

Advanced
Dungeons & Dragons®



Beyond the Prism Pentad



James R. Love

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Official Game Accessory

Beyond the Prism Pentad

by Bill Slavicsek

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A Decade of Adventure

Introduction

“The dragon is dead, but Athas still reeks of danger, death, and decay. Make no mistake. It’s in the very air we breathe, choking us like the sand and silt. We’ve eliminated one horror, but, as surely as the crimson sun rises at dawn, three more will appear to take its place.”

—Brakus of the Tyr Council of Advisers

Athas, like all the worlds of the multiverse, changes with the passage of time. And, like all worlds inhabited by humans, time is marked by the occurrence of great events. Here is a chronicle of great events and the changes wrought by time’s relentless passage.

History is rare in a world without seasons, in a world where the past remains as hidden and mysterious as the depths of the Silt Sea. However, these great events didn’t occur in the ancient past. They took place in recent memory. The chronicle starts a decade ago, when three slaves and a noble joined forces to kill a sorcerer-king. It begins in the city-state of Tyr, inside the great stadium, in the shadow of Kalak’s ziggurat, on the day Kalak died...

About This Book

Since the original DARK SUN[®] boxed set debuted in the fall of 1991, a lot has happened to the burning land. *Beyond the Prism Pentad* summarizes the key events from the Prism Pentad novel series and the various role-playing game products. It also updates the situations in the city-states of the Tyr Region in relation to these events, describes the changes in the land, gives statistics for the major characters that survived the novels, and provides a short adventure that helps tie player characters into the dramatic conclusion of *The Cerulean Storm*. In short, it deals with the aftermath of the events depicted in the Prism Pentad and other DARK SUN sources.

What is the Prism Pentad? It’s a five-book novel series that introduces the world of Athas and tells a sweeping saga that spans 10 years. The books, in order, are: *The Verdant Passage*, *The Crimson Legion*, *The Amber Enchantress*, *The Obsidian Oracle*, and *The Cerulean Storm*. Over the course of the story, much of the political, social, and environmental structure of Athas changes. In this product, these changes are explained in the context of an ongoing DARK SUN campaign.

In addition, this product provides the base upon which the revised campaign setting, DARK SUN: A New Age, is built. Consider *Beyond the Prism Pentad* to be a bridge that spans the decade of campaign time between the original boxed set and the revision.

Note: If you haven’t read the novel series yet, be warned that the information that follows reveals the surprises of the story. If you plan to read the Prism Pentad novels (which is strongly recommended), save this product until after you’ve had a chance to do so. Then come back here to discover how to incorporate its plot into your DARK SUN campaign.

The First 10 Years

The first DARK SUN adventure published after the release of the initial boxed set was *Freedom*. It allowed the player characters to take part in the pivotal event of *The Verdant Passage*, the first novel in the Prism Pentad series. The event was a rebellion that ended with the death of Kalak, the sorcerer-king, and the independence of the city-state of Tyr.

After the second adventure, *Road to Urik*, which tied into the events in the second novel, *The Crimson Legion*, the story lines of the books and the role-playing products diverged. While the remaining novels in the Prism Pentad series went on to span a 10-year period, the game line’s adventures and accessories slowed down, allowing individual campaigns to develop and find their own pace in the Athasian wastes.

Now, with the release of DARK SUN: A New Age, it’s time to bring the two story lines back together and advance the campaign timeline. More than 10 years have passed since King Kalak of Tyr was killed and the inhabitants of his city-state found freedom. This was but the first of a series of events that helped significantly change the look and nature of the Tyr Region from the material initially presented in *The Wanderer; Journal* (the campaign book from the original boxed set). To bring DARK SUN campaigns up to speed, these events—and their repercussions—need to be examined in the context of recent Athasian history.

In the timeline that follows, the featured events are drawn from these sources: the Prism Pentad novel series, the *Dragon’s Crown* and *Black Spine* adventures, the *City by the Silt Sea* campaign expansion, and the *Thri-Kreen of Athas* accessory. These are noted on the diagram, while the text summarizes the events. DMs are encouraged to incorporate other published



adventures, their own adventures, and their campaign experiences into the timeline as they see fit.

Two methods for reckoning time are used across Athas. The first method is the High Calendar, used by the merchant houses and most templars in the Tyr Region. It was originally called the Calendar of Tyr, but the city-state has officially abandoned it since overthrowing Kalak. All of the dates shown are for years in the 190th King's Age.

The second method (listed parenthetically) is the Calendar of Free Tyr, which was instituted by Tyr's Council of Advisers shortly after King Kalak's death. This calendar hasn't gained widespread acceptance as of yet, but it is being used by Tyr's nobles and artisan guilds.

Prominent Characters of the Pentad

The Prism Pentad chronicled the tales of a number of prominent characters, including:

Rikus. The mul gladiator started out as a slave in Tithian's gladiatorial pens, but won his freedom by helping release Tyr from Kalak's tyranny. He led a Tyrian legion against the city-state of Urik and joined the battle to imprison the ancient menace of Rajaat, the War-Bringer.

Sadira. The half-elf female began in Tithian's slave pens, keeping her true nature secret. Sadira is a member of the Veiled Alliance and a preserver with a thirst for power. She sought to see all of Tyr set free. She brought Rikus into the Alliance's plot to assassinate Kalak. Later, she gained advanced magical power at the Pristine Tower, killed the sorcerer-queen of Raam, was a member of the group that destroyed the Dragon of Tyr, and helped to end Rajaat's menace.

Agis of Asticles. The Tyrian senator and master of the Way joined the rebellion against Kalak and became an influential voice in the politics of Free Tyr. Agis went on a quest to find the elusive Dark Lens, a magical item capable of destroying Borys, the Dragon. He died after completing his quest.

Neeva. The female gladiator Neeva was introduced as Rikus's battle partner, but she quickly became much more. Her fighting skills helped to destroy Kalak, defeat Urik's armies, and ultimately saved Athas from the Dragon and Rajaat.

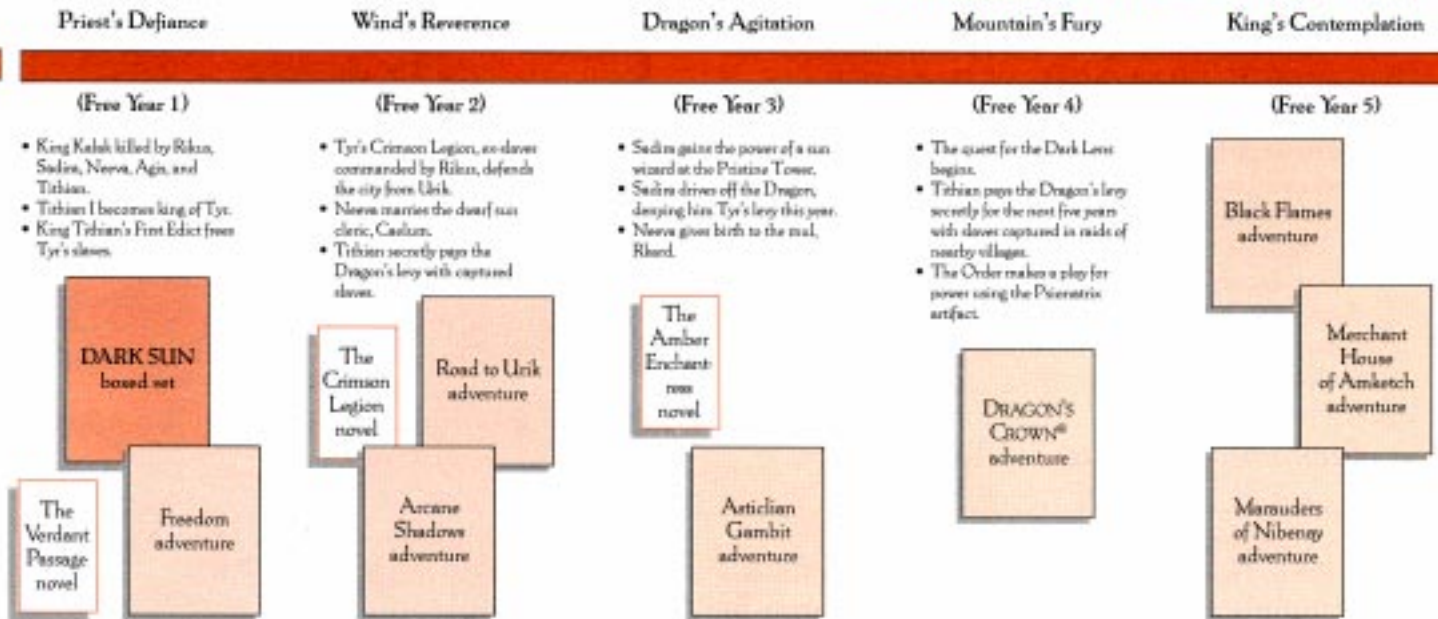
She also gave birth to Rkard, a mul boy who is a child of destiny. The boy played a pivotal role in the final events of the novel series and definitely showed the promise of becoming an important figure in Athas's ultimate salvation.





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Timeline of Important Events



Tithian. While Tithian turned out to be more of a villain than a hero, he did help destroy Kalak and the Dragon, albeit for his own purposes. Tithian was first introduced when he was promoted to High Templar of the King's Works by Kalak. He became Tyr's new king after Kalak's death and allowed the Tyr-ian Council of Advisers to enact sweeping reforms while he sought a way to become a sorcerer-king. More often than not, he wound up working for Tyr's benefit while he pressed forward with his own dark plots for gaining power and immortality. In the end, his final gambit for ultimate power led to a transformation unlike anything the sorcerer-kings had ever experienced.

The Dragon. Once called Borys, the 13th Champion of Rajaat and the Butcher of Dwarves, the Dragon was an advanced being of unbelievable power. In the distant past, Borys convinced the other Champions to betray Rajaat and use their combined powers to transform Borys into the Dragon. In exchange for maintaining the spells that kept Rajaat trapped, the Dragon received a levy of 1,000 slaves every year from the sorcerer-kings.

Rajaat. Rajaat, known as the First Sorcerer and the War-Bringer, is an ancient being from a forgotten age in Athas's distant past. He first appeared as a benevolent figure, teaching preserver magic to the people of the Green Age. Later, he

selected a number of Champions and taught them how to combine defiling magic with psionics. With the Champions' help, Rajaat wanted to fulfill his ultimate dream—to eliminate all of the new races and regain the glory of Athas's earliest days, a time called the Blue Age.

The Champions fought the Cleansing Wars, wiping out numerous races and defiling the land. Before they finished Rajaat's mad dream, they discovered that it wasn't the glory of humanity Rajaat wanted to attain. He wanted to give all of Athas back to the halflings. Realizing that they, too, would have to be eliminated, the Champions revolted and imprisoned Rajaat beyond the shadow plane of the Black, in a place of nothing known as the Hollow. There he remained, guarded by the Dragon, until the 190th King's Age, in the Year of Friend's Agitation, in the tenth year of Tyr's freedom . . .

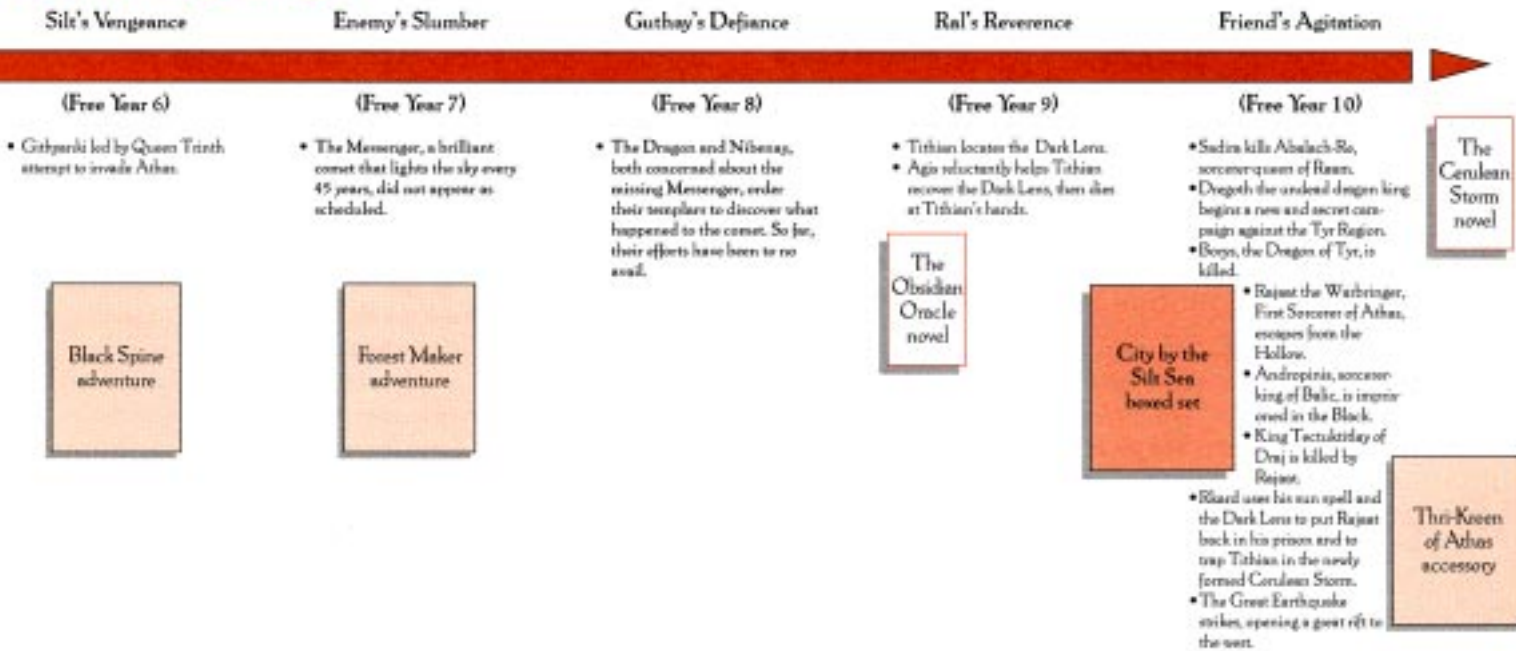
Timeline of Events

Refer to the timeline for a graphical representation of this important decade on Athas. The text below details the specific events of the decade.

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190th King's Age



Priest's Defiance (Free Year 1)

Kalak, sorcerer-king of Tyr, was ready to take the next step in his transformation into a full dragon king. He was impatient, however, and wasn't content to proceed according to the prescribed method. Through magical research and by scrutinizing ancient texts, he sought a shortcut that would condense the 10-stage metamorphosis into a single, grand ritual.

First, Kalak needed a huge device to focus the great amount of destructive force required to power his spell. He had his slaves construct a ziggurat for this purpose, while the attached Great Stadium would trap the life energy of thousands of spectators to serve as that power.

Tyr's Veiled Alliance learned that King Kalak was planning something terrible for the ziggurat's dedication ceremony. The preservers couldn't find out what was going to happen, but they decided that the day of the ceremony would provide the best opportunity to initiate a plan of their own. They would free Tyr from Kalak's tyranny by doing the unthinkable—they would kill a sorcerer-king.

