, or wood. The kank and the cilops have hard body parts ideal for the creation of masterwork mail coats. The greatest suits of mail armor are worn by the elite guards of the sorcerer-kings.

Scale Armor: Heavier Athasian masterwork armor is made from horn, scales, and carapaces, such as those found on mekillots or shed by thri-kreen. Advanced masterwork scale armor is created from the tough, thick hides of terrifying rampagers and drakes. The greatest armor of this type is formed from scales shed by the Dragon as it rampages through a region.

Plate Armor: Plate armor is made from giant insect or crustacean chitin, or from the shells of creatures such as chathrangs or rare desert tortoises. Braxats and gaj provide the durable shells used to make mid-level masterwork plate armor. The rarest plate armor is derived from drakes and braxat lords. Armorer drill tiny ventilation holes in chitin-plate armor to make it bearable in all but the hottest weather.

Shields: Like armor, shields rely on wood, chitin, shell, and similar materials for their construction.



WARREN MAHY



1. Dragon paw; 2. Trikal; 3. Carrikal; 4. Chatkcha; 5. Wrist razors; 6. Cahulaks; 7. Alhulak; 8. Gouge;
9. Dejada; 10. Tortoise blade; 11. Lotulis; 12. Gythka

WEAPONS

The weapons of metal-poor Athas feature bone, crystal, obsidian, and wood. These materials change little about the weapon's usefulness. Some Athasian weapons feature the following new properties.

Brutal: A brutal weapon's minimum damage is higher than that of a normal weapon. When rolling the weapon's damage, reroll any die that displays a value equal to or lower than the brutal value given for the weapon. Reroll the die until the value shown exceeds the weapon's brutal value, and then use the new value.

For example, the gouge has the brutal 1 property. If a fighter wielding this weapon hits with *menacing onslaught* (a 2[W] power), the player rolls 2d6 for the weapon damage, rerolling any die result of 1 until the die shows 2 or higher.

Defensive: A defensive weapon grants you a +1 bonus to AC while you wield it in one hand and wield another melee weapon in your other hand. Wielding more than one defensive weapon does not increase this bonus. To gain this benefit, you need not attack with the defensive weapon, but you must be proficient with it.

Stout: A weapon that has the stout property can be treated as a two-handed weapon.

ATHASIAN WEAPONS

Athasian warriors can be proficient with a number of weapons unique to the setting.

Alhulak: This weapon is an unusual flail. A short length of rope separates a four-bladed, hafted grappling hook from the handle.

Cahulaks: This double weapon features two four-bladed, hafted heads separated by a length of rope. The secondary end is light enough to be used as an off-hand weapon. When one end of this weapon is held by the haft, the rope is long enough to grant the other end reach. The entire weapon can be thrown.

Carrikal: This axe has two forward-facing blades carved from the front of a large jawbone, commonly that of a mekillot.

Chatkcha: This throwing wedge, often shaped from crystal or obsidian, is a thri-kreen invention. It returns to a proficient wielder's hand after the ranged attack is resolved.

Dejada: A long, scooped basket fitted to a glove-like bracer, the dejada is used to hurl projectiles. Ammunition can be a fist-sized stone, but the weapon is also used to extend the range of explosive alchemical mixtures.

MELEE WEAPONS

SIMPLE MELEE WEAPONS

One-Handed

Weapon	Prof.	Damage	Range	Price	Weight	Group	Properties
Talid	+2	1d6	—	5 gp	1 lb.	Unarmed	Off-hand
Widow's knife	+3	1d4	5/10	1 gp	1 lb.	Light blade	Off-hand, light thrown
Wrist razors	+3	1d4	—	1 gp	1 lb.	Light blade	Off-hand

MILITARY MELEE WEAPONS

One-Handed

Weapon	Prof.	Damage	Range	Price	Weight	Group	Properties
Alhulak	+3	1d8	—	20 gp	5 lb.	Flail	Versatile
Carrikal	+2	1d8	—	15 gp	6 lb.	Axe	Brutal 2

Two-Handed

Weapon	Prof.	Damage	Range	Price	Weight	Group	Properties
Trikal	+2	1d10	—	25 gp	12 lb.	Axe, polearm	Reach

SUPERIOR MELEE WEAPONS

One-Handed

Weapon	Prof.	Damage	Range	Price	Weight	Group	Properties
Gauntlet axe	+2	1d8	—	25 gp	3 lb.	Axe	Defensive, off-hand
Net	+2	1d6	2/5	20 gp	6 lb	Flail	Heavy thrown, off-hand
Puchik	+3	1d6	—	3 gp	1 lb.	Light blade	Off-hand, high crit
Singing stick	+3	1d6	—	40 gp	2 lb.	Mace	Defensive, off-hand
Tortoise blade ¹	+2	1d6	—	10 gp	7 lb.	Light blade	Off-hand
Whip	+3	1d4	—	1 gp	2 lb.	Flail	Off-hand, reach

Two-Handed

Weapon	Prof.	Damage	Range	Price	Weight	Group	Properties
Cahulaks ² (Off-hand end)	+2	1d8	3/6	25 gp	9 lb.	Flail	Heavy thrown, reach
	+2	1d8				Flail	Off-hand
Dragon paw ² (Off-hand end)	+2	1d8	—	40 gp	10 lb.	Heavy blade	Defensive, stout
	+2	1d6				Light blade	Off-hand
Gouge	+2	2d6	—	30 gp	12 lb.	Axe, spear	Brutal 1
Gythka ² (Off-hand end)	+2	1d8	5/10	25 gp	9 lb.	Spear	Defensive, heavy thrown
	+2	1d8				Spear	Off-hand
Lotulis ² (Off-hand end)	+2	1d10	—	40 gp	9 lb.	Heavy blade	Defensive, stout
	+2	1d8				Heavy blade	Off-hand

1 This weapon can be used as a light shield. See its description.

2 Double weapon.

RANGED WEAPONS

SIMPLE RANGED WEAPONS

One-Handed

Weapon	Prof.	Damage	Range	Price	Weight	Group	Properties
Dejada	+2	1d8	10/20	10 gp	2 lb.	Sling	Load free

MILITARY RANGED WEAPONS

One-Handed

Weapon	Prof.	Damage	Range	Price	Weight	Group	Properties
Chatkcha	+2	1d6	6/12	10 gp	1 lb.	Light blade	Light thrown

Dragon Paw: Short blades attach to either end of this staff. In the center of this double weapon is a guard with a protruding blade perpendicular to the staff. The light, middle blade (which serves as the off-hand end) can be used for quick jabs, ideal for a warrior with a roguish bent.

Gauntlet Axe: This heavy bracer holds two light crescent blades, turning the forearm into an axe while keeping the hand free. The weapon can also serve as a light shield. A gauntlet axe can be enchanted as either an arms slot item or as a magic weapon. When enchanted as a magic weapon, it does not occupy a character's arms slot.

Gouge: This spadelike weapon has a long haft with a handle on the end. The head is a wide, double-edged blade with a stabbing point at the top. Some gouges are fitted with a strap or a harness, making the weapon easier to carry.

Gythka: Each end of this thri-kreen staff has a small, crescent-shaped blade with a centered stabbing tine. The secondary end of this double weapon is light enough to be used as an off-hand weapon. A gythka can be thrown like a javelin.

Lotulis: This short-staffed double weapon sports outward-pointing, barbed crescent blades on each end.

Net: A net is a web of rope or cord fitted with heavy weights.

Puchik: The grip of this weapon is perpendicular to its wide blade. A puchik is treated as a katar.

Singing Stick: The ends of this 2½-foot-long, narrow rod are carved to be slightly wider than the middle. It whistles as it spins in the hands of a proficient user.

Talid: Made from leather, chitin, and bone, this spiked “gladiator’s gauntlet” augments unarmed attacks. A talid can be enchanted as either a hands slot item or as a magic weapon. When enchanted as a magic weapon, it does not occupy a character’s hands slot.

Tortoise Blade: This bony or chitinous plate is affixed with a short blade that points forward from the wielder’s hand. An enchanted tortoise blade can be used as a magic shield or a magic weapon, but not both. When enchanted as a magic weapon, it does not occupy a character’s arms slot. A tortoise blade and a spiked shield are considered to be the same weapon.

Trikal: This polearm projects three blades symmetrically lengthwise from its haft. A trikal is equivalent to a halberd.

Whip: Although a whip is impractical as a weapon in most circumstances, some opponents are prone to underestimating the wielder of a whip, which can lead them to attack rashly or make other mistakes.

Widow’s Knife: Although this weapon originated as a harvesting tool, it has become a favorite in noble courts. The blade is a flat semicircle. The grip can be modified to hold poison. A widow’s knife and a dagger are similar weapons.

Wrist Razors: This weapon consists of three sharp blades that protrude from a sturdy bracer, freeing the wielder’s hand. A shield cannot be worn on the same arm as wrist razors. Wrist razors do not need to be drawn, nor do they need to be sheathed for the wielder to use the hand the razors are on. An enchanted wrist razor occupies the arms slot.

OPTIONAL RULE: WEAPON BREAKAGE

Nonmetal weapons break more easily than metal ones. A broken item is at best an improvised weapon. Damaged magic weapons lose their enhancement, properties, and powers until repaired. The following options simulate the relative fragility of nonmetal weapons, making combat more unpredictable and exciting. Your Dungeon Master will tell you if one of the following optional rules is being used.

Fumbling Breakage: When you roll a natural 1 on an attack roll using a nonmetal weapon, the item breaks. (DM: If you use this rule, you should also use the rules for fixed enhancement bonuses in Chapter 6, which mitigates the effect of this rule.)

Reckless Breakage: When you roll a natural 1 on an attack roll, your weapon has a chance to break. You can accept the result, automatically missing the attack as usual, but keeping your weapon intact. Alternatively, you can reroll. Regardless of the reroll result, a nonmetal weapon breaks once the attack is complete. A metal weapon, however, breaks only if you roll a natural 5 or lower on the reroll. This rule gives you a say in whether a weapon breaks. You can play it safe and accept the errant attack, or you can attempt to avoid a miss by risking your weapon.

DOUBLE WEAPONS

The following rules apply to double weapons.

You must wield a double weapon in two hands.

A Small character cannot wield a double weapon unless the weapon has the small property.

Wielding a double weapon is like wielding a weapon in each hand. In the table, the first line of the double weapon’s entry describes the main end of the weapon, wielded in your main hand. The second line describes the weapon’s off-hand end, wielded in your off-hand. The two ends of a double weapon can have different proficiency bonuses, damage, groups, and properties. The weight and price entries represent the total for the weapon, rather than only one side.

When adding an enchantment that requires a particular weapon type, at least one end of the weapon must match the requirement. For example, a dragon paw could gain the vorpal enchantment, even though only one end meets the requirement of “heavy blade or axe.”

An enchanted double weapon gains all benefits of the enchantment on each end (even if one end would not normally qualify for the enchantment). Nonetheless, the frequency of use of any power possessed by the item does not increase; if you wield a double weapon that has a daily power, you can still use that power only once per day.

ADVENTURING GEAR

The following items are widely available across the Tyr Region.

Desert Clothing: Loose clothing in light colors reflects heat and retains the body's moisture. When wearing desert clothing, you gain a +1 item bonus to Endurance checks against environmental dangers.

Disguise: A disguise consists of a convincing outfit, makeup, and other accoutrements needed to pass oneself off as someone else. A disguise grants a +2 bonus to Bluff checks made to appear as someone else.

Distillation Kit: Desert travelers use distillation kits to extract water from wastes or toxic fluids. The device "cooks" moisture from the materials and collects it in a reservoir. Using a distillation kit for 6 hours produces 1 day's worth of water.

Dowsing Rod: This forked rod can be used to ferret out hidden water reservoirs. It grants a +2 bonus to Nature checks made to forage.

Filter Mask: Affixing this mask over the face allows the wearer to breath normally in adverse conditions, such as during a dust storm.

Fire Kit: A fire kit includes sticks and a small bow. It is used to start a fire.

Rope, Giant Hair: Woven from tough strands of giant hair, this rope is used for making strong cord. Giant hair rope has resist 10 to all damage.

Sun Balm: Travelers value sun balm to ward against the sun's pernicious effect. Sun balm grants a +2 bonus to Endurance checks made to endure heat.

Survival Day: A survival day is an abstract representation of the preparations a traveler must make to navigate the wastelands without risk of exposure. Each survival day includes water, food, proper apparel, and common unguents to ward off sunburn.

ADVENTURING GEAR

Item	Price	Weight
Desert clothing	10 gp	3 lb.
Disguise	10 gp	6 lb.
Distillation kit	50 gp	20 lb.
Dowsing rod	20 gp	5 lb.
Filter mask	1 gp	—
Fire kit	1 gp	—
Rope, giant hair	10 gp	10 lb.
Sun balm	50 gp	1 lb.
Survival day	5 gp	8 lb.

MOUNTS

Mount	Cost (gp)	Speed per Hour	Speed per Day	Normal Load (lb.)	Heavy Load (lb.)	Push/Drag (lb.)
Crodlu	225	4 miles	40 miles	190	380	950
Crodlu, war	1,000	4 miles	40 miles	200	400	1,000
Erdlu	75	4 miles	40 miles	160	320	800
Inix	2,000	3 miles	30 miles	220	440	1,100
Kank	840	4 miles	40 miles	180	360	900
Mekillot	4,000	3½ miles	35 miles	260	500	1,300

FOOD, DRINK, AND SERVICES

Denizens of the Tyr Region gain nourishment wherever they can. Tough cactus meat, tubers, and grains are dietary staples. Exotic beverages made from fermented nectar, animal by-products, and other, less savory substances are also available for more adventurous types.

Broy: Fermented kank nectar, this foul, intoxicating beverage is mixed with herbs to mask its taste.

Interpreter: Local dialects and distinct languages can be insurmountable barriers to travelers. The interpreter offers services as a translator.

Sorcerer-King's Levy: Most city-states demand payment before allowing travelers to enter their gates.

Item	Price
Broy, pitcher	2 cp
Interpreter (per day)	1 sp
Sorcerer-king's levy	2 cp

TRANSPORTATION

Inhospitable barrens cover large portions of Athas. Sturdy mounts and vehicles greatly ease a traveler's journey. If the transportation is swift and comfortable as well, all the better, but such conveyance is rare.

MOUNTS

Athasians have domesticated a variety of mounts. The most common are presented below. More unusual steeds, such as giant ants, spiders, drakes, and wyverns can be found, but not easily or cheaply.

CRODLU

A crodlu is a large, flightless drake with a beak and weak, clawed forelimbs that can be used to manipulate small objects. It is a tough and aggressive hunter in the wild. When trained, it makes an excellent war mount. (For details, see the war crodlu in the *Dark Sun Creature Catalog*.)

ERDLU

The erdlu is a smaller version of the crodlu. Its body is covered in tough scales, and its folded forelimbs sprout useless wings. Hardy and fast, this drakelike creature is a fine riding beast for a Small rider. It is too skittish to be trained for war, however.

Erdlu	Level 1 Skirmisher	
Medium natural beast (mount, reptile)	XP 100	
HP 28; Bloodied 14	Initiative +5	
AC 15, Fortitude 14, Reflex 14, Will 12	Perception +1	
Speed 8		
TRAITS		
Medium Steed		
A Small character can use an erdlu as a mount.		
Escape Sprint		
When an erdlu runs, it gains +4 to speed, instead of +2. The erdlu and its rider don't grant combat advantage when running.		
STANDARD ACTIONS		
(Beak At-Will)		
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +6 vs. AC		
Hit: 1d6 + 3 damage.		
Str 16 (+3)	Dex 16 (+3)	Wis 13 (+1)
Con 12 (+1)	Int 2 (-4)	Cha 8 (-1)
Alignment Unaligned	Languages –	

INIX

An inix, also called a dune behemoth, is a long, low-slung reptile with bony plates on its back. It is strong and spirited. An inix rarely eats anything as large as a humanoid, but it does not shy away from a fight. (For details, see the inix adult in the *Dark Sun Creature Catalog*.)

KANK

Kanks are docile insects that form hives. Each member of the group has a role: food producer, soldier, or the brood queen. The kank soldier can be trained for riding and battle. (For details, see the kank soldier in the *Dark Sun Creature Catalog*.)

MEKILLOT

These massive creatures serve as draft animals given their tremendous pulling strength. They are aggressive, however, and have been known to turn on handlers. (For details, see the mekillot in the *Dark Sun Creature Catalog*.)

VEHICLES

Chariots and wagons are common vehicles in the cities and barrens of Athas. Pulled by mekillots, Gargantuan or larger wagons serve as mobile palaces for the wealthy. Vehicles grant protection from the blistering sun and carry necessary supplies hidden from greedy eyes. Certain specialized conveyances are the only means to cross a given landscape, such as the Sea of Silt.

SAND SKIFF

This light, wedge-shaped vehicle has three wheels and a single sail. Propelled by the wind, sand skiffs make excellent speed in salt flats, stony barrens, sandy wastes, and dry savanna. They can also manage gentle hills. Sand skiffs do not navigate soft sand, boulder fields, steep hills, or thick brush well.

Sand Skiff		
Large vehicle		
HP 80	Space 2 squares by 3 squares	Cost 360 gp
AC 8, Fortitude 12, Reflex 8		
Speed 8		
Pilot	The pilot must sit by the sand skiff's tiller, typically at the rear of the vehicle.	
Load	Six Medium creatures and their gear.	
Out of Control	An out-of-control sand skiff moves forward at half speed. At the Dungeon Master's discretion, it can instead move in the same direction as a strong wind at up to full speed.	
Sails	At the Dungeon Master's discretion, a sand skiff can take a modifier to its speed of -4 to +4 depending on the strength and direction of the wind.	
Special	A sand skiff requires firm, flat, open terrain. Reduce speed by half (or more) if the terrain is steep, soft, or cluttered with obstructions.	
Option: Creature-Drawn	One Large or larger creature can pull a sand skiff when the wind is calm.	

SILT SKIMMER

The typical silt skimmer features a broad hull and outsized wheels. It rides 10 feet above the ground and is powered by two large sails. The vehicle can also be driven slowly, using muscle-powered capstans to rotate its wheels. A silt skimmer is most efficient in flat, open terrain, but it can also make its way through silt or dust sinks up to 15 feet deep.

Silt Skimmer		
Gargantuan vehicle		
HP 400	Space 5 squares by 10 squares	Cost 2,600 gp
AC 2, Fortitude 25, Reflex 2		
Speed 6		
Pilot	The pilot must stand at the skimmer's helm, typically atop the quarterdeck.	
Crew	In addition to the pilot, a silt skimmer requires a crew of three, all of whom use a standard action each round to help control the ship. Reduce the ship's speed by 2 squares for each missing crew member. At speed 0, the skimmer sails out of control.	
Load	Twenty Medium creatures; thirty tons of cargo.	
Out of Control	An out-of-control silt skimmer moves forward at half speed. At the Dungeon Master's discretion, it can instead move in the same direction as a strong wind at up to full speed.	
Decks	A silt skimmer has two decks: an open upper deck and a lower deck for passengers and cargo. It also has a raised quarterdeck for the helm.	
Sails	At the Dungeon Master's discretion, a silt skimmer can take a modifier to its speed of -2 to +2 depending on the strength and direction of the wind.	

MAGIC ITEMS

Adventurers encounter a diversity of magic items on Athas. Not surprisingly, given the unforgiving environment, magic items oriented toward survival are treasured above all others.

ARMOR

The natural materials used to create armor sometimes produce unexpected results when that armor is enchanted.

Scorpion Carapace Armor

Level 4+

The spirit of the scorpion resides in this segmented armor.

Lvl 4	+1	840 gp	Lvl 19	+4	105,000 gp
Lvl 9	+2	4,200 gp	Lvl 24	+5	525,000 gp
Lvl 14	+3	21,000 gp	Lvl 29	+6	2,625,000 gp

Armor: Scale, plate

Enhancement: AC

Property: Creatures that have tremorsense must have line of sight to detect you.

Power (Daily ♦ Poison): Immediate Interrupt. *Trigger:* An enemy adjacent to you willingly moves. *Effect:* Make an attack: Melee 1 (the triggering enemy); Your level + 4 vs. Reflex; *Hit:* 5 poison damage, and the target is immobilized until the end of your next turn.

Level 14 or 19: 10 poison damage.

Level 24 or 29: 15 poison damage.

WEAPONS

Securing provisions is one of the top priorities for those who are about to venture into the Athasian wastes. Sufficiently numerous and potent weapons to protect those supplies are just as important.

Blood Obsidian Weapon

Level 5+

Powerful defiling magic denudes the land and sometimes rends it asunder. When the magma that boils up from these vents cools, it forms veins of obsidian infused with the essence of death.

Lvl 5	+1	1,000 gp	Lvl 20	+4	125,000 gp
Lvl 10	+2	5,000 gp	Lvl 25	+5	625,000 gp
Lvl 15	+3	25,000 gp	Lvl 30	+6	3,125,000 gp

Weapon: Axe, heavy blade, light blade, spear

Enhancement: Attack rolls and damage rolls

Critical: +1d6 necrotic damage per plus

Property: When you use the *arcane defiling* power, you gain a +2 item bonus to the rerolled attack roll.

Power (Daily ♦ Necrotic): Free Action. *Trigger:* You hit an enemy with an attack using this weapon. *Effect:* That enemy takes necrotic damage equal to twice the weapon's enhancement bonus. In addition, you regain the use of your lowest-level arcane encounter attack power.

Carnage Weapon

Level 3+

No amount of time spent cleaning and maintaining this weapon removes the old, ingrained bloodstains. They are evidence of its power and purpose.

Lvl 3	+1	680 gp	Lvl 18	+4	85,000 gp
Lvl 8	+2	3,400 gp	Lvl 23	+5	425,000 gp
Lvl 13	+3	17,000 gp	Lvl 28	+6	2,125,000 gp

Weapon: Axe, heavy blade, mace

Enhancement: Attack rolls and damage rolls

Critical: +1d12 damage per plus

Property: When you roll the maximum result on at least one of this weapon's damage dice, the target takes extra damage equal to twice the weapon's enhancement bonus.

Exsiccating Weapon

Level 4+

Glowing with crimson light, this weapon leeches moisture from the air around you.

Lvl 4	+1	840 gp	Lvl 19	+4	105,000 gp
Lvl 9	+2	4,200 gp	Lvl 24	+5	525,000 gp
Lvl 14	+3	21,000 gp	Lvl 29	+6	2,625,000 gp

Weapon: Any

Enhancement: Attack rolls and damage rolls

Critical: +1d6 fire and necrotic damage per plus

Property: Creatures vulnerable to fire or necrotic damage treat damage from this weapon as being fire and necrotic.

Power (Daily ♦ Fire, Necrotic): Free Action. *Trigger:* You hit an enemy with this weapon. *Effect:* That enemy takes extra fire and necrotic damage equal to twice the weapon's enhancement bonus. It is also dazed until the end of your next turn.

Hidden Weapon

Level 3+

This slender weapon cunningly adopts the characteristics of your garb when stowed.

Lvl 3	+1	680 gp	Lvl 18	+4	85,000 gp
Lvl 8	+2	3,400 gp	Lvl 23	+5	425,000 gp
Lvl 13	+3	17,000 gp	Lvl 28	+6	2,125,000 gp

Weapon: Light blade, mace

Enhancement: Attack rolls and damage rolls

Critical: +1d6 damage per plus

Property: You gain an item bonus to initiative checks equal to the weapon's enhancement bonus.

Power (At-Will): Free Action (1/round). *Effect:* You draw or sheathe this weapon. If you sheathe this weapon, it vanishes, and only you can find and draw it.

SUITABLE MAGIC ITEMS

As with rituals (page 116), certain magic items appropriate for other DUNGEONS & DRAGONS settings undermine the mood and tone of Athas. Magic items that alleviate harsh conditions by controlling the weather or creating food and water—such as an *endless canteen* or *everlasting provisions*—are scarce on Athas. Divine items are rarely found, except perhaps in truly ancient sites. Items related to creatures that are foreign to Athas, such as aquatic humanoids, do not exist. Items composed of metal wholly or in part are infrequent or nonexistent. Consult with your Dungeon Master to determine if any particular item has a level and cost different from normal, or is unavailable.



Jolting Guard Weapon

Level 8+

You deflect the enemy's attack with a deft parry so forceful that it numbs the foe.

Lvl 8	+2	3,400 gp	Lvl 23	+5	425,000 gp
Lvl 13	+3	17,000 gp	Lvl 28	+6	2,125,000 gp
Lvl 18	+4	85,000 gp			

Weapon: Any melee

Enhancement: Attack rolls and damage rolls

Critical: +1d8 damage per plus

Power (Encounter): Opportunity Action. *Trigger:* An enemy misses you with a melee attack. *Effect:* The triggering enemy is weakened until the end of its next turn.

Sandstorm Weapon

Level 8+

The dust trailing from this weapon explodes in a scouring storm when you land a telling blow on an enemy.

Lvl 8	+2	3,400 gp	Lvl 23	+5	425,000 gp
Lvl 13	+3	17,000 gp	Lvl 28	+6	2,125,000 gp
Lvl 18	+4	85,000 gp			

Weapon: Any

Enhancement: Attack rolls and damage rolls

Critical: The target is blinded and takes ongoing damage equal to twice the weapon's enhancement bonus (save ends both).

Property: Whenever you reduce an enemy to 0 hit points using this weapon, you gain concealment until the end of your next turn.

Power (Daily ♦ Zone): Free Action. *Trigger:* You hit an enemy with this weapon. *Effect:* The attack creates a zone in a close burst 2 centered on that enemy. All squares within the zone are heavily obscured to your enemies until the end of the encounter or until you dismiss the zone as a free action.

ORBs

Defilers use orbs to enhance the effect of their debilitating magic.

Orb of Darkest Defiling

Level 8+

When you draw on life energy to power your magic, fiery veins just beneath the surface of this translucent sphere glow and pulse.

Lvl 8	+2	3,400 gp	Lvl 23	+5	425,000 gp
Lvl 13	+3	17,000 gp	Lvl 28	+6	2,125,000 gp
Lvl 18	+4	85,000 gp			

Implement (Orb)

Enhancement: Attack rolls and damage rolls

Critical: +1d6 damage per plus, +1d8 damage per plus when you use a power with *arcane defiling*

Property: Whenever at least one ally takes necrotic damage from your use of *arcane defiling*, you gain temporary hit points equal to twice the orb's enhancement bonus.

Power (Encounter ♦ Necrotic): Free Action. *Trigger:* You use *arcane defiling*. *Effect:* One enemy within 20 squares of you takes necrotic damage equal to half your healing surge value.

RODS

Warlocks forge pacts with all manner of supernatural entities. The powers nearest at hand are Athas's sorcerer-kings. They are no less foul than more otherworldly forces.

Rod of Office

Level 2+

A badge of office and implement of power, this rod is granted to templars by their sorcerer-kings.

Lvl 2	+1	520 gp	Lvl 17	+4	65,000 gp
Lvl 7	+2	2,600 gp	Lvl 22	+5	325,000 gp
Lvl 12	+3	13,000 gp	Lvl 27	+6	1,625,000 gp

Implement (Rod)

Enhancement: Attack rolls and damage rolls

Critical: +1d8 damage per plus

Power (Encounter): Minor Action. You regain the use of your fell might.

Rod of Scathing Scorn

Level 4+

Clutching this blackened bone scepter, you channel life-draining power at your enemy.

Lvl 4	+1	840 gp	Lvl 19	+4	105,000 gp
Lvl 9	+2	4,200 gp	Lvl 24	+5	525,000 gp
Lvl 14	+3	21,000 gp	Lvl 29	+6	2,625,000 gp

Implement (Rod)

Enhancement: Attack rolls and damage rolls

Critical: +1d8 damage per plus

Property: When you spend your fell might on an arcane attack power while using this rod, you gain temporary hit points equal to twice the rod's enhancement bonus.

Power (Daily ♦ Necrotic): Free Action. *Trigger:* You hit an enemy with an arcane attack power using this rod. *Effect:* You spend your fell might to deal ongoing necrotic damage to that enemy equal to twice the rod's enhancement bonus (save ends).

STAFFS

Whether a serviceable walking stick or a resplendent symbol of arcane power, a staff protects as it enhances.

Staff of New Horizons

Level 9+

This weathered wooden staff bears many scars, testimony to its heavy use in far-flung lands.

Lvl 9	+2	4,200 gp	Lvl 24	+5	525,000 gp
Lvl 14	+3	21,000 gp	Lvl 29	+6	2,625,000 gp
Lvl 19	+4	105,000 gp			

Implement (Staff)

Enhancement: Attack rolls and damage rolls

Critical: +1d6 damage per plus, and you teleport the target 1 square per plus

Property: When traveling overland, you and each ally within 5 squares of you gain an item bonus to speed equal to the staff's enhancement bonus. This property does not affect speed in combat.

Power (Daily ♦ Teleportation): Immediate Reaction.

Trigger: You take damage from an attack. **Effect:** You and each ally adjacent to you teleport a number of squares equal to the staff's enhancement bonus.

TOTEMS

Athas's primal spirits have suffered mightily from the widespread ruination of their world. They are merciful and quick to anger. Totems dedicated to them tend toward the fiercer aspects of nature.

Sunfury Totem

Level 5+

Constantly warm to the touch, the bleached bone and crystal of this totem depicts the glaring sun.

Lvl 5	+1	1,000 gp	Lvl 20	+4	125,000 gp
Lvl 10	+2	5,000 gp	Lvl 25	+5	625,000 gp
Lvl 15	+3	25,000 gp	Lvl 30	+6	3,125,000 gp

Implement (Totem)

Enhancement: Attack rolls and damage rolls

Critical: +1d6 radiant and fire damage per plus

Property: When you use a primal attack power that deals radiant or fire damage through this totem, you gain an item bonus to damage rolls equal to the totem's enhancement bonus.

Power (Daily ♦ Fire, Radiant): Free Action. **Trigger:** You hit an enemy with a primal daily attack power using this totem. **Effect:** That enemy is blinded and takes ongoing fire and radiant damage equal to twice the totem's enhancement bonus (save ends both).

Totem of Ashen Fury

Level 7+

After you use this totem, your hand becomes stained with soot, the remnants of a land ruined by defiling magic.

Lvl 7	+2	2,600 gp	Lvl 22	+5	325,000 gp
Lvl 12	+3	13,000 gp	Lvl 27	+6	1,625,000 gp
Lvl 17	+4	65,000 gp			

Implement (Totem)

Enhancement: Attack rolls and damage rolls

Critical: +1d6 damage per plus

Power (Daily ♦ Fire, Zone): Free Action. **Trigger:** You hit an enemy with a primal attack power using this totem. **Effect:** The attack creates a zone in a close burst 1 centered on a square occupied by that enemy. The zone lasts until the end of your next turn. The squares within the zone are heavily obscured, and any creature that starts its turn within the zone takes fire damage equal to 5 + the totem's enhancement bonus.

Totem of the Flensing Sands

Level 10+

When you place this burnished sandstone fetish to your ear, you can hear the sandstorm's distant howl.

Lvl 10	+2	5,000 gp	Lvl 25	+5	625,000 gp
Lvl 15	+3	25,000 gp	Lvl 30	+6	3,125,000 gp
Lvl 20	+4	125,000 gp			

Implement (Totem)

Enhancement: Attack rolls and damage rolls

Critical: +1d6 damage per plus, and you slide the target 1 square per plus

Power (Daily ♦ Teleportation, Zone): Standard Action.

Effect: You create a zone in a close burst 5 centered on a square occupied by an ally within 10 squares of you. The zone lasts until the end of your next turn. You teleport the ally 5 squares. Each creature that starts its turn within the zone takes 5 damage and is slowed until the end of that turn.

Totem of Unleashed Flames

Level 4+

The edges of this bone totem are charred, hinting at the danger inherent in the centrally embedded red jasper.

Lvl 4	+1	840 gp	Lvl 19	+4	105,000 gp
Lvl 9	+2	4,200 gp	Lvl 24	+5	525,000 gp
Lvl 14	+3	21,000 gp	Lvl 29	+6	2,625,000 gp

Implement (Totem)

Enhancement: Attack rolls and damage rolls

Critical: Ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends)

Level 14 or 19: Ongoing 10 fire damage (save ends)

Level 24 or 29: Ongoing 15 fire damage (save ends)

Property: When you use a primal attack power through this totem to deal ongoing fire damage to an enemy, the enemy takes a penalty to saving throws made to end the ongoing damage equal to the totem's enhancement bonus.

FEET SLOT ITEMS

Whether you are navigating Athas's hazardous terrain or staying one step ahead of its fearsome predators, magic footgear can be a boon.

Silt Sandals

Level 5

Dust and stains fall away from the surface and the tread of these simple clogs.

Item Slot: Feet 1,000 gp

Property: You ignore difficult terrain resulting from dirt, sand, or silt. You leave no tracks in such terrain. If you start your turn standing on a solid surface, you can move across a nonsolid horizontal surface (such as silt or water) as if it were solid ground. If you are on a nonsolid surface at the end of your turn, you sink.

Power (Daily): Minor Action. You can move across nonsolid horizontal surfaces (such as silt or water) as if they were normal terrain until the end of the encounter.

Silt Striders

Level 12

Smooth-soled and vented for comfort, these fine shoes are woven from glassy fibers.

Item Slot: Feet 13,000 gp

Property: You gain a +1 item bonus to speed. You ignore difficult terrain resulting from dirt, sand, or silt. You leave no tracks in such terrain. In addition, you can move across and stand on nonsolid horizontal surfaces (such as silt or water) as if they were solid ground.



HEAD SLOT ITEMS

In the wilds of Athas, head coverings that sharpen your senses and protect from both sun and sword are valued.

Alluring Veil

Level 7

This gossamer veil conceals your features and augments your glamour.

Item Slot: Head 2,600 gp

Power (Encounter ♦ Illusion): Minor Action. You assume the appearance of a member of any humanoid race of the same size category as you. Your clothing and equipment alter appearance as you desire. The illusion doesn't alter sound or texture, so a creature listening to you or touching you might detect the illusion.

Power (Daily): Free Action. **Trigger:** You make an attack roll using an encounter or daily attack power that has the charm or illusion keyword and miss. **Effect:** Reroll the attack roll and use either result.

Scorpion Mandible Helm

Level 16

Fashioned using the mouth parts of a giant scorpion, this tremor-sensitive helm expands your awareness.

Item Slot: Head 45,000 gp

Property: You perceive creatures and objects adjacent to you that are in contact with the ground or the same substance (such as silt or a web) as if you had line of sight, without needing to make a Perception check.

Power (Daily): Minor Action. Until the end of your next turn, you gain the benefit of this helm's property for creatures and objects within 10 squares.

NECK SLOT ITEMS

Nearly all the amulets offered in the city-states' markets are baubles promising greater protection than they deliver. An amulet that has potent mystical power is difficult to find, but well worth the effort.

Amulet of Psychic Interference

Level 5+

A shrunken head carved from bone hangs from a rough twine. It animates and cackles madly when you call on its power.

Lvl 5	+1	1,000 gp	Lvl 20	+4	125,000 gp
Lvl 10	+2	5,000 gp	Lvl 25	+5	625,000 gp
Lvl 15	+3	25,000 gp	Lvl 30	+6	3,125,000 gp

Item Slot: Neck

Enhancement: Fortitude, Reflex, and Will

Property: You make saving throws to end charm, fear, or psychic effects at the start of your turn. If you fail any of these saving throws, you do not make a saving throw to end that effect at the end of your turn.

Power (Daily ♦ Psychic): Immediate Reaction. **Trigger:** An enemy you can see hits or misses you using a power that has the charm, fear, or psychic keyword. **Effect:** The triggering enemy takes 10 psychic damage.

Level 10 or 15: 15 psychic damage.

Level 25 or 30: 20 psychic damage.

RINGS

Athasian rings are formed of bone, shell, and other animal parts. Metal bands signify wealth and might harbor great power.

Ring of Life

Level 26

A band of warm, green wood, this bark-covered ring infuses you with vitality.

Item Slot: Ring 1,125,000 gp

Property: You do not need to eat or drink. In addition, you gain a +5 item bonus to saving throws against necrotic effects.

Power (Daily): Free Action. *Trigger:* You take necrotic damage. *Effect:* You reduce the necrotic damage to 0.

Ring of the Crimson Sun

Level 14

This obsidian bauble draws on the sun's heat, remaining comfortably warm day and night. It reinforces you in the face of flame and retaliates in kind.

Item Slot: Ring 21,000 gp

Property: When you take fire damage from an attack, you gain temporary hit points equal to half the damage dealt by the attack.

Power (Daily ♦ Fire): Immediate Interrupt. *Trigger:* You are hit by a fire power. *Effect:* Until the end of your next turn, any creature that enters a square within 3 squares of you or starts its turn there takes 10 fire damage.

If you have reached at least one milestone today, that creature also takes ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends).

WONDROUS ITEMS

Whether ancient or recently devised, marvelous items are as common on Athas as on other worlds.

Athasian Spellshard

Level 1

This shard of obsidian or crystal can be imbued with magical knowledge.

Wondrous Item 360 gp

Property: You can store wizard daily and utility spells, rituals, and ritual effects that mimic scrolls in this shard. Each item is stored as mental information rather than written words. A spellshard is equivalent to a spellbook or a ritual book for the purpose of holding such information. The cost of storing rituals and scrolls is unchanged, and using the stored information otherwise functions normally. **Property:** An Athasian spellshard can be enchanted as if it were a magic tome (for more about tomes, see *Arcane Power*, page 151).

Folding Sand Skiff

Level 15

Whittled from hard wood, this miniature sand skiff transforms on command. In its full-sized form, the skiff can sail on any desert terrain.

Wondrous Item 25,000 gp

Power (Daily): Standard Action. If enough space is available, the miniature skiff unfurls into a full-sized sand skiff (page 124).

Power (At-Will): Standard Action. If empty of gear and occupants, the skiff reverts to its miniature shape.

Solitaire (Quartz Lens)

Level 5

This clouded crystal supplements your powers with the energy of Athas's sun.

Wondrous Item 1,000 gp

Power (Encounter ♦ Varies): Free Action. *Trigger:* You score a critical hit on your turn. *Effect:* The triggering attack deals radiant damage or fire damage in addition to its normal damage types.

Special: You cannot use more than one solitaire in an encounter.

CONSUMABLES

Instead of brewing potions, Athasian ritualists enchant edible fruits with potion, elixir, or oil effects. For the process to take hold, the fruit must contain ample fluids. Once the fruit is enhanced, it lasts indefinitely until used. Taking a bite of the fruit—a minor action, as is drinking a potion—activates the stored magic.

Agony Beetle

Level 9

These insidious beetles latch onto a creature's spine and cause excruciating pain.

Other Consumable 160 gp

Power (Consumable): Standard Action. Make an attack: Melee touch (one creature); Dexterity + 3 vs. Reflex; Hit: The target is immobilized, grants combat advantage, and takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls (save ends all).

Dune Runner's Fruit

Level 11

This fruit has gritty flesh and rough skin. Its thick juice is applied to the feet or shoes to speed travel.

Elixir 350 gp

Power (Consumable): Minor Action. Until you take an extended rest, you ignore difficult terrain resulting from dirt, sand, or silt, and you leave no tracks in such terrain. If you start your turn standing on a solid surface, you can move across a nonsolid horizontal surface (such as silt or water) as if it were solid ground. If you are on a nonsolid surface at the end of your turn, you sink.

Special: Consuming this elixir counts as a use of a magic item daily power.

Fruit of Life

Level 25

Vibrant green and veined in crimson, this fist-sized fruit subtly vibrates with barely contained life force.

Other Consumable 25,000 gp

Power (Consumable ♦ Healing): Minor Action. You spend a healing surge and regain 15 additional hit points. Until you take an extended rest, you gain resist 15 necrotic and do not need to eat or drink.



ATLAS OF ATHAS

"Between the Ringing Mountains and the Sea of Silt, the traveler finds hermits, thri-kreen packs, nomad tribes, isolated villages, and the Seven Cities known to remain on Athas. One meets people of all races and classes: human nobles and slaves, elf raiders, half-giant mercenaries, and even the rare halfling wanderer. This region is the great mixing bowl of Athas, in which the different cultures of many peoples are forced to mingle or clash."

—The Wanderer's Journal

What remains of Athasian civilization is cupped in the broad plains and deserts between the mighty Ringing Mountains and the impassable Sea of Silt. This wide area is known as the Tyr Region after its oldest city, although these days, Tyr is no more powerful or influential than its neighbors. (In fact, Tyr, mired in turmoil, is desperately vulnerable at the moment.) Beyond the borderlands of this region lie desolate wastes; some people believe that the Tyr Region is the last habitable area on Athas, and that all the people remaining in the world live in these lands.

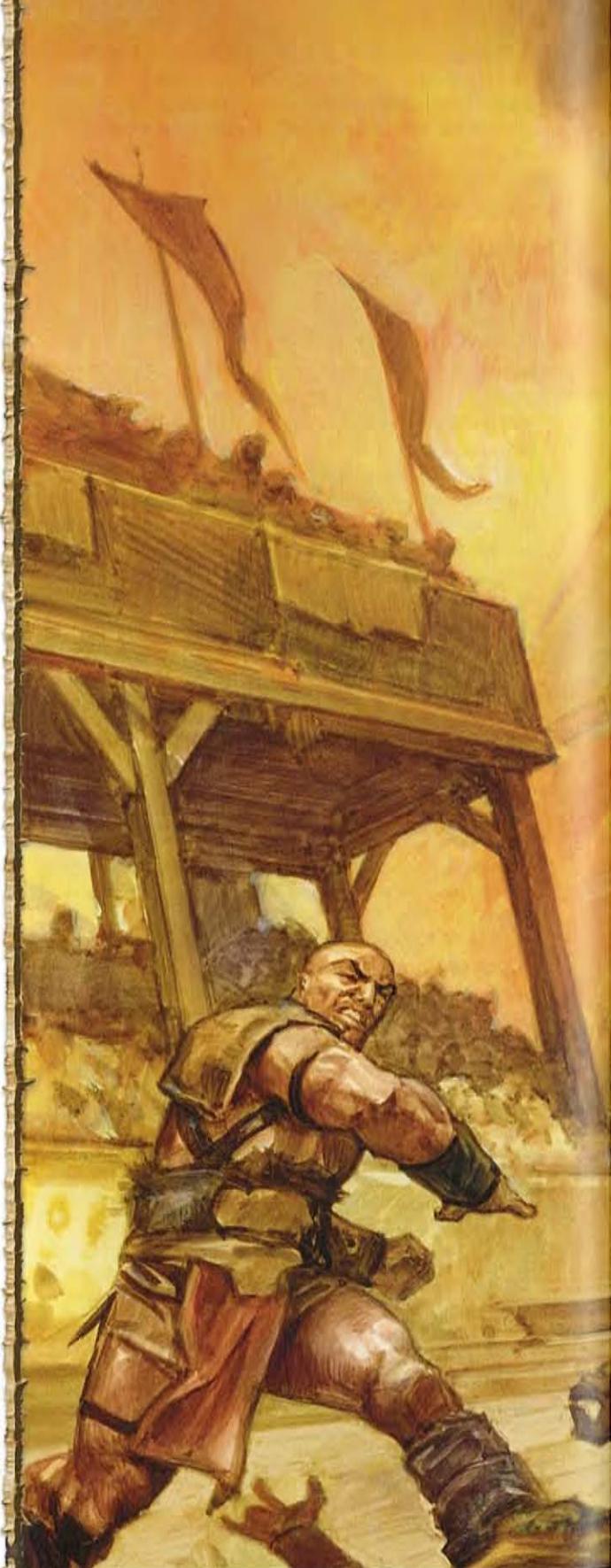
The sorcerer-kings have ruled the Tyr Region for longer than anyone can remember. For generations, no one contested their power and lived to tell about it, but everything changed recently when a spear impaled Kalak, the sorcerer-king of Tyr. Kalak's death and Tyr's liberation marked the beginning of a new era, shaking thrones that had not been threatened in countless years. Rumors of Tyr's newfound freedom spread like wildfire across the Seven Cities, giving pause to sorcerer-kings who hoped that thoughts of rebellion would not spread to their own domains.

First, this chapter presents a desert primer. Not all deserts consist solely of sand, and this section provides an introduction to the landforms and conditions that prevail over much of the world.

Next, the chapter describes prominent locations on Athas. These include the Seven Cities, the great city-states of the Tyr Region: Tyr, Balic, Draj, Gulg, Nibenay, Raam, and Urik. Tyr is described at greater length, since its current state of affairs provides many opportunities for heroes looking for a way to make a difference in the world.

In addition, this section discusses major regions of Athas in the vicinity of Tyr: the Estuary of the Forked Tongue, the Forest Ridge, the Ivory Triangle, the Ringing Mountains, the Road of Kings, the Sea of Silt, the Southern Wastes, the Tablelands, and the Western Hinterlands.

ZOLTAN BOROS & GABOR SZIKSZA





A DESERT PRIMER

"The Tablelands are arid, hot, and barren. Even on windless days, the sky is filled with a yellow-green haze of floating silt. The crimson sun blazes with merciless intensity, and the breeze feels like the hot breath of the Dragon itself."

—The Wanderer's Journal

Athas is a desert world, but that doesn't mean the planet is uniformly covered with sand or barren wastes. Deserts come in many forms. Some are habitable, some are brutal killing grounds, and some are wastelands that seem empty but are full of hidden life. Knowing the types of deserts one might encounter while traveling across Athas is a vital survival skill—one that might mean the difference between a successful journey and a hard death in the wilds.

BOULDER FIELDS

Boulder fields consist of broken, jagged rock. Some are old lava flows long since cooled, and others are valleys choked with rockslides or slopes of scree. They usually lie near mountains, and most are no larger than a few miles across. Boulder fields are formidable obstacles since they lack water, vegetation, and shade, and if travelers do not have sturdy boots or sandals, the sharp rocks can cut their feet to ribbons. Deep gulches and crevices crisscross boulder fields, offering plenty of hiding places.

DUST SINKS

Windblown dust, ash, and silt accumulate in depressions to form dust sinks or silt basins. The largest known example is the Sea of Silt, but smaller sinks exist in almost any low-lying terrain. Even a light wind stirs the dust into billowing clouds. On calm days, a dust sink appears to be a smooth plain of pale gray or dun powder. Appearances are deceptive. The dust is too light to support a traveler's weight, but it is thick enough to suffocate anyone who falls in. Sometimes, the ground beneath the powder is uneven, concealing a dangerous drop. One misstep, and a traveler can disappear beneath the dust.

Large bodies of silt often extend like the rivers of old into more solid terrain, following narrow channels called estuaries. Many estuaries of silt are shallow enough for human-sized travelers to wade with care. Very tall creatures such as giants can navigate correspondingly deeper silt; a giant can wade through silt 10 feet deep without difficulty.

Many large sinks and estuaries are sprinkled with islands of high ground, isolated from the "mainland" by stretches of dust of varying depths. Some of these islands are rocky protrusions just large enough to

accommodate a giant or two, and others can support an entire village. Miles of silt have sheltered many islands over the years from the touch of defiling magic, and those islands remain surprisingly verdant.

MOUNTAINS

Low ranges such as the Mekillot Mountains, the Stormclaw Mountains, and the Black Spine Mountains dot the Tyr Region. They are daunting obstacles. Their bare, rocky peaks—sometimes as tall as 6,000 feet—offer little water or shelter to make the climb worthwhile. After a daytime temperature of well over 100 degrees, temperatures at night can plunge near the freezing point. Most of the exposed rock crumbles under the twin hammers of heat and cold, so great slopes of broken rock and frequent rockslides make for arduous travel.

Mountain vales, on the other hand, often are watered and filled with heavy scrub, cacti, or sparse forest. Little of the land is suitable for cultivation, but savages and monsters such as goliaths, gith, and kirres make their homes in vales. Large networks of caverns lie under most of the low mountain ranges, home to all sorts of strange creatures that prefer to hide from the sun.

A truly awesome mountain range marks the western border of the Tyr Region—the Ringing Mountains, whose highest peaks reach 20,000 feet or more. Some of these peaks have thin but permanent snowcaps.

MUDFLATS

Little open water remains on the surface of Athas; most is buried underground. In a few places, water seeps upward, saturating the land to create mudflats. Most common near or in dust sinks (especially the shallows of the Sea of Silt), mudflats hide beneath the churning dust, revealed only when the winds clear an area and expose the soupy mess to the air. Uncovered mudflats usually dry out in short order, leaving behind hard, cracked clay that might or might not be solid enough to support a traveler's weight.

A few mudflats manage to survive, sometimes through cultivation and sometimes by happenstance. These areas are lush with vegetation, including desert grasses, thorny bushes, and small trees. Where mudflats stand in silt basins, low islands of dense vegetation rise above the dust. These mudflats are rarely large; most measure only a few hundred feet across. Tangled underbrush and mucky ground make traveling through these areas difficult but not impossible. In general, mudflats offer little to travelers; there isn't much standing water, and dangerous predators hunt creatures that subsist on the greenery.

ROCKY BADLANDS

Most hilly regions on Athas are rocky badlands—highly eroded mazes of sharp-edged ridges, winding canyons, and thorn-choked ravines. Daunting escarpments force travelers into meandering courses along the ravine floors, which often end in blind canyons or loop back on themselves. Badlands can be barren, waterless wastes, but many are filled with thorny brush that can completely clog the ravine floors.

Rocky badlands are difficult to cross, no matter which way a traveler means to go. Sticking to a canyon's floor is easy enough, but a canyon rarely leads in the direction one desires, and the thick, prickly brush makes for very hard going. Climbing up the walls to crest a badland ridge usually involves a dangerous scramble of several hundred feet, and travel along the top of a knife-edged ridge is equally challenging.

SALT FLATS

Great flat plains encrusted with salt that is white, brown, or black, salt flats can extend for miles. Some are dotted with briny marshland, but most are barren and lifeless. Any water is usually too brackish to drink and might be poisonous. Salt flats offer no shelter, and the temperatures reach more brutal extremes than anywhere else on Athas. Sun sickness (page 199) can kill an unprotected traveler caught in a salt flat.

If the salt flats have one asset, it's that no creatures linger in them for long. A prepared traveler can cross a flat without risking an encounter with a wild beast or roving band.

