

# DARK · SUN

Official Game Accessory

## Elves of Athas



by Bill Slavicsek

**Advanced Dungeons & Dragons**  
2<sup>nd</sup> Edition



Official Game  
Accessory

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by Bill Slavicsek

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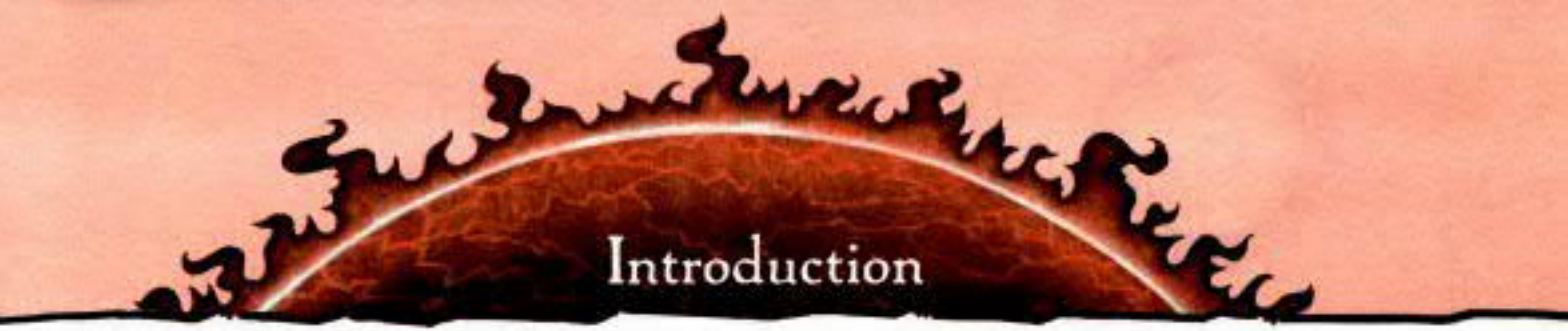
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# Introduction

## Daled's Tale

*I am Daled, dwarf and ex-slave, wandering the burning sands of Athas like a faro leaf caught in a hot breeze. This breeze is my focus, to learn all I can about the slave tribes that fill the endless wastes, and it drives me in directions I never contemplated going.*

*In my travels I have gathered more knowledge than my focus would indicate. Perhaps it was inevitable. Knowledge comes with experience, and my experiences have been as varied as the viewpoints of a half-giant—and as fickle. At the least, all have been educational (at least in hindsight).*

*My memories include long periods of thirst and hunger, dark days under the lash of templars, and even brief stretches of contentment. Let me share one of these memories with you before the fire fades and the crimson sun burns away the night. Let me tell you of the time I ran with the elves of Athas.*

*In truth, it was but a single tribe of the long-limbed nomads, and compared to the grace and swiftness of a desert elf, the way I traveled could hardly be called running. But I kept up with them, for my life and my focus depended upon it.*

*I was traveling across the Tablelands in the company of a small merchant caravan of House M'ke. The caravan was going my way, and I was glad for the companionship and protection its wagons and crew offered. We were on the road from Nibenay to Raam, moving through a region of sandy wastes, when a terrible storm blew in off the Sea of Silt. The winds were fierce, the dust as thick as kank honey. The caravan tried to push on, but it wasn't long before we were lost in the swirl of choking dust and stinging sand. I cursed the caravan master for trying to forge a path through the storm, but the words were drowned in the raging wind.*

*For two days the wind swirled around us, whipping our breath away and burning our skin raw. The sand pelted*

*us as the master pushed the wagons and pack beasts forward. For two days we wandered blindly through the storm, and those who could not keep up were lost to the angry elements. The storm finally began to subside as the second day neared its end, though more than half the caravan was gone. What remained huddled around the master, hoping for protection and guidance.*

*When the sun rose on the third day, there were still large clouds of silt filling the air. But the dust was not as thick or as violent as it had been, and visibility had improved considerably. I almost wished it hadn't, for what we saw sent a ripple of fear through the remaining caravan members. Our makeshift camp was surrounded by figures wrapped in tattered cloaks and clinging dust. These figures were tall and thin, with long limbs and savage bearings. There was no doubt in my mind that we were surrounded by the dread desert runners: elves.*

*Two of the guards who still held positions at the caravan master's side moved to drive off the raiders. They were cut down quickly and without fanfare. Then one elf stepped forward and declared that our goods were now the property of the Wind Dancers tribe. Any further show of resistance would result in the slaughter of the entire caravan. She spoke with a detached calmness that was more frightening than any arrogant boast I had heard from other raider leaders. I knew she meant what she said, and so did the caravan master.*

*It did not take long for the elves to strip the caravan bare. They moved with speed, grace, and an unnatural silence that made us even more uneasy. When they were done, not a single trade good remained. They even took our weapons, food, and water. These elf raiders were not bloodthirsty, but we would die as surely from lack of supplies as if they had cut us apart with their weapons of stone and bone. Without a word, they prepared to fade away as silently as they had come.*

*If I remained there, without weapon, water, or even a clue as to where I was, then I would die without complet-*



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ing my focus. This was unacceptable. There were still slave tribes to visit, still experiences and knowledge to add to my continuing chronicle. Worse, there were the legends of what happened to dwarves who die with their focus unfulfilled—legends as dark and disturbing as the inner sanctums of the sorcerer-kings. I had to survive—my focus demanded it.

I called to the chief and insisted she let me join her tribe. If she noticed the fear in my eyes or the urgency in my voice, she made no mention of it. Instead, she listened quietly, with an intensity that unnerved me even more. My arguments steadied me, however, as I used those I had heard in the slave tribes and even invented a few as I rambled on. I offered reasons for accepting me into the tribe, listing my skills and accomplishments. I even called out challenges and demanded a rite of initiation, knowing full well that my words could just as easily get me killed as they could perhaps save my life. The chief's eyes examined me, measuring me by more than just the sounds that emerged from my mouth. When I finished, I thought I saw her smile.

"So the dwarf wants to be an elf," the chief replied. "Then run with us, Short Sprinter, and we shall see." And ran I did, though not swiftly and certainly with no grace. Sheer force of will kept my legs pumping and my eyes on the fading backs of the racing elves. For three days I did my best to keep up. Then, when it seemed weariness and thirst were about to overcome me, I crested a sand dune to find the chief waiting for me beside a well-traveled road.

The chief held out a skin of water, which I wearily snatched. "You were lucky, Short Sprinter," she said through a wide grin. "You gave us three days of laughter, and laughter has been in short supply of late among the Wind Dancers. For that, you have earned this drink. Fort Isus lies along this road. Go there or not. The choice is yours." She turned to leave, then paused and called back, "Remember the time you ran with the Wind Dancers,

because the Wind Dancers will remember you, Sprinter." Her laugh followed her into the dunes, but I'll never forget its wild, savage sound. . . .

They run across the burning sands like whirling dust sweeps across the baked dunes and parched steppes of the Tyr region. By day they are untamed winds, blowing hot gusts of chaos from one end of the Tablelands to the other. By night they are swift shadows, always in motion, dancing beneath the light of Athas's twin moons. They are the elves of Athas, and the twisted path they trace over the landscape is fast, furious, and more than a little dangerous.

Like all of the accessories for the DARK SUN<sup>®</sup> campaign setting, this one requires the AD&D<sup>®</sup> rule books, the DARK SUN boxed set, and *The Complete Psionics Handbook* to make full use of its contents. *Elves of Athas* features details on the tall, long-limbed race of desert runners. While they share certain similarities with the elves of other AD&D campaign worlds, these elves are definitely a breed apart. They are a race of mystery and danger whose very nature is alien—not only to humans, but to other elven species as well.

Because Athasian elves are so different from other types of AD&D elves, much of those rules and concepts do not apply. This book presents new rules and details specific to the elves of the DARK SUN campaign setting. While other AD&D books provide information on elves, including the useful PHBR8, *The Complete Book of Elves*, none cover the unique nature of Athas's desert runners. For this reason, the rules in this book take precedence as far as the elves of Athas are concerned. They enhance and expand upon the rules presented in the DARK SUN boxed set, providing all the details needed to understand, run, and play elves on the burning world.

Prepare to leave all you know or think you know about elven nature behind. Whatever erroneous beliefs you

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still hold will quickly be boiled away by the truth of the desert, dried up as fast as a puddle of water in the burning heat of a crimson sun. Know this: Athas is cut from a different cloth. It has been sliced from a torn, blood-crusted swath with a broken blade to fashion a world more deadly than any that has come before. As such, its elves do not fit the patterns established in other settings. They are Athasian elves, driven by all the brutal twists and harsh surprises that the environment that spawned them implies.

In the paragraphs which follow, *Elves of Athas* brings you to the desert camp of the Star Racers. This proud tribe of elves presents a festival dedicated to the very first elf chief. Witness a dance of celebration and hear a song of legend as an elf maiden sings the ballad of creation. Afterward, we'll examine the physical and psychological natures of Athasian elves, looking at what makes the

desert runners move and behave the way they do. A section on elven society provides details about how Athas's elves live and love. To understand the desert runners, we must understand the tribes they live in, and we'll take a close look at a number of the tribes roaming the Tyr region. Finally, we'll explore some of the character kits available to the elves of Athas.

*Elves of Athas* places these savage wasteland runners before you, giving you a rare and vivid look at their culture, habits, and daily lives. We'll look into their oddly shaped eyes and search for the passions that drive them—the wanderlust, the love of life, the need to live for the moment no matter what the cost. Of course, to stare into the cunning, all-seeing eyes of an Athasian elf is to invite a returning glance. So be on your guard, for an elf's fingers are as quick, as thieving, and as deadly as the blink of his wild, feral eyes.



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Now prepare yourself. The time has come to travel the sands where the long-legged elves of Athas dance and hunt and raid. The time has come to *run!*

### The Song of Creation

Music rises from the camp. An alien sound, it is formed from the deepest wells of elven emotion and given voice by strangely shaped elven instruments. The music touches everyone, permeating mind and body. It plays across different levels. Sounds sweep into tapered ears on melodious winds of noise. Rhythms pulse in time with fast-beating hearts and rushing blood. Other tones go beyond such physical trappings, leaping from the air itself to ignite inner fires and arouse elven souls.

Driven by the swift, chaotic beat of mythic drums, the tribe begins to move. The elves follow the music's winding path, keeping time to tempos that no human could match. Male and female, elder and child, the tribe dances to the wild elven sounds. Then, from the midst of the furious motion, Utaa the elf maiden's clear, liquid voice sings out . . .

"Death is stillness, so run, you elves. Dance to the beat of life, for the moment is quick and oh so short. There is nothing as fast nor as proud nor as wonderfully made as an elf," Utaa smiles proudly, wickedly, "and there is no elf to match a Star Racer!" The tribe shouts in joy, and Utaa sings on with even greater enthusiasm and power. "Let us celebrate the now with a song of remembrance! Let us dance to the song of the first Star Racer. Coraanu, we remember you!"

The tribe twirls and leaps, each member like an individual grain of sand in the elven music storm. Each elf follows the beat while not conforming to the movements of the others. Still, out of this chaotic swirl a sophisticated harmony forms. The dancers mimic Utaa's words with subtle motions as well as unrestrained gyrations, adding form and substance to the verbal images she has wrought

for the tribe. A male warrior spins out of the crowd. His name is Botuu, but for the now he is Coraanu—he is the first Star Racer. Utaa's eyes fill with joyous light, and she prepares to sing again.

"Before the deserts filled the world, in a now when the wasteland ruins were bright and new, the elves lived high in the sky," Utaa sings in reverence, her eyes lifted toward the burning sun. "These elves, the stories tell us, were small and frail—not Athasian elves at all! One elf was faster and stronger than his fellows, the elf named Coraanu. When the rest of his tribe decided to settle down and build cities like the slumbering humans, Coraanu refused to join in. He was a runner, and the wanderlust danced in his feet and sang in his blood! He laughed at his tribe and ran in search of wealth and adventure."

Utaa lets the music move her, her body dancing to the beat of the instruments and her own singsong words. Her voice low and husky, she sings on, "Coraanu raced across the stars by night, avoiding the heat of the day and the eyes of his slow, clumsy enemies. His feet barely touched each glowing step in the night-sky road, and he carried only the most precious items with him. Some were his at the start, others were found along the way, taken from those with slow minds and slower bodies.

"For a trader's year Coraanu ran," the elf woman tells her tribe, letting her words gain speed to match the building rhythm. "He rested by day, taking a single nibble of his loaf and a single swallow from his waterskin before resuming his race when the sun left the sky. When he could not run and could not win by wits and cunning, Coraanu won by war. He wielded a wicked blade of glowing iron that cut through foes with a brutal, savage joy. None were his equal—and only fools chose to stand against him as he sped through the night.

"He raced across the sky, gathering followers from among the slumbering tribes," Utaa sings as Botuu dances through the crowd. He taps a male here, a woman

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there, a child by his side, motioning for them to join him in his story dance as Utaa's words fill the camp. "Elves with restless spirits and courageous hearts flocked to his side, and Coraanu became chief of a new, growing tribe. He decided to leave the slow, settled elves behind to find a place where his elves could run free.

"We shall run as far and as fast as our legs will take us,' Coraanu told his tribe. 'We shall run day and night on roads of clouds and paths of stars. We will carry all the food and water we can, never stopping until our waterskins run dry. Then, with nothing to sustain us but heart and courage, we will run still more until we find a place to dance and hunt and run as we please.'"

The music builds in intensity, pulsating through the crowd of frenzied dancers. Now other elves leave the circle to join Botuu—Coraanu—as he dances/runs in the center of the crowd.

"On and on Coraanu ran," Utaa's voice informs the gyrating crowd. "Some of his new tribe could not keep up, so they were left behind. But those who raced beside him became stronger with every long stride. Every step stretched them, adding length to their limbs and height to their lithe, powerful frames.

"When so many nows had passed that not a single elf could count them, Coraanu and his followers stepped down into the flat, unmarred Athasian wilderness," the elf woman sings with gladness and awe, throwing her arms wide. A lyran joins in, its strings vibrating with unrestrained joy as Utaa sings. "The land stretched in all directions like the endless width and breadth of the sky. There was game to hunt and enemies to battle, room to run and no walls to choke them in.

"This wilderness is ours!' Coraanu cried out. 'It belongs to the elves, and any who dispute that will taste our elven blades!' The others added their voices to his song, and Coraanu looked upon the people he had gathered. As the song and celebration continued, Coraanu danced among the elves. He formed them into smaller

groups and danced with each for a time, finally singing out a name before spinning away to the next group. The name suited each group, and one at a time they danced away from the others. Thus were the tribes born; thus did the elves claim the endless wilderness as their home."

Utaa pauses, letting her ballad rest between the beats of the music so that anticipation can build. She spins beside Botuu, matching his frantic steps for a time. Then she twirls away and sings, "Finally, only one group remained. These were the best of the elves that ran with Coraanu—the strongest, the swiftest, the smartest. This was the tribe he had always dreamed of leading.

"You are the Star Racers,' Coraanu proclaimed. 'Let this celebration continue through every now to come, so that you will always remember the time when we ran across the sky and found this wilderness to sustain our bodies and our ways!'"

Utaa dances into the crowd, fading away so that only Botuu remains as focus and spoke in this living wheel. He leads the crowd through moves and steps so fast and furious that they seem almost supernatural. For this moment, he is truly Coraanu, the first Star Racer, and these are his ardent followers. The dance continues, carrying each elf on a wild, savage ride as the music reaches a furious beat. Legs and arms pump, heads rock from side to side, and joyous screams vibrate through the camp.

Then, all at once, the music ends and the dancers drop exhausted to the ground. Silence fills the air as loudly as the sounds of elven instruments did but a moment before. The song of creation, however, remains. It echoes in every elf's heart and soul, there to be remembered when next the music plays. . . .

The title 'Chapter One: Physical Nature' is centered at the top of the page. It is set against a dark, semi-circular background that resembles a stylized sun or a large, dark archway. The background has a textured, almost flame-like or jagged edge. The text is in a white, serif font. The words 'Chapter One:' are on the top line, and 'Physical Nature' is on the bottom line, both centered within the arch.

## Chapter One: Physical Nature

Any discussion on Athasian elves must start with the obvious—the things we can see, hear, and feel. There is no mistaking an elf for a human or a mul, for example, because we can see that the elf stands taller and is leaner in form. We can touch the thick, callused skin of a dwarf and note how much more rugged it is as compared to the smoother, sleeker elven flesh. This is not to say that elves display no evidence of wilderness life—just that elves weather it differently than other races.

The desert runners tower over halflings as the Dragon towers over all. From a purely visual perspective, the only thing these two races share is a tendency to be in top physical condition. Of the most common races, only half-giants and thri-kreens grow larger than Athasian elves, though neither has an elf's grace or pleasing form.

All of this falls under the heading of physical nature. There are certain physical traits, attributes, and bodily functions that all the elves of Athas share. From appearance and stature to natural physiological abilities and the effects of aging, elves are very different from the other races of Athas. This suits them just fine, for the elves consider themselves as beings above and apart from all others.

### Elves Under a Dark Sun

The crimson sun blazes in the sky, casting light and broiling heat upon sorcerer-king and slave alike. On the arid, barren plains of the Tablelands, where the last remnants of civilization huddle around pools of brackish water and clumps of withered vegetation, the elves of Athas run free.

To an elf of the Tablelands, the hot wind offers a promise of adventure, and the burning sun provides a challenge to be met head on. Only the best survive the fires of Athas's wilderness, for they are made strong like a bowl in a craftsman's kiln. While any elf is quick to admit that others come through the challenges of sand

and sun intact, few races do it as well or with as much fervor as those of elven stock.

Thousands of elf tribes wander the dunes and steppes of the Tyr region. They compete with each other and with the other races, battling for the food and water that will keep them strong. Moreover, the elves recognize no boundaries beyond the limits of the walls of the city-states (and even these they pay only surface homage to). As such, every mile of stony barrens, scrub plains, and salt flats is their territory; every caravan and solitary traveler fair game. Most tribes stake out a particular area for a time, wandering a specific path for months or even years. Then, when the mood strikes them, they abandon the territory for whatever lies over the heat-soaked horizon.

Athasian elves are forged in the endless desert—burned dark by the sun, toughened by the swirling sand, and given strength and speed by the constant wind. Legends proclaim this and songs make it fact, for an elven adage states, "If we sing of it, it must be so." Elves are tall, usually standing between 6½ and 7½ feet. As with all races, there are a few exceptions to these generalities, but most elves fall within these parameters. They are thin for their height, lean, and always appear in peak physical condition.

An elf's limbs are slender and longer than his body size would indicate. His legs seem to stretch forever, and it is easy to see why he is a born runner. Though lean, his limbs are not as fragile and weak as they might appear. Long, slender muscles ripple inconspicuously beneath robust, weathered flesh, giving the elf strength to flourish under the dark sun.

Unlike the elves of other campaign worlds, Athasian elves are not pale-skinned, delicate beings. Athasian elves' pigmentation is as varied as the flesh of other races and as affected by the rays of the sun. They grow no facial hair, but the locks atop their heads come in all colors—from sun-bleached blond to red to brown to darkest black. Finally, there are no subraces of Athasian elves.



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They are not divided into High or Grey or Drow. There are only elves, and the only allegiance they hold to is that afforded their own particular tribes.

### Physical Pursuits

Elves are seen as lazy and deceitful, and in most ways they are. They strive to lead short, happy lives as opposed to long, sad ones. If work can wait for even another moment, then it will. For an elf, the future is a dark, deadly place, so he or she strives to make every now as enjoyable and full as possible.

Still, elves do work. In some ways, they work harder than members of other races. Because they do not farm and the only herd animals they raise are kanks, elves must spend a lot of time and energy hunting and foraging in order to supplement their diets. While they detest hard labor and will never voluntarily set out to construct anything more durable than a tent or small hut, they will spend hours on end haggling and negotiating with potential customers.

If captured and forced to toil as slaves, elves will seek the first opportunity to escape. Only a few of those who cannot escape survive in captivity. Elven spirits crave free, open spaces, and many elf slaves quickly succumb to the claustrophobic cells, the restricting chains, and the joyless labor.

In the wild, elves temper hard work with frenzied feasting and raucous revelry. For every hour spent working, two are spent celebrating the now. "What good is the work," an elf adage asks, "if you do not take the time to enjoy its fruits?"

There are certain physical pursuits that elves do not consider tiring or boring. For example, an elf can practice with her long bow and long sword for days on end. She finds joy and fulfillment in honing her martial skills. Likewise, another elf spends every waking moment studying magic or thieving techniques if the rest of the tribe

will let him. Try to get the same devotion out of a herder, and he'll just laugh as he seeks some diversion to fill one of his frequent breaks.

This attitude makes other races think of elves as lazy. Elves apply considerable energy to activities others consider frivolous, while spending as little time as possible in "gainful" endeavors. Dwarves and humans toil the day away, but elves dance and laugh and run and sing. In fact, they have raised celebrating to an art form. There is nothing as beautiful or captivating as an elven dance, nothing as inspiring as the haunting music produced by elven instruments.

Between constant practice and naturally quick reflexes, elves are lightning fast in combat. Their swiftness makes them extremely dangerous enemies, and there are few things more brutal than the savage techniques devised by elf minds. They prefer long, slender weapons that can be whirled with speed and agility. Swords and polearms are particular favorites. Elvenmade weapons are never cumbersome or bulky, for mobility in combat is preferred over strength of attack. "Strike three times before your enemy knows you are there," advises an elven ballad. The sentiment has become a part of every elf's combat philosophy.

Elves will do whatever is necessary to keep themselves alive and prosperous—but no more. When the work is done, and not a moment later, the fun begins.

### Elven Abilities

Elves have natural abilities that make them unique among the intelligent races of Athas. To an elf, each difference makes him that much better than his counterparts in other races. While elves do not make a point of openly degrading the deficiencies in others, they do take great pride in their own inborn talents. Consummate merchants to all outward appearances, elves believe deep down that they are better than everyone else.



They hold a secret contempt for those things that are not elven—for those who are slower, less cunning, who do not know the songs of Athas's nature. This contempt even stretches across tribal boundaries. For example, Sun Runners claim to be faster than Wind Dancers, and Wind Dancers boast they are craftier than the Silver Hands.

In the physical realm, elves believe that their form, speed, strength, and other natural abilities put them at least one step ahead of Athas's other beings.

### What the Elves of Athas Have

All Athasian elves start with the following abilities:

- **Attack Bonus.** As proud warriors with warrior traditions, elves have mastered two specific weapon types—the long bow and the long sword. This tradition translates into constant training from an early age, giving all elf characters a bonus of +1 to their attack rolls when using these weapon types. However, the bonus only applies to weapons crafted by the wielder's tribe. An elf who uses a long sword or long bow crafted by anyone else—including a member of another elf tribe—receives no attack roll bonus.

The bow and sword were the weapons favored by Coraanu Star Racer, the legendary first chief of the elf tribes. He chose them because they fit so well with his long-limbed frame, and in his hands they were deadly in the extreme. These weapons became the traditional arms of the elven tribes, and each tribe developed fighting styles to make best use of their individual crafting techniques. Though every tribe crafts weapons of elven design, each adds slight variations to make them uniquely their own. Such variations can be so small as to defy notice by non-elves, but they make all the difference to the wielder.

An elf child is trained to become one with his or her blade and bow, and tribal crafters balance weapons to an





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individual's specific strengths and weaknesses. This gives them attack bonuses when using the specially crafted weapons, bonuses that cannot be employed when using nontribal bows and swords.

Elf crafters can fashion weapons out of any material that is available, including metal, but the most common are crafted from bone and stone.

- **Surprise Bonus.** Because of their intimate ties with Athas's wilderness and wastes, elves gain a surprise bonus over their opponents when in these areas. Alone or in the company of other elves, an elf can move with great stealth through the deserts and steppes of the Tyr region. Non-elves or mixed groups suffer a -4 penalty to their surprise rolls when approached by elves.

However, elves do not gain this surprise bonus against other elves, when they are in the company of non-elves, or when they are not in the appropriate terrain. This bonus reflects the fact that elves spend so much time learning the ways of the desert that they can blend into its natural flow.

- **Infravision.** Elvensight, or infravision, enables the desert runners to see up to 60 feet in darkness. This ability, they believe, was developed during Coraanu's race across the stars, although we know that elves of other worlds have elvensight as well. In addition, elves have extremely keen natural vision. They can see farther and with more clarity than a human or half-elf.

- **Ability Adjustments.** Being nimble and blessed with incredible speed, Athasian elves receive a +2 to their initial Dexterity scores. They also receive a +1 to their initial Intelligence, reflecting their natural genius. This intellect suffers from a lack of common sense, however, giving them a -1 to their initial Wisdom scores. A high metabolism and relatively weaker physical nature tends to tire elves out faster (except when running; see "Elf Run" on the next page). This weakness is reflected by a -2 penalty to their initial Constitution scores.

- **Resistance to Heat and Cold.** Athasian elves are

less affected by their world's temperature extremes than are other races. For this reason, elves do not suffer as greatly from the heat of the day or the chill of the night—and thus they appear less weathered than members of other races. The sun still bakes their flesh dark, and the cold still causes them discomfort, but not to the same degree as humans, dwarves, and halflings.

Until the temperature climbs above 110°F or dips below 32°F, elves exhibit no undue stress. They lose no body water to sweat until the heat of the day surpasses their tolerance limit, and they do not need to protect themselves from the night cold until it drops below freezing (a rare but not unheard of occurrence in the Athasian wastes). This resistance does not, however, extend to magical or supernatural heat or cold.

- **Natural Swiftmess.** While elves have the same base movement rate as humans and half-elves (12), they do not move at the same speed as the shorter, bulkier races. This inbred swiftness is related to the "elf run," which courses through elven systems (see below). In game terms, elves receive bonuses to their base movement rate according to their Dexterity scores. Dexterity determines how swift elves are in normal movement situations (walking, in combat rounds, etc.), while Constitution determines swiftness when elves are engaging in long periods of overland movement.

To determine a particular elf's natural swiftness, find his or her Dexterity score on the table on the opposite page. This table gives a bonus that is then applied to the elf's base movement rate. So, while all elves start with a base rate of 12, most are naturally faster than this base rate indicates.



## Natural Swiftsness Table

Dexterity Score	Bonus to Base Movement Rate
12-13	+1
14-15	+2
16	+3
17	+4
18	+5
19	+6
20	+7

• **Elf Run.** If the elves of Athas have one ability for which they are primarily known, it is running. They condition themselves to speed over sandy and rocky terrain as their usual method of travel. To an elf, it is dishonorable to ride either animal or vehicle when his or her own legs can do the job as well. (Or better, as most elves believe.) They attribute their marathon swiftsness to a condition called the “elf run.”

Elves are swift-footed nomads who can cover as many as 50 miles per day when the “elf run” flows through their long, pumping legs. Individually and as a tribe, elves can induce this state of grueling endurance for as many as seven days in a row before fatigue begins to overtake them. Elf run is a state of mind that causes adrenaline to flow which inhibits the tiring nature of an elf’s weaker constitution.

Elves receive 24 movement points to apply to overland movement (30 when undertaking a forced march). With the aid of the elf run, they can add their Constitution scores to the base movement to determine the distance they can travel in miles (or points) per day.

An individual elf can induce an elf run with a minimum of concentration (one turn) and a Constitution check. The Constitution check determines how many days the elf run lasts before fatigue sets in, as shown on the Elf Run Table below.

Elf groups of three or more (up to an entire tribe) can induce a mass elf run using the Constitution score of the lead runner as the basis for the check. (This is different from the rule for other racial types, and the leader must be either the tribal chief, a clan head, or the elf with the highest Charisma score—not necessarily the elf with the highest Constitution.) The lead runner also grants all members of the group an additional number of movement points equal to his or her Constitution score. In a mass elf run, every individual must use the lead runner’s movement bonus, even if his or her own bonus would normally be higher. This reflects the fact that they have become as one for the duration of the elf run.

A mass elf run requires group concentration for one hour before beginning a trek, but the runners share each other’s strength, thus allowing for longer runs. (See the Mass Elf Run Leader Bonus table below.)

## Elf Run Table

Roll Equal to	Days Before Penalties Begin
Failure/no preparation	1
Constitution Score to Constitution -3	2
Constitution -4 to Constitution -7	3
Constitution -8 to Constitution -10	4
Constitution -11 to Constitution -13	5
Constitution -14 to Constitution -16	6
Constitution -17 or lower	7

## Mass Elf Run Leader Bonus

Leader Type	Constitution Bonus
Tribal Chief	+3
Clan Head	+2
Highest Charisma	+1



## Physical Nature

If elves must start an elf run with no preparation (as when they must flee a city marketplace, for example), they can still run for a full day before they start to fatigue. Once fatigue begins (after a number of days as determined by the Elf Run Table above), elves in an elf run receive a -1 penalty to all attack rolls for each day they engage in the elf run beyond their predetermined limit. A full day's rest is required to remove one day's penalty.

### What the Elves of Athas Don't Have

Athasian elves do not receive some of the abilities available to elves of other campaign worlds. The common abilities not available to them are as follows:

- **Spell Resistance.** Athasian elves have no special resistance to spells, including *sleep*- and *charm*-related spells. As a race, the elves of Athas never had a chance to develop these resistances—or perhaps they lost them as the years of magic deprivation took a toll.

- **Find Secret and Concealed Doors.** The elves of Athas are nomads who dwell in the deserts and wastes. They shun settlements except for brief stops to trade or steal. Because of this, they never developed any special abilities for spotting hidden portals.

- **Attack Bonuses.** Athasian elves receive no attack bonuses other than those described above. Remember, the only weapons that grant them such bonuses are tribal elf-crafted long bows and long swords.

- **Surprise Bonus.** Only the surprise bonus described above is available to Athasian elves. It is terrain specific and does not apply to other situations.

- **Communion.** This ability, described in PHBR8, *The Complete Book of Elves*, faded away on Athas, perhaps because Athasian elves are so fiercely independent. It is not available to the desert runners.

- **Manifestation.** Another ability described in *The Complete Book of Elves*, manifestation never developed

for the elves of Athas. Athasian elves already have a daunting presence and do not need additional help to impress others.

- **The Reverie.** Athasian elves have much shorter life spans than the elves of other worlds. For this reason, they must engage in normal sleep patterns, complete with dreams and nightmares. While the condition known as the reverie (see *The Complete Book of Elves*) is not unheard of, it is extremely rare in Athasian elves and must still be supplemented by regular periods of sleep.

### Stages of Life

Athasian elves do not live as long as the elves of other campaign settings. In fact, on average both half-giants and dwarves live longer than the desert runners. Death is a very real part of life on Athas, and only the strongest, craftiest and luckiest elves live to see old age, let alone to die a peaceful, natural death. They have no sense of sweeping periods of time, or of the broader range of values that go with such longevity, for elves naturally live only to around the age of 140 years.

Unlike elves of other worlds, Athasian elves do not mysteriously disappear after a certain stage in their lives. There is no hidden elven homeland that calls to them, no otherworldly realm waiting to welcome them with eternal rewards. To the elves of Athas, there is only the now. They live in the moment, perhaps to an even greater degree than humans and halflings.

They do share a few traits with their non-Athasian counterparts. Aging is not as radical a transition to elves as it is to other races. There is little outward difference between an adult elf and an old elf. Only when they reach venerable age (100 years old and beyond) do elves begin to display obvious signs of wear. Even these signs are slight and mild when compared to a venerable human; in elves, their hair begins to dull and turn gray,



their shoulders stoop slightly, and their reflexes start to slow. But they do not suffer the crippling diseases of old age, such as senility, that plague humans.

Like other races, elves go through a variety of stages of life. From childhood to adolescence, adulthood through middle age, and to old age and beyond, the elves of Athas dance and steal their way from birth to oft-violent death. The Athasian Elves Stages of Life Table on page 17 lists the passages described in the following text and provides details on adjusting elf characters as they progress through life, for even elven abilities rise and fall as each *now* passes. These changes vary slightly from the table in the DARK SUN® *Rules Book* in order to represent the differences between elves and the other races of Athas.

