

Advanced Dungeons & Dragons[®]
2nd Edition

DARK SUN™

W O R L D

Official Game Adventure

Road to Urik

by David "Zeb" Cook

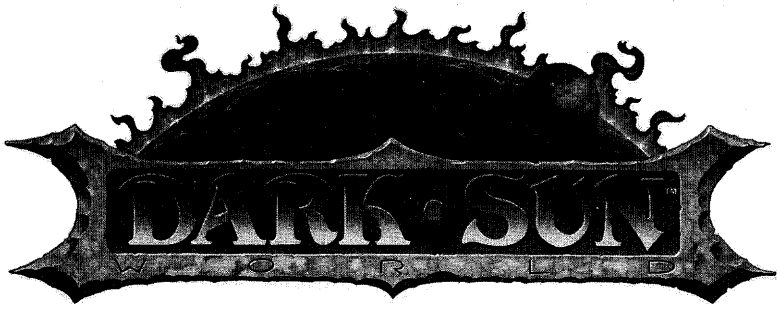




ARK · SUN

The new
army of Tyr
faces deadly
foes.

Player's Book



Road to Urik

A DARK SUN™ Campaign Adventure

Player's Book

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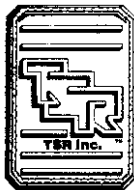
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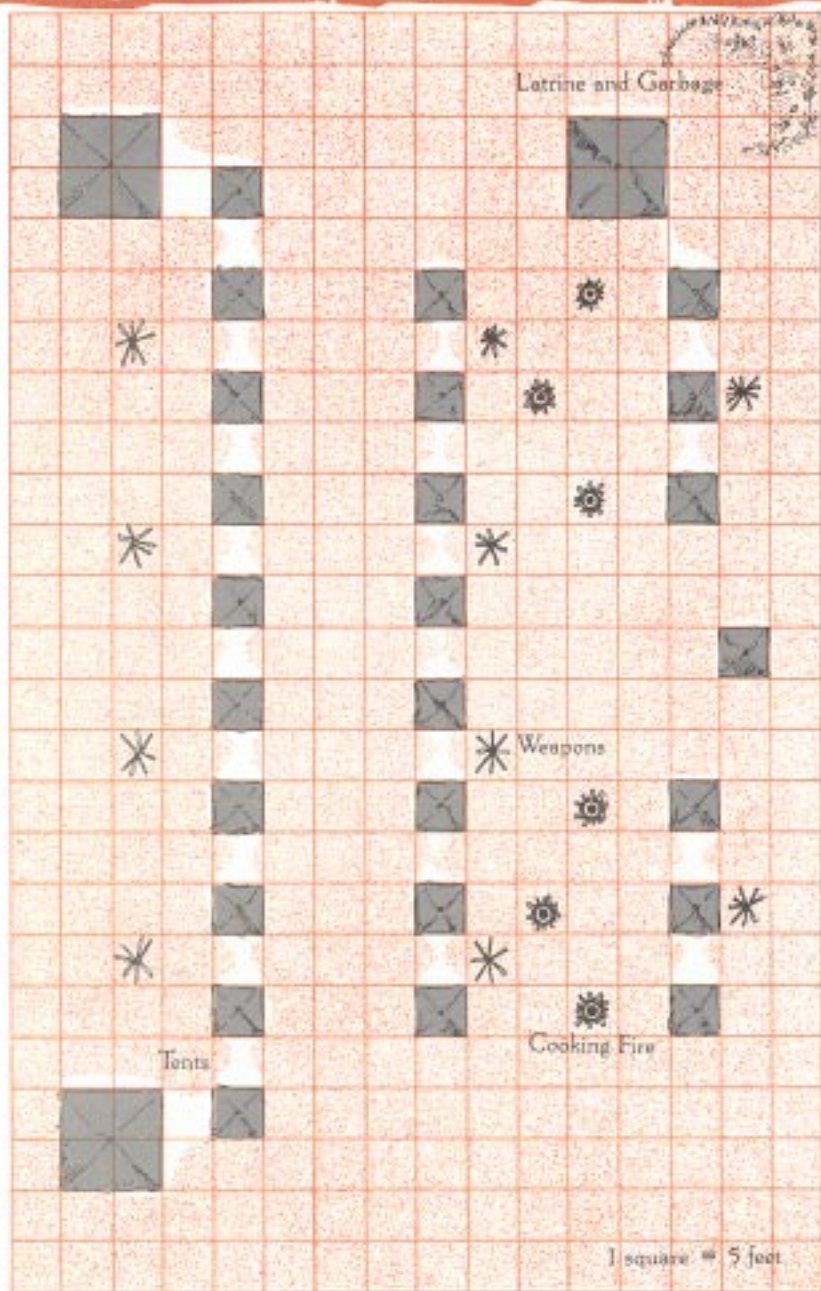
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One: Camp



Two:
Decisive Action



Three: Demands



“Look, take a little time and drink with me. I got some news that you might want to hear—it could be real important.” Hasaval pauses to gulp down some spiced wine, wiping his goatee before continuing.

“There’s trouble brewing with the templars. Some of them—and no, I ain’t saying who, I got to look out for myself after all—anyway, some of them are grumbling about this army that’s being raised. They’re saying things like Tithian’s just trying to get rid of them, stuff like that. Anyway, they’re worried and they got demands to make sure they don’t get the short end of the stick.

“Most important is they want to pick their own commander. Already got a guy chosen—Templar Girias. Ever hear of him? No matter, no matter. The thing is, unless this Girias is given a command post, there’s going to be a lot of trouble from the other templars. That wouldn’t be good for Tyr, so I figured somebody might help me negotiate this mess with Girias.”

Four:
Miserable Wretches



Five:
The Garden



Six: The Meeting



"Thank you for coming to this meeting, especially on such short notice. There is trouble brewing for Tyr—perhaps you have heard rumors of it. No? Well then, let me be the first to tell you. The word from King Tithian and the council is that Tyr is under attack. I don't mean this instant—I mean that King Hamanu, the sorcerering of Urik, has dispatched an army to capture Tyr and claim it for his own. Hamanu styles himself a warlord, although he relies on Tyr for the iron in his weapons. Apparently King Kalak cut off supplies long ago and now Hamanu is coming to reopen the mines—under his control."

"Tithian's told the council and even appointed Rikus, that templar Styan, and noblewoman Jaseela as commanders—but only because I think he wants to get rid of them. The army is going to need help if we want our free city to remain free. I'm counting on you for some of that help."

Seven:
The Scorecard



Councilor Turloff



Hanfros



Master Sintha



Quick Wenzel



Senator Turax



Senator Vildeen



Templar Hasoval



Templar Rhac



Verrasi of Minthur



Puram of Ulrik



Templar Giriss

Eight:
On Patrol

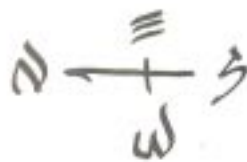
Front

Direction of March

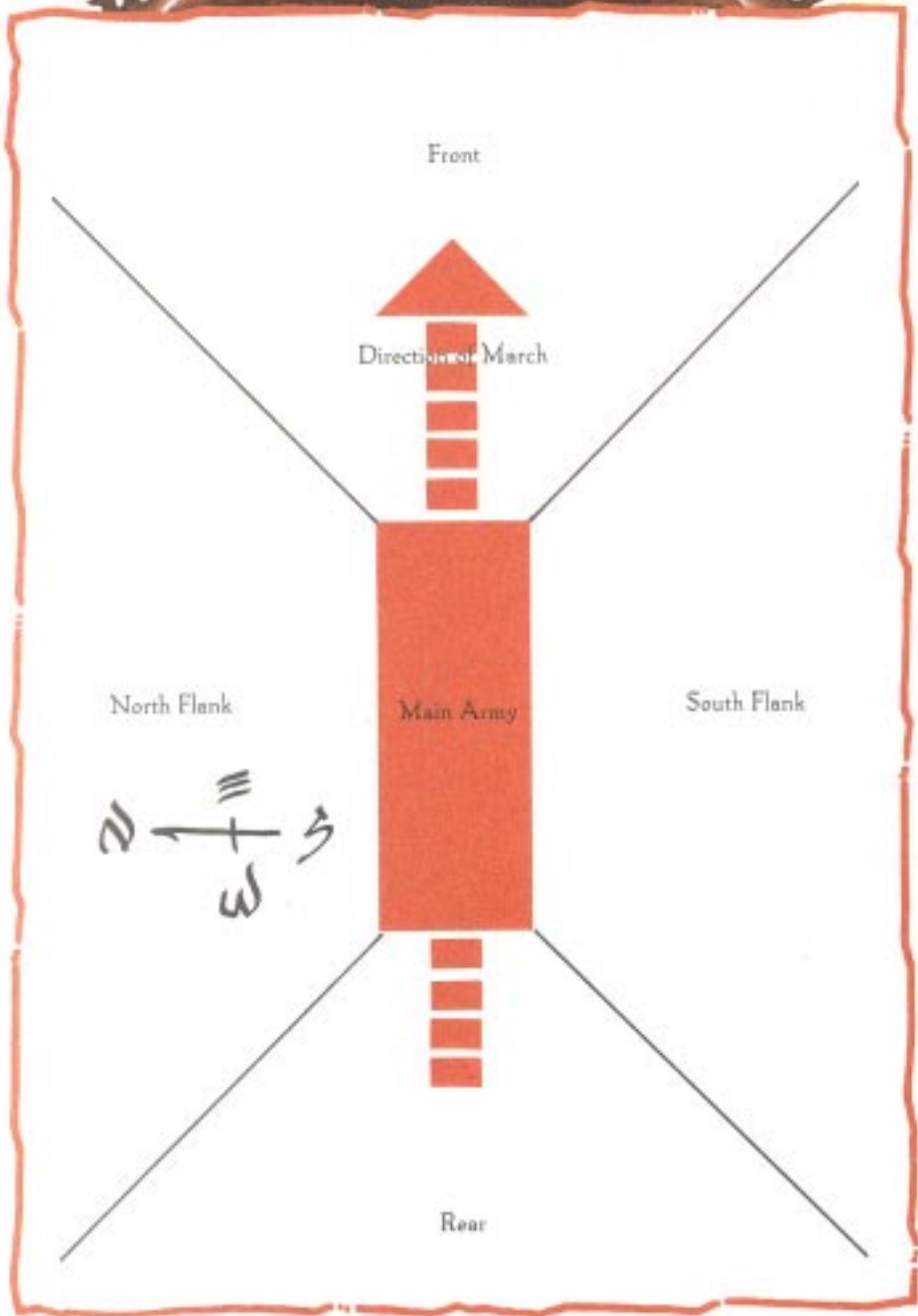
North Flank

Main Army

South Flank



Rear



Nine: BATTLESYSTEM™ Game Statistics

PCs' Command

The first three units, the core of the PCs' small force, are commanded by the player characters themselves.

Gladiators (2 figures)

BATTLESYSTEM stats:

AD 8	AR 9	Hits 2	ML 13
------	------	--------	-------

Leather armor, no shield, assorted swords.

Templars (2 figures)

BATTLESYSTEM stats:

AD 6	AR 8	Hits 2	ML 11
------	------	--------	-------

Giant hair armor, shields, bone swords, spears.

Nobles (2 figures)

BATTLESYSTEM stats:

AD 6	AR 8	Hits 2	ML 13
------	------	--------	-------

Quilted *faro-* cloth armor, stone clubs, spears.

The above figures can all be combined into a single unit with the following statistics:
AD 6 AR 8 Hits 2 ML 12



Trythani Troops (number variable)

Commander Urvas, 0-level human:

AD 4	AR 9	Hits 1	CD 2
------	------	--------	------

Militia:

AD 4	AR 10	Hits 1	ML 7
------	-------	--------	------



Minthur Troops (3, 5, 7, or 10 figures)

Commander Vorddman, 4th-level dwarf fighter:

AD 6	AR 7	Hits 2	CD 4
------	------	--------	------

Regulars:

AD 6	AR 9	Hits 1	ML 11
------	------	--------	-------



Turloff's Pioneers (4 figures)

Commander Feylan, 3rd level elf fighter:

AD 6	AR 8	Hits 2	CD 6
------	------	--------	------

Pioneers:

AD 6	AR 9	Hits 1	ML 12
------	------	--------	-------

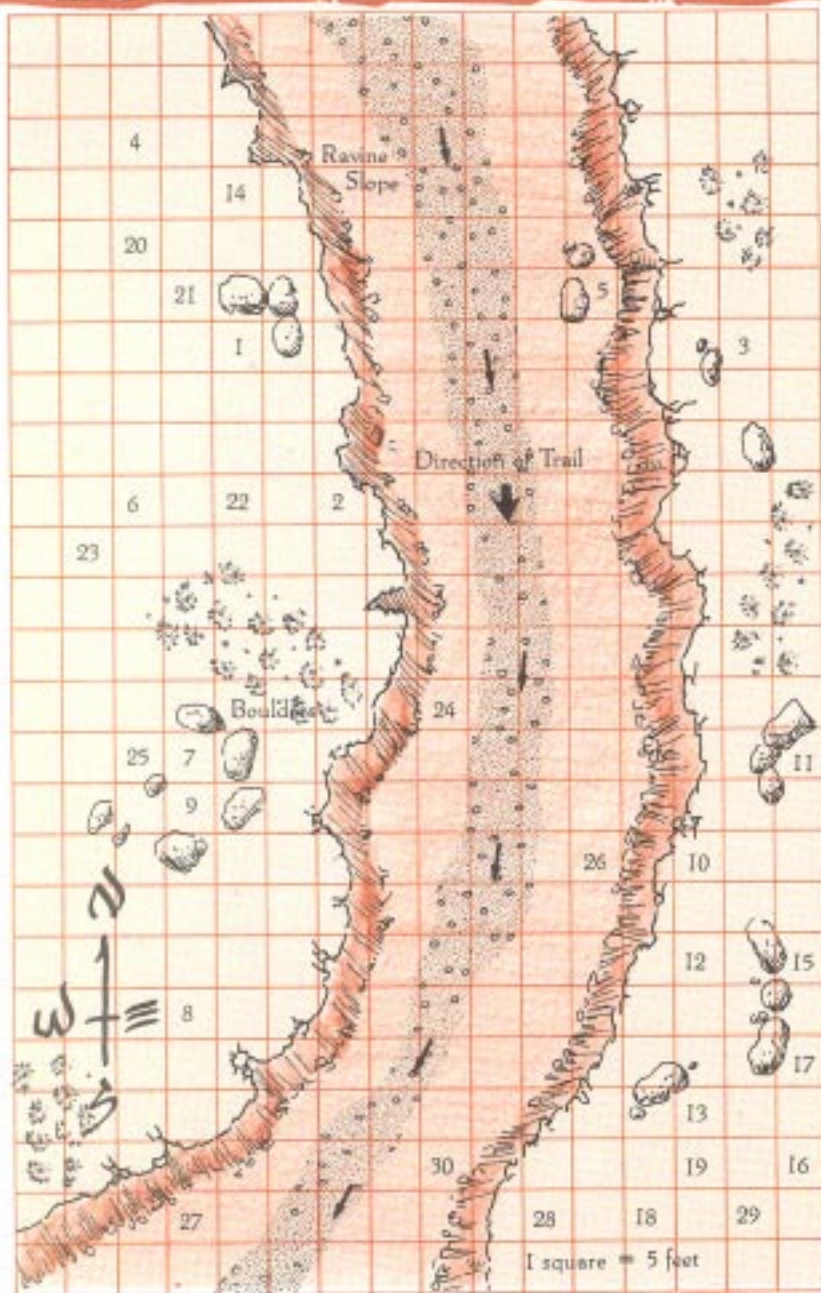
Ten:
Traders



Eleven:
Assembled Multitude



Twelve:
Bushwhacker



Thirteen: The Voice of Reason

"People of Tyr, hear me! You are being deceived! In your blindness for freedom you have only traded one tyrant for another. Gone is Kalak the Murderous; here is Tithian and his lying council. Even now they lie and plot against you.