SALT MARSHES

Salt marshes and shallow, ephemeral lakes can form in and near salt flats, dust sinks, and sandy wastes. Most are only a mile or two across, but a few—such as the Salt Meres or the Maze of Draj—extend for as much as hundreds of miles. The water, too salty or alkaline to sustain life, is undrinkable. Many salt marshes dry out completely in the months of High Sun, and some remain dry year-round if the following Lowsun comes and goes without rain.

A salt marsh contains low grasses, reeds, or brush. Ankle-deep channels of briny water encrusted with caked salt wind through the marsh, sometimes opening out into large, shallow lakes. Here and there, tough stands of scrub or the occasional tree stand above the grasses. Few creatures can digest the tough vegetation, but the marshes buzz with tiny insects that can drive a traveler half mad.

SANDY WASTES

Vast stretches of yellow sand, sandy wastes are the most identifiable deserts of Athas. Some wastes are plains where the air is still and no winds disturb the trackless land. In other wastes, the landscape takes

on a rumpled appearance as winds pile up sand to form great dunes. The topography of such wastes changes endlessly; old dunes slowly erode under the wind, and new ones form when deadly sandstorms whip up with little warning. Travelers caught in a storm hear the wind howl in a deafening scream while stinging sand bites their skin. The worst storms can scour flesh from bones.

In the flat areas of Athas, sandy wastes do not hinder travel. Oases, wells, and stands of tough scrub can sustain desert-dwelling creatures and people indefinitely. Flat sand is easy for travelers, although a lack of landmarks increases the risk of becoming lost.

In areas that have dunes, travel is more challenging. Mekillot dunes, named for their passing resemblance to the huge drakes, can be hundreds of feet tall, but most dunes rise no higher than a hundred feet. In wastes where the winds shift or collide, star dunes might form. The ridges of these mounds extend away from the main mass, forming arms that spread out like tentacles in all directions.

SCRUB PLAINS

Scrub plains are savanna, prairie, or chaparral with just enough water to support extensive vegetation. Tough, dry grass punctuated by creosote bushes and tumbleweed dominates the ground. One can even find a few small trees scattered across the landscape. By Athasian standards, scrub plains are almost lush, supporting a high concentration of wildlife.

Excessive grazing and the use of defiling magic have reduced some scrub plains in the Tyr Region to ruin. Only a few such areas survive in the wild lands between the city-states, protected by primal guardians who use ancient magic to destroy intruders and safeguard their homes. However, beyond the Ringing Mountains stretch vast scrub plains such as the Crimson Savanna.

STONY BARRENS

Stony barrens dominate the Tablelands. Most barrens are bedrock shelves exposed by windstorms. These weathered plains are covered with rocks that range in size from pebbles and gritty dust to huge piles of standing boulders. In places, the bare rock gives way to hard-packed red earth, and yellow sand collects in crevices, forming dunes or drifts. Huge mesas and pointed buttes dot the plains, a testimony to the erosive power of the elements.

Cacti proliferate in stony barrens. Hundreds of species grow throughout, appearing in all shapes and sizes, from small, thorny buttons to towering saguaros. Some cacti are edible, making suitable fare for travelers low on supplies. Others are stealthy predators that can kill careless travelers; in the Athasian wilderness, one can never be certain who is the hunter and who is the hunted.

TYR, THE FREE CITY

"Is it true? Kalak dead? Slaves freed? Magic wild in the streets? Doubtful, but we'll know soon enough."

— Shahin, wandering hermit

As far as most Athasians are concerned, Tyr has always existed. Certainly it has endured through the entire Desert Age, and even with the fall of its sorcerer-king, it seems likely to endure for centuries to come. And throughout all the long years of its existence, it was a city-state enslaved.

That has all changed.

In the courts of the other city-states, rumors of King Kalak's overthrow are only whispered, but in Tyr, the repercussions howl through the streets. Many scheme to succeed Kalak, and the templars and other power groups vying for control struggle to keep the city-state from disintegrating into anarchy at the hands of people eager to enjoy their freedom. Nobles and merchants clamor for influence, and commoners and freed slaves openly celebrate, challenging civic authority and social boundaries at every turn.

TYRIAN BACKGROUNDS

The sudden end of King Kalak's oppressive reign has left Tyr and its citizens in a state of confusion and chaos. Tyrian characters are surrounded by new opportunities—and new perils.

Associated Skills: Endurance, Streetwise

Language: Elven

Embedded Spy: Tyr's newfound freedom has caused no shortage of consternation among the Seven Cities. The other sorcerer-kings have dispatched agents to gather intelligence about the liberated city-state and create conflict where possible. You are one such spy. Were you born in Tyr, or are you from another city-state? To whom do you report? How do you view the rebellion?

Freed Slave: Following Kalak's death, King Tithian outlawed slavery in Tyr. You were one of thousands set free. Do you think your liberty will last? Who owned you? How do you feel about your former master?

Noble of Conscience: You have enjoyed comfort and privilege throughout your life, but you know that your wealth was earned through the efforts of people who didn't have enough. You want to help the oppressed, but should you keep your title and become a protector of the weak, or should you fight to erode the power and influence of your noble peers?

Revolutionary: You worked to overthrow Kalak in the final months of his reign. Whether you spied on his nobles, preached rebellion to slaves in the brickyards, or carried messages for rebel leaders, you played a part in the king's downfall. What will you do now that you have succeeded? What secrets did you

learn? Do you have contacts among the groups vying for power in the city-state?

TYR'S POWER STRUCTURE

Tithian, the former high templar, is now recognized as King of Tyr. However, his throne is far from secure. King Tithian holds his crown at the sufferance of the other templars and the heads of powerful groups who wield great influence but are not yet strong enough to overthrow him.

THE POWER GROUPS

In Tyr, a number of groups fight for power in the wake of Kalak's death. Fortunately for Tithian and the other templars, no single group has managed to consolidate its influence enough to challenge the

TYR AT A GLANCE

Tyr is a flashpoint of intrigue and change on Athas. Its Golden Tower and sealed Ziggurat are unique wonders that awe most visitors.

Population: Roughly 15,000 within the city walls, and about as many in the noble estates and villages of the Tyr Valley. Humans are the majority, constituting two-thirds of the population. Dwarves, elves, goliaths, and muls make up most of the rest.

Water: Seventeen public wells reach down below Tyr to tap one of the deepest, oldest aquifers on Athas, fed by runoff from the nearby Ringing Mountains. A Tyrian Guard detachment protects each well. Tithian (under pressure from others) has declared that each citizen is entitled to one hand-carried container of water per day. Those who try to get around this law risk being exiled. The city-state also has many private wells, such as in the King's Gardens and in the Templar District.

Supplies: A wide variety of basic supplies is available in the Caravan and Merchant Districts, as well as in the Elven Market in the Warrens. Most days, a ragtag bazaar springs up near the Stadium of Tyr.

Defense: Most of Tyr's army disbanded after Kalak fell, but the templars are currently rebuilding it as the Tyrian Guard. An uneasy mix of soldiers who formerly served Kalak, noble house contingents, revolutionary fighters, and freed gladiators and slaves, the Guard forms a standing army of about five thousand warriors of varying quality. The marshal is a mul ex-mercenary named Zalcor. In addition to the Guard, many noble and merchant houses keep large contingents of private soldiers on hand.

Inns and Taverns: The Caravan District and the Merchant District have more than thirty inns and an equal number of taverns between them. The Warrens offers more squalid spaces, including abandoned buildings that host squatters.



new king's rule. Members of these factions meet frequently, sometimes in large gatherings, to make decisions and forge treaties that affect the balance of power in the city-state. Factions that have great influence in Tyr include the following.

Deposers of Kalak: The rebels who challenged and defeated Kalak are highly regarded by most citizens. In addition to Tithian, the depositors include Rikus, a mul ex-gladiator who leads the Crimson Legion; Sadira, a half-elf ex-slave and a secret member of the Veiled Alliance; Agis of Asticles, a high-ranking noble of the Asticles house in Tyr and a practitioner of the Way; and Neeva, another ex-gladiator.

The Freed: Former slaves make up a large portion of Tyr's population. Although they are poor and largely uneducated, their sheer numbers give them considerable power. Their leaders include Shivrin, a half-elf from the Warrens (rumored to have ties to the Toothcutters, a criminal gang); and Nori, a mul from the fields who is known as an eloquent speaker. During her time as a slave, Nori was a favored gladiator in the stadium games.

Commoners: Many revolutionaries were common folk of Tyr. Those who have retained a good deal of influence in the wake of their success include Rowan, a half-elf innkeeper from the Caravan District; and Xalos, a mul stonemason of the Artisan District. Xalos

secretly receives a stipend to spy for the city-state of Urik, but no one in Tyr suspects anything . . . yet.

House Merchants: Merchant house representatives are no strangers to power and influence in Tyr, although now they must deal with competing factions rather than a single monarch. The dominant merchants include Davith Vordon of House Vordon, whose major interests include Tyr's iron mines and the slave trade beyond the city-state's borders; and Belana Wavir of House Wavir, a house headquartered in Balic.

Templars: Tehosian, the Minister of Laws, is responsible for setting up a new system of justice. Mashastra, the Minister of Defense, marshals the army and organizes the defense of Tyr according to Tithian's directives.

Nobles: Shoshana Beryl, matriarch of Beryl Manor, seeks to move the government toward a senate of nobles. She believes that only the nobles have the education and the means to administer the city-state. Murter Dyan, who holds a partial interest in Tyr's iron mines, secretly belongs to the True—a group of holdouts hoping for Kalak's return.

KING TITHIAN

While the factions of Tyr seethe and quarrel, King Tithian works steadily to establish his own authority independent of the power groups. He must move

carefully, because any attempt to seize too much control too quickly could provoke a reaction from the other influential players in the city-state, and Tithian does not yet have the strength to hold his throne in the face of unified opposition. Every decree and decision made by the king is subject to the tacit approval of the various factions—a situation the proud, ambitious Tithian deeply resents. His support is strong among the former templars of Kalak; even so, many of them resent his betrayal of their royal master, and a few wonder if they could replace him.

The former high templar is currently exploring Kalak's sorcerous libraries and treasures, searching out the deposed king's magical secrets. Some of Tyr's leaders fear that Tithian intends to become a new tyrant if only he can find the power he needs to defy them.

EXPLORING TYR

Tyr hunkers within high walls in the middle of the fertile Tyr Valley, which lies in the foothills of the Ringing Mountains. From miles away, a traveler can make out the massive spires of the Golden Tower rising over the city-state's walls. Not far from the tower, a brick step-pyramid soars above the walls: the Ziggurat of Kalak, multicolored and resplendent under the desert sun. The city walls are parched sandstone, smoothed by time and centuries of continual repair. Beyond Tyr loom the ramparts of the Ringing Mountains, whose topmost peaks glint with a dusting of snow during the months of Sun Descending.

Most traffic enters the city-state through the eastern Caravan Gate. This structure consists of two marble valves, each 20 feet high and nearly as wide, which are banded and hinged in precious iron. Inside, the thoroughfare known as Caravan Way leads through the Caravan District toward the heart of the city, where the Merchant District is nestled at the base of the towering Ziggurat of Kalak. The spacious stone residences that make up the twin wards of the Noble District lie north and south of the Caravan District, easily differentiated from the press of adobe buildings in the surrounding neighborhoods.

Commoners and freed slaves live cheek by jowl in the Warrens, a medley of unplanned structures that sprawls away north of the Ziggurat. Criminal gangs roam the Warrens, preying on the weak. Temporary shelters built by recently freed slaves have sprung up in the Artisan District on the ziggurat's north side. Although shelter and access to water is less certain in the Artisan District, fewer bodies turn up here each morning than in the Warrens. This district also now doubles as a training area for gladiators who choose to fight in the Stadium of Tyr during the infrequent games held there.

The stadium separates the Ziggurat of Kalak from the Golden Tower. Under the new regime, the sound

of spectators screaming for their favorites is heard on just ten days of every month. The rest of the time, the stadium serves as an overflow market of disorganized stalls, tents, and blankets where misfit traders offer a multitude of goods and services.

Tyr has always been two cities in one: the greater city, which is composed of commoners, slaves (now freed), and nobles, and the smaller Golden City, which is dominated by the Golden Tower and is the home of the resplendent King's Gardens. Many civic structures surround the tower, along with giant warehouses that hold precious reserves of grain, iron ingots, water, and weaponry. In addition, the Golden City houses upper-class functionaries and templars.

The Golden Tower, Tyr's most majestic piece of architecture, is constructed of rare golden granite and contains dozens of chambers linked by winding passages. A separate observation spire stands nearby, a smaller version of the main tower; a soaring bridge connects the two structures. According to rumor, defiling magic binds ancient elementals to the Golden Tower, creatures that remain vigilant against potential attackers. Since King Kalak fell, all attempts at entering the tower have failed.

Finally, beneath the city lies Under-Tyr, catacombs that represent the leavings of more than two thousand years of urban construction on the same site. Buried streets, cracked courtyards, and crumbling ruins abound in the darkness beneath Tyr. Secret cellars in surface buildings offer access into this dangerous realm of subterranean passages and forgotten neighborhoods.

THE CARAVAN DISTRICT

The Caravan District is the primary trade and visitor's district in Tyr. Regular visitors and dune traders enter the city-state through the massive Caravan Gate. The area just inside the gate is a confusion of animal pens, transports, crates of exotic goods packed for travel, and traders screaming about their loads. The gate is usually watched by a Tyrian Guard

TYR'S CODE OF JUSTICE

Under King Kalak, "justice" was synonymous with the whims of the powerful, and no one expected (or received) fair treatment under the law. Today, the commoner-led factions in Tyr seek to address that problem. Bending to pressure from commoners threatening to rebel, King Tithian has charged the templar Tehosian with creating a system of law that presumes innocence unless a jury of three unbiased judges determines otherwise.

So far, however, Tehosian has relied on the judgments of templars, nobles, and Tyrian Guard patrols. Those deemed guilty of minor crimes are fined; those found guilty of serious crimes are exiled from Tyr and sold into slavery. Truly heinous criminals are executed in special ceremonies in the Stadium of Tyr.

detachment that questions newcomers and collects taxes from merchants (about 5 percent of the declared value of a wagon of trade goods). The Guard records the names of foreign visitors and their purpose in coming to the city.

Past the press of caravans and new arrivals near the gate, Caravan Way meanders west through the heart of the main trade district. By day, the road is dotted with clusters of pedestrians and street vendors hawking their wares. Permanent shops throng Caravan Way, selling myriad goods, including clothing, caravan supplies, feed for mounts, rations, spirits, collectibles, arms, and armor.

Vendors and sites in the Caravan District include the following.

Devyn's Desertwear: Items for sale include broad-brimmed sun hats, sweat-wicking kanduras, sun goggles, fingerless gauntlets, horn-heeled boots, scarves, and more. Devyn, a forty-year-old female human, is also a Veiled Alliance contact.

Grik's Weaponry: This shop's merchandise includes erdlu-claw daggers, obsidian-tipped javelins, bramble-tree clubs, and (available for viewing by appointment only) a very small selection of iron weapons. Grik, a male mul, sometimes fights in the stadium during festivals.

Golden Inix: This inn and tavern has a common room serving meals, broy (fermented kank nectar), Tyrian brown ale, and Asticles wines. Lodging in the Golden Inix includes eight typical rooms (2 sp per night) and two luxury rooms (2 gp per night). Rowan, the male half-elf proprietor, is a member of a consortium of innkeepers that is one of the groups vying for power in Tyr.

Ezar's Storehouse: In the past year, this warehouse has gone through several owners. Each one died under strange circumstances. Now, no one dares take ownership, and stories say the warehouse is haunted. A secret passage below the building leads into a particularly dangerous portion of Under-Tyr.

JOSSI THE JUGGLER

Caravan District Personality

Jossi is an elf street performer seen all over the Caravan District, demonstrating impressive juggling skills for coin. Her performance involves singing, selecting volunteers from the crowd to participate in her stunts, and other tricks designed to delight.

Jossi is actually a thief who supplements her income by serving as a messenger (and sometimes an assassin) for Tyr's Eyes—a network of beggars, thieves, and other street people. She also works for various criminal elements in the city, including the Toothcutters gang in the Warrens. Jossi sizes up visitors to Tyr, making a note of the inn or tavern where they take lodging. She never knows when information about rich or unusual travelers from the desert might be worth something.

ARTISAN DISTRICT

This area is Tyr's secondary trade district. Artisan Way begins at the foot of the Ziggurat of Kalak and wends north to the city-state's wall, skirting the Warrens to the east. Permanent shops front the road, selling all manner of goods and services, including clothing, household items, fresh and dried foodstuffs, ale, footwear and shoe repair, weaving, and more. Other vendors and street performers work Artisan Way, but such people do not swarm the thoroughfare like locusts, as sometimes happens on Caravan Way.

The businesses in this part of Tyr serve local needs rather than the needs of visitors. Many freed slaves who have parlayed their skills into useful crafts or services make their homes in the Artisan District. The following shops and familiar sights lie in the district.

Karlen's Eye: This shop sells collectibles and oddities gleaned from Under-Tyr and places beyond the city. Its owner, Karlen, is a talkative half-giant and retired adventurer who sees the potential for value in nearly any item plucked from obscurity. He also haggles over every sale.

Wayward Trader: This quiet tavern for locals serves kip sausage and biscuits, ales, and broy.

Stone and Mortar: In this store, customers order stone in bulk or to custom specification from a quarry outside the walls of Tyr. Xalos, the mul owner, is often absent, sitting in on secret meetings with other powerful citizens (and spying for Urik in the bargain).

Sculptors' Square: Manors in the architectural style of the two Noble Districts stand here, remnants of a time when Tyr's districts adhered to different borders. Although the buildings are dilapidated, they gained a new lease on life following Kalak's fall. Freed slaves kept for their artistry have renovated portions of the crumbling manors for use as art studios. Many craft styles are represented in the square, but the most popular by far is marble and sandstone sculpture. Anyone can visit the studios to see the latest projects in progress, although donations are expected; each studio puts out a basin to collect spare coins. It's easy to find an empty chamber in Sculptors' Square suitable for renovation and, if inspiration strikes, the pursuit of an artistic dream.

Door of Drakes: Before they disappeared a hundred years ago, the members of the Dethersan noble family commissioned a structure that resembled a sepulcher adorned with drakes and flames in relief. When the building was finished, the family members entered it, locked it from the inside, and disappeared. Over the years since, few people have managed to enter the Door of Drakes, and those who succeeded were swallowed without a trace. Today, locals leave the site alone.

XALOS THE STONECUTTER

Artisan District Personality

Although he is rarely seen inside his shop, Stone and Mortar, the mul stonecutter Xalos is a regular fixture in the district. He wanders the neighborhood and keeps up friendly acquaintances with its residents. He is especially fond of seeing sculptures made from custom stones that were delivered from his quarry.

As part of his commitment to work behind the scenes to further liberate the people of Tyr, Xalos sits in on clandestine meetings between factions that seek power in the city-state. This habit serves him well in his other role—that of a secret spy for Urik. The mul deludes himself, choosing to believe that he never gives up information that is too damaging to Tyr. He continues to take a stipend from his Urikite minder each time they meet in an empty room in Sculptors' Square.

SMITHS' DISTRICT

This district also engages in trade, although few people make their homes here. Unlike in the Artisan District, the labor performed in the Smiths' District is big and loud, and it requires a lot of space.

Brickyards: The construction of the brick Ziggurat of Kalak was a monumental effort that hurried hundreds of slaves to their deaths. Today, the Brickyards continue to produce bricks, although production has been diverted to the many civil projects that languished so long while the ziggurat was being built. The Brickyards no longer use slaves, instead paying laborers for a day's service. Ironically, many laborers are ex-slaves who once worked under the threat of the lash.

The site remains under the authority of the city (that is, King Tithian and the templars), but workers have begun demanding control. Almost daily, protests and demonstrations begin in the Brickyards and march through other districts. Each parade includes workers loudly chanting "Brickyards for the Brickers!" and similar slogans. So far, only minor scuffles have resulted from brushes with the Tyrian Guard.

Slave Pits: Twenty-foot-high walls with guard towers on each corner isolate an area once used to house slaves working on the Ziggurat of Kalak. Stories of awful practices committed within the walls still wag on the tongues of those who survived the experience. When slavery was outlawed in Tyr, the Slave Pits remained empty for only a short time before being repurposed as a training ground for aspiring gladiators. What started as an impromptu introduction to arms for newly freed slaves has become more organized. Those who wish to compete in the stadium can come here and train to hone their skills.

Rarvin's Wagonworks: This large workshop specializes in the repair and manufacture of wagons, armored argosies, chariots, howdahs, and more.

Tarnished Cup: This shop offers previously owned goods, including jewelry, musical instruments, and more exotic items that were likely fenced. The proprietor, a tiefling named Gavan Sul, is rumored to deal in devil grass, a pernicious scrub weed that is the basis for a potent poison.

The Brick Barrow: Over the years, many slaves have died in the Brickyards, and their bodies were dropped down a shaft that opened into a cavity beneath the district. This dumping ground is referred to as the Brick Barrow. Now and then, haunting cries still echo up the shaft, audible even through the stone plug that Tithian ordered to seal it.

GAVAN SUL

Smiths' District Personality

Given the fierce reputation of tieflings, many visitors to the Tarnished Cup are surprised to find one behind the counter. However, Gavan Sul is the very soul of urbanity, so much so that he comes off as slightly insincere when he flatters customers about how well a particular piece of jewelry or clothing would look on them. That's because Sul is insincere; he cares only for profit and would sell the eyes of his own mother for enough coin.

Sul is a fence for the Iron Rats, a gang that prowls the Warrens. Every so often, a member of the Rats gets the idea to rob the tiefling's shop, but such thieves are never seen again. Sul is also secretly involved with the Ianto Traders, members of House Ianto who aren't ready to quit the slave trade just yet. The tiefling sometimes abducts patrons of his shop to supply Ianto's illicit operation.

MERCHANT DISTRICT

Caravan Way snakes into the Merchant District from the east. The main thoroughfare reaches its terminus in the shadow of the ziggurat at Iron Square, where the road divides to surround the center of trade. Assortments of loyal guards and laborers work in the warehouses that adjoin the emporiums.

Each of the largest trading houses on Athas maintains emporiums, offices, and homes in the Merchant District. Grandiose trading parlors line Iron Square, each branded with the name and emblem of the controlling merchant house and staffed by junior members of the house. Between the prominent emporiums sit small traders that fill niche markets and handle cargo that the bigger merchants avoid due to too little profit or too much risk. Fierce rivalries and subtle intrigues are daily considerations of merchants in Tyr; most houses hire dependable caravan guards for their frequent cross-desert trade treks.

Emporiums fronting Iron Square include the following.

House Vordon: Headquartered in Tyr, House Vordon is the region's primary iron trader. *Trade Goods:* iron, weapons, artwork, textiles, and salves (outside Tyr). *Emblem:* a black diamond.

House Wavir: Based in Balic, this house has good relations with the reigning government of Tyr. *Trade Goods:* grain, ceramics, precious metals, hardwood, gems, and exotic animals. *Emblem:* a silver crodlu.

House Shom: Based in Nibenay, Shom suffers from decadence and corruption. *Trade Goods:* obsidian, water, wood, art, and weapons. *Emblem:* three white dragonflies.

House Tsalaxa: Based in Draj, House Tsalaxa is known for blackmail, espionage, and assassination. *Trade Goods:* rope, grain, and “recovered” stolen cargo. *Emblem:* two glaring, bestial eyes.

House Stel: Based in Urik, Stel is openly militaristic and hostile to lesser houses that it targets for acquisition. *Trade Goods:* slaves (outside Tyr), weapons, hardwood, feathers, and hostages for ransom. *Emblem:* crossed black scimitars.

House M’ke: Based in Raam, House M’ke fights to protect its trade routes and outposts from attacks and runs of “bad luck” orchestrated by Tsalaxa or Stel. *Trade Goods:* nuts, spices, and glassware. *Emblem:* a silver quill pen.

House Ianto: A small Tyrian house formerly engaged exclusively in the slave trade, Ianto is attempting to relaunch its business through speculative cargos. *Trade Goods:* none right now. *Emblem:* a green inix.

HANETH TSALAXA

Merchant District Personality

A ruthless, 30-year-old human trader, Haneth uses his position as House Tsalaxa’s representative in Tyr to amass as much personal wealth as possible. He is an expert at blackmail, double-dealing, and extortion. When residents of the Merchant District see Haneth on their doorstep, they know they are in for an unpleasant interaction. Ironically, it’s when Haneth hasn’t been seen for a while that people worry most—the house agent is adept at espionage and assassination.

The oddest characteristic about Haneth is a secret that he keeps at all costs, even from members of his own house: He has a natural ability to change his shape, which serves him well in his dirty dealings. Born (apparently) of human parents, Haneth doesn’t know where his ability comes from, but he guesses that it might be psionic in nature.

NOBLE DISTRICT

Tyr’s Noble District is divided in two by the Caravan District. The stylish, spacious stone residences of the Noble District serve as a reminder of what most commoners will never possess—a family name associated with a history of wealth and influence. Merchant princes, templars, ranking administrators, and nobles who maintain villas inside the city-state enjoy various degrees of lavish quarters. Their residences are tall and airy, usually three stories or more in height. Most homes have quarters for servants, private courtyards, and gardens.



The district’s shops are more sophisticated than those found elsewhere in Tyr. Herbalist shops spice up their offerings of medicinal herbs and exotic oils with flute and sitar music. Vendors of colorful silks, glassblowers, and perfumeries display their wares in fancy arrangements outside their storefronts, enticing passersby to linger. Essentially, these shops exist to separate nobles from their excess coin.

The following sites lie in the Noble District.

Rhey’s Apothecary: Items for sale include medicinal herbs, water pipes, scented candles and oils, incense, and musical instruments. Rhey Khal, a middle-aged male human, is rumored to dabble in magic and deal with enchanted items. He responds to most inquiries about such interests with self-deprecating humor.

Narissa’s Colors and Scents: Goods include perfumes, body oils, face paints, colorful feathers, and (for favored customers) poisons. Narissa, a beautiful half-elf said to be the illegitimate daughter of an important templar, is the soul of discretion, no matter the purchase.

Jade Jozhal: Items include exotic jewelry fashioned from bone, horn, wood, metal, and gems. Kaorik Marrish, the dwarf proprietor, fashions the jewelry himself. The shop’s guardian is a thri-kreen named Ixixt, whose motionless stance leads many customers to think that he is a particularly lifelike sculpture.

Athas Revealed: Wares include maps (of city-states, areas, ruins, and more), navigation charts, explorer's journals, and (to those who know the secret) routes and access points into Under-Tyr.

Sweetwater Inn: This inn provides luxury accommodations and services for visiting nobles, senior house merchants, and others with an excess of wealth.

Blacksun Villa: The Shahram noble family turned a portion of its manor into a private ballroom, where it hosts fabulous parties to which few other noble families are invited. The holder of an invitation is the envy of Tyr's aristocrats, but the plain papyrus cards stamped with a black circle and date are rare commodities.

The templars believe that the villa is the front for a cult, and that its parties are dark ceremonies. However, the nobles who attend the parties have great political influence, and the templars lack hard evidence that would substantiate the rumors. Thus, they have taken no action to investigate what might hide behind Blacksun Villa's facade.

THE SCARLET HELMS

Noble District Street Watch

The Tyrian Guard doesn't venture into the Noble District. Instead, the major noble families provide a small private army of watch officers. Called the Scarlet Helms after their distinctive red-dyed headwear of inix scales, this force maintains order in the streets and escorts non-residents out of the district by nightfall. It keeps special watch on the borders where trade districts adjoin noble neighborhoods.

A Scarlet Helms squad consists of a leader (usually a human or mul gladiator) and several half-giant guards. A number of ex-gladiators have hired on with the Scarlet Helms in the weeks since Kalak died and the slaves were freed.

THE WARRENS

This sprawl of slums scars Tyr's northern quarter with a sea of dilapidated structures inhabited by the desperate, the poor, and the unlucky. Freed slaves swarmed into the Warrens following Kalak's overthrow, looking for places to call their own. Some found jobs on the plantations outside the city that once enslaved them. Others, less fortunate and less ambitious, turned to crime to survive. Visitors are advised to stick to the edges of the neighborhood. Monsters lair in some of the deepest portions of the Warrens, where many structures have remained empty and ruined for decades.

Other than a number of poor craftsfolk and dismal wine shops, the Warrens have few permanent stores of note. Sites in the Warrens include the following.

Elven Bridge: The ancient Elven Bridge hangs over a dust-filled streambed that has been dry for as long as anyone can remember. This secluded spot is a site for clandestine exchanges and ambushes against innocents lured into the Warrens.

House on Sand Street: One place even the brutal gangs of the Warrens avoid is the winding, gutted alleyway called Sand Street. This road dead-ends at a structure that is not decrepit like those all around it. Rumors say that within the building dwells a worm-like creature known as a psurlon.

Elven Market: Destitute as the Warrens are, many people visit the area to shop at the Elven Market. Stalls and tables clutter the dark alleyways, and elf peddlers beset anyone who seems likely to have a coin or two to rub together. Most elven goods are worthless baubles, but some tribes offer exotic items and curiosities that are not available anywhere else in Tyr. The Nightwinds tribe deals in silk rope, fleece, and soaps; the Vinian tribe sells exotic pets such as hurrms and lizards; and the Greenstone elves specialize in candles, sunrods, and everburning torches.

Screaming Cellar: Just off the Elven Market is an abandoned winehouse whose cellar contains a secret entrance into Under-Tyr. When a crew of Toothcutters raided the winehouse one night and killed the proprietors, the conflict woke some kind of evil, which manifests as a screaming spirit of rage. No one who has seen it has survived, and those who hear the screams that issue up through the ground have troubled dreams.

GANGS OF THE WARRENS

Many gangs roam the Warrens. Robberies have risen dramatically since Kalak's death, and the Tyrian Guard finds bodies in the street daily. Sometimes the violence spills over into the trade districts or the Noble District. Not even appearances by strong templar patrols helps. The mobs scatter when they see the guards coming, vanishing like rats in a sewer.

Gangs in the Warrens include the following.

Toothcutters: This pack of murderous elves controls the largest swath of the Warrens. Many shops within (and outside) the Warrens pay protection money to the Toothcutters. The influential half-elf Shivrin has a secret association with this gang.

Iron Rats: Made up of thieves and cutpurses, the Iron Rats spend most of their day in richer districts, taking coins and valuables from the unwary and dodging the Tyrian Guard. Gavan Sul in the Smiths' District fences stolen goods for the gang.

Ruincreepers: This group of displaced halflings lives like feral animals in the deepest part of the Warrens. Word is that they have tamed an escaped braxat that lairs among the dilapidated structures.

THE STADIUM OF TYR

Tyr's gladiatorial stadium sits between the walls of the Golden City and Kalak's Ziggurat. A special viewing balcony, once reserved for the king and high-ranking templars, is set halfway up the Golden City's walls. On the opposite side of the stadium, a great stairway climbs from the gladiatorial floor to the top of the ziggurat. Mosaics depicting Kalak as a warrior god adorn each step facing the stadium.

The spaces below the spectators' seats are a maze of cells and passageways that hold prisoners and monsters destined for the arena. A wide avenue leads from the stadium's north side to the nearby Stadium Gate in the city walls. This gate is carved to resemble the gaping jaws of the Dragon, and it is used to transport monsters captured in the mountains or the desert to holding cells until they are brought out for combat in the arena.

The Master of Games, a high-ranking templar, stages games on ten days out of each month and during festivals. Anyone can enter the games, although in practice, most entrants are professionals who win purses to support themselves or gladiators sponsored by a noble family or merchant house. Slaves are no longer conscripted to compete in the stadium. Deaths are far less common than they were under Kalak's reign; most contests now end when one gladiator yields or is too badly wounded to continue. Any gladiator who performs a coup de grace on a downed opponent is exiled from Tyr. However, battles against desert monsters or savage foes are always to the death.

On days when no games are held, the stadium serves as an impromptu market of jumbled stalls, hide tents, and blankets where vendors offer goods and services. The sellers who display their wares need not pay any fee for the space they occupy as long as it is no more than two wagons wide. King Tithian was pressured by the freed slaves into making this decree to give ex-slaves a place to offer their services without going into debt.

FIGHTING IN THE STADIUM

Player characters can fight in the gladiatorial stadium if they wish to enter the competition and pay a fee of 25 gp per game. They can take part as individuals or as a team and could be involved in a fight, a race, or an obstacle course. Create a stadium game just as you would create a regular encounter, setting the level of the creatures and threats in the encounter to within 4 levels of the party's level. The purse for winning a competition should be a treasure parcel that is 2 levels lower than the parcel normally awarded for overcoming the encounter.

THE ZIGGURAT OF KALAK

"The great Ziggurat towered above the squalor of the sun-baked city. Each level of the terraced pyramid was finished in glazed brick of a different color: gleaming violet at the base, then indigo, azure, green, yellow, fiery orange, and finally, scarlet."

— A chronicler of Athas

Kalak built his ziggurat to siphon the life force of the people of Tyr and use it to transform himself into a being as mighty as the Dragon. He failed, but the ziggurat remains as a prominent reminder of the evils of defiling and the folly of placing ultimate power in a sorcerer-king.

The only obvious entrance is located atop the great stair, which opens into a small antechamber lined with obsidian as black as Kalak's heart. A massive block of stone scribed with the emblem of King Tithian now seals the entrance into the body of the ziggurat. In addition, a squad of the Tyrian Guard is always on duty here, making certain that no one tries to gain entry without permission of the templars.

What lies inside the ziggurat? At the very least, the structure contains the defiling apparatus that Kalak created to drain the life force of Tyr's citizens. According to the only group that managed to penetrate the ziggurat and come out alive—a strike force sponsored by the Veiled Alliance—the interior is a maze of stairs, tunnels, and obsidian brick-lined chambers on which arcane glyphs pulse. Artifacts, relics, and tomes were noted but left in place for fear of disturbing further evil. The strike force hunted for Kalak, who had fled into the ziggurat after receiving a seemingly mortal wound from the gladiator Rikus in the stadium. It was widely reported that the strike force recovered his corpse, but in truth, Kalak's body was never found.

Recently, the noble Murter Dyan has argued that another group should enter the ziggurat to learn more of Kalak's secrets and discover what became of his body. However, most of the city-state's leaders believe that the place is better left undisturbed. A few of the factions vying for power in Tyr want to break the seals on the ziggurat and explore the place from tip to cellar. No group is so eager as the True, a secret society that wishes to return Kalak or an heir to the throne. If King Tithian decides to send another team into the ziggurat, the True's agent among the nobility—Murter Dyan—intends to accompany the group so he can spy on what is discovered and advance the True's schemes.

THE GOLDEN CITY

Once reserved for King Kalak and his top administrators and templars, the Golden City retains many of its restrictions on visitation, despite the growing clamor of ordinary Tyrians.

On one day every week, commoners are allowed to tour the King's Gardens and the Golden Tower. Only about a hundred citizens are let in on any given day, despite the fact that far more wish to see the fabled gardens with their own eyes. Resentment is brewing, even though the templars have tried to explain that if the gardens were opened freely to all citizens of Tyr, the place would suffer irreparable damage.

Sites of interest in the Golden City include the following.

Grand Gate: Only shipments from Tyr's iron mines and people on government business can pass through this gate. When closed, the Grand Gate presents to the world a marble slab carved to resemble the terrifying visage of the Dragon. The gate is protected by Tyrian Guard detachments as well as a gate captain versed in the Way.

High Bureaus: Just inside the Grand Gate lies a cluster of buildings in which administrators and templars see to the day-to-day functions of the city-state. Although everyone associated with the new government in Tyr describes it as "a brand new day for all," bribes remain the quickest way to gain an audience with the ranking templar of a given bureau.

King's Gardens: The King's Gardens include three lushly wooded and overgrown plots of land. Walking amid these green canopies is like stepping into the fertile past of Athas. Lavish amounts of water from the Golden City's wells and a small army of attentive gardeners keep these areas alive with growth despite the killing climate; Kalak ordered this done so that he would have a ready source of life for his defiling magic. With Kalak gone, the same gardeners—under the leadership of the Master of the Gardens, a half-elf templar named Dafna—continue to tend the botanical reserve because the gardens contain many rare trees, including a few said to be magical.

Templar District: Many templars keep mansions in the Noble District, but the highest-ranking templars and their families live in a special section of the Golden City. Large warehouses at the western end of this area house precious reserves of grain, iron, water, and weaponry. No obvious entrances present themselves; instead, well-guarded tunnels in Under-Tyr connect each warehouse to an entrance building in the High Bureaus.

THE GOLDEN TOWER

This magnificent edifice is constructed of rare golden granite that gleams like yellow iron under the crimson sun of Athas. A high, arching bridge connects the smaller observation tower with the larger main keep. The defiling magic of King Kalak bound ancient elementals to the Golden Tower, and these creatures show themselves if invaders threaten the structure.

The third level of the tower (to which the bridge from the observation spire connects) contains the

Advisors' Chamber, formerly the Royal Receiving Room, whose seats are luxurious pillows and cushions. The former centerpiece of the chamber, Kalak's opulent iron throne, has been removed and forged into blades to arm heroes of the revolt against Kalak. A council of Tithian's highest-ranking templars meets in this room, and leaders of other power groups in Tyr are called to the Golden Tower when the king or the templars need to sell them on a certain course of action.

Onyx staircases lead to the chamber above, which was Kalak's library. King Tithian's chamberlains guard the collection; sages and scholars who have been granted access report that the library holds many secrets of the long history of Athas.

MEETING WITH THE TEMPLARS

Although the citizens of Tyr now have greater influence in government matters than they did under Kalak, they do not have the right to stand before the king or the council of templars. Usually, citizens who have concerns attempt to meet with a templar out of chambers and convince him or her to take up the issue with the full body of advisors.

Individuals can be invited to a meeting as guests of the templars, especially if a person or a group has been instrumental in solving a problem in the city-state. The templars might invite a group of proven player characters to a meeting and ask them to perform a service that will aid Tyr, such as:

- ◆ Spying on a nearby ruin, trade outpost, or city-state.
- ◆ Infiltrating a Tyrian secret society.
- ◆ Mapping a newly uncovered portion of Under-Tyr.
- ◆ Eradicating the True.
- ◆ Exposing the headquarters of a rogue Veiled Alliance faction.
- ◆ Investigating illicit slaving in the area.
- ◆ Accompanying an embassy to the Forest Ridge.

UNDER-TYR

Over the centuries, Tyr has been racked by conflagration, famine, sandstorm, pestilence, war, and the wrath of the Dragon. Each time the city-state suffered a tragedy, Kalak ordered it rebuilt. More than two thousand years of such activity means that several layers of ancient ruins lie beneath Tyr, with entrances to Under-Tyr scattered throughout the city. The Warrens contain many entrances, about half of which are sealed, but hidden passages exist in nearly every district. Those who own a shop or structure that has an entrance to Under-Tyr might allow explorers to use the route for a fee and a pledge of silence.

As explorers follow one of the tunnels beneath Tyr, they cross interconnected sunken streets, ancient sewers, lightless courtyards, dizzying stairs, fallen towers, lost catacombs, and echoing cellars. Half-crumbled businesses, residences, and shrines to



forgotten gods abound. Within this subterranean realm lurk creatures that have adapted to the darkness, undead, latent magic wards, and criminal elements using shortcuts and lairs that are unlikely to be discovered by the Tyrian Guard. King Tithian has declared Under-Tyr off limits to citizens—not to protect would-be explorers, but to avoid arousing unknown magic, traps, or monsters that lie slumbering.

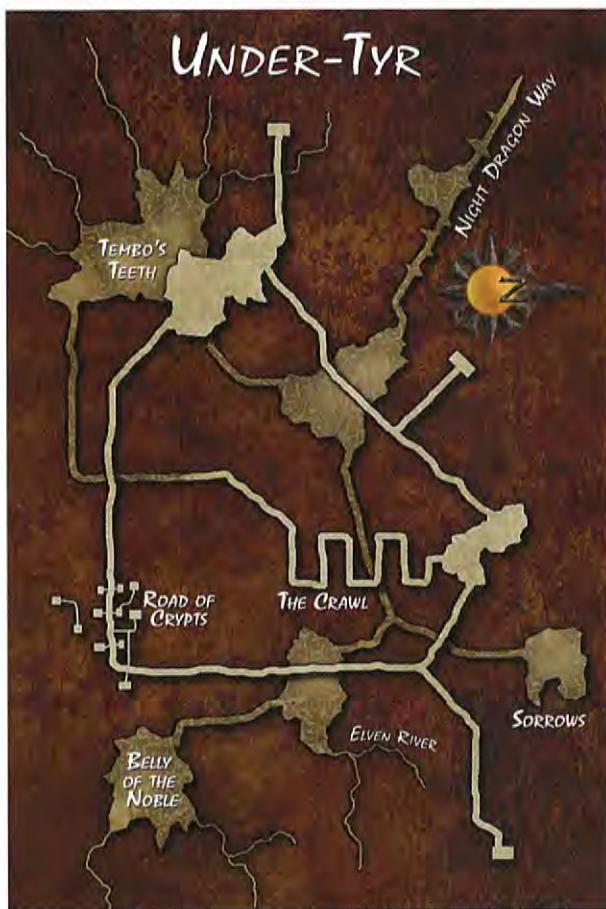
Under-Tyr consists of hundreds of distinct pockets beneath the present-day city-state, some of which are not connected to one another. The major routes include a myriad of intersections and smaller passages that lead to mazes of dark corridors, echoing chambers, and dank cavities. The largest interconnected regions beneath Tyr are the Sorrows, the Elven River, the Belly of the Noble, Tembo's Teeth, the Crawl, the Road of Crypts, and Night Dragon Way.

The Sorrows: The Sorrows is a rubble-filled maze of confusing chambers. A great courtyard in the center of the area contains a chasm of unplumbed depths, along with an immense building made of granite blocks and what appears to be intact colored glass. The sealed structure is said to be haunted by vengeful ghosts of those slaughtered long ago by Kalak.

Elven River: This so-called river contains no water and is merely a network of smooth tunnels that reach deep into subterranean Athas. A colony of id fiends lairs in the tunnels nearest to the surface, and a small group of the creatures emerges into Tyr each night to search for fresh victims.

Belly of the Noble: This complex of interconnected cellars and broken vaults lies beneath the Noble District. It is widely considered to be one of the most dangerous parts of Under-Tyr, riddled with both modern and ancient traps meant to safeguard treasures of the ages. Regardless, thieves occasionally try the Belly, to their regret.

Tembo's Teeth: This area of Under-Tyr is a natural subterranean cavern and associated cave complex. The many stalagmites and stalactites decorating the caves give the area its name. A century ago, Kalak sent a group of dwarves and half-giants to seal off the Teeth after yuan-ti were sighted in the deeper



tunnels. When Kalak was overthrown, some of the works of his defiling magic failed. Those who have the gift of psionic foresight believe that passageways to an ancient yuan-ti temple might soon gape wide beneath the streets of Tyr.

The Crawl: The crushed remains of trade districts of earlier eras create a barely supported network of low-ceilinged chambers; in many places, the roof is only 3 to 5 feet high. In Tyr, explorers can obtain fragments of maps that hint at an old armory in the Crawl stocked with iron weapons, but so far, these maps have not provided enough information for anyone to find the storehouse. Explorers who return from their failed attempts describe the Crawl as a torturous death trap replete with rockfalls and hordes of zombies that seep out of the nearby Road of Crypts.

Road of Crypts: Tombs of long-dead nobles fill this multileveled, branching catacomb. Many crypts stand empty, having been looted long ago; others are guarded by deadly traps, defiling magic wards, and undead that do not wish to be disturbed.

Night Dragon Way: This mysterious road once plunged to deeper places, but the far end collapsed in a rockfall centuries ago. Dim red light spills from the mouths of crudely carved dragons that appear every hundred feet on the side walls. A colossal statue of a dragon—perhaps the Dragon—lies in broken fragments off a chamber midway down the tunnel. No one knows the statue's history or purpose.

FOUNTAIN OF LEAVES

Somewhere in the Belly of the Noble, a dry fountain contains a split, eroded statue of Kalak. Residual magic supports a sickly growth of vines and luminescent leaves that smothers the statue and sends trailers dozens of feet down nearby intersecting tunnels. The plant produces a deep red fruit that temporarily enhances psionic abilities in those who consume it. However, the nature of the enhancement is random, and it comes at the cost of prophetic nightmares of mind-shattering intensity.

BALIC, CITY OF SAILS

"In Balic, we treasure our freedoms. You are free to speak as you will. Of course, Andropinis is also free to speak as he will, which might very well be an order for your execution. Choose your words with care, my friend."

—Darian, a patrician of Balic

A wealthy mercantile city-state on the shores of the Estuary of the Forked Tongue, Balic is under the control of Dictator Andropinis, a sorcerer-king who claims to have been elected to his throne over seven hundred years ago. Despite the dictator's grip, Balic is perhaps the most affluent city-state in the Tyr Region and is home to powerful merchant houses that bring great wealth to Balicans fortunate enough to share in the prosperity. The business of Balic is business, and for the most part, Andropinis does not interfere in routine affairs of nobles or merchant emporiums.

The city is renowned for its democratic traditions. Balic's nobles are seated in a Chamber of Patricians that creates and maintains the code of laws, and its templars must stand for election to 10-year terms. The various professional guilds (and Balic's chapter of the Veiled Alliance, for that matter) conduct their business by taking votes and electing officers; even the dictator is, in theory, elected. Much of this democracy, however, is little more than an illusion. The office of dictator is held for life, and Andropinis has endured in his position now for centuries. Public debate and discourse is allowed, but only up to a point. Any direct criticism of the dictator or his templars is dealt with harshly, and the patricians learned long ago to pass only those laws that meet with the dictator's approval.

Balic enjoys a cultural heritage and a civic mythology dating back thousands of years, which finds expression in a public appreciation for poetry and drama. The mythology still lives in the form of powerful arcane vestiges; Andropinis and his templars are masters of manipulation. The cultural heritage is evident in the dozens of theaters throughout the city-state, which run the gamut from crowded, ramshackle stagehouses in the poorer quarters to magnificent amphitheaters in the noble districts. In Balic, talented playwrights and orators can win acclaim equal to that held by the greatest gladiators—as long as they steer clear of subject matter that the dictator's templars might find offensive.

BALICAN BACKGROUNDS

The far-flung interests of Balic's powerful merchant houses mean that Balican characters exist throughout the Tyr Region.

Associated Skills: Athletics, Streetwise

Language: Giant

Legionary: You served as a foot soldier in the army of Balic for a time. Legionaries who finish their terms honorably gain several privileges in the city-state, including the right to own land and hold certain offices. Did you complete your enlistment, or did you desert?

Patrician: You were born into one of Balic's noble families. Your family owns a large estate outside the city-state and holds a seat in the Chamber of Patricians. Perhaps you grew bored and turned to adventuring to find new challenges. Maybe you fell out of favor with your family or were disinherited. Or are you a person of conscience, determined to use your wealth to improve the lot of the less fortunate?

Silt Sailor: You spent your youth as a deckhand in Balic's fleet of silt schooners, working the trade routes in the Estuary of the Forked Tongue, the Silt Archipelago, and sometimes as far away as the Road of Fire. Traveling the Sea of Silt is dangerous—you have fought off giants and silt horrors and endured terrible dust storms. Why did you leave your last ship? Do you hope to buy your own vessel someday?

BALIC AT A GLANCE

The wealthiest of the Seven Cities, Balic is a mercantile power known for its democratic systems, although Dictator Andropinis is the true authority in the city-state.

Population: Roughly 24,000 people live in Balic, with more in the nearby countryside. About half the population is human. Dwarves, muls, elves, and half-elves are present in large numbers. Balic is also home to small numbers of minotaurs and half-giants.

Water: A system of five public wells and extensive subterranean cisterns supplies Balic with water. Most noble villas have their own cisterns. The city-state depends on the intermittent rainfall of the months of Sun Descending to replenish its water stores. In dry years, the praetors enforce strict water rationing.

Supplies: Balic's exports include grain, salt, olives, wine, livestock, leather, marble, and a small amount of copper.

Defense: Balic faces few threats from other city-states, but giants and desert raiders are drawn to the fields and manors outside the city walls. Five legions of one thousand soldiers each garrison the city and its fields. Most able-bodied free citizens are conscripted into the legions as young adults for three years of service.

Inns and Taverns: The Olive Tree, just off the Road of Legions in the Arena Precinct, offers cheap but secure lodgings for travelers. The Furled Sail is a rough, dangerous place that caters to the crew and passengers of silt skimmers moored in the harbor. The Thespian House in the Market Precinct, known for its bawdy productions, secretly serves as a meeting place for the Veiled Alliance.

BALIC'S POWER STRUCTURE

Most Balicans regard Andropinis as a necessary evil, resigning themselves to the fact that the dictator wields supreme power and isn't likely to surrender it. Andropinis routinely arranges the elections of templars he favors and directs the Chamber of Patricians to pass the laws he drafts. From time to time, he indulges idealists and reformers, allowing corrupt nobles or unsatisfactory templars to be indicted or voted out. However, the dictator retains absolute control over the city's legions and brooks no defiance of his personal authority.

PATRICIANS

Balic's nobles are known as patricians. The patrician class is composed of the leading landowning families; each family owns a slave-worked estate of grain fields, vineyards, olive groves, and pastures in the lands west of the city. Many of Balic's most prestigious public offices, such as military command and important templar positions, can be filled only by candidates of the patrician class, so the families amass a great deal of influence by placing their sons and daughters in public service.