## Childhood

Elf children develop at much the same rate as do human children, except that they begin to crawl and stand much earlier in their development. They learn to run when humans are learning to walk, and by the age of two they can run with the tribe when speed is not a necessity. Adult elves carry their children in back harnesses or on their shoulders when the tribe must make an overland run.

Prior to learning to run, elf children do not have names as such. They are called by descriptive terms or nonsense names, such as Little One or Flop Ears. An elf child receives her first true name based upon the first interesting thing she does after learning to run.







## Physical Nature

By the time an elf is four years old, he or she has grown to nearly 3 feet. Most of this height is in an elf's legs, which are long, lean and strong. Now the elf child can run alongside the adults and begin to learn the skills needed to perform as a member of the tribe.

As elves never completely lose their childish ways (it's a part of their makeup), elf children are encouraged to play. Much of their play has educational benefits, for elven amusements include races, games whose objective is to steal items from other tribe members, and mock combat with practice bows and swords. Through these activities the children learn the basics of warfare, desert survival, haggling, thievery, raiding, and many of the social customs of their tribes. Other types of play have no other purpose than to entertain and create joy. These include many elven dances and silly games of luck and nonsense.

Childhood is not all fun and games, however. Elves, like the desert that spawns them, are hard parents. They provide no comfort to their young, no soft shoulders to cry upon. Elf children must learn that although they are part of a tribe, they are also on their own. They must learn to be brave and to stand on their own, no matter what anguish or heartache assails them. They must learn to be elves.

As young elves gain more strength and height, they begin to take on jobs to help the tribe. From around the age of 10, elf children are expected to assist with simple chores as a precursor to the apprenticeships to come.

### Adolescence

Between the ages of 13 and 17; elves undergo radical changes as they mature. By the time adolescence ends, both male and female elves have reached their full height and have learned enough to take on adult roles and responsibilities in the tribal community.

Adolescence is a time of structured learning, wherein

adult elves instruct young ones in the business of the tribe. There are no roles specific to the sexes (with the exception of childbirth), and males and females learn the same things. For the first year or two, young elves learn as much as they can in as many subjects as possible. Besides formal training in wilderness lore and survival, archery, swordplay, and tribal customs, they also receive instruction in trade practices, hunting, tending herds, raiding, and other profitable ventures.

When an elf reaches the age of 15 or so (or when a chief or other tribal leader feels the elf is ready), he or she is apprenticed to an adult. Whatever area the elf has shown particular talent in becomes the focus of this learning period. If, for example, an elf demonstrates a knack for magic, he or she becomes a pupil of the tribe's mage. Others are apprenticed to hunt masters, scouts, herders, trade leaders, war chiefs, clerics, or some other experienced adult—all for the purpose of learning specific skills and honing natural abilities.

Even this period of growth is not all work and study. Elves must also learn to enjoy and appreciate the *now*, and new entertainments are introduced to help accomplish this. Many of these entertainments involve interaction with the opposite sex, and more and more often adolescents are allowed to participate in adult dances and festivities.

As elves approach their eighteenth year of life, they begin to prepare for the tribal ceremonies that will usher them into adulthood. Some may be granted the full rights and responsibilities of adulthood as early as their sixteenth year, while others must wait until the age of 20 or beyond to engage in the tests and initiations of the tribe.

### Adulthood

Simply because an elf is born to a tribe doesn't mean he or she automatically gains full membership rights. While there are specific privileges afforded those of a particular

# Physical Nature



tribe's blood, for an elf to reach adulthood he or she must pass the tribe's rites of initiation. Elves are considered ready to face these grueling tests when they reach their full height and have demonstrated not only bravery and mastery of a particular job, but when the tribe's leaders determine the time is right.

Elf children receive names based on the first interesting thing they do when initially learning to run. These names may change when they reach adulthood, for often the rites of passage suggest new, more appropriate designations. Long-standing traditions determine what form a particular rite of passage will take, as well as the signs given to a tribe's element singers (clerics) during periods of reflection. While dangerous, few rites are deadly, and most adolescents ascend into adulthood with little trouble. However, young elves who suffer from maladies or extremely weak constitutions may not survive the tests placed before them.

Some may see this as cruel, but the lifestyle of the desert runners leaves no room for those who cannot hold their own. "Run, or be left behind," proclaims an elven adage. That is the truth and the reality of life on Athas.

Adult elves are in the prime of their lives. They feel invincible and full of energy, ready to live every now to the fullest and face anything the wastes can throw in their

way. They proudly take their place in the tribe. Never in their lives have elves been more free, and everything they do affirms the strength and independence of their spirits.

While most elves remain with their tribes, a few decide to take up a life of wandering. Those who become adventurers by choice must fulfill the curiosity and longings that sing in their souls. Those who do so because of circumstance are often a sadder lot, for something has forcibly ripped them away from their tribes. They could have been captured as slaves, or cast from their tribes for some unspeakable transgression. Some are the lone survivors of a desert war, others the remaining members of tribes that fell to the deadly nature of Athas's untamed wastes.

Elf adventurers who leave their tribes voluntarily or because they were forced to by nontribal agents may stay away for years on end, but eventually the songs of elven blood call them home. When they return, their tribes typically welcome them with open arms and wild celebrations.

Those who are cast out of their tribes or who have no tribe to return to feel a similar call, but they have no way to answer its summons. These elves must find a way to stay focused on the now or yearnings for dead yesterdays and impossible tomorrows may drive them mad.

## Athasian Elves Stages of Life Table

Childhood	Adolescence	Adulthood*	Middle Age**	Old Age†	Venerable††	Maximum
1-12	13-17	18-49	50-66	67-77	100+	100+2d20

\* Full normal abilities                    † -2 Str/Con, -1 Dex; +1 Wis

\*\* -1 Str/Con; +1 Int/Wis                    †† -1 Str/Dex/Con; +1 Int/Wis

**Note:** Modifiers to abilities are cumulative per age category. For example, the total ability adjustments to an Athasian elf of venerable age would be as follows: -4 Str, -2 Dex, -4 Con, +2 Int, and +3 Wis. Intelligence and Wisdom scores cannot be increased above 20 except by magical means. All abilities can never deteriorate below the following minimums except by magical means: Str 5, Dex 12, Con 8, Int 8, Wis 5, Cha 5.



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### Middle Age

At the age of 50, Athasian elves enter middle age. Now they begin to slow, though few non-elves can perceive any change. Disease and injuries become more prevalent, but not to the extent that middle-aged humans must endure. These elves know their own capabilities, when to push forward and when to retreat. They have gained some wisdom, and they constantly seek new challenges and diversions to make the now more enticing.

Athasian elves who survive to middle age typically choose to become the leaders of their tribe. They turn to teaching, seeking to pass on what they have learned to the next generation of elves. Some continue to adventure, especially those who have no other choice, but most return to their tribes in order to participate in the daily dance of survival.

### Old Age

Around the age of 67 or so, an elf begins to show visible signs of age. This is the beginning of an elf's twilight years, when old age sets in and the end becomes a tangible possibility. Not the end that every elf faces every day—the possibility of violent death that marks each now under Athas's crimson sun—but an end that comes from weariness and fatigue, that creeps up like a thief in the night to steal away the now and all nows to come. Old elves must make a concentrated effort to run and stay in the lead, for to rest for even a moment is to invite the end to catch up and overtake the runner.

These elves do not look old to members of other races. Although they no longer appear as vital young runners, by no stretch of the imagination do they look like they are on their last legs. To other elves, however, looking upon elves who have reached old age is to look into the very depths of night. It saddens them to see the once-proud racers slow, to know that their limbs have lost vitality and

speed, that their aim is no longer true and sure. But the younger elves also rejoice at the knowledge these elders have gained, for they seek their wisdom when faced with problems or indecision.

### Venerable Age

The dark years for an Athasian elf begin around his or her hundredth birthday. Age has finally begun to take a significant toll on the elf, and the years can now be seen in both body and bearing. Hair that was once shiny and full full of color has dulled and turned to gray. Wrinkles spread across weathered features, and pain starts to intrude upon limbs that once knew only vitality. Though a venerable elf is in much better physical condition than the average human of comparable age, he or she is far from the excellent form of youth.

Sometime between the start of old age and the onset of venerable age, an elf finds that he can no longer keep up with his tribe. Many simply fall behind and die, losing the will to live. Some, however, refuse to lose the now without a fight. These ancient elves become hermits, living as best they can in the bleak wilderness. A few even find a place among other non-elf tribes, for the knowledge and skills they bring to a struggling settlement can mean the difference between survival and death. Of course, such non-elf communities must overcome their natural aversion and distrust of the desert runners to even contemplate such an arrangement.

If an elf can survive all the hazards of life on Athas into her venerable age, then she can expect death by natural causes to finally catch up with her sometime before her one hundred-fortieth birthday. When a venerable elf passes from the world in such fashion, it is said that all the tribes across the deserts mourn. At such a rare and poignant time, the songs of grief can be heard echoing across the dunes like the cries of the world itself, carried on the hot, boiling winds.



## Elves and Half-Elves

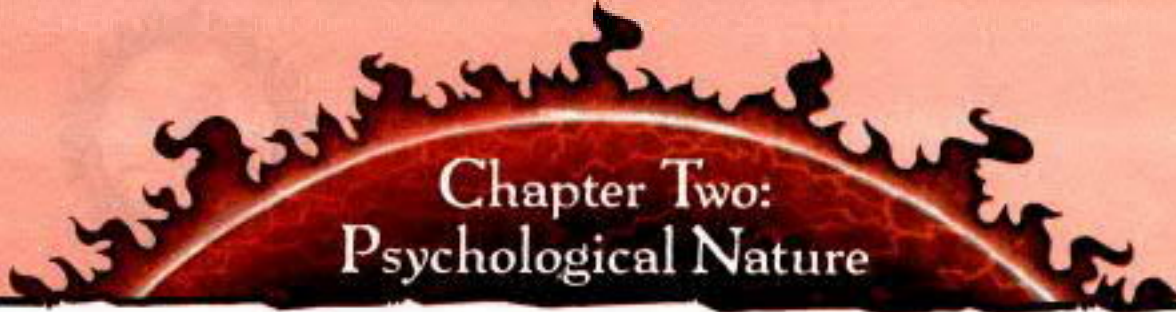
The elves of Athas may have an instinctive distrust of outsiders, but they must still deal with them from time to time. As so often happens in the wilds and in the cities, sometimes the two find common ground. In the case of humans, whether through force or shared passions, children of mixed heritage are born into the world: the half-elves.

Half-elves are generally taller than humans, but rarely grow as tall as their elf parents. Most stand between 6 and 6½ feet. However, half-elves are not as lean as desert runners, for they inherit some of the bulk of their human side. In most cases, it is easier for a half-elf to pass himself off as a human than as an elf, but elven features can be spotted if one looks closely enough.

Elves have no tolerance for mixed children. Humans are more accepting, but only in certain circumstances.

They will work with half-elves, but few will call a half-elf friend. Elven tradition demands that children born from the union of elf and human be left for lirs and other predators, and some tribes even drive out mothers of such children. A half-elf born in a city has a greater chance to survive, as humans do not have a comparable tradition. Still, life is not easy for half-elves. Elves distrust the half-elf's human side, and humans have no faith in the elf side.

Half-elves go through life as outsiders, developing self-reliance in order to survive. They may go out of their way to find acceptance among their parents' people, but rarely does this acceptance come their way. Typically, they grow to adulthood as loners, seeking to hide their mixed heritage as best they can in order to avoid the discrimination that waits to batter them with angry words and distrustful glances.



## Chapter Two: Psychological Nature

*What do I contemplate as I run beneath the crimson sun? What thoughts occupy my silent reverie? Do I ponder the now among the rolling dunes, listening to my heart pound a tune and my blood sing its sweet life song? Do I dwell on the adversity that chases behind me, for its jaws are wide and hungry, and its hot, foul breath scalds me with hardships and misfortune? Or do I consider death, awaiting me over the approaching crest and in the cracked canyon, behind the rise of rubble and around the next bend?*

*With these choices, how can the other races ask such a question? How can a dwarf look behind and a human look forward when either direction is as endless and as bleak as the burning wastes? I think of the now and revel in its moment! I dance to the music of the elf run! I sing the joy of today that swirls in my head!*

*What do I contemplate as I run beneath the crimson sun? I ponder the now, for anything else is too terrible to imagine!*

*—from Utaa Star Racer’s  
‘Song of the Elusive Now’*

### World View

The minds of Athasian elves are complex and full of seemingly blatant contradictions. They love to laugh and play, yet they are as hard and unforgiving as the vast desert they run through. They are savage warriors, but not bloodthirsty killers. They easily switch mindsets like nobles in the city-states change wardrobes, operating as vicious raiders one moment and friendly traders the next. They appear lazy, lacking the motivations that drive other races. When necessary, however, they can become industrious workers, toiling with as much zeal as the hardest dwarf until the work ends—then they put as much effort and even more energy into the wild celebration that follows. To outsiders, they are untrustworthy liars. To their tribe mates, they are loyal and true.

How do elves justify this seemingly unbalanced behavior? In truth, they feel that no justification is necessary. They simply live according to their world view, which holds that only the moment is important—the moment, or what the elves call the “now.” The now is time as it exists, the present, where every being resides. To waste time recalling the past or contemplating the future lets the now slip away. Lost nows are gone forever, and with them are lost that many brief chances for happiness in this world of unrelenting grief.

To preserve these easily lost nows, elves live every moment in expressive joy. This outward celebration hides a deep sorrow, however, for every elf knows that tomorrow will be worse than today. Nothing can change that fact. All elves can do is keep moving, hoping to stay ahead of the misfortune and tragedy that follow on their heels like hungry thri-kreen.

To an elf, the goal of life is to live a short, happy existence. They have no desire to endure a long, cheerless one. An elf knows that death and hardship are his constant companions in his journey through the Athasian wastes, so he does everything he can to make the now more enjoyable. This outlook should not be mistaken for a suicidal nature, just a very short-ranged view of life. All elves want to live the now to the fullest; they don’t want to imagine all the dreadful nows to come (and the inevitable death that waits in ambush among them).

Unlike elves from other worlds, the desert runners have no patience. They are always in a rush, figuratively and literally racing to stay in the now. Emotional in the extreme, elves seem driven by the whims of the moment. This, they feel, is simply a reflection of the world they live in, where fate changes as quickly as the desert breeze.

Elves are free spirits, content with living a nomadic existence. They derive a portion of their daily joy by relenting to the wanderlust that sings in their long limbs. Only when hunting and foraging fail to meet their needs do elf tribes put aside their wanderings and turn to trad-



ing and raiding for sustenance. They do not consider these activities to be good or evil. They are simply alternative ways of making the most of the ever-elusive now.

## Intelligence and Wisdom

Elves have an inherent tendency to be highly intelligent. This intelligence manifests itself not as introspection and complex planning but as intuitive leaps of genius in the now. They can determine the best course of action from moment to moment, thinking on their feet with nearly flawless mental agility. They can formulate plans in an instant, reasoning their way through the most unexpected situations. This high level of intelligence makes elves very comfortable with magic, whether they are gathering spell components or practicing spellcraft themselves.

High intelligence must be tempered with common sense, however, and this is a trait most elves are deficient in. Nature has not been generous with elves as far as wisdom is concerned. In practice, elven genius can seem undirected because of poor judgment or a lack of willpower. While elves understand and appreciate magic (at least more so than the general population), they have little understanding of the spheres clerics operate in. Thus, elf tribes often have significantly fewer clerics than mages.

## Elves and Outsiders

On Athas there are endless ways to die. Besides the natural hardships of thirst, hunger and heat, there are the countless enemies that Coraanu Star Racer made when he ran across the sky. These enemies include halflings, humans, dwarves, half-giants, muls, thri-kreen, and the horde of lesser races and creatures struggling to survive the now. Even other elves are grouped among these enemies and potential enemies, for Athas makes desperate people turn to desperate means.





## Psychological Nature

To elves, all outsiders are potential enemies. Everyone they meet is presumed guilty of a future crime, and it falls upon the outsiders to prove their trustworthiness and friendship. Anyone not of a particular elf's tribe is an outsider—including other elves. The concept of racial unity means nothing to the elves of Athas. Severe desperation and common greed have shown them that anyone can turn on them, so they must remain vigilant and on guard whenever "outsiders" are around.

This view of outsiders helps form the elven code of ethics, which states that when dealing with outsiders, no code of ethics applies. Because they believe that outsiders are potential enemies waiting to take advantage of them (or worse), elves feel that it is in their own best interest to take advantage first. This includes lying, cheating, stealing, tricking, and swindling outsiders at every opportunity. This free-for-all attitude means that everything is fair game—property, people, and territory.

The true dividing line in an elf's mind centers on his or her concept of equality. All members of a given tribe are equal. All outsiders are less than equal. If an elf cannot look upon someone as his equal, then he cannot treat that person with the same respect he affords the members of his tribe. To an elf's way of thinking, only the fastest, strongest and smartest can survive the hardships of the now. Those who do it best are the members of his tribe. Everyone else is less successful at surviving (sometimes despite evidence to the contrary), and it is the elf's obligation to take advantage of that inequality. Of course, if an outsider can prove he is the elf's equal, then the rights afforded other members of the tribe are extended to include the outsider. Until then, there are no limits imposed on the elf, either by conscience or concern.

To an elf trader, there is no professional pride concerning quality of goods or guarantee of services. In fact, haggling a higher price than an item is worth provides enjoyment for the merchant and makes her feel successful. To an elf raider, all property falls into two cate-

gories—what's hers and what will soon be hers. Outsiders have no substantial claims to the items they possess. Even artificial boundaries mean nothing to an elf. Doors, locks, walls, and fences are only as sturdy as the warriors protecting them (which is why most elf tribes pay at least outward respect to the walls of the city-states).

Only time and tests of trust can cause an elf tribe to accept an outsider. More often (though still rare as far as the number of occurrences go), individual elves will accept outsiders who have befriended them and earned their trust.

### Tribal Bonds

The rules of conduct (or lack thereof) that govern an elf's dealings with outsiders do not apply once you enter the tribal community. Within the tribe, elves must obey a strict code of honor. There are definite limits and guidelines, established by tribal law and tradition, concerning the liberties that can and cannot be taken with the rights of other tribe members. Two major factors contribute to the trust and loyalty that elves demonstrate to their tribe mates: the elven concept of equality and the need every desert dweller has for aid and companionship.

Elves have no problem treating those they consider less than their equals with disdain and deceit. This view allows them to carry out their normal business practices without guilt or shame. By tradition, however, all full members of a tribe are equal. With this equality comes a special rule of elven conduct: treat those who are your equal as you yourself want to be treated. Remember, only members of an elf's tribe and a few select outsiders ever receive this level of equality. By definition, outsiders cannot be an elf's equal until they have not only proven their trustworthiness, but have also passed trials similar to the elven rites of passage—just like the elf's tribe mates.

Like all those who seek to survive in Athas's burning wilderness, elves need the help and companionship of



those they can depend on. They must be able to place their lives in the hands of others and trust that those hands will not fail. No matter what peril springs up in an elf's path, as long as he is the member of a tribe he never has to face the peril alone. All tribe mates are brethren, defending each other from every danger that comes along. A tribe is a close-knit community, an extended family that takes care of its own. Even the most fiercely independent elf needs help from time to time, and his tribe mates are always nearby to provide it.

This is not to say that every member of every tribe loves (or even likes) each other, but they all offer the same amount of respect and assistance they wish to receive in return. If there is one thing in all of Athas that an elf can count on, it is the support of his or her tribe.

The bonds of tribal loyalty are like ancient steel, forged in the fires of adversity and linked by the chains of tradition. "Care for each other as you would have the world care for you," Coraanu Star Racer told the members of his tribe (according to accepted legends sung by ritual dancers). All elves know that Athas has no regard for those who inhabit its wastes, so they find comfort in the bosom of their tribes.

Members of a tribe stand together against every hardship the now may hold. The elements, outsiders, even the land itself will rise against the tribe. That is the way of things on Athas, and it is no more and no less than an elf expects. But the elves face these challenges as one, stronger for every elven link in the tribal chain. "If you need me, my run brother, I will be there," the elves of the desert tribes sing. They add, "I am your shadow, your strong right arm. Know joy since we are one! Find comfort in our union!" These are more than words to the elves. These are truths that survive the sun and wind and shifting sand.

Few acts can break the bonds that hold tribes together. If an elf does transgress against a tribe mate, there are literally dozens of ways to mend feelings and egos. From

contests of strength and skill to gifts of apology, most social blunders can be repaired in the context of tribal life. There are transgressions, however, that require a greater price be paid. Spilled blood must be compensated with spilled blood, and death (brought on by accident or intent) must be answered with death. The foulest crimes usually lead to the guilty party being cast from the tribe, as elves abhor killing tribe mates. Once outcast, the abhorrence quickly fades away for the elf is no longer a member of the tribe. A death sentence can then be carried out if the tribe so chooses.

## Independent Spirit

The elves of Athas possess a great love of personal freedom and a driving need to remain independent and self-sufficient. While few elves would willingly trade away their tribal bonds, all experience a need to be alone regularly to prove their individual worth. It is not uncommon for an elf to disappear for weeks or even years at a time when the wanderlust grips her. Besides seeking new joys in every now, she will seek new challenges to test her mettle. Such tests may even include joining up with adventurers for a time to face the dangers of the burning world. At no time is an elf more independent and the need for self-reliance so great as when an elf travels among non-elves.

Elven ritual dancers and element singers believe that this fierce independence comes from the elves' communion with the wilderness. There are no walls in the desert that can long stand against the driving winds and smothering sands. The wind goes where it wants to go, and it has taught the elves to do the same. The wind is like the tribe, the sand like individual elves. Usually the wind carries the group in the same direction, but sometimes individual grains will drift away to follow a different breeze. Eventually, if they are able, the grains will return, but until then they are on their own.





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An elf needs wide open spaces. She must be able to run across the horizon, to feel the sun on her skin and the wind in her hair. She needs to see the sky and touch the ground. For this reason, most elves do not last when forced into slavery. The wastes have made the elves a claustrophobic people. They dislike walls and hate the feel of bindings, which inhibits their ability to run.

If an elf is captured, he will spend his initial days in captivity seeking a way to escape. The need to run free burns in his heart, keeping him focused on the now and ever alert for some opening to exploit. Once an elf gives in to despair and loses his hope of freedom, he succumbs to the rigors of slave life and dies.

Do not think that this love of freedom extends to outsiders, however. Elves are only concerned with their own freedom and the freedom of their tribe mates. They will not go out of their way to set other slaves free. Unless there is some hope of personal gain involved, an elf will simply leave an outsider to find his own way out. After all, if the elf could escape, then anyone who is his equal should be able to escape, too.

### Elves and Love

Their independent spirits allow elves to love freely. Elven love comes with no obligations or promises beyond the now. This does not make elven love less intense or less real than the love exhibited by other races. On the contrary, like other elven emotions, love is unrestrained and overflowing. Elves do nothing halfway. When they commit to love, they commit fully and completely, with every fiber of their wild souls. However, because they refuse to think or plan beyond the now, their love can be over in an instant. It lasts for as many nows as it lasts, then it ends with no regrets or compromises.

Elves readily fall in love with members of their own tribe, elves from other tribes, and even with humans—it all depends on whether the spark fly. (Rumors of elf and

halfling dalliances have yet to be confirmed.) When the sparks do fly, the love that follows burns like the sun itself, with heat and passion. But elves cannot stand to be tied down with obligations any more than they can endure being bound with ropes and chains. Elven love does not come with any guarantees or promises other than those of the moment. For the now, an elf loves fully and without restraint. Who knows what the next now will bring? Certainly not the elf, who cannot contemplate the future the same way members of other races can.

### Madness and Elves

Two types of madness often strike at elves, shattering their fine minds and breaking their soaring spirits. The first type of madness appears in most elves at one time or another. This is the madness brought on by confinement, crowds, or enclosed spaces due to an elf's natural claustrophobia. This madness is rarely disabling. Instead, it causes depression, mild panic attacks, or even moderate physical discomfort. In rare cases, it can cause elves to be gripped by such an intense panic as to become nonfunctional or to even lash out with wild, frenzied attacks.

The other type of madness usually strikes elves who have lost their tribe through disaster or who have been cast out. If these elves ever lose the ability to focus on the now, longings for the past or for futures that will never be can drive them into a state of depression and insanity. This form of madness often takes a destructive course, leading the elves it inflicts toward a quick, violent end.

### Elven Honor

To outsiders, it appears as if elves have no concept of honor. On the contrary, elven honor is as virtuous as human honor—it just doesn't apply to anyone who is not of an elf's tribe. To those who are considered an elf's equal, an elf must behave according to a strict code of

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honor. This code incorporates honesty, integrity, trustworthiness, and virtue (as the terms are understood in the context of an elf tribe). Those who are an elf's equal are afforded rights and given the same considerations the elf wishes to receive. Property, for example, belongs to whoever possesses it, and it is dishonorable for an elf to take liberties with the property of a tribe mate.

Elven honor never extends to outsiders. Those who are not members of an elf's tribe are expected to behave just as an elf would behave when meeting an outsider—they are expected to look out for themselves.

However, when an elf finally accepts an outsider as an equal, the paths to friendship open wide. These friendships often flourish when an elf joins a group of adventurers (by choice or circumstance) and the party passes whatever tests of trust and friendship the elf devises. Once an elf accepts an outsider, he or she treats that person with all the honor afforded tribe mates and other equals. Only acts of severe dishonor and untrustworthiness can break these bonds of friendship.

### Mental Pursuits

Elves enjoy thinking that involves their current situation. They don't like to dwell on the past, except for an occasional legend that takes the form of a song and dance. They also do not enjoy contemplating the future, for all they see are the tragedies to come. But they can spend countless hours thinking about the moment. In many ways, elves find more enjoyment in mental activities than they do in physical ones.

Learning for learning's sake occupies much of an elf's free time. On average, a greater percentage of the elf population can read and write than the populations of other races. Not only do they study their own written language, but they make a habit of becoming proficient in the common language, partially because it is useful when a tribe engages in trading activities.

Mental challenges make up the majority of elven pastimes. Puzzles, word and logic problems, and even mathematical riddles fill the time on elf runs or when the tribe is camped. Elves who create challenging problems receive as much or even more admiration as those who are quick with solutions. Some of these problems become so complicated as to take years to figure out, and a few even become part of a tribe's tests of passage.

### Elves and Magic

Elven intelligence makes the desert runners' association with magic almost inevitable. On average, they are the one race most comfortable with the arcane arts and their accoutrements. They have no problem gathering and selling spell components, and they see no inherent evil in either preservers or defilers. Since they believe that pain and death are the obvious results of life, then a defiler is only a single catalyst for the unavoidable outcome. Both approaches to magic can make the now more bearable, so both find a place among the elves. Individual tribes may have restrictions concerning one type of mage or the other, but in general both are accepted and even welcomed among elven ranks. As a personal matter, preservers and defilers do not like each other, so though elves may not have any bias concerning the two, they will rarely be found operating in the same tribe.

Whereas other types of tribes may either openly hate or barely tolerate the presence of a magic user, elven tribes accept them the same way they accept a good fighter or a skillful rogue. Mages receive no special considerations within a tribe, but they also receive no undue restrictions and are not objects of fear and suspicion.

Because of their ready acceptance of magic, elves have no problems combining arcane mental activities with more physical training. It is not uncommon, therefore, to meet an elf who displays skills as a fighter, thief, cleric, or psionicist along with his or her magical abilities.



## Elves and Clerics

Priestly magic, on the other hand, is as mysterious to elves as wizardly magic is to the other races. Most tribes offer positions of power and respect to clerics (whom they call “element singers”), though they hold those who commune with the elements in awe and feel at least some fear toward them. Because of this, tribes will rarely have more than one full element singer among their number, and never more than two.

Each tribe’s particular traditions often dictate the type of singers they seek, and if none of that type are born to the tribe they will try to steal one (literally) from another tribe. Those clerics born to a tribe who worship an element other than what the tribe is dedicated to are directed to become multiskilled practitioners. These clerics combine priestly talents with warrior, mage, psionist, and thief skills to better serve their tribes. They are never afforded the title of element singer.

## Elves and Psionics

Because psionics are so vital to life on Athas, the elves have embraced this field of study with the same enthusiasm they show the martial and thieving arts. While elven attitudes preclude them from developing anything as formal as the schools devoted to the Way of the Mind, elder psionists among the tribes teach young talents how to harness their developing abilities. Even wild talents are encouraged to practice their skills in order to best use them for the benefit of the tribe.

Every so often, a talented elf psionist will leave his or her tribe to search for a more qualified teacher. Those who voluntarily reject their tribal affiliation take up plain brown wrappings to signify this decision, showing all they meet that they are elves without a tribe. It is rumored that some of these “brown elves” even find a place among the legendary Order.





## Chapter Three: Elven Society

*Another hunt has been successful, another raid has reaped rewards. We stole from slow-limbed humans, we traded with dull-witted dwarves. Another day of adversity assailed us, another day of hardship endured. Now we put the day behind us, now we set the work aside. Elves, take up your drums and horns and lyrans! Elves, hear the music and sing the night's song!*

*—from Utaa Star Racer's  
'Prelude to Revelry'*

From the point of view of non-elves, elven society is savage and unpredictable. Few non-elves even admit that the elves have a society, let alone the rich, varied culture that truly exists. At best, other races see elves as uncivilized, despite the fact that elven society is made up of ancient traditions and longstanding customs that go back at least as far as those remembered by any of the other races.

While all elves share a number of general traits, lifestyles, and traditions, each tribe approaches life a little differently. The information that follows can be taken as a very generalized view of elven life, without any of the twists or enhancements made by individual tribes. Also, where a tribe operates has a way of determining the type of society it currently adheres to. Elves living in a city-state, for example, behave differently than their brethren running across the desert.

It should also be noted that elves are the eternal wanderers. In a particular elf's lifetime, the elf may live in the desert for a while, take up residence in a city-state market, return to the desert, live alone in the wilderness, join an adventuring party, then return to his or her tribe as it wanders the wastes. The elf is likely to start the cycle all over again, repeating it any number of times as the mood and circumstances direct. In other words, what may be true of a tribe and its members one season may be totally false the next. As the elves see it, "The now is not stable and fixed in its ways. Neither are we."

### Tribal Life

Other races normally come into contact with elf merchants or raiders, but the majority of elf tribes operate as nomads and herders. These are the roles they feel most comfortable filling. Elves love to wander, and as nomads they are free to forage and hunt as they travel the desert wastes. Raising kanks requires almost no special effort, so elves who are herders have plenty of time for celebration and revelry.

Tribal life consists of the daily struggle to survive Athas's dangers and the constant search for ways to make each now more enjoyable. Joy comes from a great many sources, all fleeting, ready to evaporate like a desert puddle. Survival includes not only battling the beings and creatures that seek to harm them, but finding ways to obtain their daily requirements of food and water. When the two primary occupations of trading and herding fail to meet these needs, then elf tribes are forced to find new occupations.

Elf tribes normally have one primary leader or chief. The chief wins his or her post by demonstrating qualities of leadership—exceptional strength and speed, cunning, charisma, intelligence, wise planning, and martial skills. Once named chief, an elf holds the position for life. Until accident, force of nature, or usurper comes along to dethrone him, an elf chief remains in charge of his tribe. Some tribes have adopted different traditions concerning their chiefs, including limited terms of office, rule by consensus or committee, and even open election. The chief-for-life pattern is the most prevalent of the governing systems, however.

An elf chief makes the major decisions concerning the tribe—where to hunt, when to make camp, when to run. The chief, either alone or in consultation with other tribal leaders, determines the nature of the tribe at any given moment. It is the chief who declares the tribe herders one season and traders the next. The chief has



the respect of his tribe, and often its admiration and loyalty. Only when a chief is ineffectual or when the tribe is plagued by successive disasters does this loyalty begin to wane.