Sadira, Rikus, Agis, and Tithian teamed up to accomplish this impossible mission. The Veiled Alliance provided the weapon, the enchanted *Heartwood Spear* created by the

halfling chief, Nok. All Rikus had to do was hurl it at the appropriate time while Sadira and Agis used magic and psionics to distract the sorcerer-king. Tithian, meanwhile, promised to look the other way and otherwise make it easier for the rebels.

On the day of the dedication, after the crowds filled the Great Stadium, Kalak ordered the doors locked so that Tyr's citizens would have no choice but to participate in his spell. Before the sorcerer-king started to draw the energy needed to transform, the heroes made their move—Rikus threw the *Heartwood Spear*.

Though Rikus's throw found its mark, even the enchanted halfling spear wasn't enough to kill Kalak outright. Kalak's half-giant guards grabbed their leader and dragged him into the Golden Tower. From there, even wounded, Kalak continued to cast his spell, and the life force of those trapped inside the stadium began to power his transformation. Time was running out, and the heroes knew they had to finish what they started before Kalak could heal himself and transform.

Because time was short, the heroes needed a guide through Kalak's huge palace. Tithian agreed to help them—for a price. "Without a king, Tyr will fall into chaos," Tithian argued. "Who better to assume that position than a templar?"

"We all know what the templars have made of Tyr!" Agis objected.



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“Then help me make it better,” Tithian replied.

Reluctantly, the heroes agreed, and Tithian led them to Kalak’s chamber. There, wounded and in the midst of discarding one dragon form for the next, Kalak struggled to finish his accelerated transformation. Even in that state, the battle that followed was terrible. In the end, Kalak was dead, the heroes were victorious, and the newly elevated King Tithian agreed to free all of Tyr’s slaves.

Wind’s Reverence (Free Year 2)

Six months after Kalak’s death, a new threat arose to crush the Free City of Tyr. Hamanu, sorcerer-king of Urik, had demanded that the shipments of iron ore from Tyr’s mines resume. Tyr’s Council of Advisers had yet to develop a solution that didn’t require the use of slave labor. When no satisfactory response was forthcoming, Hamanu ordered his army to march on Tyr.

Rikus was given command of the Crimson Legion, two thousand ex-gladiators who had learned the art of combat in Tyr’s arena before being set free by King Tithian’s First Edict. The Legion defended the city in a running battle through the sandy wastes between Tyr and Urik, eventually gaining the help of the dwarves of the village Kled. In Kled, Rikus was given an enchanted sword called the *Scourge of Rkard* to wield against the foes of freedom.

As the war continued, Rikus came up with a daring strategy. He led his legion into Urik while Hamanu’s main army searched the wasteland in an attempt to cut off the legion’s route back home. In Urik, Rikus started a short-lived slave revolt that saw thousands die to Hamanu’s wrath. In the end, the Crimson Legion was destroyed, but Urik suffered enough to realize it couldn’t take Tyr—at least not yet. Rikus sacrificed friends and followers for the sake of Tyr, proving himself a worthy guardian for the dream of freedom.

At the conclusion of these events, Neeva decided to stay in Kled and marry the dwarf sun cleric named Caelum.

Dragon’s Agitation (Free Year 3)

Each of the city-states were required to give 1,000 slaves to the Dragon each year to ensure that Rajaat’s prison remained secure. In the years since Tyr’s freedom, the Dragon’s levy was conveniently forgotten.

It was during the third year of Tyr’s freedom that Rikus, Agis,

and Sadira learned that King Tithian had honored the Dragon’s levy from the previous year—and was about to do so again. To surrender citizens to the Dragon was unthinkable. Another solution had to be discovered.

The news of the Dragon’s approach wasn’t all the trio learned. In Kled, the *Dwarven Book of Kings* revealed that the Dragon was actually Borys, 13th Champion of Rajaat. Borys and the Champions eventually overthrew their master and took control of his sanctum, the Pristine Tower.

To defy the Dragon, Tyr needed great power. It was decided that Sadira would seek out the Pristine Tower and its secrets, while Agis organized Tyr’s psionics and sorcerers to defend the city. A more onerous task fell to Rikus. He had to be prepared to use his popularity to sway the populace if the unthinkable happened—if Agis and Sadira failed and the levy had to be paid to save Tyr.

At the Pristine Tower, Sadira gained the ability to power her magic with the rays of the crimson sun (instead of with the life force of plants). During the day, her body took on a jet-black hue as she was steeped in the sun’s life-giving energy. With her increased magical strength, she was able to drive off the Dragon and deny him his levy for the year. She also learned that the ultimate solution to the menace of the Dragon was held in a lost artifact called the Dark Lens.

Balic was the first to suffer for Tyr’s defiant stand against the Dragon. King Andropinis paid Tyr’s share of slaves to Borys, but other city-states and villages would pay as the years rolled by.

Before the year ended, Neeva gave birth to her son, the mul Rkard. The boy was named for the dwarf king who battled Borys over 2,000 years ago, during the last days of the Cleansing Wars.

Mountain’s Fury (Free Year 4)

While Sadira and Agis were beginning their search for the Dark Lens, other heroes were involved in events centered around the Dragon Crown Mountains and a stronghold of high-powered psionics known as the Order. The newest leader of the Order, Pharistes, was disillusioned with the brutality of Athas. He blamed this brutality on the wanton abuse of psionic power for personal gain and gratification. With the help of the Psionatrix, an ancient relic of unknown origin, Pharistes launched his own plan for restoring Athas.

Through the power of the Psionatrix, Pharistes established a field of energy designed to suppress the harnessing and use of

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psionic energy for 1,000 years. Members of the Order were given small shards from the Psionatrix that made them immune to the effects of the suppression field. While the field was in place, the Order would set things right. To most, this was just another abuse of power, another example of tyranny as practiced beneath the crimson sun.

The heroes eventually defeated Pharistes and shattered the Psionatrix. The psionic suppression field dissipated, and the Order withdrew from the affairs of Athas for many years. The Order had to try to heal the split between loyalists and renegades, as well as replace the members it lost as the events unfolded. It has yet to emerge from its self-imposed exile.

Silt's Vengeance (Free Year 6)

The heroes of Tyr continued to search for clues that would lead them to the Dark Lens while another menace threatened Athas. It fell to a different group of heroes to combat this new threat. Athas's latest danger came from deep beneath the Black Spine Mountains where a portal to another plane of existence gaped like an open wound. Through this portal, Queen Trinth of the githyanki planned to move a massive army that would swarm across Athas and conquer it completely. She used the gith, who she believed were a twisted off-shoot of the true githyanki line, as an advance troop, though she planned to eliminate them once all of Athas was hers.

The githyanki queen's plans were foiled when the heroes traveled through the gate to the Astral Plane and killed her in a fierce battle. With Trinth dead, her portal collapsed and her army lost its impetus. The githyanki threat was eliminated—for the time being.

Ral's Reverence (Free Year 9)

In the five years since Sadira turned away Borys, King Tithian secretly supplied the Dragon's levy with slaves captured from outlying villages. On one raid during Tyr's ninth year of freedom, Tithian's agents had a second goal. They were to break into the stores of ancient artifacts in the dwarf village of Kled to secure items from the time of King Rkard. Tithian had succeeded where Sadira and Agis failed. He learned the location of the Dark Lens, as well as the fact that it was guarded by undead dwarves still loyal to the ancient dwarf king. Tithian needed the items to get past the guardians, who had become banshees once their natural lives ended.

Neeva discovered Tithian's involvement with the slavers during the raid on Kled. She warned Agis after the raiders were driven off, but she wasn't able to stop them from stealing a few of the ancient artifacts.

Before Agis could act on Neeva's news, Tithian departed for the city-state of Balic to arrange passage into the Strait of Baza. The Dark Lens was in the possession of the giants of the silt islands off the coast of Balic, where it was regarded as a holy relic called the Obsidian Oracle.

Agis eventually caught up with Tithian and reluctantly aided him in his quest. After the pair retrieved the Dark Lens, Tithian killed Agis. He removed Agis' signet ring and sent it along with a message to Sadira and Rikus back in Tyr. "Tell them to meet Agis in the village of Samarah," Tithian said. "The time has come to kill the Dragon."

While Agis's signet ring made its way back to Tyr, the dwarf banshees appeared before Neeva's son, Rkard. The boy was now a sun cleric in training, and he had grown large and strong as all half-dwarves do. The banshees brought him the items that Tithian's agents had stolen earlier—the dwarven *Belt of Rank* and King Rkard's crown. With the items, they brought a message of their own: Young Rkard was going to slay Borys the Dragon.

Friend's Agitation (Free Year 10)

Events were coming together at a blinding pace. Tithian wanted the Dragon dead so that he could free Rajaan, the ancient sorcerer who originally created the sorcerer-kings. Tithian wanted Rajaan to bestow those same powers on him, and he didn't care who he had to eliminate or lie to along the way. Meanwhile, another ancient sorcerer-king was preparing to return to terrorize Athas, and the land itself was about to shudder with the pangs of catastrophe.

The Dragon learned that Tithian had gained possession of the Dark Lens and was preparing to betray him. He called on the other sorcerer-kings to assist him, for the one thing that bound the sorcerer-kings and the Dragon together was the threat of their old master, Rajaan.

Sadira, Rikus, Neeva, and young Rkard traveled east toward the shoreside village of Samarah. Originally, they believed they were going to meet Agis, but along the way Sadira learned that Agis had died. In the salt flats of the Ivory Plain, they were ambushed by a Raamin legion led by the sorcerer-queen, Abal-



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ach-Re. Sadira, with the help of an artifact connected to Rajaat, killed Abalach-Re. Rajaat the War-Bringer had his first taste of revenge on those who had betrayed him.

Shortly after Raam's queen fell, another sorcerer-king, who had been in hiding for nearly 2,000 years, decided it was time to make his presence felt on Athas. Dregoth, the 3rd Champion of Rajaat and the sorcerer-king of ruined Giustenal, was now an undead dragon king, second in power to Borys the Dragon. He had been busy ruling an underground city and traveling the various planes of existence searching for a way to achieve true godhood, a goal that had become his obsession. Dregoth had no idea what was occurring above him, but he knew what he wanted—the worship of the masses, a new city-state that wasn't hidden or ruined, and revenge against the sorcerer-kings who had killed him and forced him into his undead state.

While Dregoth was sending his templars to the surface to learn the state of the Tyr Region, Sadira and Rikus had joined forces with Tithian again. Though they didn't like it, Sadira and Rikus needed Tithian if they really hoped to destroy the Dragon. Meanwhile, Borys had captured young Rkard and was flying him across the Sea of Silt to the Dragon's city-state, Ur Draxa. He took the child to use as one possible option in his hopes of stopping Tithian and the others from slipping into the city with the Dark Lens. If they could reach Ur Draxa with the Lens, they could find a way to release Rajaat—and that was something the Dragon wanted to avoid at all costs.

Ur Draxa was more than just another city-state. It was built around Rajaat's prison, surrounded by a lake of molten rock and located deep within the Sea of Silt, in a place called the Valley of Dust and Fire. The easiest way to reach Ur Draxa was to step through the Gate of Doom, a mystic arch that provided a magical portal across the molten lake for those who knew the arcane words that activated it. At the arch, the dwarf Caelum died trying to rescue his son Rkard from the Dragon. Rkard realized his destiny was nothing more than a lie propagated by Tithian as he vainly struggled to free himself and help his father. He realized he wasn't going to slay Borys. The prophecy was a lie Tithian used to distract the banshees who guarded the Dark Lens.

A short time later, Rikus, Sadira, and Tithian faced Borys just outside Ur Draxa, on the other side of the mystic portal. Rikus buried the *Scourge of Rkard* in the Dragon's snout. The blade snapped, and a fountain of black fluid erupted from the weapon. The black stain coated the Dragon and ate the flesh from his bones, destroying him. From out of the dark slime,

Rajaat's voice proclaimed, "Borys of Ebe, Butcher of Dwarves, Leader of the Revolt. Your master has claimed his punishment."

It still fell to the heroes to keep Rajaat imprisoned, but that meant they had to capture the Dark Lens. Tithian held the obsidian orb, and he had left before the battle with Borys had ended. As Tithian carried the Dark Lens through Ur Draxa, it absorbed the magic of the caging spell. Rajaat was free!

As Rajaat emerged from the Hollow behind the Black, Ur Draxa began to change. Water spouted everywhere, and a blue sun rose into the sky. The buildings took on the sweeping, organic look of ancient halfling in architecture, and monuments to serene halflings replaced the obsidian statues formerly dedicated to Borys. The past was overprinting on the present.

Rajaat, meanwhile, had undergone his own change in the centuries he was trapped in the Hollow. Obsessed with a period in time when Athas was covered with water, the First Sorcerer had become so closely linked to that element to be almost a force of nature. Free of the Hollow, Rajaat's skeletal form grew twice as tall as any giant, and blue clouds covered his bones instead of flesh. He was a walking cerulean storm, intent on returning Athas to the Blue Age. Before that, however, he had traitors to deal with.

The first sorcerer-king to feel Rajaat's wrath was Andropinis of Balic. "For you, eternal confinement," Rajaat proclaimed as his shadow swallowed the sorcerer-king and trapped him in the Black.

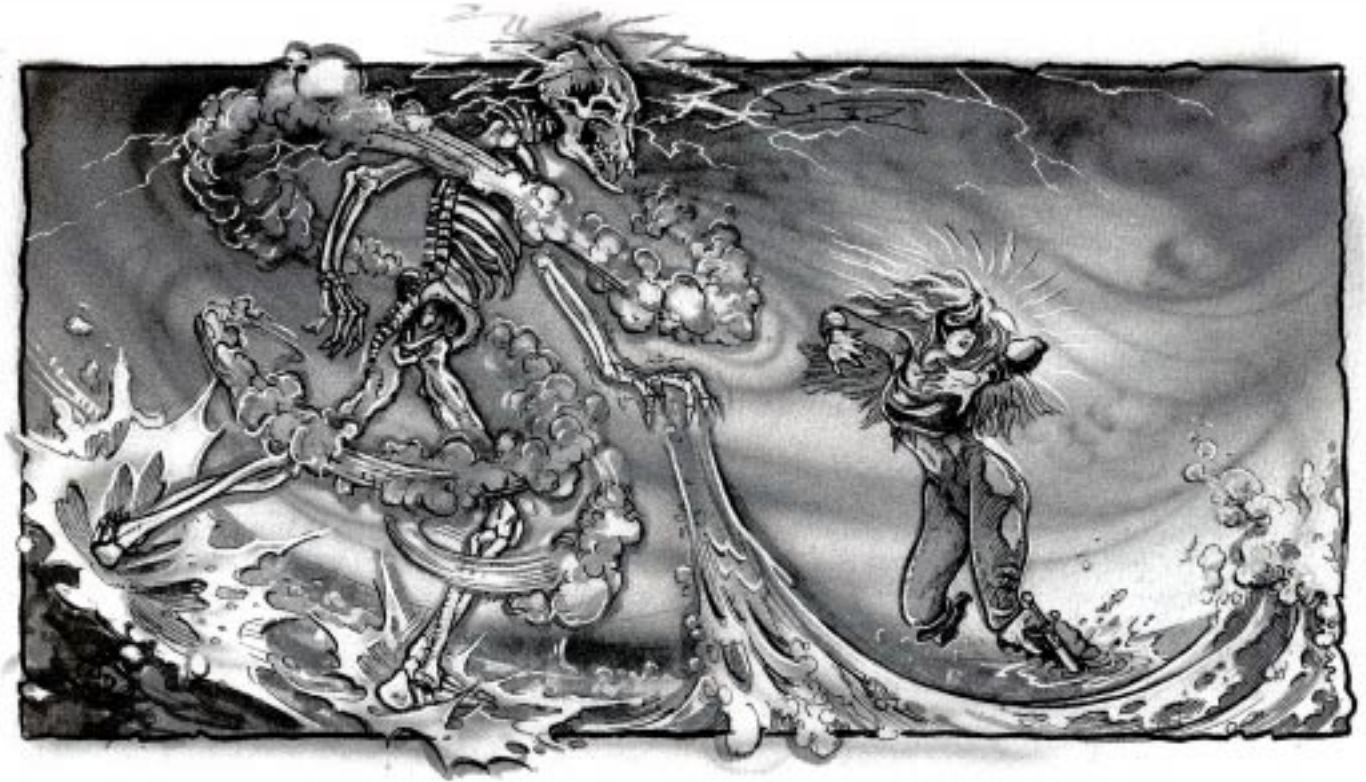
King Tectuktitlay of Drax was next. "For you, death," Rajaat announced as he brought the Dark Lens he took from Tithian crashing down on Tectuktitlay's skull.