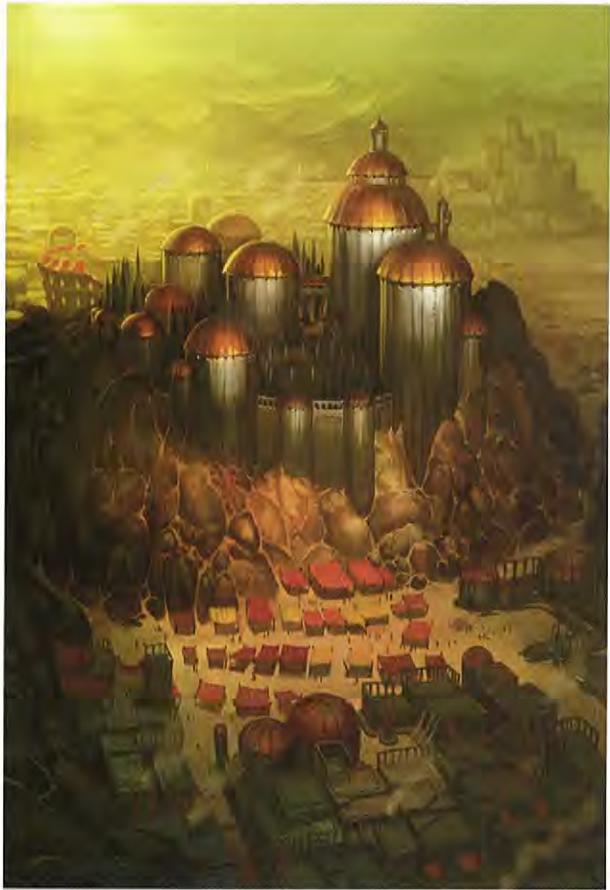
The dictator theoretically governs with the consent of the Chamber of Patricians (a legislative body made up of representatives from each family), but in practice, the patricians rarely challenge Andropinis. A charge of treason, justified or not, is all the excuse the dictator needs to strip a patrician family of its lands and offices and redistribute them elsewhere.

PRAETORS

Praetors are the templars of Balic. By popular vote, they are elected to their offices for 10-year terms. Once they have won their positions, Andropinis invests them with the magical power necessary to perform their duties. The dictator's minions carefully screen candidates and arrange voting districts and slates to produce the results that Andropinis desires. On occasion, an unwanted praetor is elected despite the dictator's arrangements; unfortunate accidents often befall such people shortly after they take office.

Praetors whose terms end without reelection or who are elevated in anticipation of offices they might one day hold serve at the discretion of Andropinis. The most important praetors in Balic, the high praetors, hold no particular office but stand high in the dictator's confidences.





MERCHANT HOUSES

Trade is the lifeblood of Balic, and the great merchant companies fill the dictator's coffers with coin. The streets surrounding the open market square known as the Agora are home to large emporiums from other city-states in the Tyr Region, including House Vordon of Tyr, House M'ke of Raam, and House Stel of Urik. The Agora is dominated by three major Balican merchant houses and a dozen or more small ones.

COMMONERS AND SLAVES

Many of Balic's common tradesfolk and artisans belong to guilds of varying power. Some guilds are strong enough to force nobles and merchants to heed their demands; for example, the Potters' Guild enforces high standards (and high prices) on Balic's distinctive pottery, ensuring that its members earn a good wage from selling the pieces they produce. Below the common citizens are the slaves, who make up 40 percent of the city-state's population. Slaves enjoy basic protections under Balic's laws, but the praetors enforce these laws only in the most egregious cases of cruelty.

EXPLORING BALIC

Balic lies near the eastern end of the Balican Peninsula, a range of arid hills between the arms of the Estuary of the Forked Tongue. The slopes of the hills are mild and verdant by Athasian standards; grain

fields, vineyards, olive groves, and progressively drier pastures extend about thirty miles west of the city-state's walls before giving way to stony barrens and brown mountain peaks. Large, slave-worked noble estates along the peninsula provide most of Balic's food supply, but they are threatened by desert raiders and by giants who lair in the islands of the Estuary. Most travelers bound for the city-state follow the Road of Legions, the major passage along the spine of the peninsula. Balic's wall cuts off the tip of the peninsula, running about two miles between the arms of the Estuary.

The city-state sits on a natural harbor formed by high hills ringing a bay of silt. Many ages past, the harbor was a seaport, but the water is long gone. Where proud galleys and dromonds once rocked gently in their moorings, a great fleet of silt skimmers now takes shelter. Scores of the wheeled sailing vessels call Balic home, carrying the commerce of the local merchant houses from Altaruk and Ledopolus all the way to the distant Silt Archipelago or the shores by Raam and Draj. Within the walled harbor of the military shipyard known as the Arsenal lies the pride of the dictator's fleet—a dozen silt dromonds, light warships fitted with psionically powered helms that levitate and can navigate silt of any depth.

Balic is divided into five administrative precincts plus the Megaleneon, which is the civic center, both literally and figuratively.

ARENA PRECINCT

Travelers following the Road of Legions to Balic arrive at the Great Gate, the heavily guarded main entrance. Beyond lies the Arena Precinct, an area of artisans, workshops, and small stores. The Road of Legions cuts through the middle of the precinct and ends at the plaza surrounding the Criterion, Balic's spectacular arena. As one ventures north or south from the main road, the streets grow more cluttered and the people grow poorer.

DARIAN HARAXES

Praetor Personality

A bitter, cruel human warlock of middle years, Praetor Darian is a newly appointed templar in charge of the effort to expose and destroy the Veiled Alliance in Balic. Relentless and implacable, he plans to spearhead a crackdown on people and businesses suspected of having ties to the Alliance. First, he needs information, so Praetor Darian is searching for potential Alliance recruits whom he can turn into his own agents before they are contacted by the rebellious group. Visitors—especially those who have magic items or unusual powers—are high on his list. He isn't above leveling false charges against someone who might be useful and threatening death or enslavement unless that person agrees to serve as his agent.

The Criterion: Standing under the white, western bluffs of the Megaleneon, the arena known as the Criterion is the pride of Balic. Its marble facade and great awning tower over the nearby area. Gladiator slaves live in secure barracks east of the arena.

House Jarko: The compound of this merchant house stands only a block from the Criterion. House Jarko's agents specialize in buying and training slaves destined for the arena, and each day, scores of prospective gladiators complete drills in the compound's courtyard from dawn to dusk.

GUILDER'S PRECINCT

North of the Arena Precinct stretches another commoner district that reaches to the shores of the silt. This district is home to many artisans and workshops, including potters, leatherworkers, stonecutters, weavers, and limners. Balic's professions are organized into large guilds. The crowded taverns and stagehouses of the Gilders' Precinct are full of voices muttering against the dictator and the wealthy patricians—not to mention spies who report what they hear to the praetors.

HARBOR PRECINCT

Between the Agora and the Estuary of the Forked Tongue is Balic's Harbor Precinct. Like the Gilders' Precinct, it is cluttered with the dwellings and workshops of common folk, but it is also home to several large shipyards, warehouses, and a legion barracks.

The Arsenal: Balic's military shipyard is called the Arsenal. The silt dromonds of the dictator's fleet are constructed in this walled compound, which also functions as a legion barracks and a fortress guarding the harbor against attacks by giants.

The Slave Auction: A small plaza in the middle of the Harbor Precinct is the site of Balic's slave auction, which is open three days of each week. Because the city takes a cut of each slave's sale price, it is illegal to sell slaves except at the auction.

MARKET PRECINCT

This part of the city is dominated by emporiums and warehouses of the prevailing merchant houses. Some of these compounds are small cities within the city, housing hundreds of mercantile agents and laborers.

The Agora: At the eastern foot of the bluff adjoining the Megaleneon is the Agora, Balic's central marketplace and the location of its primary merchant emporiums: House Rees, House Tomblador, and House Wavir.

The Elven Market: The Elven Market is barred from operating within the Agora, so elf vendors fill the streets and alleys near that location. Visitors heading for the Agora face a gauntlet of elf peddlers and pickpockets before they reach the main bazaar.

House Wavir: The largest of Balic's houses, Wavir maintains emporiums in all the cities of the Tyr Region. Wavir is unusual among the major merchant

houses because it refuses to engage in slavery. All who work for Wavir are free, and the house hires exceptional agents to protect its interests throughout the Tyr Region.

House Tomblador: The sworn enemy of House Wavir, Tomblador gladly deals in the slave trade that Wavir forsakes. Tomblador was the preeminent merchant house of Balic until Wavir arose and displaced it a century ago. Today, Tomblador controls most of Balic's silt skimmers and the Estuary trade.

House Rees: Driven solely by a quest for profits, Rees is known for its counting-houses—lending institutions that invest in smaller businesses and squeeze them brutally for years afterward. Many old patrician families have ties to House Rees or owe it money.

VILLA PRECINCT

The Villa Precinct, Balic's noble district, spreads over the slopes of the cypress-dotted hills south of the Arena Precinct and the Megaleneon. High above the haze of silt that chokes the lower-lying precincts stand the palaces of the patricians, surrounded by orchards and guard barracks.

Villa Nauripides: A small estate near Balic's wall, the seat of the once-dominant Nauripides family now serves as the headquarters for the local Veiled Alliance. The silver-haired human noble Zaethus Nauripides has supported the Alliance for forty years, and his father funded the group before him. The playwright Ramphion is the elected leader of the Alliance; much of the support given by the Nauripides family is disguised as patronage for his plays.

Mount Laeron: The brown peak of Mount Laeron rises a thousand feet above Balic's eastern precincts, shielding the city from the dusty wind that blows up the Estuary on most mornings. A handful of ruins lie on Laeron's slopes, and stories persist that their vaults and crypts hide long-lost treasures.

THE MEGALENEON

The physical and political center of Balic is the Megaleneon, a high, rocky hill overlooking the harbor. Andropinis rules from the White Palace, a majestic structure at the top of the hill. The Chamber of Patricians and the barracks of the First Legion sit farther down the slope of the Megaleneon.

Temple of Heroes: Near the Chamber of Patricians stands the Temple of Heroes, a shrine to the great figures of Balic's civic mythology. Residents of the city-state don't worship these ancient heroes as gods. Instead, the figures form the basis for a collection of fables that illustrate Balican virtues such as courage, dutifulness, resourcefulness, and cleverness.

The Praetorium: Most of Balic's civic business takes place in the Praetorium, a large building housing the administrative offices and quarters of the praetors. A strong, secure prison lies in the dungeons below the templars' offices.

DRAJ, CITY OF THE MOONS

"You, friend, have been given a great honor. To see the Father is a rare blessing bestowed on only the worthiest souls. What's that you say? Sacrifice? Oh, yes—yes, indeed, you will be sacrificed. Now don't struggle so. To have your heart claimed by a god—what a gift!"

—Huemac, moon priest attendant

Draj is a backwater city-state held firmly in the grasp of a mad sorcerer-king. Draj has never known peace, for warfare and conflict are among its highest ideals. Warriors hold power, and their vaunted status is something all aspire to attain. When not waging war against Raam or defending their home from reprisals or conquest, Draji raiders prowl the surrounding wastes, plundering villages for fresh slaves to replace those expended in labor or sacrifice.

Draj owes its sinister nature to its sorcerer-king. Tectuktitlay, the Father of Life, is a pervasive presence in the city-state. His visage adorns walls and buildings, his symbol ripples on banners, and his templars (known as moon priests) are everywhere, enforcing his laws and instructing the people in his perfect divinity. No one would suggest it, but in fact, the sorcerer-king's features have little majesty. Tectuktitlay has narrow eyes, a wide nose, heavy jowls, and round, pouty lips. Other regal images include the feathered serpent found on banners carried by soldiers in war. The jasuan, or ambush drake, also has a place of prominence in Draj.

Tectuktitlay's influence is so insidious that most Draji dare not question his divinity, doubt the deeds attributed to him, or disobey the commands given by his moon priests. All citizens know that dissent invites the sorcerer-king's ire, and his anger can be quelled only by blood sacrifice.

DRAJI BACKGROUNDS

Few of Draj's people travel abroad, except in war parties. Most residents of the city-state are insular and suspicious of others.

Associated Skills: Religion, Stealth

Language: Abyssal

Calmec Scribe: Your family belongs to one of the scholar, or calmec, clans. You have studied writing, history, astrology, and theology. Few calmec scribes wander far from Draj, but you might have dabbled in forbidden arts recorded in your clan's ancient texts, or perhaps you discovered warnings of a dire catastrophe to come in the horoscopes you cast. What are you searching for in the deserts beyond your city-state?

Jasuan Knight: You were born in one of the heroic clans as a noble of Draj. You spent your youth scouring the surrounding lands for enemies, monsters, spies, and captives to bring back for sacrifice.

You might have been sent out into the world to meet the demands of a horoscope drawn for you by the calmec scribes, or perhaps you fled Draj to avoid a blood feud with another clan. Were you blamed for the death of a fellow jasuan knight and exiled, or did the bloody cruelty of the moon priests finally push you into a crisis of conscience?

Pochte Trader: You were raised in a pochte clan, a family group dedicated to mercantile pursuits. Tsalaxa is the largest and best-known group outside Draj, but a number of other pochte clans exist. Whereas most Draji are xenophobic, you have dealt with foreigners all your life, and you understand their ways. Pochte traders have a reputation as sly, ruthless dealers who dabble in espionage and intrigue; do you live up to that stereotype, or are you more honest? Are you always looking for the next chance to barter, or have you left your caste behind in your adventures?

DRAJ'S POWER STRUCTURE

The basic social organization of Draj is the clan, a group of related families that practice the same trade or craft. Most Draji are raised to follow in the footsteps of the forebears of their clan. Each clan is assigned a portion of the fields surrounding Draj and

DRAJ AT A GLANCE

Commanding the landscape for miles around, blood-drenched Draj is home to a warlike people whose loyalty to their sorcerer-king is as unwavering as their ferocity.

Population: About 18,000 people live in Draj, plus many more—mostly slaves and guards—in the surrounding fields. Humans account for just over half the population of the city-state. Elves and dwarves are the largest minorities; many dwarves toil as slaves in the fields. A few muls, halflings, thri-kreen, and others round out the populace.

Water: The boggy mudflats surrounding Draj release little usable water, but deep wells in the Gift tap into the water table below.

Supplies: Draj is an agricultural center, with abundant grain and hemp fields that can feed the city-state many times over. Textiles such as cotton, linen, and silk are major exports. The city's distance from Tyr means that some commodities, specifically metal goods, are hard to acquire.

Defense: The city-state has an enormous military. Some five hundred jasuan knights make up the core of the defense and receive support from another three thousand lesser warriors. The moon priests can press slaves into service if they see the need to do so.

Inns and Taverns: Unfriendly to travelers, Draj offers few inns and fewer taverns. Most accommodations are run by House Tsalaxa, cater to caravans, and stand near the Golden Moon Gate.

a share of slaves taken in raids on other city-states. Prestigious clans receive better plots in the fields and hold more slaves.

Whether or not they believe that Tectuktitalay is a divine being, almost all Draji embrace him as their ruler and count his presence as a boon. The Father of Life delegates most of the city-state's administrative concerns to his templars. The elite warrior caste known as the jasuan knights supports the templars. All other residents of the city-state are merchants, artisans, or slaves.

TECTUKTITLAY

According to the story told by the moon priests, the moons Ral and Guthay pitied the world and gave to it their son, a god in mortal flesh named Tectuktitalay. The god led his chosen people out of suffering and to a new home. With a word, he repaired the lands, turning sand to soil and bringing forth lush growth. With a sweep of his hand, he raised a city to give shelter to his followers. His work complete, Tectuktitalay made ready to depart, but the mortals beseeched him to stay and protect them from jealous enemies who would claim his gift for themselves. The Father of Life consented, and the people built for him a palace in which he would dwell forever.

Actually, Tectuktitalay is no god. He's "merely" a sorcerer-king, and a middling one at that. He is petty, spiteful, and ravenous for power. Never content with his holdings, he constantly looks to the west, probing his rivals' lands and defenses for weakness so he can send forth his legions and expand his empire.

MOON PRIESTS

Draj's templars are known as moon priests. Part bureaucrats, part warriors, and part religious police, they use fear and propaganda to ensure Tectuktitalay's continued reign. Their primary purpose is to control the population and observe a bewildering variety of rites and celebrations throughout the year. The moon priests teach the Draji that bountiful harvests will continue only as long as Tectuktitalay and the moons are pleased.

MAXLIXOCO, HIGH MOON PRIEST

Moon Priest Personality

Maxlixoco is the High Moon Priest, chief of the cult that deifies Tectuktitalay. He is a stringent, petty fanatic and brutally punishes lesser priests who aren't sufficiently attentive to their duties. A withered old man of 80, Maxlixoco is the son of Tectuktitalay, who saw to his child's rise through the ranks of the templars. The High Moon Priest is a spiteful madman who earnestly believes his father's propaganda and brooks not the slightest expression of doubt about Tectuktitalay in his presence.

As is true of templars in other city-states, the moon priests have a hierarchy. The lesser templars oversee the fields and slaves; those of higher rank attend the sorcerer-king, with all the luxury and excess that such a position carries.

JASUAN KNIGHTS

Draji respect strength and ruthlessness, qualities personified by their warriors. The jasuan knights, named for Tectuktitalay's beloved pet drakes, embody these principles. Jasuan knights are warriors born into one of the city's heroic clans, the descendants of great Draji heroes of long ago. Unlike the nobles of other city-states, Draji nobles aren't necessarily wealthy landowners. Their riches lie in their membership in the city's foremost clans, and their trade is war.

Each noble clan claims the allegiance of certain artisan or merchant clans. Warriors of these lower clans are bound to "their" jasuans and fight under their command.

EXPLORING DRAJ

Other city-states have larger populations, but only Raam rivals Draj's sprawling size. Draj commands the Tyr Region's easternmost extent, where the old Road of Kings curls east and then northward to legendary lands and the world's edge beyond. The rich mudflats that surround the city-state for miles give Draj its strength and resources. Grain and hemp grow abundantly in fields worked by slaves day and night under the moon priests' watchful eyes.

A causeway of stone cuts through the muddy fields and brackish ponds. Along this narrow path travel House Tsalaxa's merchant caravans, laden with flour, rope, textiles, and other goods, casting a deep shadow across the smaller clans that struggle against this mercantile giant—such as Draj's Elven Market, which consists of a string of shabby little tents and booths along the causeway. The ancient stone road cuts through the fields until it comes to the outer city, which is called the Gift. No wall protects the Gift; a wide, muddy ditch filled with sharpened stakes and vermin is the only barrier. Javelin-armed guards patrol the perimeter of this moat. The only route across is a stone bridge, its footings sunk deep into the mud.

The Gift is a lively community that fills the space between the ditch and the 60-foot-tall walls that surround the inner city, known as Two Moon City. In the Gift, roads wend among clay buildings that are stacked atop one another like children's blocks. Wood or hemp ladders offer access to the upper stories and roofs. Here and there lie public squares with great wells and the fat, round towers of grain silos.

The Golden Moon Gate is the only passage from the Gift into Two Moon City. Upon entering Tectuktitalay's inner domain, the first sight that visitors see

is the Father and Master Temple, an enormous step-pyramid that commands the entire city-state. At its peak is the God's Altar, where Tectuktitlay sacrifices slaves, dissenters, and enemy soldiers by tearing out their hearts and discarding their corpses to the arena hundreds of feet below. Channels cut into the pyramid's sides carry blood down to ground level and into the compound. On days of sacrifice, crimson streams trickle throughout the inner city.

THE FIELDS OF PLENTY

The moon priests divide the mudflats into segregated fields that are given over to grain and hemp production. This system allows them to manage crops more efficiently and keep the slave laborers under their control. Each plot features a small encampment that includes a barn or a granary, a slave barracks, a communal hall for meals, and an altar dedicated to Tectuktitlay. Moon priests and overseers from the clan that owns the plot patrol the borders to monitor work and keep the slaves docile.

Avenue of Conquest: When the Road of Kings enters the Fields of Plenty, it becomes the Avenue of Conquest. Paved in stones and raised above the surrounding fields, this path is the easiest and deadliest route into the city-state. Many would-be invaders, unable to maneuver in the boggy grainfields,

have found defeat as they pushed down the road, facing arrows, spears, and hit-and-run attacks from defenders hidden in the fields.

House Tsalaxa Compound: Tsalaxa is the largest and most powerful merchant house operating out of Draj. Reviled by other merchant houses, Tsalaxa doesn't let bad publicity interfere with its business. Ydris Tsalaxa, the house patriarch, runs his operations from a walled villa just outside the city-state in the Fields of Plenty. Lax guards patrol the grounds, but their boredom is not an invitation for skulduggery. The estate has magic wards, myriad traps, and hidden guardians all designed to make short work of enterprising thieves.

THE GIFT

Draj's outer city, the Gift, sprawls between a wide outer moat crawling with cilapses (large psionic centipedes) and the walls that surround Two Moon City. The Gift is as vulnerable as it is crowded; most Draji citizens call this area home. It is a tangled mess of narrow, twisting streets and squat mud-brick homes. Since space is limited, many homes are stacked on top of one another, and owners climb wooden or rope ladders to reach the upper levels. Small, square windows allow some breeze, but many families spend their evenings on the homes' flat roofs.



Flower War Field: The great field fronting the Golden Moon Gate hosts an annual contest known as the Flower War. Warriors from clans all over the Gift dress in full battle regalia, as colorful as the blossoms they trample. They fight one another in free-for-alls, duels, and team matches, pounding their rivals with stone clubs. The best might win a place among the jasuan knights. The worst face shame or exile, with most winding up as corpses in the ditch.

Bountiful Market: One of the few open areas in the Gift, the Bountiful Market is as far as foreigners can venture into Draj without permission from the moon priests. This colorful bazaar, positioned at the end of the Avenue of Conquest, hosts traders and vendors from all over the known world. Established merchant houses keep their emporiums and warehouses along the market's edges. Grains and textiles dominate the trade here, but there is also a growing pottery market.

House of the Mind: The House of the Mind is the preeminent psionic institution in the Tyr Region. Students from the Seven Cities come to study at the academy, which is led by its headmaster, Ixtabai the Blind. Tectuktlay takes pride in the House of the Mind and shows an unusual interest in its affairs.

TWO MOON CITY

The heart of Draj is Two Moon City, surrounded by walls 60 feet tall. Here, the sorcerer-king passes the centuries among his best warriors, his most loyal priests, and his most valuable treasures.

Golden Moon Gate: Only one gate grants access from the Gift into Two Moon City. Positioned at the edge of a red brick plaza, Golden Moon Gate consists of massive wooden doors inlaid with silver tracery and glittering obsidian. Jasuan knights monitor the gate, and slaves spend long hours polishing and scrubbing the doors to maintain their impressive appearance. Beyond the gate is the Avenue of the Moons, a long, dark tunnel that runs to the Palace of Gladiatorial Combat, where gladiators are paraded before their matches, and on to encircle the Father and Master Temple.

Temples of Ral and Guthay: Dwarfed by the Father and Master Temple, but no less beautiful, are twin temples on either side of the entrance to Two Moon City. Each structure is a lavish shrine where citizens make offerings to the moon gods and beseech their blessings. The shrines also serve as the main barracks for the moon priests.

Royal Menagerie: Tectuktlay collects creatures and stables them in a large park inside Two Moon City. The specimens range from the curious to the horrific. The jasuan breeding pens are the sorcerer-king's special pride; he works to replenish the fierce ambush drakes that once hunted the Fields of Plenty. On occasion, Tectuktlay orders the moon priests to turn certain creatures loose in the streets, and any wayfarer unfortunate enough to encounter them becomes one more sacrifice.

Palace of Gladiatorial Combat: This arena is a grand amphitheater-style coliseum with a spacious floor. Tectuktlay's likeness appears everywhere as bas-reliefs and friezes capture the sorcerer-king's most celebrated achievements. The residents of Draj can observe the games from comfortable balcony seats.

Tectuktlay has a habit of discarding slaves, functionaries, and anyone who displeases him from the height of his temple, which abuts the arena. The falling bodies splatter and break as they smash against the arena floor and the statuary of the sorcerer-king. Tectuktlay forbids the moon priests from removing the corpses; their broken remains serve as a reminder of his power.

FATHER AND MASTER TEMPLE

Nearly 300 feet high, the Father and Master Temple dominates Two Moon City. The structure is an enormous step-pyramid that serves as palace and treasury. A bloody altar crowns the top, which is the site of Tectuktlay's unrelenting sacrifices.

The temple contains over twenty levels between the ground floor and the peak. The lower levels hold administrative offices and the sorcerer-king's throne room. Barracks, slave quarters, kitchens, and storage chambers fill out the middle. The upper levels are the residences of Tectuktlay, his concubines, and his many children. Vaults in the highest levels hold the sorcerer-king's treasures, protected by bitter curses and magic wards.

THE BLACK GUARD

Tectuktlay fears no thief, for the constructs known as the Black Guard protect his innermost vaults and chambers. Created centuries ago, each of these obsidian monstrosities stands nearly 15 feet tall and resembles the sorcerer-king. Legend holds that Draj could once field an army of these constructs, but in the last century or so, no one has ever seen more than five at a time when the sorcerer-king parades them through the city.

ESTUARY OF THE FORKED TONGUE

"I've known giants to move the shoal markers, hoping that a silt skimmer might strand herself in deep silt. Then they'll kill you and eat you, or they'll charge you half your cargo to pull you out of the silt. Not sure which is worse."

—Nimora Hestian, Balican skimmer captain

A great arm of the Sea of Silt that nearly slices through the Tyr Region, the Estuary of the Forked Tongue is home to dozens of small villages, trading posts, and nomad camps. This inlet reaches well over four hundred miles from the isle of Waverly at its mouth to the trading town of Altaruk at the head of its northern arm; the city-state of Balic sits near the midpoint of the Forked Tongue. The estuary serves as a trade route for silt schooners out of Balic, and many of the villages and tribes here fall under the influence of Balican merchant houses.

Life along the estuary is more or less free of the oppression of the sorcerer-kings, but it is hardly easy. Marauding giants, deadly predators, dust storms, and desperate bandits make the Forked Tongue as dangerous as any other place on Athas. Savage raiding tribes roam the outskirts of the region and sometimes attack small, weakly defended villages and outposts. For this reason, most Forked Tongue settlements are protected by strong walls and determined warriors.

FORKED TONGUE BACKGROUNDS

The people of the Forked Tongue include every race common to Athas. Human villagers and merchants, dwarf miners and artisans, elf nomads, and goliath tribesfolk live along its shores. Along the northern edge of the Endless Sand Dunes roam the Tamwar, fractious tribes of nomadic human and genasi herders. Given the trade that passes up and down the estuary, characters native to this area are likely to take on employment with various merchant houses and could end up anywhere in the Tyr Region.

Associated Skills: Acrobatics, Endurance

Language: Dwarven or Giant

Merchant/Trader: You are (or were) employed by a Forked Tongue trading post, perhaps as a local guide, as muscle for a major merchant house, or as an independent trader. Maybe you became involved in a feud between rival merchant houses, or perhaps your post was plundered by raiders. Were you a clerk, a mercenary, or a laborer? Do you still have contacts with the house that employed you?

Ruin Gleaner: Countless small ruins litter the lands around the estuary. You search out the places of the ancients and pick through the dust and debris in search of something worth selling. Do you know of sites that no one else has ever found? Did you find

something too valuable—something that powerful people took away from you?

Village Speaker: You come from a remote estuary village where the moods of the elemental spirits are a matter of life and death. You might have been apprenticed as a child to the village elder or spirit-talker, or perhaps the spirits chose you later in life because of a traumatic event. Do you treasure your gifts, or are you haunted by them? What led you to leave your native tribe or home village? Are you driven by powers beyond your control, or are you a humble healer?

GIANT HOLDS

Many giants inhabit the isles of the estuary. Some are friendly, but most giants regard smaller folk as easy pickings and waylay travelers at every chance. Hill giants, stone giants, and beast giants are the most common of their kind found along the Forked Tongue. The different kinds get along well enough if a strong leader is present, but they fall to bickering and feuding otherwise.

Giant holds might be cave complexes, ruined towns, or clusters of large, crude mud huts, and they are usually surrounded by thorny brush walls that form palisades. A typical hold is home to three to twelve giants; monstrous vassals such as brohgs, goliaths, minotaurs, or ogres; beasts kept as pets; and a handful of miserable thralls (usually dwarves, elves, or humans). Chiefs of giant holds take titles such as "king" or "lord" and levy tribute from nearby tribes or settlements of lesser races.

EXPLORING THE ESTUARY

Throughout most of the estuary, a belt of shallows lies beneath the silt, hugging the shoreline. Usually, the shallows are a few hundred yards wide, but in some spots they extend for miles out from the shore, providing hidden paths across narrows or to distant islands. These shallows are too deep for human-sized travelers to wade, but silt skimmers and giants can manage them easily enough. Most skimmer captains take on paying passengers, but they rarely stop anywhere except well-known villages and trading posts. After all, a skimmer is a rich prize, and the best defense is to keep moving and remain in silt that is too deep for most raiders to cross.

At Balic, the estuary splits into two great arms—the North Fork and the South Fork. The North Fork is larger and more heavily populated, its shores dotted with tiny villages and outposts.

DRAGON'S PALATE

This narrow island consists of a single range of high, steep mountains. The north face sees a lot of rainfall by Athasian standards, and thin streams cascade

down the slopes to form mudflats in the dust. Balic maintains several small, well-protected forts on the western end of the island to guard against the giants of the Dragon's Palate, but these outposts are often attacked. A beast giant known as the Skull Wearer is the most powerful of the island's chieftains. He makes his home in an ancient minotaur stronghold known as Marrowgate, which lies in the mountains near the center of the island. The Skull Wearer is said to be possessed by the ghosts of the skulls that hang around his neck, and he wields dangerous magical powers.

LEDOPOLUS

The twin towns of North Ledopolus (population 1,000) and South Ledopolus (population 2,000) sit on the shores opposite the island of Ledo. Many dwarves live in these towns, and they are engaged in a great project—the construction of bridges to span the northern fork of the estuary and replace the silt skimmer ferry. The dwarf Bruthambar, chief of the Rockcutter clan, is the head builder and master of the towns. He is a pugnacious ex-mercenary whose bluff good cheer is wearing thin after years of setbacks and obstacles. The hill giants that inhabit Ledo, a key stepping-stone for any bridge across the estuary, have already torn down two previous bridging attempts. The giants believe that the bridge is a scheme to gain access to their island's valuable flint deposits. Attempts to bribe them into allowing the construction have proved fruitless. Competing merchant houses make the situation even more difficult. The Wavir and Inika trade posts in Ledopolus favor the bridge, but the head of the Tomblador outpost secretly fans the giants' fears.

MOUNTAINS OF THE TEETH

A low range of dry, knife-edged peaks, the Mountains of the Teeth are home to hostile tribes of tareks and minotaurs. The mountains also hide several mysterious, ancient monasteries—the strongholds of rakshasa

princes. Ranging out from these isolated retreats, rakshasa spies roam the Tyr Region, secretly plotting to turn the sorcerer-kings against one another and enslave the city-states.

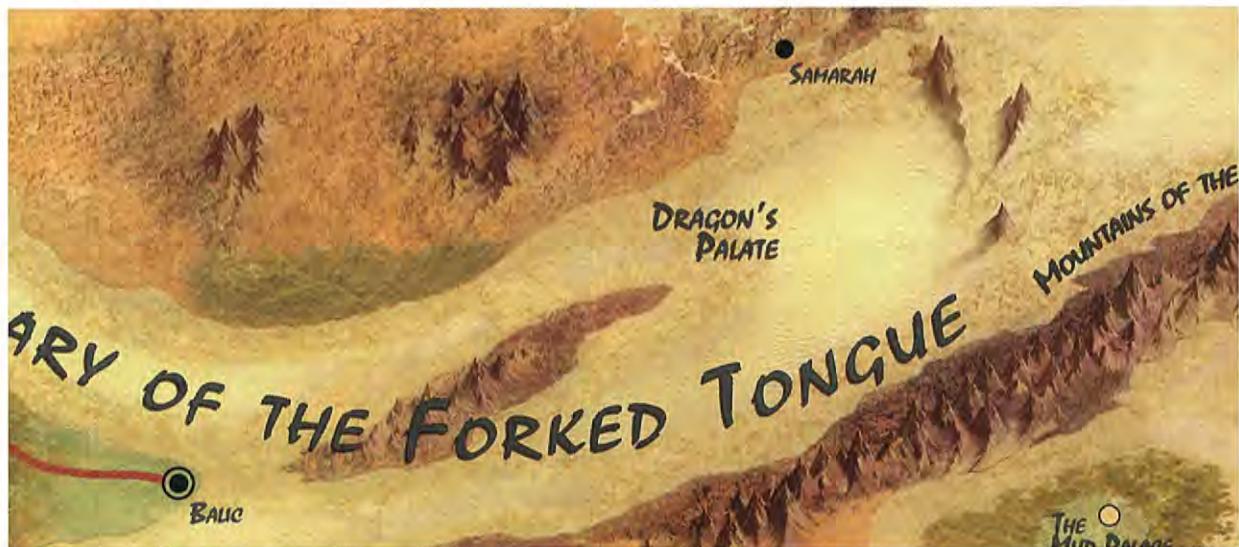
SIREN'S SONG

An evil power haunts this island in the South Fork. Travelers who come too close sometimes fall under the spell of a strange, beautiful song that calls them to the isle. However, the silt surrounding the island is too deep for most creatures to wade, so many victims lured by the song blunder out to their deaths in the dust. Most people assume that a terrible monster makes its lair on the island, but the truth is stranger yet: The Lands Within the Winds lie near to Athas here. Hidden in the fey echo of the island is the eladrin hold of Caerl Vhismyr, domain of Naemon sil Vhismyr, the Veiled Prince. The deadly song is part of a maze of mirage and enchantment that eladrin mages wove long ago around the shifting borders of the Lands Within the Wind to guard their isolated realm.

WAVERLY

In the center of the large isle of Waverly is an ancient city of the same name that fell during the wars of the Red Age. The battles depopulated the city, but its high stone walls and gates remain stout and whole after thousands of years. The central plaza features a grand fountain of marble fashioned in the likeness of a creature that has the body of a female human and a snakelike tail; the fountain still sprays water into the air in a shimmering arc. Old waterways crisscross Waverly, feeding a fertile scrub plain. Dozens of sailing ships lie half buried in a harbor at the shore of the silt; their wooden hulls and decks became petrified long ago.

Except for flocks of wild erdlus and hives of wild kanks, the island appears deserted. But according to legend, a staggering hoard of silver lies buried in a treasure vault somewhere beneath the city.



THE FOREST RIDGE

"Paradise on top of the world, my left foot! Are you such a fool that you believe every slave rumor you hear? If it were true, don't you think we'd all be living there instead of in this dusty pit?"

—Dura Mandic, Tyrian glass crafter

Rumors and reports filter across the Tablelands, whispers about a vast and untamed wilderness beyond the Ringing Mountains where rain falls every day and trees grow so tall and thick that the sun struggles to shine through the canopy. Most Athasians doubt that such a fantastical place could exist on their dying world, but exist it does. Beneath the mighty peaks of the Ringing Mountains is the Forest Ridge, a region unlike any other on Athas. It is a wild, verdant land of dense jungles choked with vines, bracken, brambles, and countless species of animals and plants. Here one can find a glimpse of the world as it should have been.

But for all its abundance, wonder, and plentiful water, the Forest Ridge is no haven. The dim light shining through the tangled boughs does little to reveal the dangers lurking in the shadows, hidden behind beautiful colors. Competition in the jungle is fierce, and the denizens must adapt or be devoured. Deadly predators—both animals and plants—camouflage themselves in a hundred ways in the dense canopy and undergrowth.

Like much of the rest of Athas, the Forest Ridge is filled with ruins. Dizzying mountain roads, mighty colossi, and hidden citadels carved by ancient hands lie unexplored in the jungles, remnants of a long-lost halfling civilization.

FOREST RIDGE BACKGROUNDS

The most notorious inhabitants of the Forest Ridge are the halflings, who gather in tiny settlements scattered through the jungle like dewdrops. They thrive in the perilous forest, ambushing anyone they deem to be interlopers. They use poisoned weapons, booby traps, and strange magic to confound and kill their enemies. Those who fall into halfling hands are rarely seen again.

Associated Skills: Nature, Perception

Acclimated Trader: You grew up as a trader dealing with the halfling tribes and were introduced to the Forest Ridge by an older relative or a mentor. You are a friend to one or more halfling tribes and consider yourself as much a native of the region as they are. Who first brought you to the Forest Ridge, and why? Do you still have the trust of the halflings? What lessons have you learned from the jungle?

Liberator: Too many halflings have found themselves enslaved by the wicked sorcerer-kings, and it is time to free them at last. Have any of your friends or family been taken? Do you know who troubles your tribe and how those enemies found you? How do you plan to free the oppressed halflings?

Spirit Guided: The jungle spirits whisper in your dreams, warning about a coming cataclysm. Will the catastrophe affect your people, or those living in the lands below? Are the spirits aggressive or friendly? Do they frighten you? Have they always spoken to you, or is this communication a recent development?

HALFLING TRIBES

Scores of halfling tribes dwell in the jungle. These halflings are an ancient people with a rich culture, far removed from their reputation as primitive cannibals living in squalor. The halflings of the Forest Ridge hold a special reverence for the primal spirits of the land—which are more numerous and aware here than anywhere else on Athas—and see themselves as the protectors of the forest. In every tribe, powerful shamans and druids stand close to the chieftain.

Halflings are not all bloodthirsty cannibals. Some tribes consist of murderous savages who gleefully devour travelers, but others are open to trading with lowlanders who treat them with respect. Most halflings are wary of outsiders and jealous of their territory (sometimes lethally so). A typical tribe has little contact with people from beyond its forest refuge, so it regards uninvited travelers who blunder into its territory as fair game for the stewpot.

Usually, the halflings seek to capture intruders alive and present the exotic catch to their village and king. The more reasonable tribes give their prisoners a chance to explain why they shouldn't be eaten; the more savage ones torture their captives for sport.

THE FOREST COLOSSI

The Forest Ridge's eastern marches are protected by a chain of colossi half buried in the jungle, great statues that anchor an ancient primal ward against defiling magic. Halfling shamans say that their ancestors created the ward to safeguard their homeland from the ravages of the Cleansing Wars, and that to this day the defiler kings of the lowlands cannot defeat it. If the ward still functions, it does not appear to prevent typical defiling magic from working. However, defilers in the Forest Ridge often find that the jungle turns against them. Savage predators, carnivorous plants, and deadly snares beset those who use defiling magic in the Forest Ridge.

EXPLORING THE FOREST RIDGE

The Forest Ridge is more properly described as a great plateau or highland. Most of the region lies at an elevation approaching 10,000 feet, and the air is 30 to 40 degrees cooler than in the lowlands of the Tyr Region. The Ringing Mountains intercept the prevailing westerly winds and the little moisture they carry. As a traveler climbs from the Tablelands through the passes of the mountain range, walls of clouds bunch up behind the peaks ahead, and the rumble of thunder echoes in the distance. Farther west, the ridge steadily descends thousands of feet to meet the scrub plains of the Western Hinterlands, and the climate grows progressively hotter and drier until the trees finally give out.

OGO

The town of Ogo is home to a prosperous tribe of about four thousand halflings. At its heart stands a massive, ruined step-pyramid that has stood for as long as the town lorekeepers have recorded. A shrine at the base of the structure houses the Spirit Oracle, a female halfling druid of unknown abilities who spends much of her time in deep communion with primal powers. Such is her reputation that even individuals from beyond the Forest Ridge seek out her far-seeing advice.

The remainder of Ogo is composed of a scattering of stone and wooden buildings amid open-air plazas. The halflings here sometimes deal with outsiders and are less likely than other clans to grab visitors and tie them up for dinner. Every year, King Urga-Zoltapl sends a levy of two hundred halfling warriors to King Hamanu in Urik in exchange for a shipment of obsidian weapons and tools. The warriors who choose to return to Ogo after their stint in Urik have a more cosmopolitan view of the world, and since this arrangement has been ongoing for the past few years, hundreds of halflings in Ogo share this experience.

THE CRYSTAL FOREST

The trees and plants in this section of the Forest Ridge were transmuted to translucent mineral centuries ago as a side effect of a battle between an arcane defiler and a druid. In the years since, many of the tallest trees have fallen and shattered, creating a field of razor-sharp crystal spikes across the few square miles of this lifeless zone. Creatures made of conglomerate mineral shards stalk the Crystal Forest and sometimes venture beyond its edge, searching for prey.

At the center of the region stands an obsidian plateau that hosts a ruined cliff dwelling. Ghost winds and spirits howl about the plateau, and ancient magic wards yet burn. Those who stand atop the plateau find their flesh slowly hardening to lifeless mineral and must flee before the change becomes complete.



TEMPLE OF THE SKY SERPENT

The top five or six “steps” of a great pyramid rise out of the jungle here; most of the structure remains buried beneath the forest floor. The pyramid is usually sealed tight, but persistent explorers occasionally bypass its magic wards and gain entry. Invariably, they report a maze of stone tunnels that seems to go on forever, opening onto empty chamber after empty chamber. But when the two moons of Athas align in a certain way above the pyramid’s apex, the sealed entrances gape wide, issuing forth green light and hypnotic music. At such times, yuan-ti priests emerge from the Temple of the Sky Serpent to practice abominable rites atop their shrine, and yuan-ti war parties range far into the surrounding jungle.

KOL-TUKULG

A plume of ash swirls over Kol-Tukulg, a dramatic volcano in the Forest Ridge. At most times, the mountain is quiet, but now and then, the cloud of ash and smoke pouring from its apex swells alarmingly. When this occurs, nearby halfling tribes mount an expedition to the summit and throw several living sacrifices into the caldera. They believe that this method is the only way to quiet Kol-Tukulg of the Fiery Tread, a terrible elemental creature that lairs in the fiery caverns of the volcano that bears its name. Ancient wards of primal magic trap the mighty being in the mountain, but the defenses have weakened over the centuries, and the elemental grows restive.

GULG, THE FOREST CITY

"You think you act in secret, but the forest ghosts see all that occurs beneath their boughs. There are no secrets from the Oba. She has sent me to show you the truth of this."

—Chachak-Ke, judaga

Many of the sorcerer-kings claim (or have claimed in the past) to be gods upon Athas. In Gulg, that assertion is made not by the sorcerer-queen of the city-state but by its residents. Ask any Gulgan, and he or she will tell you: Lalali-Puy, Queen of Gulg, is the Oba, the Forest Goddess, the Mother of Trees and Beasts, and a dozen more epithets besides. This declaration is no empty platitude mouthed to avert the baleful eye of the templars—the people of Gulg sincerely believe that their ruler is divine.

Gulg is a city only in the loosest definition of the term; it consists of a cluster of forest villages enclosed by a single wall. Most buildings are made of thatch or mud, and roads are little more than trampled earth, worn down by the feet of generations. Gulg is roughly divided into small communities called dagadas, each of which comprises ten to fifty huts. A dagada is enclosed by a mud wall or wooden fence and is built around one or more wells shared by the residents,

Lalali-Puy is an absolute monarch in the purest sense: All property in Gulg is hers, and she holds the ultimate power of life and death over all citizens, from the lowest slave to the greatest judaga warrior.

GULGAN BACKGROUNDS

The dagada is the core unit of Gulgan society. The term refers to both a physical village and its collective inhabitants. Most dagadas are a cross-section of Gulgan culture; hunters, artisans, and even slaves identify with their dagada first and their city-state second. Layered across the patchwork of dagadas is a second set of divisions known as Peoples. A People is a unit that falls somewhere between a dagada and an extended family. Many dagadas are composed of members of only one or two Peoples, but some dagadas have citizens of many Peoples. Each of the Peoples has its own dagafari, an ancestral lodge or shrine built in the branches of an agafari tree where their elders gather to discuss important matters.

Associated Skills: Insight, Stealth

Enlightened Seer: You exhibited talent in the Way and were taken from your family to study in the seer dagada. Were you equal to the testing and instruction, or did you fall short? How have your experiences with the seers altered your perceptions about the Oba? Do you still view her as a goddess, or perhaps as something less?

Paper Wasp: You were a member of the Paper Nest, a clandestine society of advisors and confidants to the sorcerer-queen. Taking their name from the pulpy nests of wasps, group members create the paper used by Lalali-Puy and her scribes, while also secretly convening to advise the sorcerer-queen on matters regarding Gulg. Do you still serve the Oba, and if so, what is your mission? Have you ended your service, and if so, why did you leave?

Judaga: You were a headhunter, an esteemed warrior in your community. Because warriors make up the noble class of the dagadas, you enjoyed great freedom and lavish luxury. All warriors must undergo the Forest Walk, wherein they encounter forest spirits after depriving themselves of food and water. What did you learn on your sojourn? What sort of spirit became your totem? How does it reflect or influence your personality?

GULG AT A GLANCE

Gulg persists as it always has: simple, unchanging, and devoted to its queen.

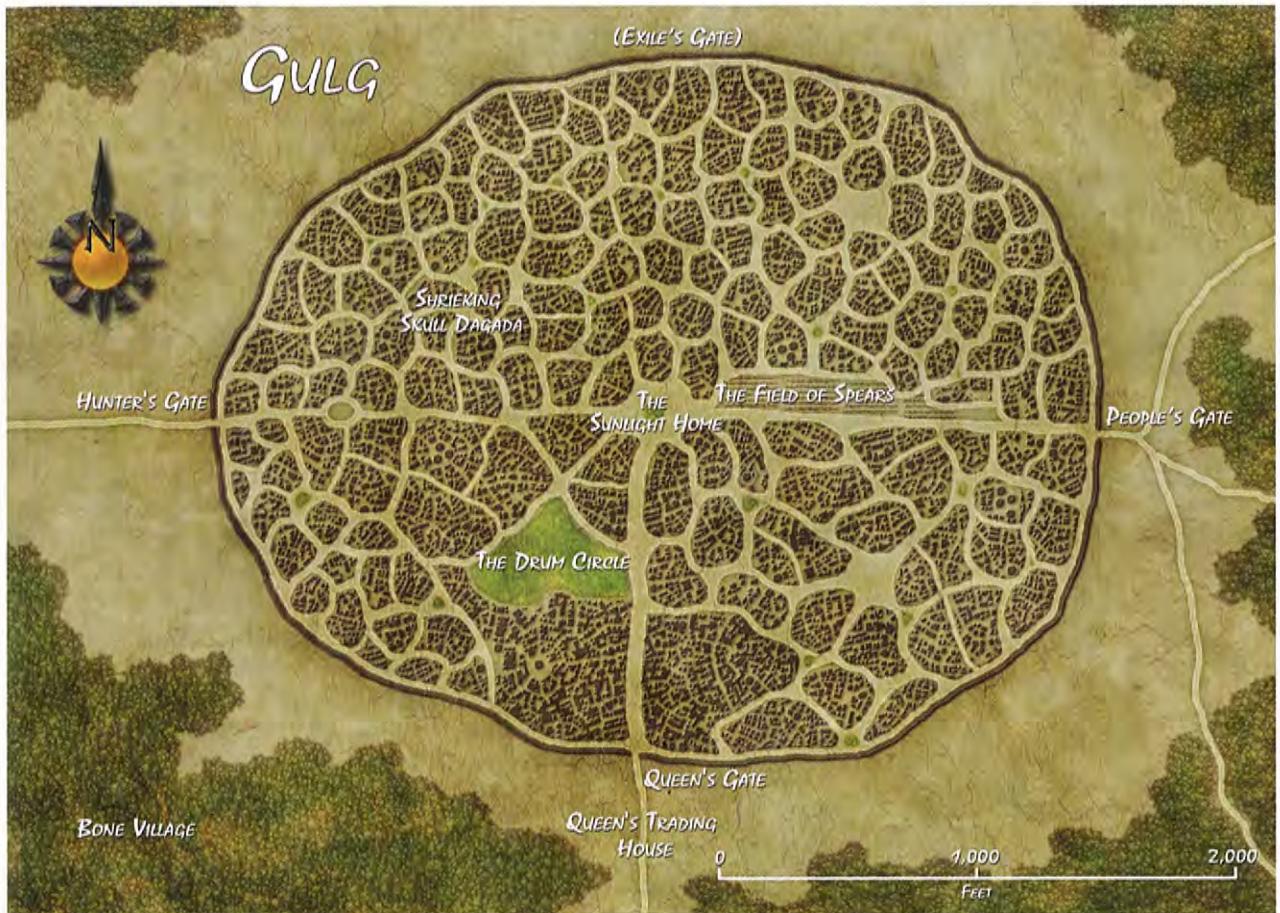
Population: The smallest of the city-states, Gulg has a population of only 13,000 within the city wall, plus small outlying dagadas in the nearby forest and plains. Nearly all Gulgans are human, with elves, dwarves, and muls as the largest minorities. A small thri-kreen community is counted among the judagas.

Water: Most individual dagadas have a well for their citizens. The Oba maintains cisterns throughout the city for the use of residents; by law, all Gulgans are entitled to water. The cisterns are not guarded—fear of the terrible curses placed by the nganga to punish water-thieves keeps the citizens honest.

Supplies: Any items beyond simple stone or bone tools and weapons are difficult, if not impossible, to find in the city-state. This supply problem is due to Gulg's primitive culture and its draconian trade laws. As part of its isolationist policies, Gulg places heavy restrictions on trade with the outside. Merchants from outside the walls can trade only with the city-state; buying from or selling to individual citizens is strictly forbidden. Nonresidents can buy and sell goods from the merchant house emporiums by the Queen's Gate, but except for House Inika, few maintain much stock in Gulg.

Defense: Lalali-Puy can count on the devoted service of more than two thousand judagas to meet any threats to Gulg. In a dire emergency, thousands of militia could be raised from the dagadas. Most young adults in the city-state have some familiarity with the spear and bow.

Inns and Taverns: Outsiders usually settle for the merchants' lodges or the travelers' dagadas outside the city wall. Within Gulg, most dagadas have a few empty guest huts, but such accommodations are rarely made available unless travelers are known and trusted by the dagada.



GULG'S POWER STRUCTURE

Lalali-Puy maintains a stranglehold on all political power in the city-state. She handpicks a circle of advisors and works through them to govern civic affairs. Her templars—the dreaded nganga—remain apart from the citizenry, vigilantly guarding Gulg from threats both internal and external.

Despite her totalitarian rule, the Oba is beloved by most of her people for three reasons. First, all citizens of Gulg are entitled to the fruits of the city: Grain from the meager client farms, produce from the forest, and meat from the dagadas' herds are distributed to all citizens more or less equally. Second, every citizen has the right to appeal to the queen directly; in any dispute, a Gulgan can request an audience with the Oba to let her resolve the issue. Although citizens sometimes wait months or years for an audience, every request is heard eventually. And third, the personal power of Lalali-Puy is seen as Gulg's chief defense against the larger city of Nibenay, its bitter rival.

THE JUDAGAS

Gulg does not have a landed nobility in the same manner as other city-states; agriculture is not prevalent, so owning property is not a sign of wealth. Instead, the noble class of Gulg is a meritocracy of hunters. Known as judagas, these privileged warriors also serve as the heart of the army, although Gulg rarely goes to war openly.