Most tribes select chiefs from the same blood line. A chief's son or daughter, while not automatically guaranteed to assume leadership upon the death or retirement of the parent, often takes or is given the crown by tradition or circumstance. The current leader of the Night Runners tribe, for example, is Hukaa New Moons. As the daughter of the previous chief, Traako, she was given the initial opportunity to prove herself as Traako's worthy successor. When the time comes for her to relinquish leadership, the new chief will probably be one of her children, either one of the twins Nuuta and Lobuu, or her youngest son Haaku. If none of her children demonstrate the proper qualities of leadership, candidates will come forth who have blood ties to Hukaa or Traako. Only when these individuals cannot gain the tribe's support does the chief's position in this tribe open up for another clan or family to claim. Even then, most tribes have traditions concerning the order of succession.

Depending on size, a tribe can be made up of a single family or of many families comprising a number of linked clans. In smaller tribes, the chief is assisted by leaders made up of the best the tribe has to offer—the best hunters, the best warriors, the best traders, and so forth. The most powerful wizard in the tribe also serves as an adviser to the chief, as does the tribe's element singer. In larger tribes, each clan leader serves as a member of the tribe's ruling council. The chief needs these leaders to help run the tribe and to offer advice, but few chiefs are bound by council dictates. A chief who ignores his advisers too often, though, can find himself with no supporters when an usurper makes a claim for his position.

Elves do not spend vast amounts of time huddled in conference with their chief or following the chief's orders. On the contrary, their love of freedom keeps elves from

becoming embroiled in the complicated court intrigues that other races constantly gravitate toward. Elven society is not totally free of these internal games of deceit, but it does have far fewer examples of them than other societies. Elves prefer to engage in intrigues that involve outsiders, leaving the internal workings of a tribe nearly trouble free.

The chief and his or her advisers meet and make decisions when necessary. The rest of the time, tribal elves are free to do as they see fit, as long as they keep to the elven code of honor. Within a tribe, all elves are considered equal. Even chiefs and leaders must abide by the elven code—their leadership status does not give them dictatorial reign over those they lead. They have certain rights and responsibilities due to their ranks, but no special privileges beyond those granted them by the elves they lead. Even the level and form of their authority is often dictated by their tribe's long-standing traditions.

## Tribal Occupations

Every tribe engages in some sort of gainful endeavor. Whether a tribe barter trade goods or forages in the rocky badlands, elves need to acquire the daily necessities of life. If they can add a few items of personal value along the way, just for the joy of it, so much the better. Tribal elves, in general, fill the following occupations: nomadic herders, hunters, traders, and raiders. In rare instances, elf tribes can be found working as mercenaries or engaging in the "shadow arts" of espionage and assassination. Few tribes stick to only one occupation, however, for circumstances and their own restless natures often lead elves from one endeavor to another and back again.

Raising herds is the traditional elven occupation on Athas. For as long as anyone can remember, elves have bred kank. While the kank is inferior as a herd animal, it suits the habits and lifestyle of the elves. The kank can travel for long periods of time at the rapid pace elves nor-



## Elven Society

mally set. They can eat nearly anything, allowing the elf tribes that keep them to travel almost anywhere their wanderlust directs. Also, kanks are instinctively self-sufficient, requiring little care from the elves. This leaves the herders free to spend more time finding pleasures in the now. Kanks do not supply everything an elf tribe needs to survive, however, so herders must also spend time hunting and foraging for necessary dietary supplements.

Elf hunters form a vital subunit in nearly all tribes. While few tribes attempt to survive solely as either hunters or foragers, almost all tribes use hunters to supplement whatever comprises their primary source of supplies. Because of their knowledge of and connection to the wastelands, elf hunters are generally more successful than the hunters of other races. Indeed, legends from some races claim that when elf hunters sing, prey offers itself willingly to their arrows. Although elf hunters perform song and dance rituals of good fortune prior to a hunt, no magical connection exists.

Elf hunters do more than stalk and capture creatures for food and other uses. They also hunt the land, seeking plants, water, shelter, and performing the duties of scouts, spotters, and advance guards. "There is more to hunt than food," an elven song proclaims, "more prey than simply desert creatures."

Many tribes turn to trading at some point in their existence, finding new challenges and unexpected pleasures as merchants. Their wandering nature lends itself well to the trading life, for elf tribes regularly move from place to place. In their journeys, they find or otherwise acquire trade goods to bring to market. Elf merchants set up markets in the city-states, near villages or other settlements, at oases, and even in the wastes if customers are available. Elf traders are not known for carrying high-quality goods (although there are exceptions, and rare items of craftsmanship and beauty can be found), but they are an excellent source of banned, illegal, or hard-to-find items. Spell components, magical items, and rare goods are the

elf merchant's stock-in-trade, though a customer is as likely to purchase a fake article as a genuine one. Elf traders do not set up merchant houses as such, and only a select few establish any kind of permanent facilities. The rest remain constantly on the move, trying to stay ahead of templars and rival merchant houses, or simply following their own need to wander.

Elf raiders are rare, but not unheard of in the Tyr region. Some tribes are forced to become raiders because of circumstance—sickness, lost herds, poor hunting, or some other catastrophe that befalls the tribe. To survive, these elves must prey on other tribes, passing caravans, or small settlements. Once the tribe is back on its feet, it usually returns to a prior occupation. However, there are a few tribes that enjoy raiding, and thus make raiding their primary endeavor as a matter of choice. These tribes often add a flourish that human raiders lack—elves prefer to plunder through stealth and thievery as opposed to ambush and force. This is not to say that elf raiders won't use force from time to time, but that they find more challenge in striking quietly and getting away before an alarm can be raised. Elves will steal everything they can carry, but this doesn't mean they are murderous in that pursuit. If they can get their bounty without drawing blood, they will. If they must fight to take what they consider belongs to them, they will. They are not opposed to killing; they just don't make it the focus of a raid.

When times are particularly bad, some elf tribes will sell their martial skills to those desperate enough to purchase them, becoming mercenaries for hire. Those who employ elf mercenaries must be more concerned with what might be after them than with leaving their lives and property in the protection of "untrustworthy" elves. A few merchant houses hire elf mercenaries when they can find them, using them as advance guards for caravans. Settlements in need of protection also employ elf warriors, but they typically find most of their possessions missing once the mercenaries have departed.



The “shadow arts” are the rarest of all elf occupations, and few tribes deal in these dark trades. Only two such tribes are known to exist in the Tyr region—the Shadows and the Night Runners. These tribes specialize in intrigue, espionage, and even murder-for-hire. They trade in contraband, slaves, and stolen items. When you need something that someone else possesses, when you need to smuggle something through the most elaborate safeguards the sorcerer-kings can devise, or when you require information that no one else can obtain, you turn to these infamous elf tribes. The services of the Shadows and the Night Runners are in great demand by the heads of dynastic merchant houses, as well as by nobles, templars, and occasionally sorcerer-kings—provided these tribes can be found and their exorbitant prices can be met.

## Optional Barter Rules System

Elves are master bargainers, skilled in the arts of deception, flattery, and haggling. The rules for simple and protracted bartering presented on page 49 of the DARK SUN® boxed set *Rules Book* work very well in most role-playing game situations. When the thrust of an encounter is the bartering session, optional bartering rules can be applied to give the session more flavor. These rules help visualize the give and take between two haggling parties and incorporate new rules that reflect the edge Athasian elves have when it comes to bargaining. If either side feels that the other’s offer is too outrageous, then the bartering session can be halted before any dice are thrown. However, with the first toss of the dice, both sides must accept the terms decided by the subsequent bartering.

As in the protracted barter system, the Charisma





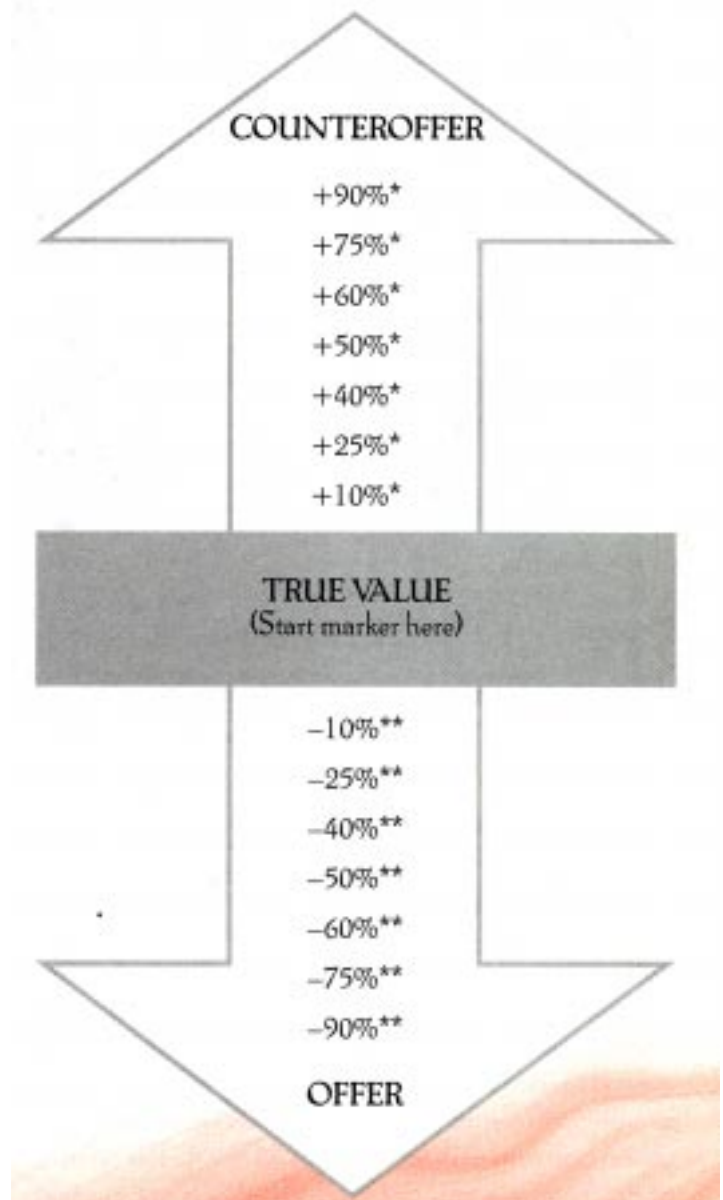
scores of the parties involved must be known. The DUNGEON MASTER™ (DM™) uses the Optional Barter Table and a marker, such as a die, to track the progress of the haggling session. The marker is placed on the True Value space and represents the true market value of the item in question. True market value can change, depending on location, supply and demand, and a host of other factors, so the true value of an item can be higher or lower on any given day. (The DARK SUN® boxed set *Rules Book*, *Dune Trader*, *The Ivory Triangle*, and other accessories contain price lists of common items haggled over in the markets of Athas.) Then, as many as three rounds of haggling ensue, following the rules as outlined below. (Note: An example using these rules is presented on page 34.)

When two parties come together to trade, three things are present: an item that one side has and the other side wants, an offer, and a counteroffer. The offers are the ideal goals of each side, and the winner of a haggling session is the side that gets a price closest to its offer. Offers cannot exceed 10 times the True Value of an item, nor can counteroffers be less than 10% of the item's True Value.

Using the various accessories listed above or establishing a price of his or her own, the DM decides the true market value of the item in question (be it a sword, a kank, a skin full of water, or whatever). He or she sets a die (or other marker) on the True Value space on the Optional Barter Table, which represents the market-value price of the item. (The DM also determines the opening offer or counteroffer of any NPC participants.)

If one of the participants is an elf, the DM checks for any applicable bonus on the Elf Charisma Bonus Table (see the following page). This bonus adjusts the starting position of the marker toward or away from the elf character's desired goal (either the Offer or Counteroffer end of the Barter Table). This bonus has no effect after the first round.

## Optional Barter Table



\* of the difference between the Counteroffer and the True Value.

\*\* of the difference between the Offer and the True Value.



## Barter Rules Difference Table

Difference Between Die Rolls	Move Item Marker
13-16	6 spaces
9-12	5 spaces
7-8	4 spaces
4-6	3 spaces
2-3	2 spaces
1	1 space
0	No space

After the offer and counteroffer are made, participating characters who have the Bargain proficiency make proficiency checks. If their checks are successful, they get to roll 3d6. All others roll 2d6 and add their totals to their Charisma scores. The winner (the character with the higher total of dice roll plus Charisma score) moves the item marker the number of spaces listed on the Barter Rules Difference Table toward his end of the Optional Barter Table.

Either side can end negotiations now, but both sides must abide by the item's price as determined by the first round of haggling.

Note that the item marker can never advance beyond the Offer or Counteroffer spaces, no matter how many spaces the Barter Rules Difference Table says to move it. In this way, a merchant can never receive more than he asked for, and a customer can never pay less than he offered.

If either side wishes to continue to haggle over the item's price, a second round of haggling occurs. Characters who have the Bargain proficiency can make checks to gain an extra die. All other characters roll 2d6 and add their totals to their Charisma scores. The winner calculates how much he won the roll by and checks on the Barter Rules Difference Table to determine how many spaces the item marker moves in his favor.

## Elf Charisma Bonus Table\*

Charisma Score	Bonus
19-20	+4 spaces
17-18	+3 spaces
15-16	+2 spaces
13-14	+1 space
7-12	No bonus
7-8	-1 space
5-6	-2 spaces

\* Adjusts the starting position of the item marker when an elf is trading with a non-elf, or when an elf trader is dealing with an elf of another class.

Either participant can end negotiations now, but the current price of the item being haggled over is binding to both sides.

If either side wants to try to gain the advantage, a third round of haggling can occur. It follows the same steps as the second round, with die-roll winners checking the Barter Rules Difference Table to determine how many spaces the item marker moves.

Negotiations end after this round, setting the final price on the item in question. This final price is binding to both sides. To calculate the final price, determine the difference between the True Value and the Offer (or Counteroffer, depending on which side won). The percentage shown is of this difference, which is then added or subtracted from the True Value to determine how well the haggling went.

For example, if the winning offer was 30 ceramics, and the true value was 10 ceramics, the difference would be 20 ceramics (30-10=20). To calculate the final price, look at where the marker ended movement (assume it was at 25%). Taking 25% of the difference noted above (20 cp) yields 5 cp. Add that to the True Value (10 cp), for a final price of 15 cp (5+10=15).



## Haggling Example

**Round One, Role-Playing.** One character makes an offer on the item in question. It doesn't matter who makes the first move in a session of haggling. Either the merchant (item owner) or customer (item buyer) can make the opening offer. The other character then makes a counteroffer, thus establishing the haggling parameters, as in the following example.

"I know you want this well-crafted elven sword," the elf merchant declares. "Look at the workmanship in the bone, the loving attention to detail. You'll be stealing it from me at 90 silver."

"It seems like you're the one doing the stealing, my friend," replies the warrior cheerfully. "Look at the chips along the cutting edge, and that extra gouge in theommel. It's not worth more than 30."

**Round One, Game Mechanics.** The DM determines that the bone long sword's true value, according to the current market, is 40 sp. He sets the item marker on the True Value space on the Barter Table.

The elf merchant has a Charisma score of 14. According to the Elf Charisma Bonus Table, this gives her a slight edge in the negotiations. To reflect this, the DM moves the item marker one space toward the elf's end of the Barter Table, which starts the marker at 10%.

Now the elf makes a proficiency check for her Bargain proficiency. She needs to roll a 12 or less. She rolls a 5, granting her an extra die in the haggling roll to come.

The elf merchant rolls 3d6 for a total of 12, which she adds to her Charisma score:  $12+14=26$ . The warrior rolls only 2d6 (no Bargain proficiency) for a total of 4. He adds this to his Charisma score of 16:  $4+16=20$ . The elf wins. The DM looks up the difference in the totals on the Difference Table ( $26-20=6$ ) and moves the item marker the number of spaces it directs (3 spaces) toward the elf's end of the Barter Table (Offer). At the end of the first round of haggling, the sword's price has been negoti-

ated up to the true value plus 50% of the difference of the elf's opening offer and the true value. This is calculated by determining how much greater the opening offer is than the true value ( $90-40=50$  sp), taking 50% of that number (25 sp), and adding it to the true value. This places the current negotiated price of the sword at 65 sp ( $40+25=65$ ).

The bargaining continues.

**Round Two, Role-Playing.** The character who made the opening offer in the first round of haggling makes a new offer based on what occurred. The other character then makes a new counteroffer, as follows.

"You must take me for a near-sighted dwarf, good sir," the elf merchant says, giving the warrior her best, most disarming smile. "Because I have a fondness for humans, especially male humans, I'll let you have this priceless weapon for only 65 pieces of silver."

"And you must take me for a thri-kreen who doesn't know the value of currency," the warrior laughs back. "I could probably find as many as 35 silver pieces in my pouches—if I look hard enough."

**Round Two, Game Mechanics.** The item marker starts this round on the 50% space of the Offer side of the Barter Table, as was determined by the first round of haggling. So far, things have been going in the elf merchant's favor. She makes a new check to see if her Bargain proficiency continues to help her. She rolls a 17—too high! No extra die for the elf this round.

The elf rolls a 6 on 2d6. Added to her Charisma score, this gives her a total of 20 ( $6+14=20$ ). The warrior rolls 12 on 2d6, for a total of 28 ( $12+16=28$ ). The warrior wins this round, rolling 8 better than the elf. On the Difference Table, an 8 means the marker moves 4 spaces in the winner's favor. This slides the marker back down to the true value space. If negotiations were to end now, the warrior would be able to purchase the sword for 40 sp.

Both sides agree to continue haggling.



**Round Three, Role-Playing.** As in the previous round, the character who made the opening offer makes a new offer based on what has occurred so far. The other character then makes a new counteroffer, as follows.

"You are as shrewd a negotiator as you are powerful a fighter, my well-built friend," the elf merchant whispers as she presses close to the warrior. "What I wouldn't give to have someone like you guarding my fine wares. Because I have grown to like you, I'll let you have this exquisite weapon for only 40 silver pieces. What do you say?"

"You flatter me with your fine words, but wound me with your lofty prices," the warrior scowls. "I would love to take that less-than-perfect sword out of your more-than-perfect hands, but I simply cannot afford to pay more than 37 pieces of silver."

**Round Three, Game Mechanics.** The item marker starts this round on the true value space, as was determined by the second round of haggling. The elf makes a final Bargain proficiency check. She rolls a 15, once again failing to make use of her skill.

Now the final haggling rolls are made. The elf rolls a 10 on 2d6 for a total of 24 (10+14=24). The charismatic warrior again rolls a 12 on 2d6 for a total of 28 (12+16=28). The warrior wins by 4, which the Difference Table shows as a 3-space-move in the warrior's favor. Negotiations end with the sword priced at the true value of the sword minus 40% of the difference between the warrior's opening offer and the sword's true value (40 sp - 30 sp = 10; 40% of 10 = 4; 40 - 4 = 36 sp). Both parties are bound to abide by this price.

**Role-Playing, Final Words:** "You drive a hard bargain, warrior," the elf merchant declares. "Because I like you, I'll give you the sword for 38 silver."

The warrior smiles. "And because I like you, I'll give you 36 pieces of silver—and not a ceramic more. Take it or leave it."

"Very well," the elf sighs, "36 silver pieces it is. Just don't tell anyone how badly you robbed me."

## City Life

While there are proportionately fewer elves living in the city-states, their presence is nevertheless felt. There is always an elf to be found in any given city-state. Elves in the cities come in three varieties: slaves, merchants, and free wanderers.

Elf slaves are rare, but a small number annually finds its way into the crowded pens of the city-states. Those slave elves who can be restrained or otherwise prevented from escaping are forced to work as farmers in the fields outside the walled cities. A few are turned into artists, where their skills earn large profits for their masters. Some elves even wind up in the gladiatorial pits, fighting for their lives as arena slaves. Many patrons of the games enjoy watching elf gladiators perform, for such slaves use speed and stealth the way muls use brute strength and endurance to win matches.

The second variety of city elf, the merchants, is by far the largest group of the three. They frequent the trading bazaars, representing their tribes in the city markets. Those tribes that have a long-standing tradition as traders may leave tribe members in a particular city-state for years at a time. Tribes rent old buildings or set up semipermanent stalls on the edges of trading quarters. These areas are known as the elven markets, and every city-state has one. When the tribe leaves, a few of its members remain behind to conduct business and to maintain a presence in the market. These elf traders become very cosmopolitan, learning the ways of the cities and keeping up on important news and gossip. Many engage in acts of thievery, collecting goods that their tribes can sell in other locations. When their tribes finally return, the city-bound elf merchants are ready with a store of new goods, a prime selling location, a wealth of news and rumors, and a great desire to set out into the wastes once again.

Elf free wanderers can be found wherever free adven-



urers travel. These are the elves who have left their tribes by choice or circumstance to explore the wonders and mysteries of Athas. Free wanderers are the most solitary elves, for they do not have the immediate support of their tribes, and everyone they meet considers them the most untrustworthy of all elves.

No matter what reason an elf has for visiting a city-state, he or she must be extremely careful within its guarded confines. Some elves may experience bouts of claustrophobia on the crowded streets and between the tall, thick walls. These bouts can manifest as depression, physical illness, paranoia, or even temporary madness. When such madness grips them, elves can become violent, careless, or totally helpless until the episode passes.

A recent example of city madness took hold of the elf raider Ventuu, of the Silt Stalkers tribe. He had entered Fort Inix, east of Nibenay, as an advance scout for his tribe. When a guard who was familiar with the markings of the desert raiders recognized the symbols of the Stalkers, he called for his fellows to bind the elf. That's when the madness overtook Ventuu, and he fought with a fury that surprised and overwhelmed the handful of guards. A hail of arrows from other guards stationed on the fort's walls finally brought Ventuu down—but not before he had killed or wounded more than a dozen guards and merchants.

Templars and city guards are always on the lookout for any minor infractions, for they are trained to expect elves to be guilty of a crime at some point during their stay. Templars will use any excuse to capture or chase elves out of the cities. Even lowly citizens can cause trouble for elves. They may seek out elves when they need to purchase a banned or rare good, but otherwise they adhere to the prejudices that have hampered elves throughout the ages. If something is missing, they reason, elves must have stolen it. If something fails to do what was promised, they further argue, it is because elves are untrustworthy. Of course, if elves are in the area, the fault usually can be

traced to them, but that does not excuse the times they are blamed purely because of their race.

When elves live in the cities, they tend to put aside most of their tribal habits in favor of the cosmopolitan lifestyle occurring around them. According to an elven song, "When in Tyr, do as the Tyrians." This allows tribal elves to experience the wonders of city life while visiting one of the great city-states. They must abide by the elven code of honor, but are otherwise free to follow the tempting curves of the city streets and seek out the tantalizing secrets that wait behind every door.

## Wilderness Life

At certain times in an elf's life, wanderlust becomes so powerful and urgent that the elf must leave his or her tribe in order to see what lies beyond the horizon. These lone explorers are but one type of elf that populates the wastes. There are also the outcasts, those elves who have been driven from their tribes because of acts of dishonor or other transgressions. In addition, those elves who have become too old or too ill to keep up with their tribes are left behind to fend for themselves in the wilderness. They must find a way to survive on their own or die.

These are the elves who live alone in the wilderness. Should they fall in with non-elves, they are still considered alone. By elven tradition, no elf may find companionship among "outsiders." In practice this is not always true, for a lone elf can become part of any group and even find friends among outsiders. To elves who are secure in their tribal standing, however, there can be no companionship outside the tribe. Most tribes have traditions of accepting outsiders into their ranks, but such occurrences are rare.

Free wandering elves who strike out of their own accord find joy in surviving the challenges of the Athasian wastes. They run where they will, often streaking across the horizon as they seek new experiences to



encounter and new locations to explore. They are among the most feared of the Athasian elves, for they will steal what they need at every opportunity, and usually in such a manner as to thoroughly confound caravan and settlement guards. Free wandering elves are whispers in the night, solitary thieves and explorers seeking nothing more than the joy of the now. They live by their wits and skills, honing their wilderness proficiencies like a craftsman hones his art. If and when they finally return to their tribes, free wandering elves find a place of honor and prestige because of the skills they have mastered.

Outcasts, on the other hand, do not have the inner joy that marks a free wanderer. An outcast elf has been cut off from the support and companionship of his tribe, set adrift in total solitude. There is no end to his wandering, his suffering, no future now when he can return to his

tribe. If he wants to live, the outcast must find his own way in the world.

Often, outcasts take on a dark attitude and persona. They become moody, forlorn, and sometimes excessively violent and cruel. These elves join slave tribes and marauding bands, venting their rage and utter loneliness on those they prey upon. Outcasts lose the love of life that permeates the very spirit of other elves. Instead of seeking joy in the now, they embrace the dark sides of life that other elves accept but pay little heed to. In many ways, death and darkness become the only true companions for outcasts, and the result creates truly terrible elves.

Of course, not all outcasts become terrors of the wilderness, but all live dark, nearly joyless lives. Only a select few can find meaning and joy apart from the tribes





## Elven Society

they once called home. These may be the strongest, most independent elves on all of Athas—the elves true heroes are made from. Take, for example, the case of Kureggi No Tribe. This elf warrior wanders the wastes north of Tyr, often helping the slave tribe called the Free perform some service against the forces of the city-states. She also appears out of the swirling sands from time to time to assist a caravan against thri-kreen hunters or human marauders.

Lastly, the wilderness becomes either home or grave for the ill and aged of the elf tribes. Most ill and elderly elves simply lose the will to live once they can no longer run with their tribes. They become food for predators and scavengers, contributing one final time to Athas's natural cycle. A few of these elves, however, refuse to submit to a natural end. They reject the notion that the elf run is over simply because the tribe has left them behind. Yet, no matter how strong their spirit, only the strong of body can long survive the wilds of Athas on their own. Thus, even those elderly elves of great heart eventually succumb to the desert wastes.

Some settlements and wilderness communities will take in elderly elves who show no obvious signs of disease (small communities are notoriously fearful of unknown sicknesses, especially if they do not have a powerful cleric among their numbers). The wealth of wilderness lore that old and venerable elves possess can often mean the difference between survival and death for these struggling settlements. Of course, they must put aside their distrustfulness and fear if they are to make good use of an elf's talents and knowledge. The elf, too, must reconcile his position among outsiders. He may even subject the settlement to a battery of tests of trust and friendship before he feels comfortable enough to extend his elven honor to its members. If the elf and the community can survive this period of testing, then both can come together as a single unit. Often, however, settlement members who do not understand elven ways will grow impatient or even

hostile toward the elf's tests and aloof manner. Then the elderly elf is turned away or killed, and both sides lose out.

Some elderly elves become hermits, living isolated existences in some of Athas's most inhospitable lands. These elves may no longer be as swift as they were in their younger days, but they can still move faster than most other races and creatures. Elf hermits can be the best friends travelers in the wastes can meet—or their worst enemies. Some want companionship so badly that they will welcome friendly visitors with open arms. They will share water and provisions in exchange for news, items of interest, or assistance with a task or problem. Others want nothing to do with outsiders, seeing them as nothing more than another one of Athas's multitude of dangers. These hermits remain hidden, fearful that revealing themselves will invite violence and hatred. Then there are those hermits who see travelers as nothing more than prey. They will attempt to steal goods and supplies by whatever means are available, even going so far as to set traps for unsuspecting wanderers. These hermits can be deadly, for they have no qualms about using excessive force to acquire the things they need to survive.

## Enemies

Elven songs tell the tales of Coraanu Star Racer, the hero who shaped the elves of Athas. These same songs tell of the enemies Coraanu made as he raced across the sky. "The enemies of Coraanu are legion, chasing him wherever he goes," declares one chorus. "All elves share these foes."

According to elven tradition, almost every force of nature, creature, monster, and intelligent race can be counted among Coraanu's (and therefore all elves') enemies. Legends abound that explain these animosities: Coraanu stole from that one, cheated this one, embarrassed a third, insulted one over there, and even defeated another in a fair (or unfair) contest.



Who and what do elves consider to be their natural enemies? Humans, dwarves, halflings, muls, giants, half-giants, the horde of creatures which roam the endless wastes, and even the land and sky can be numbered among the enemies of the elves. The worst scourges, though, giving young and old elves alike nightmares, are the undead and the thri-kreen.

Elves accept the natural order of the world. They understand the cycle of life and death, and they know their own place in it. They cannot abide anything that exists outside this order, for such unnatural things defy the world view upon which so much of the elven mindset hinges. To elves, the undead epitomize the break from the natural order. Elves see them as foul creatures to be feared and avoided. If an undead creature is known to be in the area, an elf tribe will move as quickly as possible. Only when absolutely necessary will an elf try to fight and destroy one of the undead.

Luckily, the undead of Athas are rare, but there are living enemies waiting among the shifting dunes. Thri-kreen are the worst of these enemies, for the insect-men actively hunt elves as a source of food. Perhaps thri-kreen warriors enjoy the taste of elf flesh because the hunt usually presents such an enormous challenge. The insect men are never far from an elf's thoughts. Elf children grow up deathly afraid of thri-kreen, for older elves use real and imagined thri-kreen threats to make young elves move faster or otherwise influence their behavior. This fear becomes a deep hatred as young elves grow to adulthood, for by the time an elf undergoes the rites of passage he or she has lost more than a few friends and loved ones to the many limbs of the insect-men. The fear, however, can never totally be erased, even by hatred. It stays in the back of every elf's mind, a reminder of terrifying yesterdays and deadly tomorrows.

When an elf and thri-kreen must work together, they adopt an uneasy peace. The thri-kreen must keep its hunger and desire in check, while the elf must hold back

the fear and hatred that would otherwise compel him or her to attack and flee.

## Elven Beliefs

The elves of Athas bow to no gods or sorcerer-kings. They have, however, a deep respect for the elements, which shows in the reverence they display toward the clerics they call elemental singers. Theirs is a sort of ancestor worship that manifests in the form of tribal heroes. By definition, every tribal chief is a hero, and songs of his or her exploits fill many a starlit night. Additionally, significant individuals from past generations are remembered and glorified in song and dance. This is one of the few examples of elven behavior not based on the current moment. In the legends and histories of past heroes, elves find inspiration for the now.

Some of these ancient heroes are common to all elves. Others are limited to specific tribes. Perhaps the greatest of these heroes is Coraanu Star Racer, who supposedly led the elves to Athas and established their most basic traditions. He taught the elves to run, to fight, to use the sword and bow, to steal, to sing, and even to dance. All tribes acknowledge his contributions, and most revere him as the greatest elf ever to run beneath the crimson sun.

All tribal heroes receive honor through the celebrations of the elves. When a hunt goes well, a tribe showers praise and thanks upon one of its legendary hunt masters. To celebrate a marriage, elves dance to the tales of long-remembered lovers. When an elf child first learns to run, the tribe sings of the exploits of its most revered racers.

Even hardship and misfortune often finds expression in the adoration of ancestral heroes. When adversity befalls a tribe, elves celebrate the ritual songs and dances of whatever hero they wish to draw inspiration and solace from. The songs and dances are believed to honor the hero's memory. If the celebration is sincere and powerful





enough, a bit of what made that ancestor so heroic will be transferred to the tribe.

## Language and Nomenclature

The elf tribes of Athas have a language common to all elves. One tribe can readily communicate with another. However, each tribe adds nuances of its own to its speech, giving different tribes accents and jargon that make the language wholly their own. These differences seem slight or even nonexistent to non-elves, but to other elves they are readily noticeable.

Short, clipped words make up the elven language. It is spoken in a rapid staccato pace that is difficult for novices to pick up. When speaking with individuals who are not native speakers of the elven language, elves must talk slowly in order to be understood. Of course, doing anything at a slower pace can make elves irritable and angry.

In addition to the elven language, most elves learn the common tongue so that they can deal with outsiders. Many tribes also develop a series of codes or a primitive sign language so that they can communicate among themselves even in a crowd of outsiders. Those tribes that specialize in the shadow arts have a more advanced sign language.