Before he could progress to Hamanu of Urik, Sadira grabbed the Dark Lens, distracting Rajaat. She figured out how to hurt the First Sorcerer. Unlike normal people, Rajaat didn't give form to his shadow—his shadow shaped him. Her magic, drawn from the same source as Rajaat's, couldn't be used against the First Sorcerer. But Rkard's priestly sun magic could.

The boy cast his sun spell into the Dark Lens, and the obsidian orb erupted into a miniature version of the crimson sun. It engulfed Rajaat in its brilliance, obliterating his shadow and sending his essence back to the Hollow. The First Sorcerer could do nothing as his body of storm boiled away in the cleansing heat and clear water cascaded from the sky.

Tithian, meanwhile, had been holding on to the bottom of the Dark Lens when Rkard cast his spell. Focused through the orb, the spell pushed Tithian into the Black. It had a secondary

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effect, however. It permanently and mystically connected Tithian to Rajaat's elemental nature. Tithian became a storm, and he raged over the Valley of Dust and Fire with wind and hail and rain.

Sadira tossed the Dark Lens into the lava lake and placed wards around it so that no one could attempt to free Rajaat again. She was also pretty sure that without the orb Tithian would remain trapped as well.

At the same instance that Rkard's spell lit up the sky and the storm began, a major earthquake rocked the Tyr Region. All across the Tablelands, people felt the ground rumble and shake. The full force of the quake was centered on the western side of the Ringing Mountains. There, a great rift opened near the Dragon Crown Mountains, cutting northwest through the Hinterlands for as far as the eye could see.

Changes in the World

The Prism Pentad and the other sources cited above describe a few significant changes in the world. The most notable ones are discussed below.

The Cerulean Storm

The Cerulean Storm began when Rajaat's cloud-body was engulfed by young Rkard's sun-spell. First, a turquoise fog spread over the entire basin in which Ur Draxa was situated. The cloud filled the sky, and a heavy rain started to fall over the city. Though it was formed from the remains of Rajaat's cloud-body and fueled by the First Sorcerer's bond with elemental water, the Cerulean Storm was tied to Tithian due to his reaction to Rkard's sun-spell and the Dark Lens. The storm soon spread to cover the whole valley. When the cool water struck the hot, molten rock, clouds of boiling steam billowed up, killing whoever was still alive in Ur Draxa and making the city uninhabitable for the duration of the storm.

Tithian's storm continues to rage over the Valley of Dust and Fire, which is now called the Valley of the Cerulean Storm. The lake of lava and Ur Draxa have been obscured by swirling blue clouds, lightning, rain, and boiling steam. The storm's duration can't be determined, but it shows no indication of abating any time soon.



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The deposed king of Tyr and would-be sorcerer-king, Tithian, has been permanently attached to Ur Draxa's ever-present storm. Trapped in the Black yet tied to Rajaat in the Hollow, Tithian can interact with Athas's physical dimension in only one way—through the Cerulean Storm. His rage at his failure manifests as wind and lightning, while his frustration and loneliness falls like bitter tears, a torrential deluge of cold, stinging rain. He has become, in effect, a spirit of water, haunting the valley and inadvertently protecting the Dark Lens that could otherwise be used to free him. Tithian's violent storm, and the scalding steam it produces over the lake of lava, prevents rescuers from reaching the Dark Lens.

The storm over Ur Draxa is an aberration produced by the intermingling of powerful supernatural forces, and appears frightening to even the hardest, most well-traveled adventurers. The effects of the rainfall on the molten lake, like the great clouds of boiling steam, have created hazardous conditions that have left Ur Draxa uninhabitable.

Tyr-Storms

The Cerulean Storm has subtly changed Athas's weather patterns. Most parts of Athas see rain once a year, while a few locations experience storms no more than once every decade. Now smaller storms periodically spin off from the main storm, riding the whipping winds across the Sea of Silt toward the Tablelands. As they fly toward land, the clouds turn black, gaining power and intensity until they finally burst over the Tablelands in small, concentrated downpours. Because the rise of these particular storms seemed to coincide with the actions of the heroes of Tyr (who some ballads refer to as fools), the storms have been named Tyr-storms.

Tyr-storms reach the many corners of the Tablelands as often as the Dragon used to appear to claim his levy of mortal life. Unlike the Dragon, neither luck nor coin can buy safety from Tyr-storms. They ravage everything with equal fury, inundating all with wind, rain, lightning, and hail. Instead of welcoming Tyr-storms, the inhabitants of the Tablelands dread their violent arrival, for they turn precious water into a deadly commodity.

There is approximately one Tyr-storm every month in a different part of the Tablelands, though no area receives more than one visit by the black storms every year. When a Tyr-storm appears on the horizon, the inhabitants of an area have a short time to prepare. When the black clouds erupt, they unleash

their fury quickly. No Tyr-storm lasts more than an hour, and most dissipate within 20 minutes, leaving death and devastation in their wake.

Earthquakes

Not only has the sky become treacherous, but the land itself has become unstable. Since the massive earthquake that rocked the Tablelands, frequent aftershocks and minor earthquakes have become commonplace, each bringing its own level of terror and destruction to the region.

The Great Earthquake, as it has come to be called, rumbled out of the west about the same time that young Rkard was casting his sun-spell on the Dark Lens. Templars and earth-clerics have traced the quake's origin to a spot about 400 miles northwest of Tyr. That puts it well beyond the Ringing Mountains and the Hinterlands, in a part of the world that not even the fabled Wanderer has visited. On the day of the Great Earthquake, powerful shock waves traveled east like a thousand herds of mekillots, causing massive amounts of destruction.

The shock waves cut a huge crevasse across the Hinterlands near the Dragon Crown Mountains. This new geographical feature has been named the Great Rift, for it is 10 miles across at its widest part and it gradually descends to a depth of two miles.

Falling rocks echoed in the Ringing Mountains as the quake's shock waves thundered toward the Tablelands, sealing familiar passages through the mountains and creating new ones.

The Great Earthquake was felt as far east as Draj and Balic, and even the silt coast villages of Cromlin and Break Shore were touched by the shaking ground. The most damage was reported west of the Altaruk trade road, however, and even then it seems that the Ringing Mountains absorbed much of the quake's final brunt. Both Tyr and Urik experienced minor damage, though a number of villages and forts in the area sustained major damage and quite a few deaths.

Aftershocks and minor quakes have become frequent in the days and weeks since the Great Earthquake. Most of these, like the original quake, are centered west of the Forest Ridge, but that doesn't mean the Tablelands are safe from the effects. Each new shock causes damaged structures to tumble, cracks to appear in the ground, rock slides, animal stampedes, and general terror and chaos through the land. As with the Tyr-storms, these minor quakes are neither welcomed nor appreciated by the people of the Tyr Region.

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"The events of recent years have caused a great many changes in the Tyr Region, but the most sweeping changes have occurred in the city-states. Freedom thrives in Tyr. Draj, Raam, and Balic have lost their sorcerer-kings and now struggle to find new direction and leadership. Meanwhile, the sorcerer-kings and queen of Urik, Nibenay, and Gulg battle to keep their kingdoms—and perhaps increase them before the last clouds of silt settle over the Tablelands. These are historic days, full of excitement and terror, for we stand on the brink of an unknown future. I hope the fall doesn't destroy us."

—The Wanderer of Athas

The seven city-states of the Tyr Region are the centers of civilization for the Tablelands—and perhaps for the entire world of Athas. Some other society may lie beyond the Ringing Mountains, or past the Endless Sand Dunes, or on the other side of the Sea of Silt, but could it rival the grandeur of Tyr, Urik, or Nibenay? It doesn't matter, for the Tablelands are where the great elf tribes, the thri-kreen packs, and the citizens of the city-states live, so what exists elsewhere is irrelevant. Only the city-states and the land around them matter.

In the pages that follow, each of the seven city-states is examined and updated to incorporate the changes wrought by the Prism Pentad and other sources. A decade has passed since the first player-character heroes earned their freedom from the slave pits of Tyr. It's time to take stock of what's changed and what's remained the same. Note that once these changes have been incorporated into a DARK SUN campaign, time advances to the Year of Desert's Fury of the 190th King's Age (or Free Year 11 for those using Tyr's new calendar), about four months after the Great Earthquake and the advent of the Cerulean Storm.

Tyr

Tyr, located in a fertile valley in the foothills of the Ringing Mountains, was the first city-state to successfully rebel against a sorcerer-king. Rikus and the other heroes of Tyr assassinated King Kalak before he could complete his spell of metamorphosis and become a full dragon. With Kalak dead, the High Templar Tithian stepped forward to rule the city. He received the backing of Rikus, Agis, and Sadira due to his promise to free all Tyrian slaves and institute other sweeping reforms—promises he actually kept.

Tithian served as Tyr's king for nearly 10 years. One of his first acts as king was to disband the Senate (which had no real power under Kalak's rule) and put the Council of Advisers in its place. These city leaders were drawn from all ranks of society, and they worked diligently to pass laws that would strengthen Tyr's newfound freedom. Tithian allowed the Council to operate independently. It virtually ran the city while Tithian sought the means to become a true sorcerer-king. For much of the time, Tithian was a recluse. If he wasn't studying the Way or digging through ancient texts, he was away from the city searching for artifacts like the Dark Lens.

During those 10 years, as Tyr struggled to come to grips with the concept of a city run not with slave labor but with the sweat of free, wage-earning workers, the city-state faced many crises. A few almost ended the experiment in freedom before it could take root, and some nearly destroyed the city completely. Many of these crises were external in origin, but a significant number arose from inside the city walls.

The neighboring city-state of Urik tried to capture Tyr's iron mines less than six months after Kalak's death. The resulting battles made Tyr's leaders realize how necessary the legions were and how important it was to resume iron production so that no one else would go to war over trade and commerce.

Other problems that occurred during Tithian's reign included finding a way to overcome the Dragon's levy, skirmishes with raiding tribes, battles with giants, keeping the Council together in the face of secret agendas and conflicting partisan interests, the templar revolt of Free Year 3, and the artisan strike of Free Year 6. Agis, Sadira, Rikus, and the Council handled most of these crises in one way or another, for Tithian was much too busy to get involved in what he considered to be the daily chores of government.

Now, in its eleventh year of freedom, Tyr faces new challenges. King Tithian no longer rules the city, as his ambitions have trapped him within the Cerulean Storm. Agis of Asticles is dead, killed by Tithian, so his wisdom and honor can no longer guide the Council of Advisers. It remains to be seen whether Tyr's freedom can root in the Tablelands—or will its independence be blown away with the silt and sand on the next gust of desert wind?

Government

A Council of Advisers makes the laws of Tyr. The Council is divided into five distinct groups who together represent Tyr's varied



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citizenry. These groups are: the Guildsmen, made up mostly of human and dwarf artisans and other professionals from Tyr's three trade districts; the Nobles, representing Tyr's aristocratic families; the Templars, who continue to handle administrative functions in the city; the Free Citizens, chosen from among the masses who were either slaves or paupers before Tyr's liberation; and the Preservers, the newest group admitted to the Council, consisting of members of the once-secret and outlawed Veiled Alliance.

With no king to lead the city, the Council now oversees all aspects of the government. When Rikus, Neeva, and Sadira returned with the news of Agis's death and Tithian's disappearance (the trio decided it would be better to keep Tithian's fate secret instead of trying to explain the real events and risking some power-hungry defiler looking for a way to free him), it was resolved that the Free City shouldn't be burdened with another king. Instead, a subcommittee made up of one member from each of the Council's groups would serve as an OverCouncil.

The OverCouncil governs on a daily basis, while the entire Council of Advisers only meets three out of every 15 days. The OverCouncil consists of the dwarf stonecutter Gar Bonehammer (representing the Guildsmen), Lady Laaj of Mycilen (for the Nobles), High Templar Timor (for the Templars), Rikus (representing the Free Citizens), and Sadira (representing the Preservers).

Templars continue to fill the administrative roles they have long been associated with, even with the loss of their spellcasting abilities. The bureaucracy has been reformed, but it still exists. Without the templars to turn the massive wheels of government, Tyr would have ceased to function long ago. High Templar Timor serves as the Minister of Tyr, overseeing the various Senior Templars who administer to departments like Fields, Finance, Public Works, Water, and Trade.

Trade and Commerce

Tyr's primary trade good remains iron ore, though the metal isn't mined by slave labor anymore. Free citizens work as paid laborers under much-improved conditions (safety and continued health being the major concerns that have been addressed by the Council of Advisers). A small number of prison laborers serve their punishments working in the mines, as directed by Council decree. As long as the ore continues to reach market on a timely basis, the OverCouncil hopes that the mine will be safe from future military conquests.

Various guilds and noble houses produce goods that are sold both in Tyr and abroad. The templars, meanwhile, oversee the production and marketing of goods that belong to the city-state itself. Textiles, silk, ceramics, and glass once produced from land belonging to King Kalak now earn resources for the Council's treasury.

The merchants of House Vordon maintain a trading headquarters and emporium in Tyr, and they base much of their business around the Free City. Before Kalak's death, this merchant family seemed on the verge of collapse due to the shutdown of the mines and other factors tied to Kalak's mad plans. Now the merchant house is thriving, conducting trade with the other city-states and the major villages of the Tyr Region.

Exports aren't the only trade occurring in Tyr. The Free City regularly imports fruits, wood, and rice to supplement the goods and foodstuffs Tyr can produce for itself. Plus, nobles and free citizens alike enjoy wandering the merchant districts for exotic goods of all descriptions.

Conditions in the City

The city has to deal with a variety of environmental and social conditions inspired by the first tumultuous decade of freedom. While the other city-states are experiencing these same conditions to some degree, they seem magnified in the confines of Tyr's sheltered valley.

The Great Earthquake signaled the start of a new stage in Tyrian history. It marked the end of the first decade of liberation and the beginning of a new period of freedom. It was, however, as violent a start as the one that accompanied the previous decade, though the violence this time was instigated by a natural disaster and not the actions of a sorcerer-king.

