

The Frontier. A desert wasteland, hostile, inhospitable, indomitable; a land shrouded in rumors – strange creatures, otherworldly elementals, warrior tribes...

The outside world knows practically nothing of this strange desert, sleeping at the north-west edge of Vilterra. The Frontier rejected both the Elven and Draconic lords in the ancient past or the nations and empires of the present day, and remains shrouded in danger and intrigue.

GEOGRAPHY

Surrounded by mountains and hills, the Frontier is very much like a valley. With not a single drop of water, the inner regions are completely inhospitable. By this, the Frontier is separated into the *Outer* and *Inner* Frontier.

WATER

For the most part, surface water is nonexistent in the Frontier. However, that is not to say that there aren't *any* water whatsoever. Water from the Crown of the World gathered at the seasonal lake *Kelibo*, and underground reservoirs are the most important water sources of desert life.

However, the position and seasonal nature of *Kelibo* makes it unsuitable for permanent residence, and the size of the groundwater reservoir and the hostile surface made extracting water impractical.

ECOLOGY

Lacking the most important ingredient of life, the Frontier desert has almost no life sparing a couple cacti and bushes on the edges. However, there are some exceptions, especially on the Outer Frontier.

ANIMALS AND PLANTS

Heat-tolerant plants such as cacti and bushes exists in the more hospitable Outer Frontier.

Camels also exists there, brought in by settlers. Most are domesticated, though some do roam areas protected from monsters by people.

HOSTILE LIFE

Because intelligent life exert such little influence over the area, the Frontier (especially the Inner Frontier) is filled with monsters.

The Frontier monsters are mostly reptilian and insectoid. Most, such as basilisks, came down from the mountains. Nagas, Ankhegs, and other beasts fight each other for sustenance.

ELEMENTALS

The most apt description of these mysterious, hostile creatures is the manifestation of the

forces of nature. Their origin are unknown, their actions are inexplicable, all that's known about them is that they have occupied this land since recorded history, and that they will attack anything that they come across.

The elementals of the Frontier desert are mostly Fire, Air, and Earth.

SANDWORMS

Perhaps the most spectacular of the legends of the Frontier is the *Sandworms*, and they certainly live up to it.

They are beings of massive proportions, some hundreds of feet long. Much of their life is spent underground, where they supposedly sustain themselves on underground water. The few times they surface are primarily for hunting, sunlight, and air.

Ironically, their times of hunting is also when they are most vulnerable. Sandworms are prone to being prayed upon by other monsters. The Shai-al run also use this opportunity to tame them.

Interestingly, Sandworms are attracted by music. The reason of which is unknown. The Shai-al run takes advantage of this to call upon them.

MIGRATION OF KELIBO

At the north of the Frontier lies a seasonal lake *Kelibo*. In late winter, early spring, the water from the northern mountains flows down into the lake, attracting all kinds of life.

Basilisks from the mountains follows this stream down to the Frontier, and some are left unable to leave.

Notably, the sandworms, despite having a consistent supply of underground water, also gathers around *Kelibo* primarily for hunting.

Because the allure of water is too great, bloody battles ensues everytime water fills the lake. The violent nature of this seasonal event earned it the name *the Red Spring*.

Intelligent life such as the red dragonbornes also joins the fray for sandworms; likewise, the Shai-al run are also present for water and defense of the sandworms.

HISTORY

Not much occurred in the Frontier worth noting; for the most part, it has remained populated only by monsters and elementals. Almost all settling attempts have ended in failure.

SEROVAN TERRAFORMING

Much like what the high elves did to the Aurabe region in the far south, they attempted to use

magic to terraform the inhospitable Frontier. However, their attempts are nowhere near as successful as in the South; A mysterious force completely voided all of their arcane arts.

DESOLATE WASTELAND

After failed Serovan terraforming, for the remainder of their rule (and perhaps much longer after that) the Frontier remained a land of no intelligent life or permanent settlements.

THE SHAI-AL RUN

It was not until after the Great Dragon War before intelligent life attempted to conquer the Frontier once again – the Shai-al run.

This mysterious group of blue dragonbornes seemingly appeared out of nowhere. They do not have a culture of recording history, thereby we have no record of their origin. Due to the timing of their approximate appearance coinciding with the Great Dragon War, it is speculated that they are nobles of the fallen Meneketes empire.

To this day, the Shai-al run remains the only semblance of occupation in the Inner Frontier.

ASAKHANI ADVANCES

The most recent attempts at settling the Frontier is made by the Asakhan Empire. As a relatively newborn nation striving to project power across Vilterra, they set their sights on the inhospitable Frontier as a demonstration of force.

The Asakhanis relied on their experience in the Aurabe: sponsoring the people of the southern desert to make for the north, taking with them tools, livestock, and experience suited to settling dry areas. So far, their attempts have been restricted to the Outer Frontier, where permanent settlements are set up, relying on support from the Empire to the south.

INTELLIGENT LIFE

Due to the harsh conditions of the Frontier, intelligent life is few and far between. However, several exceptions stand out, braving the harsh desert.

THE SHAI-AL RUN

OVERVIEW

By far the most notable of the intelligent races that inhabit the Frontier is the assortment of blue-dragonborne tribes that collectively call themselves the *Shai-al run*. They are the only race that can truly call this land home.

ORGANIZATION

Rather than a single nation-state, the Shai-al run is more like a collection of cooperative tribes,

operating almost completely independently.

Kelibo. As with most creatures of the desert, the Shai-al run tribes make an annual migration to the lake of Kelibo, primarily to follow and protect the sandworms. It is one of the only instances where all of the Shai-al run work together.

WAY OF LIFE

Martial Culture. To survive in the unforgiving Frontier, the people of Shai-al run became adept at combat by necessity; both for fending off threats and for monster-hunting.

Due to constantly hunting for monsters and fending off the wyvern-riding red dragonbornes, Shai-al run warriors primarily use heavy or ranged weaponry, some of which forged in Kelibo, most of which procured from monster remains.

Sandworms. The most distinguishing trait of the Shai-al run is their taming of the sandworms. The exact methods of taming a sandworm is known to very few; it seems to have something to do with the Nu-cha flute – another symbol of Shai-al run culture

charm_sandworm.jpeg

CONFLICT

The Shai-al run tribes are known to be territorial. They are known to attack Asakhani settlers that came too close to the Inner Frontier.

OUTSIDERS

While the Shai-al run is the only permanent resident of the Frontier, there are numerous peoples that, despite living elsewhere, frequent the area.

IRONOK

While primarily residing in the mountain ranges to the west of the Frontier, the Ironok goblins have a great presence on the Frontier.

Similar to the Shai-al run, the Ironok is a collection of cooperative Goblin tribes.

IO-TO

The Shai-al run are not the only dragonborne seen on the Frontier. Residing in the Northern mountains are the red dragonborne of *Io-to*. They are most famous for their mount – wyverns.

FOR THE SANDWORMS

Despite the Frontier being a hostile place with little to no natural resources, these Outsiders risk their lives and the wrath of the Shai-al run for one thing – Sandworms.

The Ironok and Io-to hunts sandworms for medicine. This, of course, incurs the wrath of the Shai-al run that rely on those sandworms to stay alive in the arid and dangerous desert. As a result, bloody conflicts are very frequent.

ASAKHANI SETTLEMENTS

As a testament to the imperious reach of the Askhan Empire, settlers dotted the edges of the Outer Frontier; Most of them are brought over from the Aurabe desert, with one singular goal – conquer the harsh environments of the Frontier.