"Were you not told that an army marched upon Tyr, intent on destroying you all? That if you did not rise up and take arms the evil king Hamanu of Urik would slaughter your men, torture your women, and enslave your children? Was this not the truth, you say? I tell you these were lies! Who among you has spoken to King Hamanu of Urik? Who among you has asked him why he comes to the aid of riot-torn Tyr? Only those, your councilors, who claim he is an enemy—only those whose wealth and power is threatened!

"King Hamanu comes not to enslave but to free you from your slave-lords. Even as far as distant Urik, he has heard the cries of the oppressed and injured and those cries moved him. Who among you feels safe at night from the gangs and thugs of our 'elected' councilors? Who among you will speak out against this tyranny and stand against this unjust war? Resist injustice! Fight the true enemy!"



Fourteen: The Council Chambers

The scene is the Hall of Councilors. Most of the four hundred or so new statesmen are in attendance, although more than a few are snoring in the back tiers. Councilor Limf (a pedantic fellow of considerable girth) and Councilor Narammash (an elderly former senator) are debating the exciting issue of land reform.

Councilor Limf (Droning, as he has been for several minutes): This latest measure therefore represents another phase in good councilor Vildeen's unceasing efforts on behalf of the nobles to completely erode the tax revenues of—

Councilor Narammash (Indignantly mumbling): Stuff and balderdash, the only revenues the esteemed councilor is concerned about are those that aren't passing through the pockets of his precious craftsmen—

King Tithian: (hammering his gavel to restore order before things get out of hand) Senator—I mean, Councilor Vildeen, Councilor Limf—I thank you both for your energetic concern on this matter—particularly the careful consideration you have given to distribution of new taxes. I believe, however, this is not the time to call a vote. Instead, let your fellow councilors reflect on your wisdom and later we shall bring up this matter for consideration again.

Councilor Limf (trying not to sputter): I-I-I think...I mean with all due respect—

King Tithian (brusquely): Thank you or for your gracious compliment; we will vote to consider the matter closed for the day. A vote, gentlemen and ladies?

(The hands of more than a few bored onlookers easily carries the king's will. There is an almost audible sigh of relief in the chamber.)

King Tithian (standing with a scroll in hand): Councilors, we have far more urgent business than land reform. (Pause as Tithian unrolls the scroll.) I have here a report from my agents abroad. The news they send is grave.

(A wave of murmurs flows through the chamber. The previously listless deputies suddenly snap to attention. King Tithian relishes the suspense for a moment.)

According to what they write, King Hamanu of Urik is marching an army on Tyr. (A hiss of breath from the audience.) The "good" King Hamanu intends to overthrow the legal authority in this city and place himself upon the twin thrones of Urik and Tyr. Councilors, we are at war!

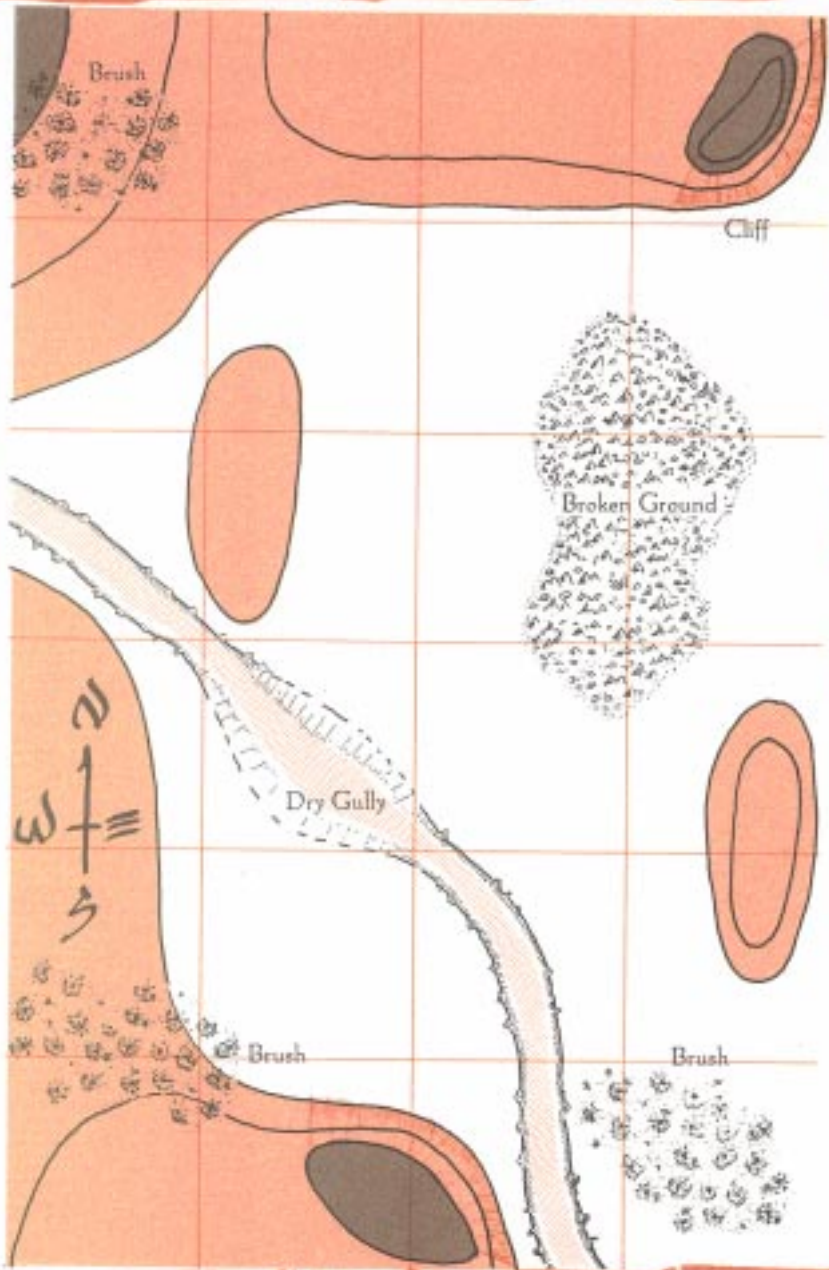
With that proclamation, the Hall of Councilors erupts into a chaos of voices shouting in rage and confusion.)

Therefore, in consideration of these grave events and by my powers as King of Tyr, I appoint the following councilors as commanders of the new Army of Tyr: Rikus the Gladiator, Templar Styan, and Senator Jaseela. I charge you three with the task of meeting and defeating our foe before his troops lay waste to our fair land.

Fifteen:
Luncheon



Sixteen:
Terrain Map



Seventeen:
The Attack



Eighteen:
The War Council



Nineteen: T'Kcyl

Thri-Kreen Gladiator

5th Level

Lawful Neutral

Str 15 Int 14

Dex 19 Wis 13

Con 17 Cha 15

Reaction Adjustments: surprise +3

NPCs +3

#AT: 2 (bite and weapon: or 1 bite and 3/
2 weapon attacks with *gythka*) or 5 (4
claws and bite)

THAC0: Natural weapons 16

+/-4 to punching/wrestling attacks

Chatkcha 13

Light crossbow 13 (12 point-blank)

Obsidian *gythka* 17

Steel dagger 16 (13 thrown)

Damage: Bite 1d4+1 and

Save vs. Paralyzation

Bone-tipped quarrels 1d4-1/1d4-1

Chatkcha 1d6+2/1d4+1

Claws 1d4

Obsidian *gythka* 2d4+1/1d10+1

Steel dagger 1d4/1d3

AC: 1 (modified for Dexterity)

HP: 44

Wild Talent: All-Round Vision

Power Score: Wis -3

Cost: 6 initial, 4 per round

PSP: 38

Leap forward 50', leap up 20'

Saving Throws

DM	RSW	PP	BW	Sp
11	13	12	13	14



T'Kkyl (Cont.)

Weapon Proficiencies: All (1 slot unused)

Weapon Specializations: *gythka*, light crossbow

Non-Weapon Proficiencies: Direction Sense, Navigation, Survival (stony barrens), Tracking (2 slots unused)

Languages: Thri-kreen, common, elven

Equipment: 15 bone-tipped quarrels, crystalline *chatkcha*, firebow, light crossbow, obsidian *gythka*, steel dagger; pack (fitted for thri-kreen), 5 sacs of kank honey, waterskin

Money: 560 cp

Background

Native to the stony ground of the Tablelands, your pack, through misadventure and misfortune, fell prey to human exterminators (marauding bands who make a living hunting down the thri-kreen "criminals") in retaliation for hunting raids on passing caravans. Only you and a few others escaped the humans' devastating psionic attack. Later, fierce sandstorms separated you from the remainder of your pack.

The loss of your pack is long past, and you have had many adventures, particularly since arriving in the city of Tyr. Without the protection of your pack, you were enslaved and forced to work on the great ziggurat. There you met others who seemed suitable members of a new hunting swarm. During the Great Riots that followed Kalak's assassination, these allies fought by your side to regain their freedom. Since then, the turmoil in the streets has kept you busy.

Before coming to Tyr, you had little understanding of the ways of men. Having endured slavery, near starvation, and brutality at their hands, your opinion of them has sunk low. Before, you innocently thought that humans, particularly the exterminators, only acted to survive. Now you realize the true extent of their cruelty. Except for those few of your new pack, the other races have no redeeming qualities. But someday you will again have a strong pack and then you can hunt the humans for food.

Twenty: Anavias the Split Rock

Female Human Psionicist

5th Level

Lawful Neutral

Str 17

Int 19

Dex 19

Wis 15

Con 13

Cha 18

Reaction Adjustments: surprise +3

NPCs +7

#AT: 1

THAC0: Bone dagger 18 (14 thrown)

Bone spear 18 (14 thrown)

Stone club 19

Damage: Bone dagger 1d4/1d3

Bone spear 1d6/1d8

Stone club 1d6+1/1d3+1

AC: 6/4 in leather armor (modified for
Dexterity)

HP: 17

Prim/Sec: Psychokinesis/Telepathy
Sciences

Mindlink

(Wis -5, IC contact, MC 8/rd, R
unlimited)

Project Force

(Con -2, IC 10, R 200 yds.)

Telekinesis

(Wis -3, IC 3+, MC 1 +/rd, R 30 yds.)

Devotions:

Animate Shadow

(Wis -3, IC 7, MC 3/rd, R 40 yds.)

Ballistic Attack

(Con -2, IC 5, R 30 yds.)

Control Light

(Int, IC 12, MC 4/rd, R 25 yds)

Inertial Barrier

(Con -3, IC 7, MC 5/rd, R 0)

Molecular Agitation

(Wis, IC 7, MC 6/rd, R 40 yds.)

Soften

(Int, IC 4, MC 3/rd, R 30 yds.)



Anavias (Cont.)

Conceal Thoughts

(Wis, IC 5, MC 3/rd, R 0)

Contact

(Wis, IC var., MC 1/rd, R sp.)

Psychic Crush

(Wis -4, IC 7, R 50 yds.)

Defense Modes: Mental Barrier, Mind Blank, Tower of Iron Will

PSP: 64

Saving Throws

D M	RSW	PP	B W	SP
12	13	9	15	14

Weapon Proficiencies: club, dagger, spear

Non-Weapon Proficiencies: *Harness Subconscious*, *Meditative Focus*, Psionic Detection, Read/Write Common, *Rejuvenation*, Survival (sand wastes); (3 slots unused)

Languages: Common, gith, halfling, thri-kreen

Equipment: leather armor, bone dagger, bone spear, stone club; belt pouch, bottle of ink, 5 candles, firekit, papyrus, personal seal, quill, sealing wax, silver mirror, water bladder; riding kank, saddle, bridle

Starting Money: 730 cp

Background

Since the age of twelve you have studied and practiced the demanding secrets of the Way. For many of those years you lived in the wilderness with Master Ghil. He became a father to you, replacing the ungrateful parent who abandoned you to your teacher's care. But eventually even your beloved master betrayed you, sending you from his door. You were sent alone into the wilderness to be tested—according to Master Ghil.

Tested you were, first by the journey to Tyr and then by the cruelties of that great city. Barely had you arrived before you were cast into Kalak's slave pens. It was a struggle to survive that hellish place, one that tested you mentally and physically. Fortunately, you were not alone, finding a few trustworthy friends among your fellow slaves. It was only by working as a group that you were able to survive the murderous riots following Kalak's assassination. Now, in the following days and weeks, you and your companions have become aides to the new leaders of Tyr. Still, someday you would like to return home and show your old master just how much you have learned.

Twenty-One: Vaerhirmana

Female Half-Elf
Fighter/Preserver
3rd Level/3rd Level
Chaotic Good

Str 17 Int 15
Dex 17 Wis 12
Con 16 Cha 15
Reaction Adjustments: surprise +2
NPCs +3

#AT: 1

THAC0: Javelin 16
Obsidian bastard sword 19
Short bow 16
Stone club 19

Damage: Javelin 1d6+1/1d6+1
Obsidian bastard sword
1-handed 1d8/1d12
2-handed 2d4/2d8
Bone arrows 1d6/1d6
Stone club 1d6/1d3

AC: 7/6 with shield
(modified for Dexterity)
HP: 22

Wild Talent: Hear Light
Power Score: Wis -3
Cost: 6/3 per round
PSP: 26

Spells: Two 1st-level spells
One 2nd-level spell

Saving Throws

DM	RSW	PP	BW	Sp
13	11	13	15	12



Vaerhirmana (Cont.)

Weapon Proficiencies: club, javelin, short bow, short sword (1 slot unused)

Non-Weapon Proficiencies: Ancient History, *Armor Optimization*, *Heat Protection*, Psionic Detection, Survival (stony barrens), *Somatic Concealment* (1 slot unused)

Languages: Common, giant, thri-kreen

Equipment: obsidian short sword, quiver with 20 bone-tipped arrows, short bow, stone club, wooden javelin; backpack, bone map case (spellbook), bottle of ink, 43' rope, 5 sheets of papyrus, quills and quillcase, three waterskins

Starting Money: 300 cp

Spell Book

1st Level

Change Self

Detect Magic

Enlarge

Phantasmal Force

Read Magic

Unseen Servant

2nd Level

Scare

Summon Swarm

Wizard Lock

Background

You thought—at least you hoped—that when you came to Tyr, life would be easier. All your life you've endured prejudice and outright hate in your small village. Life as a half-elf has never been kind, not that you'd ever stoop to asking for anything from anyone. Becoming a perserver only added to the complications. Still, you expected Tyr to be kinder than the mob of peasants who stoned your old master, Thangros, to death back in the village.