With most of the heroes and beloved leaders of the city away on a mysterious mission, the people of Tyr had to rely on themselves and the remaining members of the Council of Advisers when disaster struck. The mountains to the west rumbled, and the Great Earthquake roared through Tyr. Remarkably, with the exception of some structural damage and a small number of deaths, Tyr escaped the disaster relatively unscathed. The greatest number of deaths occurred in the Warrens, for the buildings there are among the weakest in the city and many collapsed when the quake hit. Portions of the wall that surrounded the city cracked, and a section split open near the Grand Gate. The single structure suffering the most damage was Kalak's ziggurat—

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great cracks riddle one face of the tower, while another face has collapsed into a heap of rubble.

The client villages that dot the valley endured the worst of the quake's effects. One village was leveled by the quake, others were pounded by rock slides that cascaded out of the mountains. The refugees are the worst, though. Intelligent races and a wide variety of creatures and monsters have fled the mountains, flooding the valley in search of a safe haven. This, in turn, has sent the villagers to the city gates, seeking protection from the ravaging hordes.

Between the Great Earthquake, the periodic aftershocks that visit the city, and the violent Tyr-storms that occasionally sweep the land, the populace has turned into a frightened mob. Not everyone has succumbed to these base fears, of course, but a significant number of people have lost control, and the Council needs to find a way to calm them and restore order. A particularly vocal group claims that Kalak has returned to gain vengeance against the city, and they have called for open worship of the sorcerer-king. Others have been trying to appease the elemental spirits of earth, hoping that they'll spare Tyr from their ground-shaking anger. Then there are those who seek to take advantage of the misfortune, looting shops, robbing nobles, and

generally taking what they want and need by force of arms. These violent mobs are concentrated in the Warrens, but they sometimes range into other parts of the city to sow mayhem and destruction.

The Council of Advisers has been working overtime to address these problems. The Council first had to deal with King Tithian's disappearance. It established the OverCouncil to rule in Tithian's place so that the business of government could continue. Second, it increased the size of the City Guard and commanded it to restore order. Things have not returned to normal yet, but the situation is much better than it was in the days immediately following the Great Earthquake. Various subcommittees have been set up to handle damage control, to see to the fair distribution of water and supplies, and to handle the refugee problem—both those rushing into the valley and those fleeing the villages for the safer environs of the city walls.

When Sadira returned to Tyr, she convinced a significant portion of the Veiled Alliance to come out of hiding and join Tyrian society. These wizards formed a new group in Tyr called the Preservers. The Preservers were given a place on the Council of Advisers to reflect their new role in Tyr. Sadira, as their leader and as an important member of the Council, was assigned to the





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OverCouncil. The good wizards are developing plans and guidelines for helping the city in a variety of ways that adhere to their overall morals and code of ethics.

The Veiled Alliance remains active in the wake of this new age of wizardly openness, however. Matthias Morthen continues to lead a small number of preservers who feel that secrecy must be maintained until all of Kalak's defilers have been eradicated and the citizens of Tyr learn to deal with the responsibilities of freedom. Besides, Morthen doesn't like or trust Sadira, who has often approached the moral lines between defiling and preserving magic (if not actually crossed over it) in the course of defending Tyr. He believes that the Veiled Alliance must survive, if only to serve as a balance for a wizard whose powers and motivations he doesn't fully understand.

Finally, the situations in the other city-states have added to the general nervousness and apprehension hanging over Tyr. While Urik has sealed itself off from the rest of the Tablelands (except for the heavily armed trade caravans that set out and return at random intervals), Gulg and Nibenay have made a few overtures to the Council of Advisers. Both city-states have offered to aid Tyr, claiming that without a sorcerer-king to defend it the city was vulnerable to all sorts of terrible dangers. The Council, naturally, graciously refused the offers. Draaj and Balic have recently resumed trade with Tyr, but both cities have changed significantly since the reported deaths of their sorcerer-kings. In fact, though Sadira and Rikus assured the Council that the kings had been disposed of by Rajaat, rumors of their return continue to drift in with caravans, adventurers, and refugees. The worst tales come out of Raam, where confusion, madness, and ambition have given rise to anarchy. Tales of nobles being murdered in their homes, of templars being slaughtered in the streets, and of vicious invaders from a hidden city-state controlled by a king named Dregoth have made Tyrians ill at ease and not quite confident that their leaders can protect them.

Urik

Change intrudes least in the square, clean city-state of Urik. Located northeast of Tyr, between the Dragon's Bowl and the Smoking Crown Mountains, King Hamanu's city remains virtually the same as it was before the Great Earthquake and the demise of the Dragon. Hamanu, the King of the World and the Lion of Urik, was involved in the events surrounding the creation of the Cerulean Storm, so he was away from his city when

the quake struck. Minor damage and a few deaths resulted from the quake, and the citizens trembled. When Hamanu returned, he promised his citizens that they would have nothing else to fear from Athas and the changes wrought by the actions of Tyr's foolish heroes. The sorcerer-king's word was as strong as precious steel, for neither the aftershocks nor the Tyr-storm that arrived two months later could breach the towering yellow walls of Urik.

Of course, Hamanu's promise wasn't unconditional. Though the Urikites didn't have to fear change, they did have to fear their king. "You need fear only me, and only when you disobey me," Hamanu proclaimed, his words penetrating every mind, enhanced by his mastery of the Way. "Obey me and live without fear." Hamanu's dictates have always shaped Urik, and he intends to keep firm control over his land, lest he discover that he is walking down the same dusty path as Kalak.

Government

The sorcerer-king Hamanu rules Urik with a stern fist. His laws are not negotiable, his will not to be denied. Unlike some rulers of other Tableland cities, Hamanu directs his kingdom personally. When laws are needed, Hamanu drafts them. When a problem arises, the King of the World solves it. When a battle must be fought, the Lion of Urik rides at the head of his troops and leads them to victory.

Hamanu is a third-stage dragon king (a 23rd-level dragon). Through a combination of the Way and magic, he appears before his subjects shrouded in illusions. He appears as either a tall, vigorous man with close-cropped silver hair, dark skin stretched tight over ruthless features, and heartless yellow eyes, or as a half-man and half-lion of powerful build and mythic proportions. He is never seen in his true dragon form, even by his most-trusted templars.

The rest of Urik operates as a traditional sorcerer-king domain, populated as it is by templars, nobles, freemen, and slaves. The templars enforce Hamanu's laws and handle the day-to-day bureaucracy, the nobles manage the farms and water supplies, the free citizens engage in business and try to remain free, and the slaves do everything else.

At one time, Hamanu's ambitions exceeded his resources. Since he returned from helping to keep Rajaat imprisoned, his agenda has subtly changed. The three surviving sorcerer-kings sensed that the time had come to rethink the old ways, to find



new approaches to the challenges of life on Athas. Until he figures out what those new approaches are, Hamanu has decided to withdraw a bit. He has effectively closed Urik off from the rest of the Tablelands, trying to keep change from intruding on his domain for as long as possible.

Trade and Commerce

Urik's main export is obsidian, which it extracts from the Black Crown, a mountain in the Smoking Crown chain. The glassy stone is used to make a variety of weapons and implements that fetch handsome prices in the other city-states. Urik's economy depends almost entirely on the black stone, though the city exports a variety of other goods that are unique to the area.

As far as imports are concerned, Urik desperately needs Tyr's iron. The iron is fashioned into tools that are used to quarry the obsidian. Though the two cities fought a brief war shortly after Kalak's death, trade has resumed to the benefit of both Urik and Tyr.

In general, Urik has sealed itself off from the rest of the Tyr Region. Hamanu doesn't want his city inundated by refugees, nor does he want the ideas sparking problems in the other cities spreading to his free citizens and slaves. Therefore, Urik periodically allows heavily regulated trade caravans to approach the city. These caravans are subject to thorough searches and psionic investigation, and the traders are restricted to specific areas inside the city walls. Failure to comply with any of these statutes can have deadly ramifications for the traders.

The same is true for the merchants of House Stel. When a caravan is ready to strike out from Urik, the traders must comply with a series of restrictions and requirements enforced by powerful templars. Only the most loyal members of Stel's organization may leave and enter Urik, men and women who have been tested repeatedly by the templars. All cargo is checked a dozen times, and trade routes must be approved in advance. If a caravan returns that has deviated from the route in any way, it is not allowed back into the city.

Conditions in the City

Except for the new restrictions regarding trade and travel, things in Urik are the same as they ever were. The city remains a warrior culture, ruled by a warrior king and geared toward fighting and winning wars. The current enemies aren't the other city-

states, however. Urik's foes are now the refugees seeking shelter from the constant tremors and violent storms and the monsters fleeing out of the west and rushing blindly across the Tablelands toward the Silt Sea. When either type of group approaches Urik's high, yellow walls, Hamanu leads his army out of his gigantic palace called Destiny's Kingdom and charges into battle. In most cases, these exercises are more properly referred to as slaughters, for the terrified invaders can't stand against Hamanu's highly trained and equipped legions.

The few signs that the Great Earthquake touched Urik have been wiped out; buildings have been repaired, streets re-paved, the dead buried. Now, Hamanu's magic keeps the aftershocks and the storms from entering the city, and, in most respects, the citizens have learned to ignore the disasters. As long as the Tyr-storms and earthquakes remain outside Urik's walls, they see no reason to dwell on them.

Closing the city off from the rest of the world has made it difficult for certain members of Urik's society. Adventurers and traders, for example, are severely hampered by the well-guarded walls. The Veiled Alliance has to be doubly careful in the wake of Hamanu's restrictions, and the preservers' supplies of spell components have become extremely limited. Elves, never really welcome near Urik's walls, now avoid the city completely. They are treated like invaders now, set upon as soon as they are spotted entering Hamanu's verdant belt. Things may change as soon as the king finishes contemplating his city's new approach to the world—or it may simply get worse if Hamanu decides to keep the rest of Athas at bay forever,

Raam

Before the death of the sorcerer-queen Abalach-Re, Raam was a city on the brink of revolution. Chaos was rampant. The sorcerer-queen was insecure in her position, and the citizens spoke openly of rebellion. Nobles regularly assassinated templars, behaving like raiding tribes inside the city walls. Since Abalach-Re's death, the city has collapsed into anarchy. Various factions have grabbed whatever power they could, and Raam teeters on the brink of civil war.

Raam, located east of Urik, felt only the slightest tremors on the day of the Great Earthquake. Shortly before that day, when the remnants of the Raamin legion that had been dispatched to find and destroy Rikus and Sadira returned to the city, the news quickly spread that Abalach-Re was killed in battle with Tyr's



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sorceress. This initiated a different sort of quake, one that was more powerful and violent than any force of nature. The news was the spark that ignited the fires of anarchy, and now Raam burns.

Government

The government of Raam still exists, but it has almost no power in the face of the violence and chaos ravaging the city. The templars who haven't fled in fear or tried to hide among the populace as regular citizens continue to administer to the city, but it is clear that Raam no longer functions the way it used to. These templars have only their bureaucratic skills to fall back on, as their abilities to call on priestly spells vanished with Abalach-Re's demise. They continue to call for the worship of the mysterious (and imaginary) being the sorcerer-queen claimed to receive her powers from, but everyone ignores them.

Instead, the city has been divided into several armed camps. The main body of templars occupy one camp that's centered in the templar quarter of the city. Various rogue templars command smaller parts of Raam, claiming from as little as one building to as many as several blocks as their personal domains. They defend these domains with troops that were once loyal to Abalach-Re but now follow their templar commanders.

The next largest group claiming dominion over sections of Raam are the noble families. Like the raiding tribes of the sandy wastes, the nobles pillage and plunder for the things they want and need to survive. The nobles have expanded their areas of control. While each family started with a small piece of land and the road adjoining it, those with the power and audacity to press their advantage have grabbed whatever they could hold onto. Like the raiding tribes, the noble camps are savage, ruthless, and have only their own interests at heart.

The merchant houses have taken one of two approaches regarding conducting business in Raam. The first option, chosen by the vast majority of merchant houses, was to get out of town and take their business elsewhere. The second option, embraced by House M'ke as a prudent enterprise that ensures its own survival, was to seize control of as much of the city as possible. House M'ke and its army of mercenaries now control most of the Merchant District. Armed bands wearing House M'ke's colors periodically sweep through the city, looting and pillaging until they gather enough goods to fill a caravan. This caravan then sets out across the Tablelands to conduct trade as a normal

merchant house caravan would. Only in Raam does House M'ke behave like a conquering army of raiders—because in Raam, that's what House M'ke has become. A few of the more daring (or desperate) merchant houses return to Raam from time to time to test the climate, but they usually wind up losing their goods to one or more of the armed camps seeking dominance in the city.

The strangest group to stake a claim in Raam's power vacuum is the elf tribe known as the Night Runners. Prior to Abalach-Re's death, the Night Runners maintained a small presence in Raam. Now, this group of elves that specializes in the "shadow arts" of espionage, assassination, and extortion have decided to take a more active role in Raamin society. A large portion of the Elf Quarter and the Tradesmen's District has been taken over by the Night Runners. Besides holding and expanding their own territory, the Night Runners continue to sell their unique services to those who can afford it—including noble houses, merchant camps, and even templar domains. In the end, the Night Runners plan to control the entire city, making it the first elf city in hundreds or even thousands of years. Until then, the elves don't mind working for the bands they're competing with as it gives them an easy way to keep tabs on how every faction in the city is doing.

Trade and Commerce

Trade within the city has become a nightmare. Free citizens, for the most part, can't buy or trade for what they need. Not only have goods and services fallen to short supply, but the various armed bands seeking to carve their own kingdom out of Raam's dying corpse have taken to hoarding whatever they come across. Free citizens, therefore, have to find what they need and take it by force of arms. In Raam, as perhaps nowhere else in all of "civilized" Athas, only the strong survive, and only the most powerful prosper.

Few traders come to Raam anymore, though many set up markets in the wilderness beyond the city gates. From these markets they sell basic supplies at an enormous profit to the trade gangs sent from the city. Trade gangs are armed mercenaries either attached to a particular armed camp or working independently to make their own profits as middlemen. The wilderness markets also provide an outlet for the goods which Raam's free citizens continue to produce in the face of escalating violence and despair.



Beyond these examples, House M'ke is the only evidence of true mercantile activity, albeit with a distinct wartime slant. Raam is a disaster, so for M'ke to function it must employ disaster economics. If terror and violence are the only ways to conduct business in Raam, then House M'ke adapts to the trade practices of the day. As such, the merchant house has seized a portion of the city and turned it into a heavily protected trade emporium. The traders of House M'ke continue to operate in the rest of the Tablelands as they always have, but in Raam they've become raiders in their own right. The house sends armed "traders" into the streets and out into the client villages to "acquire" goods and supplies by whatever means is necessary. This usually implies plundering from those weaker than themselves. These plundered items are then loaded into caravans and sent to House M'ke emporiums in other city-states. If the leaders of House M'ke have their way, Raam will become the first city-state to be controlled by a merchant lord instead of a sorcerer-king. (House M'ke doesn't consider the situation in Balic to be a threat to their claim.)

Conditions in the City

The environmental disasters of recent months have had very little impact on Raam. The Great Earthquake was barely perceived, for it caused little damage and no deaths. No Tyr-storm has visited the city-state, so the Raamins have yet to experience the devastation that such a storm can inflict. The death of Abalach-Re, and the resulting struggle for power, has caused more death and destruction than any force of nature.