Because of the way elves feel about outsiders, most will not make any effort to learn other languages (with the exception of the common tongue). You will rarely find elves who speak dwarf, thri-kreen, halfling, or some other racial language. If they did not need the common tongue in order to conduct trade, elves probably wouldn't make the effort to learn it either.

Of all the uses for language, it is in the choice of names that elves truly take a great deal of time and care. Names are very important to elves. Much thought goes into the selection of names, and tribal leaders (including element singers) consider naming young runners as one

of their most solemn duties. Elven names are derived from two sources. First, elves take the surname of either their tribe or clan. To this surname, they receive a given name based upon the elven tradition of naming a child for the first interesting thing he or she does when learning to run. While this might seem an easy task, tribal leaders watch for occurrences that are both significant and that fit the child's personality, for traditions hold that names help shape the elves they are given to. With the proper name, a young elf can grow to become a great elf. With the wrong name, the same elf will disappear in the wastes. Some childhood names are changed because of extraordinary actions undertaken during a youth's rites of passage, but such changes do not happen very often.

The following tables present male and female given names, as well as tribal surnames. The Tribal Surname Table also lists any clans that belong to a given tribe. For added flavor, the Elf Insults Table provides a sample of insults that players can use when role-playing their elf characters.

## Female Elf Given Names Table

Elven Word	Translation
Alaa	Bird Chaser
Ekee	Wild Dancer
Guuta	Singing Sword
Hukaa	Fire Leaper
Ittee	Dancing Bow
Nuuta	Quiet Hunter
Utaa	Laughing Moon



### Male Elf Given Names Table

Elven Word	Translation
Botuu	Water Runner
Coraanu	First Elf, the Warrior Thief
Dukkoti	Wind Fighter
Haaku	Two Daggers
Lobuu	First Runner
Mutami	Laughs at Sun
Nuuko	Sky Hunter
Traako	Metal Stealer

### Tribal Surnames Table

Tribe Name	Clan Name
Clearwater*	Fireshaper
	Graffyon
	Graystar
	Lightning
	Onyx
	Sandrunner
	Seafoam
	Silverleaf
	Songweaver
	Steeljaw
Wavedivers	
Windriders	
Night Runner**	Dark Moons
	Full Moons
	Half Moons
	Lone Moons
	New Moons
	Quarter Moons





Tribe Name	Clan Name
Shadow*	
Silt Stalker**	Fire Bow Fire Dagger Fire Sword
Silver Hand**	
Sky Singer**	Dawnchaser Dayjumper Twilightcatcher
Swiftwing*	
Water Hunter**	Raindancer Poolrunner Lakesinger
Wind Dancer**	Airhunter Breezechaser

\* Tribe described in DSR2, *Dune Trader* accessory.

\*\* Tribe described in Chapter Four of this book.

## Elf Insults Table

Elven Word	Translation
Otuuk fe!	Kank rider!
Gotii	Outsider
Egotti	Less than an outsider
U'Raanu	Elf with no tribe
Athuum	Sand crawler
Jukkete	City dweller
Ud'Raan	Half-elf
Kuu datto	Swift as a human

## Music and Dance

The elves of Athas are a musical people. Song and dance play a major part in their lives, from helping them remember history and legends, to keeping time when working or on long runs, to providing a primary outlet for celebration. And in case this fact is still in doubt, elves celebrate everything. From the rising and setting of the sun and moons to the death of a revered leader, the elves have a revelry to observe it. To non-elves, this music is captivating and seductive. Its haunting sounds and joyous beats seem otherworldly and out of place under Athas's harsh sun. There are two types of elven music, each with its own accompanying dances and songs. First there is the music of the elven markets, designed for outsider and elf ears alike. This is the music most outsiders associate with the elves, for it spills out of tavern and entertainment tents to lure customers. For outsiders, elf musicians weave tunes that spark emotions in most listeners. The desired response is usually joy, for happy customers spend money freely and often come back for more of the same. But these musicians also weave tunes of sadness, love, or even hatred when a particular performance calls for it. The songs and dances that accompany these melodies range from ribald to extremely seductive—what male can forget Areela Steeljaw's Dance of the Four Swords after catching even a brief glimpse of her captivating moves?

There is also the music of the tribes, which rarely (if ever) is performed in the presence of outsiders. These songs and dances have almost a religious connotation, for they are linked with elven revelry and celebration—the closest thing to prayer and worship any elf ever engages in. Whatever beautiful sounds you hear in an elven market, multiply them a hundredfold: that is the music they reserve for themselves. When elves play for elf ears alone, the music that emerges carries a piece of their independent, wandering souls in its melody. The sounds, rhythms, and beats are almost divine.



he or she can produce haunting sounds to accompany any song or dance.

## Courtship and Other Customs

When elves reach adulthood and decide to find mates, they engage in elaborate courting rites. Both males and females can take the initiative in locating potential mates. It all depends on which partner wants to remain with his or her tribe. That elf goes on a “mating hunt.” Mating hunts involve spying on other elf tribes until an unattached male or female catches the hunter’s interest. These hunts are dangerous affairs, for any outsiders caught close to an elf camp risk death for their troubles. Once the hunters spot elves that catch their interest, they must leave signs for their desired ones to let them know that a hunt is under way. If the object of the hunt agrees to the mating, then a capture occurs with only a token show of resistance. If the potential mate wants nothing to do with the hunter, the struggle could prove fatal to one or both parties.

When a hunter brings his or her mate back to the tribe, runners are sent to inform the other tribe that a wedding will take place. Now the captured elf loses all ties with her old tribe. After the three-day-long celebration, the abductee receives status as a daeg in her spouse’s tribe. A daeg lives in a state of serfdom until the chief decides that past loyalties have been forgotten. It takes years until a daeg becomes a full member of the spouse’s tribe—and some never do. Why then, do some elves agree to become daegs? For love, of course, which burns brightly and intensely in the hearts of elves.

Other tribal customs include the following:

- When elves return from raids or thieving expeditions with prizes, it is customary to give their chief first pick of the booty.
- When elves die, general practice is to let them lie where they fall. Elves do not bury or burn their dead. It is

Elven music is produced on a number of traditional instruments. The most basic is an elf’s own voice, which can create a range of sounds far beyond what even the most talented human bard can accomplish. Other instruments are fashioned of bone or animal hides. These instruments can be as beautiful as the sounds they produce, for elf crafters have learned to shape bone as others shape glass or iron.

Three traditional elven instruments are the lyran, the palm drums, and the staff pipe. The lyran is a stringed instrument constructed of bone or even the armored shell of a large animal. Hollow paths are carved throughout the body of the lyran, which create different notes depending on which string, or combination of strings, is strummed. Eighteen strings stretch from a single point to two ends of the lyran, while an additional seven strings cross the instrument’s face. Palm drums fit in the palm of the hands. As elves dance, they slap the palm drums against their bodies to produce a percussion beat. A staff pipe is a tall, slender staff of bone. Hundreds of tiny holes are carved into its shaft. When an elf blows into the staff,



seen as an elf's final task and hardship to serve as food for scavenging beasts.

- When an elf becomes a full member of his or her tribe (either upon passing the rites of adulthood or when daeg status is changed), it is customary to shower the new member with gifts. These gifts carry obligations, however, which usually take the form of voiced support when the gift-bearer petitions the chief.

- When seeking a favorable decision from the chief, it is customary to offer bribes. These bribes must not be blatant, but instead should be made under suitable pretexts: "This gold piece would be much safer in your hands, my chief; now, if I could ask you to name my son as apprentice to the hunt master . . ."

## Families

Elves place more stock in their clans and tribes than they do in individual families. However, there are some traditions associated with family units that should be addressed. Only children born of the same mother are considered to be true siblings. Children who share the same father but have different mothers are considered to be long-brothers or long-sisters. Tribal traditions forbid long-brothers and long-sisters from bearing children together, even though they do not have the same ties as do true siblings toward each other.

Elves do not have the same traditions concerning male parents as do other races. Because elves spread their affections so easily, and mating with only one partner is the exception rather than the rule, male parents are much harder to determine than female parents. The elven term for mother, "mamuk," means "the birthing parent." An elf mamuk receives a measure of respect, but the entire tribe shares in the raising of the young. The maternal bonds stretch throughout the tribe, as opposed to being concentrated between a single mother and child. On the other hand, there is no elven term for father. The closest

is "tada," which applies to any male whose blood runs in a child's veins.

## Native Dress

While elves typically dress to survive in the desert environment, individual tribes often design garb that showcases their own customs and traditions. Even when visiting an oasis or city, elves tend to favor their native dress. If this garb has anything in common from tribe to tribe, it is its functional design. Elven garb tends to protect its wearers from the brutal elements while allowing for freedom of movement.

Some tribes wear cloaks made of sharply patterned erdlu feathers that have been studded with bits of polished bone. Others wrap themselves in tight-fitting carru leather that has been decorated with bright colors and strange patterns. Feathers, bones, hides, stones, and even metal (when available) is often woven in varying ways to make clothing that is recognizably elven in origin while remaining uniquely the product of an individual tribe.

A few tribes, especially those that regularly engage in raids, have started incorporating plunder into their native garb. To a typical elven cloak, an elf warrior might add bits of clothing stolen from caravans and settlements. This hodgepodge of elven and human (or other race) design creates a look that can be at once striking and frightening.

Elves are known for wearing clothing that is both functional and flattering. Part of an elf's daily joy is to look good to himself and to his tribe mates. An elf will spend hour upon hour crafting garments to accomplish these goals.

Most tribes also have traditional war dress which they wear when going into battle. Unlike everyday garb, war dress is designed to protect and to instill fear in the enemy. From frightening war paint to terrifying and protective wrappings, when an elf dresses for war he or she also dresses to scare and disturb the enemy.



## Chapter Four: The Elf Tribes

*Our road is the burning desert, our home the endless wilderness. We are runners, as fast and furious as the storm-blown sand. We are hunters, as quiet and deadly as the silt that lends us its name. We are the Silt Stalkers, and everything in the Tablelands is ours. Who can stop us? Who can outrun us? Who can resist our swords and spears? We are the Silt Stalkers, and we take what is ours by force and by stealth. No caravan can avoid us, no village wall can hold us back. We are the Silt Stalkers; we are the swirling sand.*

*—An elf-run song of the Silt Stalker tribe*

Thousands of tribes of nomadic elves wander the dunes and steppes of Athas. They race across the bleak landscape, stealing, fighting, or cheating sustenance out of the land and its inhabitants. While all elf tribes share certain traditions and customs, each approaches these customs in a unique manner. The elves of Athas are extremely individualistic, as the behavior and outlook of each tribe demonstrates.

To gain a better understanding of these individual traditions and customs, it is helpful to examine a few specific tribes. The tribes that have been selected are all currently operating in the Tablelands, and each represents a different aspect of the elven lifestyle.

In the entries that follow, each tribe is presented in a uniform manner. An overview of the tribe starts each entry. Then we examine the tribe's organization and society, its area of activity and current endeavors, and its recent history. Finally, we look at the tribe's relations with outsiders and its most important members. In two cases, we also deal with specific locations (namely, the Sky Singers' market in Nibenay and the Silver Hands' oasis at Silver Spring).

### Sky Singers

When someone mentions elf merchants in the Tyr region, they are probably talking about the Sky Singer tribe.

While not as old a tribe as their chief rival, the Clearwater elves, the Sky Singers quickly established themselves as traders of note. The semipermanent market the tribe maintains in Nibenay, for example, is a feast for the senses, full of both exotic and commonplace goods presented so as to fascinate customers as they wander among the colorful tents and crowded stalls. Most customers come away from the market feeling as though they received the better part of any deal they participated in, even if they didn't. It's just another part of the illusion of quality and service the Sky Singers have expertly woven into their repertoire of merchandising.

The Sky Singers tribe embraced trading as its primary means of existence long before their current chief (or the chief before him) was born. Every activity the tribe engages in contributes in some manner to its mercantile endeavors. They enjoy this approach to life, and seem content to continue as merchants—at least for the now.

### Organization

The Sky Singers' chief rules for life, but does so in strict consultation with his advisers and clan leaders. If the tribe ever fails to turn a profit after a trader's year, the leaders can challenge the chiefs right to rule. The only memory of such action being taken is in the Song of Temtaa, which tells of a time long ago when trading was so bad that the tribe had to turn to raiding to survive.

The current chief, Muuton Sky Singer, is considered a member of all clans, so that no clan can claim superiority over another. The tribe has approximately 3,500 members divided among three clans. Of these, the Dayjumpers clan is the largest, with about 1,500 members. The rest of the tribe is divided evenly between the Dawnchasers and Twilightcatchers.

Each clan shares most of the tasks necessary to maintain a successful elven merchant house. Contrary to the activities of other elf tribes, the Sky Singers actually gather



## The Elf Tribes

their market goods by mostly legitimate means. They trade and purchase goods from the outlying settlements to bring to market in the city-states, and then gather merchandise in one city to trade in another. Outright theft accounts for only a fraction of their total stock.

If one clan does poorly during a given period, it is not considered an infraction by the tribe as a whole. The entire tribe shares the assets and deficits of the individual clans, spreading the wealth and good fortune around. After a trading period, the chief and clan leaders inventory the tribe's assets, relegate a portion to use to restock trade goods, then distribute a share of the remaining profits to all tribe members.

Even though the clans coordinate their profit-making ventures, each clan specializes in a few select areas. The Dawnchasers, for example, continue to operate as herders. Members of this clan are responsible for not only the tribe's animals, but also for the animals customers pay to have tended in the markets. They also raise or secure animals by other means to sell in the markets, from pack and riding beasts to personal pets. The Dayjumpers clan specializes in major commerce and understanding city laws and customs. Members of this clan maintain the tribe's permanent markets in the city-states, dealing, trading, and securing new goods while the remainder of the tribe travels elsewhere. Finally, the Twilightcatchers clan deals in things pertaining to the arcane arts. Spell components, magical items, and wizardly texts of all descriptions are their stock-in-trade.

The chiefs advisers consist of the leader of each clan, the flame singer, the elder wizard, the commander of the elven guards, and the nine trade masters who oversee all mercantile activities. While clan leaders keep their posts for 12-year terms, the other advisers represent the best individuals the tribe produces—the most powerful cleric and wizard, the best warrior, and the most talented merchants, for example. The elves in these posts are reviewed regularly, with their advisory seats often changing hands as

other elves demonstrate better skills and abilities in the appropriate areas.

Where other tribes organize raiding parties, the Sky Singers use small trading parties to scout market locations, make major deals, and find new supply sources. These trading parties are led by merchant captains and consist of as few as six elves or as many as several hundred when transportation and protection are required.

### Recent History

The Sky Singers recently returned to Nibenay after a six-month absence. What the tribe discovered produced shock and anger in its members—all of the elves left behind to oversee daily mercantile activities were either dead or missing. Of the 16 elves who remained in Nibenay, 11 were found slaughtered. The other five have not yet been located, and the tribe fears the worst.

The building used as the permanent living quarters for the elves stationed in the city seemed oddly quiet and deserted when Muuton and his warriors arrived. At first, Muuton thought that the templars had run off his traders, as was sometimes the case, but the awful truth soon became evident. The bodies of the traders were scattered about the building's dark interior, each more brutally battered than the one before. While a few of the bodies displayed evidence of fighting back, most appeared to have been killed before they could even draw their weapons. Muuton and his advisers suspect either House Stel or the Clearwater elves of orchestrating the murders, but neither side has claimed responsibility as yet.

Despite the murders and missing elves, the Sky Singers have decided to open the Nibenay market as scheduled. Muuton believes that the murders were committed in order to delay or even cancel the Sky Singers' market, and he has no intention of letting either of those possibilities occur.

Muuton has ordered several trading parties into the streets to search for the five missing elves or for news pertain-



ing to the deadly attack. It has even been whispered that the chief wishes to meet with either the Shadows or Night Runners, but no adviser will confirm this. All that can be said for sure is that the Sky Singers desire revenge, and a war that involves more than trade might be on the horizon.

## Relations with Outsiders

House Stel, a merchant house operating out of Urik, has shown a deep hatred of nonhuman races, especially elves. As the house is busy trying to take parts of House Shom's market in Nibenay, it has come into open conflict with the Sky Singers. House Stel thought to capitalize on the current household pet craze sweeping Nibenay because House Shom was showing little interest in handling live merchandise. The Sky Singers, however, quickly captured

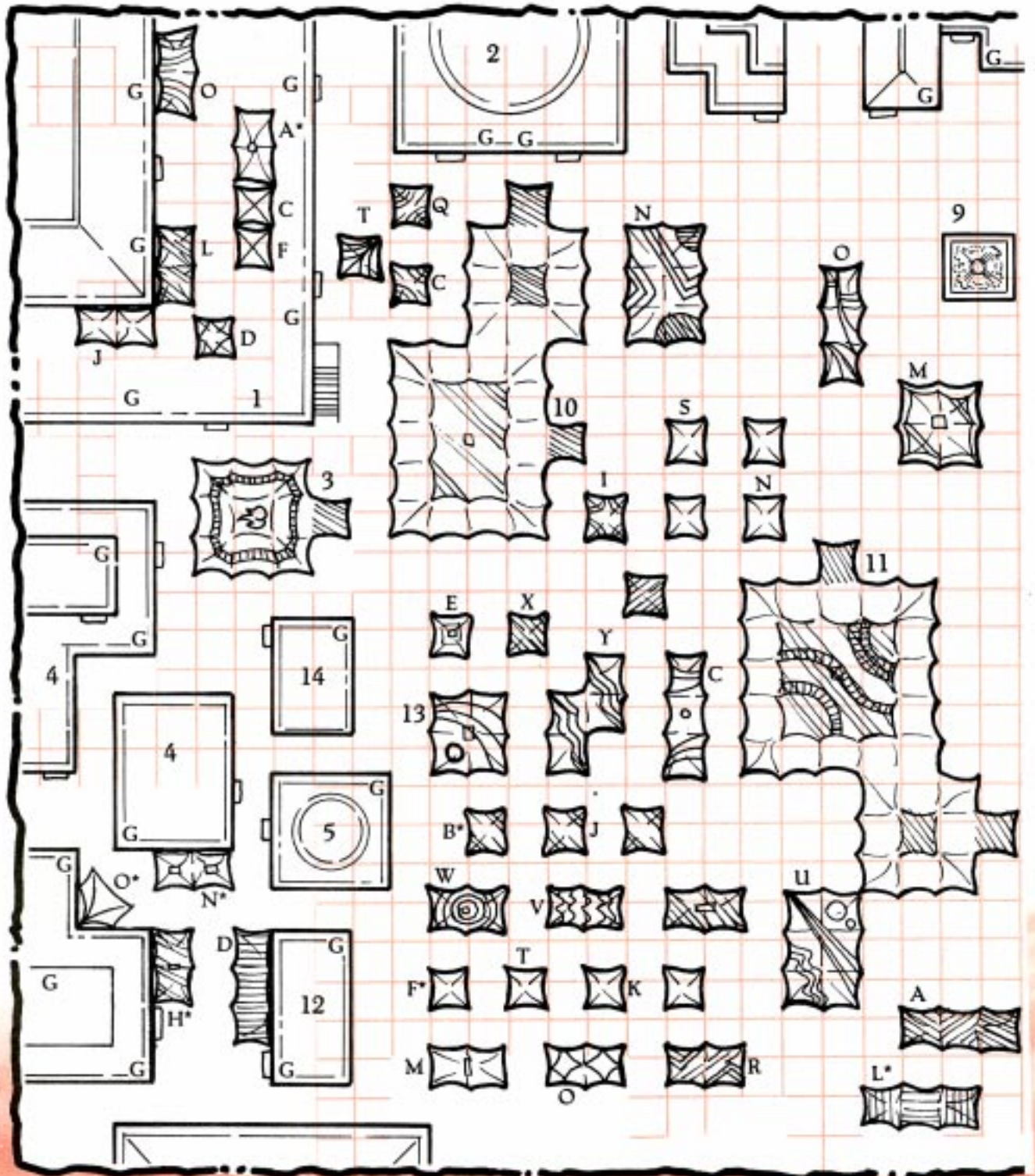
a larger share of this market. The elves are able to bring animals to market faster and in larger quantities, and their expertise makes for healthier, more robust creatures. House Stel's agents are already working to change this situation, and some of Muuton's advisers attribute the recent murders to this war-loving merchant house.

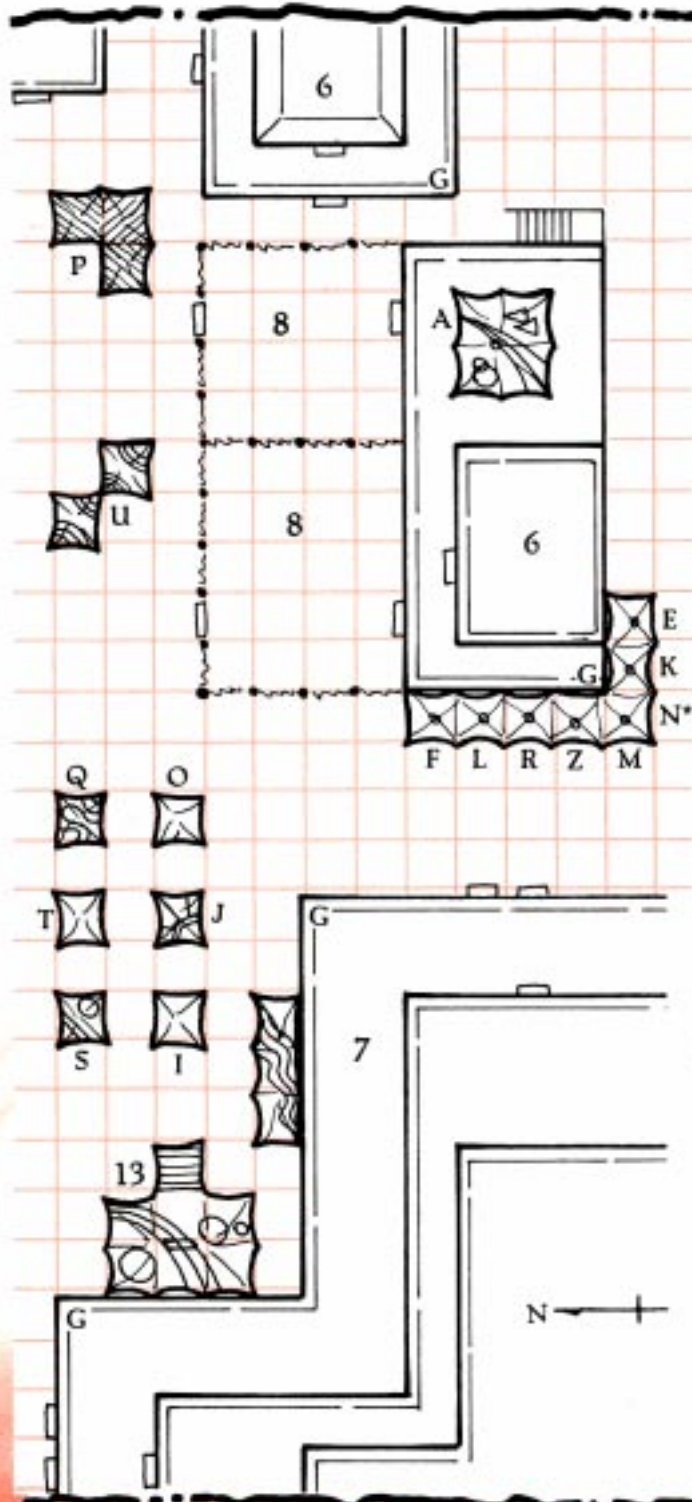
If the tribe can be said to count any outsiders as friends, then those outsiders would be members of Nibenay's Veiled Alliance. Guvaano, the tribe's elder wizard, has a number of contacts in the Alliance. While most of the Twilightcatchers know about this connection, Muuton and the rest of the tribe only suspect that these ties exist. Guvaano sometimes dines with Thagya Phon, the leader of the city's Alliance, but he usually meets with Allya Durz, a female half-elf who serves on the Council. She passes along important information, news, rumors,





# The Elf Tribes





## Sky Singers Market (in Nibenay's Hill District)

One Square = 10 Feet

1. Permanent Market/Dayjumpers Clan Camp
2. Happy Hurrum Tavern
3. Flame Singer's Tent
4. Twilightcatchers Clan Camp
5. Chief's Camp
6. Dawnchasers Clan Camp
7. Ancient Ruin
8. Animal Corral
9. Fountain
10. Tent of the Dancing Swords
11. Tent of the Singing Sands
12. Wizard's Quarters
13. Artisan's Tent
14. Smuggler's Den

- A. Weapons (bone/stone)
- B. Weapons (metal)
- C. Fine clothing
- D. Spell components
- E. Dried meats
- F. Shoes/boots
- G. Guards
- H. Magical items
- I. Elven instruments
- J. Gems/jewelry
- K. Alcoholic beverages
- L. Armor
- M. Bargain clothing
- N. Fruits/vegetables
- O. Pottery
- P. Pets
- Q. Candles
- R. Leather goods
- S. Tattoos
- T. Confections
- U. Stone/bone carvers
- V. Weaver
- W. Wooden goods
- X. Fine art
- Y. Glassware
- Z. Travel supplies

\*Magical items available in these stalls



## The Elf Tribes

and even what the Alliance knows about templar activity in the Hill District, making Guvaano's council to Muuton highly valued.

Of the other elf tribes, the Sky Singers are in open competition with the Clearwater tribe, and in open conflict with the Silt Stalkers. The Clearwater elves, long considered the most powerful and successful of the elven merchant houses, fear that the Sky Singers are becoming too prominent in their own right. The two tribes have begun to compete for the same markets, the same sources of goods, and the same trade routes. Some of Muuton's advisers believe that the recent murders of the Sky Singer traders were the work of the Clearwater elves. If this belief is proved, then the trade war could escalate into more violent conflict. The Silt Stalkers, on the other hand, regularly raid the Sky Singers' trading parties as they return with goods for market. The Sky Singers have lost significant amounts of goods to these raids, and ways to better defend the small trading parties are being debated by Muuton and his advisers.

### Current Endeavors

The Sky Singers operate as merchants, and all of the activities the tribe participates in furthers this occupation. The entire tribe is geared toward mercantile endeavors of all sorts. These elves love to discover new sources of trade goods and new customers to deal with. More than anything, the Sky Singers find enjoyment and satisfaction in haggling a deal. While they love to come out ahead, they also simply enjoy a good session of wheeling and dealing.

The tribe has been doing very good business recently trading in domestic animals. Kanks, erdlu, and crodlu are always in demand, but the Sky Singers have also found a thriving market for carru and household pets. Carru leather is currently the rage in Gulg, for the nobles and templars of the city have discovered it as a "high-fashion" material.

Meanwhile, animals that can be used as pets, such as hurrum and critics, have become favorites of Nibenay's elite. The Dawnchasers clan can't keep enough of these creatures in stock, and their trading parties are traveling farther and farther to find new supplies to bring to market. Even with the high demand and low supply cache, the Sky Singers have been able to bring more domestic animals to market than their primary rival in this venture, House Stel. House Stel agents are already seeking ways to hinder the elves and turn the market to their favor.

The Twilightcatchers, meanwhile, have been busy bringing magical items to market. As dealing in arcane merchandise is highly illegal, these elves must exercise extreme caution and take every possible safeguard when hawking these wares in the city-state marketplaces. In addition to the normally brisk trade in spell components, mildly enchanted items (presented as powerful magical objects), and genuine magical items crafted by the elves, the clan has procured a number of ancient artifacts. These magical metal weapons, armor pieces, miscellaneous items, and texts can each command an exorbitant price—but they must be marketed slowly and carefully to avoid undue notice. The Twilightcatchers refuse to say where these genuine articles come from, but their trading parties have been active near the ruins of Giustenal and Bodach.

### Area of Activity

Muuton and his tribe of elf merchants operate within the region of the Tablelands known as the Ivory Triangle, though they often range outside this area to secure new or unusual trade items. The Sky Singers maintain a permanent presence in Nibenay's Hill District, and usually have representatives in Gulg and Balic.

When the Sky Singers enter a city or village, they quickly set up an elaborate bazaar of colorful tents and well-stocked stalls. Their marketplace in Nibenay is their



most flamboyant showing, for the tribe owns or leases a number of buildings around a large square. This gives them plenty of room to display their wares, and they have learned to make the most of the location. In the other cities and villages the Sky Singers visit, they do not have access to as much space. The bazaars they set up in these locations are not as extensive, but they remain showcases of exotic items from all over the Tyr region and beyond.

At least once every trader's year, the Sky Singers set up an outdoor bazaar somewhere along one of the trade roads leading out of Gulg or Nibenay. These bazaars have a festive feel, providing not only opportunities for trade but a party atmosphere for those who venture into the city of tents that springs up out of the wastes. Many merchant houses send representatives to the Sky Singers' bazaar to find exotic goods to market in one of the farther cities, but the majority of customers are travelers and people from the desert settlements. It is not unusual to see members of the shunned races wandering among the tents in search of deals, and even some of the slave tribes come to secure supplies and other items from the Sky Singers.

While the bulk of the tribe stays close to the Ivory Triangle, trading parties bearing the mark of the Sky Singers can be encountered from the Forest Ridge to the Sea of Silt as they seek out new deals to negotiate and new stock to fill their markets.

## Sky Singers' Market

The Sky Singers' market in the heart of Nibenay's Hill District becomes a bustling center of trade and entertainment whenever the tribe is in the city. Nestled among ancient ruins and dilapidated buildings, the market features a crowded square of tents and stalls of all sizes. When the tribe is off wandering, many of the tents are stored in the buildings, which the elves rent year round. A small market is maintained throughout the year, and elf traders take turns staying behind to run it.

This market is the largest the tribe ever establishes—bigger than their bazaars in Gulg, Balic, or any of the villages and oases of the Ivory Triangle. While the following details pertaining to the many tents and stalls specifically describe the Nibenay market, they are applicable (albeit on a smaller scale) wherever the tribe sets up to trade. Any tents that stock illegal goods also have a supply of mundane items to use as cover should the templars or city guards wander by.

Note that on the accompanying map (pages 48 and 49), the shaded buildings represent multistoried structures, and the locations of elf guards (both hidden and in plain sight) are marked with a "G" for guard. The numbered locations are either permanent structures or those areas important to the tribe. Lettered locations refer to the stalls and tent shops that make up the bulk of the bazaar.

### 1. Permanent Market/Dayjumpers Clan Camp.

This large building was once the home of a wealthy noble who long ago fell out of the sorcerer-king's favor. It is now leased to the Sky Singers, serving as the tribe's headquarters and permanent market. The Day-jumpers clan provides the majority of the elf traders who elect to stay in the city, and this building also serves as the clan's camp while the full market is open. The year-round traders conduct deals, store goods, and even operate a small number of market tents as time and circumstances permit. If adventurers need spell components, banned goods, or even normal traveling items, this building and its inhabitants can usually accommodate them.

**2. Happy Hurrum Tavern.** This crumbling clay-brick building becomes a lively, often unruly tavern when the entire tribe is present. The Dayjumpers clan operates the tavern, providing food, drink, and light entertainment to visitors who have money and a desire to enjoy themselves. Elf serving girls constantly flirt with male customers, urging them to eat and drink with smiles, winks, and gentle touches. The same can be said of the male servers who



## The Elf Tribes

concentrate on female patrons. The servers work the crowd, swiping a coin pouch here and a treasured item there—but they never take so much as to draw significant attention. Elf warriors stand in as bouncers and protectors, though most of the young servers can protect themselves. Tale singers wander the floor, telling stories and providing news to the accompaniment of elven instruments. Games of chance (both legitimate and crooked) can be played here, and many deals are struck over pitchers of elven wine and plates of steaming food. The clan maintains a limited number of sleeping chambers for those visitors desperate enough to pay for a room at an elven inn.