The term “judaga” means “headhunter” and refers to the hunters’ practice of taking the heads of their enemies as trophies. The templars of Gulg know a ritual that can trap the soul of a deceased warrior in its own skull, and the dagadas of the greatest hunters are adorned with such undead guardians. Judagas have no land or titles to pass on to their descendants, but they compete fiercely for trophies and rich spoils to buy wives, slaves, livestock, and houses full of luxuries that their families can enjoy for generations. A prominent judaga’s family remains wealthy and influential long after the individual’s death, and young hunters descended from renowned judagas are likely to become judagas themselves.

THE NGANGA

Gulg’s templars are unlike those of the other city-states. They do not serve as judges, priests, or members of the city watch. Instead, they are secretive witch doctors known as nganga, mystics who lurk at the edges of society and protect Gulg from magical, spiritual, and moral threats. Lalali-Puy’s grim templars are seldom seen walking the streets. Rather, they leave indications of their presence only in the aftermath: A dissenter’s family might vanish in the night, the only evidence being odd footprints and a trail of blood leading into the forest.

The nganga stand apart from Gulg society. Upon becoming a nganga, a Gulgian is no longer a member of his or her People or dagada—in fact, a dagada holds a funeral for a newly chosen nganga, acting as though the recruit has died. Thereafter, the nganga never ventures into public without covering his or her face, either with a fearsome wooden mask or with paint suggestive of a skull, a cilops, or some other terrifying monster.

THE QUEEN'S SCRIBES

Since the templars of Gulg remove themselves from ordinary affairs, the city's administration falls to scribes who attend the Oba in her palace. They come to the job from many different dagadas and Peoples. Higher-ranking scribes wield authority similar to that enjoyed by senior templars in other city-states. The magical and moral duties of the nganga and the day-to-day governmental concerns of the scribes rarely overlap.

THE OBA AND THE PRIMAL SPIRITS

Unlike the other sorcerer-kings, who maintain that primal magic is a sham, Lalali-Puy teaches her people that the primal spirits of the Crescent Forest are real—and that they hate the residents of Gulg. Primal spirits, according to the Oba, are embodiments of pure evil, and only the might of the queen and her templars hold them at bay. Because primal magic is the best means by which to coerce and control these vicious spirits, many of Gulg's templars are shamans or druids who cruelly enslave the spirits serving them.

Primal practitioners who do not subscribe to the queen's teachings should keep their reservations to themselves. The Oba's templars are swift to seize and condemn anyone who questions their use of magic.

EXPLORING GULG

Travelers bound for Gulg follow a wide stone tradeway from Altaruk along the north arm of the Estuary of the Forked Tongue. At the eaves of the Crescent Forest, the stone road gives way to a hard-packed dirt causeway called the People's Road. The city-state of Gulg stands in a large clearing inside the borders of the forest.

Rather than earth, stone, or wooden fencing, Gulg is walled by a tightly woven hedge of razor-sharp brambles 20 feet high, known as the Mopti Wall. Guards in woven grass armor and fearsome animal masks patrol the wall and monitor the gates that provide ingress into the city. By decree of the Oba, all outsiders must enter the city through the Queen's Gate, to which the People's Road leads. The Hunter's Gate is reserved for the use of the judagas and any warriors in arms (in the rare event that Gulg goes to war). Common citizens and slaves use the People's Gate.

The fourth gate, called the Exile's Gate, is used for the banishing of criminals. This gate is opened in the north wall when a templar performs a ritual to create a temporary opening in the Mopti Wall. In addition, those who wish to leave Gulg can exit through this gate when it is opened and no templar will raise a hand to stop them, but no one can enter the city through the Exile's Gate.

THE MOPTI WALL

Gulg's city wall is a magically infused hedge of sharp thorns that seeks the flesh of anyone who attempts to climb or tunnel through the brambles. The wall encloses all of Gulg's dagadas except for those outside the city that have been set aside for use by travelers. Elite judagas guard the three permanent gates in the wall (and the Exile's Gate, when it is open); headhunters also patrol the grounds outside the dense hedge. Inside the wall, wooden scaffolding allows archers to fire out over the top of the fortification.

The Queen's Gate: Located at the terminus of the People's Road, the Queen's Gate is the first sight of Gulg that greets most travelers. For many visitors, it is the only part of the city-state they ever see.

The Travelers' Dagadas: These dagadas are small clusters of thatch huts surrounded by a six-foot clay wall (DC 15 Athletics check to climb, Break DC 20). Since they are beyond the Mopti Wall, these dagadas are allowed to conduct business with outsiders, making them the most likely accommodations for visitors who lack contacts in Gulg. The travelers' dagadas are outside the bounds of the Oba's law and thus popular targets for thieves and swindlers. One of the dagadas serves as the city's small Elven Market.

TRAVELERS' DAGADAS

Notable travelers' dagadas in Gulg include the following.

Dagaous: The "House of Outsiders" is one of the more reputable travelers' dagadas outside the Mopti Wall. Five cp will buy a bowl of vegetable stew and a hut for the night.

Kaponome Dagafari: The "Ancestral Tree Home for the People Without Ancestors" offers cheap beds and cheaper meals, and the dagada is located far enough from the People's Road to be popular with those seeking to avoid the attention of the templars. The owner has a standing arrangement to allow the Salt Stealers tribe of elves to rob guests during the night.

Dagamhouti: The "House of Charity" is the only public dagada within the Mopti Wall. It circumvents the sorcerer-queen's law against lodging or trading with outsiders by providing its services free of charge. In addition, the owner's daughter shops for legal goods in Gulg's market and presents the items to the guests as gifts. Travellers are strongly encouraged to reciprocate in kind, lest the owner's sons set upon them once they leave the city.

The Queen's Trading House: By the sorcer-queen's decree, this small, unwalled cluster of merchant house emporiums and wooden warehouses is the only place in Gulg where outsiders can trade. Even so, visitors can buy and sell only among themselves or with the government of the city-state. House Inika, the only merchant house that has a significant presence in Gulg, deals primarily in luxury items, such as furs, beads, feathers, and spices. Still, for the traveler in need, the Trading House is the only legal option in the vicinity of Gulg.

THE CITY

Gulg's dagadas crowd against one another amid twisting roads, small dusty squares, animal pens, and groves of trees. The city-state has no districts other than the dagadas themselves, and most outsiders can't find their way around without help from a resident.

Drum Circle: According to Gulgan superstition, stories have an innate magic like no other. Storytellers (including minstrels and bards) are respected for their ability to connect the people to their past and feared for their ability to twist a story to a dark and painful end. Behind the earthen walls of the dagada known as the Drum Circle, storytellers, black magicians, poisoners, and other malcontents congregate by night. Sensible folk stay away from the Drum Circle, lest they be snatched up by the tales and never seen again. Still, for adventurous types who have the right contacts, this dagada is a good source of black-market implements, poisons, and services of ill repute.

Shrieking Skull: This dagada near the Hunter's Gate is reserved for the judagas that constitute Gulg's nobility. A fence of close-set wooden poles, sharpened at the top, surrounds a collection of longhouses that are larger and more ornate than most dwellings in the city-state. The dagada takes its name from the dozens of humanoid skulls that festoon the perimeter. Some are mounted on stakes buried in the earth, others hang from the fence on leather thongs, and two prominent half-giant skulls cap the wooden posts that support the gate. Each skull was taken in battle by one of the judaga residents and magically prepared by Gulg's templar shamans to contain the ghost of its former owner. These angry spirits guard the Shrieking Skull dagada against anyone who tries to enter without permission.

Field of Spears: Gulg has no arena. Instead, gladiators meet on the Field of Spears, an open area near the center of the city-state. Warriors form a wide ring around the combatants to keep them from fleeing, while spectators clamber onto walls or roofs for a better view. Gulgans favor one-on-one battles, pitting two warriors against each other or a lone combatant against a savage beast of the forest. It is common for a judaga to enter the field to display his or her martial

prowess. In addition, prisoners are executed in the Field of Spears, and slaves occasionally fight to the death for the amusement of the crowd.

KEN-KENTU VEK, THE ADDER WHO DANCES

Drum Circle Personality

Of all the sinister figures who frequent the Drum Circle, Ken-kentu Vek is the most feared. A powerful magician and master of the killing arts, he can be hired by anyone who has the coin to pay and the stomach to solicit his grisly work. Vek's favored method of execution is to immobilize his quarry with a poison blowgun dart, then slay the victim in an agonizing ritual. Currently, Vek is embroiled in a long-standing feud with the war chief Mogansho.

SUNLIGHT HOME

Located in the heart of Gulg and visible from every dagada in the city, Sunlight Home is the dwelling of Lalali-Puy. This small wooden palace rests in the highest branches of an agafari tree that has been grown to titanic size through the queen's magic. Few Gulgans ever see the inside of Sunlight Home (except those who request an audience with the Oba), but Lalali-Puy makes frequent addresses from her balcony. When she makes such an appearance, the people of Gulg crowd the roads and clearings around the palace to cheer their goddess.

The nganga make their huts in the lower branches of the agafari tree, shaded by the massive limbs that support Sunlight Home. The queen's palace is bright and beautiful, but the templars' huts are foreboding and grim, often decorated with ghoulish embellishments—bones, desiccated trophies, barely visible guardian spirits, and the like. The common folk avoid so much as looking at these huts when they pass underneath, and even the judagas tread lightly when their business requires a visit to the nganga.

BONE VILLAGE

Deep in the Crescent Forest, beyond sight of the Mopti Wall, lies Bone Village. This profane grove is Lalali-Puy's personal mystic laboratory, where she carries out ghastly rituals to expand her power and punish her enemies. The grove has been a place of execution since the time of the earliest Gulgan tribes. Ancient druids worked rituals here that bound the souls of the slain into the earth. As long as their bones remain within the grove, the tormented souls linger, unable to pass on to their final fate. Few aside from the Oba have seen Bone Village, and whispered tales say that angry ghosts and bound spirits destroy anyone who ventures here without the queen's blessing.

THE IVORY TRIANGLE

"I strangled my owner with the leather rope that fettered me, and fled into the desert without food, water, or weapon. I nearly died. The Triangle is a hard land, and I may die yet. But I promise you that I'll die free."

—Tol Thamar, escaped mul slave

Lying in the center of the Tyr Region, the Ivory Triangle is a crossroads and a wasteland. Most of the area is desolate, home only to monsters and desert raiders, but it sits astride the trade routes from the cities of Raam and Draj in the north to rich Balic in the south. Every day, gigantic mekilot-drawn argosies and fleet-footed kank or crodlu pack trains make their way across the blistering salt flats. The rival city-states of Gulg and Nibenay are found in the Ivory Triangle; they lie in a narrow verdant strip along its northern edge at either end of the Crescent Forest—one of the last lowland forests on Athas. The sorcerer-queen Lalali-Puy rules as a goddess over the forest city of Gulg, and the sorcerer-king Nibenay, also known as the Shadow King, holds dominion over the ancient metropolis that bears his name.

The Ivory Triangle consists of the Great Ivory Plain and the surrounding lands. It extends from the North Fork of the Estuary of the Forked Tongue to the ruins of Giustenal on the Bay of Maray in the northeast and the Salt Meres in the southeast. Outside the verdant

belt supporting the Crescent Forest and the city-states of Gulg and Nibenay, only a handful of small villages and outposts are scattered over this vast area. Most are forts manned by garrisons hired to protect mines, caravan stops, or other resources from raiding bands and monsters, and to repair any facilities that are damaged by storms. Battlefields and wrecked sites dot the landscape as well—some recent, others so old that no one remembers who fought there or why. In addition, the Triangle holds raider tribes, slave villages, haunted ruins, and other mysterious locales.

IVORY TRIANGLE BACKGROUNDS

People from all over the Tyr Region live in the Ivory Triangle; it has a reputation as an open frontier where you can make a fortune if you're tough, smart, and handy with a blade. Mercenaries working for the merchant houses bring customs and beliefs from their homelands, which mingle with those brought by slaves from far-flung territories. Folk of all the civilized races roam the waste, and bands of halflings and thri-kreen can be found in the wilds.

Associated Skills: Endurance, Perception

Language: Deep Speech



Beleaguered Sentry: After spending years protecting a crumbling fortress from raiders, storms, and monsters, you set out to find a new life. Did you desert your employer, or did you part ways when your contract ended? Where did you serve? Did you make any allies or enemies? What will you do now?

Driven Bounty Hunter: You hunted slave and criminal alike, chasing down those on the run and bringing them back to face justice. Are you still in this business? If so, whom are you hunting now? What did they do to deserve your attention? If you aren't bringing in fugitives, why did you stop?

Hardened Traveler: You have crossed the Ivory Triangle more times than you can count, each trip more harrowing than the last. Are you a merchant, a guard, an envoy, or a raider? Do you have any favorite or most despised stops? If so, what are they, and why?

Wanted in the Seven Cities: You have earned a death sentence that you can't shake. With few places left for you to run, the Ivory Triangle seemed as good a hiding spot as any. How have you eluded your pursuers so far? What did you do to gain so many enemies? Have you worked with a raiding band, or do you hide under a false identity?

EXPLORING THE IVORY TRIANGLE

The dominant feature of the Ivory Triangle is the Great Ivory Plain, a salt flat stretching for hundreds of miles. Although the flat is nearly uninhabitable, it offers travelers a smooth, level passage from one end of the Triangle to the other. Dune traders and nomadic tribes skirt out onto the flat to make good time, but they stay close to the edges so they can take shelter in the surrounding terrain when the sun hammers down on the glistening white plain.

THE CRESCENT FOREST

The Crescent Forest lies along the southern curve of the Stormclaw Mountains. This thickly forested expanse is the most fertile and well-watered area in the Ivory Triangle and perhaps in the entire Tyr Region (aside from the Forest Ridge). During the months of Sun Descending, rain in the Stormclaw Mountains waters the forest with runoff. During the dry season, deep springs scattered throughout the easterly foothills sustain the area. The forest is thickest in the south and center; it thins considerably in the north because of logging from Nibenay and the dry winds blowing through Bremil Pass.

At one time, the Crescent Forest might have extended the entire length of the verdant belt, but no one can say for sure. The recent history of the forest has been shaped by the centuries-old rivalry between Nibenay and Gulg; the hunters of Gulg skirmish frequently against Nibenay's foresters. For now, the

judagas of Gulg keep Nibenay's lumber camps limited to the northern end of the forest, but the increasing scarcity of wood in the Tyr Region—and the corresponding value of large logs—lures the woodcutters deeper into the forest.

The Lostspears: For years, Gulg's sorcerer-queen Lalali-Puy has sought to build a force of halfling slave-soldiers to serve as scouts and assassins against Nibenese soldiers in the Crescent Forest. Halflings are woodwise beyond all but the most skilled judaga hunters. However, halflings do not take to slavery well, and some of the Oba's slaves have vanished into the forest. The Lostspears are a small tribe of about fifty escaped halflings who wander the forest's central region, a threat to Gulgans and Nibenese both.

Temple of the Eye: Beyond the bounds of Nibenay's farthest logging camps sits a crumbling, vine-choked ruin, a former temple of a forgotten dark god. The image of an enormous, hideous eye is carved into the wall above the black stone altar. Nibenese templars tend the temple day and night, slaying anyone who happens upon the site, but they never enter the unexplored catacombs belowground. Well-guarded slave laborers spend their days chiseling stone carvings from the temple's ancient walls, and teams of bearers ferry the carvings back to the Naggarakam, the dominion of the Shadow King. To what purpose Nibenay puts these carvings, none can say.

Witchgrove: In the deepest part of the Crescent Forest lies a stretch of forest that appears to be alive. Strange eyes watch from the undergrowth, and the trees seem malignantly aware. Here in this wood, called the Witchgrove by those who encounter it, the Lands Within the Wind lie near to Athas. When travelers blunder into the area, strange, hateful fey creatures fall upon them and sometimes spirit them away.

DRUIDS OF THE CRESCENT FOREST

A loose organization of druids watches over the Crescent Forest, protecting the woods from logging, overhunting, and defiling. The Crescent Circle is made up of a dozen or so hermits, escaped slaves, and Gulgan outlaws. Most keep to themselves in the deep recesses of the forest, but others spy on judaga hunting parties or try to drive Nibenese loggers back to their own city. The druids are allied with the handful of treants who guard the forest's most sacred sites.

The chief of the druids, a stern, gray-bearded Gulgan named Barazin, was once a nganga (templar) in the service of Lalali-Puy. In his younger years, Barazin enslaved and tormented primal spirits with his arcane magic, but he came to see through the Oba's lies about the forest spirits and abandoned Gulg to serve them instead.

CROMLIN

Originally a trading post created by House Shom, the village of Cromlin has prospered despite the decline in its founder's fortunes. The silt sailors of Cromlin have charted hidden paths through the treacherous dust of the Bay of Maray, giving them easy access to the villages on the bay's northern shores. Light cargoes bound for Raam or Draj (or heading southward to Nibenay) can go by silt skimmer, shaving weeks of time from the normal journey.

Although House Shom still runs Cromlin, at least nominally, the village's unique position means that Shom's leaders overlook most infractions that do not affect the house's profits. Stealing from Shom's emporiums brings harsh punishment, as does raiding a caravan heading to or from the village, but it's fair game to rob unaffiliated travelers or attack caravans that pass through the Black Spine Mountains. These lax laws make Cromlin a haven for smugglers, slavers, pirates, and elves—rogues and scoundrels of all sorts call the place home.

The principal source of entertainment in Cromlin is the inn known as the Dirty Lizard. Jaksot Han, a thickset mul of middle years, owns the place. Han is a former silt pirate, and his common room attracts a similar clientele. Bar brawls occur daily at the Lizard, and according to commonly held wisdom, a patron isn't considered a regular until he's been through a fracas.

GIUSTENAL

Forty miles east of Cromlin lies a ruin largely forgotten by most of Athas. Rumors in the Ivory Triangle speak of Giustenal, a crumbled city on the far side of the Black Spine Mountains. Silt skimmers passing by the Bay of Maray steer far out on the shoals and give the city a wide berth, seeking to pass by swiftly and in daylight. Brave souls who venture near find a maze of walls and broken ramparts encircling Giustenal, many winding down into the silt for hundreds of yards. Silt horrors thrive beneath the dust here.

Within the maze, the city is half buried in silt. It appears deserted, and its ruins show evidence of a terrible sorcerous battle fought here long ago. Giustenal was destroyed swiftly but never sacked; the few looters who have raided the city claim that a great deal of treasure still lies in the ruins.

No people are known to linger nearby, but dangerous beasts lair in the remains of the city. From time to time, travelers passing by in the desert report feeling the lure of a psychic presence calling them toward Giustenal. All that is known about this mysterious spirit, referred to as the Caller, is the effect it has on its victims—trusted companions go into a shrieking, violent fit, killing pack animals or fellow travelers before fleeing into the desert, heading straight for the ruined city. Even those touched only lightly by the

Caller's power speak of feeling an unnatural desire to pass through the gates of Giustenal and be consumed. Some say that the Caller is the collective remnant of Giustenal's long-dead populace, trapped on Athas by the mystical turbulence stirred up by the city's destruction. Others believe that the Caller devours those it lures into the city, adding their souls to its own tormented legions.

DREGOTH, THE UNDEAD SORCERER-KING

A dreadful secret lies beneath Giustenal's dusty streets: The sorcerer-king of this destroyed city still exists in a subterranean network of caverns and tunnels. Once Giustenal was a city-state as grand as Tyr or Nibenay, ruled by its powerful sorcerer-king Dregoth. Here, Dregoth forged a new race of followers—the dragonborn, or dray. But almost two thousand years ago, the other sorcerer-kings conspired to kill Dregoth, fearing his growing strength. The resulting magical duel turned Giustenal into a vast tomb. In the end, Dregoth fell dead, and his opponents left the ruined city to the desert. But with the last of his power, Dregoth made the transition to undeath. The Dread King has secretly gathered his few surviving templars and slaves underground. Now, after all these centuries, the undead Dregoth schemes to take his place as ruler of Athas.

THE MEKILLOT MOUNTAINS

The Mekillot Mountains are an old, low-lying range in the center of the Great Ivory Plain. A series of long, domed monoliths of spectacular orange, they resemble nothing so much as a line of titanic mekillots. The northern cluster, known as the Greater Mekillots, is higher, and the southern cluster (unsurprisingly called the Lesser Mekillots) is more broken and jumbled. A narrow ring of badlands and stony barrens separates the rounded mountains from the surrounding salt plain. Old mines and the odd Green Age ruin can be found here, along with fierce tribes of escaped slaves, hungry monsters, and bands of cruel, two-headed giants that raid the surrounding outposts for food and captives.

Echoing Mine: Nestled in a valley in the Mekillot Mountains, this ancient silver mine might hold untapped riches. Many expeditions have sought to reopen the Echoing Mine, but all have discovered to their cost how the place earned its name. Hook horrors, grimlocks, and other light-hating subterranean monsters infest the tunnel system. The mysterious clicks that echo through the mine are the rapid, high-pitched sounds these creatures use to navigate and communicate.

Salt View: The village of Salt View is home to a raiding tribe founded by the half-elf Xaynon, an escaped gladiator from Raam. Its population has

grown to the extent that raiding alone can no longer sustain it. Over the last year or two, ex-slaves from all over the Tyr Region have come to Salt View for sanctuary, drawn by rumors of a place where they can start new lives. Most of them lack skills that might be useful to raiding parties. Still, the new citizens have brought one intriguing talent to the village: performing. Many former slaves who received training in dance and theater have organized into touring troupes, which now travel the roads of the Ivory Triangle and perform for coin and trade goods. The Salt View troupes are valuable sources of intelligence regarding happenings around the region.

KORSK, SALT VIEW MALCONTENT

Not all the gladiators and soldier-slaves who founded Salt View are pleased with the idea of becoming a simple trading village known for its performing troupes. Many would rather abandon the village's dead weight in the desert—or better yet, use the actors as fodder and throw them at caravan guards—and return to the raiding lifestyle they know and understand. Korsk, a dwarf who fought with Xaynon in Raam's arena, is the most vocal member of this faction. He is secretly arranging an attack by Nibenese slavers that will carry off many of Salt View's "useless" citizens when he and his raiders are safely away from the village.

BODACH

One of the grandest ancient ruins on Athas, Bodach lies amid the maze of salt marshes, dry sinks, and silt basins known as the Salt Meres. From miles away, its towers can be seen rising above the reeds. Long ago, Bodach was a city of great magicians, and mighty arcane secrets still wait to be discovered in its wreckage. However, few treasure-hunters dare to explore the impressive ruins. A terrible fate befell the city in the days of the Cleansing Wars, and now it is haunted by thousands of skeletons, zombies, and worse. The undead emerge each night at sunset in a vast horde to scour the surrounding countryside for living prey.

BEASTBARRENS

At the eastern end of the Great Ivory Plain lies a bleak region known to nearby nomads as the Beastbarrens. Few people have reason to come this way, and those who do rarely linger long before retreating, for the Beastbarrens is a cursed land. Here, an unknown, baleful power warps desert predators into freakish monstrosities; they sprout extra limbs, their hands or paws grow into daggerlike claws, scaly armor covers their skin, and worse. New terrors wander out of the Beastbarrens every few days or weeks to fall on caravans and outposts in the eastern reaches of the Ivory Triangle.

The Broken Butte: A mazelike system of canyons and ravines gouges the flanks of this great hill of black stone on the edge of the Beastbarrens. Broken Butte is home to a large tribe of minotaurs known to have an appetite for raw flesh. The savage minotaurs seek to drive travelers into the canyons, then harry the victims until they are thoroughly lost—at which point the beasts descend upon the victims and devour them. The tribe sends its fiercest warriors into the wastes to undergo physical transformations, viewing the changes suffered by the champions as the marks of a mad god's favor.

Pristine Tower: Standing alone in the heart of the Beastbarrens, the Pristine Tower is an astonishingly old relic of ages past. Only the sorcerer-kings and precious few other Athasians realize its true history. Most people know only that the tower is a structure of pure alabaster stone rising out of the desert that has somehow resisted being swallowed by the sand. Sages and experienced travelers also know not to approach the Pristine Tower, for it is guarded still, and a gruesome fate befalls those who come too close. Worse yet, creatures that sustain physical wounds within a few miles of the tower fall prey to the transformative plague that fills the Beastbarrens with loathsome monstrosities.



NIBENAY, CITY OF SPIRES

"Raiders troubling the road to Raam? Unfortunate, I suppose, but it hardly seems like cause for concern. Does anything important come from Raam? Who would want to go to Raam, anyway? If you must, send someone to bribe some other band of savages to drive them off."

—Sadag, Nibenese noble

Ancient beyond measure, Nibenay is a wealthy, powerful city-state immersed in decadence and intrigue. Most Nibenese regard themselves as the only civilized people remaining in a world of barbarism and desolation; the events that take place outside the city walls are little more than the squabbles of savages. Even the architecture of Nibenay reflects these prejudices. Splendid statues and carvings cover the walls, public buildings, and private homes throughout the city, depicting great heroes and honored ancestors from ages long forgotten by the rest of Athas. Some are works of surpassing beauty, some glorify ancient triumphs, and others depict shocking hedonism.

Nibenay is ruled by the sorcerer-king who gave the city-state his name. He is an enigmatic, retiring figure, rarely seen by anyone but his templars. Deep within the royal compound at the city's heart—the forbidden dominion called the Naggarakam—Nibenay immerses himself in arcane studies and mysterious pursuits, leaving governance to the bureaucracy of his templars. He is so reclusive that rumors of his death circulate every few years, giving rise to unrest and feuding among the nobles until he appears and puts to rest any stories of his demise.

NIBENESE BACKGROUNDS

The people of Nibenay expect decorum in all things. Slaves and commoners know their places and show courtesy and deference to their betters; similarly, people of higher standing remain cool and distant to their inferiors. To demonstrate anything other than calmness and serenity is to reveal a character flaw.

Associated Skills: Acrobatics, Insight

Gifted Dancer: The Nibenese see dance as their gift to the world. The dramatic *liaka-ih* style features whirling dancers in veils, scarves, and ribbons. The comedic and bell-wearing *priytu-ih* dancers perform for celebrations and joyful events. Militant, weapon-wielding *wriquo-ih* dancers honor warriors and their battles. You have studied the three forms, learning their techniques. Which form do you prefer?

Walker of the Exalted Path: The monasteries of the Exalted Path teach their students to accept authority and endure its excesses, for to do otherwise places too much emphasis on the self. One should deny the individual and embrace one's place as part of a larger whole. You studied this philosophy for a

time. Do you still subscribe to it, or did you abandon it? What attracted you to it in the first place?

NIBENAY'S POWER STRUCTURE

The city-state of Nibenay is ruled by the sorcerer-king Nibenay, also called the Shadow King. For twenty centuries or more, he has left the city entirely in the hands of the temple bureaucracies, emerging from the Naggarakam only when necessary to lead his forces to war or crush rebellions against his rule. However, news of Kalak's assassination has reached Nibenay, causing him to reconsider his habitual detachment from the city's affairs. In the last few weeks, the Shadow King has summoned several meetings of the High Consorts' Council, asking probing questions about the manner in which the group is governing his city. Similarly, he has taken an active interest in the readiness of his armies and in the affairs of the city's noble houses.

TEMPLAR-WIVES

All of Nibenay's templars are female. Nibenese tradition dictates that every templar is a wife of the Shadow King, although the marriage is purely

NIBENAY AT A GLANCE

Nibenay is an ancient, decadent city-state under the rule of a distant and mysterious sorcerer-king.

Population: Roughly 24,000 people live in Nibenay proper, with a similar number in outlying tenant farms and villages. Most of the population is human, with sizable minorities of half-giants, elves, and half-elves.

Water: The city-state sits atop bubbling hot springs that well up from deep below ground. The noble houses own all the springs, so anyone who wants water must purchase it from them.

Supplies: Nibenay is wealthy and extravagant by the standards of most other city-states. Anything a traveler could want is for sale in the markets, legitimate or otherwise. The city produces timber, stone, spices, nuts, and various dry beans (the staple food).

Defense: The Shadow Guard is an elite palace guard of half-giants numbering a thousand strong. The Temple of War supplements these defenders with five thousand janissaries (loyal slave-soldiers), including small numbers of dray mercenaries.

Inns and Taverns: Numerous inns serve travelers in Nibenay, with the highest concentration in and around the Sages' District. The noble district of Cliffside features more opulent inns for visiting nobles, and those looking to keep a low profile can find flophouses in the Hill District. Abandoned quarters are scattered throughout the city.

ceremonial for all but a handful of favored or high-ranking templars. At any given time, Nibenay's wives number several hundred; almost all are humans or half-elves. They form the middle and upper layers of an immense bureaucracy that runs the city's affairs. This bureaucracy is divided into five temples, each overseeing one aspect of governance. A high consort who reports directly to the Shadow King oversees each temple.

The Temple of the House controls most of the day-to-day administration of Nibenay. Under the auspices of High Consort Kahalya, this temple oversees the reservoir, the grain supply, public works, and tax collection. It also manages the lumber camps that raid the Crescent Forest for wood.

The Temple of War manages the recruitment (or purchase, as is more often the case), training, and equipment of Nibenay's armies. The templars appoint officers to command the army in the field and accompany the troops as advisors and magical artillery. High Consort Bamandji, a fierce, middle-aged mul of impressive stature, commands this temple.

The Temple of Trade, under High Consort Rejan, governs tariffs, spending, business licensing, and relations with the merchant houses.

Of all the temples, the Temple of Thought is the least involved in governing the city-state, overseeing only the state-run schools maintained for the nobility.

High Consort Siemhouk oversees the mystical training of Nibenay's agents, including templars, defilers, and psionic agents.

Finally, the Temple of the King's Law has authority over crime and punishment in Nibenay. High Consort Djena controls the secret police, the dungeons, and the disposition of slaves and prisoners bound for the arena. The temple is also charged with bringing justice to templars who defy the Shadow King.

THE NOBILITY

Nibenay's noble class is renowned for its decadence and indolence. Long ago, the city-state's nobles were a warlord caste awarded fiefs in surrounding lands for their service in Nibenay's wars. Over the centuries, the Shadow King's templars consolidated military power in the army, reducing the nobles to the role of wealthy landlords who collect the rents and harvests of their tenant farmers. Much of the land for miles around the city walls, including the Plain of Smoking Waters, is divided into a patchwork quilt of noble holdings; Nibenese citizens buy their water from one noble or another. In comparison to Nibenay's templar bureaucracy, the nobles are weak, corrupt, and disorganized, but they are exceedingly rich, and their cultural conservatism is a major contributing factor to the city's arrogant, self-indulgent ways.



EXPLORING NIBENAY

Nibenay lies at the foot of a striking cliff, surrounded by a wide field of large, steaming pools and palm groves—the Plain of Smoking Waters. The most commonly used entrance is the Mekillot Gate. Past the gate, a wide thoroughfare leads directly to Sages' Square, the chief marketplace in the middle of the Sages' District. At the heart of the city-state, dominating its profile, stands the Naggaramakam, the Shadow King's palace compound. This enormous, fortified city-within-a-city is open only to the sorcerer-king and his templars.

Walking the streets of Nibenay is a claustrophobic experience. Most streets are narrow alleyways framed by buildings with vaulted stone roofs. The city's many stone spires produce a dizzying verticality in its street layout; sometimes the roof over an alley supports another walkway above it. With the exception of the High Road and the caravan road from the Mekillot Gate, none of the streets is wide enough to accommodate mounts larger than a crodru.

SAGES' DISTRICT

Much to the surprise of first-time visitors, this district is not known for its sages or scholars. Instead, it contains the homes and businesses of the dynastic merchant houses. By royal law, no unaffiliated trader can conduct business or live in this district.

Sages' Square: In this enormous square of packed red earth, the dynastic houses operate their opulent emporiums. Unlike the markets in many city-states, Sages' Square never closes except on official state holidays. At any time, day or night, a prospective buyer can find any manner of exotic goods for sale.

Slave Market: South of Sages' Square, a rectangular plaza hosts Nibenay's open-air slave market, which is monopolized by the merchants of House Shom. Occasionally, the government sells surplus slaves here, an event that always draws a crowd.

Palm Court: Located down a snaking alleyway from the slave market, this meager plaza is the last refuge of legitimate traders who cannot afford a storefront but who refuse to sell their wares in the city's black markets. A few feeble palm trees stand in the middle of the square in homage to its name.

POLAN FELK

Polan Felk is a weather-beaten, middle-aged male human. Hard living shows on his face and in the pitiful quality of the ceramic pottery he sells from a blanket spread in the southeast corner of Palm Court.

Felk is the primary contact in Nibenay for the Veiled Alliance. He remains sequestered because the local faction of the Alliance doesn't trust outsiders. Thus, the only people likely to find Felk are those who have been specifically sent by the Alliance.

Temple of Trade: This cross-shaped building houses the administrators of the Temple of Trade. Anyone wishing to do business in Nibenay must acquire a license from this temple. The structure sits at the western edge of the Sages' District, nearly touching the walls of the Naggaramakam.

HILL DISTRICT

Once the Hill District was the site of a fine palace, perhaps belonging to an ancient prince or king. Today that place is a shattered husk, its roof fallen in and its carved walls collapsed. Ordinary citizens avoid the area, and not just because of the rumors of hauntings that inevitably spring up around ancient ruins. The Hill District is a gathering place for the shadier elements of Nibenese society: cutthroats and cutpurses, poisoners for hire, elves, and black marketeers.

Elven Market: The Sky Singers tribe's market in the heart of the Hill District is a small but bustling center of trade and entertainment. The elves maintain the market throughout the year, and elf traders take turns staying in Nibenay to run it. Recently, all sixteen elves in charge of the market were murdered by parties unknown. Since the killings, the Sky Singers have pledged several warriors, under the leadership of a deadly swordsman named Abyuuk Dawnchaser, to investigate the crime.

RESERVOIR DISTRICT

The Reservoir District stretches from the city-state's eastern wall to the western wall. Most of the sprawl consists of tenement housing for free merchants, poor common artisans, and laborers, but it also boasts a few notable landmarks.

City Reservoir: This cistern, a large, low-slung building of clay brick surrounding the Reservoir Gate, is reserved for the use of the Naggaramakam. It is opened to the public only in times of crisis. From outside, the only indication of the astounding amount of water stored within the reservoir is the lush garden on the building's roof.

High Road: This wide stone causeway literally rises above most of the Reservoir District, passing through it at a height of 15 feet off the ground. Only the sorcerer-king and his army can use the High Road, which leads directly from the Naggaramakam to the Reservoir Gate and then to the Plain of Smoking Waters.

Exalted Path Monastery: The monastic tradition of Nibenay has seen a resurgence in the last few centuries. The monks teach austerity, physical readiness, psionic enlightenment, and the quiet acceptance of authority. The Exalted Path is the largest of the city-state's monasteries, led by a frail old abbot named Thong Nal. Recently, a number of younger monks have rebelled against the centuries-old neutrality of the Exalted Path, and they have begun to speak out forcefully against the excesses of the nobility—and the Shadow King's court.



WESTERN DISTRICT

Occupying most of the western side of Nibenay, the Western District has a reputation as a rowdy and violent part of the city where templars go in force. The district is predominantly filled with poor artisans, but a small mercantile neighborhood has sprung up around the West Gate.

Shrine of the Sun: The five so-called temples that run Nibenay are not religious organizations; genuine houses of worship in the city-state are known as shrines. Of them, the Shrine of the Sun is one of the few that practices openly. It is the center of faith and devotion for a fire cult that has grown popular among free citizens. The High Priest of the Sun, a half-elf named Fedarramin, offers his shrine's services in the collection and disposal of dead slaves—for a small donation. The intensity with which he promotes this service has raised some eyebrows among the nobility.

Academy of Fierce Purpose: Run by the Temple of Thought, this school provides a comprehensive, if basic, education to the children of the city-state. Nominally, the academy is open to all free citizens, but the tuition is so exorbitant that only the offspring of nobility attend regularly. Some well-to-do free families scrape up the funds to send a child to the school, and occasionally the Temple of Thought sponsors the daughter of a free family, with the understanding that she will become a templar and wed the Shadow King on her sixteenth birthday.

Arena: Nibenay's arena is unique among the city-states in that it has been excavated from the ground. The highest (and thus worst) seats are at ground level, with the better seats descending into the pit. According to popular rumor, the Shadow King maintains a labyrinth of tunnels beneath the arena, stocked with deadly beasts and murderous traps. On special occasions, the templars turn prisoners loose in this maze, and if they survive to reach the arena and defeat its current champion, they are pardoned and freed.

CLIFFSIDE

Lying in the shadow of the Crescent Forest, Cliffside is the most prosperous noble district in the city-state. Many of its manors are carved directly into the cliff's face, creating a honeycomb of opulence and power. Slaves scurry to and fro, ferrying water up from the nobles' springs in the Plain of Smoking Waters, and dignitaries from the merchant houses stroll through the streets to see and be seen.

Serpent Tower: This enormous stone edifice provides access to mansions carved in the rock wall that overlooks the city's north side. The tower resembles a tangled mass of snakes and has walkways extending to each noble house, as well as to the wall that crowns the top of the cliff.

House Shom Villa: Although its mercantile interests reside in the Sages' District, House Shom maintains a lavish walled compound at the foot of the

great cliff. Once the villa was the hub of a thriving business empire; today it is better known for Giovvo Shom's decadent celebrations, which put to shame the worst excesses of the Hill District.

THE NAGGARAMAKAM

At the heart of Nibenay lies the Naggarakam, the dominion of the Shadow King and his templars. To enter it means death for anyone outside the royal "family," and what goes on behind its walls is the subject of many hushed rumors.

Templar Quarters: Large portions of the Naggarakam hold living quarters for the Shadow King's templar wives. The quality of these accommodations ranges from comfortable if spartan barracks for the lowest ranks up to small palaces for Nibenay's senior and most favored wives. Each templar lives in her quarters and cohabitates with her "husband" only on infrequent occasions.

Temple of Thought: Templars who wish to hone their mystical prowess subject themselves to schooling in this temple. Under the harsh tutelage of the psionic prodigy Siemhouk—a human girl of only fifteen, said to be a special protégée of the sorcerer-king—students learn deadly arcane and psionic secrets.

Royal Palace: Within the walls of the Naggarakam, another fortification 50 feet high surrounds the private grounds of the Shadow King. Above the inner wall, the tops of enormous agafari trees can be seen rising out of the king's gardens. The palace is sculpted in the shape of the Shadow King's head, and thousands of sculpted female forms, each carved to resemble one of his templar wives over the centuries, form columns that appear to be locks of his hair. Inside the palace are numerous comfortably appointed chambers and dark mazes filled with the fog of incense and the hypnotic chanting of templars reciting their devotions.

DHOJAKT, PRINCE OF NIBENAY

According to whispered rumors, the Shadow King has a son, Dhojakt, who never leaves the Naggarakam because he is half monster. Supposedly, Dhojakt's mother—a high-ranking templar—recklessly exposed herself to dangerous arcane energy in an attempt to infuse her unborn child with physical and magical power. Instead, Dhojakt was born a monstrosity. For reasons of his own, Nibenay chose not to destroy the creature. Dhojakt is seen even more rarely than his father is, and most citizens consider him little more than a myth. He spends the bulk of his time studying the arcane arts and plotting against High Consort Siemhouk because he is jealous of the status she enjoys even though she is not one of Nibenay's offspring.

RAAM, CITY OF UNREST

"Raam is a city exhausted. The land can support it no longer. There are no treasures left to pluck from the earth. The sorcerer-queen? She hides, knowing death waits in every shadow. The warlords? Petty, feckless, and brutal. Don't waste your water on us."

—Gaurav, disaffected rebel

Ancient and magnificent, Raam has fallen far from its formerly wondrous heights. Centuries of plundering the countryside for its resources, rampant corruption in its government, and the rule of a hedonistic and disinterested sorcerer-queen have brought the city-state to the brink of disintegration. The alabaster quarries and gemstone mines stand exhausted; reckless agricultural practices have led to disastrous food shortages. In the streets, violent factions sworn to one warlord or another battle for control as the once-vibrant and influential city slips into ruin. Mobs riot daily against their ineffectual ruler, the sorcerer-queen Abalach-Re, and her templars dare not set foot in some of the city's districts.

The present difficulties might have been averted by a strong hand, but Abalach-Re had less interest in ruling than in feeding her insatiable appetite for pleasure. Generations ago, she abandoned her royal title and declared herself to be the representative of an all-powerful deity known as Badna. Calling herself the Grand Vizier, a title normally held by Raam's greatest mystics, she razed the city's existing shrines and temples, replacing them with new shrines dedicated to Badna. The deity's image—that of a grinning, four-armed male dressed in a long loincloth—appears all over the city-state. Abalach-Re continues to assure the citizens that Badna watches her closely and will strike her dead if she falters in her duties, but few believe her anymore.

RAAMITE BACKGROUNDS

Raamites are a somber, spiritual people, now given to a certain degree of fatalism. Before Abalach-Re's "revelation" many years ago, Raamites venerated a host of mythological figures and held mystics and sages known as saddhus in the highest esteem.

Associated Skills: Religion, Streetwise

Language: Elven

Badna Dedicate: The Badna priesthood maintains innumerable shrines and leads the people in prayers to the elusive god who chose Abalach-Re to rule the city in his stead. Do you believe that Badna exists? Did you join the priesthood to secure some benefit or advantage for yourself or your family? Do you serve in the priesthood still?

Dedicated Rebel: You fight alongside other disaffected citizens, battling the templars and mansabdars to oust Abalach-Re and right the city's course. Were

you recruited, or do you fight alone? Why did you join the uprising? Can you move freely about Raam, or are you hunted for your part in the rebellion?

Honest Mansabdar: The mansabdars, ostensibly charged with enforcing the laws of Raam, are thugs and criminals more interested in taking bribes than anything else. You served in this dubious organization. How did you persevere in the face of rampant corruption? Did your colleagues pressure you to let certain criminal elements go unpunished? Did your good intentions cause problems?

RAAM'S POWER STRUCTURE

Centuries of age have not diminished Abalach-Re's physical allure. Her voluptuous figure is as youthful as it was the day she first seized the throne of Raam. She is the exception to Raam's rigid castes, largely because she has the power and arrogance to ignore them. However, her citizens still view their ruler through the prism of their culture's stigmas. After five hundred years of her shocking dalliances and scandals, sometimes involving individuals of the lowest castes, many Raamites consider the Grand Vizier to be unclean and beneath contempt.

RAAM AT A GLANCE

Raam is a city-state of strife and squabbling factions. With the frequent unrest and riots, most structures outside the sorcerer-queen's palace incur damage.

Population: More than 40,000 people live in Raam, making it the most populous of the city-states. Another 40,000 or so dwell in the warlord-dominated estates surrounding the city. Humans constitute less than half the population. Elves and dwarves are the most numerous minorities, and muls, half-giants, and half-elves make up most of the rest.

Water: Raam draws water from a deep reservoir below the city, which provides enough to sustain the populace and irrigate the fields beyond.

Supplies: Although the renowned mines have been picked clean and the current troubles have all but paralyzed trade, Raam retains enough commodities to lure merchants. The city exports silver, gemstones, flint, silk, rugs, art, and textiles, among other goods.

Defense: The mansabdars form the heart of the largest army in the Tyr Region, leading thousands of wretched slave-soldiers. In addition, Abalach-Re hoards weapons, armor, and equipment in an enormous armory beneath her palace.

Inns and Taverns: With the city's trade in disarray, many inns and taverns have closed, their buildings joining the scores of empty, shuttered shops. A few determined places remain open near the city gates, where they compete for increasingly rare customers.



Over the nearly thirty generations that she has ruled Raam, Abalach-Re has taken many mates and borne scores of children. She has little affection for her progeny, discarding them or keeping them depending on her mood. Those she abandons at birth are given to one of the noble nawab families and raised as foster children. Abalach-Re's hundred or so current living descendants, known as the Offspring, dwell among the citizens. Many of the Offspring manifest unusual magical or psionic talents; it is rumored that Abalach-Re manipulates her children with sorcerous energy before they are born, and that they pass their unpredictable gifts to their own children in turn.

The residents of Raam exchange whispered tales about the purpose behind the Offspring. Some say that Abalach-Re grows old and wishes to move her intellect into a younger version of herself. Others believe that she is preparing for a great ritual that requires the aid of scores of people sharing her potent bloodline. Still others claim that she cannot die as long as at least one of her children remains alive.

TEMPLARS

Abalach-Re has comparatively few templars. When she has need of new ones, she performs divinations to discover young citizens who might be suited for wielding magic. Then she removes the candidates from their families, regardless of caste, and trains them to serve her. The templars take new names and exist outside the caste system, like their mistress.

JASON A. ENGLE

Raam's templars are not bureaucrats; the city-state has many ranks of officials that oversee civil administration. Instead, the templars serve as the eyes and ears of Abalach-Re, representing the Grand Vizier's interests and instructing officials and functionaries in her will. The current disorder and strife in Raam has made it dangerous for templars to walk the streets without armed escorts. Many barricade themselves in their estates, ignoring their duties to their queen.

MANSABDARS

The mansabdars are Raam's police, city watch, and soldiers. They are a mundane part of the civil administration, supervised as needed by the templars. Their main duty is to enforce the Grand Vizier's laws, but their ranks teem with corruption. Most mansabdars are on the payroll of warlords or wealthy merchants and spend their time watching out for their patrons' interests. Other mansabdars shake down commoners and artisans in their districts, work for criminal gangs, or arrest whomever they're paid to arrest.

Given the malfeasance of the mansabdars and the breakdown of templar authority, Abalach-Re relies more and more on the kuotagha—an organization of secret police—to enforce her will. Like the mansabdars, they are an arm of the civic government, loosely overseen by the templars. Little better than assassins, the kuotagha hide among the populace, striking without warning to eliminate undesirables.

NAWAB WARLORDS

Raam's nobles are known as nawabs, families of high caste that have amassed wealth and property over the centuries. From their estates (which are fortified with mercenary guards), the nawabs wage war against one another to crush opposition and rally supporters. Each family is an armed faction, and all are little better than bandits, demanding tolls from anyone seeking to use the roads crossing their lands.

Each mansabdar, mercenary, criminal gang, and commoner in Raam swears allegiance to one of the nawab warlords; to do otherwise is to risk enmity from all. The leading warlords include Nawab Maaranham, a human demagogue who is virtually a crime lord with control of the gangs in the poorer quarters of the city; Nawab Urdun-Mor, a militant dwarf who controls the arena and many mansabdars; and Nawab Shialha, a female elf with strong ties to eleven tribes outside the city.

EXPLORING RAAM

Extensive irrigation combined with the water beneath Raam's holdings have transformed the natural scrubland into a rich, verdant area ringing the city for miles. At its height, Raam rivaled Draj in grain production, and its date orchards were second to none. Now, many fields lay fallow, burned, and

RAAM'S CASTES

Each Raamite belongs to a caste, and most remain in their social class until death. Custom disallows marriages between those of different castes; even casual interactions between such individuals are brief and irregular. From highest to lowest, the castes are as follows.

Priest: Mystics known as saddhus hold the respect of all Raamites. However, their esteemed rank has been compromised by the less worthy priests of Badna.

Nawab: This caste consists of the noble warlord families.

Vizier: Viziers include public servants, bureaucrats, and other officials. All viziers wear colorful silk robes to denote their office. Abalach-Re refers to herself as the Grand Vizier, although she does not consider herself restricted by traditional caste boundaries.

Warrior: Mansabdars, mercenaries, and other soldiers belong to this caste.

Merchant: Those who buy and sell goods created by others belong to this caste.

Laborer: The laborer caste includes common artisans, farmers, herders, and other poor free citizens. This caste is by far the most populated and most disaffected.

Slave: The slave caste is unusual in that upon gaining freedom, a former slave can assume a new caste.

Unclean: The most wretched caste is known as the unclean. Any who make their living handling carcasses or corpses fall into this category.

salted, the work of raiders and warring nawabs. Such destruction has led to food shortages, driving up prices for the most basic foodstuffs.

The Road of Kings and the Nibenese Road lead directly into the city from the west, south, and east. Noble estates front these roads, each one a small fortress replete with steep walls, turrets, and garrisons to protect the households within. Most nobles try to collect tolls from passersby. The crude huts of field slaves lie clustered in squalid hamlets between the estates. The three great ways meet at the plaza where the Circle Market stands, near the middle of the city.

NATURAL ARENA OF RAAM

The rumpled land north of the sorcerer-queen's palace is barren, unfit for cultivation, yet Raamites travel nearly a mile across narrow pathways to watch gladiators duel for their lives in the arena. The arena floor is small by other city-states' standards, bounded on one side by a steep hill pocked with veiled observation balconies and on the other by a great chasm called the Maw. Raamites take seats just across the chasm to ensure that no would-be saboteurs interfere with the games or make an attempt against the Grand Vizier's life.

GHOST CITY

Growing like a boil against Raam's eastern wall is the Ghost City, home to the unclean. Morticians, butchers, tanners, and every other unpleasant industry sets up shop here. Those in the Ghost City cannot escape from the unclean caste, but at least they are not in danger of being enslaved.

The Crematory: Smoke rises day and night from the Crematory, a huge building made of yellow clay bricks stained with soot. Collectors make rounds through the city, piling up bodies to bring back here for burning. Greasy ashes rain down from the black clouds, painting swaths of the Ghost City white and gray. Raam's chapter of the Veiled Alliance secretly convenes beneath the Crematory under the leadership of Nanda Shatri, a capable and determined female human of thirty-five years. Despite the fact that she is one of the Offspring, Shatri is a powerful preserver.

COINS QUARTER

A prosperous area in better days, Coins Quarter lies in the eastern portion of Raam. Civil unrest makes trade difficult if not impossible, and the once-fabulous quarter has become a gathering of armed encampments built around the merchant houses of the city-state.

Gallery of the Seven Stars: Years ago, House M'ke built a museum meant to celebrate the culture and the inestimable statues of Raam—and also to display the power and influence of the merchant house. A large garden surrounds the gallery; the destitute and diseased beggars who sleep in the tall grasses keep visitors away from the wonders in the building.

Office of House M'ke: House M'ke anticipated the decline of Raam and spread its fortunes to the Forts Firstwatch, Istus, and Xalis, all arranged outside the city-state. The familial estates still command a large part of Coins Quarter, but defense is far more important than resuming commerce. Currently, house patriarch Trubo M'ke conducts business from the safety of the forts while his heir, Rogil M'ke, oversees the family's holdings in Raam.