Raam has been divided into armed camps controlled by greedy, power-hungry warlords. Some call themselves templars, others nobles, liberators, or merchant lords. All are raiders and bullies, seeking to use strength as a means of control. These armed camps don't even make a pretense of peaceful coexistence. Skirmishes are constantly being fought over disputed territories, caches of weapons, supplies, or just to determine which side is stronger in a given dispute. It won't be long before a mad, all-out war breaks out to see if one leader and his faction can win out and restore order of some sort to the city. This war, of course, may simply wind up destroying Raam and reducing the verdant belt it occupies to a wasteland.



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The free citizens, therefore, live in a constant state of fear. They have nowhere to go, and conditions within the city become more terrible with each passing day. Some citizens have appealed to one faction or another, becoming indentured slaves for the protection and sustenance offered by the varying warlords. Every day, more and more citizens surrender their freedom in exchange for a safe place to sleep, a cool drink of water, and a small amount of food to fill their empty stomachs.

The slaves of the city have fared even worse than the free citizens. Cruel masters have been replaced by heartless owners who treat the slaves no better than living tools that can be replaced without any trouble. Most warlords work the slaves they captured when they took possession of their domains to death, then order another slave to take the dead one's place. Some slaves, embracing the legends of Rikus, Neeva, and Sadira of Tyr, have rebelled thanks to the opportunity presented by the chaos.

One group of slaves has followed the leadership of a gladiator named Korno. Between Korno's military daring and expertise, and a cache of weapons discovered in one of Abalach-Re's many hidden treasuries, this group of slaves have set themselves up as another armed band in a city of thugs. Korno has called for all slaves to join his community. When they have the numbers to go along with their dreams, they plan to rise up and overthrow all of the masters. Some have claimed that Korno seeks the fame of Tyr's heroes, but Korno is as cruel and ruthless as many of the other leaders of the armed bands. The slaves that have flocked to his side continue to be treated as slaves, working to make life easier for Korno and his best warriors.

With food and water in short supply and rampant violence pervading the streets, it's little wonder that the people of Raam are turning to anyone or anything that claims to have a solution. The two most popular factions gaining acceptance among the Raamins are the sect of Dregoth the Savior and the teachings of Leviath the Calm.

Dregoth the Savior is seen as the salvation of Raam by many of the templars, nobles, and free citizens. The doctrine of Dregoth, preached to the masses by strangers with bizarre accents who hide their features beneath the many folds of their sand-colored robes, calls for the city to put down its weapons and accept Dregoth as its new god. "Dregoth has wandered the many planes of existence," the preachers claim, "and only he can put an end to the chaos that fills Raam's streets." Unknown to the Raamins, Dregoth is an undead sorcerer-king who once

ruled the ancient city of Giustenal. He recently returned to the surface of Athas after spending two thousand years hiding and gaining power in an underground domain. His plans for Raam have nothing to do with saving the city. He wants to destroy Raam's inhabitants, for he was murdered and betrayed by Abalach-Re in the distant past. Once his templars gain the Raamins' trust through words of peace, Dregoth plans to slaughter all of Abalach-Re's spawn and seize the city. Raam would then become Dregoth's new Giustenal, a city where his people can find a home and from which he can lead armies on a conquest of the surface world.

Leviath the Calm, meanwhile, is an unusual half-giant who spreads true words of peace and tranquillity to all who want to listen. His words are like fire in the ears of the masses, for they are spoken in kindness and with a truth that has rarely been seen beneath the crimson sun. For all his size and great strength, Leviath has never raised his voice in anger or struck a blow to harm another living creature. He believes that violence is a path that leads to death and destruction, as has been shown by the recent situation in Raam. "We must all live together if we are going to survive," Leviath proclaims. "Lay down your anger and let the serenity of life give you greater strength." Though he doesn't seem to want to be a leader, his words have inspired a significant number of free citizens and ex-slaves who now follow him around and preach his message of peace to others.

In this volatile environment, revolution seems to be inevitable. The murmurings of discontent are heard along the city streets, and the angry whispers of citizens rise and fall like the pounding of a heart. The pulse of the populace is strong and fevered; all that remains to be determined is the outcome of the bloody riots that loom on the horizon.

Draj

Draj, situated on a vast mud flat east of Raam, was another warlike city-state before its sorcerer-king was killed by Rajaat a few months back. Before the news could cause panic and social upheaval in the city, King Tectuktitlay's templars (called "moon priests") moved to keep Draj on a steady course. Order had never been a problem in the city before this time, as the citizens were enraptured with the theocracy and religious trappings Tectuktitlay had surrounded himself with since before anyone could remember. As such, it was an easy task for the templars to



use these trappings to save the city and keep the government going.

The templars knew they had no real power without the spells granted by their sorcerer-king. They quickly took stock of the situation and decided on their best course of action to preserve immortal Draj. The Supreme Moon Priests made an alliance with the most powerful masters of King Tec's psionic academy, the House of the Mind. After numerous secret meetings, a plan was hit upon: The rulership of Draj would pass on to King Tec's "son," a young psionist named Atzetuk. In truth, the youth was not related to the king, but he had vast potential as a mind-bender and charismatic personality. The masters of the Way altered the teenager's mind, making him believe he was actually the king's son. They instructed him on what to say to the city to instill confidence in the masses. In reality, the templars and psionic masters would share rulership of the city, working behind the scenes while the populace looked upon young Atzetuk as their new god-king.

Government

Atzetuk rules Draj for all to see, but he is nothing more than a figurehead who sits on the throne and carries on the practices and traditions of war set forth by King Tectuktitlay. The youth is paraded before his subjects every day, holding court in the Temple of Two Moons. While Atzetuk believes that he is the legitimate heir to Tectuktitlay's throne and the true ruler of Draj, the business of government is managed by the Moon Priests and the masters of the House of the Mind. The templars have some power in this alliance, but the real leaders of the city are the masters of the Way, who bow to the commands of old Ixtabai the Blind. It is in everyone's interest to maintain the illusion they have so carefully constructed. Without the young god-king, the nobles and free citizens might rebel against the rule of templars and mindbenders.

Draj's noble families participate in the governing of the city through special meetings held at the *tecpans*. In these long buildings, noble elders gather to debate and resolve problems considered too ordinary and routine to concern the Moon Priests and the new god-king. As long as the warrior traditions and ceremonies are upheld, these noble warriors remain loyal to their new king.

Trade and Commerce

The commerce Draj has always enjoyed with the cities of the Tyr Region continues under the rule of King Atzetuk, though at a reduced rate due to the limited trade routes leading west and south. The fertile lands around Draj provide the main resources the city-state deals in: hemp, with which Draj produces cloth and rope, and grain, used to feed the Tablelands' hungry people (for a price, of course).

The merchants of House Tsalaxa conduct most of the trade for the city of Draj. Tsalaxa is known for its ruthless practices that befit a warrior culture. These traders regularly engage in espionage and intrigue in order to secure valuable contracts and business opportunities. The new head of the House, Yarsha Tsalaxa, has some private doubts about the legitimacy of Atzetuk's rulership. She is still trying to settle her own position as leader of House Tsalaxa in the wake of her grandfather Ydris's death, and she is hesitant to express her concerns without solid proof to back it up. In the meantime, she continues to aggressively control the merchant house and keep the trade routes active and open to benefit the city and her own coffers.

The Draji enjoy brisk trade with two mysterious cities to the north. These unknown trade partners provide the bulk of Draj's commerce since chaos overtook nearby Raam. Until another trade route to the west and south can be established, or until things settle down enough in Raam to ensure safe passage for caravans, commerce with the cities of the Tablelands is guaranteed to be sporadic at best. The main avenue for reaching the cities of the Tyr Region are the silt skimmers that travel between Fort Firstwatch and the village of Cromlin. This makes Nibenay Draj's main trading partner in the region.

Conditions in the City

The war festivals and religious ceremonies dedicated to the twin moons of Athas continue to be the focus of life in Draj. The people have lost a god-king they neither respected nor believed in, but have gained a new god-king that is both well-liked and inspires faith and reverence. This has surprised the secret leaders of the city, though not to the point where they have grown concerned. If their plan to replace King Tectuktitlay has succeeded beyond their wildest dreams, so much the better. Life in Draj remains as it always was—only the name of the king has changed.



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The natural disasters of the west never reached Draj. Rumors of a Great Earthquake arrived with the passing traders, but not even the slightest tremor or shake disturbed the city. Draj was visited by one of the first Tyr-storms, however. The mud fields flooded, ruining crops and killing more than a few Draji before the rain stopped falling and the wind and lightning abated.

It didn't take long for the templars to clean up in the wake of the storm or for King Atzetuk to assuage the fears of his citizens. He called for sacrifices to appease the elementals, and the Draji approved. Atzetuk sent his warriors out into the wilderness to find captives worthy of dying on Draj's great pyramid, and before the week had passed rivers of blood washed over the pyramid's stone steps. Because of the relative closeness of the Cerulean Storm, and because the Tyr-storms often pass within sight of Draj as they sweep inland, the sacrifices have become a regular ritual. The citizens believe, because their god-king has told them so, that the blood keeps the storms at bay.

The problems in Raam have had an effect on Draj. The templars and psionic masters watch the unfolding events as omens of what could occur in Draj if the illusion they've woven around Atzetuk is ever unraveled. Plus, many refugees have fled Raam and sought sanctuary in Draj. Most of these refugees found only death, though, either in the mud flats or atop the bloody pyramid at the heart of the city. The secret leaders fear that Draj society will collapse if too many refugees weaken the infrastructure or if the people lose faith in King Atzetuk.

Atzetuk himself poses another problem for Draj's secret leadership. Every day, the youth gains more and more confidence. Every day, his belief in his own divinity strengthens. Add to this the youth's increasing mastery of the Way and it spells trouble for the secret leaders. Soon, the masters of the Way fear, they are going to lose control of the teen. While they don't want Draj to be overcome by anarchy and violence, they also don't want to give up the authority they've gained since Tectuktitlay's death. If Atzetuk continues to assert himself, the masters of the Way and the moon priests might decide to remove the king they put in place. After all, they reason, Draj survived the death of one king. It can surely survive the death of two.

Nibenay

Nibenay, the Shadow King, survived the events surrounding the Cerulean Storm, but his outlook was severely altered—at least for the foreseeable future. The city that shares his name has

been affected by the monumental happenings of recent months, and the sorcerer-king has changed his approach to ruling the masses and dealing with the neighboring city-states.

Like Hamanu and Lalali-Puy, Nibenay witnessed the deaths of the Dragon and the other sorcerer-kings. He saw Rajaan reach out from beyond the veil of Athas to wreak vengeance against those who betrayed him. He also saw Rajaan defeated by the efforts of lowly mortals from the city of Tyr. In the wake of these signs and portents, Nibenay realized it was time to reconsider how best to rule his city. He knew that the time for change was at hand.

The city-state of Nibenay, located east of Tyr at the northern tip of the Crescent Forest, barely felt the effects of the Great Earthquake. The city-state was protected by the Windbreak Mountains, which absorbed the last tremors of the quake's dissipating energy as it rippled eastward. Nibenay has also thus far been spared from Tyr-storms and the growing unrest spreading throughout the Tablelands. If the Shadow King has his way, those problems are not going to reach his domain.

Government

The sorcerer-king Nibenay used to stay behind the scenes. He was called the Shadow King because he rarely left Naggaramakam, the walled sub-city. His templars, who are all female, ran the city with skill and great care. Now, however, the Shadow King has become more prominent. In the past, the average free citizen could hope to see King Nibenay once or perhaps twice in an entire lifetime. Since his return from the events in the Silt Sea, the Shadow King has taken a more active role. He still allows his templars to deal with the daily business of government, but now the king has turned his attention away from the mysterious scholarly pursuits that once occupied his time to hold court for the city's nobles and free citizens.

Nibenay's military might was never a question, but it also was never a major concern of the Shadow King. Now he actively seeks to understand his forces and looks for ways to improve their might and readiness. While the city used to appear to be secure in its own position, it now seems to be gearing up to battle an enemy that only the Shadow King knows about. The problem is that the enemy is change, and no army that Nibenay raises can stop its relentless tide.

In the wake of all this upheaval, Nibenay's nobles continue to care for and maintain the bubbling springs that surround the



city. They don't know what to make of the Shadow King's sudden interest in the business of the city, but many of them are seeking ways to improve their own positions by getting closer to their once-elusive king.

Trade and Commerce

As always, the city-state's main commodity is wood culled from the agafari trees of the Crescent Forest. Nibenay's craftsmen fashion the wood into shields, spears, and clubs which are then sold throughout the Tyr Region. The wood is extremely hard and is considered the next best thing to metal on Athas.

The merchants continue to conduct a brisk trade with Urik, Tyr, and Balic. Besides wood, Nibenay trades copper, rice, fruits, and spices with the other city-states. Nibenay's client village of Cromlin, located on the shores of the Silt Sea, remains one of the only links with Dradj. For this reason, Nibenay's merchants have an almost exclusive line for moving trade goods to and from the northern city-state. Dealings with Raam have collapsed (though it is rumored that Nibenay is building up his army to restore order in that troubled city), but conditions between Nibenay and Gulg have never been better. In the past, the two city-states competed for the precious resources of the Crescent Forest and often fought battles over control of the woodlands. The two city-states never actually went to war, which was good for Gulg. Lalali-Puy's domain would not last long if Nibenay decided to throw its full might at the smaller city-state. Since the events that saw the birth of the Cerulean Storm, the two leaders have set aside their differences and have begun working together. The sorcerer-king and sorcerer-queen have met on two separate occasions since they returned to their city-states. The final results of these meetings remain shrouded in secrecy, but it is known that Nibenay has begun to show more respect for the forest. For every tree a Nibenese slave pulls from the ground, another slave plants two more.

Conditions in the City

Though there have been no major changes to life in Nibenay, enough strange occurrences have been worked into the routine to put a different spin on the city-state. For example, average citizens—and even powerful nobles—never expected to see the Shadow King, let alone attend one of his courts. Now the Shadow King regularly makes public appearances and shows an

active concern for his community. This doesn't mean that life is any harder or easier than it's always been. It's just different. If a citizen or visitor breaks a law and can't afford to bribe a templar, then that person is still going to end up in Nibenay's slave pens.

The other major change is the city's outlook on matters of a martial nature. The Shadow King and his templars seem to be concentrating much of their efforts on bolstering Nibenay's military might. The army regularly practices in the arena, and patrols of the surrounding countryside have increased dramatically. In addition, free citizens and nobles have been ordered to serve in Nibenay's defense. Templars are busy organizing them into part-time militias and regimenting training sessions.

What the Shadow King is truly concerned about, besides the unrest and upheaval that seems to be spreading throughout the Tablelands, are the rumors claiming that Dregoth has returned. Nibenay knows how powerful the sorcerer-king of Giustenal was. Dregoth was second only to Borys the Dragon in power. If Dregoth and his city have somehow come back from the dead, Nibenay wants to be prepared. After all, Nibenay's city-state is one of the closest to the ruins of ancient Giustenal, and he has no intention of losing his domain to a rival that was thought destroyed two millennia ago.

Gulg

The city-state of Gulg sits inside the southern portion of the Crescent Forest, almost directly east of Tyr. Located east of the Windbreak Mountains, Gulg was spared the devastation that the Great Earthquake visited on the cities and villages to the west. That doesn't mean that life in Gulg has remained unaffected by the changes sweeping through the Tablelands. In a few significant ways, Gulg has been changed the most.