**3. Flame Singer's Tent.** The tribe's cleric, an elemental fire singer named Jaraati, tends to spiritual needs from this location. The flame singer and her apprentices sell their skills to those in need, healing the wounded, curing the ill, and casting whatever other priestly spells are required—all for a negotiated price. Jaraati and her helpers are mostly honest, though they have been known to charge more than a spell is worth and even to sell a spell that none of the clerics could actually cast. If a customer makes a donation to the spirits of fire while recuperating (read, while the customer is unconscious or otherwise unaware), so much the better. The flame singer may seek to strike a deal, but she never refuses to help someone in need unless her spells have been exhausted.

**Jaraati Dayjumper:** C9; AL CG; AC 5 (leather armor plus Dexterity); MV 15; hp 37; THAC0 16 (18 with club); #AT 1; Dmg 1d6-1 (stone club); Str 14, Dex 16, Con 13, Int 17, Wis 14, Cha 17; Spells—4 1st, 4 2nd, 3 3rd, 2 4th, 1 5th.

**4. Twilightcatchers Clan Camp.** These two brick buildings are in fairly good shape, and they serve as the living area for the Twilightcatchers clan while the market is in session. The larger, two-storied structure is used primarily as a sleeping barracks. The smaller building also serves this purpose, but has another use as well. Its shadowy interior holds many of the tribe's most potent magical items,

including the bulk of the ancient artifacts that recently came into the Sky Singers' possession. Powerful elf wizards, warriors, and multiclassed individuals maintain a constant vigil over the arcane stock. Only customers who have been thoroughly checked (through mundane, magical, and psionic means) are admitted to this building, and even then spells and psionics are used to distort the customers' memory and perceptions to safeguard the location. Note that PCs cannot purchase or otherwise secure more than two major magical items from the tribe, and the price of these items should be tied to the main plot of a major adventure.

**5. Chief's Camp.** Chief Muuton, his guards, and his aides reside in this tall stone building while the market is in session. He conducts fairly little tribal business within the building's confines, however, as Muuton believes it is bad luck to discuss important matters hidden from the sun, moons, and elements. There are always 12 seasoned warriors near the chief, though most of them remain hidden until needed.

**6. Dawnchasers Clan Camp.** These two buildings of ancient stone once housed wealthy free craftsmen in the days when this area of the city was rich and prosperous. Now it serves as the living area for the Dawnchasers clan. The buildings only see use while the market is open and the bulk of the tribe is in Nibenay. The clan operates a number of stalls out of one of the buildings. These deal in traveling supplies, fresh food, clothing, leather goods, and other animal byproducts. A larger tent on the roof of the building offers a selection of elf-crafted weapons made of bone and stone.

**7. Ancient Ruin.** This extremely old building probably has ties to the ancient palace called the Hill, which gives this section of Nibenay its name. Unlike the Hill, this structure is not used to house either elves or trade goods. The Sky Singers refuse to enter its dark confines, and all kinds of legends and horror stories have grown up around it. Ancient carvings and tile mosaics show scenes



of lush forests being savaged by foul creatures straight out of nightmares. The elves set guards atop the building's lowest roof to watch over the market, but that's the extent of their dealings with the place.

**8. Animal Corral.** The fences around the Dawnchasers clan building mark the boundaries of the animal corral. Here, the Dawnchasers watch over the tribe's animals (including kanks, crodlu, and a few carru) that have been brought into the city. The majority of the herd remains outside, under the watch of other Dawnchasers. The corral can be divided to make room for outsiders' animals. The elves will watch and care for these animals for a price: 2 cp per day for kanks and crodlu, and 5 cp for inix. They do not offer facilities for mekillots.

**9. Fountain.** This old, badly maintained fountain offers a trickle of water to thirsty residents. At certain times of the day, the fountain's trickle refuses to run. The elves are ready for these dry periods. Each of the potters also carries stored water for purchase.

**10. Tent of the Dancing Swords.** When the entertainment offered in the Happy Hurrum isn't enough, customers can file into this large, elaborate tent for a good time. Male and female elves dance to seductive elven music as customers cheer and whistle. Drinks and light meals are available. The talented members of the Dayjumpers clan have even been known to serve a temple from time to time. When the dancers aren't performing, elven acrobats demonstrate their skill and derring-do. Admission to the tent is 1 cp.

**11. Tent of the Singing Sands.** The Dawnchasers clan operates this entertainment facility, which specializes in music and song. Customers come in to hear the captivating voices of the tribe's most gifted singers, who regale them with heroic ballads, bawdy limericks, and humorous songs. The clan also performs a new form of entertainment—group storytelling, or plays. Members of the clan became captivated by the performances made famous by the ex-slaves of Salt View, and they have since been per-

fecting their own version of the art form. Instead of simply telling a story with a large cast of actors, the Dawnchasers sing their tales to the accompaniment of elven music. Admission to the tent is 1 cp (2 cp on the night of a play).

**12. Wizard's Quarters.** The tribe's elder wizard resides in this stone building when the market is open. The current elder wizard is Guvaano Twilightcatcher, a 12th-level preserver. He shares the building with his apprentices. Many arcane wards protect the dwelling, as well as fighter/mage and fighter/psionicist guards assigned by the clan. Guvaano is an ally of Nibenay's Veiled Alliance, though few tribe members outside the Twilightcatchers know this. Even Muuton isn't sure of this connection, though he suspects that the tribe sometimes receives help from outsiders.

**Guvaano Twilightcatcher:** W12; AL CG; AC 6 (Dexterity); MV 18; hp 27; THAC0 17 (18 with dagger); #AT 1; Dmg 1d4-1 (bone dagger); Str 15, Dex 19, Con 12, Int 18, Wis 13, Cha 13; Spells—4 1st, 4 2nd, 4 3rd, 4 4th, 4 5th, 1 6th.

**13. Artisans' Tent.** Elf craftsmen labor in this large tent, producing many of the goods sold in the stalls. The artisans also take on special commissions, crafting items to the specific orders of wealthy customers. Visitors may enter the tent to observe the workers, but only expensive custom orders may be placed here. All other sales occur at the appropriate trade tents and stalls.

**14. Smuggler's Den.** This low, dilapidated structure of baked mud and clay is a storehouse and exchange site for the Twilightcatchers' smuggling operation. Goods that have been banned or obtained by illegal means are routed through this location to waiting customers. The clan often takes on specific jobs, serving as carriers of banned goods from one city to another. Psionicist guards examine clients very carefully before any deals are struck or concluded.

**A. Weapons (Stone and Bone).** These tents and stalls deal in weapons of all descriptions. Some are of elven



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make and design, but many are simply weapons the elves have gathered in their travels. These tents are the most well-stocked of the weapons traders, for bone and stone is in plentiful supply for constructing weapons. Some stalls have a small number of enchanted weapons for sale, though all will first attempt to pass a fake magical weapon off as the real thing.

**Typical Elf Trader:** Tr2; AL NG; AC 5 (leather armor plus Dexterity); MV 15; hp 7; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8-1 (bone long sword); Str 13, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 13, Cha 15; Bargain proficiency 11.

**B. Weapons (Metal).** This stall carries weapons of iron and even a few ancient metal arms. A few are magical; all are expensive. The stall appears as a simple kank honey shop (and kank honey items can be purchased here). Metal weapons are kept hidden until a serious customer is identified.

**C. Fine Clothing.** The best finery of elven and human make fills these tents, offering a wide selection of expensive clothing to those with the silver to afford it. The clients usually come from the noble or merchant classes, though an occasional freeman will come looking for a regal outfit.

**D. Spell Components.** These tents carry spell components, the ingredients necessary to cast spells. To outward appearances, the tents seem to be selling herbs and spices, but mages in need who have money or items to trade can stock up on magical supplies. Because spell components are illegal in the city-states, the proprietors of these stalls are very careful about who they sell to, and costs start at triple what the components are actually worth.

**E. Dried Meats.** Various meats are on sale here, many prepared and spiced according to exotic recipes. The meats are dried and preserved to last in the desert heat. While adding to the diets of the locals, these meats also make excellent traveling fare for independent traders and adventurers.

**F. Shoes and Boots.** Footwear, both pre-made and specially crafted, can be obtained in these stalls. On rare occasions, the tent on the roof of the Dayjumpers clan building has a few pairs of magical footwear to sell.

**G. Guards.** Elf guards are posted around the marketplace. Some are in plain view, others are out of sight until needed. They watch for troublemakers, thieves, and agents of their competitors and the sorcerer-king. Typical elf guards are fighters of 2nd to 4th level, though some are multiclassed psionicists or mages.

**Typical Elf Guard:** F3; AL NG; AC 4 (leather armor plus Dexterity); MV 16; hp 21; THAC0 17 (16 with long sword); #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 (bone long sword); Str 17, Dex 17, Con 15, Int 13, Wis 11, Cha 12.

**H. Magical Items.** This obscure tent, hidden in the alleys between the Twilightcatchers clan buildings, carries a select supply of magical items. Potion fruits, talismans, wards, and good luck charms (some of which are occasionally genuine) make up the bulk of this tent's wares. Also stocked are whatever items the clan has brought to market, including various texts and scrolls, rings, wands, and the rare miscellaneous magical item. This tent never has more than six genuine items available at any given time.

**I. Elven Instruments.** This tent carries beautifully crafted elven musical instruments. The wares include lyrans, staff pipes, and more traditional instruments, including a few of human make. The shop also stocks some magical staves and rods for those with the money and the knowledge to ask.

**J. Gems and Jewelry.** Elven jewelry is among the most beautifully crafted on all of Athas. Since metal is so rare, elven jewelers set precious stones in bands of stone or bone to create rings, bracelets, and necklaces. Some of this jewelry is enchanted, though fakes are more prevalent than real magical items. These stalls also handle a steady traffic of gems, which the elves convert to currency or trade vouchers for use at other shops in the market.



**K. Alcoholic Beverages.** Fermented fruit and an assortment of wines and ales can be purchased here. In addition to the alcoholic brews of the various city-states and villages, the Sky Singers produce their own wine from kank honey. This beverage is an acquired taste, however, and profits are higher on the beers from the city-states.

**L. Armor.** These tents and stalls stock various pieces of leather and hide armor. If a customer is lucky, he or she might be able to find a piece of metal armor or even a magical item among the wares. Pieces right off the rack are slightly cheaper than those fitted to a customer's specific size and shape.

**M. Bargain Clothing.** Typical citizens, working freemen, and ordinary adventurers cannot afford to purchase fine suits for everyday wear. Instead, they shop at these stalls for clothing at bargain prices. Shirts, pants, cloaks, hats, and other traveling garments can be found here.

**N. Fruits and Vegetables.** Fruits and vegetables from the forests, verdant belts, and oases are sold here. The quality and quantity of the wares depend on how good trading was while the Sky Singers made their trading circuit as well as when a customer comes by. Obviously, the earlier in the market session, the better the selection will be. Some of the stalls stock a small selection of fruit potions.

**O. Pottery.** Ceramic pots, bowls, and vases fill these stalls. As with other trade tents, elven-crafted items are stocked beside items made by other artisans. These shops also sell water stored in sealed jars.

**P. Pets.** The Dawnchasers clan offers household animals for sale in this noisy, crowded tent. Hurrum, critics, lizards, great cats, ock'n, and other small animals can be purchased here. Exotic and even banned creatures may sometimes be obtained, and the clan is not above taking on a special commission to find such an animal.

**Q. Candles.** Besides purely functional candles, these stalls sell candles in decorative shapes, some of which give

off pleasant aromas, and even a few that supposedly provide magical effects. A few actually are enchanted.

**R. Leather Goods.** Everything from weapon harnesses to animal barding can be obtained here. Although boots, clothing, and armor aren't available, anything else made of leather is, including belts, pouches, packs, and sheathes.

**S. Tattoos.** From simple shapes to exquisite illustrations, the elves of the Twilightcatchers clan produce striking examples of body art for those who can afford it. By prior agreement with Muuton, one of the elves working here is actually a member of the Night Runners. She watches for customers who might need the dark talents of her tribe.

**T. Confections.** Candy made from kank honey, fruit pulp, and other ingredients are presented in a manner to entice customers to sample the sweet wares. These types of treats are rare in the city-states, so the expense puts them out of reach of most citizens. Nobles, however, stock up on the sweets whenever the market comes to town.

**U. Stone/Bone Carvers.** Tools, knives, and works of art are created by elf carvers.

**V. Weaver.** Elven looms spin fine textiles, which are sold in this tent. The quality and designs are particularly good, and the sorcerer-king himself is rumored to purchase cloth for his templars from time to time.

**W. Wooden Goods.** Wood is almost as rare as metal on the dying world of Athas. When a supply becomes available, it is turned into weapons and other items that are sold here. The crafters will also create items from wood brought in by a customer, and sometimes they even stock wares made by the halflings of the Forest Ridge. Items made in Gulg or crafted from wood taken from the Crescent Forest are illegal. These items can be found among the legal wares, however.

**X. Fine Art.** Nibenay's nobility is especially fond of work of art that can be displayed and admired. Paintings and sculptures fill this tent, waiting to catch the eye of a





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noble or his or her agents. The elves consider this type of art to be useless and even laughable, but they will produce and stock it as long as someone keeps buying it.

**Y. Glassware.** Elf glassblowers create wondrously shaped bottles, jars, and works of art to the delight of watching customers. All have a flame motif in deference to the element of fire, which the Sky Singers revere.

**Z. Travel Supplies.** To travel the burning wastes, a person must be well prepared. The supplies that travelers and adventurers need can be purchased here, though these tents do not stock magical items of any sort. Rope, waterskins, bedrolls, tents, and other ordinary yet essential items fill these tents.

### Important Tribe Members

#### Muuton Sky Singer

Male Elf Trader/Fighter, Neutral Good

Armor Class 3 (leather, Dex)	Str 15
Movement 19	Dex 20
Level 12/9	Con 13
Hit Points 47	Int 16
THAC0 12 (11 with long sword)	Wis 15
No. of Attacks 1	Cha 18
Damage/Attack: 1d8 (bone <i>long sword</i> +1)	
Psionic Summary: PSPs 66; Wild Talent—Displacement (PS Con -3; Cost 6+3/round)	

Muuton Sky Singer leads the tribe with strength, cunning, and a strong business sense. He loves to make deals, and the sounds of his tribe's market haggling give him much pleasure in the now. Still, he dreams of bigger things. A young 58, Muuton wants to make the Sky Singers the most powerful merchants in the Tyr region. Despite the pain caused by the recent slaughter of his tribe mates, he cannot help but take that as an indication that he is moving in the right direction. Muuton wears an

ornate cloak over decorated leather armor. A helm of leather and roc feathers is his mantle of office.

#### Kiiretti Dayjumper

Female Elf Trader, Chaotic Good

Armor Class 5 (leather, Dex)	Str 11
Movement 14	Dex 14
Level 14	Con 9
Hit Points 54	Int 15
THAC0 14	Wis 18
No. of Attacks 1	Cha 19
Damage/Attack: 1d4+1 (stone <i>dagger</i> +2)	
Psionic Summary: PSPs 72; Wild Talent—Time Shift (PS Int; Cost 16)	

Kiiretti Dayjumper is the tribe's current trade master—a post she has held for the last five years. While other advisory posts shift personnel regularly, Kiiretti has been able to maintain and even increase her personal base of power. Besides her aggressive tactics, shrewd trading sense, and natural charisma, the beautiful and forceful Kiiretti also has a psionic wild talent that proves useful in her negotiations with others. With time shift, she can peer into the future to see what her opponents (and she treats everyone except Muuton as an opponent) are going to do. Then she adjusts her own plans accordingly. She has helped the tribe grow wealthy through her endeavors, and it seems likely she shall remain trade master for the foreseeable future.

#### Abyuuk Dawnchaser

Male Elf Ranger, Neutral Good

Armor Class 3 (leather, Dex)	Str 17
Movement 17	Dex 18
Level 10	Con 15
Hit Points 55	Int 14



THACO 11 (7 with long sword)      Wis 14  
 No. of Attacks 3/2                      Cha 11  
 Damage/Attack: 1d8+3 (bone *long sword* +3)  
 Psionic Summary: PSPs 64; Wild Talent—Shadow-form  
 (PS Con -6; Cost 12+3/round)

Abyuuk Dawnchaser serves as commander of the elven guard. He won the post through his bravery and fighting prowess. The elven guard protects not only the Sky Singers' markets, but they also operate as the tribe's first line of defense. Abyuuk's ranger skills and psionic wild talent make him a very effective warrior; but he also understands military tactics and knows how to lead fighters in battle. He is particularly concerned about safety in the wake of the recent murders and has doubled the number of guards on patrol. When the true culprit is identified, Abyuuk plans to personally lead the counterstrike with as many warriors as he can muster.

## Wind Dancers

Not all elf tribes are as prosperous or successful as the Sky Singers tribe. Some must struggle through every now, undergoing a constant battle to survive in the harsh, unforgiving wastes. Such is the case with the Wind Dancers tribe. The Wind Dancers once roamed the Great Alluvial Sand Wastes from Tyr to Balic, tending huge herds of kanks and living a rich and peaceful existence. The tribe was beginning a small business in trade, mostly as carriers of goods between the two city-states. But as every elf knows, hardship strikes when the now is happy and bright, and that is what happened to the Wind Dancers.

Two years past, a terrible disease ravaged the tribe's kank herd. No matter what the elves or their element singers attempted, the kanks continued to die. Worse, the elves themselves were not immune to the disease. Many died, and those who didn't were incapacitated, until only

a small percentage of the tribe remained on its feet to offer care and provide protection. Fewer than 50 elves were sufficiently strong enough to cook, tend the remaining kanks and tribe members, and stand guard. It was then, at the height of the Wind Dancers' vulnerability, that a thri-kreen hunting pack attacked.

The horde was the largest number of thri-kreen the Wind Dancers had ever seen assembled. Perhaps some similar disaster had befallen the insect-men, for never had so many of them banded together before. They were hungry and desperate, and the Wind Dancers were a feast set before them. Between the disease and the hungry thri-kreen, the Wind Dancers lost all their remaining kanks and most of their numbers. Of 2,000 elves, only 400 survived the twin plagues. There was some retribution, however: the disease ravaged their thri-kreen attackers a few weeks later, killing large numbers of the insect men.

Until the Wind Dancers tribe can rebuild itself, it must do whatever it can to survive. Now, with hungry mouths to feed and few choices on how to accomplish this, the elves have turned to raiding. While the majority of the tribe hopes to return to herding, a small but vocal minority has enjoyed taking sustenance by force. They are determined that raiding shall be the new road to follow in the elves' journey through the nows.

## Organization

Santhaal Wind Dancer took command of those elves who escaped the vicious thri-kreen attack. She forced them past their despair and onto a productive course of action. Before disease and battle decimated the Wind Dancers, Santhaal had been the tribe's warlord; she had been responsible for commanding the warriors and defending the tribe. When the tribe's chief died in the plague, the elves lost all cohesiveness. They needed a strong leader who could inspire them if they were to survive the nows to come. Santhaal decided she was the elf for the job. After



## The Elf Tribes

gathering the survivors and organizing the first successful raid, she was declared chief.

Only two clans remain of the five that originally made up the Wind Dancers tribe. The handful of members of the other clans that survived have been assimilated into the two clans by order of Santhaal. These clans, the Airhunters and the Breezechasers, form the basis for the Wind Dancers' return to glory. Even though the two clans continue to maintain separate leaders, Santhaal makes them operate together by intermingling members in the same raiding parties. As far as the chief is concerned, Airhunters and Breezechasers must be as one clan if the Wind Dancers tribe is going to survive.

Santhaal's advisers are drawn from the warrior classes. Even the tribe's element singer and master mage have a militaristic approach to life. For a tribe of simple herders turned raiders, the leadership that warriors can provide takes precedence over every other concern.

The tribe is divided into raiding parties consisting of 50 elves—men, women, and children from both clans. A raid master commands each party and also serves as one of Santhaal's advisers. Parties can be combined when larger numbers are needed. In such cases, Santhaal herself operates as raid master, or she assigns a leader to command the combined forces.

### Recent History

After spending more than a year on the run and subsisting on starvation rations, the Wind Dancers have begun to make a name for themselves as capable raiders. They do not yet inspire the levels of fear and terror associated with the Black Sand Raiders or the Silt Stalkers, but the traders south of Tyr have learned to be wary of this desperate tribe of elves. In the wake of the ravaging plague and the subsequent attack by thri-kreen hunters, the tribe was reduced to few possessions, almost no supplies, and less than a quarter of its number. The elves literally had to

start from scratch. While things have gotten better than they were in the dark days that witnessed their desperate flight from the thri-kreen, the Wind Dancers remain on the brink of extinction.

During a recent raid on Fort Adros, the Wind Dancers were ambushed by gith warriors. The fort, located about 35 miles north of the Lost Oasis, opened its gates so that a caravan carrying gold bound for Altaruk could exit. As the caravan moved away from the protection of the fort, the Wind Dancers swarmed out of the wastes. The raid was going smoothly when the gith decided to attack. They came out of the mountains north of the Lost Oasis, seeking to take what the elves had fought for. The three-way battle ended with the elves and gith running off with about a third of the cargo each. The rest was carried back to the fort by the remaining members of the caravan. This was the latest incident in the growing conflict between the Wind Dancers and the Blood Clan gith of the southern wastes.

To bolster the strength of the Wind Dancers, Santhaal has allowed outcasts from other elf tribes to join her raiders. The newest of these outcast elves is a defiler named Duukodo. Many of the tribe members feel uncomfortable with this addition, for the tribe has traditionally been home to preserver magic. The tribe's master mage, a preserver named Riikaa Breezechaser, doesn't like the defiler, but she has agreed to his inclusion at the insistence of the chief and because the tribe needs the power Duukodo's magic provides. Horuum Airhunter, the tribe's wind singer, has not accepted the defiler, however. His vocal protests could force Santhaal to choose between her chief cleric and the new magic-user.

Such a decision will have to wait, though, as Santhaal is busy planning a major raid on House Wavir's Outpost 10. The small trading post on the edge of the Ringing Mountains has been receiving large shipments from the Forest Ridge, and Santhaal wants to plunder as much as she can before the caravans arrive from Balic to haul the goods away.



## Relations with Outsiders

All outsiders, with the exception of outcasts from other elf tribes, are looked upon as enemies or sources of plunder by the elves of the Wind Dancers tribe. Elven outcasts are offered a place in the tribe if they agree to swear loyalty to Santhaal. The chief has decided on this practice in order to increase the tribe's depleted numbers. The rest of the Wind Dancers aren't pleased by this disregard of tradition, but they understand that the tribe must grow quickly if it is going to survive. The initiation process does include a number of tests of loyalty, many of which Santhaal administers herself. This testing has mollified the two existing clans to a degree.

House Wavir of Balic and House Inika of Gulg have

bolstered the caravans that service this portion of the Tyr region with more guards, but this has not yet served to deter the desperate Wind Dancers. Because the two merchant houses currently operate as allies, the possibility of them raising an army of mercenaries to send after the Wind Dancers is a virtual certainty.

A tribe of gith that inhabits the mountains north of the Lost Oasis has come into conflict with the Wind Dancers on at least six separate occasions over the past year. The Blood Clan, as the gith call themselves, are attracted to the same targets of opportunity that interest the Wind Dancers. Santhaal doesn't believe her tribe is ready to go to war with the gith, but she may be forced to if the foul creatures continue to strike at the elves' raiding parties. In fact, the Blood Clan has recently begun shadowing the



## The Elf Tribes

Wind Dancers, waiting for the elves to launch a raid—and then swooping in to take a portion for themselves.

The Wind Dancers recently made another enemy. The elves plundered a small caravan on its way to Altaruk, killing all its members when they refused to surrender their possessions. This caravan was made up of ex-slaves from a tiny village near Grak's Pool, and their deaths did not go unnoticed. The slave tribe called Sortar's Army, which considers itself locked in a war against the city-states, sees all those who would harm or hinder ex-slaves as enemies to be destroyed. Sortar and his berserkers are now looking for the Wind Dancers, and they have retribution on their minds. (See DSR1, *Slave Tribes*, for more information on Sortar's Army.)

### Current Endeavors

Once the Wind Dancers were prosperous herders beginning to develop a trade route between Tyr and Balic; now they live as savage raiders. In the two years since disease and war reduced the tribe, Chief Santhaal has been training her elves to fight, to steal, and to take what they require by force of arms. With the constant threats of thri-kreen, gith, slave tribes, and caravan guards looming over them—not to mention the other hazards of the wastes—Santhaal wants her tribe to be as prepared and capable of defense as possible.

The tribe tends to be extremely violent during the initial moments of a raid. They strike swiftly, hoping to cripple their target so that the rest of the raid goes smoothly. During these sweeps of bloodthirsty violence, the tribe seeks to vent some of its pent-up anger and sorrow. However, once the first line of defense is broken, the raiders seem to recover their composure. They become almost apologetic and careful not to kill any more people than they must. But make no mistake: the tribe remains in desperate straits and will go to any lengths to secure the things it needs to survive.

Other than Santhaal's push to train her tribe for battle, the Wind Dancers have no set plan or agenda. The elves have learned where the best ambushes can be set, but they rarely make grand plans or elaborate preparations prior to engaging in a raid. They are marauders of opportunity, taking advantage of whatever travelers, caravans, or poorly defended settlements happen across their paths. They do make periodic checks on the forts and oases of the wastes to see what kind of activity is in progress, but that is the extent of their planned routine.

The Wind Dancers became raiders because of the circumstances that battered them into poverty. The tribe is a long way from becoming well-seasoned raiders, and many of its members aren't sure that they want to be raiders once the herd has grown to sufficient size to support them. Most of Santhaal's advisers, however, like the direction the tribe is taking. They are elves with a military mindset, and they see raiding as the best way to keep the tribe strong.

As long as the tribe follows a philosophy of combat, these advisers believe they will maintain their positions of power. If they can continue to convince Santhaal that marauding is the best direction for the Wind Dancers, then the tribe will remain a hindrance to the southern traders.

### Area of Activity

The Wind Dancers tribe wanders the Great Alluvial Sand Wastes, traveling as far north as Tyr and as far south as the Lost Oasis in its search for plunder. The tribe has only a limited number of kank to haul supplies, and each elf must carry his or her own items.

Santhaal regularly leads her raiders against House Wavir's Outpost 10 and the caravans from Balic that service it. She also orders periodic attack on Fort Adros and the traders it defends along the gold route between Walis and Altaruk.



## Important Tribe Members

### Santhaal Wind Dancer

Female Elf Fighter, Chaotic Neutral  
 Armor Class 1 (*war smock* +1, Dex) Str 16  
 Movement 17 Dex 18  
 Level 11 Con 12  
 Hit Points 64 Int 14  
 THAC0 10 (11 with long sword) Wis 11  
 No. of Attacks: 3/2 Cha 16  
 Damage/Attack: 1d8 (stone long sword, Str)  
 Psionic Summary: PSPs 54; Wild Talent—Project Force  
 (PS Con -2; Cost 10)

Santhaal was originally charged with the defense of the herders of the Wind Dancers tribe. She carried out this position well—until the illness struck. No matter how strong she was, no matter how skilled with sword and bow, there was no way for Santhaal to fight the disease. It even claimed her beloved, Chief Wooguun. Unable to strike back at the plague, Santhaal stood helpless as those whom she'd sworn to protect died. When the thri-kreen attacked, all she and her warriors could do was flee.

Now Santhaal rules the tribe, and she promises that every member will learn to protect him- or herself. Her vision is that, though the Wind Dancers are now weak, soon their raids will be the stuff of song.

Santhaal wears a leather smock covered with flat squares of carved stones and bones that have been engraved with arcane symbols of protection. The scar across her face has done little to mar her natural beauty and charismatic nature.

### Duukodo

Male Elf Defiler, Neutral Evil

Armor Class 7 (Dex) Str 9  
 Movement 16 Dex 17

Level 9 Con 10  
 Hit Points 26 Int 19  
 THAC0 18 (17 with dagger, Wis 12  
 19 with staff) Cha 16  
 No. of Attacks: 1  
 Damage/Attack: 1d4+1 (*metal dagger* +1),  
 1d6-1 (bone staff)  
 Spells: 4 1st, 3 2nd, 3 3rd, 2 4th, 1 5th

Duukodo joined the Wind Dancers only a short time ago, taking advantage of Santhaal's offer to elves who had been cast out from other tribes. He impressed the chief with his displays of arcane might and has since taken an unofficial role as one of her advisers. He has been very quiet about his past, though his future plans seem obvious to those not taken in by his power and charisma. Duukodo wants to lead the Wind Dancers—or at least become the power behind the throne. Why he wants this tribe remains a mystery, but it might have something to do with his expulsion from his previous tribe. Duukodo knows that the tribe's wind singer does not trust him and will eventually step forward to oppose him, but he plans to eliminate that threat before it comes to bear. Duukodo's spells are inscribed on the bone staff he carries, and he keeps his enchanted metal dagger hidden in his desert wrap.

### Meebog Airhunter

Male Elf Fighter/Trader, Neutral Good

Armor Class 8 (Dex) Str 12  
 Movement 16 Dex 17  
 Level 6/2 Con 13  
 Hit Points 27 Int 13  
 THAC0 15 Wis 16  
 No. of Attack: 1 Cha 13  
 Damage/Attack: 1d8-1 (bone long sword)  
 Psionic Summary: PSPs 36; Wild Talent—Truthear  
 (PS Wis; Cost 4+2/round)



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Meebog Airhunter was one of the first traders in the Wind Dancers tribe before the disaster struck. He had been learning the intricacies of mercantilism and helping to establish the tribe's first trade route. The illness that claimed so many of the elves also hampered Meebog, but he eventually recovered whereas most simply died. Since then, the tribe has changed direction dramatically. He understands the need for raiding, but he wants the tribe to return to its herding ways so that he can go back to learning how to be a merchant. He fears that Santhaal and her advisers want to remain raiders, and that would leave little room for peaceful trade. Meebog has become withdrawn and quiet since his illness, and his mood has not been helped by the marauding mentality hanging over the tribe. He would rather plunder through negotiation and wits than with a sword and bow, but he may have to leave the tribe in order to follow his desires.

### Silver Hands

The Silver Hands aren't a typical elf tribe on Athas. While other elves run free, the Silver Hands have decided to settle down. The tribe has claimed a small oasis as its own and bestowed upon it the lofty name of Silver Spring. Do not be deceived: there is nothing silver about this oasis except for the coins that the tribe's chief craves. The water is foul-tasting and less than clear, but it is safe to drink – and therein lies its attraction to the elves.

Silver Spring Oasis blossoms from the Tablelands near the main trade road from Urik to Tyr. It is a prime location that has long provided relief to travelers, offering a bit of shade and enough water to quench the thirst of even the largest caravan crew. Although its location made it a natural stopping point, its poor appearance and less-than-perfect water never inspired a settlement or fort to spring up around it. Then the Silver Hands tribe discovered the oasis, and everything changed.

The tribe's chief, with his passion for silver, saw a better

way to fill his packs and pockets than finding targets to rob. "Better to let them come to you and *then* rob them," Toramund decided. When the tribe happened upon the oasis during its wandering, the chief declared that the spot belonged to the Silver Hands. The tribe has controlled the oasis ever since. At first the elves simply set up a camp around the oasis and demanded payment from all travelers who stopped there. Eventually, they constructed a fortified compound to better enforce their claim to the property and to ensure that the area was protected from those who didn't want or couldn't afford to pay.

### Organization

Toramund leads the Silver Hands elves with humor and a driving obsession for wealth. He has a particular fondness for silver, and when he took command he changed the name of the tribe to reflect his own tastes. He is a cunning warrior and a crafty defiler who has infected his tribe with his own greed and desires. Unlike other elf leaders of a similar mold, Toramund readily shares all the wealth that comes his way with the entire tribe. He believes that by being generous to his followers, they will be less likely to hold back whatever wealth they obtain. He prefers to receive a portion of most of the tribe's income rather than hoarding all the obvious assets and missing out on income he might otherwise know nothing about.