You should have known that even in Tyr human nature wouldn't change. Barely before you'd had your first meal, Kalak's templars enslaved you to work on the great ziggurat. You survived by your wit and the help of a few others you discovered you could trust, even during the horrors of Kalak's Great Games. The bloodbath was a terrible price to pay for the good that came from it—Kalak's death and freedom for the slaves, including you.

In the weeks since, you've managed to make a few important contacts—a supplier of spell components and some fellow preservers. Finding them was tricky, what with the riots and the suspicion, but now the attitude of the city towards preservers seems to be changing slightly—there is even talk of governmental legalization.

Twenty-Two: Herminard the Eloquent

Male Human Bard

6th Level

Neutral Evil

Str 12 Int 15
 Dex 18 Wis 10
 Con 11 Cha 17
 Reaction Adjustments: surprise +2
 NPCs +6

#AT: 1

THAC0: Bone wrist razor 19

Sling 16

Damage: Bone wrist razor 1d6/1d4

Sling stone 1d4/1d4

AC: 6/4 in leather armor (modified for
 Dexterity)

Hit Points: 26

Wild Talent: Time/Space Anchor

Power Score: Int

Cost: 5/1 per round

PSP: 29

Thieving Percentages

PP	OL	F/RT	MS	HS	HN	CW	RL
60	25	10	45	45	15	60	10

Influence Reactions: -2 die modifier

Inspire: +1 THAC0, +1 Saving
 Throw, or +2 Morale

Identify Magical Item: 30%

Saving Throws

DM	RSW	PP	BW	Sp
12	12	11	15	13



Herminard (Cont.)

Weapon Proficiencies: dagger, sling, wrist razor

Non-Weapon Proficiencies: Appraisal, Disguise, Etiquette, Heraldry, Local History, Reading Lips, Read/Write Common, Ventriloquism

Languages: Common, elven, halfling

Poisons Known:

B (Injected, Onset: 2-12 min., Str: 20/1-3)

C (Injected, Onset: 2-5 min., Str: 25/2-8)

E (Injected, Onset: Immediate, Str: Death/20)

G (Ingested, Onset: 2-12 hrs., Str: 20/10)

I (Ingested, Onset: 2-12 min., Str: 30/15)

Equipment: bone hook, bone wrist razor, pouch with 40 stones, sling, thief's tools; ball of twine, belt pouch, 5 glass vials, various herbs (for poisons)

Starting Money: 210 cp

Background

Curse the day you ever left Balic! Since then, your life has been nothing but misery and pain. First it was the flight from the templars of Dictator Andropinis across the wasteland to the gates of Tyr. And did they respect your talents in Tyr? Did a patron seek out and reward your skills? No, the templars of Tyr threw you into their horrid slave pens. Only by luck and skill did you manage to escape a hideous death in the riot Kalak's assassination. The old sorcerer-king and the templars got just what they deserved. Ever since, you've been looking for a chance to even up old scores. Best to wait for the politics around here to sort themselves out. Once you know who's on top, you can sell your skills to him.

The time in prison did give you time to think—especially when you realized that you do need other people's help once in a while. So lately you've been trying to think a little more about your friends—a little, but not too much.

Twenty-Three: Azhul the Hasty

Male Half-Giant Fighter
5th Level
Lawful/Neutral/Chaotic Good

Str 21 Int 12
Dex 14 Wis 10
Con 15 Cha 8
Reaction Adjustments: surprise 0
NPCs 0

#AT: 1 (3/2 with two-handed sword)

THAC0: Bone-studded gauntlet 13

Obsidian 2-handed sword 13

Damage: Bone-studded
gauntlet 1d3+8

Obsidian 2-handed sword
1d10+10

AC: 10/6 in braxat hide armor
(no dexterity bonus)

Hit Points: 61

Wild Talent: Catfall

Power score: Dex -2

Cost: 4

PSP: 20

Saving Throws

DM	RSW	PP	BW	Sp
11	13	12	13	14



Azhul (Cont.)

Weapon Proficiencies: mace, short sword, spear

Weapon Specialization: two-handed sword

Non-Weapon Proficiencies: Animal Lore, *Armor Optimization*, *Heat Protection*, Stonemasonry, *Water Find*, *Weapon Improvisation* (1 slot unused)

Languages: Common

Equipment: bone short sword, bone-studded gauntlet, braxat-hide armor, obsidian two-handed sword, stone-headed mace; fire kit, leather backpack (to size), 50' hemp rope, map case, tent (to size), 5 waterskins

Money: 1,000 cp

Background

Although you remember that you were born near the Ringing Mountains, you (like most of your kind) have recreated your life many times over. Your most recent incarnation was as a soldier-guard in the service of King Kalak of Tyr. There you achieved the rank of sergeant in the City Watch, although your sense of mercy was a constant hindrance to your advancement. After the death of Kalak and the riots throughout the city, you found yourself unloved and under attack. Since this position was uncomfortable and clearly dangerous, it was not long before you changed roles once again. Now, with your new friends, you are a proud defender of freedom for all within the walls of Tyr.

Still, you have not completely forgotten your past life nor has it forgotten you. A number of city guards and templars owe you favors—which may prove useful. At the same time, there are old “friends” who also believe you owe them, and some of these folks are still in a position to press their claims.

Twenty-Four: Chividal

Male Halfling Cleric/Psionicist
4th Level/4th Level
Neutral Good

Str 15 Int 17

Dex 19 Wis 16

Con 15 Cha 16

Reaction Adjustments: surprise +3
NPCs +5

#AT: 1

THAC0: Bone spear 19 (15 thrown)

Obsidian hand axe 19 (15 thrown)

Damage: Bone spear 1d6-1

Obsidian hand axe 1d6-1

AC: 4 in leather armor

(modified for Dexterity)

HP: 25

Cleric of Air Spells: Three 1st-level spells
Two 2nd-level spells

Prim/Sec: Psychoportation/Telepathy
Sciences:

Banishment

(Int -1, IC 30, MC 10/rd, R 5 yds)

Teleport

(Int, IC 10+, R infinite)

Devotions:

Astral Projection

(Int, IC 6, MC 2/hour)

Contact

(Wis, IC varies, MC 1/rd, R special)

Dream Travel

(Wis -4, IC 1/25 miles, R 500 miles)

ESP

(Wis -4, IC contact, MC 6/rd,
R unlimited)

Identity Penetration

(Wis -3, IC contact, MC 6/rd,
R unlimited)

Life Detection

(Int -2, IC 3, MC 3/rd, R 100 yds)

Teleport Trigger

(Int +1, IC 0, MC 2/hour, R infinite)



Chivald (Cont.)

Time Shift

(Int, IC 5, R 0)

Time/Space Anchor

(Int, IC 5, MC 1/rd, R 0)

Defenses: Intellect Fortress, Mind Blank

PSP: 57

Saving Throws

D M	RSW	PP	B W	Sp
13	15	10	16	15

Weapon Proficiencies: club, hand axe, spear

Non-Weapon Proficiencies: *Harness Subconscious*, *Heat Protection*, Herbalism, Leatherworking, *Meditative Focus*, *Rejuvenation*, Sign Language, *Somatic Concealment*, *Water Find* (1 slot unused)

Languages: Halfling, common

Equipment: bone spear, leather armor, obsidian hand axe; backpack, bag of carved casting sticks, 5 globes of kank honey, seeds of the home tree

Money: 10 cp (Chivald does not see the need for money.)

Background

How much better it would be to go home to the soothing wilderness beyond the Ringing Mountains, but it is not yet time to return. For an act of minor impropriety, Chief Huc gave you many fine gifts and instructed you to seek wisdom for the tribe in the lands of men, not to return for many High Suns. This was a sorrowful and serious thing, so you could not refuse—the chief would never ask this of someone who had not shown the need. Taking with you the finest of the chief's casting sticks, you set out to learn of men for the tribe.

You have been in the wilderness for some time, slowly absorbing the rude ways of the dry-folk, as all beyond the mountains are known. They are a difficult lot to fathom. They speak without connection to the trees, their mouths uttering polite phrases while their hands make the most insulting gestures. Yet they do not seem aware of it, nor do they notice when you signal your displeasure. Too long from the trees, these people have no subtlety or grace. Still, you think you can stand them, and so have come to learn in the city of Tyr.

Thirty-One:
Ground View



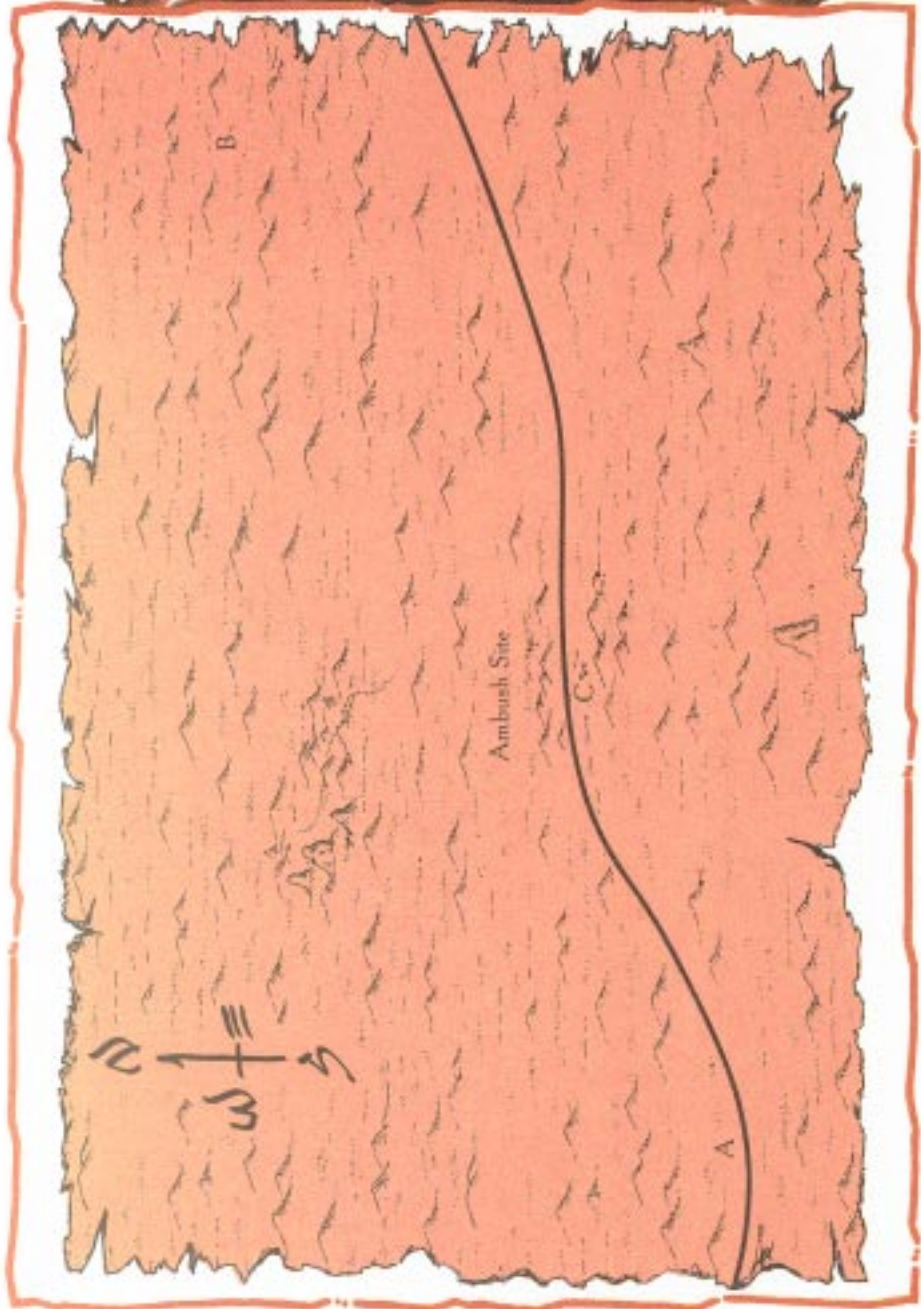
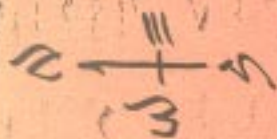
Thirty-Two:
Pursuers



Thirty-Three:
The Wasteland

B

Ambush Site



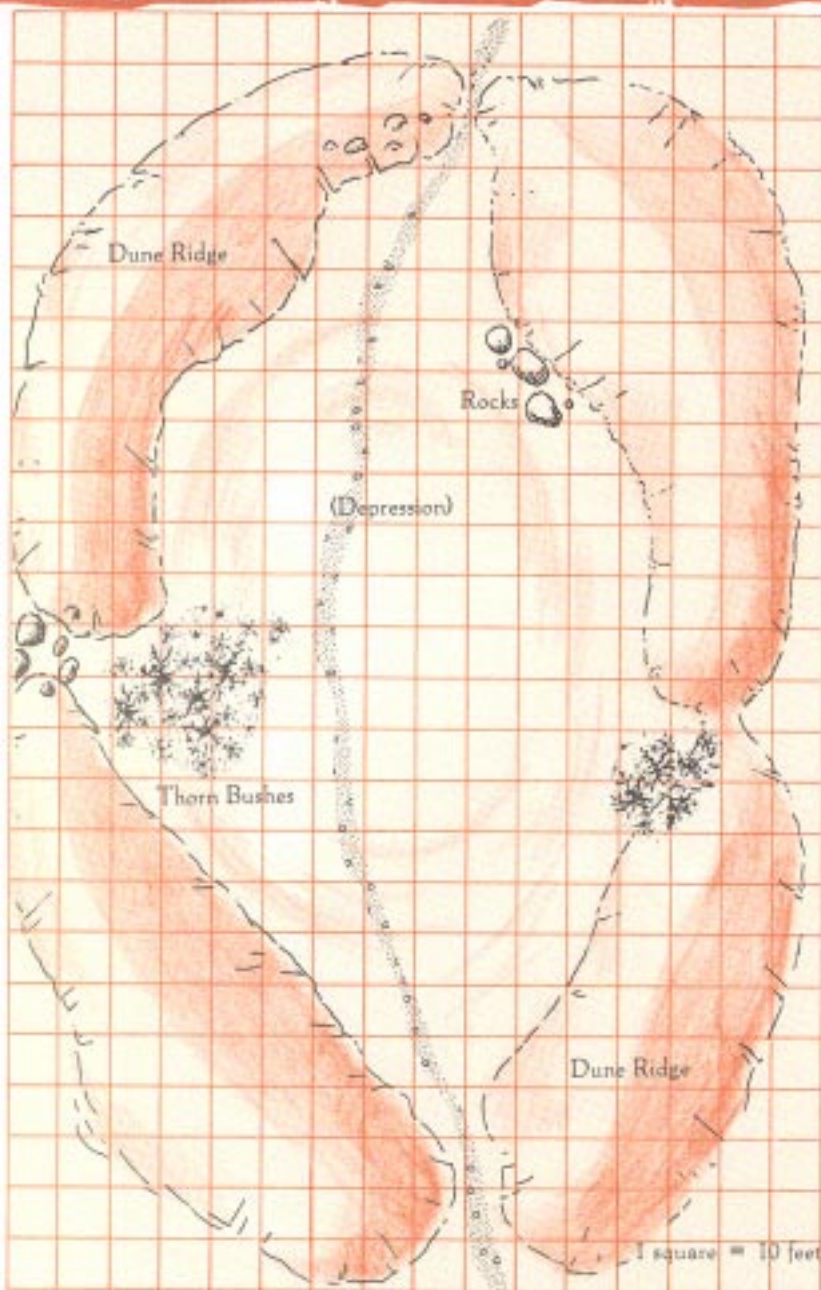
Thirty-Four: The Contract

Whereas the lords of Tyr desire the house or Tyrthani to sponsor and equip a body of soldiers that shall number _____