Gulg's sorcerer-queen, Lalali-Puy, is the absolute monarch of her realm. Her subjects consider her to be the *Oba*, the forest goddess. Over the centuries that she's been in power, Lalali-Puy has come to relish the worship and adoration her subjects heap upon her. In fact, though she remembers her origins as a Champion of Rajaat and a sorcerer-queen, she prefers to think of herself as the goddess her people believe her to be.

To the Oba of Gulg, the abundance of rain—even the violent rain that accompanies a Tyr-storm—is a blessing to Athas. She has proclaimed this blessing to be a gift from the forest goddess that she intends to take full advantage of. "No longer will Gulg be solely concerned with the well-being of Gulg," the Oba



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declared to her people. "Wherever the rain falls, there will the forest grow. And wherever the forest grows, the forest goddess will be there, for all the forests of Athas belong to the Oba."

Behind the rhetoric, Lalali-Puy actually wants to help restore the vitality of Athas. The Gulgs have always had an enlightened understanding of the interconnected nature of all life, so they've always treated the forest as a precious resource that must be maintained and not depleted. This attitude comes right from the Oba herself, which may seem strange as she is a defiler of extreme power. Since taking over Gulg, however, she has learned to temper her use of defiling magic in favor of keeping her forest healthy.

Of course, this attitude was one of the contributing factors to the problems with Nibenay. The Nibenese saw the forest as a resource to be exploited, not a living thing that cares for its inhabitants as they care for it. Nonetheless, Lalali-Puy has made the first moves toward a peaceful existence with Nibenay, going so far as to teach the sorcerer-king how to preserve the life-giving environment of the Crescent Forest.

The Oba's motivation isn't entirely selfless. She believes that when the forests return to Athas she will be deified by all races, just like she's been in Gulg. "Let Nibenay and Hamanu play as sorcerer-kings," she has decided, "for in the end I will be as a god to all of Athas."

Government

In many respects, Gulg is not like any of the other city-states of the Tyr Region. It is a living city, grown from vines and trees instead of constructed from brick and stone. The outer walls of the city, for example, consist of a thick hedge of thorny trees. The Oba lives in the tallest branches of a huge agafari tree, while her templars inhabit the lower branches. There are no paved or cobblestone roads leading through Gulg. Instead, forest paths and trails wind their way between the trees.

There have been few major changes in the way Gulg is ruled. The Oba remains the owner of everything, distributing food, water, and other supplies to where they are needed most. Her templars continue to oversee the military, economic, and agricultural aspects of the community on behalf of the forest goddess. Nobility is still an earned position, not one granted by an accident of birth. The nobles hunt the forest for fresh meat, while slaves commanded by the templars gather the wild fruits, nuts, and berries that round out the dietary concerns of the community.

Lalali-Puy is a third-stage dragon king (a 23rd-level dragon). She uses the Way and her powerful magic abilities to appear before her people as a beautiful young woman with long, silky hair and dark skin. She never appears in public without her illusions in place, for she doesn't want her people to see her in her true dragon form.

Trade and Commerce

The strange trade practices of Gulg have not changed in many centuries, so merchants who arrive at the wall of thorns must be prepared to conduct business by Gulg's rules. A templar is assigned to each merchant house emporium, where he or she barter on behalf of the people of the city. House Inika, the only merchant dynasty with direct ties to Gulg, continues to be the primary avenue for exporting goods to other city-states, though other houses can and do maintain emporiums. Visitors to the city must stay in restricted areas, as the Gulgs distrust foreigners. With the destructive ideas emerging from places like Tyr and Raam, the Oba and her templars have taken greater pains to keep visitors away from the average people of Gulg.

What has changed is that Nibenese traders are now tolerated within the confines of Gulg (at least as much as other traders are tolerated). Suspicion and hatred built upon centuries of tension and conflict can't be erased overnight, but since the forest goddess and the sorcerer-king have started cooperating, so have the peoples of the two cities. It is an example that the rest of Athas should try to emulate—if it can be demonstrated to have actually built a lasting peace.

Conditions in the City

Life has always been more tolerable in Gulg than in any of the other city-states under the rule of sorcerer-kings. In some ways, life has actually improved for the Gulgs. The Oba's newfound crusade to restore Athas has made her more forgiving and generous to her loyal citizens. In the spirit of cooperation, she has selected her best templars to travel the Tyr Region and spread the word of restoration. These templars have a two-fold purpose. First, they help show the rest of the Tablelands how to work in harmony with nature, which hastens the reforestation of the world in the Oba's view. Second, her templars pass along the tale that the rain is a blessing from the Oba, thereby increasing the number of people who know of and believe in Lalali-Puy.



Except for the aid these templars have provided to Nibenay, no other city-state has thus far been targeted by the Oba's select force. Instead, the templars visit villages and oasis communities, teaching and preaching as circumstances permit. Some places have welcomed the templars, others have driven them away. Those communities that have actually experienced a Tyr-storm, for example, are quick to attack anyone who claims to be associated with their fearful properties.

A significant change in Gulg society concerns the Veiled Alliance of the city. Gulg's Veiled Alliance has always actively worked to restore Athas to its verdant glory, never directly opposing the will of the sorcerer-queen. Now that the Oba has declared her own intentions for restoring Athas, the two seem to have less to fight over. The Oba has even extended a "peace leaf" to the Alliance, calling for the preservers to shed the veil of secrecy and join the forest goddess' quest to save the world. The Alliance hasn't responded yet, but rumors persist that the preservers are planning to come out of hiding in the forest city just as they've done in Tyr.

Balic

The sorcerer-king Andropinis once ruled Balic from the airy confines of the White Palace, not far from the dusty shores of the city's silt harbor. One day in the Year of Friend's Agitation, he boarded his silt armada and struck out for the far side of the Sea of Silt. It was a trip from which he never returned.

The city-state, located southeast of Tyr on the secluded shores of the Forked Tongue Estuary, has suffered on a number of fronts in recent years. In the Year of Dragon's Agitation, when Tyr refused to pay the Dragon's Levy, it fell to Balic to make up the loss by adding an extra thousand slaves to its contribution. The following year, Mountain's Fury, saw the Peninsula Rampage, a short-lived war in which a small army of giants overran most of the Balican Peninsula. Half of Balic's army and a quarter of its fields were destroyed in the battle. The city-state was still recovering when Andropinis fell to Rajaat's revenge a few years later.

Today, the city-state has no sorcerer-king to lead it or protect it from the ravages of Athas. Balic has always had a tradition of the illusion of democracy. Andropinis claimed to have been freely elected to his position, the templars were elected to 10-year terms by the free citizens, and even the nobles (called patricians) were allowed to participate in the governmental process

by selecting members to attend the Chamber of Patricians on a regular basis. Though this democracy wasn't real, it still taught the people about one possible way a free society could work. When the news spread that Andropinis was gone (he had been imprisoned in the Black by Rajaat), various factions called for a new election.

The main contenders for the position of dictator of Balic were Oriol of Magestalos, First Speaker of the Patricians, General Zanthiros of the Balican army, and First Templar Asthira. Before the final votes could be counted, Tabaros, the patriarch of House Wavir, made his move. The merchant house seized the White Palace, the silt harbor, and all of the territory in between and declared Tabaros to be the Trade Lord of Balic. This didn't sit well with House Wavir's rivals. Neither House Tromblador or House Rees wanted to be cut out of this opportunity so each of these merchant dynasties took over the remaining portions of the city. The whereabouts of the original contenders are unknown, but many believe that they are waiting for the right opportunity to return and take control of the troubled city-state.

Government

Balic is divided into three parts, each controlled by a different trade lord. These divisions cooperate on one level but battle for supremacy on all others. The largest block of control falls to Lord Tabaros of House Wavir, while Lord Kaladon of House Tromblador and Lady Essen of House Rees control equally sized smaller blocks. The same amount of cooperation that allows the three rivals to jointly maintain the major trading village of Altaruk allows them to keep Balic running as a major city-state.

As far as outsiders are concerned, the three leaders formed a triune council to rule the city after Andropinis fell. While such a council does exist, and the three rivals meet regularly to keep the city-state strong enough to stand against invaders, they each work behind the scenes to build up their own power bases and knock their rivals down.

Each trade lord has a different view of the world and the way Balic should be governed. Wavir, for example, wants to free all slaves, outlaw defilers, welcome preservers into society, and set up a true democratic state. The way to accomplish this, Lord Tabaros believes, is by quick action and harsh measures. Lord Kaladon wants to resume the dictatorship—with himself as king of Balic. Lady Essen, meanwhile, believes that the city-state



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should be nothing more than a glorified merchant village, serving to fill the coffers of House Rees and making it the most powerful merchant house in the entire Tyr Region. Needless to say, none of the sides want to see any other gain a significant advantage.

Those templars who agreed to swear allegiance to one of the trade lords were retained for their bureaucratic skills. However, the merchant houses have their own administrators to fall back on, so any templars who couldn't be trusted were eliminated. A small number of templars still loyal to Andropinis went into hiding and continue to work in secret, though they have little power and few hopes of gaining any authority under the current system.

The patricians are allowed varying degrees of participation in the government, depending upon which merchant house holds sway over the territory their land occupies. None of the trade lords are as bad as Andropinis was. The sorcerer-king made it a practice to consult with the members of his Chamber of Patricians on a regular basis. However, to assure that no state secrets ever fell into enemy hands, Andropinis had his leading patricians blinded, deafened, and made mute by painful mutilations. Under Wavir's control, the patricians are allowed full participation rights. Under House Tromblador, the nobles are treated barely better than slaves, while House Rees gives them the freedom to handle their own affairs—provided they meet the production quotas Lady Essen has established for each noble family.

The maimed patricians remain quiet and have offered no information concerning Andropinis. Psionic and magical attempts to glean information from them have all met with failure. Many of these patricians are cared for by House Wavir.

Trade and Commerce

Because trade lords control Balic, commerce plays an important part in all levels of society. If there is one aspect that has actually increased since Andropinis's demise, it is mercantile activities of all kinds. Balic's major products continue to be salt, silver, livestock, and leather. Each of the controlling merchant houses operate emporiums throughout the Tablelands in city-states and villages, as well as with a mysterious city to the south.

House Wavir maintains good trade relations with Tyr and cordial relations with Gulg and Nibenay (as do the rival houses). House Tromblador has strong ties to Urik, but con-

ducts almost no activity in Tyr. Of the three houses, only House Rees regularly sends caravans to Raam in hopes of exerting influence in that troubled city.

Conditions in the City

Balic is a clean, comfortable metropolis on the shores of a silt bay. It was untouched by the Great Earthquake, but other disasters have left their marks on the place in recent years. For the most part, however, life under the trade lords is considerably better than it was under the cruel and oppressive Andropinis. Even the territory controlled by House Tromblador, whose lord attempts to pattern himself as Balic's new dictator, is pleasant compared to the atrocities of the previous ruler.

On the surface, the city appears to be one sprawling metropolis, not a divided city. No walls separate one territory from another, no guards wait to collect tolls as citizens move from block to block. To the locals, however, there is a clear delineation between one lord's domain and the next. Wavir is free and bright, Tromblador oppressive and dark, and Rees is like an extended work camp where everyone labors for the benefit of the trade lord.

Though on the surface they appear to cooperate for the good of the city, the trade lords wage a secret war against each other that everyone knows about but few people understand. None of the trade lords are willing to let this conflict escalate into a full-scale civil war, but they have come very close to it in recent months. Caravans have been raided or sabotaged, warehouses plundered or burnt to the ground, and important agents have been killed on all sides. How far each is willing to push before a better solution must be found remains to be seen.

To stave off another war with the giants, House Rees has sent representatives into the silt basin to negotiate a lasting peace. No contracts have been agreed upon, but it seems Balic may soon have an agreement with the usually hostile giants.

Dark rumors persist that Andropinis is able to contact his loyal templars from his prison in the dimension known as the Black. These can be neither confirmed nor denied at this time, but the thought of Andropinis continuing to exert influence over the city has the local Veiled Alliance more than a little concerned. If the rumors are true, is Andropinis working with his exiled templars or with someone currently in power somewhere in the city?

Personalities of the Tyr Region

"There are three types of people in this world: those who seek fame for themselves or have it thrust upon them by their actions, those who hide in the shadows and hope that no one ever notices them, and those who simply live life as they see fit, neither seeking recognition nor running from it when it comes their way. Some of these last types wind up being heroes. Athas needs more heroes—but then, Athas needs a lot of things."

—The Wanderer of Athas

The following personalities of the Tyr Region are some of the most powerful beings living in the Tablelands. Almost every adventurer has heard at least one tale concerning each of these personalities, for their legends have been carried far and wide on the hot winds that blow across the sandy wastes.

Note that there are some differences from the familiar AD&D® Game statistics. The Strength Table, for example, has been modified for DARK SUN: A New Age and all bonuses have been adjusted accordingly. In addition, DARK SUN now uses the *PLAYER'S OPTION*™ psionics system, which is included in the new boxed set.

The dragon kings have an assortment of magical items that are not detailed in these pages. Should they be attacked by a band of heroes, the sorcerer-kings of the Tablelands are magically and psionically linked to an assortment of useful magical items, and they can easily call upon whatever they require to achieve victory.

Rikus

Mul male gladiator, 15th level: AL NG; AC 6 (Dexterity); MV 12; hp 116; THAC0 6; #AT 2; Dmg 1d10+1 (metal *long sword* +1); SA +2 to attack rolls and +5 to damage rolls due to Strength; SZ M (6'); Str 21, Dex 18, Con 20, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 16

Psionics Summary: Nil **Player's Option:** MAC 5

Rikus was raised as a gladiator in the slave pens of the noble house of Mericles. He was one of the best gladiators to fight in Tyr's stadium, winning the adoration of the crowds with his skill and bravado. His great strength, near-reckless daring, and self-assured arrogance made him popular with his allies and fans, but also made him one of the most feared combatants his opponents ever faced.

The mul now serves as a member of Free Tyr's OverCouncil, part of the ruling body of the city-state. He continues to oversee Tyr's legions and city guard, ready to lead them to battle in

defense of the city. He lives with the human female Neeva, who was once his partner in the arena games, and with her son, the mul boy Rkard.

Rikus is currently trying to solve the growing crime problem infesting the poorer sections of Tyr. He personally leads troops into the streets and tirelessly tackles the problem head-on. This is one enemy, however, that he might not be able to vanquish with muscle and brute force.

Sadira

Half-elf female preserver, 10th level: AL N; AC 6; MV 12; hp 34; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4+1 (metal *dagger* +1); SZ M (6'); Str 11, Dex 18, Con 15, Int 19, Wis 15, Cha 17

Psionics Summary: Nil **Player's Option:** MAC 6

Half-elf female sun wizard, 18th level: AL N; AC 2 (continual emanation of an *armor* spell while in daylight); MV 12; hp 42; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4+1 (metal *dagger* +1); SA +1 bonus to damage rolls due to Strength; SZ M (6'); Str 16, Dex 18, Con 15, Int 19, Wis 15, Cha 17

Psionics Summary: Nil **Player's Option:** MAC 5

Sadira was a slave in the Mericles household, which is where she met Rikus, but she was also a preserver and a member of the Veiled Alliance. Sadira helped put the Alliance's plan to kill King Kalak into motion by getting Rikus to agree to throw the *Heartwood Spear*.