The Silver Hands elves have long been a tribe of outlaws and raiders, though they never achieved the numbers necessary to make a name for themselves across the Tablelands. Toramund wrested control of the tribe from the previous chief by challenging her to a fight after a particularly long and festive celebration. While Toramund was clear-headed and alert, his rival Vorundi was intoxicated with too much fermented kank nectar and a potent jug of dwarven whiskey from South Ledopolus (graciously offered to her at the start of the festivities by Toramund). In addition to being Toramund's chief, Vorundi was also

# The Elf Tribes



his mother. The fight did not last long. Toramund killed Vorundi and declared himself chief of the tribe.

The tribe has no separate clans. All its members are Silver Hands elves. There are approximately 100 elves in the tribe; fully half that number are warriors. The rest of the tribe is composed of assorted thieves, traders, psionists, and children. There are also a few defilers and clerics to add power to the tribe.

There are only three official posts in the tribe—chief, protector of the wall, and keeper of the silver. Toramund, of course, is chief. The fighter Basettu is protector of the wall. It is his responsibility to defend the tribe and its property from any and all threats. Lastly, Toramund's daughter Torami serves as keeper of the silver. She keeps track of and watches over the tribe's assets, paying special attention to the silver her father loves so well. If Toramund ever considers that his daughter may do to him what he

did to his mother, he never shows it. It has been noted by older members of the tribe that he never drinks from skins or bottles offered to him by Torami, however.

## Recent History

At first, the Silver Hands tribe had to enforce payment for using the oasis by threats, hoping that whatever travelers visiting the spot were willing to turn over silver rather than fight. This method didn't always work, and many times the Silver Hands had to flee in the face of stronger and larger groups. Then Toramund had an idea. He had his elves construct a wall of sun-dried mud brick to protect the spring. This worked for a while, but then the Sun Runners tribe decided they didn't like the idea of a wall keeping them out. The Sun Runners' mage (who happened to be Sadira of Tyr) brought the wall down in a hail of powerful magicks.





## The Elf Tribes

Since then, the Silver Hands have built a bigger compound with sturdier walls. This fort has been constructed of stone, for Toramund blames the last disaster not on the power of the rival elves' wizard but on the vulnerability of fragile mud. In addition, Toramund has ordered his elves to admit the Sun Runners next time they appear. He would rather lose out on a few fees than have to rebuild the compound a third time. Further, if he can cause the Sun Runners to drop their guard, his elves might get an opportunity to strike back at them in some subtle way. Thievery, or perhaps poison, is usually safer than direct combat, Toramund reasons, and in some ways much more satisfying than drawing blood.

The tribe has been searching for a powerful defiler. Toramund prefers to keep his own wizardly powers secret, using them only when unobserved or absolutely necessary. Instead, he likes to have another defiler at his side to offer protection and to follow his orders. None of the mages born of his tribe are strong enough to fill his requirements, so he seeks outcast elves or mages from other races to serve him. His last defiler, an old human named Bademyr, died during the Sun Runners' last visit.

### Silver Spring Oasis

A lush field of tart-smelling ashbrush fills the area around the oasis. The brush is dun-colored and thorny, and burnt-orange rocks jut from the scrub plains. The elven compound—a looming fortress of stone blocks rising above the barrens—can be seen from the road. When travelers approach to within bowshot of the walls, elf guards call out the rules of the compound: "Two silver pieces each to water here and rest in relative safety. Pay or turn back." Then an elf appears from a hidden entrance to collect the fees. The gates will not open until payment is received, and most violence is returned in kind by the bow-wielding guards upon the walls.

Inside, the small pond is full of brown, bad-tasting

water. Around it wait the elven tents, full of goods to trade and deals to be struck. If a traveler is careful and keeps his wits about him, he might even come away with a worthwhile item and most of his money.

The descriptions below are keyed to the accompanying map of the oasis.

**1. Warrior Tents.** The fighters and multiclassed warriors charged with defending the compound live in these long tents. The warriors follow strict schedules so that there are always guards atop the walls. If trouble occurs, all of the warriors can be assembled within minutes. All warriors carry long bows, a quiver of arrows, and a long sword made of bone or stone.

**Elf Warrior:** F3; AL N; AC 5 (leather armor, Dexterity); MV 15; hp 19; THAC0 18 (17 with long sword, 17 with long bow); #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 (bone long sword, Str) or 1d6 (bone-tipped arrow, Str); ML 11; Str 17, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 11, Wis 9, Cha 9.

**2. Defilers' Tent.** Toramund provides this tent for the use of whatever defiler he recruits. It also serves as the living quarters for the three low-level elf defilers that were born into the tribe. These elves dislike the idea that Toramund seeks wizard talent from outsiders, but they also know that they do not possess the power their chief requires. They continue to hope that the next mage to come to the Silver Hands will agree to tutor them in the higher arcane arts. Until then, they continue the long process of self-study. They are constantly on the lookout for travelers who might be wizards, for they are eager to increase their store of spells, arcane texts, and magical items through whatever means are necessary.

**Elf Defiler:** D4; AL NE; AC 9 (Dexterity); MV 14; hp 11; THAC0 19 (20 with dagger); #AT 1; Dmg 1d4-1 (bone dagger); ML 9; Str 9, Dex 15, Con 9, Int 14, Wis 10, Cha 11.

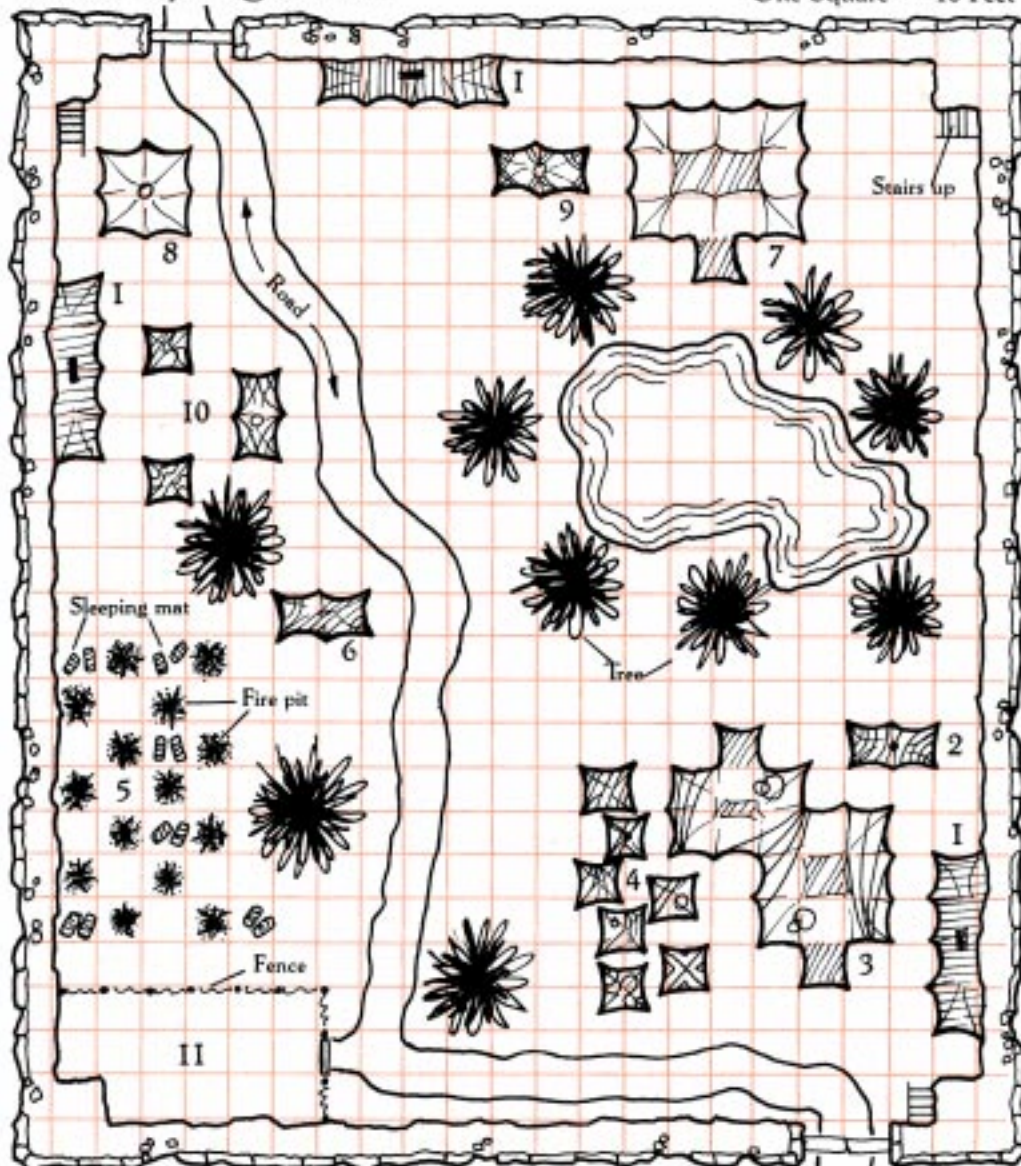
**3. Chief's Palace and Common Living Tent.** This huge tent serves as Toramund's personal living area and

# The Elf Tribes



## Silver Spring Oasis

One Square = 10 Feet



1. Warrior tent
2. Defiler's tent
3. Chief's palace and common living tent
4. Oasis market
5. Travelers' camp
6. Camp supplies

7. Tent of Delights
8. Provisions
9. Warrior leaders' tent
10. Living tents
11. Animal pen



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court, and as the common living area for the rest of the tribe. Toramund and his personal guards live here in a portion of the tent blocked off by flowing curtains. The larger common area houses the tribe's children and those elves who have no other place to sleep. Sometimes the common area is cleared so that Toramund can hold court or entertain important visitors. Toramund's private collection of silver and treasures is stored here, under the watchful eye of his daughter Torami.

**Personal Elf Guard:** F/Ps 6/6; AL N; AC 4 (Braxat hide armor, Dexterity); MV 15; hp 26; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 (bone long sword, Str); ML 13; Str 16, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 13.

**4. Oasis Market.** The tents of the oasis market are filled with cheap, gaudy goods that carry hefty price tags. All items have been "improved" with decorative elements to justify prices three times more expensive than those offered elsewhere—improvements include a few extra stitches here, a few more beads there, etc. Common goods of all descriptions can usually be found here, as can a few "exotic" items that are often only slightly altered common goods. For example, a battered bone sword might be engraved with a few meaningless runes and hawked as the legendary weapon of Colwyn of Bodach. The elves also sell spell components, and every so often a real treasure shows up in the market. But in order for a genuine treasure to escape Toramund's private collection, it must be so obscure or disguised as to appear to have little or no true worth.

**Elf Trader:** Tr1; AL CN; AC 6 (leather plus Dexterity); MV 14; hp 5; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8-1 (obsidian long sword); Str 11, Dex 15, Con 9, Int 15, Wis 12, Cha 16; Bargain proficiency 10.

**5. Travelers' Camp.** The Silver Hands provide space within their compound for travelers to make camp. This area is treated as an outdoor inn. For an additional silver piece (or something of equivalent value), the elves provide

a sleeping mat, a small camp site, and a fire pit. Those travelers who take advantage of the elves' hospitality are bothered by peddlers and wandering entertainers throughout their stay. They must also beware of elf thieves who regularly prey upon the campers. The thieves do not steal so much from a single person as to be readily noticed, but they often take possession of a valuable item or two.

**Elf Thief:** T5; AL N; AC 6 (leather armor, Dexterity); MV 15; hp 22; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8-1 (bone long sword); ML 10; Str 12, Dex 16, Con 10, Int 13, Wis 9, Cha 11.

**6. Camp Supplies.** This tent holds all the supplies for the travelers' camp. Visitors pay their silver here to receive sleeping mats and kindling from the elves on duty. The tent also has a small cooking fire to prepare meals (which cost twice as much as the fare at city inns), and it stocks wine and ale for those visitors inclined to drink something other than foul water.

**7. Tent of Delights.** Elf entertainers sing and dance for audiences in this tavern/show hall. The drinks are strong and often as foul-tasting as the water outside, but the singers and dancers are good. Most cannot compare to the entertainers found among the Sky Singers, for example, but a few come quite close. Friendly customers who can afford to pay may avail themselves of elven company during their stay in the compound.

**8. Provisions.** Traveling supplies may be purchased from the elves in this tent. The items are costly, but all are of good quality. They stock no magical items. If visitors anger or insult the Silver Hands, the provisions they purchase might be laced with some type of poison. Occasionally, the elves will poison a particularly wealthy visitor with a deadly but slow-acting brew. Then they will follow after in order to loot the visitor's dead body once it falls to the ground.

**9. Warrior Leaders.** Basettu, the protector of the wall, and his warrior lieutenants share this tent. Their personal

# The Elf Tribes



belongings are stored here, and this is where they come to sleep and relax. The accommodations are less spartan than the warriors' tents, but not nearly as opulent as the chief's living area. Four leaders live here, in addition to Basettu.

**Warrior Lieutenant:** F7; AL NE; AC 2 (Braxat hide armor, Dexterity); MV 16; hp 47; THAC0 14 (13 with long sword); #AT 3/2; Dmg 1d8+2 (obsidian long sword, Strength); Str 18, Dex 17 Con 14, Int 15, Wis 11, Cha 16.

**10. Living Tents.** These tents serve as living areas for other members of the tribe who do not live in the warrior tents or in the common tent. These are elves who desire a bit more privacy and have been granted it by Toramund. Traders, successful thieves, and a few of the more popular entertainers live here.

**11. Animal Pen.** The elves maintain this facility to keep and tend animals brought in by visitors. The small number of kanks that the tribe keeps are also corralled here. The two silver piece fee must be paid for all animals brought to the compound that wish to partake of the water of the oasis. If an animal's owner decides to spend any amount of time in the compound, then the animal must be left in the pen. The fee for using the pen is one silver piece. Mekillots are not permitted in the compound, but water may be brought to these creatures outside the walls if the normal fee is paid.

## Relations with Outsiders

Everyone is welcome at the Silver Spring Oasis—provided they have the monies to pay the fees associated with resting and watering within the compound walls. Only those who refuse to turn over the appropriate amount of silver are turned away, usually by a hail of arrows and a few well-placed magic spells. If a group of visitors appears especially powerful, Toramund may decide to open the compound gates and give them free access to the oasis in

order to avoid a battle his tribe may not win.

The Sun Runners, led by the elf named Faenaeyon, have been competing with the Silver Hands for a long time. The last time the two tribes met, the Sun Runners used powerful magic to bring down the compound walls. The time before that, the Sun Runners robbed a large portion of Toramund's private hoard. When next they meet, Toramund wants his tribe to come away with the upper hand. He plans to be friendly and forgiving of his elven brethren, offering them free access to the oasis. Then, when they are off guard, he plans to strike at them in a way that will truly hurt Faenaeyon—by stealing from the Sun Runner chief's own store of wealth.

The Silver Hands also have an agreement of sorts with the Black Sand Raiders. In exchange for allowing the slave tribe to use the oasis, the Raiders have agreed not to plunder or destroy the elf compound. The Silver Hands serve as the eyes and ears of the marauders, going so far as to actively work for them if the Raiders demand it. They watch for choice caravans and for signs of danger that may concern the Raiders, and sometimes even provide aid by poisoning a particular target or by sending word to the slave tribe of something that is sure to interest the Raiders' leader or his defiler adviser. (See DSR1, *Slave Tribes* for additional information about these raiders.)

## Current Endeavors

The outlaw Silver Hands tribe has taken on an air of legitimacy by establishing a permanent trading post at the Tablelands crossroads. This appearance hasn't changed the fact that the Silver Hands are thieves and raiders. The elves have merely changed the method by which they plunder travelers. Now, instead of seeking out caravans and travelers to raid, they wait for the travelers to come to them. Then they rob them by charging high prices for the services they provide, and by pilfering a money pouch or costly item or two in typical elven fashion.



## The Elf Tribes

The compound that the elves have erected around the oasis gives new meaning to the phrase, "Let the buyer beware." At the Silver Spring Oasis, a traveler and his money are soon parted. The elves require payment for everything, from watering at the pond to receiving a small area to set up camp. Due to recent troubles, all prices have been increased. It now costs two pieces of silver for every person and animal that seeks admittance to the oasis.

Once a traveler steps through the fortified gates surrounding the oasis, he or she receives the endless attention of peddlers and entertainers. Everyone from old elves to young children assaults the traveler, hoping to sell or trade some trinket for more than its worth or seeking an opportunity to secretly swipe a prized possession. When the parade of peddlers slows, other elves arrive to level a series of annoying minor fees, charges, and gratuities for the privilege of resting within the protection of the fortified wall. The compound features an elven market where travelers can stock up on supplies or find an exotic trinket or two. Everything is extremely expensive, and most items are of dubious quality.

If any traveler seems particularly wealthy, Toramund takes a personal interest. He uses all of his charm and guile to appropriate a portion of that wealth for himself, going so far as to offer an item of true value in exchange for an amount of silver. Once such a deal is concluded, Toramund often sends thieves off to shadow the traveler with orders to steal back the item at the first opportunity. On the other hand, the chief tries to keep obvious acts of theft and violence to a minimum. After all, if the oasis garners an unreasonably bad reputation, business will likely slack off.

### Area of Activity

The Silver Hands operate exclusively in the area surrounding the Silver Spring Oasis. Since claiming the oasis as their own, the elves have devoted themselves to

protecting it and turning it into a profitable venture. Like the silver he hoards, Toramund jealously guards the oasis to the exclusion of all other activities. The tribe can never wander too far from its muddy shores for fear that someone else will move in. Toramund sometimes sends small trading parties to Fort Iron or Ablath when supplies are low, and elf scouts watch for caravans and signs of danger in the surrounding barrens, but the majority of the tribe stays at the oasis.

### Important Tribe Members

#### Toramund

Male Elf Fighter/Defiler, Neutral Evil

Armor Class 1 ( <i>leather armor</i> +2)	Str 15
Movement 18	Dex 19
Level 9/11	Con 12
Hit Points 41	Int 18
THAC0 12 (10 with long sword, 13 with short sword)	Wis 9
	Cha 15
No. of Attacks: 3/2	
Damage/Attack: 1d8+2 ( <i>metal long sword</i> +2), 1d6-1 ( <i>bone short sword</i> )	
Spells: 4 1st, 4 2nd, 4 3rd, 3 4th, 3 5th	

Greed rules Toramund, chief of the Silver Hands tribe. His desire to possess silver is overwhelming, and he has infected the rest of the tribe with the same obsession. He is proud of the fort he has constructed around Silver Spring, and he believes that his tribe's method of robbing visitors is much better than actually tracking and attacking caravans in the desert. He keeps his defiler skills secret, though he is interested in any magical texts or items his tribe acquires. He carries an enchanted metal long sword (not of elven make) and a wicked bone short sword. If pressed into battle, he can wield both weapons at the same time.



## Quaar

Male Elf Trader/Psionician, Chaotic Neutral

Armor Class 8 (leather armor)	Str 13
Movement 14	Dex 14
Level 8/7	Con 13
Hit Points 30	Int 20
THAC0 17 (19 with dagger)	Wis 15
No. of Attacks: 1	Cha 14

Damage/Attack: 1d8-1 (bone long sword),  
1d4-1 (obsidian dagger)

Psionic Summary: PSPs 85; Level 7; Dis/Sci/Dev  
3/4/12; Attacks MT, II; Defenses MB, TS, IF

Quaar oversees all trade within the Silver Spring compound, though he is usually to be found at the market or in the Tent of Delights. His long friendship with Toramund helped him gain his position, as did his talents and learned skills. The friendly elf loves to make deals and run businesses—especially crooked businesses. He shares the same obsession for silver that afflicts his chief, but he also enjoys cheating visitors out of other types of wealth. He sometimes sells information to the Night Runners and agents from House Vordon of Tyr.

## Water Hunters

The elves of the Water Hunters tribe wander the sandy wastes and rocky badlands in an endless search for sustenance. The hunter-gatherers and herders that make up the tribe embrace the old elven ways. They reject the “new” ideas that other tribes have adopted, declaring mercantile activities to be the province of the slower races and not worthy of true desert runners.

The Water Hunters look down upon the Silver Hands tribe with especial scorn. Not only has that tribe settled in one place, its members have gone so far as to build a permanent fort to wall in a portion of the desert. This goes

against everything that Coraanu Star Racer taught the elves of Athas. It is only a matter of time, the Water Hunters believe, until the worst hardships of life catch up with these heretics of elven nature who have given up the gift of running free.

The Water Hunters are ferocious fighters. While they do not actively pursue caravans to raid or search out settlements to plunder, they will battle any outsiders who invade what they consider to be their territory (currently the area within the vicinity of Utbo Grove). They will also attack those who interfere with their hunting and herding activities.

These elves hold to a number of barbaric practices that date back to an earlier time; as such, they are much like the halflings of the Forest Ridge. The Water Hunters consume raw meat, often carving it off the still-living creatures they have chased and captured. They collect trophies from their prey and fallen foes, proudly wearing the bones of those they have bested in the hunt or by combat. For all their savagery, there are no better hunters, trackers, or scouts in the Tablelands than the elves of the Water Hunters tribe.

## Organization

Two main forces drive the elves of the Water Hunters tribe. The first is their unyielding observance of the oldest elven traditions. The second is their devotion to the elemental spirits of water. Together, these forces shape every course of action the tribe and its chief and clan leaders pursue.

Three ancient clans form the basis of the tribe: the Raindancers, the Poolrunners, and the Lakesingers. Each clan conducts similar activities; hunting, herding, and gathering alongside each other for the benefit of the entire tribe. At the end of every day’s hunt, the clans gather together to hear the legend-songs of their tribe and to honor the water elementals who have aided them in their



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activities throughout that day.

Lismuuk Water Hunter leads the tribe in the manner of his ancestors. According to tradition, his tribe members are free to follow any course they wish—provided this course doesn't violate tradition or anger the water elementals. Like Coraanu Star Racer, Lismuuk leads by example, providing guidance and advice when his followers seek it. As long as the traditions of the tribe remain intact, Lismuuk prefers to leave his elves to their own devices. Lismuuk has held his post for two 10-year terms, and he feels confident that he will remain chief after the next selection process occurs in one year's time.

A small grove at the base of the Ringing Mountains west of Urik serves as a sacred place for the Water Hunters. The grove, called Utbo ("bubbling water") by the elves, receives vital water from an underground spring. Once every 10 years, water from the spring bubbles to the surface beneath an ancient kaor tree. To the elves of the Water Hunters tribe, this natural event marks the passage of another chief's term, and they gather in the grove to select a new leader. Traditionally, a new leader is chosen by the elemental spirits of water that dwell in the underground spring. If no elemental appears to select a new chief, the old chief continues to rule for another term.

In addition to the chief and the tribe's water singers and ritual dancers, there are other leaders, who come from among the tribe's best hunters. Hunters wear the spotted skins of tagsters beneath their protective cloaks. The more bone trophies that adorn their skins and head rings, the more authority and prestige a hunter receives from the rest of the tribe.

Although Lismuuk doesn't exercise constant control over the elves, the masters of the hunt demand obedience and cooperation when stalking prey. These leaders believe in discipline and the need to follow orders. Hunters also serve as the main warriors for the tribe, protecting the herds and clans from any threats that enter the territory currently claimed by the Water Hunters. Interestingly

enough, they don't see this possessiveness of the land on which they are hunting to be the same as the ownership imposed on property by the slower races. According to elven tradition, property belongs to whoever holds it for the now. At some future now, it may belong to someone else, but during this now they will guard and defend it with their lives.

### Recent History

The Water Hunters have been busy protecting Utbo Grove of late. They see the merchants of House Stel as threats to the grove, and Chief Lismuuk is determined to fight this threat with every resource at his command. He has purposely ordered the Water Hunters to remain within a day's run (50 miles) of the grove so that the full strength of his warriors can be mustered in case it is needed. His best scouts range across the area, watching for signs of a new force marching out of Urik's high gates.

This state of war started four months ago. At that time, the Water Hunters returned to the area to find that a human outpost was being constructed in the shadow of the Ringing Mountains, less than five miles south of the hidden grove. When it was ascertained that the outpost had ties to the city-state of Urik—whose warlike inhabitants have made a practice of slaughtering elf tribes—Lismuuk ordered his tribe to attack. The outpost and its defenders were surprised by the elves, who struck out of the scrub plains without warning. Every merchant, guard, and slave was killed in the frenzied attack.

Two months later, after the tribe engaged in a number of skirmishes with small troops loyal to House Stel, a second force from the merchant house in Urik arrived to reestablish the outpost. This group contained soldiers, psionicists, templars, and even a few defilers. Lismuuk led his warriors to battle a second time, and though the Water Hunters suffered a significant amount of damage, the outpost was destroyed yet again.

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Now Lismuuk and his followers watch for the inevitable signs of approach from an even stronger force. The chief has heard many tales concerning House Stel's patriarch, Hargan Stel III, and all of them speak of a true warrior who hates elves almost as much as he hates to lose. This particular hunt may wind up destroying Lismuuk's tribe, but tradition demands that the Water Hunters defend the sacred grove—and that is what the elf chief will do.

## Relations with Outsiders

Travelers in the northwestern area of the Tyr region have good reason to be cautious: anything that comes into the Water Hunters' stalking grounds becomes potential prey. It doesn't matter if it is animal or monster, human or demihuman. Everything is fair game to the elves of the

Water Hunters tribe.

Whether the elf tribe acknowledges it or not, the Water Hunters are at war with House Stel of Urik. The merchant house, which is also causing trouble for the Sky Singers and Swiftwing elf tribes, has dedicated a sizable amount of funds toward eliminating the Water Hunters tribe. The battle that is sure to come could be almost as devastating to the area as was the recent war between Urik and Tyr.

The nearest neighbors to the sacred Utbo Grove are the inhabitants of the Hidden Village. These ex-slaves, who now call themselves the Free, faced the same prospect that now faces the agents of House Stel—move somewhere else or risk a war with the Water Hunters. But the leader of the Free, the ex-soldier-slave Bartras, refused to give in to either course of action. He demanded a meeting







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with Lismuuk to prove his equality. After engaging in a series of contests, the human won the respect of the elf chief. Since then, the two tribes have been on good terms. They often exchange surplus supplies, news, and even come together for celebrations from time to time. Bartras has offered to assist the Water Hunters against House Stel's troops, for the presence of a large armed force so close to the Hidden Village threatens the slave tribe's security. Lismuuk has thus far refused this offer. (See DSR1, *Slave Tribes* for more information on the Free.)

### Current Endeavors

Following the oldest traditions of Athas's elven people, the Water Hunters live almost exclusively off the land. These elves do not trade or sell wares; they do not set up markets; nor do they craft frivolous items that serve no purpose but to cheat the slower races out of ceramic pieces and goods. This is not to imply that cheating outsiders is wrong. In fact, cheating is one of the paths to momentary happiness forged by Coraanu himself during his race across the stars. Rather than follow the paths taken by the other elf tribes, the Water Hunters prefer to approach everything they do in terms of the Hunt.

The Hunt is sacred. The Hunt is all. To track, stalk, and kill prey not only demonstrates the skills of the hunter, but it honors the prey by giving it a chance to use its own skills. As with the concept of outsiders, if prey is equal to or better than the elf hunter, then it will escape or even kill the hunter before the hunter can kill it. If it isn't, then its death was inevitable. Better it serve a worthwhile purpose by feeding and clothing the tribe than to end up as the meal of some lesser creature. The Hunt extends to all that crosses into the Water Hunters' current stalking grounds, including members of the intelligent races.

When humans, demihumans, or other elves become prey, they are afforded all the rights other types of prey receive under the traditions of the Hunt. If they can best

the hunter stalking them, they have proven their worth and get to survive—at least until another hunter picks up their trail. Prey that is hunted to a successful conclusion is often killed, but this is not always the case. Sometimes intelligent prey is stalked for the provisions it carries. It may still wind up dead, but that is not the intent of such a hunt.

In addition to constantly hunting, the elves of the Water Hunters tribe participate in only a few other regular activities. The entire tribe tends the large herds of kanks that are kept by each clan. These herders are also responsible for gathering the plants needed to supplement the tribe's diet and to provide materials for clothing, tools, weapons, and spell components. All tribe members, with the exception of the chief and his highest-ranking hunters, take turns crafting and repairing weapons; gutting and cleaning fresh kills; and making tents, clothing, and other items necessary for the day-to-day survival of the tribe.

The other regular activity occupying the Water Hunters is their savage hatred of the agents of House Stel. The outpost that the dynastic merchant house has been attempting to establish at the base of the Ringing Mountains is deep within the territory the elf tribe considers its traditional hunting ground and very close to their hidden Utbo Grove. Twice in recent months the elves have attacked and destroyed those sent to establish this outpost, and they keep scouts on constant patrol to watch for signs of House Stel's return.

### Area of Activity

The Water Hunters tribe stalks prey through the rocky badlands that stretch from Tyr to the Smoking Crown and farther north, as well as across the sandy wastes south of Urik. They follow wild herds, search out water sources, and seek grazing land while remaining relatively close to the hidden grove they hold sacred. The Water Hunters seek challenging and dangerous prey in the shadows of

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the Ringing Mountains, though they refuse to ascend into the mountains themselves. Primarily hunters and herders, the tribe occasionally raids caravans traveling to and from area outposts or those bound for Urik. The elves ceaselessly strike out at those who indiscriminately enter their hunting grounds (for defensive purposes, but also to occasionally supplement their stock of provisions).

Although the tribe doesn't live in Utbo Grove, it does consider the area to be part of its territory. Because no full-blooded elf can become a druid, the tribe considers it a sacred duty to periodically produce half-elf offspring who can tend and guard the grove. A select number of half-elves are retained by the tribe after birth and then given over to the care of the half-elf druid of the grove. While the tribe wanders the Tablelands in search of prey and grazing land, these half-elf druids watch over the grove. The Water Hunters don't have any more love or compassion for half-elves than does any other elf tribe, but these elves are bound by their traditions to provide a druid of elven blood to tend to the grove and its elemental spirits. They will do what they must to uphold the old traditions.

## Important Tribe Members

### Lismuuk Water Hunter

Male Elf Fighter, Chaotic Neutral

Armor Class 5 (braxat-hide shield, Dexterity)	Str 18
Movement 18	Dex 19
Level 9	Con 11
Hit Points 49	Int 15
THAC0 12 (10 with sword)	Wis 12
No. of Attacks: 3/2	Cha 15
Damage/Attack: 1d8+1 (bone <i>long sword</i> +2)	
Psionic Summary: PSPs 63; Wild Talent—	
Body Control (PS Con -4; Cost 7+5/turn)	

Lismuuk has been chief of the Water Hunters tribe for almost 20 years. During that time, he has struggled against the trends affecting other elf tribes in order to keep his elves true to long-standing traditions set down in the distant past. Other tribes have become merchants or mercenaries, and at least one tribe has established a permanent settlement. Lismuuk wants to have nothing to do with these new ideas, and any members of his tribe who attempt to adopt them are cast out.

The chief is a tall, handsome elf who wears a crown of tagster fur adorned with the long, sharp teeth of some huge monster. Simple fur leggings and a tunic cover his tanned flesh, hide boots protect his feet, and he carries a braxat-hide shield. His long sword, lovingly carved from bone by the tribe's finest crafter and enchanted with a magical edge, is as much a symbol of his station as the crown he wears.

The only person outside his tribe whom Lismuuk considers an equal is Bartras, the human leader of the Free. As for Hargan, patriarch of House Stel, the elf chief has declared him to be prey—to be hunted and killed at the first opportunity. Lismuuk hopes to be the one to drive home the killing blow.