TEMPLE QUARTER

Opposite Coins Quarter under Raam's western gate is the Temple Quarter, the spiritual center of the city-state. Small shrines devoted to the thousand spirits and powers venerated by Raamites crowd the wide thoroughfare that wends northwest through the city to the Queen's Hill. Each shrine boasts idols, mosaics, and friezes depicting the city's pantheon. Scattered among these older structures are the upabadas, the shrines dedicated to Abalach-Re's dubious sponsor, Badna.

Garden of Benevolence: If there's one thing all Raamites agree upon, it's respect for their elders. To ease the aged into the spirit world, the city-state sponsors a home where old people can spend their final days in peace, comfort, and meditation. The honor of entering the Garden of Benevolence is bestowed only upon members of the proper castes, of course; elderly citizens of lesser status must fend for themselves.

Schools of the Way: Those who demonstrate talent in the Way can earn a spot in one of the psionic academies along Ascetic Row. Many of these schools are small, but a few, including the prestigious Psiu-markh, tutor more than a hundred students at a time. Rival academies include the Psionoramh and the Yellow Monastery.

OFFICIAL QUARTER

The center of Raam is dominated by a sprawling complex of administrative buildings—courts, records halls, mansabdar barracks, and more. Most of the templars sequester themselves in secure palaces in the Official Quarter, where they are guarded by well-paid mercenaries or magically controlled monsters.

Circle Market: In a wide plaza where the Road of Kings meets the Nibenese Road, the city market of Raam and the Elven Market set up shop, with no distinction between them. Once, this space would have been filled with the booths and displays of hundreds of merchants and artisans, but in these days, much of the Circle Market remains empty. Locals peddle what goods and materials they can, but the market is more important today as a meeting place and a skirmish ground between nawab warlord factions.

LOW QUARTER

This large, sprawling district in the southern part of the city-state comprises many neighborhoods, none of them very well off. More Raamites live in the Low Quarter than in the rest of the city put together, and

its narrow, twisting streets lead to residential communities, trader quarters, slums, and marketplaces, with a few shrines scattered here and there. The simple buildings are constructed of wood in the nicer areas and daub-and-wattle in the worst. The last century has been hard on the Low Quarter, and whole sections stand in ruins. Rubbish clutters the walkways, and homeless citizens take what shelter they can find.

USHUCH-SI

The work of the renowned sculptor Ushuch-Si graces every city-state in the Tyr Region. His great talent might earn him sponsorship in another community, but he seems content to live among the people of Raam. Few know that Ushuch-Si is a leading activist and rebel. He believes that the Offspring hold the key to overthrowing Abalach-Re, and he has compiled a secret genealogy of the sorcerer-queen's descendants.

QUEEN'S HILL

Commanding a view of the entire city-state is Queen's Hill, a steep, grassy ridge in the northwestern corner of Raam. Recent troubles have seen the hill's elegant gardens and quiet pools replaced with imposing walls, breastworks, and bristling ditches.

Ivory Palace: The Grand Vizier's palace is the jeweled crown atop Queen's Hill. A fabulous citadel constructed of ivory and alabaster, studded with gemstones, and inlaid with silver tracery, it is a testimony to Abalach-Re's excess. The palace contains over a hundred rooms, including great halls, ballrooms, kitchens, bedrooms, treasure vaults, and more. On still nights, the sounds of revelry from the palace drift down to the resentful people below. Beneath the sorcerer-queen's dwelling, extensive caverns house her prized silk wyrms.

Royal Barracks: At her generals' insistence, the Grand Vizier permitted the Royal Barracks to be moved inside the defensive perimeter, not far from the gate that grants access to Queen's Hill. One thousand of her best and most loyal soldiers bunk here.

Hall of Conquest: Behind the palace is a giant military complex where the Grand Vizier's warriors perfect the fighting arts and train to become her finest warriors. The complex includes smaller barracks, indoor practice fields, archery ranges, an armory (almost the equal of the one below the palace), and offices for Abalach-Re's military advisors.

Consecrated Sepulcher of Badna: Abalach-Re has taken many paramours over her long life, and she has outlived them all. She entombs the remains of each consort in a vast mausoleum next to a stone path that ascends to the doors of her abode. Fluted columns mark the entrance to the crypt, and alabaster statues sculpted by the esteemed Ushuch-Si adorn each vault, carved to preserve the lovers' features across the centuries.

RINGING MOUNTAINS

"The high places are not for the weak. Already you gasp for breath, and your head swims with dizziness—and it appears that the Kra-Hnurdha have picked up your trail. Perhaps this would be a good time to return to the lowlands."

—Mikus, Ringing Mountains anchorite

The mighty Ringing Mountains, the greatest mountains known on Athas, form the western border of the Tyr Region. The highest peaks in the range reach more than 20,000 feet in elevation, and even the lowest passes are a good 12,000 feet above the lowlands. Despite the brutal heat and aridity of the deserts below, a glimmer of snow and ice clings to the highest spires, visible from a hundred miles away. The high vales are home to reclusive monasteries, isolated clans of mountain herders, tribes of fierce goliath and tarek raiders, and a wide variety of dangerous predators such as rocs, kirres, and braxats. No sorcerer-kings have tried to conquer the rich Forest Ridge that crowns the mountains, and for good reason. The cold and the thin air are brutal on soldiers, the passes are impossible for heavy wagons and lowland draft beasts, and the forest is protected from defiling by the ancient primal wards of the halflings.

Despite these daunting obstacles to invaders, the Ringing Mountains are thinly settled. Halflings, and those who trade with them, use secret roads and hidden passes to reach the lowlands. Vicious raiding tribes of goliaths and other warlike races lurk in the wild fastnesses of the peaks. And, as in most of Athas, monster-haunted ruins lie scattered through the mountains, tempting explorers to try their luck.

RINGING MOUNTAINS BACKGROUNDS

A small number of miners, herders, and nomads live in the lower elevations of the Ringing Mountains, and lonely monasteries and defiler's towers brood in remote vales. Those few who venture into the mountains typically make their way to the nearest and easiest pass available, and they do not linger.

Associated Skills: Athletics, Nature

Isolated Monastery: You were raised in one of the monasteries or shrines hidden in the high vales. There you trained in the Way, mastering physical or mental psionic disciplines. Who were your original people? Why did they give you to the monastery? Why have you set out into broader Athas?

Mountain Tribe: Your people were hill folk: herders, mountaineers, and sometimes raiders. Life was hard but free—the armies of the sorcerer-kings never troubled your village, and you had no one to rely on but yourselves. Were you driven from your tribe for

a crime? Did you set out to settle a blood-feud with someone who wronged your family?

Prospector: A handful of tough, resourceful miners eke out a living in the Ringing Mountains by digging for metal deposits. You grew up wandering the canyons and foothills in search of elusive precious metals. You might have practiced this trade with your family, or perhaps you were sold into slavery and forced into prospecting. Why did you leave this vocation behind? Do you know of a rich vein or a hidden mine that others might be willing to kill for?

EXPLORING THE RINGING MOUNTAINS

The Ringing Mountains are much steeper on their eastern face. On the western side, the great plateau of the Forest Ridge climbs slowly to its lofty height, but to the east, the peaks rise almost vertically from the Tablelands, fronted by a narrow and precipitous range of foothills a few miles in width. The mountains confront travelers with great walls of riven rock, tortuous footpaths, and sheer cliffs that prevent passage.

WALIS

Site of the only gold mine known to exist on Athas, Walis is a tiny village atop a high spire of rock within a canyon in the foothills of the Ringing Mountains. A massive cargo bucket let up and down by slaves in a crankhouse tower controls access to the community.

Walis is a client village under the control of the city-state of Balic and administered by House

RUINS OF THE RINGING MOUNTAINS

Crumbling towers, abandoned keeps, and forgotten castles dot the ridges, foothills, and clifftops of the Ringing Mountains. Many ruins are in strategic locations, such as on a knoll overlooking a canyon entrance. Some are empty, and others host monster or raider tribes.

Aside from these visible ruins, ancient mines and subterranean tunnels spiral through the mountains and foothills. These underground passages are prone to cave-ins, noxious gas, and dark creatures that make their homes away from the crimson sun. Some of the mines date back to the Green Age or earlier. The oldest excavations have smooth, brightly colored walls, and sometimes they lead to underground ruins of peculiar, domelike cities.

All the ruins of the Ringing Mountains hold out the possibility of treasure, perhaps still recoverable after hundreds or thousands of years of neglect. The riches include bits of metal, psionic artifacts, and tomes imbued with arcane resiliency.

Tomblador. In addition to Tomblador's outpost in Walis, two templars of the sorcerer-king Andropinis and a small detachment of legionaries keep an eye on the village. The Balican templars allow Tomblador agents to do as they wish.

The gold mine lies at the canyon's throat. Each day a working party of village slaves is let down from the crankhouse and escorted to the mine under the sharp eyes of overseers. The miners produce only a pittance of gold, but it's enough to sustain the operation.

Suspicion greets the few visitors who come to Walis. Those whose stories check out can stay in the Yellow House, a hostelry and stable maintained at the spire's foot.

ECHOLESS CAVERNS

Decades ago, a human named Mulmehr discovered a particularly old series of tunnels through the mountains and claimed them for himself. Mulmehr, a scion of the Shahram noble family in Tyr, spent years and much of his resources modifying the tunnels to use them in a psionic ritual. He completed his preparations, attempted the ritual, and apparently failed. Many of the tunnels collapsed, and Mulmehr was never seen in Tyr again.

Whatever the nature of the ritual, the tunnels have since gained a reputation as an evil place that drains all sound from visitors—as well as their willpower and volition. No one can say what lies at the heart of the Echoless Caverns, where Mulmehr scribed the ritual circle, because no one has reached that area and returned to tell the story.

KRA-HNUR

Home to an aggressive tribe of half-giant raiders, the hold of Kra-Hnur lies in a hanging valley about halfway between Tyr and Walis. Crude stone fortifications barricade the path leading up from the valley to the stronghold. The goliaths keep large flocks of goats and erdlus in the high pastures behind their walls, along with several hundred thralls of other races—captives taken in raids on the lowlands.

The leader of the tribe, a huge, one-eyed half-giant war chief known as the Great Kra, is far more clever than his brutish appearance would suggest. The Great Kra spent his youth serving in the royal guard of King Kalak of Tyr, and when he returned home, he seized control of his tribe. He despises humans, elves, and other “weaklings,” and he personally leads his warriors on raids. The Kra-Hnurdha tribe primarily strikes at caravans on the Trade Road and isolated villages and outposts in the Tablelands. However, with the recent chaos in Tyr, the Great Kra has turned his eye on the client villages clustering within the city's verdant belt.



MAUSOLEUM OF SHIIVARM

In the middle of a deep cleft in the mountains north of Tyr stands the ruin of a white palace surrounded by golden-brown savanna. Its towers are carved with the images of strange beasts that no longer exist on Athas—great, long-nosed creatures with tusks and flaplike ears—and its central dome gleams with polished copper. The word “Shiivarm” is written across the palace gates in the ancient Barazhad script of the elemental powers, but no one alive today knows who or what Shiivarm was, or whether the structure is truly a mausoleum. Demons haunt the vicinity, falling upon travelers whose curiosity draws them too close.

MOUNT NARRAN

The steep slopes of this dark peak are sometimes visible from the walls of Tyr, especially when witch lights play within its gaping mouths. Tunnels, tombs, and long-looted ruins riddle the mountain's lower reaches. On a plateau near the summit stand the crumbled walls of an ancient githyanki outpost. Today, the only inhabitants of the ruins, the tunnels, and the winding stairs beneath are gith that hunt the Ringing Mountains, ambushing sources of food. The warrens below Mount Narran contain thousands more fierce gith. It is said that they revere an old statue hidden far below the surface, where they carry out savage rites of blood and sacrifice.

ROAD OF KINGS

"Road of Kings? Road of slaves, perhaps. The high and mighty sorcerer-kings squabble like jhakars worrying at a carcass, throwing away armies with all the care of spoiled children. Such are kings on Athas."

—Alon, House M'ke trader

Far to the north, beyond the Great Alluvial Sand Wastes and crowning the punishing barrens of the Tablelands, stretches the Road of Kings, a war-torn, shattered land defined by the ambitious sorcerer-kings who vie for dominance in the region. Three city-states dominate the Road of Kings, each straddling the ancient routes. Quarrelsome and greedy, they frequently war with one another, as scorched battlefields and countless bones testify in the haunted lands between them.

In the west, one finds mighty Urik, a proud and powerful city-state whose armies have no match among the Seven Cities. Traveling east, past the Dragon's Bowl, one comes to the troubled city of Raam, beset by strife and famine. Beyond tragic Raam, far to the east, stands proud Draj. Blessed with abundant fields, Draj supplies food to other cities, transporting grains and hemp to far-flung markets while its bloodthirsty warriors scour the wilds for captives to sacrifice on their king's altar. In the empty stretches between Urik, Raam, and Draj, caravan routes, herder trails, and ancient highways link the three city-states together.

The region takes its name from the ancient Road of Kings, the route stretching from Urik across the stony barrens to Raam and extending eastward to Draj and beyond. Although the Road of Kings is given to the same desolation as found elsewhere on Athas, the region is bustling and active, crowded with caravans, travelers, and skirmishing armies.

ROAD OF KINGS BACKGROUNDS

Where other cities struggle for basic subsistence, the three cities of the Road supply grain, hemp, and obsidian to distant markets. Dune traders—some honest, some greedy, and some corrupt—pursue their fortunes across the barren land. The Road holds many possibilities for the cunning and strong, but it is also a place where the weak are trampled underfoot, doomed by disease, hunger, and want.

Associated Skills: Bluff, Thievery

Druid Initiate: You studied under a guardian druid who protected a rare oasis, spring, or place of the spirits in the desert. You were taught to hate defilers and to use lethal means to prevent your guarded land from being damaged by encroachers. Your mentor intended for you to take over his or her

solemn vigil someday. What place did you guard? What led you to leave your teacher? Do you intend to return and fulfill your mentor's expectations, or has that chapter of your life come to an end?

Failed Merchant: Catastrophe brought your enterprise to ruin. Were you affiliated with a merchant house? Does this house still exist? What event brought about your downfall? Have you abandoned this line of trade, or do you hope to establish a new house?

Yaramite Descendant: Once your people called the ruined city-state of Yaramuke home. When Hamanu of Urik destroyed your city, your ancestors were among the many who fled and took up a hard-scrabble life in the herding tribes or desert villages on the edge of the Broken Lands. What treasures did your family carry away from the destruction? Are you of noble lineage despite your humble circumstances?

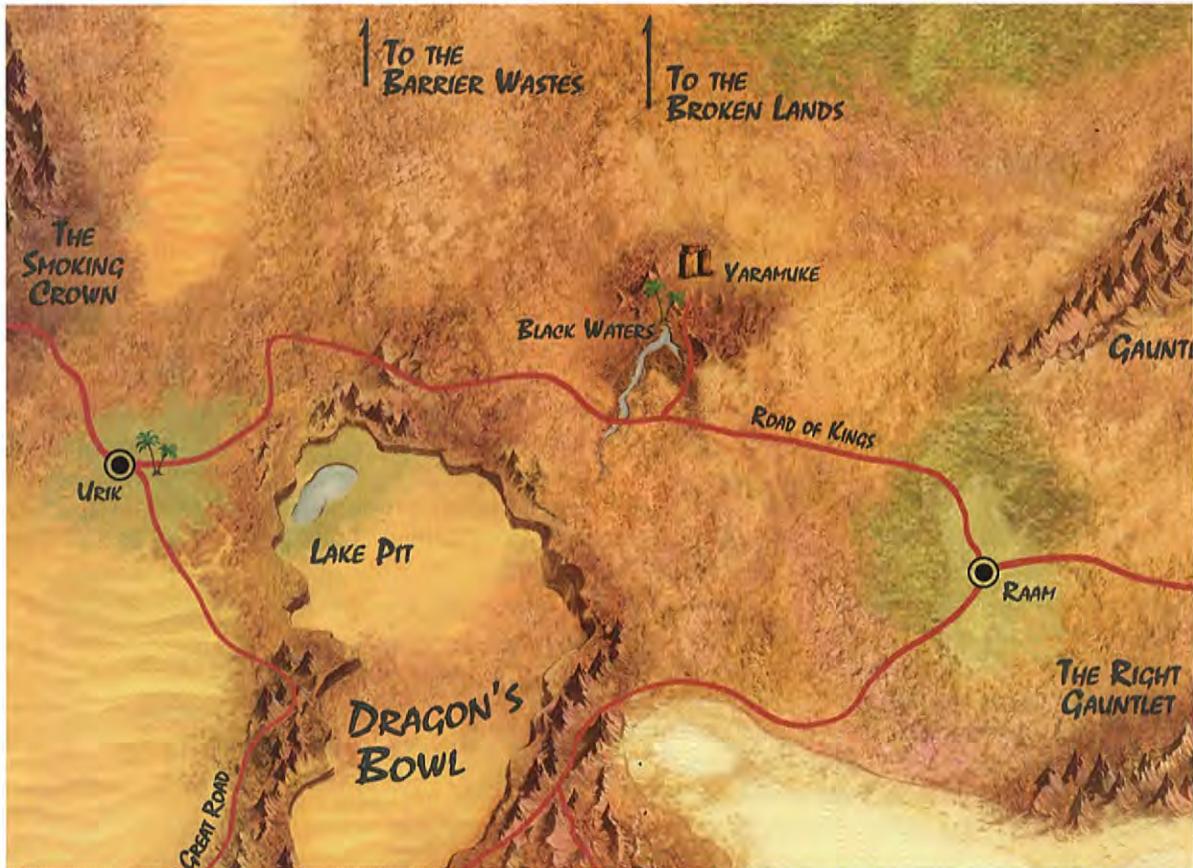
EXPLORING THE ROAD OF KINGS

Much like the Tablelands or the Estuary of the Forked Tongue, the Road of Kings is dotted with tiny desert villages, mining camps, nomadic tribes, and trade outposts. Most such camps or posts are tent cities surrounded by crude walls formed from stacked stone, bones, and brush. Others are built atop hidden wells. Dune traders wander the trails meandering through the barrens, swapping goods and rumors with the folk of the desert. Life in the arid wasteland is hard but not impossible. Travelers in this region are rarely more than a few miles from shelter, water, and food. The only question is whether the desert denizens will bargain to share their resources or defend them from intruders.

The Road of Kings is plagued by bandits, raiders, hungry savages such as ssurrans or gith, vicious marauders such as belgoi and braxats, and all sorts of desert predators. These creatures usually give the city-states a wide berth, but they pose a threat to travelers who go more than a few days' journey from civilization.

BITTER WELL

Who controls water, controls life. The few oases scattered across the wastes were discovered long ago and remain in the hands of those strong enough to keep them. Prospectors mount forays into the wilderness, scouring the land for new water sources, for any such find can make a prince of a pauper. For a long time, travelers approaching the Narrows east of Draj had heard running water, but no one could track down the source—not until three years ago, when dwarf prospectors set themselves the task of finding it. They uncovered a small spring of cold, clean water emerging from under the rock mantle.



The dwarves constructed a makeshift encampment and set out to improve their well, believing they could sell the water to caravans bound for Draj or Eldaarich in the far north. It didn't take long for the dwarves to discover that the water was in short supply, and that a single caravan could drink it down to a trickle that would take a week or more to recover. In fact, the water isn't even enough to support the community that has grown up around it—hence the name Bitter Well.

THE NARROWS

After Draj, a trade road travels east, following the land's contours until it passes through Bitter Well. For many, this distant outpost marks the world's end, since few dare travel the ancient road farther for fear of the Narrows. Aptly named, the Narrows is a stony strand between the natural Maze of Draj to the north and the yawning Sea of Silt to the south. Each year, the silt encroaches a little more, threatening to swallow the ancient highway one day. Giants plague the area, wading through the dust sinks to snatch caravans from the roads. The wreckage of splintered wagons litters the Narrows, testifying to the giants' incredible appetites.

DRAGON'S BOWL

A rumpled range of low mountains and highlands in the stony plains between Raam and Urik conceals a natural marvel: the Dragon's Bowl, a great cliff-walled crater more than seventy miles wide. The view from its rim is awe-inspiring, and nothing else in the Tyr Region matches its size and scope. The Dragon's Bowl

is an obstacle akin to the Ringing Mountains; sheer cliffs between 1,000 and 2,000 feet in height isolate its floor from the world outside. Only a handful of precarious trails descend the cliffs. The site takes its name from legends describing how the Dragon tore free from the world and left behind the deep crater to mark its birth.

The Dragon's Bowl has a strange stillness, as if the world holds its breath, awaiting the creature's return. The feeling intensifies at the bottom, where one finds a mix of rocky debris and hills covering the middle to southern reaches. Large herds of game animals and predators thrive in the Bowl, untroubled by the presence of people.

Lake Pit: To the north, the Dragon's Bowl slopes down toward a verdant belt surrounding a pristine lake. Lake Pit, one of the largest bodies of water in the Tyr Region, teems with fish and wildlife. The lake's isolation contributes to its unspoiled character, but the area also lies under the protection of a powerful druid, the aged mul Enola. He allies with wrathful elementals that tolerate no trespass in these guarded lands.

Lost Samarthia: Legends speak of a lost city somewhere in the Dragon's Bowl—a fantastic hidden place known as Samarthia. According to varying stories, Samarthia is a buried ancient citadel filled with the sorcerous science that prevailed in the civilizations of those ancient days, an eladrin city that lies in the Lands Within the Wind, or a city of geniekind or rakshasas concealed by mirage. Many treasure-seekers searching for Lost Samarthia have disappeared in the area, never to be heard from again.

ENOLA, GUARDIAN OF THE LAKE

A vigilant guardian druid named Enola protects Lake Pit. Eighty years old, the mul is vigorous and hale. Some who have met him believe he was once a gladiator slave, and his scorn for the city-states supports this theory. Enola is served by powerful elemental spirits, and he tries to drive off or kill intruders who come to plunder or settle the Dragon's Bowl. The druid usually spares innocent travelers, but he keeps a close eye on them, and he asks trespassers to leave only once.

THE GAUNTLETS

Two rugged mountain ranges form the Gauntlets in the east, just beyond Raam. The range to the north—the Left Gauntlet, as one looks eastward from Raam—is considerably older and more weathered than the southerly range. Sandstorms have reduced the Left Gauntlet to rounded domes, split and cracked by great fissures. Raam mined these peaks for generations, extracting silver and gemstones before the mines played out. Now the abandoned shafts house tarek tribes that prey on small caravans bound for Draj, along with a slave tribe known as Krikik's Pack.

The steep southern mountains of the Right Gauntlet have proved harder, forming a barrier against the Sea of Silt and preventing its encroachment inland. Many old gypsum quarries that provided alabaster for the statues and facades of Raam dot their lower slopes. Tribes of hejkins and troglodytes have all but driven out Raam's stonecutters.

KET

Seventy miles northeast of Bitter Well sits the large village of Ket, known to dune traders as the last outpost of civilization in this corner of the Tyr Region. The half-legendary cities of Kurn and Eldaarith are many days' travel to the north, and trade with those distant realms is infrequent. Ket lies in a large mudflat covered in tall grasses, trees, and brush. A silt basin surrounds the flat, and a mile-long wooden causeway spans the dust, linking Ket to the Road of Kings. Ket is a client village of Draj, and Draji warriors stationed here protect the settlement from attacks by giants.

BROKEN LANDS

Far to the north of Raam, the Ringing Mountains begin to draw away to the west, slowly marching off into a faint brown smudge flickering in the heat mirages. The landscape gives way to rocky badlands, littered with sharp stones and pebbles, whose broken escarpments and low peaks are hewn into odd shapes by the relentless dust storms that blow across the region. All manner of terrible creatures infest the twisting canyons and blind defiles of this jagged,

unforgiving area. No villages or trade posts lie in the savage wilderness; the Broken Lands mark the northern bounds of the Tyr Region.

DRY MARSH

The city-state of Draj rises out of the southwest portion of a region of salt marshes, scrub plains, dust sinks, and mudflats known as the Dry Marsh. Great stands of saw-edged grasses and dryreeds sighing in the wind dot the dusty marsh bed, forming a natural labyrinth known as the Maze of Draj. Skilled Draji workers venture deep into the maze, sometimes on stilts, to cut huge bundles of reeds that can be fashioned into floor mats and light walls by the city's weavers. In addition, Draji hunters and trappers take an assortment of small game here. Escaped slaves hide in the Dry Marsh, eking out a precarious living and avoiding the hungry monsters in the area.

PLAIN OF SINGING SKULLS

Near the middle of the Maze of Draj is a low mesa whose edges are studded with nearly a hundred stone obelisks, each decorated with skulls. The skulls have been filled with mortar and drilled such that winds blowing through the menhirs produce an awful moaning. Draji hunters and reed-gatherers avoid the mesa because a large and fierce tribe of belgoi long ago claimed these lands from whoever raised the obelisks. Some believe that the ruin of an ancient city lies somewhere nearby, and that the belgoi protect the fabulous treasure it must contain.

THE SMOKING CROWN

An ominous range of volcanic peaks rising in a ring-like formation north of Urik, the Smoking Crown is a dangerous land, barely habitable. The peaks belch plumes of steam, ash, and cinders that rain down over everything. Lava sometimes streams from the fissures in the slopes, spilling in fiery rivers down the mountainsides. Other fissures vent steam that scalds flesh or colorless, poisonous gases that kill without warning. Despite the danger, slaves excavate the mountains for obsidian and pumice. The quarries are hellish places to work, with unbearable temperatures and jagged black glass on all sides.

City of the Fire King: Miners tell of glimpsing dizzying ramparts and sinister gates through the clouds of steam and ash that fill the blasted plateau at the heart of the Smoking Crown. The citadels reported by the miners are said to be the homes of fearsome fire giants, fire titans, and salamanders that waylay workers who venture into the Crown.

Lake of Golden Dreams: At the foot of the Smoking Crown lies a strange wonderland of odd rock formations, boiling pools, and bubbling mud, eventually giving way to a steaming lake several miles wide. The Lake of Golden Dreams is the most visited location in this area, for the vapors rising from the scalding water are said to grant visions. Mystics, seers,

and lunatics make their homes along the lake's shore, rotting their minds by sampling the unhealthy mists.

In addition, the lake might conceal a submerged city. Where the blistering water is not too deep or cloudy, one can see remnants of old walls on the bottom, with dark cave mouths leading deeper into the earth.

Makla: Standing on the southern shore of the Lake of Golden Dreams, the village of Makla is a trade center and supply depot surrounded by pens for the quarry slaves. House Stel of Urik invests heavily in the village, and most employees, guards, and citizens in Makla have ties to this merchant house. King Hamanu keeps a large force of guards stationed in the village, as well as halfling hunters tasked with recovering fugitive slaves.

YARAMUKE

The city-states in the Tyr Region enjoy an uneasy peace. Although hostilities simmer and raids provoke retaliation, these incidents seldom grow into larger conflicts. Open war between two city-states leaves one or both vulnerable to neighbors that might take advantage of weakness and attack. The current arrangement of powers has lasted for a long time, but the ruins of Yaramuke show that things can change.

Long ago, Yaramuke was the fourth city-state along the Road of Kings, Raam's nearest neighbor and occasional ally. Yaramuke's sorcerer-queen Sielba doomed her people when she reached too far. Sielba had long coveted the obsidian of the Smoking Crown, so she sent prospectors into the mountains to establish new quarries. When Hamanu of Urik discovered Yaramite miners in his mountains, he rounded them up and sent their heads back to Yaramuke as a warning against further encroachments.

GOLDEN DREAMS

Those who inhale the steam of the Lake of Golden Dreams experience visions. Many are meaningless hallucinations, but enough true visions are had to lend credence to the tales about the lake. Any living character who spends an hour on the shores can spend two healing surges to take in the vapors. The character then makes a DC 25 Arcana check or History check. A successful check grants the character a piece of information about the past, as if the character had performed the Consult Mystic Sages ritual. Alternatively, at the Dungeon Master's discretion, the character can glimpse a future event instead—perhaps a person who will cross paths with the party, a location the adventurers will one day explore, or some other portent. A character can receive only one vision per day, and consecutive uses on subsequent days cost one additional healing surge. Healing surges spent at the Lake of Golden Dreams to experience visions do not return until the character takes an extended rest at least four miles away from the lake.

Incensed, Sielba sent an army of new slaves to take the mines by force, but Hamanu's Imperial Guard crushed them easily. Since it was clear that Sielba hadn't understood his warning, Hamanu chose to strike back. He led a small army up the Road of Kings, moving slowly as a sign of his disdain for his opponent. When his army arrived a month later, he found Yaramuke well defended, its walls protected by thousands of warriors.

The Urike legions surrounded the city but did not attack. Instead, Hamanu climbed to the highest hill overlooking the city and began a terrible incantation. So powerful was this ritual, so destructive its force, that Hamanu drew the life from all the plants and animals for miles around. His magic shattered the city's walls, killed its defenders, and swept through the streets, slaying thousands in a rain of fiery death. Not even the Urike army was spared, and many of Hamanu's soldiers fell alongside those of Yaramuke. By the time the magic had run its course, the city was reduced to rubble, and the lands around were poisoned, defiled, and ruined for all time.

Although Yaramuke was destroyed, the city-state was never sacked, and some believe that it still contains secrets and riches. The promise of Sielba's vast wealth is enough for many adventurers to set aside common sense and plunge headlong into the devastated city.



THE SEA OF SILT

"The slightest breeze stirs up a silvery pall of dust that clings to the surface like a fog. It becomes impossible to tell where the silt-laden air ends and the dustbed begins. When the wind blows more strongly, as it often does, the Sea of Silt becomes a boiling cloud of dust, the edges tinged with crimson sunlight. On such a day, a traveler near the sea cannot see more than a few feet in any direction. The dust coats his clothes, his face, the inside of his nose, and even his lungs. He cannot see the ground or the sky, and when he walks, his feet drag through inches of thick silt. He grows disoriented, and it becomes an easy matter for him to wander into the sea and disappear forever."

—*The Wanderer's Journal*

The Sea of Silt is a great dust sink that extends for hundreds, perhaps thousands, of miles eastward from the shores of the Tyr Region. Long ago it was a great sea of water, vast and deep, but now the shore slopes down to meet what looks like an endless plain of gray dust. On a calm day, it seems that one could walk out onto the plain as if it were fine sand, but the silt is too light to support a human's weight and too deep to wade for any distance. The Sea of Silt is an impossible barrier to travel, passable only along its margins by silt skimmers or waders that remain in shallow dust.

In addition to natural hazards, those who brave the sea must contend with the monstrous creatures that dwell in and around the silt. Tentacled silt horrors prowl the deeps, and giants roam the shallows, walking on secret roads only they know. Even the islands in the Sea of Silt offer as much peril as safe haven. Their isolated locations make them ideal hideouts for unscrupulous types who don't want their activities to be observed, and the austerity of life on the islands turns many inhabitants to savagery.

Like the Ringing Mountains to the west and the Southern Wastes to the south, the Sea of Silt forms one of the borders of the Tyr Region. For most people, the sea effectively marks the end of the world; no traveler has crossed its emptiness and returned to tell the tale. Attempts to circumnavigate the silt are likewise perilous—far to the north, a traveler faces impassable fjords and chains of active volcanoes that bar the way. To the south, the traveler ventures into desolate regions of salt flats and sandy wastes, bereft of life or shelter. In that direction, the sea appears to continue for thousands of miles without narrowing or coming to an end. It is a daunting barrier, to say the least.



SEA OF SILT BACKGROUNDS

The Sea of Silt is one of the least hospitable environments known on Athas, yet for some, its harshness is a boon of sorts. Small bands of outlaws and outcasts make their homes along its shores or on islands within the sea, competing with the beasts of the silt for meager resources.

Associated Skills: Acrobatics, Nature

Language: Giant

Archipelagan: You grew up in one of the tiny villages hidden among the mudflats of the remote coasts. Most Athasians fear silt and won't venture in deeper than their ankles, but you grew up around the stuff. You balance on stilts as easily as other people balance on sandals, and you have a feel for which silt is safe to wade and which should be avoided. Life in the mudflat villages is simple and primitive compared to life in the Tablelands or the Seven Cities; what do you make of the world beyond your home? Do you hope to return to your village someday?

Silt Pirate: Small, vicious crews of silt pirates lurk along the lonelier coasts, preying on silt skimmers loaded with trade goods. Did you join a pirate crew as a youth, captured by the romance of the notion? Did you win the pirates' respect by standing up to them? What led you to abandon your crew and strike out on your own?

THE NATURE OF THE SILT

The Sea of Silt is a curious phenomenon. Once an ocean, it is now filled with fine gray powder as dry as sun-parched bone. No one can explain why the silt persists instead of blowing away or slowly compacting into a firm gray plain—it's not natural for dust to behave in such a manner. Many Athasians assume that some dreadful magic transformed the seas to dust long ago, and they're not far from the mark. The Sea of Silt is a vast elemental intrusion into Athas, a region in which a great elemental power has subtly altered natural law, balancing air, earth, and water in a deviant fashion. In the Sea of Silt, dust coalesces and refuses to compact under its own weight. It remains light enough to rise in a wind-whipped haze that can cover nearby lands with fine gray grit, yet it trickles back down in time to rejoin the larger sea. Even if the silt blows into dust sinks many miles away, it retains these strange properties.

EXPLORING THE SEA OF SILT

Much of the Sea of Silt remains unexplored and unknown due to its sheer inaccessibility. Except for a few well-charted shoals, the largest silt skimmer can venture only a mile or two from shore. (Anyone who wants to venture farther out needs a means of flying or levitating.) Worse yet, long voyages up or down the coast offer little profit. Most of the reachable islands and mudflats are largely barren, and as far as anyone

knows nothing but blasted wasteland, possibly teeming with flesh-eating monsters, awaits the bolder travelers.

Experienced silt travelers know that the greatest danger of the sea is not monsters, raiders, or drowning—it is the insidious "disease" known as the Gray Death. When the hot, dry sirocco rises, it kicks up the top layer of fine gray powder and holds it aloft in a vast cloud. As creatures breathe this airborne dust, the moisture in their lungs and throat causes the silt to clump; a human can suffocate in a matter of hours. The surest protection against the Gray Death is to cover one's mouth and nose with a wet piece of silk or similar fine cloth (included in a typical survival day of supplies).

THE GOD IN THE DUST

The Sea of Silt is home to a dormant beast of great elemental power known as the Dust Kraken, Ul-Athra, or the Mouths of Thirst. It is said that the fearsome silt horrors that hunt in the sea are the spawn of Ul-Athra. Did the creature come to Athas during the Red Age and turn the original sea to dust? Was it a native of the sea, changed along with the water by defiling magic? No one knows.

Over the centuries, a number of elemental cults have risen to worship the Dust Kraken, seeking to rouse the beast from its slumber and use its power against their enemies. These cults perform strange rites in the name of their god. Sometimes, those especially favored by Ul-Athra's dreaming awareness are rewarded with secrets of powerful elemental magic or vile rituals that summon and bind lesser avatars of the Dust Kraken.

LAKE ISLAND

Most islands in the Sea of Silt are little more than jumbled boulders that fight a losing battle against the abrasive winds. Larger, more protected islands can withstand erosion and might sustain life. Lake Island is among the bigger landmasses in the sea. A mountainous spine forms a wall that shields against the storms blowing out of the deep silt; the largest peak is a dormant volcano. A large, clear lake lies within the caldera, and steam curls up from its pristine waters, warmed by the volcano's fiery spirits.

Trickling streams from the caldera nourish the thriving flora that blankets Lake Island's western slopes. In the lowlands, a traveler can find wild kanks, erdlus, and other herd animals. In addition, small settlements cluster around oases; Lake Island is home to warring giant clans, thri-kreen, dwarves, and others. Minotaur traders help sustain the few outposts, and gith raiders emerge from below the mountains to drag prisoners to an unknown fate in stinking subterranean grottos.

THE MOUNTAINS OF THE SUN

Standing like a line of tired sentinels a few hundred miles east of the isle of Waverly, the Mountains of the Sun are almost buried in silt. The range is very old and no longer has the jagged edges and sheer cliffs of younger ranges such as the Ringing Mountains. Deep passes of silt separate the individual peaks; each rises a few hundred to a few thousand feet above the dust. From the highest mountains in the center of the range, a traveler can see an endless ash storm far to the east in the middle of the Sea of Silt.

The Mountains of the Sun have few sources of water. Some of the older peaks support a few acres of sparse scrub along their leeward sides, but most are barren. Thousands of years of isolation from the mainland, coupled with the lack of water, have weeded out all but the hardiest inhabitants. The small number of peaks that can support life attract powerful flying monsters such as wyverns or rocs. Resilient goats and erdlus survive on some of the larger mountains. In the caves that crisscross the oldest peaks lurk degenerate tribes of hejkins and colonies of monstrous spiders.

THE ROAD OF FIRE

The place's name is a misnomer, since no actual roads span this chain of volcanic islands in the Sea of Silt. Some sages believe the Road of Fire to be a mighty arm of the Ringing Mountains flung out into the sea, but others think the volcanic isles are a new range, rising slowly out of the silt. Although several dozen smaller peaks are counted among the Road of Fire, the bulk of the archipelago consists of three islands: Dhuurghaz, Avehdaar, and Morghaz.

Dhuurghaz: The largest island in the Road of Fire, Dhuurghaz is a broad plateau of volcanic rock that is mostly flat except for a range of steep, rocky cliffs along the southern shore. The center of the island is a deep pit, from which emanates the hellish red glow of magma far below. This volcano connects to the Elemental Chaos, and elemental beings (especially firelashers, rockfire dreadnoughts, and fire archons) emerge from the depths, seeking to burn anything they can find. Beast giants of the Khal-Ish-Thaas tribe dwell in the southern highlands of Dhuurghaz, traveling a slow, nomadic circuit up and down the coast.

Avehdaar: Smaller and more mountainous than Dhuurghaz, Avehdaar is home to nomadic bands of stone giants and half-giants. The clans of Avehdaar raid out of necessity, since their island cannot support even the meager herds raised by the giants of Dhuurghaz. Avehdaar is also home to a large population of fire drakes. These creatures attack the raiding clans, but only when their own hunting is particularly bad—even fire drakes can't stand up to a dozen angry giants.

Morghaz: Unlike its sister islands, Morghaz has no active volcanoes and is surprisingly verdant. Scrub brush covers much of the land, and here and there stand small copses of forest. A small tribe could live here easily, yet the island is uninhabited. The Khal-Ish-Thaas tribe and the clans of Avehdaar avoid Morghaz, believing it to be haunted, and they are correct. A shattered keep on the southeastern tip of the island was the home of an ancient order of preservers. The former leader of the order, a powerful ghost named Haakar, still lingers in the ruins.

ROQOM

Rising out of the dust like the shattered fang of an enormous beast, Roqom appears only at the peak of midday on the hottest days of the year. This sharp, jagged spire of basalt lies in the wilderness beyond the Beastbarrens, but according to legend, it appears wherever its master can work the greatest mischief. The master of Roqom is Fajjayad, a great rakshasa prince, and he occasionally uses magical sendings to lure silt sailors and travelers to his black palace—especially travelers who have a desperate need of some sort. Fajjayad claims to be able to provide for any such needs in exchange for services to be rendered within 1,001 days.

The rakshasa is unfailingly polite and candid. If asked, he freely admits that the task he sets is likely to be difficult, even deadly, and that his "clients" might die while attempting it. However, Fajjayad assures them that "the laws" (a term he does not define) forbid him from setting a task that is impossible or whose outcome is certain death. For his magic to work, the task must have an element of chance and uncertainty. Still, if any group has ever profited from Fajjayad's bargain, its tale is not known.

SHAULT

The Isle of Shault lies east of Lake Island, far out in the Sea of Silt. Frequently hidden by blowing dust and virtually inaccessible by silt skimmer, Shault holds a secret: a thriving lowland forest. Except for a range of small mountains along the southern edge, the entire island is thickly forested with bizarre, exotic, and sometimes dangerous trees, the likes of which have been forgotten by the rest of Athas. Shault's fertility stems partially from its geography (the forest is protected on three sides by tall cliffs that block the searing winds from the silt, and numerous springs feed up from below the surface) and partially from the primal magic of the half-giant druid Mearedes, who protects the island.

If visitors can persuade Mearedes that they mean no harm, she and her three apprentices tolerate the intruders. However, the druids' hospitality comes at a price. The goliath is determined to ensure that knowledge of Shault's existence and location does not spread, lest unscrupulous types plunder the island. She insists that all visitors be subject to a ritual that compels them never to speak of the isle. Mearedes and her apprentices attack all who refuse, with full intent to kill; she does not revel in violence, but she considers the preservation of Shault more important than any individual life. In addition to her apprentices, Mearedes can call on some forty giants of varying kinds at need, all of them fiercely loyal to the druid.

In the heart of Shault's jungle, far from Mearedes and the homesteads of the giants, an ancient city has been ravaged by the march of time. The press of the jungle has torn down chunks of the walls and collapsed buildings as the greenery grows over the stone. Neither Mearedes nor the giants of Shault know who built the city or why; the murals and carvings that survive display script in an unknown language. Since the island receives few visitors and the druids avoid the ruins, its vaults and tombs remain undisturbed. Mearedes doesn't mind if adventurers explore the city—assuming that they prove cooperative enough for her to tolerate their presence at all—but she warns them that dangerous beasts lair within the ruins.

THE SILT ARCHIPELAGO

Far to the southeast of the Estuary of the Forked Tongue lies the Silt Archipelago, an unusual region of shallow silt and mudflats. Much of the sediment here is shallow enough to be crisscrossed by "giants' roads"—pathways where the tall creatures can wade. The islets of the archipelago are home to many of the same deadly creatures that haunt smaller mudflats and shallows throughout the Sea of Silt, as well as a number of tiny villages. Life on the islets is hard, but it is also free. The residents believe themselves beyond the reach of the sorcerer-kings, and they do not practice slavery. Raider tribes from the mainland and slavers from Balic attack the villages from time to time, but the archipelago's human and dwarf warriors are fierce and determined, and if they cannot turn away an attack, several giant tribes in the area are willing to lend a hand.

A few merchant houses based in Balic send caravans to the Silt Archipelago to trade for staple goods such as food, wood, hemp, and giant hair. In return, the traders obtain mekillot hide and bone, kank nectar, and manufactured goods of glass and worked stone that are beyond the villagers' ability to make.

VANISHING LAKE

One of the largest bodies of water in the Tyr Region, Vanishing Lake is a vast mudflat south and east of the Estuary of the Forked Tongue. It stretches more than twenty miles in length and five in width. The precise size is difficult to judge, for the silty muck that surrounds the lake is easily mistaken for more of the mudflat. Extended periods of drought cause the lake to evaporate, which means that during the months of High Sun there is less water and more mud. Eventually the open water disappears entirely, and the lake seems to vanish, leaving behind a thin, watery mire. When the sun beats less fiercely during the months of Sun Descending, the water's source wells up once more, and the lake becomes obvious to the eye again. Old silt sailors claim that the periods of open water grow shorter and farther apart as the years pass. Someday the lake might disappear and never return.

Vanishing Lake is home to one or more aggressive water drakes, and silt runners, floating mantles, chathrangs, and other dangerous creatures live in the surrounding mudflat. The area is protected by a powerful, ancient druid known as the Old One. Most folk never encounter him, although occasionally a lost traveler, half dead from thirst and sun sickness, claims to have been set on the right path and given a waterskin by a mysterious old druid who disappeared into the silt.

THE VERDANT ISLE

Stories shared in taverns from Tyr to Cromlin tell of a lush island in the middle of the Sea of Silt. According to the tales, the island is home to a secret city-state ruled by a benevolent monarch and ringed by wide lakes of cool, pristine water. Supposedly, this city is a paradise, and if a traveler is lucky enough (or has the right map, which many hucksters just happen to have for sale), he or she can find the Verdant Isle and live in idle luxury. Sages speculate that the rumor might refer to the island of Ebe, a wealthy and prosperous kingdom during the Green Age. Others dismiss the Verdant Isle as a mirage that lures the foolhardy far out into the sea, where they drown in silt. The wildest tales maintain that the city, a mighty citadel concealed in a valley of dust and fire, is the hidden retreat of the Dragon.

THE SOUTHERN WASTES

"Beware the city dwellers, for they have the tongues of serpents, and their daggers are made of silver coins."

—A Tamwar saying

The Tyr Region is rimmed by the Ringing Mountains to the west and the Sea of Silt to the east, but to the south is nothing but desert—a vast desert that never ends, as far as anyone knows. As one travels south from the shores of the Estuary of the Forked Tongue, villages and outposts peter out to wild lands where only a few lonely nomads roam. Beyond that, the traveler comes to silent, empty lands where no one lives at all, and even the vicious predators that haunt the deserts of the Tablelands and the Ivory Triangle grow few and far between. These are the Southern Wastes, a desolate expanse that in all likelihood girdles the rest of the world.

The wastes have no verdant areas or oases large enough to support a city. In fact, the desert takes on a capricious, elemental character as one ventures farther south. Just as the Sea of Silt is an incursion of elemental power into the world, the Southern Wastes are home to other sorts of incursions: mazes of wind-carved canyons, plains of smoking ash, forests of stone columns that drift with the gusts, rivers of fire, seas of salt, and more. Perhaps other populated lands like the Tyr Region exist somewhere beyond these terrible wastes . . . or perhaps not.

SOUTHERN WASTES BACKGROUNDS

To the people of the Tyr Region, the far south is nothing but desolation and mystery, but the near margins of the great southern desert are home to nomadic tribes and small villages.

Associated Skills: Nature, Perception

Secret Order: You belong to an elemental cult or a priesthood, a secret society that teaches reverence for the primal power sleeping in the world's sand, stone, and sky. Perhaps you were brought to a hidden shrine as a child and raised there, or you might have met a wandering teacher or half-mad seer who tutored you in the power of the elements. Does your order have a high purpose, such as the restoration of Athas or the destruction of the sorcerer-kings? Does your order still exist, or are you the last member?

Associated Skills: History, Nature

Tamwar Dervish: You come from the Tamwar, nomads who live on the edge of the Endless Sand Dunes. As a youth you were chosen to learn the ways of the elemental spirits and become a holy warrior of your people. Perhaps you left your tribe to seek your fortune in the wider world, hoping to earn great wealth in the civilized lands. Or maybe you are the

last of your family, the sole survivor of a dark tragedy. Are you a mercenary or a scout for hire, ready to trade your desert knowledge for a few coins at a time? What do you think of the city dwellers you meet?

EXPLORING THE SOUTHERN WASTES

Much like the deserts of the Tyr Region, the Southern Wastes are the graveyard of ancient realms. Ruins dot this awesome expanse and seem to grow older the farther south one travels. Some sages claim that the peoples of the Tyr Region once lived in these lands and were driven northward century by century as the decay of Athas slowly enveloped the south.

ENDLESS SAND DUNES

South of Balic lie the Endless Sand Dunes, a wasteland that stretches for hundreds, perhaps thousands, of miles. It is the domain of the nomadic people known as the Tamwar, herders who struggle to survive at the outskirts of the dunes. In centuries past, the Tamwar gathered in plundering hordes to strike at Balic, Kalidnay, or Tyr, but no great leader has appeared among them in many generations. The Tamwar tell stories of ancient kingdoms buried under the vast dune sea—the homelands of their sacred ancestors. The nomads turn on outsiders who venture into their holy places.

HERUMAR, THE SAND SCOURGE

A terrible monster slumbers deep in the Endless Sand Dunes—the beast known as Herumar, the Sand Scourge. The creature resembles a seven-headed hydra of immense size, whose breath gives rise to scouring sandstorms. A cult of vicious elementalists worships Herumar, believing that blood spilled in the dunes slakes the elemental creature's thirst and earns the cultists its favor.

ARKHOLD

A ruined seaport buried in the sands by the shores of the Sea of Silt, Arkhold is so remote that few treasure-hunters have picked it over. The timeworn fortress of a forgotten order of knights sits atop the highest point of the settlement, overlooking the dry harbor. Drifting sand covers much of Arkhold and shifts from place to place over time, exposing long-buried portions of the area while hiding others beneath new dunes.

THE BLUE SHRINE

For most residents of Athas, it's a commonly accepted fact that if gods ever existed in the world, they are long since dead or driven off. The Blue Shrine,

however, suggests otherwise. This ancient structure remains untouched by the hands of time, its white marble gleaming in the crimson sun. Within the shrine, an endlessly smoking throne rests before the altar. Those who sit in the throne and breathe the smoke experience a dizzying rush of visions: enormous, shining warriors battling beasts of living rock and wind, armies of priests kneeling in obeisance, the smell of incense, and the sound of ancient hymns rising to the sky.

CELIK

A great city of the Green Age, Celik is now a ruin, but it has not been deserted. Over the centuries, the city became a meeting place for nomadic tribes drawn by its excellent wells and the shelter offered by its crumbling walls. Dune traders followed the nomads, setting up seasonal posts, and eventually, escaped slaves, outcasts, criminals, and others seeking refuge or opportunity found their way to Celik. From time to time, the ruins fell empty again, but sooner or later someone would settle in the old city's outskirts. Monsters plague the ruins, including bands of anakores, gith, and a few hungry gaj that haunt the old cistern network below the streets.

An ambitious, middle-aged human trader named Korsun controls Celik. He is the head of House Mareneth, a small merchant house trading in Tyr, Altaruk, and Balic. Anyone who wants to set up shop in Celik or explore its ruins must buy a license from Korsun; if someone can't afford the cost, he or she can become indentured to the trader instead.

THE GREAT SALT FLAT

Between the eastern borders of the Endless Sand Dunes and the Sea of Silt lies a salt flat even larger than the Great Ivory Plain. This region, known as the Great Salt Flat, is a waterless expanse hundreds of miles across that offers no shelter of any kind. In many places, chest-high ridges of salty encrustation form natural mazes, blocking all but the most nimble pack beasts and forcing travelers to scramble across the tops of the ridges. The flat is a nearly impassable obstacle between the islets of the Silt Archipelago and the more settled regions near the Estuary of the Forked Tongue.

THE MUD PALACE

In a deserted corner of the Tyr Region, the Mud Palace stands in the middle of a vast mudflat. It is a mysterious citadel of white marble that appears to have no windows or doors in its lower floors. From its towers pour continuous torrents of cold, fresh water that have irrigated the mudflat for years, perhaps centuries. Nomads who pass nearby say that the palace was the home of a powerful sorcerer who commanded genies or demons to build it for him. As the story goes, he reneged on his payment, and his otherworldly allies entombed him in the structure. It



THE SOUTHERN WASTES

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seems likely that a gate or a portal provides the Mud Palace with its bottomless fountains, but few people try to collect water here—the surrounding mudflat teems with horrid monsters.