The young half-elf became very involved in the politics of Tyr, for she had an intense love of freedom and a desire to see the city-state retain the liberty she helped ignite. During the decade of change that started with Kalak's death, Sadira was married to both Rikus and the nobleman Agis. It was through her actions and the help of her friends and lovers that the Dragon was ultimately destroyed and Rajaat remained imprisoned.

At the Pristine Tower, Sadira gained the ability to draw magical energy to power her spells right from Athas's crimson sun. During the daylight hours, Sadira's powers increase as the rays transform her into a sun wizard (use the second set of statistics). The circumstances surrounding her original transformation were unique, so it's doubtful any other sun wizards can ever be created. When empowered by the sun, Sadira's skin turns ebony and her abilities and physical strength increase. At night, she reverts to her normal self.

Today, Sadira has helped bring the Veiled Alliance out of the shadows. She serves on the OverCouncil as the preservers'



Personalities of the Tyr Region

leader and representative. Those preservers who have kept the veil of secrecy don't trust her, and she has many other enemies among the hidden defilers, templars loyal to the old ways, and nobles who see her as a threat to their own power and ambitions. Rikus remains her steadfast ally in the defense and preservation of Free Tyr.

Hamanu, Sorcerer-King of Urik

Male dragon king, 23rd level: AL LE; AC -2 (magical protection); MV 12; hp 112; THAC0 9; #AT 1; Dmg 1d10+4 (metal *two-handed sword* +4); SZ L (11'); Str 22, Dex 15, Con 16, Int 19, Wis 16, Cha 16

Psionics Summary: Dis 5/Sci 12/Dev 28; PS 17; PSPs 152

Att: All; Def: All

Player's Option: #AT 2; MTHAC0 2; MAC 0

Clairsentience: *Sciences*— clairvoyance, true sight; *Devotions*— all-round vision, combat mind, danger sense, martial trance, psionic sense.

Psychokinesis: *Sciences*— megakinesis, suppress magic, telekinesis; *Devotions*— control body, control wind, inertial barrier, levitation, mass manipulation, momentum theft, stasis field.

Psychometabolism: *Sciences*— complete healing, life draining, metamorphosis; *Devotions*— adrenalin control, alter features, cannibalize, displacement, enhanced strength, fighting trance.

Psychoportive: *Sciences*— summon planar energy, teleport; *Devotions*— astral projection, dimension blade, phase, teleport lock, teleport trigger.

Telepathic: *Sciences*— hallucination, mindlink; *Devotions*— awe, ESP, psychic drain, synaptic static, true worship.

Hamanu wasn't one of Rajaat's original Champions. He was elevated to Champion status in order to destroy and replace Myron Troll Scorcher, who had somehow displeased Rajaat. Later, he helped Borys and the others overthrow the First Sorcerer.

As sorcerer-king of Urik, Hamanu fashions himself as a powerful warrior king. His army is one of the strongest in the Tablelands, and maybe on all of Athas. He recently sealed his borders to keep out the changes sweeping through the region.

Hamanu has almost as many titles as he has seen years beneath the crimson sun, from the Lion of Urik to the King of the World. He demands total obedience and devotion from his subjects in exchange for the protection and guidance he provides.

Urik's king has promised to re-think the old ways, but until then he wants nothing to breach the magical walls of his city. Sadira of Tyr has tried to meet with him to discuss new directions, but so far Hamanu has refused to see the sun wizard.

Nibenay, the Shadow King

Male dragon king, 24th level: AL LE; AC 4 (natural); MV 15; hp 107; THAC0 8; #AT 1 or 2; Dmg 1d4+2 (metal *dagger* +2) or 2d10/2d10 (claws); SZ L (12'); Str 21, Dex 14, Con 16, Int 21, Wis 17, Cha 15

Psionics Summary: Dis 5/Sci 12/Dev 29; PS 18; PSPs 198

Att: All; Def: All

Player's Option: #AT 2; MTHAC0 2; MAC -2

Clairsentience: *Sciences*— clairaudience, clairvoyance, cosmic awareness, object reading; *Devotions*— bone reading, hear light, know location, probability manipulation, poison sense, psionic sense, see magic, sensitivity to observation.

Psychokinesis: *Sciences*— telekinesis, telekinetic flight; *Devotions*— animate shadow, control light, molecular agitation, molecular bonding.

Psychometabolism: *Sciences*— metamorphosis, shadow-form; *Devotions*— alter features, aging, catfall, heightened senses, iron will.

Psychoportive: *Sciences*— banishment, summon planar creature, teleport; *Devotions*— astral projection, dimension walk, shadow walk, summon object, teleport lock, teleport object, teleport trigger.

Telepathic: *Sciences*— mindlink; *Devotions*— awe, ESP, identity penetration, invisibility, send thoughts.

Nibenay, the Shadow King, has been a reclusive figure since he threw off the guise of Champion of Rajaat and took on the mantle of a sorcerer-king. Recently, with the events surrounding the birth of the Cerulean Storm, Nibenay has become a more visible and active force in the city-state that bears his name.

The Shadow King fancies himself a scholar and researcher of wide repute. While no one outside his private inner sanctum knows what Nibenay has been studying, rumors persist that it involves Athas's earliest ages. How Nibenay's current interest in his city's military prowess is going to affect his arcane studies has yet to be determined.

The Shadow King still keeps his inner city, a place where scholar-slaves labor over ancient texts and arcane relics, closed to the public. Nibenay himself often talks about "the time before" with his top templar-wives—the time before the sorcerer-kings, before the Champions, before Rajaat. Some members of the veiled alliance believe that the Shadow King is seeking a way to travel through time, but this has yet to be confirmed.

Because of the changes effecting the Tyr Region, Nibenay has put aside his ages-old enmity with Lalali-Puy, sorcerer-queen of Gulg. At least that's how it appears on the surface. His nobles and templars believe that the new level of cooperation is only a ruse to gain the Shadow King even more power in the Ivory Triangle.

Personalities of the Tyr Region



Lalai-Puy, Oba of Gulg

Female dragon queen, 23rd level: AL LE; AC 0 (magical items); MV 12; hp 98; THAC0 9; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6+4 (*spear +4*); SZ L (10'); Str 20, Dex 19, Con 15, Int 18, Wis 19, Cha 20

Psionics Summary: Dis 5/Sci 12/Dev 28; PS 17; PSPs 203

Att: All; Def: All

Player's Option: #AT 2; MTHAC0 2; MAC 1

Clairsentience: *Sciences* – aura sight, precognition, spirit lore; *Devotions* – danger sense, know direction, psionic sense, see ethereal, see magic, spirit sense.

Psychokinesis: *Sciences* – telekinesis; *Devotions* – control flames, control wind, levitation.

Psychometabolism: *Sciences* – animal affinity, complete healing, metamorphosis, regenerate; *Devotions* – adrenalin control, aging, cat-fall, cause decay, chameleon power, double pain, heightened senses, strength of the land.

Psychoportive: *Sciences* – summon planar energy, teleport; *Devotions* – blink, dimension wall, ethereal traveler, phase, spatial distortion.

Telepathic: *Sciences* – domination, mindlink; *Devotions* – attraction, awe, beast mastery, ESP, inflict pain, life detection.

Lalali-Puy, sorcerer-queen and Oba of Gulg, is the forest goddess of her people. She is intimately tied to the Crescent Forest that surrounds her city-state, as are the people she rules. She takes a keen interest in Gulg and its inhabitants and genuinely cares for her subjects.

In the wake of the Dragon's death and the brief return of Rajaat the War-bringer, Lalali-Puy has turned her attention to actually aiding the besieged world. She sees the Cerulean Storm and the increased frequency of rainfall as signs of her divinity, and she has ordered her templars to preach those words to all who would hear them.

Lalali-Puy wants to help the people of the Tyr Region—so long as they eventually agree to bow down and worship her. "Acknowledge my divinity and pray to me," the Oba has said to more than one outsider, "and I will show you how to grow trees and quench your burning thirst."

The Oba has agreed to cooperate with her one-time enemy to the north, the sorcerer-king of Nibenay. She doesn't trust the Shadow King any more than she did in the past, but she believes that the time has come for change. War, she believes, isn't the solution to Gulg's problems (or Athas's, for that matter). Another path must be found, and Lalali-Puy is willing to search for one—as long as it benefits her position in the burning world.



The Defiler's Gambit

The Defiler's Gambit is a short adventure for a party of four to six player characters (PCs) of 7th to 12th level. A good mix of classes is recommended, including at least one preserver. An elemental cleric (other than a water cleric) would also be a boost to an adventuring party. Read the material that follows before attempting to run this adventure. A creative Dungeon Master (DM) may want to expand the scenario into a full-length epic.

Materials Needed to Play

To run this adventure, the DM needs copies of the AD&D rulebooks, the DARK SUN boxed set (the revised edition isn't needed for this scenario), and *The Complete Psionics Handbook* (or the psionics primer from DARK SUN: A New Age).

The Defiler's Gambit begins immediately before the last scene in *The Cerulean Storm* novel, then continues from the events described therein. The DM should at least be familiar with the timeline set forth in this product, though reading the Prism Pentad novel series adds to the DM's knowledge and understanding of the events that changed the world of Athas.

Adventure Background

Terrible cataclysmic occurrences herald the end of one Athasian age and the beginning of another. As the Great Earthquake rattled the Tablelands huge storm of lightning and torrential rain appeared over the distant edge of the Sea of Silt, a powerful defiler named Malignor watched for a sign from his master, Tithian, King of Tyr. The sign came right before the earthquake struck and blazing crimson exploded across the horizon. Tithian contacted Malignor through the Way.

"Come to Ur Draxa, beyond the horizon of the Silt Sea," Tithian commanded. "Your king has need of you, Malignor. Serve me well, and your power will be second only to mine."

Malignor, once one of King Kalak's most powerful defilers, had to go into hiding after Kalak's death. He watched for almost two years from his hiding places, waiting for the tide of freedom to shift back to the more familiar society of masters and slaves. Eventually, the defiler saw enough to convince him that Tithian wasn't really part of this aberrant revolution. The new king was just biding his time until he could crush all of the rebels with a single blow. To do that, Tithian would need help. Malignor offered his services.

For most of the years that Malignor secretly served Tithian, the defiler did so from a distance. Tithian was searching for a way to gain the power of a sorcerer-king, and he didn't want to share that power with anyone—not even Malignor. So the king sent the defiler off to handle far-away missions while he studied sorcery and the Way.

When Tithian finally learned the location of the Dark Lens, he called Malignor back to Tyr. Tithian wanted to locate the artifact alone, but he also wanted the defiler close enough to assist him if necessary. "Stay near Balic and the coast," the king commanded. "I'll contact you soon." Weeks passed before that call came, but Malignor was ready.

Tithian's message came through the Way, calling Malignor to Ur Draxa. "Hurry, Malignor," Tithian directed, "the power of Rajaat the First Sorcerer will be ours if you reach me quickly." The defiler used his magic to travel across the silt, heading toward the horizon as crimson fire filled the sky.

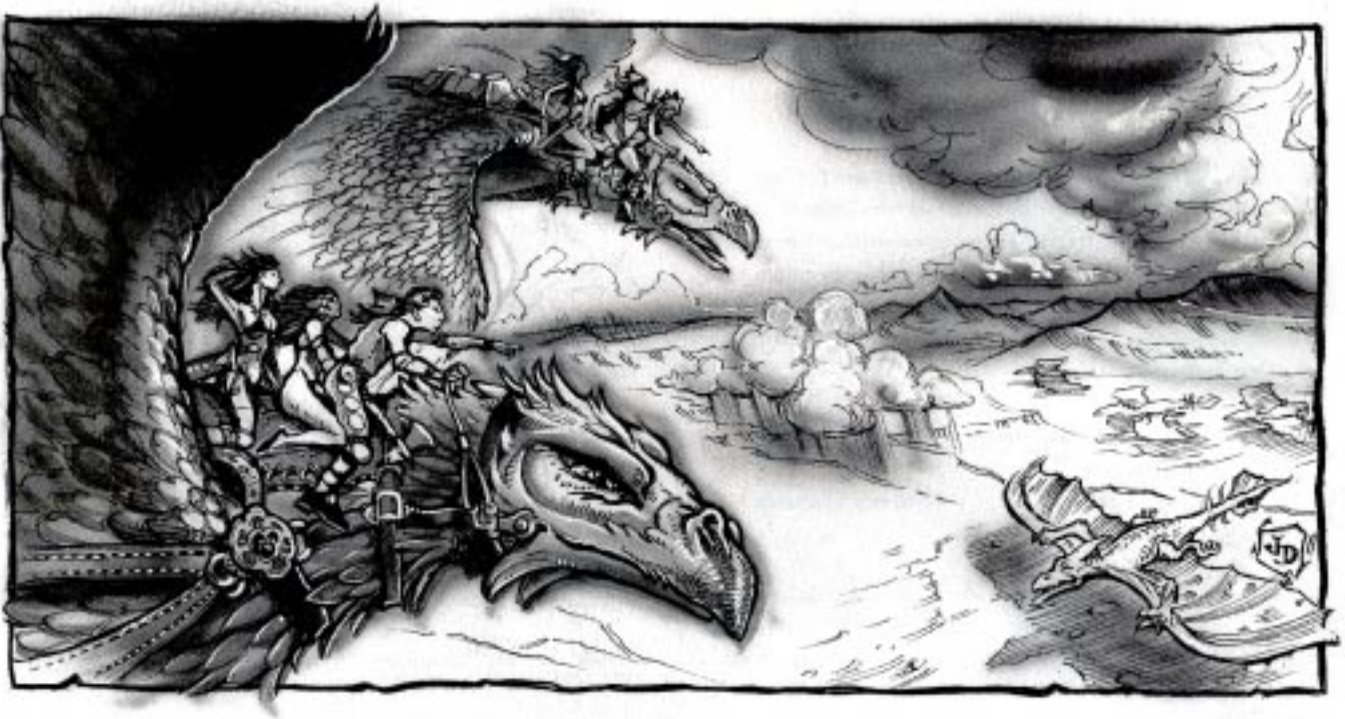
What happened in Ur Draxa is detailed in the first section of this book. *The Cerulean Storm* ended with Sadira staying behind to finish trapping Rajaat. "There are some wards that I must place around Rajaat's new prison," Sadira told Rikus and Neeva. "Tithian is not the only mortal on Athas who lusts after immortality, and I intend to be certain that I know if anyone else attempts to achieve it by freeing Rajaat."

Sadira wasn't quite finished placing her wards when the sun dipped beneath the horizon and night fell across the valley. Her enhanced sun powers vanished with the waning light, leaving only her abilities as a normal preserver. That's when Malignor struck.

The defiler arrived as Rikus, Neeva, and Rkard started their journey back to Tyr on the magical sun boat that Sadira created for them. He knew how powerful Sadira was during the day, so he stayed hidden until night fell. Malignor wasn't idle during the day, however. He gathered allies to help him and studied the situation. Both Tithian and Rajaat were trapped. The defiler decided that Tithian could stay a rain cloud for all he cared. He would free Rajaat and claim the power of a sorcerer-king for himself.

When night arrived in the valley and Sadira reverted to her normal self, Malignor struck. He knocked the preserver unconscious, securely bound her, then went about using his spells to try to free Rajaat. Before the night ended, the defiler had almost exhausted his memorized spells, and Rajaat was still trapped. He placed Sadira in a dark cave where the sun wouldn't be able to reach her, then began to memorize his spells for the next day's activities.