### Borjaanu Raindancer

Male Elf Fighter/Preserver, Lawful Neutral

Armor Class 3 (braxat-hide armor, Dexterity)	Str 19
Movement 16	Dex 17
Level 8/8	Con 15
Hit Points 43	In 15
THAC0 13 (10 with sword, 11 with long bow)	Wis 10
No. of Attack: 3/2	Cha 12
Damage/Attack: 1d8+6 (bone long sword), 1d6+6 (stone-tipped arrows)	
Spells: 4 1st, 3 2nd, 3 3rd, 2 4th	



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Psionic Summary: PSPs 111; Wild Talents—  
Combat Mind (PS Int -4; Cost 5+4/round)  
Expansion (PS -2; Cost 6+1/round), Object  
Reading (PS Wis -5; Cost 16)

Borjaanu Raindancer, a fighter/preserver, serves as Lismuuk's hunt master, chief adviser, and bodyguard. He is never far from Lismuuk's side, using his fighting prowess, spellcasting abilities, and psionic wild talents to augment the chief's own formidable skills. He is extremely loyal to his chief, ready to give his own life if necessary to preserve Lismuuk's.

As Lismuuk's long brother (they share the same father) and first son of the previous chieftain, some assumed that Borjaanu would be chosen to lead the Water Hunters. The elemental water spirits, however, selected the younger Lismuuk, and Borjaanu accepted this decision without complaint. He is not as charismatic or outgoing as his long brother/chief, and he tends to be more reserved at celebrations. Some credit this to his quiet nature, but Borjaanu simply takes his guardian role very seriously. No one gets near the chief without first getting past the powerful Borjaanu.

### Feykaar

Female Half-Elf Druid, Neutral

Armor Class 6 (Dexterity)	Str 16
Movement 12	Dex 18
Level 12	Con 16
Hit Points 88	Int 16
THAC0 14 (12 with sword)	Wis 17
No. of Attack: 1	Cha 17
Damage/Attack: 1d8+3 (bone <i>long sword</i> +3)	
Spells (Cosmos, Water Spheres): 6 1st, 5 2nd, 5 3rd, 3 4th, 2 5th, 2 6th	

The half-elf named Feykaar was born to a woman of the Water Hunters tribe 33 years ago. When Feykaar turned

13, she was given to the druid of Utbo Grove to determine if she should be trained or turned into the wastes to fend for herself. The decision was easy, for it was evident from Feykaar's youngest days on that she was going to become a druid to be reckoned with. The elemental spirits of the grove took an instant liking to her, and she quickly picked up skills and abilities before her formal education ever began. She has been the druid of the grove since her twentieth year, tending to its needs, protecting it, and raising the few half-elves left for her by the Water Hunters tribe.

Feykaar has great respect for Lismuuk, though she wishes he would show her more than the homage required of him by tradition. She may be the druid of the grove the Water Hunters hold sacred, but she is still only a half-elf and not a member of the tribe.

Unlike other druids, Feykaar often emerges from hiding to welcome visitors and hear news of distant places. She worries about the threat posed by House Stel, but she is confident that the Water Hunters will help her protect Utbo Grove.

## Silt Stalkers

One of the true terrors of the eastern portion of the Tyr region is the ferocious elf tribe called the Silt Stalkers. This raiding tribe attacks outsiders for the sheer pleasure; plunder and loot are simply added bonuses. These fearsome elves move purposely across the area, often passing unseen until their terrible shriek signal the start of an attack.

Very little is outside the attention of the Silt Stalkers. Small villages, merchant-house outposts, caravans—all appear as tempting targets to the raiding elves. Like the Black Sand Raiders in the west, simply whispering the name of the Silt Stalkers tribe in the east causes even the strongest, most-seasoned caravan guards to pale. Few want to tangle with these crazed killers, for unlike other elf tribes the Silt Stalkers crave the blood of their victims as well as their spoils.

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All the major caravan trails disappeared from the eastern region long ago, but the Silt Stalkers have little trouble finding plunder. Many of their targets consist of tribes of gith or belgoi. The elves also stalk caravans bound for slave villages or the scattering of forts and outposts that still populate the land on the edge of the Sea of Silt.

## Organization

Eevuu Silt Stalker rules his tribe of elf raiders with force and an iron will. Like the chieftains before him, Eevuu derives pleasure from not only bringing terror to outsiders, but by ruling over his followers through fear, intimidation, and the occasional death-fight to prove his superiority. He obtained his lofty position after defeating the previous chief in a death-fight seven years ago; he has only had to defend his station three times in the intervening years.

Eevuu's constant companions and chief advisers are Miiri Fire Bow, the tribe's elemental fire singer, and Luubarra Fire Dagger, the tribe's master defiler. Both females enjoy being close to the tribe's seat of power as much as they enjoy employing their skills and talents on a raid.

As with most raiding tribes, leadership and privileges go to those who have the power to claim such roles and spoils for themselves. Strong warriors, skilled mages, cunning rogues, and powerful clerics rise to the top of the Silk Stalkers' hierarchy. The rest fall into subservient positions—or wind up dead. Life in this tribe involves not only struggling against the natural hazards of Athas, but struggling against the other members of the tribe as well. Tribal bonds only count for so much in this violent society. They must be cemented with blood and muscle and weapons.

The death-fight serves to adjudicate all disputes and claims for advancement. It is the one tribal law that must be obeyed by everyone—including the chief. If an elf is challenged to a death-fight, he or she has no choice but to accept or lose honor, position, and possibly even life. In a

death-fight, the only rules are that the fight continues until one or both combatants are dead, and that the death blow is delivered by a physical, elf-crafted weapon (although magic and psionics may be used in the interval). If an elf feels that he or she is ready to take command of the tribe, then a death-fight challenge is issued to the ruling chief. If the chief loses, the challenger takes the title. As mentioned before, Eevuu has been challenged three times, but still he remains chief of the Silt Stalkers.

The tribe consists of three clans: the Fire Bow, Fire Dagger, and Fire Sword clans. The Fire Bow clan is dedicated to scouting and wilderness skills. Their weapon of choice is the long bow, and these archers are among the finest in all the Tyr region. Many of the tribe's elemental fire singers come from the ranks of this clan. Fire Bow clanspeople constantly range ahead, seeking targets to raid and watching for any dangers that may threaten the tribe.

The Fire Dagger clan follows the dark paths of defiling, thievery, and assassination. Mostly made up of defilers and rogues, the Fire Dagger clan stays in the background until its specialized skills are called for by the chief.

The Fire Sword clan, under the direct command of the chief, is a warrior clan. As its name implies, clan members make use of elf-crafted long swords. When a target is located, the Fire Sword clan rushes forward to attack, slicing a bloody path through even the toughest opponents so that the rest of the tribe can join in the "festivities."

## Recent History

Eevuu's advisers have been urging him to take more and more risks of late. A few months ago, Luubarra began whispering prophecies of power, glory, and riches into Eevuu's tapered ears. "These foretellings will come true," she assured him, "if our followers engage in even more mayhem and bloodshed than usual."

Eevuu complied with Luubarra's dark desires, striking



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out and slaughtering a gith settlement in the Blackspine Mountains, attacking the village of Cromlin (though the Silt Stalkers were forced to retreat from its well-defended walls), and destroying a heavily armed caravan on the trade road between Nibenay and Raam. Each of these raids cost the Silt Stalkers much in terms of lives and time, and none of the raids provided any more loot than the tribe typically gathers in easier attacks. Further, because Luubarra coaxed Eevuu into timing these raids extremely close to one another, the tribe has been unable to rest and heal its wounds.

The impetus behind Luubarra's prophecies originated during her sojourn to the ruined city of Giustenal. When she returned from that desolate place just over two months ago, she immediately sent her clan to the ruins to explore a new entrance she claimed to have discovered. The clan has yet to return.

Luubarra has been urging the chief to send the rest of the tribe to investigate, but thus far Eevuu has refused. He is wary of the haunted ruins, and the tribe has expressed concern and even fear over the fate of the Fire Dagger clan. If something in the ruins was able to capture or destroy an entire clan of magic-users and rogues, then it is something the remainder of the tribe should leave alone.

Luubarra, however, dismisses these grumblings. She is certain that the clan has simply found too much to carry back and is waiting for additional help. Why then, Eevuu has wondered (though he has not expressed this thought to his master defiler), has the clan failed to send a runner with a message? While Eevuu is deciding what to do, he continues to listen to Luubarra's whispered visions and dreams of the great raids still to come for his tribe of Silt Stalkers.

### Relations with Outsiders

The Silt Stalkers tribe has no outsider allies. To them, everyone and everything that wanders the land east of the

Windbreak Mountains exists solely for the purpose of being raided and killed. This niche that the Silt Stalkers have carved for themselves is theirs, and they would have it no other way. Yet for all their bravado, the Silt Stalkers are cautious. Eevuu and his tribe tend to avoid nearing the city-states of Gulg and Nibenay, for the chief knows that his tribe cannot stand against the armies of the sorcerer-kings—*yet*.

Luubarra promises that the day will come when the Silt Stalkers can challenge a sorcerer-king, and Eevuu eagerly awaits the chance to kill one personally. Though most outsiders see this as an unlikely event, Eevuu and his elves believe that, once they build sufficient numbers of warriors, then nothing will be beyond their grasp. They are, after all, Silt Stalkers, the greatest elf tribe on all of Athas (if they do say so themselves).

These raiders cause much trouble for the merchant houses of Fyra, Inika, Shom, and Wavir. All have interests in the area and must occasionally send caravans through the Silt Stalkers' territory. Traders bound for or passing through Fort Fyra, Fort Harbeth, Fort Inix, Cromlin, and Outpost 19 must be ever vigilant against the ferocious and deadly elf raiders. Even Salt View, Tenpug's Band, and the elves of the Sky Singers tribe are not immune to attacks by the Stalkers. The gith tribes of the Blackspine Mountains as well as other monster settlements in the region suffer the most from the tribe's terrible and often surprising raids.

Because the raiding tribe has become even more ferocious and active in recent months, the ex-slaves of Salt View have doubled their own defenses in order to protect themselves. Even the normally unresponsive House Shom of Nibenay has reacted strongly to the recent attacks on the village of Cromlin. The leaders of the merchant house have increased their troops protecting the village in anticipation of another Silt Stalkers' attack.

Luubarra, Chief Eevuu's adviser and master defiler, has a particular dislike of the Sky Singers tribe, though why is



not entirely clear. She especially hates the Twilight-catchers clan, for these preservers seek the same treasures and secrets of the ruined city of Giustenal that she does. Through her urgings, the raids against the Sky Singers' caravans have been increased dramatically. She has even tried to convince Eevuu that if any disaster actually did befall her Fire Dagger clan in Giustenal, then it is the Sky Singers who are at fault.

## Current Endeavors

The Silt Stalkers are a raiding tribe, earning their way by pillaging and plundering. They are not given to domestic pursuits. They do not raise herds. They engage in no trade. They simply take what they want from whoever has it, provided Chief Eevuu feels his warriors can survive the encounter—and there are few outsiders who can hurt his tribe of warriors and thieves.

Where other elf tribes accomplish their daily work and then engage in celebrations and festivities to bring joy to the now, the Silt Stalkers consider each raid to be a festivity. They revel in mayhem and bloodshed, celebrating their superior prowess with combat, murder, and plunder instead of dance, song, and drink. To the Silt Stalkers, the raid is everything. Stalking, attacking, and successfully defeating a target provides as much sustenance as the loot they come away with, if only on a psychological level. As for the plundered goods, the tribe takes only what it can carry. It leaves the rest for whoever might come along in its wake.

The Silt Stalkers observe their intended targets for a time, determining strengths and weaknesses as best they can. Then, when Eevuu gives the command, the elves begin their raid shriek. This bone-chilling noise rises out of the wilderness like the wind, crashing against the tribe's target much like waves of water once crashed along the shores of the Silt Sea. The frightening banshee sound usually has one of two effects: either it immobilizes the





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tribe's targets with numbing fear or it spooks the targets into making stupid mistakes. Regardless of the outcome, the Silt Stalkers benefit.

Like the Wind Dancers, the Silt Stalkers have no long-range plans. The tribe simply moves in a random spiral from silt shore to forest and back again, watching for caravans to target. Along the way, the elves may hit a fort or village, depending on the mood and needs of Chief Eevuu and his advisers. Usually, though, the Silt Stalkers wait for travelers to emerge from behind village walls rather than launch attacks against fortified locations. On a side note, the chief does give his warriors strict orders to keep at least a few members of an attacked caravan alive so that the master defiler, Luubarra Fire Dagger, has subjects to experiment on.

### Area of Activity

The Silt Stalkers prowl the eastern stretches of the Tyr region. These elves operate within the area of land that juts into and is surrounded on three sides by the Sea of Silt. Essentially, the area east of the Crescent Forest to the Silt Sea, north of the Estuary of the Forked Tongue, and south of the silt bay separating Raam from Nibenay falls under the shadow of the Silt Stalkers. This is the land they wander through; this is the land they plunder and raid.

The tribe engages in periodic raids against Fort Harbeth and Fort Inix; Outpost 19 and Fort Fyra; the village of Cromlin; and the traffic coming to and leaving from Gulg, Nibenay, and Salt View. In fact, the travelers of the Ivory Triangle are favorite targets for these elves. Fearing little, the tribe sometimes camps near the ruins of Giustenal and Bodach, even going so far as to occasionally search deeper into the ruins for scattered treasure. With the recent disappearance of the Fire Dagger clan, however, the tribe has become wary of Giustenal. They are unlikely to venture into the ruins until the mystery has been solved.

### Important Tribe Members

#### Eevuu Silt Stalker

Male Elf Fighter, Chaotic Evil

Armor Class 3 (bone breast plate; bone shield, Dexterity)	Str 20 Dex 17
Movement 16	Con 12
Level 9	Int 13
Hit Points 63	Wis 9
THAC0 12 (8 with sword)	Cha 16
No. of Attacks: 3/2	
Damage/Attack: 1d8+9 (bone <i>long sword</i> +2, <i>flameblade</i> )	
Psionic Summary: PSPs 54; Wild Talent—	
Displacement (PS Con -3; Cost 6+3/turn)	

Eevuu Silt Stalker, chief of the Silt Stalkers elf tribe, is a huge, powerfully built elf who has wild eyes and a cruel smile. He delights in battle and in the actual kill, often leading his warriors on raids purely for the sheer fun they provide.

Eevuu stands more than 7½ feet tall and, while still thin, he appears more muscular than his fellow elves. Like the other elves of his tribe, Eevuu wears his hair in a pattern of wild spikes. A bone breast plate covered with arcane runes protects his upper body, and he carries a bone shield.

His bone long sword, which has been used by many Silt Stalkers' chiefs before him, is enchanted with a magic that causes burning flames to dance along its extremely sharp edge when used in combat.

Eevuu's defiler and companion, Luubarra, has been filling his head with visions of conquest and great power. The elf chief sees a festival of murder and mayhem in his future, a celebration in which the very sands will turn red with blood. He is impatient for these visions of power to come true.



## Luubarra Fire Dagger

Female Elf Defiler, Chaotic Evil

Armor Class 2 (*bracers AC 6*, Str 13  
 Dexterity) Dex 19  
 Movement 18 Con 10  
 Level 10 Int 18  
 Hit Points 24 Wis 11  
 THAC0 17 (15 with staff) Cha 18  
 No. of Attacks: 1  
 Damage/Attack: 1d6+2 (*quarterstaff +2*)  
 Psionic Summary: PSPs 55; Wild Talent—Aging  
 (PS Con -7; Cost 15)  
 Spells: 4 1st, 4 2nd, 3 3rd, 2 4th, 2 5th

Luubarra Fire Dagger has always been drawn to power. She has sought it for her personal use, and she has worked hard to position herself near those who wield even greater power than she. Naturally, she was drawn to Eevuu, and she has been at his side for three years now. It is her intent to remain his companion until the time Eevuu is overthrown.

Like other members of the Silt Stalkers tribe, Luubarra has a thirst for blood and violence. She especially enjoys conducting defiler research on captured outsiders. Since her return from the ruins of Giustenal a few months back, Luubarra has become even more inclined toward murder and mayhem. At her urgings, Eevuu has taken to leading the tribe into greater and greater opportunities for death and destruction—all because she claims that the road to untold wealth and power must be paved with blood. This behavior has something to do with whatever Luubarra found in the ruins of the ancient city, but she has so far declined to reveal any details to Eevuu or anyone else. She also keeps her wild psionic talent a secret, employing it against her enemies with quiet malice.

## Miiri Fire Bow

Female Elf Cleric, Chaotic Evil

Armor Class 3 (*carru leather*, Str 15  
 Dexterity) Dex 18  
 Movement 17 Con 16  
 Level 11 Int 17  
 Hit Points 80 Wis 16  
 THAC0 14 (13 with bow, Cha 16  
 15 with sword, 14 with mace)  
 No. of Attacks: 1  
 Damage/Attack: 1d6-1 (*obsidian-tipped arrows*),  
 1d8-1 (*obsidian long sword*), 1d6+1 (*steel mace*)  
 Psionic Summary: PSPs 55; Wild Talent—Hear Light  
 (PS Wis -3; Cost 6+3/round)  
 Spells: 5 1st, 4 2nd, 4 3rd, 3 4th, 2 5th, 1 6th

Miiri Fire Bow is an elemental fire singer—the most powerful cleric in the Silt Stalkers tribe. In addition to her role as adviser to the chief, Miiri heads the Fire Bow clan. She participates in the daily decision-making concerning the activities of the tribe. Her main rival for power in the tribe, as well as for Eevuu's attention and affections, is the defiler Luubarra. The two elf women hate each other, for they both covet the same thing—power. For them, Eevuu is only a means to greater power. "Let him think he is chief," Miiri tells herself, "while I wield the true power from the shadows."

The cleric always believed that she could deal with Luubarra and even eliminate the woman when necessary, but the actions initiated by the defiler in the past two months have given the fire singer cause to pause. Miiri believes there is something more to Luubarra's recent erratic behavior than simple bloodlust. She has decided to watch the defiler carefully, for Miiri's own plans to achieve greater power depend on an intact, powerful Silt





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Stalkers tribe. Luubarra, on the other hand, seems determined to urge Chief Eevuu to lead the tribe to its own destruction.

### Night Runners

The elves of the Night Runners tribe operate in the shadows of Athas, passing from dark corner to dark corner like whispers in the night. Like the Shadows (the elf tribe presented in *DSR2, Dune Trader*), the Night Runners tribe is intended to be a mysterious group of elves who exist to most of the people of the Tyr region as nothing more than a legend told around a dying campfire. This secretive group of elves is not as old or as numerous as the elves of the Shadows tribe, but it is making a name for itself among those who require experts of the "shadow arts."

The Night Runners specialize in activities that most consider covert, if not totally illegal. Espionage, theft, kidnapping, smuggling, assassination, and extortion are just some of the areas these elves work in. Those who can afford their prices can hire these elves who, like their competitors the Shadows, have turned smuggling, contraband trade, and other illegal activities into art forms.

### Organization

Hukaa New Moons, a powerful female thief who has the skills of a trader, currently leads the Night Runners tribe. She treats all the tribe's activities like a business, conducting its operations the way the successful merchant houses conduct theirs. The tribe consists of six clans, each of which is responsible for a particular type of shadow art.

The chief coordinates all activities and oversees the entire tribe, whereas each clan is headed by a master runner. Master runners function much like trade masters, overseeing all operations and directing the course of negotiations and the assignment of personnel. This tribe is considerably more organized than other elf tribes, partly

because of the attitudes and beliefs of their leader, and partly because of the nature of the work they undertake. Hukaa's direction is a sound one, however, for to compete with the ancient Shadows, the Night Runners must stay focused and on an even course.

The Night Runners clans include the Lone Moon, Dark Moons, Full Moons, Half Moons, Quarter Moons, and New Moons clans. Those born to these clans undergo specific training in a limited number of fields. The belief is that by concentrating on a few types of skills necessary to a specific shadow art, each elf will become a highly trained specialist in the clan's area of devotion. The Lone Moon clan, for example, specializes in thievery and mercantile endeavors. By training as legitimate merchants, they have an established cover for their thieving activities. Elves of the Lone Moon clan regularly steal from other merchants to stock their own stores, and they also take on special jobs that require their special touch. If someone comes to the Night Runners in need of acquiring a special item currently in the possession of someone else, then the Lone Moon clan takes on the job. As far as trading goes, the Lone Moon clan will buy and sell anything, and they will deal with anyone. These elves will even deal in slaves if the price is right and the opportunity presents itself.

The Dark Moons clan produces some of the finest assassins on all of Athas. These murderers-for-hire have turned killing into an art form. In most cases, clients can specify not only a target, but a means of death and a time when the death is to occur. The Full Moons clan, on the other hand, specializes in a more straightforward form of death-dealing: combat. Not only does this clan serve as the protectors of the entire tribe, it also hires its members out as mercenaries. However, when a band of elven warriors from this clan goes out as fighters-for-hire, they don't reveal themselves as members of the legendary Night Runners tribe. Instead, they appear as outcast elves or free wanderers selling their swords and bows to earn a living.

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Only their great skills and high degree of professionalism hint that they may be more than they seem to be. When Night Runner spies overhear that someone seeks to hire warriors, word is sent to the Full Moons clan. They demand hefty fees, but only accept half up front. The rest must be delivered if they prove to be as good as they claim.

The elves of the Half Moons clan specialize in magic. Using spells of deception, stealth, and illusion, these magic-users assist operatives from the other clans and sometimes undertake their own missions. The Quarter Moons clan, in contrast, is a wild, ferocious bunch of raiding elves. Outsiders will hire these raiders to create diversions, to disrupt supply lines and caravan routes, or just to eliminate a competitor. Fees are usually based upon the target in question, as the Quarter Moons clan keeps whatever it plunders. These elves are not hired by clients who

want the contents of a caravan, for example, but by those who simply want the caravan destroyed. Those who want the goods must go to the Lone Moon clan.

Lastly, the New Moons clan specializes in espionage. These elves search out hidden knowledge by learning the great secrets of the nobility, the merchant houses, and even the sorcerer-kings. In some cases, the New Moons seek this knowledge of their own initiative, for knowledge is not only profitable, it is a means to power. Other times, this clan takes on contracts to find out specific information for paying clients. These elves are trained to observe without being observed, to follow without a sound, to get into places considered safe and secure without leaving a trace of their passage. In addition to its role as information-gatherer for the tribe, this clan has long held sway over the other clans by virtue of its proximity to the tribal



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chieftain. This clan has produced the tribe's chief for the past six generations, and as Hukaa's bloodline remains strong, it should continue in this capacity for at least one more generation to come

### Recent History

Hukaa New Moons has been busy of late. The trade war with the Shadows has escalated, threatening to erupt into a full-scale battle for territory. She has worked to circumvent the actions of the Shadows, who have interrupted the operations of her tribe and even cost some of her tribe members their lives.

Few outside these clandestine elf tribes know that a trade war is underway, however, for both groups rarely expose themselves to the light of Athas's blazing sun or the scrutiny of others. To those who are aware of this growing conflict, it seems obvious that this secret war will eventually spill over into public view. Hukaa hopes to reach a settlement before this occurs, as such an event is sure to hinder both tribes—and may even leave them exposed to other enemies. The grand shadow master, leader of the Shadows tribe, has thus far refused or ignored all of Hukaa's requests for parlay. In the meantime, the trade war continues.

### Current Endeavors

The biggest operation currently being handled by the Night Runners tribe involves a contract with House Shom of Nibenay. The merchant house has hired the Night Runners to provide information concerning the plans, strengths, and weaknesses of the traders currently operating in the Ivory Triangle. As Shom must rely on hired help to survive, it decided to make use of one of the better resources available to it. The Night Runners are hard at work digging up information about Shom's biggest and most dangerous competitors—especially House Stel of Urik.

The elves have also been hired by the patrician Herculopis, a noble of the city-state of Balic, to eliminate the leader of a rival noble family. The target, Posidian, has so far eluded two murder attempts. The Night Runners, who feel their reputation is on the line, have increased their efforts to fulfill this murder-for-hire before the trader's year is out. There are rumors that Posidian has hired the Shadows to protect him, but the Night Runners have yet to determine the truth of these claims.

They do know, however, that the Shadows tribe has declared a sort of trade war against the Night Runners. The Shadows see this elf tribe as an upstart group that has begun to interfere with their ancient provinces, crossing over into territory the Shadows consider theirs. This war is being conducted in secret, known only to the two tribes that are involved. Sometimes evidence of this conflict is found by outsiders, but it only appears as a mysterious event that has no rhyme or reason. A dead elf found in a dark alley, for example, may mean nothing to an outsider, but the two half-moon tattoos inscribed on the elf's shoulder identify him to other Night Runners as one of the Half Moons clan—another victim of the war with the Shadows.

### Area of Activity

The Night Runners operate all over the Tyr region, but the tribe tends to concentrate its efforts to the east of the Windbreak Mountains. The tribe maintains a dagada in Gulg, small markets in Nibenay, Balic, and Raam, and has agents constantly on duty throughout the Ivory Triangle. Members of the New Moons clan can be found in all of the city-states and in many of the larger villages, watching and listening for news to send back to the chief and the master runners. Like the Shadows tribe, the Night Runners tribe places its members into other tribes. These undercover elves serve as the eyes and ears of the Night Runners, and operate as contacts between the legendary tribe and potential contacts throughout the Tyr region. In

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most cases, the chief of the seeded tribes know of the undercover elves' connections. They allow this deception to occur because of favors they owe the Night Runners – or for favors they will receive at some future date.

## Relations with Others

In one manner or another, the Night Runners deal with all outsiders. Other elves, nobles of the city-states, agents of the merchant houses, even templars – everyone's money is welcome to the Night Runners. As few can readily identify a member of this secretive tribe, even those who dislike the Night Runners never know when they are dealing with its members. The tribe's chief competitors in the shadow arts are the elves of the Shadows tribe. The grand shadow master has declared a trade war against the Night Runners, and the Shadows have been working to

discredit and disrupt the Night Runners' operations. The two tribes have never gotten along, but in recent months the Shadows have become particularly hostile.

The Night Runners have good relations with the Sky Singers tribe, on the other hand, and at least one elf working in the Sky Singers' market is an undercover Night Runners elf. The chieftains of both tribes have exchanged favors in the past, and both consider the other to be a friend. This could have something to do with the fact that both are born traders, or it could simply be a result of past dealings. For whatever reason, Hukaa and Muuton often meet to share tales and discuss business that affects their respective tribes. Some have suggested that the two are in love, but neither has yet attempted to steal the other or has engaged in any other obvious elven courting practice.

One other relationship bears mentioning. The Night Runners have always kept a wary eye on the activities of





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the Silt Stalkers tribe. Partially as a favor to Muuton Sky Singer, and partially because Hukaa has always considered it prudent to know what the raiding tribe is up to, the Night Runners have maintained a vigilant watch over the elves of the Silt Stalkers. The recent disappearance of one of the tribe's clans, its frenzied actions of late, and the mysterious behavior of the tribe's master defiler have all set off warning signals in the back of Hukaa's mind. She has ordered the New Moons clan to keep a careful watch over the raiding tribe's actions, for she feels that something significant and important may be driving the Silt Stalkers to new heights of ferocious pillaging. The Night Runners hope to learn the fate of the missing clan, for Hukaa believes that that is the key to the master defiler's behavior and the unprecedented actions of the Silt Stalkers' chief.

### Important Tribe Members

#### Hukaa New Moons

Female Elf Thief/Trader, Lawful Evil

Armor Class 3 (carru leather, Dexterity)	Str 16
Movement 19	Dex 20
Level 12/16	Con 12
Hit Points 32	Int 19
THAC0 13 (12 with dagger, 11 with sword)	Wis 14
No. of Attacks: 1	Cha 19
Damage/Attack: 1d4+3 (obsidian dagger +3), 1d8+2 (bone long sword +2)	
Psionic Summary: PSPs 92; Wild Talent—Control Light (PS Int; Cost 12+4/round)	
Thieving Skills: Backstabx4; PP 85, OL 65, F/RT 52, MS 95, HS 95, DN 75, CW 85, RL 80	

Hukaa New Moons has been chief of the Night Runners tribe for more than 20 years, taking over the role when her

father felt the weight of his great age slowing his once lightning-fast reflexes. As Hukaa herself is fast approaching middle age, she has taken a greater interest in training her children so that at least one of them will be prepared to lead the tribe when she finally decides to step down. For now, she sees that event as happening far in the future.

Because she understands the mercantile arts as well as the shadow arts, Hukaa has striven to make the Night Runners operate like a successful merchant house. All operations are organized and administered in an orderly fashion, and all missions are viewed as profit-making ventures. While she allows her advisers and clan leaders the freedom to operate independently of her control, she does like to stay involved in the day-to-day operations of the tribe. To facilitate this, Hukaa requests frequent meetings and updates so that she can stay on top of her tribe's activities.

Hukaa has sun-bleached white hair that shines around her well-tanned face. Her great beauty has served her as well as her thieving and trading skills over the years, and she seems to have only gotten more beautiful with age.

#### Keelorr Dark Moon

Female Elf Fighter/Thief, Lawful Evil

Armor Class 2 (braxat hide, Dexterity)	Str 17
Movement 18	Dex 19
Level 10/12	Con 14
Hit Points 44	Int 14
THAC0 11 (10 with sword)	Wis 11
No. of Attack: 3/2	Cha 18
Damage/Attack: 1d4 (bone dagger), 1d8+1 (bone long sword +1)	
Psionic Summary: PSPs 60; Wild Talents—Contact (PS Wis; Cost Varies +1/round), Post-Hypnotic Suggestion (PS Int -3; Cost Contact +1/level or hit die)	
Thieving Skills: Backstabx4; PP 85, OL 75, F/RT 65, MS 95, HS 85, DN 75, CW 95, RL 50	

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Keelorr Dark Moon is an accomplished assassin who uses stealth and misdirection to complete her missions much as others use poisons and ranged weapons. She almost always takes on an assumed role, pretending to be a beggar or a dancing girl, a serving wench or a common trader, in order to get close to her target and beneath his or her guard. Her favorite role is that of an elf dancer.

Keelorr's dancing skills are so great that she often headlines at the Tent of the Dancing Swords in the Sky Singers' market. She lavishes attention on those she has been hired to murder, flirting unmercilessly and dancing only for them. It is her practice to give her victims one last moment of joy before she strikes, making them happy with her dancing, her smile, or the welcoming attention of her large gray eyes. If she can make her victims love her, even for an instant, then she experiences her own sense of joy. Then, once this ritual she loves to perform has been completed, she carries out her mission. Her kills are quick, painless, and accomplished with hardly any struggle.

Keelorr has been mentioned as the successor to the current master runner of the Dark Moons clan, but it is doubtful that she would accept the position. She enjoys her field work much too well to accept a leadership role.

## Misteeck Quarter Moon

Male Elf Cleric/Defiler, Chaotic Evil

Armor Class 7 (Dexterity)	Str 14
Movement 16	Dex 17
Level 9/10	Con 10
Hit Points 28	Int 18
THAC0 16 (14 with mace)	Wis 17
No. of Attacks: 1	Cha 13
Damage/Attack: 1d6+3 (steel mace +2)	

Psionic Summary: PSPs 100; Wild Talents—Ballistic Attack (PS Con -2; Cost 5), Body Control (PS Con -4; Cost 7+5/turn), Contact (PS Wis; Cost Varies + 1/round), Mass Domination (PS Wis -6; Cost Con-

tact +2xvictim's hit dice or level/round)

Spells (earth cleric): 4 1st, 4 2nd, 3 3rd, 2 4th, 1 5th

Spells (defiler): 4 1st, 4 2nd, 3 3rd, 2 4th, 2 5th

Misteeck Quarter Moon serves as both an earth singer and as a master defiler for the Quarter Moons clan. He thoroughly enjoys his role with the raiders, for he revels in violence and destruction. Plunder is the alms that the weak outsiders must lay at the feet of the strong elves of the Night Runners tribe, and Misteeck is happy to point this out to those he raids. He is a tall, dark-skinned elf, with long dark hair and hooded, shadowy eyes. He proudly bears the mark of his clan: two quarter moons tattooed into the flesh of his right shoulder.