THE DEAD LAND

Many days south of Balic, a great plain of broken, black obsidian interrupts the monotony of the Endless Sand Dunes. The obsidian differs throughout the plain—it can be smooth and glassy, low and razor-edged, or shattered into jagged chunks 20 or 30 feet tall. Here and there, bare hillocks rise above the obsidian waves, crowned by a clump of hardy bushes or a small tree, or half-buried remnants of city walls jut out of the glistening glass like the bones of a creature that died in a tar pit. During the Cleansing Wars, a terrible battle was fought on this plain, and a defiler of awesome power broke the world's skin, flooding the area with molten black glass to destroy whole armies with one dreadful ritual.

With no food, little water, and no shelter to speak of, the Dead Land is one of the worst regions on Athas. By day, the sun's heat on the black ground can kill a traveler within hours; at night, the armies slain here rise as hateful undead, driven to reenact the last battles of their lives. Near the center of the plain stands an obsidian citadel, built from rock cut from the ground by hordes of skeletons and zombies under the direction of a mighty undead lord.

THE TABLELANDS

"Beyond Tyr, who knows what we'll meet? Maybe earthquakes, scouring sand squalls, monstrous abominations, attacks by violent raiders... sure you're up for the trip?"

—Shahin, dune trader

Stretching from the foothills of the Ringing Mountains to the Great Ivory Plain and from the Lost Oasis to the Dragon's Bowl, the Tablelands are a vast territory of sand, stone, and scrub plains. The picturesque mesas and buttes for which the region is named jut from the plains or rise like broken ramparts from the badlands, painted in broad striations of orange, yellow, and ocher. These ancient lands, inhabited by a wide variety of almost all the speaking peoples of Athas, hold dusty trading posts, hidden villages, and crumbling ruins. When city-dwelling Athasians think of deserts and desert people, they usually picture the Tablelands and its denizens. In fact, some city residents use the term "Tablelands" to describe everything between the Ringing Mountains and the Sea of Silt.

Two city-states dominate the Tablelands: Tyr and Urik. Tyr claims the broad central belt, and Urik's influence extends over the northern portion. With the death of King Kalak of Tyr, the old rivalry has taken on a new complexion. Tyr's revolutionaries dream of spreading their uprising to new cities, while Hamanu of Urik plots to seize Tyr's iron mines and extend his control all the way to Tyr's walls. However, there is a difference between what each city claims and what it truly controls. Outside a narrow belt of patrols and outposts ringing the two cities, the only laws a traveler need worry about are the laws of the desert: Trust no one, guard your water, and watch where you step.

TABLELANDS BACKGROUNDS

The Tablelands are a true cross-section of Athas; here one finds herders, elven tribes, raiders, dwarf miners, trading posts, and ruins teeming with savage marauders. Scores of tiny hamlets, remote camps, and nomadic tribes call this area home.

Associated Skills: Diplomacy, Endurance

Language: Thri-Kreen

Herder: You hail from the nomadic clans that wander the scrub plains and badlands, tending flocks of goats, erdlus, kanks, or other livestock. However, you are no dull shepherd—protecting your animals from desert predators and raiding tribes is a deadly serious task, and you learned to fight at an early age. Were you captured by slavers and taken from your people, or has some vendetta drawn you out into the wider world?

Land's Guardian: You swore an oath to the land's spirits that you would protect a particular region from harm. What part of the world do you guard? How free are you to leave it? What do you regard as the greatest threat to your chosen realm? What would you do to protect your territory?

Hopeful Entrepreneur: You work for yourself, owing no allegiance to any merchant house. What goods do you trade? How do you get along with other merchant houses? Have any tried to recruit you? Do any houses actively oppose your enterprise? What cities have you visited? What allies or enemies have you made?

EXPLORING THE TABLELANDS

The Tablelands around Tyr hide a number of intriguing sites, including plantations of Tyr's nobles, client villages, raider camps, old ruins, and lairs of dangerous monsters. Trade routes snake eastward from Tyr, leading to the cities of Balic, Gulg, and Urik. Great mekilot-drawn argosies creak slowly along these well-traveled paths, but the roads are far from safe.

ALTARUK

The Balican merchant dynasties of Wavir, Rees, and Tomblador sponsor this fortified town of about two thousand souls astride the trade route that connects Balic with Tyr. Desperate raiders wait in ambush in the stony barrens and rocky badlands that surround the village, but Altaruk's well-paid mercenaries drive off any bandits they find lurking within half a day's travel of the town's gates.

This protection is not free to travelers. All who want to enter Altaruk must pay a toll of 1 gp per visitor (including each beast of burden). But for those inside the 15-foot-high walls, Altaruk offers stables, room and board, trade opportunities between merchant houses, and gossip from all corners of the Tablelands. Only the largest and fiercest raiding tribes would consider attacking Altaruk, but rumor has it that giants of the Estuary of the Forked Tongue are gathering to strike at the town. It's happened before.

The village is governed by a Balican noble named Arispistaneles. In his role as master of the town, he deals with traders in a stern but fair manner. Arispistaneles also has a secret role in Altaruk—he heads a local cell of the Veiled Alliance, which maintains contact with cells in the neighboring cities. Many an Alliance plot has been hatched in the cellars of Altaruk.

BIRK SUNTOUCHED

Altaruk Personality

This wide-eyed dwarf wanders the village and makes his living by begging. He constantly mumbles nonsense regarding Kalak's "secret prophecy." Most locals believe he's a harmless loon, but Birk Suntouched is actually a member of the Veiled Alliance who has been tasked by Arisphistaneles to lure out any secret members of the True—a conspiracy of Kalak's followers—who might be skulking about in Altaruk.

BLACK SANDS

East of the Silver Spring Oasis lies a sprawling area of coarse black sand. Most travelers give it a wide berth, for in bony rooms and caravanserais across the Tablelands, people speak in hushed tones of the evils of the Black Sands.

According to rumors, the Black Sands region was created by defiling magic that predated the rise of the city-states and their rulers. Supposedly, an ancient ruined city, haunted by hateful ghosts of a past age, lies at the center of the Sands, and any who enter its crumbled walls are doomed to join the undead spirits. Actually, a ravaged city does sit at the heart of the Black Sands, although it does not predate the sorcerer-kings. In addition, the legendary Black Sands Raiders are far more dangerous than any undead that might haunt the devastated city. These bloodthirsty marauders camp in the shadow of the ruins, riding out in all directions to plunder villages and raid caravans.

ZEBURON, THE IRON RIDER

Chief of the Black Sands Raiders, Zeburon leads the group's attacks. He is a bloodthirsty marauder known for torturing any victims who fall into his hands; his savagery is legendary in a land where savagery is the norm. Zeburon conceals his face by wearing a full iron helm, etched with strange runes that mark it as the product of another age. Iron gauntlets cover his arms almost to the elbow, but apart from a breechcloth, cloak, and sandals, he wears no other adornments. Zeburon presents himself as an elemental force of slaughter—grim, terrible, and silent.

DRAGON HORNS

An ominous pair of crags rising above the rocky badlands south of Tyr, the Dragon Horns serve as the lair of a vicious gnoll tribe that calls itself the Dragon Horde. The tribe has no connection with the Dragon, but its appropriation of the terrifying creature's name enhances its gruesome reputation. The leader of the Horde is a wily old war chief named Tuarg Broken-Fang.

Tuarg and the gnolls have taken swift advantage of the confusion following the fall of Tyr's sorcerer-king. Their raids have grown bolder and bolder as the city

fails to respond to their forays. Tyr grapples with too much internal turmoil to police its outlying plantations and mines. Scenting opportunity, Tuarg has sent runners to other gnoll tribes, summoning them to join the Dragon Horde. When next the gnolls strike, they mean to scour clean everything outside the city walls.

FREEDOM

For decades Tyr's slaves whispered about a hidden village called Freedom that welcomed anyone who escaped from bondage. Unlike many slave tales, this one is true—Freedom exists, hidden in a remote crater in the foothills between Tyr and Urik. The village's former slaves raid to support themselves; however, with Kalak's fall and the liberation of Tyr's slaves, the village elders are pursuing a new path: trade, or at least trade with Tyr.

From their hidden refuge, the ex-slaves have sent trade delegations to Tyr, presenting themselves as House Lirr, a new minor merchant house. The delegations are led by Bartras, a male human who once worked as a slave for House Vordon. Bartras rose as high in the house as a slave could before he fled with a purse of stolen gold, and he fears he would be recognized in Tyr. Therefore, Bartras travels in disguise, wearing the long black robes and hood of a desert ascetic. He usually lets his assistant Fathalia speak for the so-called House Lirr.

In addition to raiders trying to turn over a new leaf, Freedom is home to ex-slaves who hold grudges against their former masters. A group calling itself the Winds of Vengeance secretly hires bounty hunters and assassins to eliminate the slavers. Unfortunately for travelers in the region, the hired killers (who travel in small groups disguised as dune traders) do not discriminate when it comes to lopping off slaver heads. If they can save themselves a bit of work by killing a stranger who can pass for their intended target, they will.

GRAK'S POOL

Midway between Altaruk and Ledopolus stands a mud-brick fortress built over a natural spring. Because surface water is rare anywhere on Athas, Grak's Pool is a welcome stop for travelers. Grak, a half-elf warrior of some renown, commands a band of mercenaries based here. He allows visitors to set up camp around the outskirts of his fortress, but his water is not free. He charges travelers 5 gp per drink and 20 gp per bath.

Below the fortress and the spring, a foundation of older ruins extends beneath the stony barrens of the surrounding landscape. Grak and his mercenaries have explored only a portion of these tangled, echoing tunnels. Spine-chilling roars sometimes echo up from the deep passages below Grak's Pool. Their awful resonance has been sufficient to keep the mercenaries from venturing too far beneath the fortress.

SEER MAFOUN

Grak's Pool Personality

Mafoun is a badly scarred dragonborn who camps perpetually outside the fortress of Grak's Pool. He offers prophecies and readings for the cost of a drink in the fortress. Mafoun belongs to a secret cult called the Children of the Dragon. The Children believe that the Dragon of Tyr will redeem Athas if it receives enough sacrifices. The world's failure is that, so far, too few lives have been given to the Dragon for it to achieve its ultimate end.

GREAT ALLUVIAL SAND WASTES

A wide belt of dunes stretches hundreds of miles from Urik all the way south past Altaruk, paralleling the Ringing Mountains. Over the ages, sand washed from the mouths of mountain canyons has accumulated into a vast desert known as the Great Alluvial Sand Wastes. This region walls off Tyr and the foothills of the Ringing Mountains from the rest of the Tablelands (and the Tyr Region in general). Although the terrain is difficult to travel, it is not especially harsh, and tiny wells and oases lie scattered across its golden expanse.

Slither, the Crawling Citadel: A century ago, a mul defiler named Yarnath used a powerful ritual to create a crawling citadel of bone in the wastes south of Tyr. However, the ritual took an unexpected turn, and Yarnath drained his own life as well as those of the slaves he intended to sacrifice. He passed into undeath and became a powerful lich.

Despite the unforeseen sacrifice, Yarnath's ritual succeeded in animating the fortified palace of Slither to serve as his roving citadel. Slither is built from the gargantuan skeletons of seven mekillot dirks bound together by beams of fused bone. Turrets and sharp spires of bone rise crookedly from the Dirk-shell structure, which slowly crawls across sand wastes, scrub plains, salt flats, and ridged foothills with equal facility.

Yarnath leads a band of raiders who primarily target trade caravans on the way to Altaruk or the Silver Spring Oasis. The lich's marauders hide their citadel a quarter-day's journey from wherever they set their ambushes, so no one realizes the secret of their mobile encampment. The raiders bear snake-skull tattoos, and Yarnath has established a network of spies and agents from Ledopolis to Silver Spring.

Vault of House Madar: The merchant dynasty of House Madar fell to the machinations of House Tsalaxa a hundred years ago, but Tsalaxa's victory was incomplete. The last Madars concealed a goodly part of their wealth in a hidden redoubt before Tsalaxa's assassins slew all who knew the secret of its resting place.

Supposedly, the vault is somewhere in the sandy wastes east of Tyr. Its entrance is said to resemble a natural, wind-carved portico set flush in the shadowed face of a canyon wall. Inside, a hidden entrance opens into a labyrinth of tunnels containing the treasury

vault of House Madar. Undead (apparently consisting of buried Madar ancestors and servitors), constructs, traps, and wards guard the place. Despite the elaborate traps and real wealth stored here, the tomb could be false—a ploy meant to distract notice from the true and as yet undiscovered vault of House Madar.

MINES OF TYR

A mountain road wending between high peaks leads from the gates of Tyr to a fortified mining camp a day's travel from the walls of that city-state. Three guard outposts monitor the road at half-mile intervals. The camp occupies a plateau shelf beneath a sheer cliff that contains the mine face. The plateau is crowded with guards, worker barracks, tools, a smelting compound, and heavy equipment.

The mines snake into the mountain following narrow red veins of raw ore. Aside from arsenic poisoning, bad air, and collapses, the workers also face hejkin raids from deeper in the tunnels.

KALIDNAY

In the southern Tablelands stand the shadow-wrapped ruins of Kalidnay, a formerly great city. From an immense palace surrounded by the mansions of his nobles and templars, the sorcerer-king Kalid-Ma ruled over a city-state as large as Tyr and as wealthy as Balic. No one knows how Kalidnay's end came, for it was not destroyed by a rival city or laid waste by the Dragon. All that is known for certain is that disaster struck on the eve of a celebration proclaimed by Kalid-Ma in honor of his queen Thanok-An. A few days later, a caravan arrived in Kalidnay and found the city deserted. The only sign of disaster was a tremendous crack that split open a pyramid in the necropolis a mile outside the city walls—a grand tomb for Kalid-Ma that had been under construction for decades.

Some tales say that the sorcerer-king sacrificed his citizens in a terrible defiling rite. Other stories claim that Thanok-An slew her husband in a bid to steal his powers and lost control of the dreadful magic she had gained. Whatever happened, the city was never reoccupied because perilous shadows still haunt the ruins. Those who know the secret of walking in other planes report that Kalidnay now exists mostly in the shadowy otherworld of the Gray; every night, strange mists roll through the streets. Any creature caught in the cloying fog is destroyed or drawn away to an unknown fate—perhaps just as the people of Kalidnay were.

Usually, creatures that take shelter in the jumble of ruins the city has become are safe from the creeping mists. As a result, bold raiding tribes, vicious monsters, and strange shadow creatures lair in the crumbling structures.

KLED

The dwarven settlement of Kled controls an obsidian mine in the foothills of the Ringing Mountains. The village is built on the location of a Green Age dwarven citadel called Kemolak. The dwarves of Kled believe they are descended directly from the kings of Kemolak, although they keep this claim from outside ears lest they anger a sorcerer-king in their presumption. From time to time, miners unearth portions of the ruins of the “city of dwarf kings.” Most of the finds are enigmatic wall remnants or bits of flagged flooring heavily inscribed with angular runes. However, every so often the workers recover a crumbling relic of ancient Kemolak.

Of late, Kled has been troubled by a series of raids targeting trade caravans bound for Tyr. A number of dwarves have been killed by mysterious attackers.

LOST OASIS

Possibly unique on Athas, the so-called Lost Oasis features a natural geyser that periodically shoots scalding water to the surface. Despite its high mineral content, the steaming water nourishes a grove of trees, perhaps with the help of the thr-kreen druid Durwadala, who claims Lost Oasis as her home.

Travelers who are allowed by Durwadala to enter Lost Oasis never see her, and those she determines to be enemies of life (such as defilers, aberrant creatures, and templars) are slain. How she manages this feat is a mystery. Either Durwadala is especially powerful or, as has been reported by raiders, the druid is linked to the geyser in some way, using it to ambush intruders with blasts of scalding water.

SCREAMING RAVINE

A natural cave mouth in the southern range of the Ringing Mountains opens onto a shaft that leads down into a series of mine tunnels and small chambers. A ravine of uncharted depth bisects many of the crumbling tunnels and chambers. Bloodcurdling screams occasionally echo up from the dark.

A narrow switchback path leads down one wall of the ravine toward its nadir. Since the chasm has not been explored in full, no one knows what lies at the bottom.

SILVER SPRING OASIS

A fortified caravanserai stands at the oasis along the trade route between Tyr and Urik. This roadside inn is a preferred stop for many house merchants and dune traders. Its faded, worn walls have greeted travelers for more than a century with flickering lanterns lit just after nightfall, snippets of exotic song, and the clamor of excited trade.

Silver Spring Oasis is a great walled square, with the central courtyard open to the elements. The inner wall of the courtyard is riddled with doors that lead to sleeping chambers, a common room, food stores, stables, and vaults where dune traders can safeguard their merchandise. The courtyard also contains the eponymous “Silver Spring,” a central well that yields cloudy, foul-tasting water. (Whoever named the well apparently did so a long time ago, when the water was fresh, or the name might be a joke.) Still, the water is safe for people and mounts to drink, and when properly filtered, it becomes suitable for the famous “silver baths” that only the wealthiest traders can afford. Carts and stalls of minor merchants fill the courtyard around the well.

The proprietors are a tribe of elves called the Silver Hands. Unlike others of their kind, the elves are not nomadic herders or raiders; they have run Silver Spring Oasis for several generations. The current leader of the tribe and head of the caravanserai is Chief Toramund, who greets all newcomers, settles all conflicts, and oversees orderly trade. Those who violate the inn’s primary rule (do not steal from another visitor) are ejected through the gate without their trade items, belongings, or clothing.



URIK, CITY OF LIONS

"I am Hamanu, King of the World, King of the Mountains and the Plains, King of Urik, for whom the roaring winds and the mighty sun have decreed a destiny of heroism, and to whom the life-giving waters and nourishing soils have entrusted the mightiest city of Athas."

—Hamanu, King of Urik

Hamanu boasts with good reason. Urik is a powerful city-state with teeming armies, enormous walls, bustling commerce, and wise sages, governed in an orderly framework established by the self-styled King of the World. Urik's legions have never met defeat, and Hamanu has never run from battle. Any decision of importance made in the Tyr Region must consider the wishes of Urik's sorcerer-king.

Urik is highly organized and militarized. A variety of laws contained in the lengthy document known as Hamanu's Code govern commerce and taxes, specify holidays, set standards for construction and artistry, and dictate family arrangements such as weddings, care for elders, and funerals. Templars test Urikite children and assign them to the vocations for which they are most suited. The city aspires to be a meritocracy, but hidden webs of patronage and influence secure important posts and stations for people with the right connections.

Although Urik seems stable and well-ordered, it is every bit as oppressive as any other city-state—perhaps more so, thanks to the number and efficiency of Hamanu's templars. In recent weeks, the fall of Kalak of Tyr has upset Hamanu's delicate balance by proving that sorcerer-kings who rule for centuries might be mortal after all. Hamanu believes that he has nothing to fear from his subjects, but he knows that Urik's fortunes depend on trade with other cities. If unrest spreads beyond Tyr, even Urik might suffer. Thus, Hamanu's templars keep an eye on developments in the Free City and pay for information from spies in Tyr, including the mul stonecutter Xalos.

URIKITE BACKGROUNDS

Urikite humans have bronze skin, dark eyes, and black or brown hair. The men wear beards and keep them trimmed into spade shapes or squares. Clothing ranges from simple kilts to sleeveless, knee-length tunics or exotic long robes with voluminous sleeves. Veils and scarves are common among the women; the finer the scarf, the higher the station.

Associated Skills: Insight, Streetwise

Gifted Potter: Pottery is the highest art form in Urik, and the pieces produced in the city-state are among the finest on Athas. You studied under master potters and perfected your craft. How do you use your position? Who was your mentor? Do you still practice the trade?

Scarred Miner: Urik's obsidian mines kill more slaves than the city's arena does. Miners who survive rarely do so without suffering terrible scars or a missing limb. Why were you sent to the mines? Were you injured there? How did you come to be freed?

Watchful Astronomer: The stars hold many secrets, and their movements can reveal the future. Urik is famed for its astronomers and their instruments, and you studied under the masters for a time. What omens did you read in the heavens? Were they responsible for your current life as an adventurer?

URIK'S POWER STRUCTURE

The templars insist that Hamanu's Code is a divine gift, a blessing that the sorcerer-king bestowed upon his people so they could prosper and grow. In truth, the laws are oppressive and jealously guard the prerogatives of the king, his templars, and the noble classes. Common Urikite citizens understand that the Code exists to protect the powerful, but they dare not grumble. The only good thing that can be said of the draconian laws is that they discourage street crime.

URIK AT A GLANCE

As much an imposing fortress as it is a city-state, Urik is protected by intimidating walls and fearless defenders.

Population: About 20,000 people live within the city walls, and more occupy the surrounding plantations. Humans make up three-fifths of the population. Goliaths are the most numerous minority race, followed by dwarves, muls, and halflings. Thri-kreen, elves, and other races are represented in Urik as well.

Water: Cisterns gather runoff from the Ringing Mountains, and deep wells throughout the city supply neighborhoods with drinking water. The irrigated lands around Urik draw water from the few oases found nearby. The city-state has ample water supplies.

Supplies: Urik enjoys a robust economy and is famed for its pottery. Obsidian weapons and tools are common. Vast herds in the surrounding lands produce leather, meat, chitin, and kank nectar.

Defense: Urik's armies are without peer. Not counting the Imperial Guard, which consists of a thousand half-giants, Hamanu can field an army of ten thousand slave warriors and professional soldiers. He is also served by a company of two hundred halfling scouts and slave-catchers sent as a gift from Urga-Zoltapl, chieftain of the Forest Ridge town of Ogo.

Inns and Taverns: Travelers can find accommodations throughout Potters' Square and the Obsidian Quarter. Urik prides itself on uniformity, so most inns and taverns are identical, with few qualities to set them apart. Only the Old District has unique places with rich character.



Hamanu takes an active role in governing, involving himself in every civic function—including dispensing justice, monitoring food supplies, and overseeing his soldiers' training. He is a difficult master to please, since he expects the same dedication from his servants. He discards anyone who proves unable to meet his high expectations.

TEMPLARS

Urikite templars enjoy great power but little luxury. Hamanu sees them as extensions of his will and presence. It is nothing to him to sacrifice a templar, and he discards them as he would slaves. Templars fulfill many functions in the city-state: enforcing laws, collecting taxes, overseeing slaves, leading warriors in battle, and ferreting out enemies of the state. They wear yellow cloaks or capes as their badge of office; no one else is permitted to wear similar garments.

Although low-ranking templars live under military discipline, high-ranking templars are awarded noble titles and rich estates as signs of Hamanu's favor.

SIRDARS

In Urik, nobles are known as sirdars. They are the only people permitted to own land. Sirdars collect rent from free tenant farmers or have their retainers oversee slave-worked fields. Hamanu gives property to sirdars in recognition of their achievements. In this way, great warriors, high-ranking templars, priests, magistrates, and other distinguished officials become

landowners and collect the rents and crops produced on their estates. Gaining an office that carries elevation to the sirdar class is often a matter of politics, but Hamanu is sincere in rewarding Urikites of exceptional ability who serve him well. Over the years, many common-born citizens have gained estates on their own merits. These awarded lands pass to the sirdar's descendants, who keep them (and the title) as long as they maintain the holdings in good order. Children of sirdar families are expected to make something of themselves, and most seek a high rank in the army or become templars or other officials.

EXPLORING URIK

In a hilly region where the Ringing Mountains meet the Tablelands, Urik sits in a fertile belt maintained by careful irrigation from deep wells. Grain fields and fruit-bearing orchards surround the city-state in neat rows. Urik gleams, its stone walls steeped in yellow pigment made from the sulfurous waters of the nearby Lake of Golden Dreams. Statues of bold, bipedal lions march to war across its walls. Lions' heads carved from stone serve as merlons atop the dizzying walls, where sentries stand guard, bows never far from their hands.

Four gates offer access to the city. The Slave Gate sees heavy traffic, including caravans bound to and from the obsidian mines in the Smoking Crown. Nobles and templars enter and exit through High Gate, and most other visitors pass in and out through

the Obsidian Gate and the King's Gate. Half-giant guards, archers, and war templars staff the towers at each gate and rigorously question all who enter.

Most of Urik is a place of straight roads and clean lines. Bricks pave the streets. In most districts, houses and buildings are uniform, nearly identical except for writing that designates the function or owner. A visitor unaccustomed to Urik's style can easily become lost. In addition, one finds Hamanu's likeness everywhere. The yellow-and-white-glazed walls feature brilliant murals that capture the Mighty King's many exploits. The sorcerer-king has spared no expense in ensuring that the people do not forget who rules.

OUTSIDE THE WALLS

The hills surrounding Urik are mostly barren, but extensive irrigation transforms the land into arable soil. Grain fields, orchards, and vineyards create surprising greenery beneath the looming brown hills. Four roads emerge from the city-state and cross this verdant tract. The wide, winding Obsidian Way climbs toward the Smoking Crown and Urik's obsidian mines. The High Road leads west toward Makla, Urik's most important client village. The Trade Way travels south to the Silver Spring Oasis, and the Road of Kings travels east to Raam.

City of the Dead: Not far from the Slave Gate outside the city, one finds the City of the Dead, Urik's cemetery. Urikites sometimes refer to it as the Bone-yard. The sprawling burial ground features stone mausoleums, mass graves, and private plots.

The Three Sisters: Three hills rise just beyond the irrigated plain. Here one finds observatories built to study the skies, including the Royal Observatory atop the center hill. In this 50-foot-tall tower, Babantylos, the chief astronomer, scrutinizes the stars for portents. Obsidian golems and a guardhouse with a dozen sentinels protect the Royal Observatory. An older observatory abandoned years ago serves as a place for clients to meet with smugglers and assassins hired by Silan the Serpent.

OLD DISTRICT

Simple stone buildings and tight, twisting streets characterize this quarter, making it a veritable maze. The Old District's disorganization sets it apart from other areas of the city-state. It is home to thousands of laborers, artisans, and warriors.

Bright Water Well: One of the oases around which Urik was built, Bright Water is now a community well at the center of the district. Locals believe that it's good luck to place coins in the cracks between the bricks and bad luck to steal those coins. Shops and taverns form a courtyard around the well.

King's Gate: This gate is the site where Hamanu declared himself king of Urik, and an obsidian statue depicting the ruler in his youth commemorates the event. Like other gates, the King's Gate is well

protected, and all traffic must pass through a narrow walled courtyard before moving deeper into the city.

Old Market: The reasonable prices and exotic goods of the Old Market—a small, shabby, open-air bazaar—attract customers from all over the city. Buyers can find spices, herbs, and rare cosmetics, not to mention illegal items such as ritual components and poisons. Templars rarely raid the market, making such transactions safer here than elsewhere in Urik.

ARTISAN QUARTER

Abutting the Old District and extending west to Potters' Square is the Artisan Quarter, a rich commercial district where Urikites shop for foodstuffs, finished goods, and other commodities. Prices are high in the quarter, but the quality is second to none.

Potters' Square: This open courtyard is filled with potter's wheels, wells, and massive stone kilns. Here, trained artisans fashion the vessels for which Urik is best known. Platters, casks, urns, and other pieces come from this square, all featuring metallic glazes, stylized astronomical features, animal carvings, and, of course, Hamanu's likeness. The blazing kiln at the center of the square makes working here by day intolerable, so pieces are fired only at night.

The King's Cup: The King's Cup, a small and unassuming workshop off Potters' Square, is the secret headquarters for the Urikite chapter of the Veiled Alliance. The half-elf Thania leads the Alliance cell that meets in the workshop.

SILAN THE SERPENT

Many foreigners think that Urik has no criminals, and as far as ordinary street thieves and cutpurses go, they're right. The city-state does, however, have a seedy underbelly of smugglers, assassins, and grifters.

Silan the Serpent isn't so much a professional criminal as he is a facilitator. Clients looking for discreet solutions to their problems know that Silan can help. He is an obese human who spends most days counting his coins at a sunny table in front of his favorite café, the Blue Iris.

FOREIGN QUARTER

A small neighborhood southwest of Potters' Square houses people not born of Urik, as well as those of races other than human. Dwarves, elves, thri-kreen, and others find shelter in this cramped community.

The Elven Market: Not far from the Obsidian Gate is the Elven Market, where elf merchants set up tents and makeshift stalls to sell exotic goods from all over the Tyr Region. The market in Urik is more dangerous than its counterparts in other city-states, and few humans explore its nooks and crannies.

Beggar's Palace: A large portion of the Foreign Quarter lies vacant and crumbling. The term "Beggar's Palace" refers to any of the ruined buildings in

this area of the neighborhood, not a specific structure. Those who cannot find lodgings elsewhere make do with what they can find here. Beggar's Palace is a warren of rot and decay, and only the most destitute and wretched people linger in the area.

OBSIDIAN QUARTER

Once Urik's lucrative mining district, this quarry was exhausted a century ago, and workers abandoned the site. Now the Obsidian Quarter is home to the emporiums of merchant dynasties, including those of House Stel, the strongest trading house in the city-state.

Pit of Black Death: This yawning cavity in the district's southeast corner is Urik's fighting arena. Once a large obsidian quarry, it now houses gladiatorial games. Wooden scaffolding rings the pit, allowing spectators to watch the action unfolding on the arena floor below. Hated for its high temperatures and jagged walls of broken obsidian, the Pit of Black Death tests its gladiators severely. Those who fight here are a breed apart.

Stel House: A brooding fortress in the Obsidian Quarter, Stel House features twelve slender towers, each faced with obsidian and capped with a rusting iron sword. The most powerful merchant dynasty in Urik, the Stel family, lives in the citadel. Patriarch Hargan Stel is rarely present in the house, since business keeps him in the field.

HIGH QUARTER

Along the western side of the city, between the Templar District and the Artisan Quarter, is the walled noble's district of Urik. This area displays enormous wealth. No common houses front the streets; instead, great estates and mansions demonstrate the luxury enjoyed by Urik's elite.

The sumptuous palaces, gardens, armories, and barracks of the manors are dazzling, but their splendor pales beside the Urikets, slender obsidian spires that rise in various places throughout the High Quarter. No one lives in the towers, and only those of proper station can climb the Urikets to peer out over the city or take in the heavens from the observation platforms at their tops. The towers also provide excellent views beyond the city-state's walls.

MAETAN LUBAR

House Lubar is a typical Urikite noble house. Its symbol is a monstrous serpent, an apt emblem for this avaricious family. Lubar's patriarch, the young Maetan Lubar, has ambitions beyond his station. He presses King Hamanu to let him take an army of mercenaries to seize Tyr's iron mines.

TEMPLAR DISTRICT

The Templar District exemplifies the discipline that Hamanu expects from his junior templars. Every block is made up of identical straight streets and narrow alleys. Each house has three stories, with the bottom two floors painted yellow and the top red. Only the cartouches adorning each door set the structures apart. The most powerful templars gather in a fortified manor, the Palace of the High Templars, which is hidden behind double walls in the center of the district.

DESTINY'S KINGDOM

Hamanu rules Urik from a compound he calls Destiny's Kingdom. The grounds include the offices of the templars, the city mint, armories, storehouses, and the Imperial Guard Barracks—a massive, brooding structure with training grounds, drill yards, mess halls, and an impressive armory.

King's Palace: Hamanu's personal residence is the King's Palace, a mighty fortress with stone turrets and 60-foot-tall ramparts capped with lion-headed merlons. No one is permitted to enter this sacred structure without the sorcerer-king's invitation. Rumors claim that he keeps fabulous wealth in deep vaults, galleries showcasing plunder from his many conquests, and an incredible garden where he communes with the land's spirits.

Temple of the Lion God: Urikites see Hamanu as divine, an idea fostered by the king's dedicated priests and priestesses. Standing just inside Destiny's Kingdom, the Temple of the Lion God is open to the public, who come to hear sermons about the coming glory, the value of order, and invocations to war.

King's Academy: Hamanu's templars scour Urik for those who show talent in the Way. Promising children are taken from their families and brought to Destiny's Kingdom, where they live and train at the King's Academy. This institution fosters loyalty to the sorcerer-king while grooming students to become useful subjects and templars when they reach adulthood.

SLAVE COMPOUND

Between the Templar District and Destiny's Kingdom stands Urik's slave compound. Sealed off from the rest of the city-state by an impregnable gate, the high-walled compound is an open courtyard with muddy lanes and squalid wattle-and-daub huts. Great stone doors stand across the compound, granting access to Destiny's Kingdom beyond. Most of the slaves kept here serve—and usually die—in the grueling obsidian quarries of the Smoking Crown.

Slaves pressed into the military have separate quarters and occupy barracks in the Slave Compound, in Destiny's Kingdom, and outside the city.

THE WESTERN HINTERLANDS

"You are not clutch. You are not pack. You are not kreen.
And you are not welcome."

—Klut Takcha, Jhol-kreen huntmaster

Beyond the Ringing Mountains and the Forest Ridge, an unexplored region of flat plains seems to go on forever. This area, the Western Hinterlands, has no cities, no known villages, and few ruins or ancient sites—only a handful of shy and suspicious herding tribes, which stay out of the way of the similarly scarce packs of thri-kreen and vicious bands of gnolls. Like the desolate wastes beyond the Endless Sand Dunes to the south or the broken badlands of the Barrier Wastes to the north, little of the Western Hinterlands is occupied.

Although one might go days or weeks without encountering signs of permanent habitation in these lands, explorers are drawn into the remote region. Adventurers looking for undiscovered ruins and refugees seeking a haven beyond the grasp of the sorcerer-kings cross the Ringing Mountains and head westward. The boldest or most desperate dune traders lead caravans southwest around the mountains or north through the Barrier Wastes, searching for thri-kreen to do business with or new resources to exploit. Eventually, most traders abandon such notions and return to civilized lands.

WESTERN HINTERLANDS BACKGROUNDS

The sporadic people of the western plains are tough, independent, and wary even by Athasian standards. The hinterlands have no walled cities or powerful armies to defend against the monsters and savages of the deserts; security depends on your own wits and strength.

Associated Skills: Nature, Stealth

Language: Thri-Kreen

Hunting Tribe: Your tribe lives off the land, keeping no herds and tending no fields. Life in the wilderness is hard, and death is never far away. Did some disaster befall your people, leading to your departure? Perhaps you grew curious about the ways of village dwellers and city folk and decided to see the civilized regions of the world. What led you to set out on such a journey?

Outcast: You were expelled from the tribe of your birth, and all the world is against you. Did you commit a crime against your people, or were you driven out by the lies of a rival or an enemy? Do you hope to prove your innocence and return to your people, or are you content to leave them behind and seek your fortune elsewhere?

Feral Foundling: You were abandoned in the hinterlands and would have died if not for merciful spirits of nature. Why did they save your life? What creatures did they use to raise you? How did growing up in the wilderness shape your personality and outlook?

THE KREEN KHANATES

The endless grasslands of the Crimson Savanna are home to the Kreen Khanates, sometimes referred to as the "Kreen Empire" by the soft-skinned races of the Tyr Region. To call the thri-kreen civilization an empire is to invest it with far more centralization than it actually has. Each khanate is a nomadic horde that roams within a vast territory, fiercely guarding its borders from raids or invasions by other thri-kreen khans. The balance of power among the khanates waxes and wanes as the hordes follow their ancient migratory patterns. At present, the Jhol and T'keetch Khanates are the largest, although the J'kez Khanate's neutrality gives it more influence than its size would dictate.

Each khanate has a similar organization. The khan is usually the smartest and strongest thri-kreen of noble lineage. A council of the wisest scholars and most gifted hunters advises him or her. Below the khan's advisors are the senior hunters, those who have been bloodied in open warfare, and those who have been called to the worship of the Sand Father (a primal spirit that the kreen revere as their creator). Below those ranks are the younger hunters, apprentices to Sand Father worshipers, and kreen who remain in camp to tend to the young and mend or manufacture supplies.

The recent uniting of the Tondi-kreen into a proper khanate under the charismatic warrior Atark Aakusk has upset the balance of power on the Crimson Savanna. The presence of a new khanate establishing its own migratory patterns has thrown off the migrations of the older khanates. Some wonder if Atark might be the *haazi*, the khan of khans whose coming has long been foretold.

EXPLORING THE WESTERN HINTERLANDS

The known hinterlands can be divided into roughly three regions: the Empty Plains (west of the Ringing Mountains and the Forest Ridge), the Jagged Cliffs (marking the end of the plains), and the Crimson Savanna (which lies beyond the cliffs).

THE EMPTY PLAINS

When most people in the Tyr Region speak of "the hinterlands," they are referring to the Empty Plains: a hundred-mile-wide shelf of largely uninhabited

barrens and scrubland that runs from the thinning forests and foothills of the Ringing Mountains' western slopes to the top of the Jagged Cliffs. The yellow-green scrubland, broken by the occasional outcropping of weathered rock, is home to herds of wild erdlus and mekillots, kank armies, and hungry desert predators. Ruins lie scattered through the plains, but apparently, the region was lightly populated even in ancient times; the remnants here are small in size and few in number.

A few primitive tribes of hunters—mostly elves, humans, and half-giants—follow the herds, along with thri-kreen packs and bands of ravenous gnolls. However, vast stretches of these plains are deserted, and travelers might go months without meeting anyone.

DRAGON'S CROWN MOUNTAINS

Rising out of the relatively flat terrain of the Empty Plains, the Dragon's Crown is a U-shaped range of mountains a hundred miles west of the Ringing Mountains. According to legend, the unusual peaks burst up out of the plains at the same moment that the Dragon came into being.

The Chaksa: This ancient shrine sacred to the kreen of the Tyr Region lies near the southernmost edge of the Dragon's Crown. Once, the Chaksa resembled a perfectly sculpted thri-kreen head, replete with enormous, multifaceted jewels for eyes. Time and vandals have left their marks on the shrine. Recently, thri-kreen of one of the Crimson Savanna khanates have taken an interest in the old shrine, driving off anyone who comes near.

Dasaraches: Within the sheltering bowl of the Dragon's Crown is a rare sight on Athas: a small but lush woodland known as the Silent Forest. Its dangerous predators and poisonous plants keep most travelers away. At the center of the wood, on an island in the middle of a muddy lake, sits a ruined fortress called Dasaraches. This ancient palace is home to a menacing cabal of psionicists who call themselves the Order. Uninvited guests are likely to have their memories erased and find themselves under a compulsion to return home by the swiftest route.

JAGGED CLIFFS

The Empty Plains come to an end at the Jagged Cliffs, a confusing maze of gradually steepening escarpments and winding canyons following the shore of a long-vanished sea. Over the course of thirty or forty miles, the land descends to the rolling plains of the Crimson Savanna, which lie two miles lower than the Empty Plains to the east. In their middle elevations, the cliffs are almost vertical, posing a nearly impassable barrier to travel from east to west. In the gentler and more well-watered canyons and hanging valleys in the northward stretch of the cliffs, strange vertical forests cling to the sheer slopes and

narrow ledges. Tribes of halflings inhabit some of these forests, building their villages directly from the cliff faces. Their technology is more primitive than that of the city-states, but the halfling culture of the Jagged Cliffs is rich, vibrant, and old. Like their kin in the Forest Ridge, these halflings are a proud and isolationist people who do not appreciate outsiders wandering through their lands.

Thamasku: Far to the north, the halfling settlement of Thamasku lies in a large, fertile hanging valley along the Jagged Cliffs. The settlement has stone buildings, paved roads, and a population rivaling that of a small city-state. Thamasku is a center of trade among the halfling tribes of the cliffs, and its bustling markets draw merchants from up and down the region. Occasionally, more exotic traders, including representatives of the merchant houses of the Tyr Region and thri-kreen from the Crimson Savanna, can be found selling their wares.

The Forbidden City: Within the jungles south of Thamasku, an ancient city half overgrown by withered vines and stunted trees crumbles into ruin. The nomadic halflings of the surrounding tribes whisper fearful tales of Tham Nusul—the Forbidden City. They tell of serpentfolk that come in the night, silent as shadows, and steal children from their cribs. They tell of plants that seek the blood of the living, and of a devil in the cisterns below the city that ensnares its victims with illusions and turns them into mindless servants. The yuan-ti that dwell in the Forbidden City raid the local tribes for food and slaves, and sometimes they grow bold enough to waylay large war parties of halflings or thri-kreen that venture too close.

THE CRIMSON SAVANNA

At the foot of the Jagged Cliffs begins an immense grassland that no explorers (other than the thri-kreen) have charted to its end. Some sages believe that before the despoliation of Athas, this region was the bed of a great inland sea, and that the red dust that gives the savanna its name is windborne silt slowly encroaching from the eastern reaches. There are stories of ancient sailing ships still lying half buried in the grassland. In any event, the Crimson Savanna now belongs to the thri-kreen khanates and fierce monsters.

Thri-kreen cities that were established centuries ago dot the dusty sward, but the mantisfolk have fallen into savagery. They abandoned their civilization, leaving their cities to crumble on the plains.

RUNNING A DARK SUN GAME

The Tablelands are replete with ruins. Decaying towers rise from sandy wastes. Abandoned fortresses loom over stony barrens. Long-lost dungeons lie hidden in badland labyrinths. Sometimes, a vicious creature or brutish monster lairs within, eager to make a meal of the unwary traveler. Once in a while, a priceless treasure is sheltered in the remains. Only the bold and adventurous know for certain.

—The Wanderer's Journal

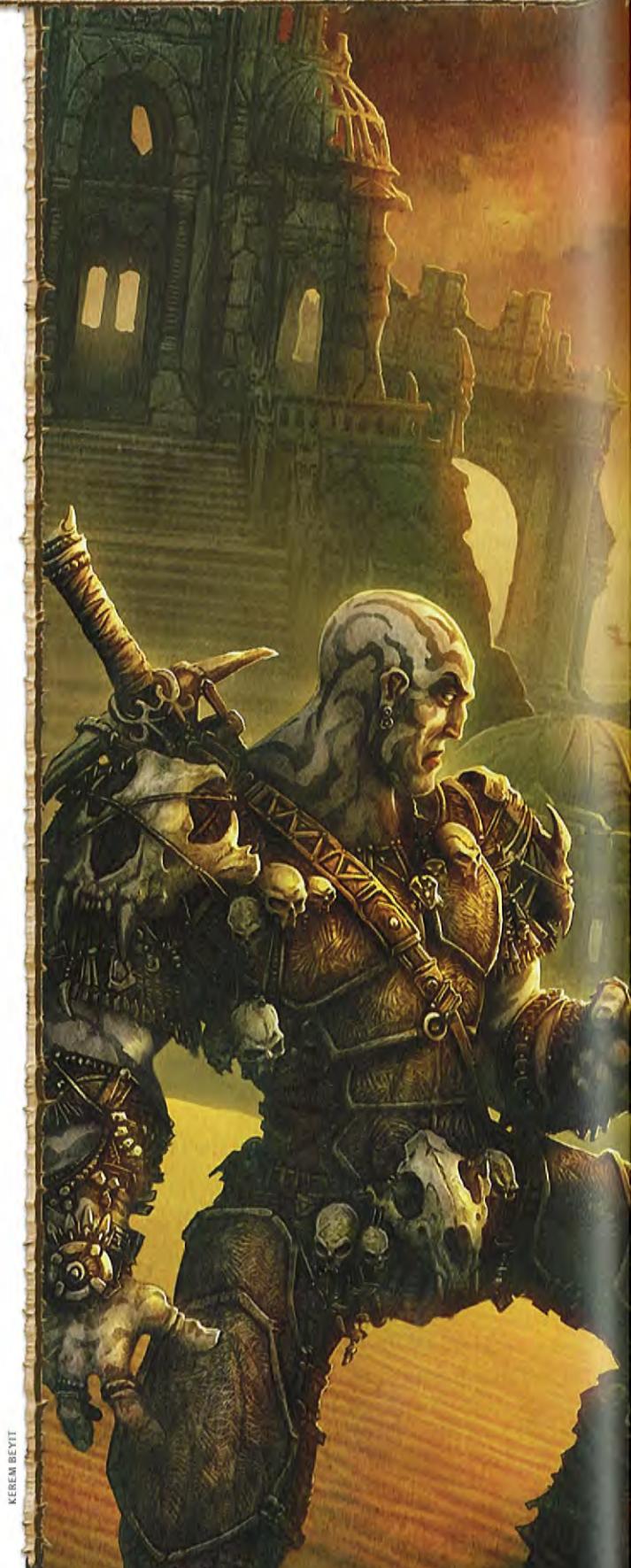
Athas is a barren and savage world where mere survival is a challenge. This land of oppressive cities and harsh wilderness offers few refuges from strife and suffering. Monsters of every shape and size lurk amid the sands, preying on anything that moves.

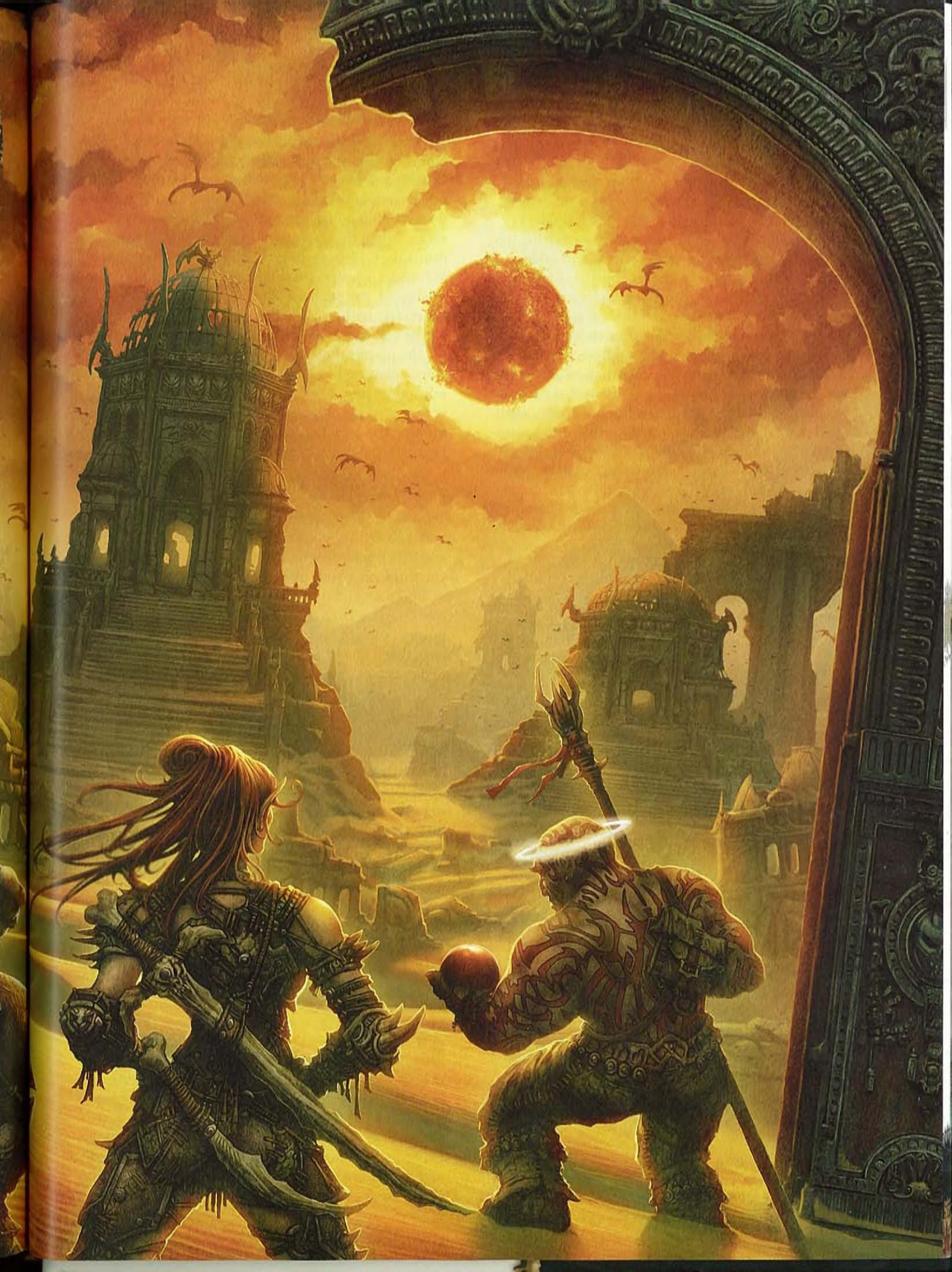
In this realm, true champions are needed—heroes whose spirit is unbowed by endless wastelands and brutal tyranny. These warriors meet challenges with courage and cleverness, their measure determined by the foes and circumstances they strive against. These worthy souls are your player characters.

Your job as Dungeon Master is to stage a world that evokes desperation, lost possibilities, and devastation in equal measure with barbaric splendor and wild beauty. Your players should feel tested at all turns by a world where only the strongest and most determined can triumph. On the other hand, hammering them with unwinnable battles or unrelieved misery is a death knell for your game. Your goal is to establish that Athas is an extraordinarily challenging world—and therefore requires great heroes—while keeping the hope of triumph alive.

To that end, this chapter contains the following sections:

- ◆ **Adventure Creation:** This advice discusses adventure themes particularly suited to Athas.
- ◆ **Travel and Survival:** A variety of tools can aid Dungeon Masters in adjudicating overland travel and survival challenges on Athas.
- ◆ **Encounter Building:** Guidelines for setting up arena and wilderness encounters are followed by sample skill challenges, all ideal for Athas.
- ◆ **Treasure and Rewards:** A discussion of fixed enhancement bonuses and alternative treasure specific to the world.
- ◆ **Sand Raiders:** This three-encounter adventure for 1st-level characters serves as a quick and easy setting introduction for your players.





ADVENTURE CREATION

The *DARK SUN* campaign setting is as broad and inclusive as any other *DUNGEONS & DRAGONS* milieu. All the familiar adventure scenarios, such as “clean out the monster lair” or “search for treasure,” work as well on Athas as they do in any other world. Straightforward dungeon crawls, such as delving into Under-Tyr, exploring desert caverns where raiders lair, or venturing into the ruins of buried cities, are as vital. All that’s necessary to make such escapades feel like *DARK SUN* campaign adventures is to surround the characters and plots with Athasian trappings, such as the desert, slavery, or a reptilian monster mix.