Whereas these same lords of Tyr are willing to offer the Tyrthani household as consideration the services of those agents whose signatures appear below for a term of service not to exceed _____

And whereas the Tyrthani agree to accept this consideration that is set forth in this agreement in return for these agents' services and warranties of the same, so LET THIS CONTRACT BE ENTERED IN THE HALL OF RECORDS, as stipulated by the laws of Tyr. _____

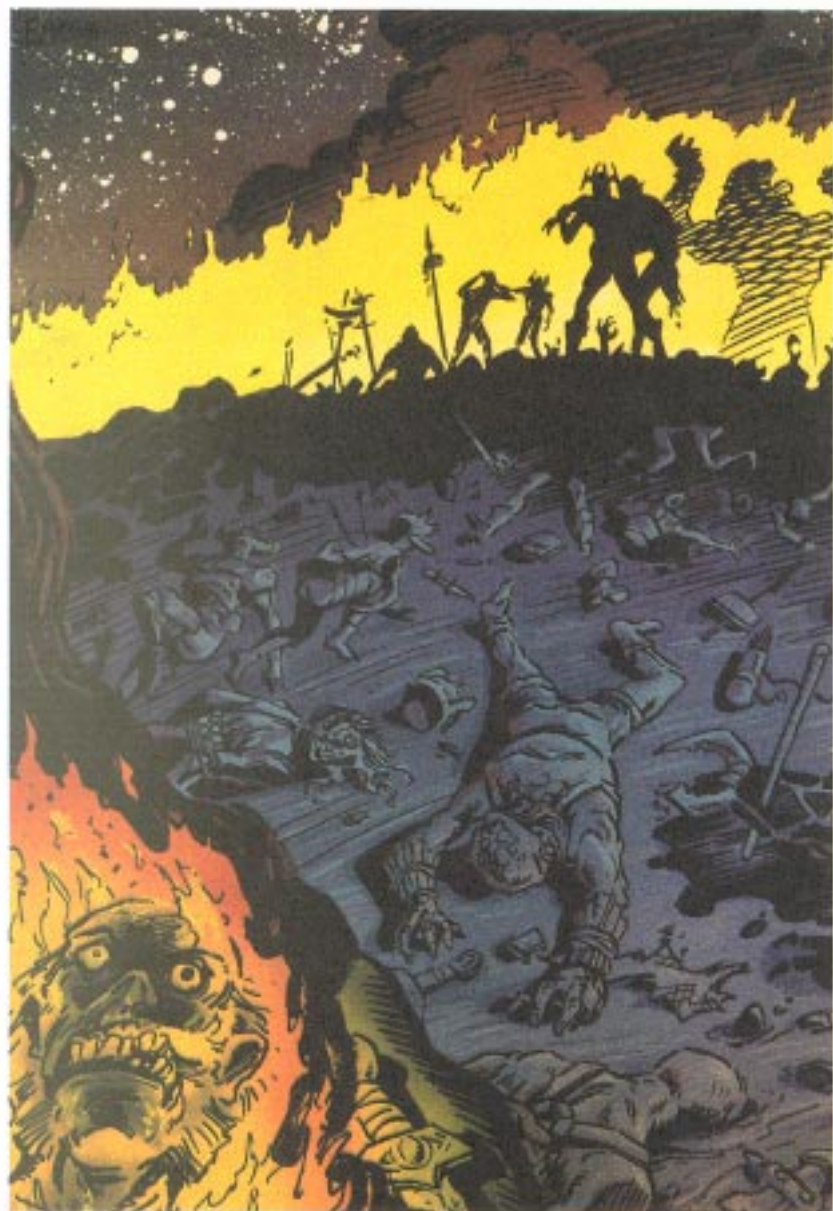
Thirty-Five:
Wilderness Map



Thirty-Six:
The Tyrthani



Thirty-Seven:
The Fruits of Victory



Thirty-Eight:
The Last Charge



Thirty-Nine:
Roll Call



Forty:
Triumph!



Forty-One: The Commander



After asking around, you learn a few facts about templar Girias. It takes a few days for your contacts to meet inconspicuously with you, and different informants give you different opinions:

The family has been in Kalak's service for centuries, sending at least one child of every generation into the ranks of the templars. For the most part, their careers have been competent although undistinguished.

This templar entered service over twenty years ago. He has served long, rising slowly, and has been passed over for promotion more than once.

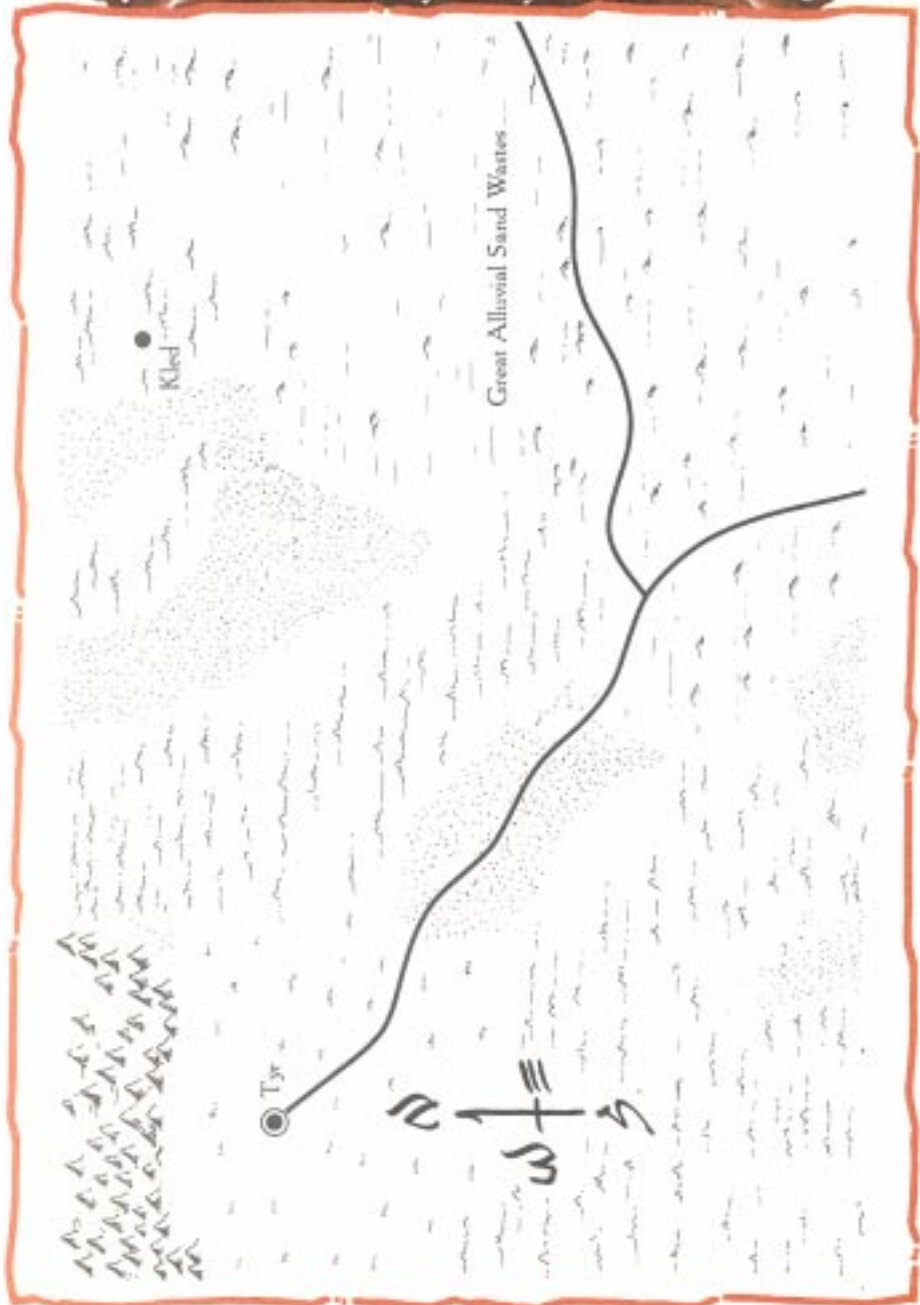
Pure and simple, the man is a fool.

Girias is likeable enough and doesn't seem to have many enemies. He's held a post in the Bureau of Water for quite a few years, supervising maintenance of the city's underground aqueducts.

Forty-Two:
Break in the Line



Forty-Three:
Beyond Tyr



Forty-Four: Voices in the Night

Speaker One: . . . you can learn? I rely on your information. I suggest you come up with more useful news—and quickly.

Speaker Two: Look, you don't understand how difficult this is. If the word got to the wrong people, and there are expenses . . .

Speaker One: You're saying you've not been paid well enough? Is that what this is all about?

Speaker Two: No, no, it's not that! It's just that these things take time. You can't very well go up to one of the councilors and demand information. Once I could have, before this damned freedom business got started—but that's all gone. Things have to be done slowly and carefully now.

Speaker One: Enough of this! What do you have for me? I've got to have something to report, so I suggest you make it good.

(A pause.)

Speaker Two: Tell them that Rikus commands the army—

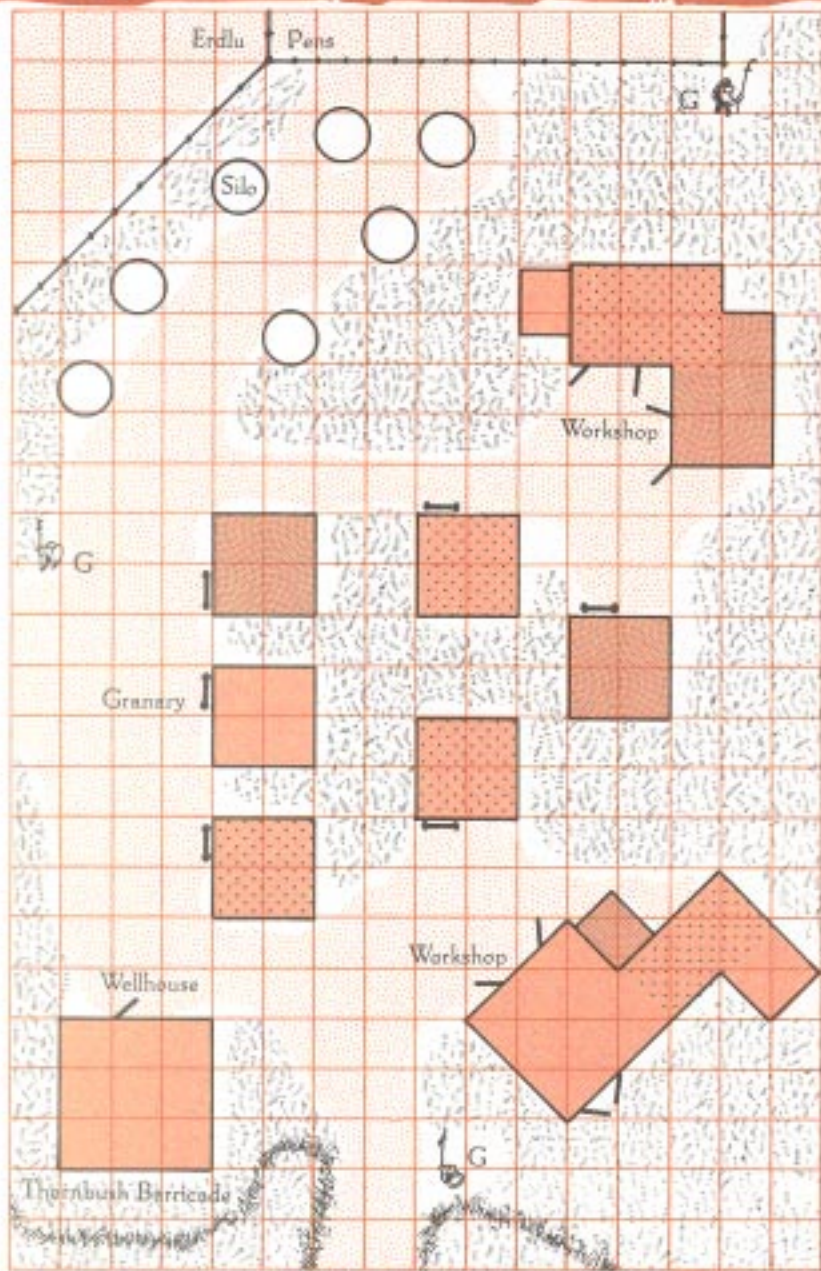
Speaker One: I know that!

Speaker Two: (acidly) That Rikus commands the army but there are divisions between him and the other commanders. It may be a weakness. At any rate, it has delayed their planned march—the army can't possibly take the field within the next week, possibly two.