As an earth singer, Misteeck communes with the elemental spirits of the earth, singing their songs for all to hear. As a defiler, he takes great pains not to harm the things of the earth when drawing forth power to cast his spells. He has no regard for whatever else he may hurt when drawing power to himself. He serves as one of the clan leader's chief advisers, and his powers and abilities are respected throughout the tribe. When he participates in a raid (and there are few raids his clan undertakes that Misteeck is not present for), Misteeck uses his abilities to cause as much destruction and confusion as possible. He believes that the quaking of the earth is his elemental spirits' greatest song, and he seeks to emulate its destructive power whenever he turns his abilities against outsiders. When the destruction and mayhem ends, he searches through the plunder for magical items, spell components, collections of spells, and other items of arcane interest.

Few in his clan challenge him for these things. The enchanted steel mace he wields in combat was taken from a caravan the clan raided a number of years ago. Since then, Misteeck has kept his eyes open for even more powerful items that may be hiding among the goods outsiders like to move from one place to another on the backs of kank, crodlu, and mekillots.

## Chapter Five: Athasian Elf Kits

This chapter describes a variety of character kits for use by Athasian elf player characters. The use of kits is optional, and players who want to create or modify existing characters to take advantage of kits should discuss it with their Dungeon Masters.

The kits that follow are designed for use with only those elf characters who inhabit the hostile world of the DARK SUN® campaign setting—not for elves of any other world. When creating an Athasian elf character using a kit, be sure to add the details from Chapter One to the character's record sheet.

### Proficiencies

Kits require the use of the proficiency rules as outlined in Chapter Five of the AD&D® *Player's Handbook* and Chapter Five of the DARK SUN boxed set *Rules Book*. If you are using kits, these rules are not optional. Unless otherwise noted in the kit description, an elf character receives the same number of proficiency slots as listed for all characters of his class according to Table 34 in the *Player's Handbook*.

### Kit Descriptions

Each of the kits that follow begins with a brief overview. This gives a quick example of the type of character it can be used to create. Other sections of the kit description include:

- **Recommended Tribal Affiliation:** If the kit is particularly appropriate to one of the elf tribes presented here or in the *Dune Trader* accessory, the tribe is listed here.
- **Role:** This section provides additional details on a character's place in elf society and the adventuring environment. It shows how a member of this kit will typically act, though player characters aren't required to rigidly stick to this information.

- **Weapon Proficiencies:** Some kits indicate that specific weapon proficiencies must be selected when the character is created. These cost the standard number of slots as outlined in the proficiency descriptions unless otherwise noted.

- **Nonweapon Proficiencies:** Some kits indicate that specific nonweapon proficiencies must be selected when the character is created. *Bonus* proficiencies are free and do not use up valuable slots. *Required* proficiencies must be selected and these do use up slots. *Recommended* proficiencies are optional and cost the usual number of slots. If a recommended proficiency comes from a group not listed for the character's class, the proficiency costs one additional slot (unless the specific kit states otherwise).

- **Equipment:** Restrictions concerning a kit's use of equipment are presented here.

- **Special Benefits:** Almost every kit features advantages that set its members apart from those using other kits. Note that bonuses are expressed as positive numbers and penalties as negative numbers. In this way, if a low number is good for a particular character's action, then the bonus is actually subtracted from the die roll and the penalty is added.

- **Special Hindrances:** Like benefits, these are unique to each kit, prohibiting or forcing certain actions at certain times.

- **Wealth Options:** All characters receive starting funds, and these are explained here.

### Warrior Kits

Warriors make up a large segment of the elf population. In addition to the pure warrior kit of the *savage hunter*, the multiclassed *thri-kreen slayer* fighter/psionicist kit is included here as elves tend to readily branch out and combine skills.



## Savage Hunter

The elves of Athas are a nomadic people, and many tribes survive solely through the skills of their hunters. The savage hunter is the most common elf warrior type, serving as both a tribal defender and an important food provider. Respected by others of the tribe, the savage hunter uses the same skills to hunt prey and to fight outsiders and other threats to the tribe. The ways of the city-states are alien to these wilderness warriors, for they are only at home in the wastes when on a hunt.

PC savage hunters either join up with an adventuring group while on a mission for their tribe, or they join during the period of wanderlust that comes upon most young elves at least once in their lives. On these journeys of adventure and discovery, savage hunters take with them all the skills they learned as protectors and providers for their tribes. As such, they are often valuable contributors to a party.

**Recommended Tribal Affiliation:** Savage hunters often come from the Wind Dancers or Water Hunters tribes.

**Role:** Savage hunters are elves who have fighting skills, knowledge of the wilderness, and hunting prowess. In the Wind Dancers tribe, the savage hunters have been turned into raiders, forced to hunt a different sort of prey to keep their tribe alive. In the Water Hunters tribe, savage hunters serve as the main warrior class. They protect the tribe from all dangers in addition to their role as providers of fresh meat and animal skins.

Elves have a great respect for savage hunters, even those elves whose tribes have given up the old traditions. Once all Athasian elf tribes survived by the skill of their hunters, and the greatest heroes of ancient songs and legends are those proud hunters. In many cases, outsiders first encounter a tribe through its hunters, who use stealth and surprise to strike swiftly at those who pose a threat to the rest of the tribe.

In tribes that still use the savage hunter class, the hunters are honored with respect, choice supplies, and roles of leadership. When savage hunters go wandering and join up with adventuring groups, they often expect these same privileges from outsiders. The people they travel with must show them the same respect they receive from their tribes, and they demand the first pick of spoils. In addition, because savage hunters fill leadership positions in their tribes, they naturally attempt to fill the same positions in whatever group they may travel with. They treat everything as a hunt, and on a hunt orders must be followed and traditions kept or the prey will escape.

Savage hunters are the most stringent keepers of elven traditions. The old ways (which hold that hunters are the best of the elf race) are the right ways, and things that go against these traditions smack of the slower races. Savage hunters are intolerant of non-elves and non-elven ways.

**Weapon Proficiencies:** Members of this kit must take the long bow and long sword, as these are the traditional weapons of the elves.

**Nonweapon Proficiencies:** The proficiencies for the savage hunter are as follows.

- Bonus Proficiencies: Tracking.
- Required Proficiencies: Hunting, survival (sandy wastes or other).
- Recommended (General): Direction sense, fire-building, heat protection, rope use, water find.
- Recommended (Warrior): Animal lore, endurance, set snares.

**Equipment:** A savage hunter receives a bone long sword and a long bow crafted for the character by members of his or her tribe, as well as a set of leather armor.

**Special Benefits:** In addition to the bonus tracking proficiency, savage hunters receive two additional non-weapon proficiency slots when they are first created. These slots must be filled from the recommended proficiencies listed above.

**Special Hindrances:** Savage hunters start with only





## Athasian Elf Kits

two initial weapon proficiency slots instead of five.

**Wealth Options:** Savage hunters from poor tribes (such as the Wind Dancers) start with 2d4x10 cp, while those from successful tribes (such as the Water Hunters) begin with the normal 5d4x30 cp.

### Thri-Kreen Slayer

Perhaps the greatest threat to the elves of Athas is the thri-kreen. These insectoid hunters love the taste of elf flesh, and they prey upon the desert runners whenever the opportunity presents itself. In order to combat the threat posed by the fast, strong, and cunning thri-kreen, a special class of desert runner has developed—the thri-kreen slayer. A thri-kreen slayer is a multiclassed fighter/psionist who devotes him- or herself to becoming an expert hunter and fighter of the dread insect-men.

Wearing armor consisting of pieces of a thri-kreen's hard exoskeleton shell, slayers train in ways to best combat the hulking insect-men. They study the fighting styles and habits of the thri-kreen, learning all they can about their deadly adversaries. Slayers are taught to hate the thri-kreen with all their hearts so that the innermost fury in their hearts can be fully tapped. Conversely, they are also taught to admire the thri-kreen—appreciating their tireless natures and their hunter's hearts. Only through understanding and a certain respect can a slayer hope to survive the challenge of a thri-kreen warrior.

When thri-kreen slayers join adventuring parties, they do so as part of their continuing training or to satisfy the bouts of wanderlust that often come upon the elves of Athas. Even away from their tribes, slayers take their roles and responsibilities very seriously. They actively seek out thri-kreen during combat, only turning toward other enemies when all thri-kreen have been defeated or when a much greater danger presents itself.

**Recommended Tribal Affiliation:** Thri-kreen slayers can be found among most of the elf tribes wandering the

Tablelands, though the Wind Dancers and the Sky Singers actively seek to develop these rare and special warriors.

**Role:** These slayers defend their tribes from thri-kreen hunting packs. They know what signs to look for to determine if thri-kreen are in the area. They know how to throw a hunting pack off the trail. When a battle is inevitable, thri-kreen slayers know the most effective ways to kill the insect-men. These warriors are the champions of their tribes, for they alone seem invincible before the enemies that haunt all elven nightmares.

Slayers tend to be loners, operating independently of their tribes for long periods of time. A tribe may not see its slayers for weeks on end, but the elves know that they are out in the wastes watching for the approach of the deadly insect-men. The slayers must warn the tribe of an impending attack, to lead any battles against the thri-kreen, and to safely move the tribe out of danger.

Slayers are extremely confident (though some consider them mad in their arrogance). Armed with an arsenal of weapons and always ready to leap into battle against a thri-kreen, a slayer is as a formidable foe. Using psionics and fighting skills to best advantage, slayers are among the most fearsome elf opponents anyone (thri-kreen or otherwise) will ever meet. Interestingly enough, there are instances of slayers having worked with thri-kreen as part of an adventuring group, but these relationships are often volatile and extremely fragile, for neither elf nor thri-kreen trusts the other.

**Weapon Proficiencies:** Members of this kit must take the long bow, long sword, and one thri-kreen weapon (either a chatkcha or gythka) among their initial weapon proficiency selections.

**Nonweapon Proficiencies:** The proficiencies for the thri-kreen slayer are as follows.

- Bonus Proficiencies: Rejuvenation.
- Required Proficiencies: Survival (sandy wastes or other).



- Recommended (General): Direction sense, languages (thri-kreen).
- Recommended (Psionicist): Harness subconscious, meditative focus.
- Recommended (Warrior): Tracking, weapon-smithing.

**Equipment:** A thri-kreen slayer receives a bone long sword and a long bow crafted for the character by members of his or her tribe, as well as a set of thri-kreen-shell armor (AC 5).

**Special Benefits:** In addition to the bonus rejuvenation proficiency, slayers gain a +4 bonus to attack rolls when fighting thri-kreen, and a +2 bonus to damage rolls. A slayer can attack with two weapons without penalty to his or her attack rolls, though all other restrictions for two-weapon attacks apply (see *Player's Handbook*, Chapter Nine).

**Special Hindrances:** The enmity that slayers feel toward the thri-kreen causes them to suffer a -4 penalty on all encounter reactions with the hated race. Thri-kreen slayers must attack thri-kreen if such foes are present during combat. They may only change targets once all thri-kreen have been defeated or if an obviously more dangerous opponent reveals itself. In addition, because of the image they present, slayers are often targeted by those seeking to prove their own skills or who are looking to make a quick reputation. They must always be on guard for attacks by those who want to prove their own toughness against such worthy foes.

**Wealth Options:** Thri-kreen slayers start play with 3d4x30 cp as well as the weapons and armor mentioned above.

## Rogue Kits

Elves are natural rogues, and most of the non-elves of Athas see them as thieves, raiders, and bandits. The *free-wanderer* rogue kit and the multiclassed *procurer*





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trader/thief are included here for those who enjoy playing scoundrels and thieves.

### Free-Wanderer

At some point in an elf's life, the wanderlust comes upon him. He must run as far and as fast as his swift legs will take him. He must see what lies beyond the horizon, and he must find as many ways to enjoy the now as he possibly can. The free-wanderer kit provides an outlet for elf rogues who seek to explore the Tyr region in search of adventure and riches. These thieves travel wherever the mood takes them, joining with adventuring groups for a time before moving on. At some point the desire to return to their tribe will send these free-wanderers home, but until then the excitement of the now is what they crave.

Free-wanderers survive by their wits, their quickness, and their thieving skills. They see every guarded purse and locked box as a challenge they must accept. The contents of these guarded items, after all, belong to the elves—outsiders are only holding them until their rightful owners come along to relieve them of their burden.

**Recommended Tribal Affiliation:** Free-wanderers come from all elf tribes, though they often discard identifying features of their native dress during their periods of travel and adventure.

**Role:** Free-wandering elves find joy in surviving the many challenges Athas throws at them. They steal whatever they need while simultaneously seeking new experiences. Many view this time of wandering as a training period, and they work to master their wilderness and rogue skills in the interval.

Free-wanderers are adventurers, roaming the wastes and prowling the cities in search of excitement, experience, and enough wealth to get them to the next adventure. Free-wanderers are among the friendliest and most outgoing of elves, for the whole purpose of their travels is to learn everything they can. This doesn't mean that

their normal attitudes toward outsiders have changed, only that they are more inclined to deal with these people during the wanderlust period.

Those forced to travel the wastes for their own survival gladly accept free-wanderers into their group for the skills and knowledge they bring. They may not be completely trusted, but they are given the benefit of the doubt when their specialized skills are desperately needed.

**Weapon Proficiencies:** Members of this kit must select the long bow, long sword, and dagger.

**Nonweapon Proficiencies:** The proficiencies for the free-wanderer are as follows.

- Bonus Proficiencies: None.
- Required Proficiencies: Survival (sandy wastes or other).
- Recommended (General): Dancing, direction sense, language (choice), water find.
- Recommended (Rogue): Blind-fighting, gaming, musical instrument.

**Equipment:** Free-wanderers travel light. In addition to their thieving tools and a weapon or two, free-wanderers have few possessions and wear only the lightest armor.

**Special Benefits:** Free-wanderers receive two additional nonweapon proficiency slots to fill when they are first created. They also get an additional 10 discretionary points to distribute among their thieving skills upon creation.

**Special Hindrances:** Because of the reputation that precedes all elves, free-wanderers receive a -2 penalty to encounter reactions when dealing with outsiders.

**Wealth Options:** Free-wanderers start play with 1d6x 10 cp, thieving tools, and a bone long sword crafted by a member of their tribe.

### Procurer

Procurers are elf trader/thieves who conduct legitimate mercantile activities with one hand while stealing with

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the other. To all outward appearances, procurers seem to be everyday elf traders. They conduct their thefts in secret, using normal trading practices to cover their filching activities. These elves usually work for elven merchant houses, filling the market stalls with goods stolen from other merchants, nobles, free citizens, templars, and even the sorcerer-kings.

No matter what it may look like a procurer is doing, he (or she) is always observing the people around him. He knows how to spot those who can help or hinder his job, and is always aware of his surroundings.

The procurer considers simple theft to be beneath his station. He needs to make the big score, acquiring the items that will bring the biggest profit at the next marketplace. Trading is all well and good, but selling a wagonful of cactus fruit and then stealing the entire stock back to trade elsewhere is even better.

**Recommended Tribal Affiliation:** Procurers can be found among the elf tribes that conduct mercantile activities, especially the Clearwater, Swiftwings, Shadows, Sky Singers, Silver Hands, and Night Runners tribes.

**Role:** Procurers are often the field agents for elven merchant houses. They conduct legitimate trade, but they are always on the lookout for opportunities to increase the tribe's stock through theft. Among elf tribes that respect mercantile endeavors, procurers are seen as only one step below master traders—especially if they are any good at their job. Procurers travel far and wide, seeking new markets, new suppliers, and new opportunities to acquire a big score.

During these travels, procurers have no qualms about joining with adventuring groups, and many know a particular group that has proven itself to be worthy of trust and friendship. Adventuring groups offer added protection, an obvious cover story, and able bodies when a job is extremely difficult. The procurer's tribe and dedication to his craft comes first, but his adventuring group comes a close second as long as helping the group doesn't hinder

his other affiliations. Of course, a procurer will disappear from his group from time to time in order to pass along goods or information to his tribe.

Procurers are skilled traders, consummate thieves, and handy companions. Unlike most elves, they know their way around the city-states and even have a limited understanding of civilization. Like other elves, they hate walls and locked doors, but procurers see these obstacles as challenges, and they make a study of such constructs the way a good warrior studies his enemies.

**Weapon Proficiencies:** Members of this kit must select the dagger. Remaining slots can be filled as they see fit.

**Nonweapon Proficiencies:** For the procurer, these proficiencies are as follows.

- Bonus Proficiencies: Bargain.
- Required Proficiencies: Appraising.
- Recommended (General): Artistic ability, languages (choice), rope use.
- Recommended (Rogue): Disguise, forgery, gaming, gem cutting, reading lips.
- Recommended (Warrior): Running, tracking,

**Equipment:** Procurers start with thieving tools and a dagger. They can outfit themselves with whatever else they can afford, provided it is usable by their classes.

**Special Benefits:** Procurers receive one additional nonweapon proficiency slot when they are first created. Due to their study of human and demihuman construction techniques, procurers can spot secret and concealed doors like the elves of other campaign settings if they are actively searching for them. They discover secret doors on a roll of 1 or 2 on 1d6, and concealed doors on a roll of 1, 2, or 3 on 1d6.

**Special Hindrances:** Curiosity is the one flaw that best describes procurers. They can't help peeking behind closed doors, opening locked gates, or seeing what waits around the next corner. This obsession, of course, often gets them (and their companions) into trouble. Unless a procurer has



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an extremely compelling reason not to, he won't leave a closed door or a concealed tent flap behind him.

**Wealth Options:** Procurers start play with 2d6x30 cp, thieving tools, and a bone dagger.

### Priest Kits

Elf priests dedicate themselves to the element that their tribe reveres. Presented below are the multiclassed *battle dancer* cleric/fighter and the common *element singer* priest kit for those who want to explore the spiritual side of elven nature.

### Battle Dancer

The battle dancer cleric/fighter is an elf warrior who follows the call of one of the revered elements. A battle dancer is basically a specialized ritual dancer, one who uses his or her talents not to tell stories but to defend the tribe. In elf tribes, very few elves are afforded the title of element singer. Others who show clerical abilities, or who seem attuned to an element other than the one revered by the tribe, are urged to become multiclassed ritual dancers. Those who decide to combine the skills of the warrior arts with priestly endeavors become battle dancers.

Full of grace and speed and agility, battle dancers perform across the field of battle much as the slaves of Salt View perform across the stage. The call of combat courses through their strong limbs while the call of their revered elemental sings in their hearts. These religious warriors are looked upon with awe by their tribesmates, and they often become the champions of their tribes.

**Recommended Tribal Affiliation:** Battle dancers can be found in any elf tribe, but those of the Water Hunters and Silt Stalkers tribes are among the most deadly and fanatical.

**Role:** Battle dancers dedicate themselves to one elemental force, usually the one revered by their tribe

(though this is not always the case). In times of peace, they use their skills of dance and ritual storytelling to inspire their tribes and to help their elemental singers administer to the spiritual well-being of the elves under their care. When combat opportunities present themselves, the battle dancers welcome them. They feel closest to their chosen elements when combining warrior skills and clerical magic into a deadly dance of violence.

As spiritual leaders and defenders of their tribes, battle dancers hold a place of honor among the elves. During the wanderlust phase, they take their powerful expression of faith to outsiders, demonstrating the benefits of merging the priestly magic of the elements with the strong physical nature of the elves. They are devoted to both elven traditions and a particular element, often exclaiming the virtues of both to all they meet. Those who disagree may witness the battle dancer's skills from the point of view of the target—much to their dismay.

Through the combination of cleric powers and warrior skills, there are few elves as deadly or as committed as the battle dancers. They are masters of the weapons they choose and devoted students of a particular element. In few other kits is the concept of the superiority of elves over outsiders more evident, for battle dancers believe themselves to be the best of the elf race—and therefore far above even the best outsider.

**Weapon Proficiencies:** Members of this kit must select the long sword and the long bow, the traditional weapons of the elves of Athas.

**Nonweapon Proficiencies:** The proficiencies for the battle dancer are as follows.

- Bonus Proficiencies: Blind-fighting, dancing.
- Required Proficiencies: Religion, spellcraft.
- Recommended (General): Heat protection, languages (choice), singing, water find.
- Recommended (Priest): Ancient history, healing, musical instrument, reading/writing, somatic concealment.



- Recommended (Warrior): Armorer, armor optimization, bowyer/fletcher, endurance, running, survival (choice), tracking, weaponsmithing.

**Equipment:** Battle dancers begin with a bone long sword and a long bow (both of excellent tribal make), leather armor, and a holy symbol dedicated to their element of choice.

**Special Benefits:** Battle dancers can attack with two weapons without suffering attack roll penalties.

With the successful use of the dancing proficiency at the start of combat, battle dancers receive an additional +1 to attack and damage rolls, and a +1 bonus to their Armor Class for a number of combat rounds equal to the success of the proficiency check. For example, if a battle dancer needs to roll an 18 or less to successfully begin dancing and she rolls a 14, then she receives the battle dancing bonuses for 4 combat rounds (18-14=4). For the next four rounds, she receives the attack, damage, and Armor Class bonuses listed above.

**Special Hindrances:** If a battle dancer fails her dancing proficiency roll (which must be made at the beginning of every combat encounter), then she receives the following penalties for 1d8 rounds of combat: -1 to attack and damage rolls, and -1 to Armor Class.

Battle dancers can never learn to use weapons beyond those they initially select. They receive no new weapon proficiency slots with the advancement of levels, and if they choose to use a nonselected weapon they suffer a -2 penalty to attack rolls.

**Wealth Options:** Battle dancers start play with 5d4x30 cp as well as the items listed under "Equipment" above.

## Element Singer

The element singer is an elf cleric dedicated to a single elemental force of nature. Most tribes hold those who commune with the elements in awe and treat them with a small measure of fear. Elf tribes rarely have more than one

or two element singers, though they will accept any number of lesser ritual dancers and battle dancers. Element singers are called by the element they worship—wind singer, flame singer, earth singer, or water singer.

Most of the element singers that outsiders meet are young singers fulfilling their wanderlust as there is no place for them (currently) in their tribe. Others no longer have a tribe, or they are seeking a new tribe because they are compelled to worship an elemental force that is not the one revered by their tribe. A select few have been sent on some far-reaching mission by the force they worship.

Element singers are the true clerics of the elf tribes. Each draws spells from the sphere of the cosmos as well as from the sphere associated with their element of choice. They fulfill roles as tribal clerics, and most have an extreme hatred of templars and defilers who draw power from landmarks associated with their revered element.

**Recommended Tribal Affiliation:** All elf tribes have element singers, so they may have any tribal affiliation desired.

**Role:** Element singers hold positions of leadership and responsibility in their tribes, though those they administer to do not quite know what to make of these clerics. Elves understand the magic of preservers and defilers, but have little knowledge of priestly magic. It frightens them, much as the raging elements frighten them. Those who commune with these terrible forces, therefore, become objects of fear, too. Still, the tribes realize they need the element singers, so they give them an awe-inspired respect. In many cases, the very survival of an elf tribe depends on its element singers.

Element singers interpret the omens and portents inherent in the forces of nature. They advise tribal chiefs as to the best courses of action. They lead rites of passage and other tribal rituals. They heal the wounded and cure the sick. When element singers leave their tribes to explore the world of the outsiders, they take with them their beliefs, traditions, and devotions. These clerics are



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elves through and through—savage, unpredictable, living for each now.

Though individual tribes tend to congregate toward a particular element, element singers are not intolerant of other faiths, as long as they are elemental in nature. Those who seek to worship individuals (such as a sorcerer-king) are seen as fools or worse, for no one—not even a sorcerer-king—can compare to the elements that shape the world.

**Weapon Proficiencies:** Members of this kit may select any weapons allowed to the priest class.

**Nonweapon Proficiencies:** Proficiencies for the element singers are as follows.

- Bonus Proficiencies: Survival (choice of terrain type depends on where the tribe spends most of its time and which element the singer is devoted to).
- Required Proficiencies: Healing, spellcraft, water find.
- Recommended (General): Animal handling, artistic ability, dancing, direction sense, fire-building, heat protection, leatherworking, singing, weather sense.
- Recommended (Priest): Ancient history, herbalism, musical instrument, reading/writing, religion, somatic concealment.

**Equipment:** Element singers may use any equipment available to the priest class. They begin play with a bone weapon of excellent tribal make and a holy symbol dedicated to their element of choice.

**Special Benefits:** Element singers receive one bonus spell at each spell level. For example, if a 3rd-level singer would normally be entitled to two 1st-level spells, this special benefit gives him or her three 1st-level spells instead. This bonus applies to each spell level, but the bonus spells must be selected from the singer's elemental sphere.

**Special Hindrances:** Element singers only receive only one initial weapon proficiency slot (instead of two). They must drop everything else they are doing to go to the aid of their tribe whenever they are needed.

**Wealth Options:** Element singers start play with 3d6x 30 cp as well as the items listed under "Equipment" above.

### Wizard Kit

The magical arts come quite naturally to the elves of Athas. Where others fear and even hate mages, elves feel comfortable around wizardly magic and even honor those who use magic to benefit the tribe. One elf wizard kit is presented here, the *arcanist*.

### Arcanist

An arcanist is an elf wizard dedicated to learning all he or she can about magic. The arcanist is the closest thing there is to an elf scholar, digging through ruins and wizards' packs in search of arcane texts and magical lore. They find their greatest pleasures in learning new spells and acquiring magical items to add to their collections.

Arcanists carry an extreme number of pouches and packs upon their persons, and each one is crammed full of items pertaining to the arcane arts. Spell components spill from every pocket, and arcane texts carved on bone and stone jut from every crowded pouch. Like pack rats, every conceivable item they come across that may be magical or that may serve some magical purpose finds a way into their personal stores.

As a result of their searches and studies, arcanists come to know a little about a lot of different things. They are consulted often, becoming experts and advisers for their tribes. They may not always have the complete answer, but they can usually decide a course of action from the bits and snippets of knowledge they do possess.

**Recommended Tribal Affiliation:** All elf tribes have arcanists, though the Twilightcatchers clan of the Sky Singers tribe and the Half Moons clan of the Night Runners tribe have the largest numbers of these mages.

**Role:** Arcanists work for their tribes, but they defi-

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nately have their own agendas. Some seek out knowledge for the power it provides. Arcanists believe that power is fine (and they'll take it when they can get it), but seeking knowledge for its own sake is a worthy endeavor.

In tribal life, arcanists work with other elf mages to gather and prepare spell components, create enchanted items (both true enchantments and illusory ones to sell to unsuspecting outsiders), and teach aspiring elf mages the tricks of the trade. Arcanists leave their tribes for long periods of time when they go in search of items to add to their arcane collections. Wandering arcanists often join up with adventuring groups, for long years of experience have taught these mages that many of the things they seek eventually wind up in the proximity of outsiders.

Arcanists provide a wide collection of lore to those they travel with, as well as spellcasting abilities. They can be either defilers or preservers. While much of the information these mages know can be useful, a lot of it is arcane trivia that sounds important but means nothing. Arcanists tend to talk on and on when a question is raised, telling much more than is necessary to adequately answer the question. Though the arcanist is always authoritative in his lecturing to companions and others, he tends to keep his magical skills secret when outside his tribe. This is to minimize the risk posed by those who hate and fear wizards (which includes the great majority of Athas's population).

**Weapon Proficiencies:** Members of this kit may select any weapons allowed to the wizard class.

**Nonweapon Proficiencies:** The proficiencies for the arcanist are as follows.

- Bonus Proficiencies: Reading/writing, spellcraft.
- Required Proficiencies: Ancient history, languages, ancient (choice), languages, modern (choice), somatic concealment.
- Recommended (General): Bargain, brewing, and cooking.
- Recommended (Wizard): Astrology, herbalism.

**Equipment:** Arcanists can use any equipment available to other wizards. They prefer small weapons that do not take up a lot of room, as this gives them more space to store their collectibles.

**Special Benefits:** Arcanists can make Intelligence checks at +1 to determine if they know anything at all about a given subject. Even if the arcanist makes a successful check, it is up to the DM to determine exactly how much he or she knows. As a rule of thumb, the better the success, the more the arcanist knows about the subject at hand.

Arcanist receive four additional initial nonweapon proficiency slots. These must be filled from the selection of proficiencies listed above.

Arcanists start play with a small collection of arcane items, as described under "Wealth Options" below.

**Special Hindrances:** Arcanists may never become proficient with any weapon. They always use weapons at the -5 nonproficiency penalty. This reflects the fact that arcanists spend much more time pursuing mental activities instead of physical ones.

**Wealth Options:** Arcanists start play with (1d4+1)×30 cp. They also start with a small collection of arcane items: one *potion* fruit (roll on Table 89 in the *DUNGEON MASTER™ Guide [DMG]*), one stone tablet with one 1st-level and one 2nd-level spell (DM's choice), and one miscellaneous magical item that the arcanist does not yet know anything about (the DM should select the item from Tables 96, 97, 101, or 102 in the *DMG*).

## Psionicist Kit

Psionicists are an important class throughout Athasian society. In elf tribes, these mental masters provide many benefits that make life easier to deal with. Outside the tribes, the elven psionicists are often mysterious and frightening. One elf psionicist kit is presented here, the *brown elf*.





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### Brown Elf

Among the elves of the Tablelands, an elf who voluntarily gives up his or her affiliation and loyalty to a tribe dresses in brown wrappings to signify this decision. These brown elves travel the region, seeking something that they could not achieve in the tribes they were born to. In most cases, the decision is tied to an elf's developing psionic abilities. For reasons not completely understood even by the brown elves, these individuals feel compelled to leave their tribes to seek out masters to teach them to fully unlock their mental powers. In many cases, a brown elf is on his or her way to becoming a member of the mysterious Order, though this affiliation is years or even decades away.

**Recommended Tribal Affiliation:** By their very nature, brown elves have given up tribal affiliation and are considered outcasts—even though the decision was of their own choosing.

**Role:** Elf tribes shun those elves who have chosen to wear the brown wrappings of nonaffiliation. Brown elves display no loyalty to tribes or traditions, and they receive none in return. These elves wander the wastes and cities, seeking teachers to instruct them in greater uses of their mental abilities.

Brown elves attach themselves to adventuring groups for a time. They enjoy the protection afforded by the adventurers, and sometimes even revel in the company they have typically denied themselves for long periods of time.

These solitary wanderers are eventually contacted by members of the Order. When a member of the Order takes notice of a brown elf, he (or she) only reveals himself once he is certain he wants to sponsor the fledgling psionist. Even then, the high-level psionist will never reveal his true identity or the purpose of his visit. During the years that follow, he may appear occasionally to offer a bit of instruction, some needed help, or a clue as to what direction to follow next, but he will never mention the

Order or what is expected of the brown elf. When the elf is truly ready to join the Order, then such gentle guidance will no longer be necessary.

Brown elves follow the tenets of the Order, even if they don't realize this. They believe that psionics should only be studied for its own sake, and that these talents should only be used to preserve the natural order. To master one's psionic talents is a noble endeavor, and the strengths they provide should never be used to further selfish ends.

**Weapon Proficiencies:** Members of this kit may select any weapons allowed to the psionist class.

**Nonweapon Proficiencies:** The proficiencies for the brown elf are as follows.

- Bonus Proficiencies: Meditative focus, psionic detection.
- Required Proficiencies: Harness subconscious.
- Recommended (General): Water find.
- Recommended (Psionist): Hypnosis, reading/writing, rejuvenation.

**Equipment:** Brown elves can use any equipment available to other psionists.

**Special Benefits:** Brown elves have no special advantages other than the bonus proficiencies they receive.

**Special Hindrances:** Brown elves receive a -3 penalty to reaction encounters when dealing with elves who are affiliated with an elf tribe. In addition, they start out particularly poor because of their nonaffiliated status.

**Wealth Options:** Brown elves start with 3d4x10 cp.



# Elves of Athas

by Bill Slavicsek



They run across the burning plains where others fear to walk. They live for the moment, these savages of a dying world. The elves of Athas are wild, dangerous, and unlike any other elves. Forget the frail forest dwellers of other campaign worlds. Athas's elves stand tall and lean, with long limbs and fearsome faces. They are thieves and raiders, swift warriors and terrible foes.

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