This section discusses several Athasian adventure themes. The most important premise is that Athas is a world ruled by evil. Civilization has been subjugated by the sorcerer-kings. Much of the wilderness is overrun with brutal, pitiless raiders. No moral authority exists to which the player characters can defer—either they are the heroes of the game, or no one is.

THE DESERT

On Athas, the desert is ever-present, a magnificent and terrible environment. Every game set on Athas should, at some point, lead characters into the blistering wilderness beyond the city-states.



By day, the Athasian desert is a scorched wasteland; at night, it can get bitterly cold. A sea of sand, shifting and blowing, might be a common sight, but other versions of desert exist. Rocky badlands, scrub-dotted hills, and featureless flats dominate certain areas. When the characters enter a new kind of terrain, take time to describe it. The first few times they encounter a desiccated salt flat or a stark fractured wasteland, you want them to hesitate for a moment to appreciate both its grandeur and its threat.

For instance, when the heroes first enter the waste, tell the players that they see white dunes like frozen waves, glowing beneath a merciless sun. An acrid, ashy odor clings to everything. The hot wind brings with it sand particles that sting exposed flesh and inflame the eyes. Except for the sigh or howl of the air currents, the desert is cloaked in a gravelike silence.

ATHASIAN ECOLOGY

The deserts of Athas are home to a mix of primitives and monstrosities unknown in other settings. In general, stock your adventures with whatever monsters you think offer your players a good challenge.

Reptilian and insectlike creatures play a bigger role on Athas than mammals do. Many beasts of burden, such as horses, camels, oxen, and elephants, have died out. Other domesticated and game animals, such as dogs, cats, cattle, pigs, sheep, antelope, and deer, are likewise absent from Athas. Goats survive, as do lions, hyenas, bats, and a few small rodents such as mice and desert rats. In place of fur-bearing mammals common on other worlds, Athasian beasts are scaled or chitin-covered. Crodlus, inixes, mekillots, and other large reptiles are common mounts or beasts of burden. Kanks and other giant insects serve the same purposes.

Certain aquatic monsters, such as aboleths and sharks, are not part of the Athasian ecology. Other normally sea-based creatures have adapted. Chuuls are at home on Athas, burrowing under the sands. They lose their swim speed and gain a burrow speed, but are otherwise the same. Other monsters appear on Athas with slight changes in form or new abilities. The *DARK SUN* Creature Catalog presents a number of themes you can use to adapt monsters to Athas.

Certain intelligent races found in other *DUNGEONS & DRAGONS* settings remain populous on Athas. Elves, dwarves, halflings, humans, and goliaths have spread across the world. Other groups were annihilated during the genocidal wars that raged thousands of years ago. Devas, gnomes, kobolds, ogres, kuo-toas, and sahuagin can no longer be found on Athas. Other humanoids, such as dragonborn and eladrin, are limited to a handful of survivors. In their place, native races such as aarakocras, brohgs, gith, hejkins,

and silt runners have settled the wastes. Finally, some peoples have adjusted to the burning sands, leaving behind old ways. Lizardfolk are known as ssurrans on Athas, and they're a desert-dwelling, nomadic race. The world has not seen the brutal tread of orcs, but tareks—a race of savage, bestial warriors—are similar.

SURVIVAL

For most creatures in the Athasian wilderness, surviving through any particular day is an accomplishment. In the city-states, day-to-day existence is not at issue for nonslaves, although the threat of treacherous death in civilized areas should not be discounted. Any hero who ventures into the desert must be concerned with necessities such as water and food.

An entire adventure could be built around surviving the rigors of Athas. Perhaps the heroes pursue a criminal into the wastes, or follow an ancient map that hints at treasure. Several days into the trip, the heroes discover that their supplies have been spoiled or are missing. The real adventure begins when they realize they're within days of death and help is a long way away. Players whose characters emerge from this "survival adventure" gain a new appreciation for the uniquely challenging nature of the DARK SUN setting.

SLAVERY

Slavery is a brutish, ubiquitous reality on Athas. Anyone might become a slave. Teams of slaves carry noble palanquins through the streets; slave auctions attract crowds in busy marketplaces; caravans bring in coffles of roped slaves. On Athas, adventurers witness slaves and chattel owners all around them.

A character might come to legally own slaves without intending to. Triumphing over a noble or a dune trader could leave the heroes responsible for their vanquished foe's slaves. They might confront the realities of slavery when they discover that a friend or a relative has been taken by slavers. A character might even fall into slavery, perhaps as a result of the machinations of an enemy noble or a templar.

SLAVERY AND ALIGNMENT

Keeping slaves is not compatible with a good alignment, but doing so does not necessarily make a character evil. Most slave owners are unaligned. Overseers who treat their slaves brutally are definitely engaging in evil acts that should outrage good characters. The question is whether anything can reasonably be done about the situation. Given how commonplace slavery is on Athas, good characters can't reasonably attempt to free every slave they meet, nor should they recklessly challenge slave owners who are too powerful to overcome. Good characters should be anguished by the abundance of human misery in civilized areas, however, and they should be dedicated to aiding however they can short of attempting suicidal actions.

PSIONICS

All living creatures on Athas have some minor ability to affect the world with their minds. Most folk fail to tap into these abilities, experiencing *déjà vu* or random flashes of insight at best. Every so often, a person naturally develops the capacity to close a door from a distance or bring a small object to hand. More than a few natives, however, display strong mental aptitude. Psions, wild talents, and other psionic creatures, individuals, and institutions can be encountered on a daily basis.

On the streets of a typical city-state, a character might observe:

- ◆ A dowser using her wild talent to locate a good site for a new well.
- ◆ A stately noble keeping dust and grim from his fine slippers and elaborate hems by levitating a few inches above the street.
- ◆ The impressive facade of an academy where influential people can pay to be educated in the Way.

To showcase the importance of psionics in the world, include psionic monsters in adventures. Instead of using an archer as an artillery monster, use a telekineticist who delivers bolts of force. Organized fighting groups could include empaths who heal, or telepaths who fight as controllers. Adventures might include story elements based on noncombat psionic talents. For example, a villain could have the ability to command lackeys using long-distance telepathy.

ARCANE MAGIC

Although Athasians are accustomed to the Way, they are hostile to arcane power. They consider casting an arcane spell to be an evil act. On Athas magic is evil or, at least, the favorite tool of evil manipulators. You should make sure that the player of an arcane character understands the constant and ruinous temptation of arcane magic. Every now and then, remind the player of the defiling option. This suggestion can be particularly telling when an important attack is at hand, such as when a character uses a daily power. Whether a character gives in to the temptation of defiling or not, people who discover that he or she is an arcanist usually assume the worst. As a result, all spellcasters must be careful about whom they confide in. Blasting enemies with spectacular spells in a populated area is certain to be met with cries of "Spell maker!" and "Defiler!" At least one witness will report the character to the templars unless the spellcaster convincingly claims to be a psion, conceals the spellcasting, or eliminates all witnesses. (Bluff can be useful for disguising arcane spellcasting; see the "Proving Your Worth" skill challenge, page 204.)

TRAVEL AND SURVIVAL

You claim these lands are barren, yet I see scorpions skittering in the rocks. Venomous serpents lurk among the dunes. Stubborn thornweed defies nature and survives despite the elusive rain. Signs of life exist all around you. You simply haven't learned to look at the desert closely enough.

—Kylus, herder

People on Athas gather in city-states and villages for good reason—the wilderness is dangerous. City-states provide food, water, and shelter from the cruel landscape. Few city dwellers quit their homes, preferring tyrannical rulers and their excesses over certain death from a cruel red sun. Adventurers, however, are enticed by circumstance and fortune to brave the wastes. Their destination might be a far-flung city-state, crumbling ruins from another age, or a rumored verdant land beyond the perils of the sun-scorched wastelands.

Beyond the city-states' sheltering presence, miles upon miles of shattered terrain lie in wait. For the unprepared, walking these lands is tantamount to a death sentence. Still, havens exist in the empty wilderness. Caravan outposts offer food and drink for exorbitant prices. Ruins—tombs for old dreams and dashed hopes—provide meager shelter. Raiding tribes, herders, and hermits claim portions of the wilds. These hardy denizens might be free from the cruel regimes of the city-states, but they are slaves still to Athas's domineering environment.

OVERLAND MOVEMENT

Many Athasians hate the wastelands, seeing nothing but hardship in the stony barrens, shifting dunes, and blowing dust storms. These fearsome landscapes hold a unique beauty, however. Their magnificence is evidence of the world's persistence despite the horrors done to it. The stirring dawn on the horizon promises yet another parched day, but the play of the crimson light stirs the heart.

In addition to the environments common to all worlds—hills, mountains, and flatlands—Athas has several landforms seen infrequently or not at all in other worlds. Salt flats are waterless and devoid of life, but they lack obstructions, enabling direct travel. Rocky badlands or stony barrens force travelers into a meandering and difficult path, but brush and cacti hold reserves of water and food.

MOVEMENT AND SURVIVAL

Desert terrain impedes travel and survival according to the following table.

Speed Multiplier: To figure the distance traveled per day, hour, or minute, multiply base overland speed (see *Player's Handbook*, page 261) by this value.

Nature (forage) DC Modifier: Modify the DC of Nature checks for foraging or survival challenges based on the terrain.

DESERT TERRAIN MODIFIERS

Terrain	Speed Multiplier	Nature (forage) DC Modifier
Boulder field	3/4	+2
Dust sink*	1/2	+5
Mountain	1/2	+0
Mudflat	3/4	-2
Rocky badland	1/2	+0
Salt flat	1	+5
Salt marsh	3/4	+0
Sandy waste**	1 (or 1/2)	+0
Scrub plain	1	-2
Stony barrens	3/4	-2

* This movement rate is possible only in wading depth, up to two-thirds of the creature's height. If the depth of the dust sink is greater than that, the terrain is impassable.

** Reduce speed in areas of high dunes.

SURVIVING ATHAS

The myriad perils of the wastelands await anyone who leaves the relative safety offered by civilization. For those who are adequately prepared, you can summarize the travel experience as you would in other game world. For those without the proper supplies, however, Athasian journeys are desperate affairs.

Characters navigating the wilderness fall into one of two states: supplied or unsupplied. Supplied characters must consume a certain amount of provisions each day to avoid dehydration and starvation. Unsupplied characters must manage to do without the food and water they need. People can live without food for weeks if necessary, but as little as three days without water can kill. Most Athasians can survive on a half-gallon of water per day—they've had thousands of years to become acclimated to the conditions on their world. A Large creature requires 2½ gallons of water per day, and a Huge creature needs 10 gallons of water per day.

To be supplied, a creature must do one of the following.

- ♦ Spend at least part of the day in a city, village, outpost, or oasis.
- ♦ Expend a survival day worth of supplies (see below).
- ♦ Use the Nature skill to forage successfully (see *Player's Handbook*, page 186).

SURVIVAL DAYS

Currency serves a purpose in the marketplaces and trade emporiums, but no coins, jewels, or precious metal can save a dehydrated traveler from the crimson

sun. Athasians value life's necessities: food, water, proper clothing, and a bit of shade from the sun.

A survival day serves as a shorthand method for managing the resources needed for a trip through the wastes. Each survival day represents sufficient water and food for one person to get through a day's walk across the countryside. The supplies also include salve to protect the skin from the sun, clothing designed to retain body moisture, and insulation to ward off the night's chill after the sun sets.

Obtaining Survival Days: You can make these daily rations available to characters in any of the following ways.

- ◆ Offer survival days for purchase at the rate of 5 gp each.
- ◆ Combine a half-gallon of water with food sufficient for 1 day (gathering such supplies might carry no cost in an area where water is available and food can be hunted).
- ◆ Substitute one or more survival day's worth of supplies for 5 gp each in treasure (see page xx).
- ◆ Grant survival days as quest rewards or as payment for undertaking adventures.

Expendng Survival Days: After each extended rest, a character can expend a survival day to become supplied until the next extended rest or until 24 hours pass, whichever occurs first. Supplied characters are not susceptible to sun sickness (see below).

Selling Survival Days: In the desert, survival days are valuable enough to be sold or traded at their normal value (5 gp each). Indeed, an explorer dying of thirst would likely pay a king's ransom for a single survival day. Where people are near sources of water and food, however, they can obtain supplies for far less than 5 gp per day's worth. In those areas, survival days aren't easy to sell.

SUN SICKNESS

Scarce resources, sudden storms, and dangerous predators come and go. The extreme temperatures caused by Athas's sun, however, are relentless. Precautions mitigate this danger for a time, but can never eliminate it.

Each daylight period that an unsupplied character or mount travels through the wilderness, Athas makes an attack against Fortitude. On a hit, the target contracts sun sickness. If a creature suffering from



sun sickness is hit again, it loses one healing surge or hit points equal to its healing surge value if it has no healing surges left.

Resting by Day: Adventurers who take extended rests during the day remain subject to contracting sun sickness, but they gain a +4 bonus to Fortitude against such attacks.

NIGHT TRAVEL

Sun sickness can be avoided by waiting for the sun to set before undertaking a journey. This strategy carries a different set of risks. At night, temperatures plummet, a stark contrast to the intolerable heat of the day.

For each 8-hour period spent traveling by night, an adventurer must succeed on an Endurance check against a moderate DC or lose one healing surge (or hit points equal to the character's healing surge value if no healing surges are available).

Sun Sickness

Level equals character level

The sun's punishing rays leech vitality from your body.

Attack: Level + 2 vs. Fortitude at heroic tier, level + 4 vs. Fortitude at paragon tier, level + 6 vs. Fortitude at epic tier.

Endurance improve hard DC, maintain average DC, worsen average DC – 1 or less

The target **Initial Effect:** The target loses one healing surge is cured. or hit points equal to the target's surge value. The healing surge or hit points cannot be regained until the target is cured.

The target takes a -2 **Final State:** The target dies penalty to all attack rolls and defenses.

ENCOUNTER BUILDING

Athas has ruins aplenty, but player characters might not undertake dungeon exploration on a regular basis. Also, challenges such as surviving desert travel, navigating the intrigue surrounding templars and nobles, and undermining insidious slavers can't be overcome through simple combat. Travelers are likely to meet deadly predators and savage marauders in the wastelands they cross to reach specific adventure sites. Indeed, the journey from one city to another could encompass an entire adventure, combining challenges of survival, negotiation, and battle against raiders or desert monsters.

This section provides guidelines for creating both arena and wilderness encounters that have an Athasian flavor.

ARENA ENCOUNTERS

The sorcerer-kings might be the most powerful beings in the Tyr Region, but even their rule would not last long in the face of an obstinate populace. To keep their subjects content, city-states host grand spectacles, vicious arena matches where slaves and professionals fight. Each week, nobles and commoners alike turn out in droves to see their favorite champions duel. The crowd gasps as horrific monsters come roaring out from their pens, venting their fury on the unfortunates scheduled to face them. The audience howls with pleasure when blood sprays the air. Both during and after events, arena masters work hard to stage extravaganzas that please their sorcerer-king masters and the crowd.

The arena is an iconic setting for encounters. Before gathered crowds, the characters test their talents, employing every trick at their disposal to secure glory, wealth, or freedom. In the arena, any encounter is possible. Gladiators might face hideous monsters or other desperate humanoids. Elaborate contests might force combatants to navigate manifold perils while fighting off the competition. If you can imagine it, a resourceful stage manager can bring it to life.

You can use the arena for a single encounter or as the site of several encounters, turning it into a surrogate "dungeon." Rather than explore rooms, the characters face new tricks and challenges in an effort to gain freedom, glory, or wealth. The following information can help you turn a simple match in an open area into an engaging and dangerous event.

Scope: Under most circumstances, the floor of an arena is larger than you need for a single encounter. In that case, you might run different contests at the same time. By pitting smaller groups against opponents in different sections, each character can see his or her companions fight at the same time. Alternatively, you can use other matches as set dressing,

sprinkling in descriptions about the events of those fights as the heroes' match unfolds.

Involvement: An arena encounter can feature one, some, or all of the player characters. Although duels can be exciting from time to time, if only one or two of the heroes are involved, the other players are relegated to spectator status. To prevent this problem, create circumstances that engage all the players. If several characters are participating in contests, make those battles team combats, or run the matches simultaneously. The players of nonfighting characters might be able to influence the action by engaging in skill challenges to shift the crowd's favor or to manipulate the stage and trappings to aid their allies.

Weapons and Armor: Few gladiators have the luxury of choosing their own weapons and armor. Most contestants use whatever equipment the arena master provides them. Typically, the gear is not something a warrior would ordinarily select. If you assign specific, suboptimal weapons and armor to a contestant or contestants, consider lowering the encounter level by 1 or more. You might impose a -2 penalty to the attack rolls and defenses of the opponents the characters face. You can also place preferred weapons in certain strategic areas of the arena, making their acquisition a key goal in the fight.

Composition: Arena encounters involving an entire party of characters are built just as other combat encounters are. When the group is divided, however, certain encounter design challenges arise. To make a small-group match suitably challenging and easier to manage, consider reducing the number of creatures and using higher-level opponents to stay within the lowered XP budget. In single-character fights, use caution, keeping in mind the character's class, capabilities, and resilience.

Frequency: An arena hosts numerous contests during a day of activity. Performers engage the crowd before and between events, giving laborers time to clear away and set up new props, to drag off corpses and other debris, and to make repairs. Events commence at dawn and continue into the night. Consider the following adjustments when pitting the heroes against several arena encounters in the same day:

- ◆ Use low-level encounters to avoid exhausting the party's resources too quickly.
- ◆ Use low-level monsters instead of high-level ones.
- ◆ Grant an action point to each character before each match.
- ◆ Allow the characters to take an extended rest during the day's events.

An encounter set in an arena can be as simple as two combatants dueling in a large sand pit. It can also be complex, with different matches being fought at the

same time or one large contest replete with monsters, terrain features, traps, and objectives each gladiator must achieve to win. The arena is flexible enough to accommodate all the kinds of encounters described in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, featuring whatever monsters you like.

The following sections present some encounters tailored for use in the arena.

MATCHED PAIR ENCOUNTER

A bout between matched pairs is an old and established tradition in arenas. Nobles and stablemasters study their gladiators to find combatants that have complementary fighting styles. Once a suitable match is found, the two warriors begin training together with the goal of forming an effective and dynamic team. Once they are ready, the gladiators are pitted against other matched pairs or against powerful opponents such as veteran gladiators or monsters brought in from the desert.

Objective: Matched pair bouts are fought until both members are bloodied or dead.

Combatants: Two or four characters. Two player characters might fight a pair of monsters or a single superior opponent. They could also battle another matched pair, perhaps composed of two allies.

Battlefield: A matched pair event needs at least a 6-by-6-square area for any meaningful maneuvering. Also, consider including a component (trap, hazard, terrain power, terrain feature) that endangers both sides equally.

Encounter Building: Pitting the proper roles against each other is as important in matched pair bouts as it is in duels (see above). If the matched characters have different roles (as they should, given the goal of creating a complementary team), you can use a wider range of threat roles for the opposition. This variety makes the encounter more exciting. The threat might be a single elite creature, another matched pair, or numerous lesser creatures.

XP Budget: The XP budget is equal to twice the standard award of a level suited for the encounter's difficulty. For example, a standard matched pair encounter for 14th-level characters should provide a reward of approximately 2,000 XP.

BEAST ENCOUNTER

Monsters delight the crowd. Matches between gladiators are entertaining, but relatively common. Beast combats offer a special treat, allowing the audience to witness some of the horrors of the wasteland without having to confront them personally. These events, however, can be dangerous. If a beast overcomes the gladiators, it can turn against the crowd. Such an eventuality might thrill particularly bloodthirsty spectators, but if a high-ranking noble or official is injured, an arena master stands to lose far more than

paying customers. Handlers (usually slaves) are ready at all times to step in and bring the beasts under control. At the very least, the handlers can distract and perhaps delay the monster as it feeds on them.

Difficulty: Standard or hard.

Battlefield: These events feature the beast in all its glory. Terrain should be minimized, particularly any feature that might block the audience's view of the creature.

Encounter Building: These combats should feature animals or magical beasts as opponents. You can use an elite monster against a matched pair of opponents or a solo monster against a team of four or five.

DRITAN ENCOUNTER

The dritan match is an expensive and laborious, yet highly popular event. After hauling in rock, dirt, and sand, the arena workers sculpt the area to reproduce a wilderness environment. The result is a complex battlefield offering combatants new tactical options and challenges. Given the cost, dritan battlefields are used for multiple matches in one day or are kept intact for several days.

Difficulty: Any.

Battlefield: A dritan match uses as much of the arena floor as possible to provide numerous tactical options.

Encounter Building: Terrain is the key to an exciting dritan match. To ease the task of construction, break the encounter area into subsections, no smaller than 4 by 4 squares each. Each subsection need not be the same size, but it should provide sufficient room for combatants to maneuver. Half of the subsections should include a hidden threat: a one-shot trap, a terrain power, or another environmental element. Connect the subsections with 2-square-wide paths that enable combatants to move from one area to another. Fill in the passages with blocking or difficult terrain. You might also include extra minion creatures to haunt the "in-between" areas.

TYRANT'S PYRAMID ENCOUNTER

The tyrant's pyramid is a wooden, bone, or stone ziggurat built in the center of the arena floor. At the top, a small platform or structure holds the prize. The sides of a tyrant's pyramid sport numerous traps and dangers to keep the ascent interesting.

Difficulty: Standard or hard.

Objective: To win this contest, a gladiator must reach the pyramid's zenith and hold it against all attackers.

Combatants: A tyrant's pyramid is a free-for-all. Each character or creature competes against all others to reach the top and to be the last one standing there at the end.



Battlefield: The ziggurat can be as large as you wish, but the topmost platform should be no larger than a 2-by-2-square area. Climbing the slope requires Athletics checks as normal. The base Athletics DC to climb should be easy, but you can increase the DC to moderate or hard if the walls are greased or are particularly smooth.

Encounter Building: Although only one combatant can be declared the winner, characters can work together to eliminate the competition. Build encounters as normal, but use creatures one to two levels lower than the party level.

In addition to the opponents, the pyramid should feature at least one trap on each face to make the ascent every bit as dangerous as the fight at the top.

Variation: The Criterion at Balic runs a special game called Earthquake. Each gladiator is given a scarf, and a red scarf hangs from a pole at the center of the elevated platform. The objective is to gain the scarf at the center as well as scarves from three other gladiators.

Aside from whatever other hazards adorn each slope, the sides of the pyramid are formed from a grid of stepped 2-by-2-square columns. These sections rise and fall of their own accord. Each time a character enters a new 2-by-2-square space, roll a d6. On a result of 1–2, the column drops 1 square. On a result of 3–4, no movement occurs. On a result of 5–6, the column rises 1 square. When the column moves, it makes the following attack.

Shifting Column

Terrain Feature

The surface beneath you trembles slightly, then shifts.

At-Will

Opportunity Action Melee touch

Trigger: A creature enters one of the squares on the top surface of the column.

Target: Each creature standing on the top surface of the column

Attack: Encounter level + 3 vs. Reflex

Hit: The target falls prone.

WILDERNESS ENCOUNTERS

Wilderness encounters can be as varied as dungeon combats, but they are more memorable when they take place in large areas (as broad as an expansive cavern or room). Natural features such as canyon walls, steep dunes, or thickets of tough, thorny brush work as well as walls and ceilings for channeling movement and circumscribing the action.

Battlefield: Some outdoor encounters, such as fights in ruins or through narrow defiles, are as confined as common dungeon combats. More often, however, wilderness encounters take place in open areas. Ranged and area attacks are more important in such spaces. Also, defenders and controllers have more difficulty bottling up enemies and keeping them from getting at the rear echelon party members. Set up a wilderness encounter in a confined or an open area by using the following guidelines.

Terrain	Battlefield Size
Confined	10 by 15 squares (one-quarter of a poster map) OR 8 by 16 squares (two 8 × 8 tiles)
Open	20 by 30 squares (a full poster map) OR 16 by 24 squares (six 8 × 8 tiles)

Confined: On Athas, broken terrain, heavy vegetation, and poor visibility lead to more restricted wilderness encounters. Combats in rocky badlands, boulder fields, mudflats, oases, or thick cacti stands, as well as battles at night or in blowing sand, fall into this category. An encounter in a confined area should begin with the combatants 10 squares away from each other.

Open: Longer-range encounters occur in rolling terrain featuring low brush or small dunes, or on a day breezy enough to kick up only a haze of dust and sand. Sandy waste, gravelly barrens, salt flats, brackish marsh, or scrub plains might be present in an open battlefield. An encounter in an open area should begin with the combatants at least 20 squares away from each other.

Frequency and Difficulty: Another consideration for wilderness encounters is the desolation of the surroundings. Few creatures of any sort live in barren environs, so encounters there should be fewer in number but more difficult. Conversely, verdant areas teem with life. Encounters in such places are more frequent and closer in level to the party.

Surroundings	Examples
Desolate	Salt flats, dust sinks, boulder fields
Harsh	Mountains, stony barrens, sandy wastes
Marginal	Scrub plains, rocky badlands, salt marsh
Verdant	Forests, mudflats, oases

Desolate: These areas lack resources to sustain life to any significant degree. Encounters should not be more frequent than once every few days. When they do occur, combats and challenges should be very hard (party level + 4 or higher). Elites and solos can fill out XP budgets. Any creatures used should be hardy enough to survive or to travel long distances away from more hospitable terrain.

Harsh: Harsh areas are somewhat more inhabited than desolate places. Sufficient water, prey, or plants exist for more than a few creatures to survive. Aim for no more than one encounter every day or two. Combats should be hard (party level + 2 to party level + 4) because the characters have access to daily powers and all or nearly all their healing surges.

Marginal: Territories on the border between wastelands and verdant areas are marginal. These places are frequented by nomads, raiders, predators, and other threats. Characters face one or two encounters every day, and combats should be standard to hard (party level to party level + 2). A number of different kinds of creatures can be used for encounters in these environments.

Verdant: These lands are densely populated. Encounters in these areas can be as frequent as you need them to be; several fights in one day is fine. Combats can be anywhere from easy to hard (party level - 1 to party level + 3) and often include a large number of adversaries.

AMBUSH ENCOUNTER

Enemies spring out from hidden positions when the characters move into the area.

Objective: The attackers use surprise and superior positioning to destroy the heroes. Predators use ambushes to bring down their prey.

Battlefield: For an ambush to be effective, the battlefield should have one point of easy entry and no obvious exits. The main area should be clear of blocking terrain. The enemies should be scattered around the periphery, hidden behind blocking or cover terrain, and separated from the characters by difficult terrain.

Encounter Building: Humanoid artillery, area-attack controllers, and ranged lurkers fire from hidden positions, while hazards, traps, and melee warriors keep the adventurers from closing on the ambushers. Assailants need not be limited to intelligent foes. Many desert predators are cunning enough to take advantage of their environment, so you can include hazards and challenging terrain in such encounters.

Variations: The enemy could close off the entrance to the battlefield by triggering a landslide or toppling a rock spire. Numerous ambush sites also include pits to trap and separate adventurers.

HIT-AND-RUN ENCOUNTER

Enemies emerge from the shadows, out of a dust storm, or from hiding. They strike quickly and fade away.

Objective: The enemy makes several strikes over the course of a day, winnowing away the characters' resources. Eventually, the heroes are overwhelmed.

Battlefield: A hit-and-run encounter takes place across several battlefields. The attackers don't stick around long enough to become embroiled in a protracted fight. They strike fast and hard, targeting more vulnerable characters with swift attacks before retreating into the surrounding countryside. Adventurers who chase after retreating attackers could run right into an ambush. Hit-and-run combats require several escape routes, so difficult and blocking terrain should be minimized. Instead, use terrain that provides cover or concealment to hide the creatures' approach and maneuvering.

Encounter Building: Skirmishers are best suited for these encounters because they can move quickly and foil defenders' abilities to lock down their enemies. Hit-and-run encounters are often repeated several times during a day, so don't keep the attackers around long enough for more than a few of their number to fall.

Variations: During one of the strikes, a lurker might steal food and water, kill steeds, or sabotage vehicles. In such instances, a harsh environment aids the raiders as the travelers are weakened by exposure.

THREE-SIDED ENCOUNTER

The adventurers happen across two other groups engaged in a battle or are caught up in someone else's fight as it rolls over their position. For example, the heroes might encounter dwarf miners defending their water from a braxat. They could also be overtaken by a mobile battle between a tribe of elves and a band of gith.

Objective: Two groups regard each other with as much hostility as they do the adventurers. The last group standing wins.

Battlefield: To accommodate the greater number of participants, a three-sided fight ranges across a wide area. The terrain should channel the party, keeping the characters from withdrawing to wait out the battle and take on the survivors. Hazards, minions, and challenging terrain all provide incentive for the heroes to join the battle.

Encounter Building: The more creatures, the better in three-sided encounters. Use lower-level opponents and minions to make sure both sides have enough forces to divide their attention between each other and the heroes.

Variations: Consider providing a means and a rationale for the characters to forge an alliance with one side or the other. Doing so might require a skill challenge using Bluff, Diplomacy, or Intimidate. A hero might save another creature from certain death, gaining at least a short-term alliance.

ATHASIAN SKILL CHALLENGES

Arena combats in the city-states and monsters in the wastelands are not the only perils on Athas. Adventurers under the crimson sun also face situations that can't be overcome by combat. This section presents five samples of skill challenges that are likely to arise in a DARK SUN campaign.

FIND THE VEILED ALLIANCE

An underground organization called the Veiled Alliance protects preservers from assassination or persecution by the sorcerer-kings. Finding members of this clandestine group can be difficult. An arcivist can gain acceptance only by invitation, which is offered if this challenge is successfully completed. The Alliance is painstaking in evaluating potential members, so the process takes time. This challenge might evolve over several sessions and require discussions with more than one Veiled member.

ADVENTURE OPPORTUNITIES

Adventures in the Tyr Region are not difficult to find. A few possibilities follow.

- ◆ Join a merchant caravan to help guard it against raiders, desert monsters, and other threats.
- ◆ Put down a crime gang plaguing the slums of a city-state.
- ◆ Accept a noble or merchant house contract to explore a newly discovered ruin.
- ◆ Accompany a Veiled Alliance agent into the lair of a suspected defiler.
- ◆ Rescue a rebel leader from a templar prison.
- ◆ Accept a commission from a templar to deliver a sealed message to another city-state.
- ◆ Root out a slaver network paying mercenaries to kidnap people from small villages.
- ◆ Shield a preserving wizard unfairly identified as a defiler against a rioting mob.
- ◆ Enter the arena as contestants to settle a grudge match with a local enemy.
- ◆ Become silt pirates fighting greedy merchant houses and the sorcerer-kings' minions.

Level: Equal to the level of the party (XP equal to the reward for three standard monsters of the party's level).

Complexity: 3 (requires 8 successes before 3 failures).

STAGE 1: LOCATING ALLIANCE MEMBERS

The adventurers must first locate and identify members of the Alliance. They can do so by investigation or by discreetly using arcane magic in the right places. The heroes need to accumulate 2 successes in this stage before moving to the "Proving Your Worth" stage of the challenge.

Primary Skills: Arcana, Streetwise.

Arcana (high DC by level): The character competently displays a small measure of arcane magic for someone he or she suspects to be a member of the Veiled Alliance. This skill can be used to gain 2 successes in this stage of the challenge.

Streetwise (moderate DC by level): The character interprets subtle signs left by the Veiled Alliance and discreetly queries the right people to set up a meeting. This skill can be used to gain 2 successes in this stage of the challenge.

Secondary Skills: Insight.

Insight (hard DC by level): The character identifies someone as a possible member of the Alliance or as sympathetic to its cause. The next Arcana or Streetwise check made in this stage of the skill challenge gains a +5 bonus.

STAGE 2: PROVING YOUR WORTH

After a meeting with a sufficiently senior member of the Alliance is arranged, the candidate must establish that he or she is committed to preserving, can aid the organization, and is trustworthy.

Primary Skills: Arcana, Bluff, Diplomacy, special.

Arcana (moderate DC by level): By exhibiting magical aptitude, the character displays the competence required by the Alliance. This skill can be used to gain a maximum of 1 success in this stage of the challenge.

Bluff (hard DC by level): Only a hero who can use arcane powers can gain a success by using Bluff in this stage of the challenge with this skill. By disguising arcane powers as psionic or primal ones, the character displays his or her ability to keep the Alliance's secrets safe. This skill can be used to gain a maximum of 1 success in this stage of the challenge.

Diplomacy (moderate DC by level): The character impresses the Alliance member with his or her dedication, strong moral character, and prowess. This skill can be used to gain a maximum of 3 successes in this stage of the challenge.

Special: If the character uses a powerful spell (such as a daily power), a success is awarded in this stage of the challenge without requiring a skill check.



Secondary Skills: Insight.

Insight (moderate DC by level): The character discerns what the Alliance member wants demonstrated and how best to go about doing that. Choose one of the primary skills. The next hero to make a check in this stage of the challenge using that skill gains a +2 bonus.

CONCLUSION

Success: If the characters achieve 8 successes, those heroes who wish to join the Alliance receive invitations.

Failure: If the characters fail 3 checks in this challenge, the Alliance is uncertain of their trustworthiness. The group requires a stronger gesture of loyalty and competence. (You might allow the characters to attempt the skill challenge again, but at a higher complexity.)

GOING TO GROUND

Adventurers who defy a sorcerer-king's authority, kill a templar, or run afoul of a noble or merchant house can be set upon by enemies on all sides and have no easy way out of the city. In this skill challenge, the characters attempt to avoid converging enemies. With the city gates blocked off and the walls watched, the heroes must lie low until the threat passes.

Before running this challenge, create two combat encounters equal to the party's level. The first and second skill check failures also result in combat with one of these groups, as the enemy closes in.

In this challenge, each character makes one check per hour. During each hour, the characters move through the city, interacting with locals, ducking into alleys, and setting false trails as they try to stay one step ahead of their pursuers. Every hour, half the group members must make Endurance checks (see "Secondary Skills," below); the remainder can make other skill checks.

Level: Equal to the level of the party (XP equal to the reward for three standard monsters of the party's level).

Complexity: 3 (requires 8 successes before 3 failures).

Primary Skills: Acrobatics, Athletics, Bluff, Diplomacy, Intimidate, Stealth.

Acrobatics or Athletics (moderate DC by level): The character throws off pursuers by climbing a wall, muscling around impediments, or bulling through crowds. These skills can be used to gain a maximum of 4 successes in the challenge. Up to two characters can aid this check.

Bluff (moderate DC by level; requires one prior successful Thievery check): The character uses stolen clothing to fashion a makeshift disguise. This skill can be used to gain a maximum of 2 successes. One character can aid this check.

Diplomacy (hard DC by level): The character convinces a citizen to hide the party, to pretend ignorance of the heroes' passage, or to help in some other way. This skill can be used to gain a maximum of 2 successes in the challenge. Up to two characters can aid this check.

Intimidate (moderate DC by level): The character uses force or threats to coerce a passerby into helping the party. This skill can be used to gain a maximum of 2 successes in the challenge. Up to four characters can aid this check. In addition to counting as a failure in the challenge, a failed Intimidate check increases the DCs of subsequent Bluff, Diplomacy, and Intimidate checks by 2. Multiple failures lead to cumulative penalties.

Stealth (hard DC by level): The character leads the party past a patrol or through an open area without attracting attention. This skill can be used to gain a maximum of 2 successes in the challenge.

Secondary Skills: Bluff, Endurance, Perception, Streetwise, Thievery, special.

Bluff (hard DC by level): A character can attempt a Bluff check to talk his or her way out of being captured. If this check succeeds, 1 failure in the challenge is eliminated.

Endurance (moderate DC by level): Each hour, at least half the characters participating in the skill challenge must make an Endurance check. Any character who fails this check loses a healing surge. A character who loses all his or her healing surges falls behind and is captured. A character cannot make Endurance checks in consecutive hours; he or she must make a different skill check or aid attempt in the hour after making an Endurance check.

Perception (moderate DC by level): The character spots a patrol, identifies a potential informant, or finds a good place to hide for a time. A successful Perception check grants a +2 bonus to the next Athletics check or Stealth check attempted by the same character.

Streetwise (moderate DC by level): The character recalls a useful route or suitable hiding place. A successful check grants a +2 bonus to the next Athletics check and the next Stealth check made by the same character. Each character can use Streetwise to gain this benefit a maximum of two times during this challenge.

Thievery (easy DC by level): The character steals clothing or accessories that help disguise the party. A successful Thievery check allows that character to use Bluff as a primary skill (see above).

Special: Performing a Lullaby or Silence ritual grants a +10 bonus to the next Stealth check made by any character. Setting a hindrance for the enemy using a Snare ritual grants 1 automatic success in the challenge.

Success: If the characters achieve 8 successes with no failures, they so thoroughly elude the pursuers that the locals believe the party has left the city. Success in the challenge despite 1 or 2 failed checks means the locals have abandoned a city-wide search, but they keep their eyes open for several days.

Failure: If the characters get 3 failures, they are cornered by a powerful group of enemies and forced to surrender or fight.

GUIDING A CARAVAN

Expeditions across the desert, even along well-traveled roads, are notoriously chancy. Keeping a caravan intact requires good navigation, careful resource management, strong defense, and strong leadership skills.

This challenge assumes that the adventurers and any caravan passengers have their own supplies of survival days (see page xx). Increase the difficulty of all skill checks to the next category if the party or passengers are not fully equipped or if the caravan is otherwise low on supplies. Each failure in the challenge also consumes 1 survival day of supplies for each creature in the caravan.

Level: Equal to the level of the party (XP equal to the reward for three standard monsters of the party's level).



Complexity: 3 (requires 8 successes before 3 failures). This complexity assumes a fairly lengthy trip, such as one from Tyr to Gulg. A shorter trip (such as from Urik to Raam) could be complexity 2, and a longer trip (such as from Tyr to Balic) could be complexity 4 or 5.

Primary Skills: Diplomacy, Endurance, Intimidate, Nature, Perception, special.

Diplomacy (easy DC by level): The character heads off quarrels between the caravan's personnel, making sure all workers are relatively content. This skill can be used to gain a maximum of 1 success in this challenge.

Endurance (hard DC by level): The character presses on against the scorching sun and scathing wind or takes on additional work, easing the burden of exhausted workers. This skill can be used to gain a maximum of 4 successes in this challenge, but no character can contribute more than 2 Endurance check successes.

Intimidate (moderate DC by level): The character pushes the caravan or its pack animals forward mercilessly, making sure travel is efficient and no one lags. This skill can be used to gain a maximum of 2 successes in this challenge.

Nature (moderate DC by level): The character watches out for bad weather and circumvents it, locates shortcuts, or finds food and water. This skill can be used to gain a maximum of 3 successes in this challenge.

Perception (moderate DC by level): The character spies signs of danger, such as bad weather on the horizon or indications of an ambush. This skill can be used to gain a maximum of 2 successes in this challenge.

Special: Wilderness marauders frequently target caravans. You might want to stage a raid in the middle of the challenge, possibly after the heroes fail a Nature check. Overcoming this combat encounter counts as 1 success in the challenge.

Secondary Skills: Heal, Streetwise.

Heal (hard DC by level): When a character fails an Endurance check, another adventurer can make a Heal check to neutralize that failure (both in the challenge and with regard to losing survival days). Heal can be used in this manner once during the challenge.

Streetwise (moderate DC by level): This skill can be used only before the party begins traveling in the wilderness. With a successful Streetwise check, the character gathers a good crew, granting a +1 bonus to Endurance, Nature, and Perception checks until the end of the challenge.

Success: If the characters achieve 8 successes, they reach the destination with the caravan largely intact. The sponsoring merchant or authority is pleased.



Failure: If the characters get 3 failures, they lose significant portions of the caravan goods or need to stop at a different—possibly dangerous—location short of their destination.

QUIETING A TEMPLAR'S SUSPICIONS

Templars are the gatekeepers and constables in a city-state. Invariably, the characters encounter a haughty bureaucrat whose suspicions cannot easily be put to rest. Although a few templars are steadfast and incorruptible (if your storyline warrants it), the majority can be fooled, intimidated, or bribed. This approach is risky, however. If the heroes fail this skill challenge, the templar and any guards under his or her command attempt to arrest them, likely resulting in combat.

Level: Equal to the level of the party (XP equal to the reward for one standard monster of the party's level).

Complexity: 1 (requires 4 successes before 3 failures).

Primary Skills: Bluff, Diplomacy, History, Insight, special.

Bluff (moderate DC by level): The character plies the templar with compliments, showing proper respect for his or her station. Alternatively, the character delivers a plausible reason for moving through the gate or the area. Multiple successful Bluff checks might lead the templar to drop a hint about a bribe (see below). This skill can be used to gain a maximum of 3 successes in this challenge. In addition to counting as a failure in the challenge, each failed check also increases the templar's suspicions, raising the DC for subsequent Bluff and Diplomacy checks attempted in the challenge by 2.

Diplomacy (moderate DC by level): The character bargains with the templar, offering a bribe, information, or some other service in exchange for passage. Instead of counting as a success in the challenge, a successful check can remove the penalty from a failed Bluff check. Multiple successful Diplomacy checks also reveal that the templar is open to a bribe (see below). This skill can be used to gain a maximum of 2 successes in this challenge.

History (moderate DC by level): The character recalls complimentary information about the sorcerer-king or the city. Once the fact is shared, the templar basks in the praise. This skill can be used to gain a maximum of 1 success in this challenge. A failed check leads the character to proclaim a fact that, after a moment's thought, casts a dubious light on the city-state or sorcerer-king, annoying the templar.

Insight (easy DC by level): The character discerns that the templar is greedily awaiting the offer of a bribe (see below). This skill can be used to gain a maximum of 1 success in this challenge.

Special/Bribe (requires 2 prior successes on Bluff, Diplomacy, or Streetwise checks): Giving the templar currency (or the equivalent) equal to one-tenth the purchase price of a magic item of the party's level grants the characters 1 automatic success in the skill challenge. This tactic can be used to gain a maximum of 1 success in this challenge.

Secondary Skills: Intimidate, Streetwise.

Intimidate (hard DC by level): The character threatens or implies dire consequences if the templar doesn't permit passage. The characters gain a +2 bonus to the next Bluff or Diplomacy check made in the challenge.

Streetwise (moderate DC by level): The character recalls a fact about the sorts of bribes templars take. Two successful Streetwise checks opens the bribe option (see above), indicating to the character how much to offer.

Success: If the characters get 4 successes, the templar ushers the adventurers through the gate or allows them to pass through the area, then forgets he or she ever saw them.

Failure: If the heroes fail 3 checks, the templar suspects treachery and calls for guards. If the characters defeat the templar and the guards, they can continue on their way, although they might face other consequences during their time in the city.

SURVIVING THE DESERT

Travelers become stranded in the desert without proper supplies due to poor planning, attacks by raiders, or as punishment for angering authorities. Survival under the harsh sun for a short time without food, water, or shelter is a harrowing ordeal for even the hardiest Athasians. This skill challenge simulates 1 day of survival, including travel. Staying in one place makes the time pass no easier, and it leaves the party in exactly the same predicament—desert-bound with limited or no supplies. Sooner or later, the wasteland will bury them.

Level: Equal to the level of the party (XP equal to the reward for three standard monsters of the party's level).

Complexity: 3 (requires 8 successes before 3 failures).

Primary Skills: Athletics, Endurance, Heal, Nature.

Athletics (moderate DC by level): The character climbs ledges, leaps across chasms, or trudges through silt, helping the party bypass rough terrain. This skill can be used to gain a maximum of 2 successes in this challenge.

Endurance (hard DC by level): The character keeps moving, shrugging off fatigue that threatens to overtake him or her. This skill can be used to gain a maximum of 4 successes in this challenge.

Heal (moderate DC by level): Using the meager resources the party has, the character treats injuries and soothes abrasions caused by heat and grit. This skill can be used to gain a maximum of 2 successes in this challenge.

Nature (moderate DC by level): The character finds the best path through the desert, identifies hazards before the party runs into them, successfully hunts down a creature for food, or finds a small amount of water. This skill can be used to gain a maximum of 4 successes in this challenge.

Secondary Skills: Perception.

Perception (moderate DC by level): The character keeps a lookout for landmarks, dangers, or hazardous terrain. The next Nature check made in this challenge gains a +2 bonus.

DESERT SETBACKS

After every two to four skill checks made in this challenge (pick the most appropriate interval), the perilous environment causes a setback. Choose one event from those described below and have the characters make a group check against the given DC. If more than half of the party members succeed, the heroes gain 1 success in the challenge (which doesn't count against the maximum number of successes allowed for that skill). If not, no failure in the challenge occurs, but the adventurers all suffer the indicated detriment. Most entries describe an effect that lasts until the next desert setback. If you decide to break up this skill challenge with encounters, it also affects every ally and enemy present during those encounters.

Extreme Heat: If the party fails a group Endurance check (moderate DC by level), each adventurer loses a healing surge, which can't be regained until he or she takes an extended rest and receives food or water. Until the next setback, each character regains half the normal number of hit points when he or she spends a healing surge.

Mirage: Led astray by an illusory image and a failed group Perception check (moderate DC by level), each character takes a -5 penalty to Nature checks during the next set of checks in the skill challenge.

Silt Storm: If the party fails a group Endurance check (hard DC by level), each character loses a healing surge, which can't be regained until he or she takes an extended rest and receives food or water. Until the next setback, each character takes a -5 penalty to Perception checks.

Treacherous Terrain: If the party fails a group Acrobatics check (easy DC by level), each character loses a healing surge. Until the next setback, each character takes a -2 penalty to Endurance checks from the drain on stamina caused by crossing the terrain.

CONCLUSION

Success: If the characters achieve 8 successes, they survive the day. If they didn't have any failures, you might give them 1 survival day of supplies (see page xx) per party member consisting of scavenged water and food.

Failure: If the characters achieve 3 failures, the harsh desert conditions take their toll. Each adventurer loses a healing surge. Until the heroes find supplies or reach a safer place, they can't regain any of the healing surges they've lost in this skill challenge.

SECRET HISTORY OF ATHAS

Most Athasians have little understanding of the ancient world. They are not aware of how the flowering realms of the Green Age came to be the sun-baked ruins littering the wastes in current times. This summary covers the secret history of the world. Other than the sorcerer-kings, few people know this story.

Toward the end of the Green Age, the gods of Athas were destroyed or driven away by the victorious primordials, leaving the shrines of that time silent and empty. The destruction of the deities introduced a fault in the world: the possibility of arcane magic. A powerful psion named Rajaat discovered this flaw and mastered the arcane arts. Because arcane magic was fundamentally flawed, it was inherently destructive—it defiled the world with each use. Rajaat taught dozens of students the basics of magic, but saved the deepest secrets of defiling for a select group of disciples.

At the beginning of the Red Age, Rajaat commanded his disciples—now known as his Champions—to reorder the world by eliminating the races he considered impure. As the Champions waged the genocidal Cleansing Wars, their reckless defiling withered Athas. Forests and grasslands perished; the seas retreated and then vanished. Entire continents began to die, even where no Champion had set foot. Finally, the destruction gave the Champions pause, and they returned to their master. Led by Borys the Butcher, they overthrew Rajaat and imprisoned him in a place of nothingness outside the world.

Rajaat's imprisonment ended the Red Age and ushered in the Age of the Sorcerer-Kings, also called the Desert Age. Over the preceding centuries, the peoples of Athas had migrated toward the hospitable lands remaining in the world. The Champions seized or founded city-states in these regions, establishing themselves as the sorcerer-kings. Borys, the most powerful, transformed completely and became the terrible Dragon of Tyr. On most of Athas, nothing resembling culture remained. Only in the Tyr Region did civilization survive under the tyranny of the sorcerer-kings. Now, after long centuries, the Age of the Sorcerer-Kings might be coming to an end.

TREASURE AND REWARDS

Many features of the DARK SUN setting make it unique. One of the most prominent is society's concentration on the present. People of Athas do not remember. They do not look back through history's veil to recall better days and dimmer threats. Records about peoples, places, or cultures other than those currently dominating a given region are not kept. The reason is simple: Sorcerer-kings rule as immortals. As far as the people know, sorcerer-kings have always been and always will be. This deception keeps the populace from imagining any other way of life.

In the course of maintaining their power, the tyrants seek out historical records and artifacts, plundering anything that adds to their personal power and destroying everything else. Over the centuries, Athas's rulers have purged the world of knowledge about the time before their rule and how they came to power. In a land stripped of its history and artifacts, heroes have few opportunities to pluck cherished prizes from dusty ruins.

The historical barrenness of Athas is exacerbated by its general resource-poor nature. As a result, adventurers cannot hoard wealth and accumulate magic items as they might in another setting. The valued accoutrements simply do not exist.

Of course, this background can be ignored, and treasure parcels can be doled out according to the standard model in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. A campaign on Athas takes on a different dimension, however, when alternative rewards are seeded into the treasure parcels characters gain. To enhance the setting's unique qualities, consider adapting treasure distribution according to the following guidelines.

FIXED ENHANCEMENT BONUS

The Dungeon Master is strongly encouraged to adopt the following standard for his or her DARK SUN campaign, and fixed enhancement bonuses will be the organized play standard.

At heart, a magic item's purpose is to ensure that a character has the defenses and accuracy needed to confront the challenges of the game world. Magic weapons and implements keep attack modifiers high, while neck slot items and armor help ensure that characters survive their encounters. Replacing magic items with alternative rewards means fewer chances for the heroes to acquire key items. Without a means to compensate for such decreased resources, characters' capacities would lag behind those of their opponents. Encounters at any given level become more challenging and character death more frequent.

You can redress the magic equipment shortage by adopting a set of fixed enhancement bonuses similar to those detailed in *Dungeon Master's Guide 2* (in the sidebar on page 138). At discrete levels, characters gain flat bonuses to attack rolls, damage rolls, and defenses. These flat bonuses do not stack with enhancement bonuses gained from magic items, and they progress at a slightly slower rate. As a result, magic swords, armor, and amulets retain their appeal. Use the following table to assign fixed enhancement bonuses to player characters based on their levels.