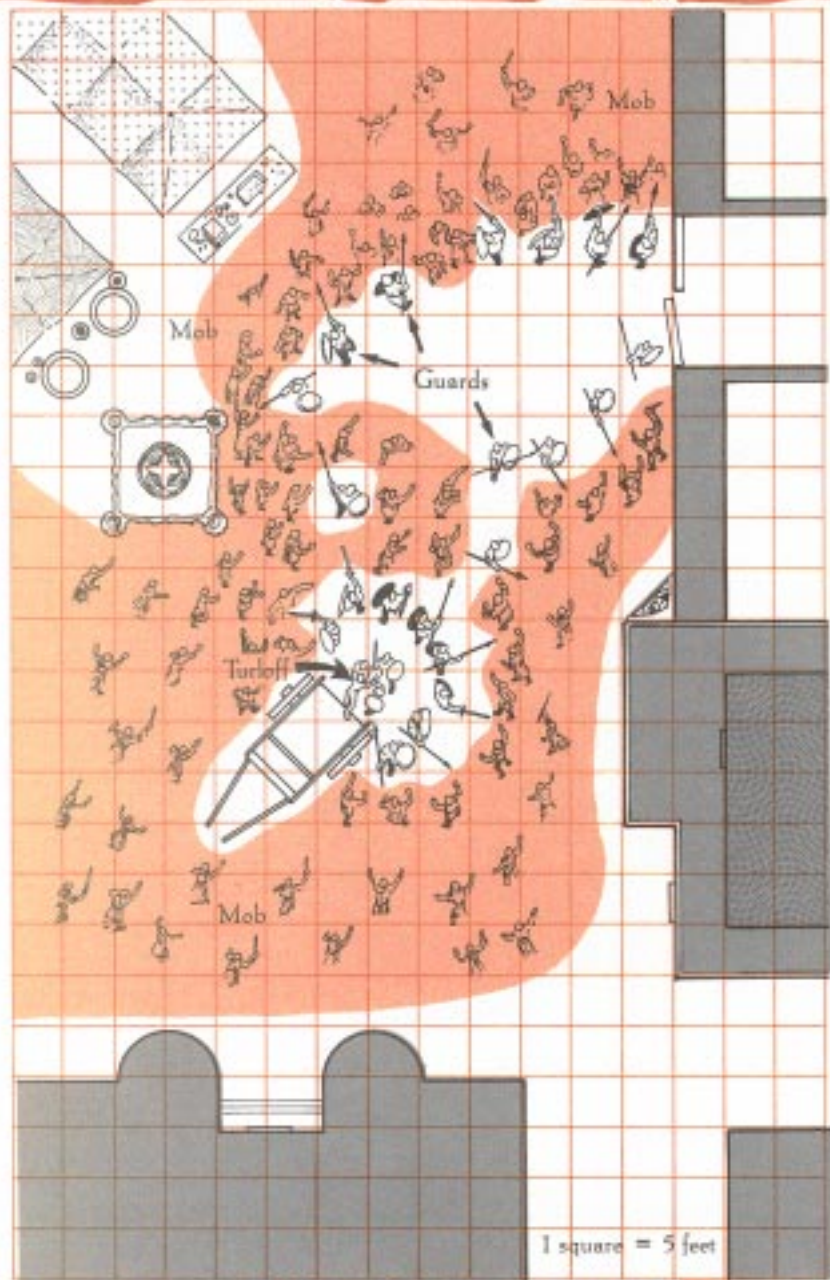
Speaker One: That's much better. Time only works against Tyr and to Urik's favor.



Forty-Five: Raid



Forty-Six: Mob Action



Forty-Seven:
Combat



Forty-Eight:
Mid-Day March





DARK • SUN

W O R L D

The new
army of Tyr
faces deadly
foes.

Dungeon Master's Book

ROX



Road to Urik

A DARK SUN™ Campaign Adventure

DM's Book

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Part One: Starting the Adventure

The Road to Urik is designed for four to six player characters of levels 3 through 6. The player characters, now citizens of the Free City of Tyr, must help organize the city's divided factions to resist the approaching Urikrite army. The player characters become enmeshed in squabbles and feuds, making allies and enemies who will be with them for some time to come....



Materials Needed to Play. In addition to this module, you must also have: the AD&D® *Second Edition* rulebooks, the DARK SUN™ boxed set, and *The Complete Psionics Handbook*.

You may also want to read the novel *The Crimson Legion* before beginning play. This novel follows the *The Verdant Passage* and describes Athas and some of its major players in greater detail.



Furthermore, this module complements *The Crimson Legion*, setting the stage for the novel's events.

The Road to Urik is the second DARK SUN adventure, following the *Freedom* special module. *The Road to Urik* can be played as a stand-alone adventure or used in conjunction with *Freedom*, continuing the characters, NPCs, and general storyline of that adventure. If you have not read or played *Freedom*, you might consider playing that adventure first. However, your enjoyment of *The Road to Urik* will not be diminished if you do not investigate *Freedom* first.



Preparing for Play. Decide whether you will use the pregenerated characters in the *Players' Book* or have the players use their own characters. If you played *Freedom*, you may remember some of these pregenerated characters. They have gained some abilities and perhaps a level or two, reflecting the experience they gained from their adventures. The pregenerated characters can replace those who may have died during *Freedom*. If you use the pregenerated characters, remove pp. 19-24 from the *Players' Book* and

let each player select a character.

Make sure that each player understands all the information on the character sheet, particularly any special class or racial abilities, as well as psionic powers. Answer all questions concerning the characters' abilities before commencing play.

Part One: How to Use this Booklet

If you have played many AD&D® adventure modules, you will find the organization and format of the DARK SUN™ products different. Aside from the different booklets (described on the inside cover of the module folder), this adventure does not follow the progression used in many other modules. The characters do not spend all their time journeying or exploring an underground setting. Monsters and NPCs do not wait for the characters to find them, and the story does not unfold in a set A-B-C pattern. Instead, player characters are involved in a swirl of events, often facing several problems at the same time. Which problems they choose to tackle and how they resolve them can affect later events. (Some events occur no matter what the PCs do.) As DM, your job is to direct and shape events to match the personalities and ambitions of the player characters. You cannot simply describe what is waiting behind the next door: you must create situations, conflicts, and sometimes interpret your players' unstated desires to fashion an exciting adventure.

This adventure offers you many tools to help you do this job. First, it's likely that there are more encounters here than you'll need: you select only those encounters most suited to your playing style and group. Furthermore, the NPCs provide a rich background of potential friends and enemies for the player characters. Many of these characters won't affect the course of the story; they are tools and foils for your story needs. By the end of *The Road to Urik*, the player characters will know many companions, villains, and assorted hangers-on who can figure into adventures of your own design. Using these NPCs in future adventures will give your campaign continuity.

Freedom and The Road to Urik

As noted above, you need not have read or played *Freedom*, the first DARK SUN adventure, to enjoy *The Road to Urik*, although elements of *Freedom* can add more detail to play: NPCs who the PCs met during that adventure may continue to provide the PCs with information, support, protection, or security. Also, the grand events of *The Road to Urik* build from the ending of *Freedom*. While the events of *Freedom* need not affect this module, the previous story line helps provide context for the events and NPC motivations in *The Road to Urik*. Also, player characters' attitudes can be profoundly affected by their adventures in the previous module.

Part One: Adventure Organization

This adventure contains encounters, scenes, and background material—seldom more than a page each. Encounters are the heart of the adventure, presenting situations for characters to act upon and developing the events and story line.

The information you need for each encounter is organized into several sections.

Setup briefly describes the encounter, lists materials you may need, and also may tell you when to use them. **Start** sets the scene for the encounter, most frequently with a short passage you can read to your players. **Encounter** is the heart of the event, describing the general course of action. **Role-Playing** provides notes on the behavior, attitudes, and reactions of the principal NPCs for that encounter. Snatches of sample Dialogue that can serve as starting points for role-playing encounters are frequently included in this section. **Reactions** describes how NPCs might respond to PCs' actions during the encounter.

Statistics lists any information on NPCs or monsters for that encounter or tells you where to find these numbers. **Outcome** presents the likely results of an encounter. (Of course, not every possibility can be accounted for, only the most likely or logical results. You must be ready to improvise, should the player characters attempt something completely unexpected.)

Next tells you where to look in the booklet to continue play. There is often a number of choices, so you can tailor the adventure to your needs.

The Road to Urik does not use wandering monster or random encounter tables. Instead, scenes at the beginning of most adventure sections describe an incident involving an NPC, creature, or problem appropriate to the section. In Tyr, scenes involve beggars, templars, and other citizens. Once the army has marched out, the desert scenes deal with officers, deserters, creatures, scouts, and spies. Some scenes are connected to the plot (for example, a scene may involve an NPC who the PCs already know), but most are simply incidental events. Use these scenes whenever you wish, perhaps to introduce an NPC or to liven up a slow moment of play. The scenes are merely tools for your use, not requirements.

Finally, background material is included in different sections of the adventure. The background material, which may take more than one page, outlines the different encounters in that section and may describe places or people common to many encounters and scenes. The background information will help you create descriptions and handle unforeseen events.

Part One: The Free City of Tyr

SPOILER WARNING: Recent events in the city of Tyr (where *The Road to Urlik* begins) are described in *Freedom* and the novel, *The Verdant Passage*. This section summarizes Tyr's recent upheaval and the outcome for those who have not read these materials. If you intend to read the novel, you should do so before continuing with this adventure, so that your enjoyment is not lessened. If you and your players are familiar with these materials, you may wish to skip this section. Likewise, if your players are unfamiliar with recent events in Tyr, share the following information with them before beginning play.

For generations unto generations, every city of Athas has been dominated by powerful sorcerer-kings—fierce tyrants who rule unchallenged the scattered great oases. Unchallenged, that is, until now, for at last one city has overthrown its oppressive lord and freed itself from the shackles of blind tradition. Tyr, once known as a decadent sprawl of slavery and vice, has roused itself with terrifying energy.

It was a storm long brewing. For two decades, the slaves, citizens, and nobles of Tyr suffered under the increasing madness of King Kalak, struggling at his command to build a massive ziggurat in the heart of the city. Its purpose cloaked in mystery, the people only knew that it was destroying them.

First, there were extra taxes to pay for material, then more and more slaves were pressed into its construction. Output from Tyr's greatest resource, its fabulous iron mines, slowly dwindled as Kalak concentrated all the city's efforts on his ziggurat. The citizens, then the nobles, began to suffer as trade with other city states languished. Although they were worried, the fear of Kalak's ire was sufficient to keep the nobility cowed.

It was only in the last few months that the oppression grew too great. With the ziggurat nearly complete, Kalak's obsession reached new extremes. The host of High Templar Tithian, Master of Games and Public Works, formed press gangs to scour the streets, enslaving the poor and indigent. The templars commandeered almost every slave in the city, from the meanest bricklayer's apprentice to the wealthiest nobles' last few field-hands. With the plantation workers depleted, nobles' fortunes teetered on the brink of ruin and the city faced eventual starvation. Yet to this all, Kalak turned a deaf ear. The little concern he once had for his people seemed to vanish like smoke.

Part One: Free City (Cont.)

It was in one of the press gangs' sweeps that the PCs were captured and sent to the slave pens. There they labored under harsh conditions, threatened with death every day, to build Kalak's monumental folly. In the slave pits, the player characters had opportunities to come into contact with various factions. Some became gladiators or drew the attention of the nobility. Some may have even secretly worked as spies for the templars or the wizards of the Veiled Alliance. Still, it seemed as if all their connections were powerless to save them from death in the slave pens.

The situation could not last. Kalak had pushed his people too far. A small group of rebels—a strange mix of nobles, templars, gladiators, wizards, and slaves—realized they had to strike. After many mishaps and near discoveries (which would have certainly resulted in terrible deaths through Kalak's psionic and sorcerous powers), the desperate group felt ready. The date was set—the day of Kalak's great games.

Ostensibly, the games were meant to celebrate the completion of Kalak's rainbow-colored ziggurat and they were to be the greatest spectacle ever staged in Tyr. Everyone, even the lowest slaves, was expected to attend. Most came by choice, for the contest was free and promised to be at least a small spark of relief from Kalak's strangling reign. Stragglers and slaves were herded to the great arena by the sorcerer-king's templars. With the stone tiers filled to near overflowing, the stadium thundered as the crowds screamed for their favorite warriors on the sands below. So it went for near all the day, until the final spectacle—the grand melee—was begun.

Just what happened next—and why—is unclear. It is generally agreed that the gladiator Rikus threw his spear at King Kalak at the same instant that a huge explosion burst over the king's balcony. Some say Kalak died instantly; others maintain he escaped to his palace. Whatever the result, the people tried to flee, but they discovered that the stadium gates had been sealed. The people, panicked and acting on some instinctual urge, turned on the templars, symbols of Kalak's oppression. Suddenly, hundreds of people, then thousands, died where they stood. Golden streams of powerful magic flowed from the dying toward Kalak's ziggurat. From there, sinister greasy smoke rose over the city.

In hindsight, some survivors claim the dragon had come, its terrible magic bringing death to all. Others blamed the rebels who had angered King Kalak. In truth, Kalak, still alive, was absorbing the life force of thousands as he tried to transform himself into a dragon. While the citizens rioted in blind panic, Kalak's slaves (the player characters included) seized the opportunity to break to freedom. At the same time, unknown to everyone, the small group of rebels hunted down and slew the wounded, but still powerful, King Kalak. With the sorcerer-king's death, his deadly magic ended.

Part One: Free City (Cont.)

Only after the gates to the stadium were forced open did the panic begin to subside. High Templar Tithian's appearance in the King's Balcony finally caught the crowd's attention. Holding aloft Kalak's crown, Tithian proclaimed himself King of Tyr and in a single stroke freed all of Kalak's slaves.

Now Tyr is something new on the face of Athas—a free city-state. The transition has not been easy. Following Kalak's assassination, riots flared throughout the city. The templars, suddenly lacking their spells, were the targets of much revenge. Mobs of newly freed slaves attacked the townhouses of their former masters, only to be driven back by squads of half-giant soldiers. Roving gangs of homeless were quickly and sometimes brutally suppressed. But the new king of Tyr was not about to let the city fall into chaos.

In the months following, the new ruler of Tyr has struggled to solidify his control over the city. Democracy and freedom are strange and foreign concepts to people so long oppressed. Slowly and with trial and error, the free state of Tyr has edged its way forward.

The Course of the Adventure

The player characters begin (or continue) their exploits when new complications arise for Tyr—a potent and dangerous threat from the outside. King Hamanu, King of the World, King of the Mountains and the Plains, King of Urik, has requested—no, demanded—that Tyr once again supply him with precious iron from its mines. Rebuffed, the lord of Urik decides to solve the matter by direct action—marching his army on Tyr.

The first part of the adventure is a race against time, as the PCs rush to help raise a new type of army, one composed of free citizens fighting for the good of their city. Although the threat is clear, the task is not simple. There are many factions among the population—nobility, templars, gladiators, and more—and they have grudges and demands. As minor heroes of the revolution and aides to a powerful NPC, the PCs try to cut deals with templars, strong-arm hesitant nobles, restrain bloodthirsty gladiators, and more. To succeed, the PCs must do more than just fight: diplomacy, problem-solving, role-playing, and even dirty tricks will often be of more use than a sword.

Once the army is forged, the PCs commend scouting patrols and are sent into the field. The PCs must show their cunning as they try to find, count, and harass the enemy. Challenges of the wilderness and war await them.

In the last section, the PCs must fight for survival. Separated from their army and caught in a trap, they must defeat the Urikites to enjoy the victory of Tyr.

Part One: The Factions of Tyr

In the first part of this adventure, the player characters must embroil themselves in the politics of the newly-liberated Tyr as they help to organize the army and stop the approaching Urikrite soldiers, so it's necessary to understand the Tyrian factions. These descriptions give broad descriptions of the city's power blocs; in the encounters, NPCs' motivations generally coincide with the aims stated below.

The King: Tithian, former High Templar and new king of Tyr, is supposedly the most powerful and important man in the city. Although he lacks the sweeping powers and absolute rule of his predecessor, Tithian is immensely popular with the masses. He is hailed as the man who toppled the insane and sadistic Kalak and who freed the oppressed slaves, and the king does nothing to change this attitude. Although he lacks psionic or spell powers, Tithian's popularity gives him great influence over the other factions of the city.

The Council of Advisors: One of the new features of democratic Tyr is the Council of Advisors. Shortly after the revolution, the Senate was abolished, primarily to break the senators' power. In its place, Tithian and others established the Council. Council members are leaders of the different classes: nobles, templars, craftsmen, paupers, and former slaves. The members were elected by their equals, although the elections were often exercises in bullying and machine politics. In addition, the merchant houses have been granted advisory (non-voting) positions on the council.