The Defiler's Gambit



Malignor

Human male defiler, 14th level: AL LE; AC 2 (*bracers of defense* AC 4, *ring of protection* +2); MV 12; hp 42; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6+2 (*staff of thunder and lightning*, 12 charges); SA spell use; SZ M (6'); ML Champion (15); XP 9,000; Str 15, Dex 14, Con 15, Int 19, Wis 15, Cha 12

Memorized Spells: 1st level (5): *armor*, *burning hands*, *magic missile* (¥2), *protection from good*; 2nd Level (5): *darkness*, *15' radius* (¥2), *invisibility*, *know alignment*, *mirror image*; 3rd Level (5): *blink*, *fireball*, *fly*, *hold person*, *slow*; 4th Level (4): *dimension door*, *hallucinatory terrain*, *shadow monsters*, *wall of fire*; 5th Level (4): *cone of cold*, *demi-shadow monsters*, *shadow magic*, *summon shadow*; 6th Level (2): *demi-shadow magic*, *globe of invulnerability*, 7th Level (1): *teleport without error*.

Psionics Summary:

Wild talent— displacement, PS 12; PSPs 72

Player's Option: #AT 1; MTHAC0 14; MAC 4

Adventure Overview

While there are many agents of evil operating beneath the crimson sun, the agents of good seem to be harder to come by. An agent of good, however, has taken an interest in the events sur-

rounding the Cerulean Storm. One of the mysterious and ancient race of pyreen watched as Rajaat struggled to freedom and was eventually slammed back into his prison. The pyreen also remained to witness Sadira's placing of the wards. She was on hand when Malignor attacked and captured the sun wizard.

The adventure begins with the heroes somewhere near the eastern coast of the Tablelands, experiencing the effects of the Great Earthquake and the blaze that lights up the eastern sky. After the ground stops shaking, the pyreen appears to ask them for assistance. If the heroes agree, the pyreen calls forth two rocs to carry them across the Sea of Silt.

From the air, the PCs see the storm that now fills the Valley of Dust and Fire. They face their first challenge—a flight of razorwings summoned by Malignor. Once past the razorwings, the heroes are deposited at the edge of the rocky badlands surrounding the lake of lava where the Dark Lens has been hidden. They must make their way across brittle crust and through scalding steam to reach the place where the defiler is holding Sadira.

The final battle pits the heroes against the defiler and his servants—one fire elemental and a small army of skeleton monsters. If the heroes win the day, Malignor flees or is destroyed,



The Defiler's Gambit

and Sadira is freed to complete her task of placing magical wards around Rajaat's prison.

Setup

Before playing this adventure, the DM must get the heroes to the eastern portion of the Tyr Region, near the coast of the Silt Sea. *The City by the Silt Sea* campaign expansion has numerous methods for accomplishing this, or the DM can create a scenario of his own. Also, this adventure takes place right after the events of the novel series, in the Year of Friend's Agitation (Free Year 10 in Tyr).

Part One: Signs and Portents

The time is full daylight as the heroes go about whatever business brought them to the silt coast. Read:

The day is like any other upon Athas. The sun beats down, scorching the very air with its intense heat. The hot winds blowing from the east carry stinging silt, and soon the coast will be obscured by a full-blown dust storm. A distant rumble catches your notice, and a moment later a wave of vibration sweeps through the ground beneath you. Earthquake! Here, by the silt coast, the quake is only a foot-shaking tremor that lasts for nearly 15 minutes. To the west, the direction the rumble originated from, you can only imagine what has occurred.

At the same time as the earth began to rock, a crimson blaze ignited along the eastern horizon, cutting through the haze hanging over the Sea of Silt. It blazes like a second sun for the length of the quake, then disappears in a thick bank of clouds that rise along the horizon.

Let the PCs continue whatever they were doing after the quake subsides. If they are in rocky badlands, they could be caught in a rock slide or boulder tumble. Otherwise, the quake's epicenter is too far to the west to bother them. The next morning, however, they awake to a strange sight. Read:

You awaken to see a strange-looking female standing on the edge of your camp. She is humanoid, but unlike any race you've ever seen. Indeed, the features of many races make up her face and body.

"I am Kal Al'Arnok, one of the beings your legends call the Peace-bringers," the woman says, speaking a language you all

know with the slightest hint of an odd accent. "Sadira of Tyr has need of your help. She must complete the task she has taken upon herself or Rajaat the War-bringer will be free to destroy the land. I cannot oppose Rajaat directly, for such is the agreement binding my people. You, however, can. Will you go to the Valley of Dust and Fire—now the Valley of the Cerulean Storm—and free Sadira from the defiler who has captured her and seeks to release Rajaat once more?"

If the heroes agree, the pyreen calls two rocs out of the air. The great birds settle near the heroes, ready to carry them across the Silt Sea. Up to three heroes can ride on one roc. The pyreen disappears as quickly and mysteriously as she arrived. She won't accompany the heroes on this adventure. If the heroes refuse, the pyreen goes in search of others willing to aid Athas and this adventure comes to an end.

Kal Al'Arnok's spells (as a 16th-level druid) are left to the discretion of the DM. Should the pyreen be attacked, she attempts to get clear of the PCs.

Kal Al'Arnok, Pyreen: Int. supra; AC 0; MV 24; HD 16; hp 103; THAC0 5; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type +3; SA spells, psionics; MR 25%; SZ M (6); ML 20; XP 14,000.

Psionics Summary: Dis 4/Sci 7/Dev 18; PSPs 96
Att: All; Def: All

Player's Option: #AT 2; MTHAC0 14; MAC 0

Clairensience: *Sciences*— aura sight; *Devotions*— danger sense, psionic sense, spirit sense.

Psychokinesis: *Sciences*— telekinesis; *Devotions*— ballistic attack, soften, inertial barrier.

Psychometabolism: *Sciences*— complete healing, energy containment, shadow-form; *Devotions*— absorb disease, chameleon power, chemical simulation, enhancement, gird, mind over body.

Telepathy: *Sciences*— ejection, psychic surgery; *Devotions*— conceal thoughts, empathy, identity penetration, psychic messenger, truthhear, contact.

Part Two: Hazardous Travel

The rocs agree to carry the heroes due to the respect they hold for the pyreen. They don't, however, fight for the PCs, so no statistics are provided for them. The trip across the Sea of Silt by air takes a full day. By the time the heroes arrive, Malignor has had time to cast many spells and memorize back up to full. He's also given up trying to find a way to release Rajaat on his own. The defiler's about to start torturing Sadira until she tells him what to do.

The Defiler's Gambit



Once the rocs take to the air, the PCs see what's happened to the distant valley. Read:

Once called the Valley of Dust and Fire, it now resembles a valley of fog and steam. Blue clouds full of rain—actual rain!—hang over the lake of lava. As the rain falls, great clouds of scalding steam rise up from the surface of the molten rock. The result is a storm unlike anything you've ever seen. And that storm is what the rocs are flying toward.

After two-thirds of the trip passes without incident, the heroes face their first challenge. A pack of razorwings summoned by Malignor fly up out of the silt to surprise the heroes (the monsters get one round of surprise before the heroes can react). The PCs must battle the razorwings from atop the rocs, which continue to fly toward the destination described by the pyreen. As the razorwings have been magically summoned, they fight to the death, directing all of their attacks at the heroes.

Razorwings (9): Int semi; AL N; AC 3; MV Fl 30 (B), Glide 24 (E); HD 4; hp 32, 32, 30, 28, 28, 23, 21, 19, 17; THAC0 17; #AT 3; Dmg 2d4/2d4/1d4; SA Surprise, double damage on charge, psionics; SZ M (8' wingspan); ML n/a; XP 420.

Eventually, the rocs land at the edge of the terrible storm. The area is made up of rocky badlands leading up to the molten lake. The rocs drop the PCs off near the cave where Sadira is being held. The great birds refuse to proceed farther into the storm—that's the job the heroes have agreed to do.

The conditions on the edge of the storm aren't deadly yet, but they're certainly hellish. Billowing steam and hot vapors obscure vision, while a torrential rain pounds from the sky. Lightning flashes unexpectedly, and the ground cracks open in various places to unleash a new spout of lava from the boiling depths. Soon nothing will be able to survive here, but for the moment the heroes can withstand the harsh conditions.

The steam and rain limits vision and makes it harder to participate in visual combat. Heroes relying on their eyes in a fight receive a -4 attack roll penalty; characters with blind-fighting can reduce this to -2. Also, due to the constant heat, heroes lose 1d4 hit points every hour they remain in the Valley of the Cerulean Storm.

As soon as the heroes dismount from the rocs, Tithian appears before them. Read:

Suddenly, a face forms in the cloud before you. The face appears human, though it's formed of vapor, with eyes of lightning and a voice of thunder. The voice says, "Stay back! Come no closer or I, Tithian, King of Tyr, will destroy you!"

Tithian is trapped within the storm. All he can do is rain upon the heroes, so they can walk right through him whenever they want. Tithian can make a lot of noise, but he has little offensive capability.

To reach the cave, the heroes must cross a mantle of brittle rock. They can hear the ground crack beneath them—a warning that they must proceed with caution. Crossing the mantle requires Dexterity checks to see if the mantle breaks beneath a hero. The checks have modifiers described below, and the number of checks needed depends on each hero's natural movement rate. One check is made each round.

Any hero that decides not to proceed cautiously can make it across the mantle in one round, but the hero must make a Dexterity check at -8. To proceed cautiously takes more time, but the checks are only at -2.

Heroes with movement rates of 15 or better can cross the mantle in two rounds; 12 in three rounds; 6 in four rounds. Large, heavy heroes (thri-kreen, muls, dwarves, and half-giants) receive an additional penalty of -2.

If a hero fails a check, the mantle beneath him breaks. A successful Strength check made at this point saves the character, and he rolls away before plunging through the mantle. A failed Strength check drops the hero 15 feet into molten lava. Each round spent in lava inflicts 6d6 points of damage.

Eventually, some or all of the heroes reach the solid ground outside the cave where Malignor is holding Sadira.

Part Three: Defiler's Gambit

The cave is near the edge of the lake of lava, and great clouds of steam fill the open land before it. This area is defended by Malignor's conjured and summoned guards: one greater fire elemental and six skeleton monsters hidden from view by the billowing clouds of steam.

Moisture hangs in the air as thick clouds of billowing vapors swirl around you. Your breathing is strained and heavy as the hot steam embraces your bodies, and vision is limited to fleeting glimpses through sheets of mist.



The Defiler's Gambit

The heat is intense, and it's doubtful that anything could survive an extended visit to this shrouded land.

When the heroes reach the area outside the cave, Malignor is inside trying to convince Sadira to cooperate. After the heroes engage in three rounds of combat with Malignor's servants, the defiler emerges from the cave to join the battle.

The skeleton monsters, created from the dead bodies of humanoid creatures that died on the shores of the lake of lava, stand in plain sight in front of the cave. The heroes can't see them, however, until they've crossed the brittle mantle. Even then, they could simply walk into the skeletons' midst if none of the PCs make a successful Wisdom check at -4. If any hero's check succeeds, that PC catches sight of the monsters through a momentary break in the clouds of steam. The skeleton monsters fight to the death, using the bone long swords they wielded in life.

The fire elemental hides in the nearby lava. It doesn't join the battle until one round of combat has passed—and then it attacks with surprise, trying to engulf one opponent. The elemental likes the conditions of the area it's been summoned to defend, so it does its best to destroy the PCs.

Monster Skeletons (6): Int non; AL N; AC 6; MV 12; HD 6; hp 42, 37, 35, 31, 26, 25; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 (bone long swords); SD Immune to *sleep, charm, hold* and cold-based spells, edged and piercing weapons inflict half damage; SZ L (8'); ML n/a; XP 650.

Greater Fire Elemental (1): Int avg; AL N; AC 1; MV 12; HD 10; hp 65; THAC0 11; #AT 1; Dmg 4d10; SA Engulf (4d10 damage each round until freed, save vs. paralysis for half damage); SD +3 weapon or better to hit; MR 50% (fire sphere)/25% (air, earth, and water spheres); SZ L (8'); ML n/a; XP 6,000.

Should an inventive PC cast *protection from evil* and rush to the cave entrance, the monster skeletons block his way. Since forcing the barrier against the monsters breaks the circle of protection, the battle progresses normally at this point.

Once Malignor emerges to join the battle, the DM must decide if he wants the defiler become a recurring villain or not. If you plan to use Malignor again, have the defiler *teleport without error* to safety once his hit points are reduced to 10 or less. Otherwise, let the battle continue to its ultimate conclusion. Remember, however, to play the defiler as the intelligent, powerful opponent he is. This battle shouldn't be easy for the heroes to win.

Part Four: Conclusion

After the PCs defeat Malignor and his conjured servants, they can enter the cave. Inside the cave, they find a bruised and battered female half-elf named Sadira tied securely in the deepest shadows. If they free her, Sadira immediately steps outside. Read:

The young half-elf steps past you in to the steaming, rain-filled air. Her skin immediately darkens, becoming deepest ebony before your very eyes. She takes a deep breath, then turns toward you.

"I am Sadira of the free city of Tyr, "she says, obvious power resonating in her voice. "Thank you for helping me. If you want, you can watch as I set the last wards into place that will keep the ancient horror named Rajaan locked away for another two thousand years."

Even though the valley is obscured by thick clouds, the energy of the crimson sun penetrates to reach Sadira. Her sun wizard powers emerge, and she quickly sets to finishing the task interrupted by Malignor.

If the PCs were helpful and don't demand an unreasonable reward, Sadira offers them safe haven in Tyr whenever they need it. "Tyr owes you a favor," she tells them. "If the city can provide it, we will honor whatever you request." This means the heroes have a place to gather supplies of a reasonable and mundane nature for free (though this is not offered more than once), a place to find healing magic, or a place to rest from enemies. Sadira also adds, "I owe you a favor as well. Would you care to travel with me back to the Tablelands and away from this valley of steam? Soon the Valley of the Cerulean Storm is not going to be habitable, so I don't recommend that you stay here."

If the heroes try to attack Sadira, she simply flies off, leaving them to die in the increasing heat. They'll be cooked alive in another day or so.

If the heroes saved the day, Sadira tells them what happened as they return to the silt coast. "You've helped ensure Athas's future," Sadira tells them. "Be proud, for the future finally looks bright for all of us."



Beyond the Prism Pentad

by Bill Slavicsek

The relentless passage of time sweeps across the burning plains, and the world beneath the crimson sun changes in its wake...

The Dragon of Tyr is gone, his evil scattered on the scalding winds. Torrential rains fall over the Sea of Silt, spinning off deadly storms that can strike anywhere in the Tablelands with only a moment's notice. Violent upheaval rocks the city-states of Raam, Draj, and Balic after the deaths of their sorcerer-kings. A new age has dawned on Athas, but will it be an age of restoration—or of destruction?

Beyond the Prism Pentad summarizes the key events from the Prism Pentad novel series and role-playing game products and updates all DARK SUN campaigns in anticipation of the revised campaign setting, *DARK SUN: A New Age*, featuring:

- The key events of the first 10 years of campaign time, with a detailed timeline of historical events.
- Updates and details on the changes in the world, including the seven city-states of the Tyr Region.
- Statistics for the major personalities, including Rikus, Sadira, and the remaining sorcerer-kings.
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