FIXED ENHANCEMENT BONUSES

Level	Attack/			Attack/		
	Damage*	Defenses	Level	Damage*	Defenses	
1st	+0	+0	16th	+3	+3	
2nd	+1	+0	17th	+4	+3	
3rd	+1	+0	18th	+4	+3	
4th	+1	+1	19th	+4	+4	
5th	+1	+1	20th	+4	+4	
6th	+1	+1	21st	+4	+4	
7th	+2	+1	22nd	+5	+4	
8th	+2	+1	23rd	+5	+4	
9th	+2	+2	24th	+5	+5	
10th	+2	+2	25th	+5	+5	
11th	+2	+2	26th	+5	+5	
12th	+3	+2	27th	+6	+5	
13th	+3	+2	28th	+6	+5	
14th	+3	+3	29th	+6	+6	
15th	+3	+3	30th	+6	+6	

* When you score a critical hit, you deal 1d6 extra damage per point of fixed enhancement bonus to the attack roll.

PARCELS

If fixed enhancement bonuses are adopted, the number of magic item parcels awarded at each level should be decreased. For groups with four or more characters, remove the parcels granting the highest-level and lowest-level magic items (parcels 1 and 4). With smaller groups, reduce the magic item parcels by one (usually parcel 1).

COLORFUL ITEMS

When heroes do find magic items, the flavor of Athas can be brought out in the details of those treasures.

Ancient Items: All kinds of magic items were crafted in the long-forgotten eras of ancient Athas. Anachronistic decorations or elaborate design might be featured on something as simple as a belt of vigor. Such an unassuming item could provide information crucial to a quest or make the difference between survival and death in the sands.

Masterwork Armor: You can give characters masterwork armor as a reward. Use the lowest-level magic armor made from that type of masterwork armor as your guideline. For example, a suit of inix shell armor (equivalent to wyrmsscale armor; see the sidebar on page xx) has a minimum enhancement bonus of +4. Because +4 magic armor is a level 16 magic item, this masterwork armor counts as an item of that level.

Metal: At higher levels, the special nature of a magic item can be evident from its material and condition. A metal sword might be pulled from an ancient citadel buried by sand for untold centuries. The item, whatever its state, is a great treasure. If it retains a sharp edge after all those years, it is more wondrous. That condition suggests it is no mundane blade.

Potions and Elixirs: Normal magic potions (as described in other books) don't exist on Athas, but their effects can be duplicated. Exotic fruits or tubers might heal or produce other magical effects. Ritual casters who brew potions do so by infusing magic into specific victuals. Alchemists who would, on other worlds, concoct magical solutions instead use a form of herbalism to alter a comestible's nature.

Psionic Items: Certain templars and nobles construct magic items using psionic techniques. These items usually provide mental protection, primarily from the head or neck slot.

ALTERNATIVE REWARDS

Magic items are less common on Athas than in other DUNGEON & DRAGONS worlds. To represent this difference, you can use alternative rewards to replace some of the magic items the characters would ordinarily find during their adventures. After five levels or so (at your discretion), an alternative reward might fade away or improve to reflect each hero's growing power or a new development in the campaign.

Coinage in most DUNGEONS & DRAGONS games is hoarded to acquire or create additional magic items. Given the scarcity of magic items on Athas, characters have few opportunities to invest their wealth in this way. As a result, heroes spend more heavily on vehicles, mounts, alchemical items, consumable items, and ritual components. Eventually, characters run out of items to purchase with their treasure. Rather than let the gold pile up, consider substituting other rewards for monetary parcels, as detailed below.

An alternative reward might rely on a story component that must be fulfilled before the reward can be gained. These story components could function as minor quests, be tied to a major quest, or be gained at the start of a new adventure. Qualifying for a training reward might require finding a mentor and convincing him or her to impart some secret knowledge. A sorcerer-king might grant a character a potent boon for performing a service. Primal spirits could convey

their wisdom to a vigilant protector. Locations can even impart a particular reward to a worthy or clever champion. The rewards discussed below are tailored specifically to Athas. You can devise other alternative rewards based on the magical properties of the items from your players' wish lists.

For more advice on using rewards other than money and magic items, see the "Alternative Rewards" section on page 136 of *Dungeon Master's Guide 2*.

FAVORS

The movers and shakers on Athas are corrupt and wicked tyrants. Even the worst of them, however, understand the value of awarding favors or repaying debts. A sorcerer-king might favor a party that stymies or undermines a hated rival. A noble could sponsor adventurers who regularly advance his or her interests during their activities.

For the most part, favors provide no game mechanic benefit. They can, however, open the way to sumptuous living conditions, ample water supplies, contact with powerful figures, or access to rituals. An adventurer takes on challenges with greater confidence when a powerful sponsor offers to restore his or her life at little or no cost.

The easiest way to handle a favor is to assign it a gold piece value. You can reward a favor from a particular individual or faction in place of one or more monetary parcels during a level. In essence, the characters build up credit with those who grant them favor, and they can "spend" that favor by calling upon that individual or faction for resources.

Once a group of characters has gained favor with an individual or a faction, the characters can call on that sponsor as long as they are in the right location and the event is appropriate for the storyline. For example, the support of the Veiled Alliance is more easily taken advantage of in a city-state than while visiting an isolated fort belonging to a merchant house. You determine the amount of time it takes to obtain the favor requested, ranging from immediately to hours or days.

Each time the characters call in a favor, deduct the cost of those requests from the overall value of the favor. Tangible requests such as mounts, ritual ingredients, and ritual scrolls reduce the group's "favor account" according to their normal price.

A favor reward can be used to obtain objects or services (such as having a ritual performed on the party's behalf). Certain benefactors might be limited in their ability to grant specific requests, however. For example, favor with a noble could be exchanged for supplies, mounts, vehicles, shelter, bribes for templars, and specialized training. Favor with a templar, on the other hand, might instead be exchanged for rituals, psionic boons, or magic items that had been confiscated as contraband.



Intangible Favor: Sometimes, heroes seek to call on favor in exchange for less tangible benefit. An introduction to a renowned master, access to a restricted area in the middle of the night, or being assigned a weak first opponent in a series of gladiatorial events are examples of intangible benefits.

Favors of this sort are not easy to assign monetary values to, but sometimes a good approximation is possible. For example, a party seeking answers to certain questions might be required to reduce the value of its favor reward by 400 gp (the component cost for the Consult Mystic Sages ritual). If no suitable approximation presents itself, deduct 5–10 percent of the party's overall favor reward for a request you consider minor and 20 percent or more one you consider major.

Arena Glory Favor: The arena is the warrior's crucible. Before massive crowds, gladiators fight and die for the people's pleasure. Anyone can survive a match as a matter of sheer luck. Those combatants who survive several matches are special—their skill, talent, and determination do not go unnoticed. Characters who make regular appearances in the arena rise from anonymity as they emerge victorious time and again.

Characters can acquire glory by winning an arena match. Sometimes being alive at the end is sufficient, but most times the heroes must achieve more in the way of victory conditions. When a party achieves arena glory, it gains favor with the people of the city-state. Even those denizens who do not attend the matches come to know the characters' reputations. City folk are more likely to give aid to popular gladiators, allowing the characters to reap the rewards of their spreading fame.

Arena glory favor can be spent to obtain goods, items, or legitimate services, such as shelter and sustenance, throughout the region controlled by the local city-state. Arena glory can also be used to buy glory boons (page xx).

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Using the information presented in this section, the following is an example of how you might prepare rewards for a *DARK SUN* campaign adventure. Initially, drop the first and last magic item parcel from the list (*Dungeon Master's Guide*, page 126). Assuming the heroes are 5th level, that eliminates the level 9 and level 6 magic items. You could choose a +2 obsidian pact blade dagger as the level 8 item (a gift to the party's templar warlock from her sorcerer-king) and a fearsome reputation glory boon as the level 7 item (for the party's goliath gladiator). Combining parcels 5 and 6, you might award 1,050 gp worth of favor with the Veiled Alliance. Parcels 7 and 8 become 680 gp in Nibenay ceramic currency, and parcel 9 is converted into 22 survival days (valued at 110 gp) and a potion fruit of healing. Parcel 10 retains its form as a 100 gp gem and 10 gold pieces.

SURVIVAL DAYS AND WATER

Travel between the city-states is dangerous at best. Even with ample supplies and proper safeguards, travelers are at risk from sandstorms, raiders, thirst, exhaustion, and the punishing sun. The *DARK SUN* setting abstracts necessary supplies through the use of survival days. These expendable resources account for food, water, proper clothing, and other supplies. Each survival day allows a single character to travel in the dangerous wastes of Athas for one day without being subjected to starvation or thirst.

Provisions can be doled out in place of monetary treasure, at the converted value of 5 gp per survival day. Characters might find a water cask on the back of a wagon, harvest nectar globules from a kank, or uncover a potable reservoir in an old ruin. Converting these supplies to survival days grants the heroes meaningful treasure they can use right away.

In most communities, water is as strong a currency as coin. The city-states ration water to citizens by circulating ceramic pieces. Each token can be exchanged for a pint of water drawn from a city-controlled well. Ceramic pieces have a gold piece value and can be traded for an equivalent amount of goods or services within the issuing city. This equivalency does not extend beyond the city-state's region, however. Thus, travelers either trade these tokens for gold or invest them in survival days.

ECHOES OF POWER

Desert ruins and sorcerer-king citadels overflow with arcane and psionic energy. Primal spirits gather in the few verdant places remaining on Athas. Visiting such a place might bestow a lasting reward, such as one of the types described below.

Echo of the Crystal Forest

Level 18

Rising from the center of the Crystal Forest is an obsidian plateau. After you ascend it, you feel your skin beginning to harden. Even after you leave, a vestige of that quality remains with you.

Echo of Power 85,000 gp

Power (Encounter): Immediate Interrupt. **Trigger:** You take damage from an attack. **Effect:** You gain resist 5 to all damage against the triggering attack.

Echo of the Tree of Life

Level 16

A majestic tree of life instills a healing boon on the worthy.

Echo of Power 45,000 gp

Property: You gain a +2 item bonus to Heal checks and to any skill checks related to the performance of a scrying ritual.

Power (Daily ♦ Healing): Standard Action. An ally adjacent to you can spend a healing surge and regain additional hit points equal to half your healing surge value.



ELEMENTAL GIFT

Elemental spirits and powers exert a palpable influence in certain areas of Athas. An adventurer might gain a blessing by communing with these entities.

Gift of Fire

Level 6+

Your complexion assumes a ruddy hue, reflecting your inner fire.

Lvl 6	1,800 gp	Lvl 26	1,125,000 gp
Lvl 16	45,000 gp		

Elemental Gift

Property: You gain resist 5 fire.

Level 16: Resist 10 fire.

Level 26: Resist 15 fire.

Power (Daily ♦ Fire): Minor Action. Fire erupts from one weapon you are wielding. Until the end of your next turn, attacks made with that weapon deal 1d6 extra fire damage.

Level 16: 2d6 extra fire damage.

Level 26: 3d6 extra fire damage.

Gift of Rain

Level 12

You drink your fill from a tranquil oasis, and healing pours from you.

Elemental Gift 13,000 gp

Power (Daily ♦ Healing): Standard Action. You and each of your allies within a close burst 5 can make a saving throw or spend a healing surge as a free action.

Gift of Thirsting Salt

Level 6+

Eerie white crystals suspended within your body surface to absorb the blood you spill in combat, then heal you.

Lvl 6	1,800 gp	Lvl 26	1,125,000 gp
Lvl 16	45,000 gp		

Elemental Gift

Power (Daily ♦ Healing): Free Action. *Trigger:* You hit and damage an enemy with a melee attack. *Effect:* You regain 10 hit points, or 20 hit points if you scored a critical hit.

Level 16: You regain 15 hit points, or 30 hit points if you scored a critical hit.

Level 26: You regain 20 hit points, or 40 hit points if you scored a critical hit.

Spirit of Sand

Level 2+

Calling forth the desert's power, you produce a short-lived blast of screaming wind and biting sand.

Lvl 2	520 gp	Lvl 22	325,000 gp
Lvl 12	13,000 gp		

Elemental Gift

Power (Daily ♦ Zone): Free Action. *Trigger:* You hit an enemy with an attack. *Effect:* You create a zone in a close burst 1 that lasts until the end of your next turn. Squares within the zone are lightly obscured. You can slide any creature that starts its turn within the zone 1 square.

Level 12: You create a zone in a close burst 2.

Level 22: You create a zone in a close burst 3.

GLORY BOONS

Arena fighters put their lives on the line daily, but they can earn widespread fame and glory.

Battle-Scarred Champion

Level 3+

Each scar marring your body recalls a past glory and the opponents who fell to your blade.

Lvl 3	680 gp	Lvl 23	425,000 gp
Lvl 13	17,000 gp		

Glory Boon

Property: You gain a +1 item bonus to your healing surge value.

Level 13: +2 item bonus.

Level 23: +3 item bonus.

Power (Daily): Immediate Reaction. *Trigger:* An enemy bloodies you, but does not reduce you to 0 hit points or fewer. *Effect:* You make a melee basic attack against the triggering enemy.

Beloved Performer

Level 1+

The people flock to the arena to witness your daring escapades and listen to your mocking wit.

Lvl 1	360 gp	Lvl 21	225,000 gp
Lvl 11	9,000 gp		

Glory Boon

Property: You gain a +1 item bonus to Acrobatics checks and Bluff checks.

Level 11: +2 item bonus.

Level 21: +3 item bonus.

Power (Daily): Immediate Reaction. *Trigger:* An enemy marks you. *Effect:* That mark ends, and you shift 1 square.

Fearsome Reputation

Level 7+

Even the most intrepid gladiators pause when they learn that you are to be their next opponent.

Lvl 7 2,600 gp
Lvl 17 65,000 gp

Lvl 27 1,625,000 gp

Glory Boon

Property: You gain a +1 item bonus to Intimidate checks.
Level 17: +2 item bonus.
Level 27: +3 item bonus.

Power (Daily ♦ Fear): Free Action. *Trigger:* You score a critical hit against an enemy with a weapon attack. *Effect:* That enemy and each enemy adjacent to it take a -2 penalty to attack rolls until the end of your next turn.

PRIMAL BLESSING

Athas's primal spirits crave vengeance for the degradation of their world. They visit their wrath on any who despoil their lands. With the proper sacrifices and respect, you might instead earn their favor.

Blessing of Blazing Fangs

Level 4+

Pain sears your neck, but you do not scream. From this day forth, you proudly display the burn scars from the spirit's bite.

Lvl 4 840 gp
Lvl 14 21,000 gp

Primal Blessing

Property: When you take fire damage, you deal 2 extra damage with all attacks until the end of your next turn. You can choose to make this extra damage fire damage.
Level 14: 3 extra damage.

Level 24: 4 extra damage.

Power (Daily ♦ Fire): Minor Action. The next time you hit with an attack before the end of your next turn, that attack deals 1d12 extra fire damage.

Level 24: 2d12 extra fire damage.

Relentless Spirit

Level 8

Fueled by the pain of your wounds, primal spirits push you to greater efforts.

Primal Blessing 3,400 gp

Property: When you use your second wind, you can shift 1 square as a free action.

Power (Daily): Immediate Reaction. *Trigger:* An enemy bloodies you, but does not reduce you to 0 hit points or fewer. *Effect:* You gain temporary hit points equal to your healing surge value.

Spirit Eyes

Level 18

Granted added sensitivity by guiding primal spirits, your eyesight pierces shadow and illusion.

Primal Blessing 85,000 gp

Property: Your attacks ignore concealment.

Power (Daily): Minor Action. You can see invisible creatures until the end of your next turn.

Wrathful Spirit

Level 6+

The spirits residing in you cannot be contained, and their fury manifests in your ferocious attacks.

Lvl 6 1,800 gp
Lvl 16 45,000 gp

Lvl 26 1,125,000 gp

Primal Blessing

Property: While you are bloodied, you gain a +1 item bonus to damage rolls.
Level 16: +2 item bonus.
Level 26: +3 item bonus.

Power (Daily): Immediate Reaction. *Trigger:* An enemy bloodies you, but does not reduce you to 0 hit points or fewer. *Effect:* Until the end of your next turn, you roll damage twice and use either result.

SORCERER-KING'S BOON

The sorcerer-kings favor characters who serve them well. The most valued champions gain boons that supplement their talents and protect them from ambitious rivals. Such blessings are never given lightly and can be taken away at the tyrant's whim.

Abalach-Re's Deception

Level 8+

The Grand Vizier's hold on Raam might be tenuous, but only fools mistake the instability for weakness.

Lvl 8 3,400 gp
Lvl 18 85,000 gp

Lvl 28 2,125,000 gp

Sorcerer-King's Boon

Power (Daily ♦ Fear): Minor Action. Each creature adjacent to you takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls until the end of its next turn.

Power (Daily ♦ Teleportation): Immediate Interrupt.

Trigger: An enemy hits you with an attack. *Effect:* You swap positions with one ally within 3 squares, and the ally is hit by the triggering attack.

Level 18: You swap positions with an ally within 5 squares, and you and the ally gain a +1 bonus to all defenses until the start of your next turn.

Level 28: You swap positions with an ally within 10 squares, and you and the ally gain a +2 bonus to all defenses until the start of your next turn.

Andropinis's Authority

Level 9+

Andropinis claims to have been elected, but that event exerts no conditions on his dominion. Loyal retainers can be vested with a measure of his boundless authority.

Lvl 9 4,200 gp
Lvl 19 105,000 gp

Lvl 29 2,625,000 gp

Sorcerer-King's Boon

Property: You gain a +2 item bonus to Diplomacy checks and Intimidate checks.

Power (Daily ♦ Psychic, Zone): Standard Action. You create a zone in a close burst 3. The zone lasts until the end of your next turn. Each ally within the zone deals 1d6 extra psychic damage with any attack that does not include you as a target.

Level 19: 2d6 extra psychic damage.

Level 29: 3d6 extra psychic damage.

Hamanu's Terrible Roar

Level 6+

When you speak with the voice of the King of the World, all creatures around you tremble.

Lvl 6 1,800 gp
Lvl 16 45,000 gp

Lvl 26 1,125,000 gp

Sorcerer-King's Boon

Property: Whenever you hit a target with a power that pushes the target, you can push the target 1 extra square.

Property: Whenever you hit a target with a thunder power, the target is deafened (save ends).

Power (Daily ♦ Thunder): Standard Action. **Effect:** Make an attack: Close blast 3 (creatures in blast): level + 2 vs. Fortitude; Hit: 1d6 thunder damage, and the target is pushed 1 square and deafened (save ends).

Level 16: Close blast 3 (creatures in blast): level + 4 vs. Fortitude; Hit: 2d6 thunder damage, and the target is pushed 2 squares and deafened (save ends).

Level 26: Close blast 5 (creatures in blast): level + 6 vs. Fortitude; Hit: 2d6 thunder damage, and the target is pushed 2 squares and deafened (save ends).

Kalak's Echo

Level 10+

Kalak's sway was not extinguished with his death in free Tyr. Strength can be grasped by those who serve his memory.

Lvl 10 5,000 gp
Lvl 20 125,000 gp

Lvl 30 3,125,000 gp

Sorcerer-King's Boon

Property: Select a level 1 at-will attack power from an arcane class. You can use that power as an encounter power.

Power (Daily): Free Action. **Trigger:** You use an arcane attack power and miss all targets. **Effect:** You reroll one attack roll of the triggering power.

Level 20: You reroll up to two attack rolls.

Level 30: You reroll up to three attack rolls.

Lalali-Puy's Blessing

Level 7+

Those who please the Oba find that her blessing affords them protection from their enemies.

Lvl 7 2,600 gp
Lvl 17 65,000 gp

Lvl 27 1,625,000 gp

Sorcerer-King's Boon

Property: When you start your turn with concealment because of obscured squares, you retain that concealment until the end of your next turn even if you leave the square that granted you concealment.

Power (Daily ♦ Poison): Free Action. **Trigger:** You hit an enemy with a weapon attack. **Effect:** That enemy takes 1d6 extra poison damage.

Level 17: 2d6 extra poison damage

Level 27: 4d6 extra poison damage.

Nibenay's Cruel Reminder

Level 8+

The enigmatic Shadow King is rarely involved in the governance of Nibenay. He leaves it to his favored to ensure that no one forgets who rules the city.

Lvl 8 3,400 gp
Lvl 18 85,000 gp

Lvl 28 2,125,000 gp

Sorcerer-King's Boon

Power (Encounter): Free Action. **Trigger:** You use an encounter or daily attack power and miss all targets.

Effect: The next attack you make before the end of your next turn deals 1d6 extra damage to the first target it hits. **Level 18:** 2d6 extra damage.

Level 28: 3d6 extra damage.

Power (Daily): Immediate Interrupt. **Trigger:** An enemy hits you with an attack while you are adjacent to an ally. **Effect:** You take half the damage from the triggering attack, and the ally adjacent to you takes the other half.

That ally gains a +1 power bonus to attack rolls against the triggering enemy until the end of the ally's next turn. **Level 18:** +2 power bonus. **Level 28:** +3 power bonus.

Tectuktitlay's Sacrifice

Level 10+

The rapacious and spiteful Father of Life demands regular sacrifices.

Lvl 10 5,000 gp
Lvl 20 125,000 gp

Lvl 30 3,125,000 gp

Sorcerer-King's Boon

Property: When you reduce a nonminion enemy to 0 hit points, you can make a saving throw as a free action.

Power (Daily): Immediate Reaction. **Trigger:** An ally you can see reduces a creature to 0 hit points. **Effect:** That ally shifts 1 square and makes a basic attack as a free action.

Level 20: That ally shifts 1 square and makes a basic attack as a free action with a +2 bonus to the attack roll and a +2 bonus to the damage roll.

Level 30: That ally shifts 1 square and makes a basic attack as a free action with a +3 bonus to the attack roll and a +6 bonus to the damage roll.

TEMPLAR BRANDS

Certain sorcerer-kings and templars subject slaves to arcane experimentation. The defiling magic warps some slaves, scarring them forever.

Mental Block

Level 4+

Exposed to mind-rupturing magic for years, you learned to block out the pain.

Lvl 4 840 gp
Lvl 14 21,000 gp

Lvl 24 525,000 gp

Templar Brand

Property: You gain resist 5 psychic and a +2 item bonus to saving throws against fear or charm effects.

Level 14: Resist 10 psychic.

Level 24: Resist 15 psychic.

Power (Daily): No Action. **Trigger:** You are subject to a fear or charm effect. **Effect:** You make a saving throw against the triggering effect. On a save, the effect ends.



VEILED ALLIANCE MYSTERIES

In its struggle against the sorcerer-kings, the Veiled Alliance rewards its most powerful members with advanced study and enhancing ceremonies.

Mystery of the Hidden Veil

Level 3+

Through misdirection and concealing magic, you obscure your spellcasting.

Lvl 3	680 gp	Lvl 18	85,000 gp
Lvl 8	3,400 gp	Lvl 23	425,000 gp
Lvl 13	17,000 gp	Lvl 28	2,125,000 gp

Veiled Alliance Mystery

Property: You gain a +1 item bonus to Bluff checks.

Level 13 or 18: +2 item bonus to Bluff checks.

Level 23 or 28: +3 item bonus to Bluff checks.

Power (Daily ♦ Illusion): Free Action. *Trigger:* You use an arcane power. *Effect:* You become invisible until the end of your next turn, and you can shift 1 square.

Level 8: Shift 2 squares.

Level 13: Shift 3 squares.

Level 18: Shift 4 squares.

Level 23: Shift 5 squares.

Level 28: Shift 6 squares.

WANDERER'S SECRETS

Having spent countless hours wandering the wastelands, you have learned to ignore the punishing heat and to navigate the unforgiving landscape.

Secret of Life's Persistence

Level 6

Your body is accustomed to the harsh environment, letting you tolerate the wasteland's dangers.

Wanderer's Secret 1,800 gp

Property: You gain a +1 item bonus to Fortitude.

Power (Daily): Free Action. *Trigger:* You make an

Endurance check or Nature check and dislike the result.

Effect: You reroll the check and use either result.

Secret of the Crimson Sun

Level 16

You are inured to the harsh Athas sun, and you can share that hardiness with your allies.

Wanderer's Secret 45,000 gp

Property: You and four other creatures within 10 squares of you gain the benefit of the Endure Elements ritual.

Power (Encounter): Immediate Reaction. *Trigger:* An ally you can see fails an Endurance check. *Effect:* That ally rerolls the check.

Secret of the Wandering Dune

Level 12

You race across desert dunes without impediment.

Wanderer's Secret 13,000 gp

Property: You ignore difficult terrain that results from sand, silt, or similar loose terrain.

Power (Encounter): Free Action. *Trigger:* You take a run action. *Effect:* You move your speed + 4 and do not grant combat advantage from running.



SECRETS OF THE WAY

The Way reveals its secrets to practitioners who show patience and dedication. For some devotees, these breakthroughs manifest in odd and inexplicable manners.

Closed Mind

Level 3+

By erecting mental bulwarks, you ward yourself against hostile psychic attacks.

Lvl 3 680 gp

Lvl 13 17,000 gp

Lvl 23 425,000 gp

Secret of the Way

Property: You gain resist 5 psychic.

Level 13: Resist 10 psychic.

Level 23: Resist 15 psychic.

Power (Daily): Immediate Interrupt. *Trigger:* An attack targets your Will. *Effect:* You gain a +2 power bonus to Will until the start of your next turn.

Focused Static

Level 2+

You learn to project your thoughts to scramble your enemies' minds.

Lvl 2 520 gp

Lvl 12 13,000 gp

Lvl 22 325,000 gp

Secret of the Way

Power (Daily): Free Action. *Trigger:* You score a critical hit against an enemy by using a psionic power. *Effect:* That enemy takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls until the end of your next turn.

Level 12: That enemy takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls (save ends).

Level 22: That enemy is dazed and takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls (save ends both).

SAND RAIDERS

Sand Raiders is a short adventure for 1st-level characters, ideal for introducing the world of Athas to your players. The heroes are gathered at the small trading town of Altaruk in the Tablelands. You can begin the session by asking the players to introduce their characters and explain how they came to Altaruk.

Read:

Soon after you arrive, a fierce sandstorm blows over the town. The following day, a ragged House Wavir caravan crawls through the town gates, reporting that one of its wagons has gone missing with valuable cargo aboard. The head of the Wavir trade post in Altaruk, a Balican dwarf named Rhotan Vor, offers a reward of 100 gp to the group that finds the lost wagon and retrieves its cargo of grain, wine, and wood. You and your companions form into a

search party. A few miles outside town, you stumble across a portion of the wagon's tracks not buried by the previous day's storm.

In this adventure, the characters first encounter a band of silt runners lying in wait for anyone looking for the wagon. Later, when the characters arrive at the wreckage of the wagon, they meet a pack of fierce kruthiks. Furrows in the sand lead from the wrecked wagon to a ruined watchtower. There, the adventurers discover the silt runners hoarding the cargo in the cellars below.

Map: The three encounters in this adventure are not directly connected—they're a mile or so apart from each other across a sandy waste. Tracks in the sand lead the heroes from one encounter to the next.

ENCOUNTER S-1: HUNTING PARTY

Encounter Level 1 (500 XP)

SETUP

3 silt runner ragers (R)

2 silt runner darters (D)

After the sandstorm of the previous day, the silt runners emerged from their shelter and soon discovered the Wavir wagon. They swarmed over the drivers, looted the wagon, and then the leader of the band sent the group of warriors described in this encounter to follow whatever wagon tracks remained back to their source. This group paused to argue over the tracks shortly before the characters appear on the scene. The reptilian humanoids spot the heroes approaching over the open desert and prepare an ambush among the rocks.

When the characters reach the encounter area, read:

The day is brutally hot. A sweltering breeze kicks up a haze of dust. Following the wagon's tracks as they appear and disappear in the sands, you come to a jumble of orange boulders and creosote bushes.

Do not set up the silt runners yet. Have the players place their miniatures near the X on the map, and then call for a group Perception check (DC 17). If at least half the adventurers succeed, the party spots one or more of the ragers before they spring their ambush. In that case, the characters aren't surprised. Otherwise, the silt runners gain a surprise round.

When the characters spot the silt runners or the silt runners attack, read:

The desert echoes with a sudden outburst of high-pitched hissing and battle cries in a harsh language. Five small, hunched reptilian creatures carrying spears, daggers, and blowguns leap out from their hiding places. Their mouths are full of sharp fangs, and they dart over the sands with great speed.

If any heroes understand Draconic, they can make out cries of "Meat! Meat!" in that language.

3 Silt Runner Ragers (R)	Level 1 Brute	
Small natural humanoid (reptile)	XP 100 each	
HP 34; Bloodied 17	Initiative +2	
AC 13, Fortitude 13, Reflex 13, Will 13	Perception +2	
Speed 7	Low-light vision	
TRAITS		
Silt Runner Swarm		
Any enemy that starts its turn adjacent to two or more silt runners takes 2 damage.		
STANDARD ACTIONS		
① Bone Spear (weapon) ♦ At-Will		
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +6 vs. AC		
Hit: 2d6 + 5 damage.		
† Brutal Spear (weapon) ♦ Recharge when first bloodied		
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +6 vs. AC		
Hit: 4d6 + 4 damage.		
‡ Penetrating Spear (weapon) ♦ Encounter		
Requirement: The rager must be bloodied.		
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +6 vs. AC		
Hit: 4d6 + 4 damage, and the target gains vulnerable 5 to all damage until the end of the rager's next turn.		
Skills Athletics +5, Stealth +7		
Str 11 (+0)	Dex 15 (+2)	Wis 14 (+2)
Con 14 (+2)	Int 6 (-2)	Cha 10 (+0)
Alignment unaligned	Languages Draconic	
Equipment bone spear		

2 Silt Runner Darters (D)	Level 1 Artillery	
Small natural humanoid (reptile)	XP 100 each	
HP 25; Bloodied 12	Initiative +4	
AC 13, Fortitude 11, Reflex 14, Will 13	Perception +2	
Speed 7	Low-light vision	
TRAITS		
Silt Runner Swarm		
Any enemy that starts its turn adjacent to two or more silt runners takes 2 damage.		
STANDARD ACTIONS		
① Wooden Dagger (weapon) ♦ At-Will		
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +6 vs. AC		
Hit: 1d4 + 5 damage.		
② Blowgun (weapon) ♦ At-Will		
Attack: Ranged 12 (one creature); +8 vs. AC		
Hit: 1d10 + 4 damage.		
③ Poison Dart (poison, weapon) ♦ Recharge [] []		
Attack: Ranged 12 (one creature); +6 vs. Fortitude		
Hit: 2d10 + 3 poison damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends).		
Aftereffect: The target is slowed (save ends).		
Miss: Half damage, and the target is slowed until the end of the darter's next turn.		
Skills Athletics +5, Stealth +9		
Str 10 (+0)	Dex 18 (+4)	Wis 14 (+2)
Con 13 (+1)	Int 6 (-2)	Cha 11 (+0)
Alignment unaligned	Languages Draconic	
Equipment wooden dagger, blowgun, 20 darts		

TACTICS

The silt runners' tactics are simple: Gang up on one or two enemies at a time. If possible, two ragers and one darter target one character, while one rager and one darter target a second character. The ragers take advantage of their speed to move or charge quickly into melee, while the darters hang back and support their melee allies with *blowgun* attacks. Darters use *poison dart* as early as possible in the fight. Ragers use *brutal spear* early, wait until they are bloodied to use *penetrating spear*, then use *brutal spear* again if possible.

After three of the silt runners have fallen, the remaining two flee into the desert, never to be heard from again.

DEVELOPMENT

After the heroes defeat or drive off the silt runners, they can follow the intermittent wagon tracks toward the north. This journey leads them to **Encounter S-2: Plundered Wagon**.

ABOUT SILT RUNNERS

Silt runners are small, fast, reptilian humanoids that gather in large packs in the desert. They are savage, blood-thirsty, and somewhat dull-witted creatures, greedy for food and shiny baubles. They are detailed further in the *DARK SUN Creature Catalog*, but the statistics blocks here are all you need to run these encounters.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

This encounter uses tiles from set DU7 Desert of Athas™.

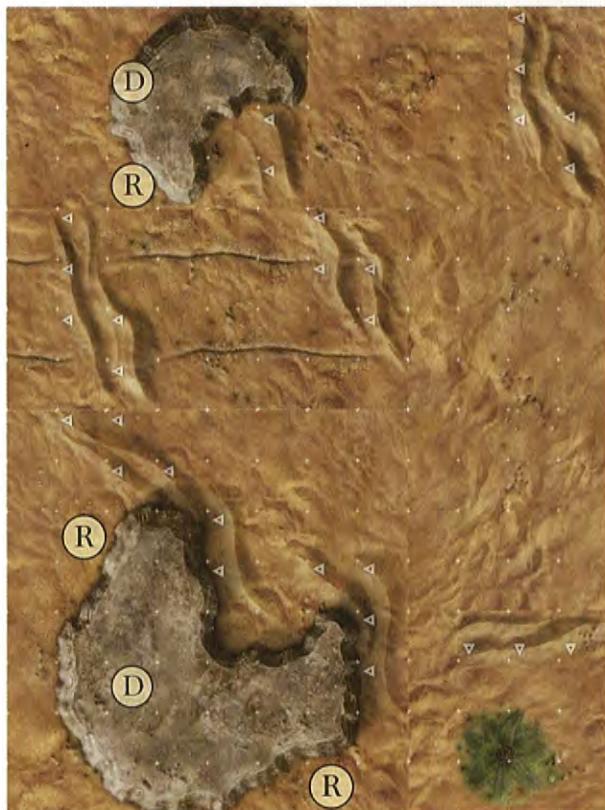
Illumination: Daylight sheds bright light over the entire area.

Creosote Bush: These squares are difficult terrain. Creatures in bush squares have cover.

Escarpment: These rocky outcroppings are about 6 feet high. A creature can vault up the steep slope with a DC 10 Athletics check, using 1 extra square of movement to do so. A failed check ends the creature's move action at the base of the escarpment. Hopping down the slope requires no check and causes no damage.

Sand Drift: These squares are difficult terrain.

Wagon Ruts: The tracks have no effect on movement or combat.



ENCOUNTER S-2: PLUNDERED WAGON

Encounter Level 1 (518 XP)

SETUP

- 1 kruthik adult (A)
- 2 kruthik young (Y)
- 3 kruthik hatchlings (H)

The missing wagon rests in the lee of a small hill, where its drivers sought cover to ride out yesterday's storm. Their draft animals—a pair of inixes—broke free of their tethers and ran off during the storm, leaving the wagon stranded. Before the three House Wavir drivers could locate their draft beasts, the silt runners of the Broken Tower found them and attacked. The reptilians dragged the drivers off to their lair and partially plundered the wagon. Currently, a pack of desert kruthiks drawn by the scent of food is nosing around the prize.

When the adventurers reach the encounter area, have the players place their miniatures near the X on the map and read:

You spot the Wavirs' missing wagon ahead. It stands in a jumble of rocks, half buried by drifting sand. You see no sign of the draft animals or the drivers. A portion of the cargo—jugs of wine and planks of hardwood—lies broken and scattered on the nearby sand. A half-dozen creatures with chitinous shells and spikelike claws are scuttling around and chittering to each other as they pick over the wreckage.

Place the kruthiks on the tactical map. If the characters want to surprise the kruthiks, have them make a group Stealth check (DC 14). If half the party members succeed on this check, the characters can attack the kruthiks with surprise. Otherwise, roll initiative.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

This encounter uses tiles from set DU7 Desert of Athas.

Illumination: Daylight sheds bright light over the entire area.

Escarpment: These rocky outcroppings are about 6 feet high. A creature can vault up the steep slope with a DC 10 Athletics check, using an extra square of movement to do so. A failed check ends the creature's move action at the base of the escarpment. Hopping down the slope costs no extra movement and causes no damage.

Sand Drift: These squares are difficult terrain.

Wagon: Creatures in the wagon have cover against enemies attacking from outside the wagon. Climbing into the wagon from the outside requires 1 extra square of movement. Most of the wagon's cargo has been removed, leaving only a few sacks of grain, some blankets, and two clay jars full of olive oil inside the vehicle.

Wagon Ruts: The tracks have no effect on movement or combat.



Kruthik Adult (A)	Level 4 Brute
Medium natural beast (reptile)	XP 175
HP 67; Bloodied 33	Initiative +6
AC 17, Fortitude 14, Reflex 15, Will 13	Perception +4
Speed 6, burrow 3 (tunneling), climb 6	Low-light vision, tremorsense 10
TRAITS	
Gnashing Horde ♦ Aura 1	
Any enemy that ends its turn within the aura takes 2 damage.	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
Claw ♦ At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +8 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d10 + 3 damage.	
Toxic Spikes (poison) ♦ Recharge ☷ ☷	
Attack: Ranged 5 (two creatures); +7 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d8 + 4 damage, and the target is slowed and takes ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends both).	
Str 17 (+5) Dex 18 (+6) Wis 12 (+3)	
Con 17 (+5) Int 4 (-1) Cha 8 (+1)	
Alignment unaligned Languages –	

2 Kruthik Young (Y)	Level 2 Brute
Small natural beast (reptile)	XP 125 each
HP 43; Bloodied 21	Initiative +4
AC 15, Fortitude 13, Reflex 14, Will 11	Perception +1
Speed 6, burrow 2 (tunneling), climb 8	Low-light vision, tremorsense 10
TRAITS	
Gnashing Horde ♦ Aura 1	
Any enemy that ends its turn within the aura takes 2 damage.	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
Claw ♦ At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +5 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d8 + 2 damage.	
Str 15 (+3) Dex 16 (+4) Wis 10 (+1)	
Con 13 (+2) Int 4 (-2) Cha 6 (-1)	
Alignment unaligned Languages –	

3 Kruthik Hatchlings (H)	Level 2 Minion
Small natural beast (reptile)	XP 31 each
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.	Initiative +3
AC 16, Fortitude 12, Reflex 15, Will 12	Perception +0
Speed 6, burrow 2 (tunneling), climb 8	Low-light vision, tremorsense 10
TRAITS	
Gnashing Horde ♦ Aura 1	
Any enemy that ends its turn within the aura takes 2 damage.	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
Claw ♦ At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +5 vs. AC	
Hit: 4 damage.	
Str 13 (+2) Dex 16 (+4) Wis 10 (+1)	
Con 13 (+2) Int 4 (-2) Cha 6 (-1)	
Alignment unaligned Languages –	

TACTICS

The kruthik young and the kruthik hatchlings scuttle into melee as quickly as they can. They split up and move adjacent to as many different characters as possible, so their *gnashing horde* auras damage multiple targets each.

The adult kruthik begins the battle by using toxic spikes, and then moves to bring enemies within its aura. It uses toxic spikes again as soon as it recharges, otherwise relying on claw.

Kruthiks are notoriously fierce and hungry. They do not break off combat while an enemy remains standing.

DEVELOPMENT

After the characters defeat the kruthiks, an inspection of the wagon reveals that much of its cargo has been removed, along with the three House Wavir drivers. The hitch where the wagon's draft beasts would have been harnessed has been ripped away, leaving splintered wood. The draft beasts appear to have bolted; it is not uncommon for panicked inixes to run off with their traces.

Drag marks and tracks in the sand (mostly those of wide, webbed feet) lead farther north. About a mile in the distance, the characters can see the broken stump of an old, ruined tower. Following the tracks leads them to **Encounter S-3: Broken Tower**.

ENCOUNTER S-3: BROKEN TOWER

Encounter Level 2 (675 XP)

SETUP

- 1 silt runner inciter (S)
4 silt runner ragers (R)
1 ssurran poisonscale collector (P)

The characters have arrived at the lair of the silt runner band that sacked the wagon. The raiders live in catacombs beneath the ruins of a small temple abandoned centuries ago.

When the heroes reach the encounter area, read:
The drag marks and tracks from the wagon lead to the weathered ruin of an ancient structure. Nothing remains aboveground except the stump of a small tower and tumbled stones where its protective walls once stood. Drifting sand and tough scrub brush surround the walls. In the foundation of the tower, you discover a flight of old stone stairs leading down to a wide set of doors.

Have the players set up their miniatures on the staircase or in the hall outside the double doors. Do not set up the monsters until the characters open the door.

When the characters open the door, read:

This large vault holds several ancient stone sarcophagi and a low cistern full of water. The ceiling is partially collapsed, and several large piles of rubble have formed. The room is filled with a musty reptilian odor. Foul debris consisting of gnawed bones, broken crates, and tattered hides is scattered about the area. The missing caravan drivers are tied up in an alcove against the far wall. Arrayed throughout the room are three more of the silt runners and a taller reptilian savage—a ssurran. They hiss in challenge when they see you.

TACTICS

The silt runner ragers rush forward into melee, opening the fight with *brutal spear*. The inciter begins with *psionic detonation* to bottle up the characters near the doorway, then uses *incite fury* to give the ragers another attack. The ssurran uses *dagger* to deal ongoing poison damage to an enemy. If successful, it uses *blinding poison* and, if the target is blinded, *end strike* against the same target.

The silt runners and the ssurran don't bother with the bound prisoners. They don't feel sufficient loyalty to their own kind to imagine that the heroes might care about threats to the prisoners.

If two of the silt runners fall, the ssurran attempts to flee. It has no wish to fight to the death for the silt runners' sake.

Silt Runner Inciter (I) Level 2 Controller (Leader)

Small natural humanoid (reptile) XP 125

HP 38; Bloodied 19 Initiative +3

AC 16, Fortitude 14, Reflex 14, Will 15 Perception +3

Speed 7 Low-light vision

TRAITS

Silt Runner Swarm

Any enemy that starts its turn adjacent to two or more silt runners takes 2 damage.

STANDARD ACTIONS

⊕ Bone Sword (weapon) ♦ At-Will

Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +7 vs. AC

Hit: 1d10 + 5 damage.

⊕ Psionic Detonation (force, zone) ♦ Recharge 1

Attack: Area burst 1 within 10 (enemies in burst); +6 vs. Reflex

Hit: 1d10 + 5 force damage. The burst creates a zone that lasts until the end of the encounter. Enemies treat squares within the zone as difficult terrain.

Miss: Half damage.

← Incite Fury ♦ Recharge when first bloodied

Effect: As a free action, each silt runner within a close blast

5 shifts 1 square and makes a basic attack before or after it shifts.

TRIGGERED ACTIONS

← Incite Frenzy ♦ Encounter

Trigger: The inciter is first bloodied.

Effect (Free Action): As a free action, each ally within a close burst 5 shifts 1 square and makes a basic attack before or after it shifts.

Skills Athletics +6, Intimidate +9, Stealth +8

Str 11 (+1) Dex 14 (+3) Wis 15 (+3)

Con 14 (+3) Int 8 (+0) Cha 16 (+4)

Alignment unaligned Languages Draconic

Equipment bone sword

4 Silt Runner Ragers (R) Level 1 Brute

Small natural humanoid (reptile) XP 100 each

HP 34; Bloodied 17 Initiative +2

AC 13, Fortitude 13, Reflex 13, Will 13 Perception +2

Speed 7 Low-light vision

TRAITS

Silt Runner Swarm

Any enemy that starts its turn adjacent to two or more silt runners takes 2 damage.

STANDARD ACTIONS

⊕ Bone Spear (weapon) ♦ At-Will

Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +4 vs. AC

Hit: 2d6 + 3 damage.

⊕ Brutal Spear (weapon) ♦ Recharge when first bloodied

Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +4 vs. AC

Hit: 3d6 + 6 damage.

⊕ Penetrating Spear (weapon) ♦ Encounter

Requirement: The rager must be bloodied.

Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +4 vs. AC

Hit: 2d6 + 3 damage, and the target gains vulnerable 5 to all damage until the end of the rager's next turn.

Skills Athletics +5, Stealth +7

Str 11 (-0) Dex 15 (+2) Wis 14 (+2)

Con 14 (+2) Int 6 (-2) Cha 10 (+0)

Alignment unaligned Languages Draconic

Equipment bone spear

Ssurran Poisonscale Collector (S)	Level 3 Lurker	
Medium natural humanoid (reptile)	XP 150	
HP 36; Bloodied 18	Initiative +8	
AC 18, Fortitude 14, Reflex 16, Will 15	Perception +8	
Speed 6 (earth walk)		
TRAITS		
Poison Strike		
The ssurran gains a +2 bonus to damage rolls against enemies taking ongoing poison damage.		
STANDARD ACTIONS		
① Dagger (poison, weapon) ♦ At-Will		
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +8 vs. AC		
Hit: 1d6 + 2 damage, and ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends).		
② Blinding Poison ♦ At-Will		
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature taking ongoing poison damage); +6 vs. Fortitude		
Hit: 1d6 + 3 damage, and the target is blinded (save ends).		
③ End Strike ♦ At-Will		
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature that cannot see the ssurran); +8 vs. AC		
Hit: 2d6 + 3 damage.		
Skills: Athletics +7, Stealth +9		
Str 13 (+2)	Dex 17 (+4)	Wis 14 (+3)
Con 12 (+2)	Int 10 (+1)	Cha 8 (+0)
Alignment unaligned	Languages Draconic	
Equipment dagger		

DEVELOPMENT

After the adventurers defeat the monsters in the Broken Tower, they can free the Wavir drivers (a half-elf named Milos and two humans named Alia and Flaron). The silt runner inciter wears a small leather pouch containing a fire opal worth 100 gp, 20 gp in ancient gold coins found here in the catacombs, and a +1 amulet of health (level 3 item, *Player's Handbook*, page 249). This treasure amounts to the level 1 parcels 3 and 7 (*Dungeon Master's Guide*, page 126).

Getting the trade goods back to Altaruk is a hot and dusty chore. With the aid of the Wavir drivers, the heroes can push the wagon back or break it up to fashion a simple travois and drag the cargo back. Either way, the return trip is uneventful. Rhotan Vor makes good on his promise, and pays the heroes 120 gp (level 1 parcel 8).

If the heroes choose to keep the Wavir trade goods, the total value of the cargo is 480 gp (level 1 parcels 5, 6, 9, and 10). Selling the goods in Altaruk is impossible, however, since Rhotan Vor claims ownership of the cargo and the chief of Altaruk backs him up. The characters can still trade the cargo for the promised reward, but the Wavirs will remember their failure to keep the bargain.

SSURRANS

On Athas, lizardfolk don't reside in marshes and swamps. They're known as ssurrans, a race of nomadic reptilian marauders adapted to the desert. Like locusts, ssurran hordes descend on an area and strip it of everything edible before moving on. The ssurran in this encounter is a wide-ranging scout for a nearby pack.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: The stairway and the area in front of the double door are bathed in daylight. Torches illuminate the silt runners' lair, casting bright light throughout the area.

Ceiling: The chamber is 10 feet high.

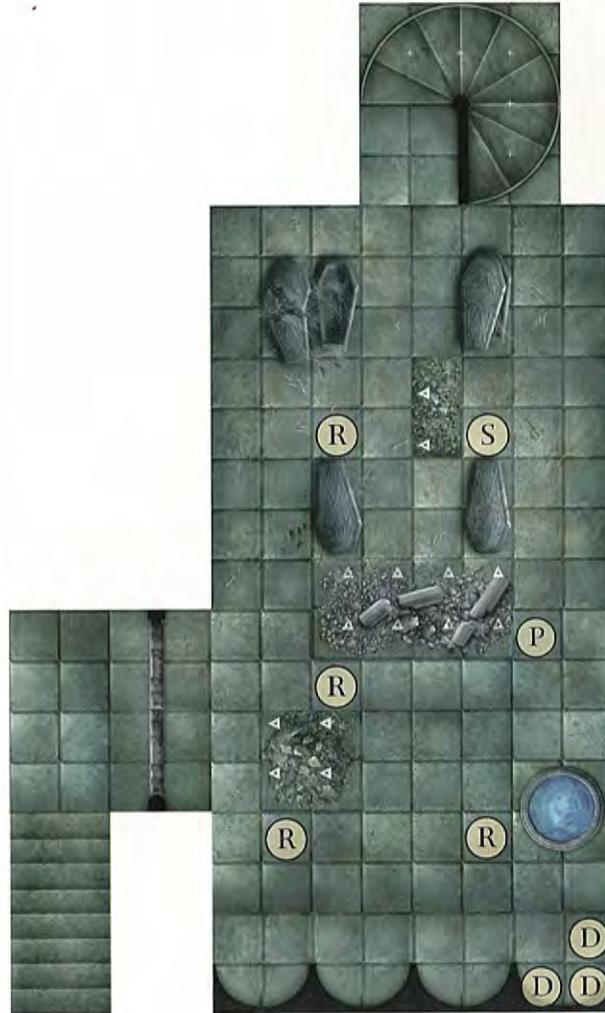
Cistern: The cistern is 2 feet deep. Its squares are difficult terrain.

Drivers: The drivers (in the squares marked D) are firmly bound with rawhide thongs and can't move. They're level 1 minions with 10 in all abilities and defenses.

Rubble: Squares of rubble are difficult terrain.

Sarcophagi: These large stone sepulchers are 5 feet tall. They provide cover. A creature can scramble up a sarcophagus with a DC 8 Athletics check, using 1 extra square of movement to do so. Hopping down costs no extra movement and causes no damage.

Wagon Loot: The casks, crates, and sacks of the Wavir wagon's cargo are piled haphazardly, creating squares of difficult terrain.



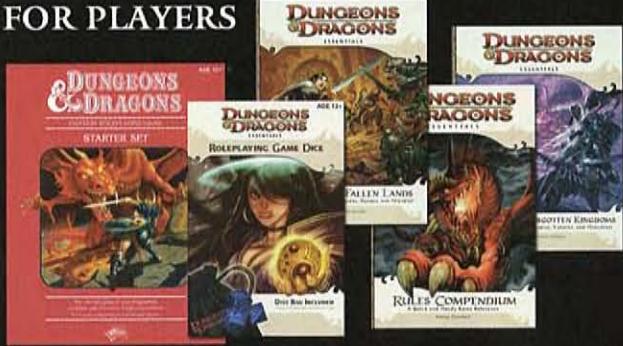
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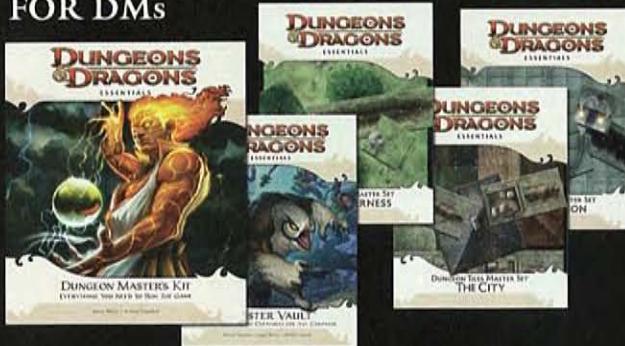


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