Although the Council is composed of many different factions, it is also a faction that must be dealt with. Many council members are discovering the advantages of their position and more than a few are attempting to pass laws for their own benefit.

The Nobles: Although stripped of their senatorial rank, the wealthy old families of Tyr have retained their traditional status as nobility. The nobles (still called senators, although some prefer Lord or Lady) are mainly concerned with protecting their own privileges and power. The nobles are divided in their support of the new king. He has, albeit reluctantly, slashed Kalak's draconian taxes on their estates, but he also created endless difficulties when he freed the slaves that used to work the plantations. The nobles support him and the new democracy only so long as it does not threaten their interests.

The Templars: Since Kalak's fall, the templars of Tyr have been living a precarious existence. The revolution has literally stripped them of much of their power, since Kalak's death stripped them of their spells. Although this is not widely known, Kalak's death triggered a wave of violent revenge against the hated templars. In the weeks following the assassination, no templar was safe on the streets.

Part One: Factions (Cont.)

Although weakened, the templars still form a powerful faction. Only they are skilled in keeping the peace, ensuring food reaches the markets, controlling the precious water supply, and even preventing outbreaks of disease. Aware of this, the new king has worked to restore order and protect the surviving templars—or most of them; Tithian's old enemies have been noticeably absent from their posts.

The templars hate the rebels, yet are forced to look to the new king for protection. Any one of them (particularly the High Templars) would like to overthrow Tithian, but such a deed is simply not possible at the moment.

The Craftsmen: The skilled tradesmen are, likewise, new to politics and have no unified agenda. Their most pressing issue is to reopen the iron mines, since many of them rely on its ore for their livelihood.

The Free Farmers: One of the largest blocs in the city is that of the newly freed slaves. They have also proven quite troublesome. Freed without property or plans, they indulged in rioting and looting. Only a combination of Tithian's strong hand and the doling out of King Kalak's estates (engineered by Senator Agis) restored order to the city. These new landholders are now known as the government farmers. They are strong supporters of King Tithian and fierce advocates of everything democratic, no matter how extreme. The government farmers are openly antagonistic toward the nobles and merchants.

The Tenant Farmers: While some freed slaves gained homesteads, the majority wound up back on the estates of their former masters. Their old masters have "generously" rented small plots of land to the former slaves, quickly ensnaring their tenants in the coils of debt. The tenant farmers are finding their lot worse now than ever before.

Although the tenant farmers have no love of their new landlords, they are afraid to protest too greatly. Most tenant councilors find it best to support their noble landlord or just stay quiet and let their vote be bought. The hope they felt in their first few weeks of freedom is slowly being crushed out of them.

The Dispossessed: Even with all King Tithian's social programs, pushed through by the great humanitarian Agis of Asticles, there are still many poor and homeless in the city. To them, the "free" elections were a farce. Many of this faction's candidates to council were supported by other factions, and money and thugs ensured the votes needed to elect them. Most of these councilors see their seats as a means to improve their own lots. They can be relied on to vote with whomever offers them the best bribe or looks most likely to win on any issue. Indeed, money and fear are far more important than right or wrong for these men.

The Merchants: The merchant houses that do business in Tyr had never had much say in the city's politics before. As advisors to the council, the merchants have no vote but can still use their considerable influence (the threat of a trade embargo) to ensure the sanctity of their licenses.

Part One: The Threat

Setup. In this section, the PCs learn of the threat to Tyr by one of three methods. If the PCs are aides to any on the Council, have the players turn to the *Players' Book*, p. 14—The Council Chambers. If the PCs are special agents of rebel NPCs, have the players turn to the *Players' Book*, p. 6—The Meeting.

Encounter. Whatever method you use, the goal of this encounter is to alert the PCs to King Hamanu's demands and the approaching Urikite army. Little other action occurs in this encounter, although attentive players may learn the names and faces of some important NPCs.

The Debate. If the PCs are able to attend council, read the following to the players.

Today, in the old senate chambers, the Council meets as it does every day. But things seem different today. Tension electrifies the air. King Tithian sits on his throne, dourly listening to the debate. Of late, the Council of Advisors has not been easily controlled or respectful. Every member seems to have his own agenda. Factions are aligning against Tithian's authority. Senator Agis in particular, with his ideas of justice and reform, has often been at odds with his old ally. The issue today is land reform and, as usual, many councilors have joined in the debate.

Have the players read The Debate aloud. For best effect, have each player assume the role of a different speaker. You may wish to read King Tithian's part, which explains the threat to Tyr.

Grim News. This should only be used if the PCs have previously dealt with an important NPC (that is, in the previous adventure, *Freedom*). Lissan, Mahlanda, Torban, any templar, or one of the rebel leaders—Rikus, Neeva, Sadira, or Agis—are all highly placed NPCs. The NPC arranges a meeting in the back room of a cool and quiet wineshop. Read the following to the players:

Your contact, (NPC's name), seems especially tense this day. Only after you are seated does the councilor stir from (his/her) shadowy seat in the corner, and then it is to check carefully that no one has followed you. Returning to (his/her) seat, your contact finally speaks.

Have one of the players read The Meeting aloud, which explains the danger Tyr faces.

Next. Turn to Raising an Army. PCs who heard the news at the debate may have to wait a day or two of game time before continuing. PCs who heard the Grim News may continue immediately with the mission. Or you may use rumors to introduce PCs to a suitable contact if they have none.

Part Two: Raising the Army

Clearly, Tyr must raise an army to counter the threat from Urik. Tithian has already appointed commanders to lead the army. Now the commanders must assemble their forces and march out; the player characters help organize the army.

Although King Tithian has announced who will march with the army, not everyone is eager to go. Furthermore, the newly-formed Tyrian army is small. While it should be adequate, additional troops would certainly help. Convincing various factions to supply extra soldiers and restraining the over-eager recruits are important tasks for the PCs. **Do not tell this to the players**, but all soldiers the PCs recruit will form their command in Part Three of this adventure. For now, let them believe their efforts are to help the army in general.

In this section, the PCs will have a number of different missions. These range from pure role-playing as the characters negotiate with noblemen to straight-up street brawls. For each task the characters successfully complete, they gain more troops (don't forget to keep track for them). They may also acquire new allies and enemies, who are listed on p. 29 of this book.

The encounters are in no particular order, nor does one necessarily lead to another. As DM, you choose which encounters to use; it is not necessary to play every encounter. During the course of the adventure, your players may choose to pursue paths that lead to other encounters. Do not oppose this, but work their plans into yours in a smooth fashion. You are not restricted to a single event thread. Characters in the same party may even be following separate adventure threads. Most of the time, the PCs' goals will be harmonious, but it is possible for player characters to find themselves in conflict.

Players who have played (and survived) *Freedom* may recognize in this adventure some NPCs who they antagonized and befriended. In particular, they may remember the galling nobleman Verresi of Minthur, who may have been responsible for their enslavement in that adventure. Recurring friends and enemies can give your campaign a stronger sense of continuity and depth. (Remember, knowledge of *Freedom* is not essential when playing *The Road to Urik*.)

To help you choose the tasks you want the PCs to undertake, each is summarized briefly below. Each summary describes the problem the PCs will face, the factions they must deal with, the style of play best suited to the encounter, and what the characters can hope to gain or lose during the encounter. In general, you will find these encounters very different from the norm. There are no ruins to explore, monsters to overcome, or treasures to discover. Instead, the PCs will add to their growing list of friends—and enemies.

Part Two: Encounter Summary

2A—Persuasion. Although Tithian has chosen nobles to take the field, the Tyrthani family (Jaseela's vassals) is reluctant to lend its support. The PCs must diplomatically persuade the Tyrthani family to pull its weight. The amount of support the Tyrthanis offer depends on just how "persuasive" the PCs are.

2B—Deals. The Minthur family wants one of their rivals hurt. The PCs may decide to accept the little midnight job—winning Minthur support—or to expose the Minthur plot—making implacable enemies of the Minthurs.

2C—Templars. Tithian has ordered the most troublesome templars to the front. One of these, a weasel named Hasaval, is causing trouble in an attempt to increase his own power. The PCs must fulfill the templars' demands, without weakening the army, in order to keep their support.

2D—Treachery. The PCs accidentally stumble across a pair of plotters. Quick action might prevent future problems. Or the PCs may have to investigate and find the traitor. If they fail, their task in the upcoming battle will be all the more difficult.

2E—Blood Lust. Not everyone is reluctant to go to war. The gladiators are especially eager and therefore troublesome. The PCs must curb the enthusiasm of the warriors and keep them under control. This will take strong leadership and a show of force by the PCs. If they fail, the army will march before the characters can assemble all their forces.

2F—Supply and Demand. An army needs equipment and the licensed merchant houses have it—for a price. Seeing the chance to make a fat profit, the merchants have been gouging the city. Enraged by this, some councilors are trying to force the issue to a head. The PCs have to keep the hotheads under control, hopefully preventing a trade embargo. With luck, the characters' troops will receive better equipment end supplies.

2G—The Investigation. Senator Turax (an influential nobleman) and his cronies are refusing to aid the army, calling for an "investigation" into Kalak's death. They want to overthrow or weaken Tithian, but their demands may also trigger a witch hunt for the Veiled Alliance. The PCs must "investigate" and find a scapegoat. If they succeed, the Veiled Alliance will secretly support their command. If they fail, the possible repercussions are grave—more riots, a trial for the PCs, perhaps even Tithian's overthrow.

2H—The Voice of the People. A charismatic street preacher is stirring up the people against the war. As his popularity increases, public support for the army, and the number of recruits, declines. The PCs must silence or expose this self-styled "prophet of the people" without making him a martyr to the cause of peace. If they fail, volunteers will be hard to come by.

Part Two: Starting the Encounters

Although the characters are aware of the threat to Tyr, just what they should do about it may not be so obvious. These missions will let the PCs meet members of the various Tyrian factions and help them understand Tyrian politics.

Most encounters will be offered or suggested by the person who warned them of the threat to Tyr. Just which encounters are offered will depend on the NPC's position and loyalties. NPCs are not likely to suggest tasks that would jeopardize their own faction's power.

Those who have played *Freedom* may have specific contacts among the new leaders of Tyr. Each NPC's attitude is described below. NPCs' attitudes affect the types of encounters they want resolved and how the encounters should be resolved. These positions can be used if the contact is a named NPC or, more likely, one of his aides. If your player characters do not know these NPCs, you can base your own NPCs on them.



King Tithian. In appointing army commanders, Tithian feels that he has already dealt with those who threaten his power. The people are another matter. They love him, but Tithian knows how fickle the mob can be. He will send the PCs on missions involving the merchants and common people. He wants these two groups firmly but discreetly kept in their places. And he certainly does not want his name mentioned in any fight with the people.



Senator Agis. Although a nobleman, Agis is a true man of the people. His concern is for the safety and well-being of all in Tyr, from the richest to the most unfortunate, particularly the latter. Agis does not favor any particular faction. He will send the PCs to apply pressure to nobles and templars, hopefully through negotiation and deals. He does not want violence in the city.



Rikus. The ex-gladiator has no love of the nobles or templars. He will gladly send the PCs after these two factions. He has no taste for deals or negotiation, preferring direct action. At the same time, he may need the PCs to keep his restless followers restrained and in line.



Sadira. Like Rikus, this agent of the Veiled Alliance still considers the templars a threat. Unlike Rikus, she believes in subtlety and caution. She wants problems quietly, peacefully, and efficiently disposed of.

Part Two: A—Persuasion

Setup. This encounter requires diplomacy, negotiation, and perhaps a bit of bribery. Have the players turn to the *Players' Book*, p. 36—The Tyrthani, when you present them with this mission.

Start. Read the following to the players:

Your contact has told you of the state of affairs with Urik. Some are not concerned—in particular, the Tyrthani family. Senator Vildeen of Tyrthani is an ally of Jaseela's people. Although ordered by Tithian to send troops to the army, Vildeen's support has been less than enthusiastic; only a few miserable tenants have been sent. It would be a great help if Vildeen were persuaded to show greater support. However, Vildeen is popular, so this must be done with a minimum of fuss.

Answer players' questions at this point. If you do not know the answer to a particular question, do not worry. Just tell the players the contact does not have that information.



Encounter. The Tyrtheni are one of the old noble families of Tyr. They are not the most powerful or the wealthiest, but Senator Vildeen has great influence with the lesser nobles. Weaker families often wait to see how far House Tyrthani will go and then follow suit. For example, if Senator Vildeen only provides minimal support, the other families will provide minimal support. Currently he has outfitted only twenty of his tenants, probably the troublemakers, yet he could easily provide five times this amount.

The Tyrthani estate is to the south, between the city end the iron mines. Like all noble estates, the Tyrthani are very well-protected, particularly in these times of trouble. Discourage any attacks on the estate—point out that the PCs are certain to lose. The group must secure an audience and convince Vildeen—through logic, threats, blackmail, or whatever—to increase his support.

Should any character be of a comparable social standing to the senator, an audience can be arranged without difficulty. Otherwise, characters will probably have to rely on an NPC (possibly their contact) to make the arrangements. The PCs will then owe that person a favor. Repaying favors should create difficulties later on.

If the PCs have no means of securing an audience, they can still go to the Tyrthani estate and try to talk their way in, but Senator Vildeen sees few “commoners.” He is wary of possible plots against the family, but is always open to opportunities to make a quick profit. If the PCs can play upon his fear or his greed, they will get in to see him. In any case, Vildeen makes the PCs wait two-to-three days before he will see them.

Next. Once the meeting is arranged, continue play with encounter 2A—The Audience. In the day or two before the meeting, you may wish to introduce other encounters. More than one encounter can be in play at once.

Part Two: A—The Audience

Setup. This encounter occurs only if the PCs manage to arrange an audience with Senator Vildeen. Have players turn to the *Players' Book*, p. 15—Luncheon, when the PCs are brought before the Senator.

Start. When the group arrives at the Tyrthani estates, make them wait. Servants come and go, but will answer no questions. Once the PCs get annoyed, read the following:

A thin, hollow-eyed human joins you on the veranda. After a brief, barely polite bow, he says, "I am Hanfros, Senator Vildeen's secretary. If you would please place any weapons on that table, the senator will see you." He waves languidly at a small sideboard nearby.

If the PCs protest, hesitate, or behave suspiciously, the secretary coughs slightly. A curtain rustles, revealing two mul guards. If the group is still hesitant, Hanfros orders the PCs searched "or the audience is over." Once satisfied they have no weapons, he leads the PCs to the senator.



Encounter. The senator has just finished his bath and receives the PCs while dressed in his robes, flaunting his wealth and power. Reclining on his lounge, Senator Vildeen looks at the PCs through hooded eyes. "Hanfros, don't just stand there like a fool!" he barks. "Tell the cook I am ready for luncheon—and I have guests." The secretary glowers at the old man's words as he backs out of the room.

The senator knows the PCs' purpose, but waits for them to plead their case. Vildeen can only be persuaded to send more troops by two things—fear or greed. If the threat is convincing, the senator stalls until action seems imminent, then grudgingly accedes. If bribed, he tries to provide the least for his money. In either case, PCs would be wise to set specific terms for the deal.

Role-Playing. The senator is abrasive and blunt, legendary for his greed. His conversation is laden with insults and complaints about everyone, including his secretary. The old man has been a senator long enough to understand power and knows the PCs are just flunkies. As such, he is not afraid of petty threats of violence. Real threats—action by King Tithian or the humiliation of his family—do scare him. As for greed, if Vildeen is confident of privacy, he bluntly demands a bribe of enough steel to make 10 swords for his troops to use—even though he has no intention of making the weapons.

Dialogue

"So you're the lackeys of (PC's sponsor). Very well, state your business."

"I don't give a hang about the army. Tithian's just trying to get rid of me."

Outcome. If the PCs can muster a convincing threat or agree to pay Vildeen's bribe, he promises to increase his troops (up to a maximum of 100). Otherwise he refuses and will not see the PCs again.

Next. If Vildeen is bribed, continue with encounter 2A—The Bribe. Otherwise, continue with one of the other missions.

Part Two: A—The Bribe

Setup. Use this encounter if the PCs agree to Vildeen's bribe. The PCs may offer Vildeen their services instead; see the *Players' Book*, p. 34—The Contract.

Start. This encounter begins when the PCs return to their sponsor with Vildeen's terms. Read the following aloud.

"Impossible!" pronounces your contact. "There's no way to get that much steel. You made the deal, you tell Vildeen it's off. And you'd better make sure he stays quiet. Vildeen could make all sorts of trouble in the council chambers. Don't bungle this!"

Encounter. If the PCs decide to pay the bribe, all is well. If the PCs refuse to pay, they must act to prevent the senator from seeking political revenge in the council chambers. There are several options the PCs might try:

Blackmail. To make any threat stick, the PCs need evidence grievous enough to embarrass Vildeen. Hanfros, Vildeen's secretary, has the evidence needed. The secretary bears no love of his abusive master and will betray him for a modest sum and a position with a better master.

Raising the Cash. PCs can raise the steel out of their own resources or they could ask other NPCs for cash. Their success will depend on the nature of your campaign. If the PCs know enough NPCs with that kind of wealth, they might succeed. However, PCs must be willing to owe a lot of people money or favors.

Service. Instead of steel, Vildeen can be paid in service. The senator will agree to provide 70 soldiers if the PCs contract to serve him. Role-play the haggling over the terms of service. (Have the players turn to The Contract, on p. 34 in the *Players' Book*.) The contract is binding by Tyrian law. After this adventure is concluded, Senator Vildeen will require the PCs to perform some particularly dangerous and odious mission. (This can be the springboard of a new adventure.)

Once the PCs know what they are going to do, they can easily arrange another audience with Vildeen. The audience will follow the same procedure as before.

Role-Playing. The senator is at first impatient, expecting the PCs to deliver payment. If they do not, his mood quickly darkens and he grows restless, planning to throw the group out. The PCs must make their offer (or threat) quickly if they want to remain in the room. Once presented with whatever alternative the PCs offer, the senator's brows furrow as he considers their words. The gears of thought are clearly turning in his head.

Outcome. If any deal is arranged, Senator Vildeen will honor his word. Still, he does not like being blackmailed. The PCs and Hanfros may find themselves attacked in the night or slipped a bit of poisoned food. You can use such attacks (the work of bards in Vildeen's employ, see Master NPC List) any time the action of the adventure seems a bit slow. In any case, a blackmailed senator will be the implacable enemy of the PCs.

Next. Continue with any other mission or go to Part Three.

Part Two: B—Deals

Setup. In this encounter, the PCs meet Senator Trevalis for more wheeling and dealing. This encounter may lead to the *Players' Book*, p. 45—Raid! This encounter can begin while other missions are being resolved.

Start. The encounter begins when the PCs meet their contact.

"Time is running out and we need more troops. Senator Trevalis has sent word that he might be willing to help, but he's not saying everything. He wants something and you'd better find out what. Remember—every man on our side means more troops."

Encounter. Senator Trevalis is the head of the Minthur family. He's a mid-level noble with ambitions to expand his estates. Those who have played *Freedom* may remember the senator's son, Verrasi—he may have been responsible for the PCs' enslavement. However, Verrasi barely remembers the PCs. After all, the PCs were (and still may be) insignificant peons.

Senator Trevalis refuses to see the PCs since he does not want to be connected with them. Instead, the senator counters any request for an audience with the proposal of a secret meeting at a disreputable inn in the elven quarter. (If the PCs don't select an inn, it occurs at the newly renamed *Kalak's Demise*.)



At the inn, the PCs meet with Trevalis's son Verrasi. As noted, he does not remember the PCs from *Freedom*, but if the PCs are hostile, he is hostile in return. However, no matter how hostile the PCs get, Verrasi will not break off negotiations. He knows he must conclude this mission for his father if at all possible. He'll take his revenge later.

The terms are simple and Verrasi wastes little time getting to the point. The Minthurs will provide troops only if the PCs undertake a mission that night. Senator Trevalis wants the PCs—that is, someone not connected to his family—to attack the estate of one of his rivals and destroy as much of his property (particularly his granaries) as possible. The senator does not want his rival assassinated or excessive loss of life, which would create real trouble. Trevalis's goal is to weaken and embarrass his enemy, not eliminate him.

Role-Playing. Verrasi of Minthur behaves much as he did in *Freedom*. He is arrogant and contemptuous. No matter what their station, Verrasi considers the PCs beneath him—after all, they are merely mercenaries in this matter. He sees no reason to be friendly toward them.

Dialogue.

[Sniff] "This place positively reeks of garbage."

"Well, I suppose you might be competent enough for the job."

"I don't care what happens to you. Father just wants this done quickly."

Outcome. If the PCs agree to the task, have the players turn to p. 45, Raid!, in the *Players' Book*. The target does not support Tithian and has not contributed troops to the army. If the PCs refuse, Verrasi becomes their enemy.

Next. If the PCs agree to the raid, continue with encounter 2B—Midnight Raid. Otherwise, resolve any other mission or go to Part Three.

Part Two: B—Midnight Raid

Setup. Use this encounter if the PCs agree to Trevalis's demands. Have the players turn to the *Players' Book*, p. 45—Raid! You will need the Master NPC Chart from the *Background Book* to run this encounter.

Start. This encounter begins when the PCs near the farm of the Freydlav family. Have the players select their route of approach using the map given to their characters. Everything seems to be the same as shown.

Encounter. If the PCs did not offend Verrasi at their last meeting, no one at the Freydlav estate expects an attack. The reactions of the guards and owners will be confused and dulled by sleep when the alarm is sounded. If the PCs angered Senator Trevalis's son, the whelp has anonymously warned the Freydlav's of the coming attack. Although things appear peaceful on the surface, estate owners are prepared for action this night.

The entries in the key below give reactions for both normal and alerted states.

Granaries: These blackish buildings have a small door in one side and no windows. A ladder leads to a hatch in the roof. If the side door is opened, faro needles sweep out over the PCs feet.

Guards: At each position stands a pair of guards. If no warning has been given, the guards are human and not particularly watchful. They are more concerned with keeping dangerous animals away from the erdlus and the granaries. Against the PCs, they have a -2 modifier on their chance of being surprised. Reinforcements from the main house will take 3d6 rounds to arrive.

If the estate has been warned, one guard in each pair is a dwarf, focused on the task of protecting. As such, the teams are keenly alert and gain a +1 modifier on their chance of being surprised. Should anything unusual happen, the guards will sound the alarm immediately. Reinforcements arrive in 2d4 rounds.

Use the Human and Dwarf Guard entries on the Master NPC Chart.

Silos: These clay towers contain fodder to get the animals through the dry months. The silo walls shatter upon sustaining 3 points of bludgeoning damage.

Well house: This blockhouse, with its single door and small windows, houses the all-important main well. A team of ten tenants keeps the water screw in constant motion. If no alarm has been sounded, they are alone. If the estate has been warned, a half-giant gladiator and the Freydlav's psionicist have squeezed into the room. Watching from the windows, the psionicist will use his powers on any attacker while the gladiator remains on guard by the door. Information on the pair can be found on the Master NPC Chart.

Workshops and Storage: These simple pavilions cover a collection of farm tools and equipment. The faro wood posts and palm leaf awnings will burn quite easily.

Outcome. If the PCs damage the Freydlav estate, Senator Trevalis will uphold his end, providing up to 100 men, according to the success of the raid. The Tyrthani family can also use this raid to blackmail the PCs at some future point.

Next. Continue with any other mission or go to Part Three.

Part Two: C—Templars

Setup. This encounter involves problem solving and negotiation. You can introduce this mission while resolving other encounters. Familiarize yourself with the *Players' Book*, p. 3—Demands, before running this encounter.

Start. The encounter begins when a templar NPC known to the PCs approaches them, seeking their assistance. Read the following to the players.

As you are leaving your favorite wineshop, a small, dark-cloaked man—the once fearsome dress of the templars—shoulders into you. At first he instinctively bristles, furious that anyone should have the effrontery to stand in his way. Before anything can happen, though, he stops and throws back his hood. It is Hasaval, a templar of your acquaintance. “Ah, it’s you,” he says. “I came looking for you. Come inside and let me buy you a drink.” Without waiting for your answer, he starts to lead you back inside.

If the PCs go with Hasaval, have the players turn to Demands.



Encounter. After the players have read the entry, let them ask questions (you must role-play the answers). Although Hasaval knows much more than he says, he won’t divulge much, often repeating instead of elaborating: “Like I already said...” Ever the schemer, he is playing both sides against each other. He has convinced Girias to demand a role as commander. Hasaval knows the old templar is a vain boob with no military experience or sense, and believes he can become the power behind the throne. Hasaval figures the PCs will either have to cut a deal or force the templars into line. Either way he wins.

Role-Playing. With his half-starved look, short legs, and wispy strands of hair, Hasaval is easily identified in a crowd. He is a manipulative hustler. Little he says or does can be accepted at face value. Hasaval also attributes his methods and motives to others. He will constantly pry and poke, attempting to learn the other person’s “angle” on the deal.

Dialogue.

“It wouldn’t be a good idea to blab this to everybody.”

“Just remember me when all this works out.”

Outcome. If the PCs take this news to their contact, they will be ordered to meet with Girias and solve the problem. Hasaval will “help” make the arrangements. If the PCs or their contact retaliate against the templars without a meeting, the priests quietly rebel, refusing aid to the army whenever they can.

Next. If the PCs search out more information on Girias, tell them to read the *Players' Book*, p. 41—The Commander. If they meet Girias, go to 2C—Girias. Otherwise, continue with another mission or Part Three.

Part Two: C—Girias

Setup. Use this encounter if the PCs arrange a meeting with Girias. Tell the players to turn to the *Players' Book*, p. 5—The Garden.

Start. Read the following to the players when they meet with Girias.

Following Hasaval's directions, you reach a house in the old Templar's Quarters. You are ushered into a lush garden courtyard. Sitting on cushions in the shade of a palm is Girias, dressed in his finest military splendor. Hasaval steps up and quickly makes introductions.



Encounter. Hasaval quickly takes control of the meeting, presenting Girias's "demands." The old templar remains quiet, convinced that Hasaval is negotiating on his behalf. Try to prevent the PCs from getting a word in edgewise.

If the PCs have checked on Girias, they know or suspect this meeting is a sham. Hasaval has convinced Girias that the templars are asking for his appointment. The truth is that Girias is considered a fool and Hasaval is trying to garner more power. If the PCs refuse to meet the demands, Hasaval will accept any counter-offer that improves his own standing. If necessary, Hasaval will sell out his "partner," if that will make him look good in the eyes of the council.

Role-Playing. Girias is vain and easily flattered. Throughout the meeting he seems more concerned with his appearance and how he will impress the troops than with command and leadership. He is bored by the meeting and leaves everything to his "friend." Hasaval constantly presses the PCs for a decision, pretending that Girias and the templars are impatient. If his scheme is revealed, Hasaval attempts to blame Girias for as much as possible.

Dialogue.

"Templar Girias has asked me to handle negotiations—you know, it's beneath his station as potential commander."

"Upon our victorious return, I will lead a magnificent triumphant procession to Tithian's Golden Tower."

"No, you, you got it all wrong—this wasn't my idea! Girias put me up to it—said he'd arrest me if I didn't help him."

Outcome. If the PCs challenge the two templars with the facts, the scheme unravels. Girias realizes that Hasaval has duped him, and Hasaval looks to the PCs for protection. If the PCs don't aid Hasaval, Girias has him arrested and imprisoned.

If Girias is appointed commander, even those templars loyal to Tithian will question his judgment. On campaign, Girias issues ridiculous orders that must be untangled in the midst of battle. The templars ignore the old fool and anyone who tries to work through him.

Next. Continue with another mission from Part Two or go on to Part Three.

Part Two: D—Treachery

Setup. This encounter may be used any evening the PCs are out late in the city. Read p. 44—Voices in the Night, in the *Players' Book*, before running this encounter.

Start. Read the following to the players.

It is late in the evening and you are headed home, watchful of the shadowed alleys. It's wise to travel in a large, well-armed group, as there are still many dangerous gangs along the near-deserted byways. As you take a short cut, you hear voices in an alley up ahead.

Begin the encounter by asking what the PCs do.

Encounter. There are two speakers, although neither voice is distinct. One speaks with a Tyrian accent. The other is thick and hard to understand. (PCs who have traveled can make an Int Check to recognize it as Urikite.)

If the PCs make no effort to conceal their approach, the voices suddenly cease. There is a loud pop and the sound of running feet. As the group passes the alley, they see the edge of a black cloak disappear around a far corner. If pursued, the figure ducks around another corner into a dead end, but he is nowhere in sight (he has used his magic boots to escape).

If the PCs approach cautiously, they can overhear snatches of the conversation. Have them read p. 44—Voices in the Night, aloud. After only a few lines, make a sudden clattering noise: a large lizard has knocked over some jars stacked near the alley's mouth, startling both PCs and NPCs. If the PCs act immediately, they can attack the two conspirators before they escape.

Statistics. *Puram of Urik (half-elf)*: AL LE; AC 6; MV 24; Tpl/Psi 8/8; hp 32; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (club); SZ M; Str 15; Dex 13; Con 14; Int 13; Wis 15; Cha 16; *bracers of defense, AC 6; dust of sneezing and choking*. Spells: 1) *command, curse, endure heat*; 2) *hold person, messenger, silence, 15' r.*; 3) *speak with dead, stone shape*; 4) *cure serious wounds*. Psionics—Sciences: *clairaudience, life draining, precognition, teleport*; Devotions: *aging, all-round vision, body control, body weaponry, combat mind, danger sense, dimensional door, double pain, dream travel, poison sense, spirit sense, teleport trigger, time shift*; Def Modes: IF, MB, TS, TW. PSPs 90.

Templar Rhac: AL LE; AC 5; MV 24; Tpl 7; hp 30; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 (steel sword); SZ M; Str 12; Dex 14; Con 14; Int 16; Wis 13; Cha 19; *ring of spell storing (conjure fire elemental and flame strike), boots of striding and springing*.

Outcome. If the spies escape and the PCs report the incident, they are told to remain on guard, and each PC is rewarded with a steel dagger. (Remember that the spies are still free: Puram may continue to make trouble.) If the PCs capture or kill either spy and report the meeting, the plot is revealed. A number of templars disappear in the night and more are assigned to the army—under strict watch. The PCs are rewarded with the spies' possessions and a steel hand-axe each.

Next. Continue with another mission or go to Part Three. Note that The Voice of the People mission can only be used if Puram escapes capture.

Part Two: E—Blood Lust

Setup. This encounter revolves around the restless ex-gladiators, and may be used any time. The players will use p. 47, *Combat*, in the *Players' Book*.

Start. While players are resolving other encounters, introduce rumors of unrest among the ex-gladiators. Rikus is pressed by other affairs and is unavailable throughout this encounter.

"I heard we're supposed to be going off to fight. What's taking so long? I'll bet it's those fat nobles just trying to save their skins."

"The gladiators of Tyr are as tough as they come—what are we waiting here for? We should be out right now, stomping those Urikites!"

"Wenzer's right, you know, we should quit sitting on our duffs and march out now—the rest of Tyr can join us in the field."

Other rumors should suggest growing discontent among Rikus's followers.



Encounter. Rikus's allies, the former gladiators of Tyr, know a little about the threat from Urik and are growing impatient for action. One, Quick Wenzer, is urging his fellows to take matters into their own hands, marching to the Urikite army.

Wenzer's arguments are persuasive and, as the days pass, the former warriors complain louder. As the faction grows, the difficulty of keeping the gladiators under control increases. When the PCs first hear of the problem, let the players know that if they don't solve it within five days, Quick Wenzer will have enough men to force Rikus to move out with whatever forces he has—perhaps before the army is ready.

To control the gladiators, the PCs must find some way to silence or at least embarrass Wenzer. There are many possible ways to do this, but not all are wise. The only good choice is to publicly challenge Wenzer to single combat to the death. If the PCs duel with Wenzer, have them turn to *Combat*.

Role-Playing. Quick Wenzer is a powerful and cunning man, famous for his skill with paired impalers. Badly scarred on his right cheek, he is still handsome and always confident. He unconsciously favors his left, trying to keep his injuries from sight. Prior to battle, Wenzer will attempt to use his mental powers on any opponent. This is not cheating.

Statistics. *Quick Wenzer:* AL CG; AC 1 (mekillot hide, armor optimization, and Dexterity); MV 24; Gld 7; hp 44; THAC0 13 (specialization bonus); #AT 2/1; Dmg 1d8+1 (bone impalers); Str 14; Dex 20; Con 15; Int 14; Wis 9; Cha 14. Wild Talents: *contact, double pain, mindlink, post-hypnotic suggestion*; PSPs 49.

Outcome. If the PC wins the battle, the gladiators cease their demands. Otherwise, they march within the five days.

Next. Continue with another mission from Part Two or go on to Part Three.

Part Two: F—Supply and Demand

Setup. This encounter involves trouble between the merchant houses and a mob of craftsmen. It may be used any time. The players will use the *Players' Book*, p. 2—Decisive Action. Should there be a fight, they will also need p. 46—Mob Action.

Start. The PCs learn the following information from their contact or at the council meeting:

This morning's council was stormy. Turloff, one of the elected craftsmen, accused the merchant houses of price-gouging on important war supplies. Master Sintha, leader of the merchants, demanded apologies while the craftsmen threatened to blockade the merchants. The session ended in chaos. Worried that the dispute could erupt into a full-scale trade embargo, your patron wants you go to the Caravan Way and prevent more trouble—if you can.

Encounter. Tyr's iron mines have made it an important center for nearly every merchant family. Almost all the buildings along Caravan Way are the headquarters or emporiums of powerful merchant families.

When the PCs get to Caravan Way, they find craftsmen blocking the doors to Sintha's emporium. Mercenary guards are trying to open paths through the protesters. Turloff stands on a wagon near the forefront, haranguing the crowd. Both sides shout, accuse, and threaten each other.

A knot of mercenaries suddenly forces its way through the crowd and drags Turloff from the wagon. (Have the players look at p.2, Decisive Action, in the *Players' Book*.) A mob of craftsmen surges toward the armed guards, who seem ready to slay any who approach. At this instant, demand to know what the PCs will do. Should a battle erupt, have the players turn to p. 46—Mob Action.

Role-Playing. Turloff is at first indignant and then frightened as he realizes the danger of his position. He forces himself to remain brave. The crowd wants Turloff released and his captors punished. They cannot be reasoned with, but can be directed by a strong commander, so the PCs could try to free Turloff and seize the mercenaries without bloodshed; they could also try to force a standoff. Sintha's guards are surprised by the mob's response. If the PCs can keep the mob at bay, the guards will negotiate. The crowd must be dispersed before the guards agree to release Turloff.

Statistics. *Craftsmen (45):* Use Typical Citizen on the Master NPC Chart. Each man has a wooden club (D 1d6).

Mercenaries (12): Use Guard on the Master NPC Chart. Each man carries a bone-tipped spear (D 1d6-1).

Outcome. If the PCs free Turloff, he can supply them with skilled men for the army. If he is freed by violence, Master Sintha is angry, affecting army supplies. If Turloff is not freed, the PCs will not gain any craftsmen for their force.

Next. Continue with another mission from Part Two or go on to Part Three.

Part Two: G—The Investigation

Setup. This encounter creates open-ended and unstructured situations. Only DMs comfortable with improvised role-playing should use it.

Start. Arrange for the PCs to attend the council (their sponsor has “urgent business” with them after the meeting), then read the following aloud.

Listening to the drone of speakers, you have no idea what could possibly be considered urgent. Finally, Tithian requests a progress report on the army. Names and numbers are read off, noting each contribution. “Senator Turax—none,” the clerk calls out. A hush falls over the assembly.

“Where are your troops, Senator Turax?” Tithian demands, scowling from his high seat.

Eyes shift to a sturdy ancient who rises from his first-row seat. “Before I send my men,” the senator clearly says, “there are questions about Kalak’s death that must be answered. The Veiled Alliance was involved and these criminals must be brought to justice. There must be an investigation!” There is an uproar as many voices shout approval.

The council recesses as Tithian consults with his advisors (including an NPC known to the player characters). Eventually, the PCs are summoned. “Turax has put us in a spot—he’s too powerful to ignore. We’re appointing you special investigators. Sink this investigation or give us a scapegoat. Otherwise it’ll be all our heads. Understand?”

Encounter. When the council reconvenes, the PCs are presented as Tithian’s choice for special investigators. Tithian cuts off debate to force a vote approving his choice. The PCs are granted the right to question anyone. All council members are urged to cooperate. The PCs are instructed to report to Tithian’s secretary. They have two to five days (DM’s discretion) to complete the investigation.

Reaction. In a second meeting, Tithian, Agis, and the others explain they do not want a real investigation; they want the problem wrapped up and forgotten as quickly as possible. Somebody must be blamed, but not the actual participants in Kalak’s death (Tithian, Agis, Sadira, Rikus, or Neeva), nor any one in the Veiled Alliance. The PCs must find someone to take the blame, probably by falsifying evidence.

Everyone on the council knows the investigation is a sham, but that doesn’t matter. Over the next few days, every faction leader approaches the PCs. Most offer the PCs bribes of cash, goods, and services to avoid being blamed. (Use these bribes to provide your PCs with money and equipment you deem necessary.) For example, a group of wealthy senators offers a +1 steel long sword or bracers of defense, the craftsmen promise the finest mekillot armor to the group, and the merchants offer goods from their emporiums.

Outcome. On the named day, the PCs must accuse someone and produce evidence to support their claim. The victim’s faction is thereafter an enemy of the PCs. If the PCs took and did not honor any bribes, those deceived will discreetly reduce their support of the army.

Next. Continue with another mission from Part Two or go on to Part Three.

Part Two: H—The Voice of the People

Setup. Do not use this encounter if Puram of Urik has been captured (see 2D—Treachery). Familiarize yourself with the *Players' Book*, p. 13—The Voice of Reason, before beginning this encounter.

Start. This encounter begins in the poor quarter. Read the following aloud.

In a market square, a knot of citizens clusters around the well. The usual market sounds—hawkers and haggling—are noticeably absent. A tall speaker is haranguing the crowd.

Have a player read The Voice of Reason aloud. Ask what the PCs do.



Encounter. If the PCs opt to get closer, they must shoulder their way through the crowd. If the PCs are obviously upper class, 1d6+2 paupers pick a fight. Other citizens only grumble and swear as the PCs barge through. If the PCs met Puram during the Treachery encounter, they will recognize the speaker; if they haven't met him, the speaker is just a half-elf trouble-maker.

Puram continues his demagoguery unless stopped. If the PCs simply leave and report the incident, their NPC contact reviles them for inaction and orders them to find the rabble-rouser. If the PCs return to the market square, Puram is gone. The DM may let the PCs track Puram. Clues, rumors, and wild goose chases can send the PCs all over the poor districts before they find Puram again.

Role-Playing. Puram is quick and knows how to play a crowd. If the PCs move against him in the square, he will use his oratorical skills to turn the tables—calling the group noble lackeys or templar spies in order to set the mob on them. He will not jeopardize his disguise by using his psionic or spell abilities in public. He won't flee unless no other action is possible.

Dialogue.

"Who says an Urikite army is coming? Have you seen it? So why do they say an army is coming—because they want you to live in fear, that's why."

"Look—there! Templar stooges!" [Point at the players.]

Reactions. *Overt, hostile action*—killing, arresting, or accusing Puram of spying—angers the crowd: 1d10+30 hostile citizens threaten the PCs (see Master NPC Chart). *Massacring the citizens* gets the PCs' arrested, prosecuted, and sentenced to the mines. *Covert action*—psionic attacks or magic, for example—may succeed if it cannot be traced to the PCs. *Any PC who denounces Puram's arguments* may sway the crowd. Both characters must make Cha checks. The highest successful check influences the crowd; the first to make three checks wins the battle of rhetoric. (As DM, you may require speeches.)

Outcome. If Puram is not dealt with, army recruitment is down among the poor. If there is a scene, Puram becomes a martyr and none of the poor volunteer. Any other result doesn't affect volunteer recruitment.

Next. Continue with another mission from Part Two or go on to Part Three.

Part Three: Timetable

Setup. This section covers the events leading to the adventure's climax. The army of Tyr does not find the Urikites immediately upon marching out. A week or more should pass before the two forces engage. On some days nothing happens; on others the PCs (and their forces) encounter merchants, elves, enemy patrols, and finally the enemy army. This suggested timetable will help you plan these events. On the March, on the next page, shows the army's route.

Timetable. The timetable begins with the muster of the troops. This is Day 1 of the On the March map. The location of each night's camp for the army is noted on the map; the arrow shows the army's general route.

Day 1. The army gathers outside Tyr. Play The Muster, and review the PCs' Friends and Enemies and their Reactions while camped here. The PCs get no sleep this night.

Day 2. Rikus moves the army out. Play the Marching Orders and Scouting encounters this day.

Day 3. The army slowly moves out of the green belt surrounding Tyr. Have the PCs organize several patrols so they can get the feel of commanding their units and begin the Desertion encounter.

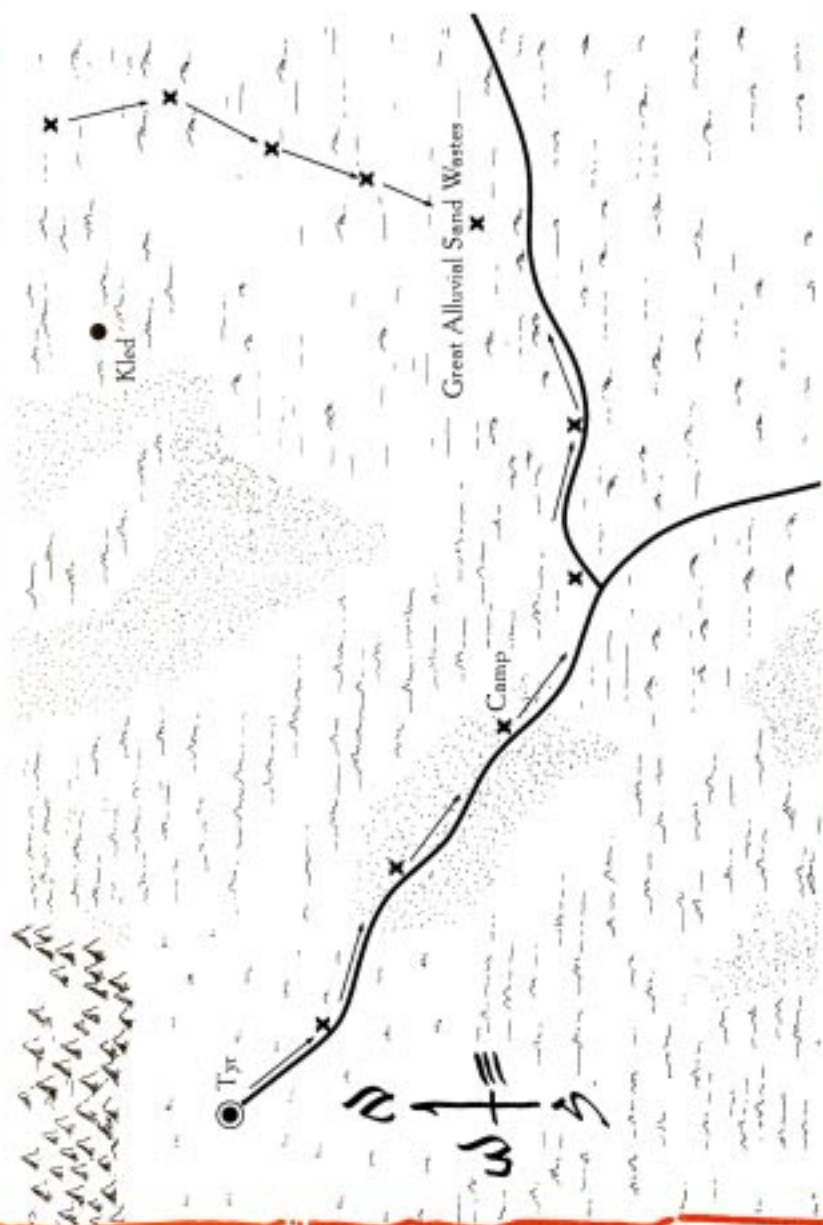
Day 4. The army enters the stony barrens. Finish the Desertion encounter here.

Day 5. Rikus calls a halt at the edge of the sandy wastes. One patrol is Attacked!, another finds Merchants.

Days 6-7. Rikus calls a halt until the PCs locate the Urikite army. Play the Elf Raid and Skirmish encounters over these two days. Conclude these encounters with The Black Plain, when the PCs have found the Urikite army.

Days 8-9. Rikus prepares his trap and attacks the Urikite army. The player characters' roles in the clash are described in the remaining encounters.

Part Three: On the March



Part Three: Day I—The Muster

Setup. Once the PCs have completed the encounters from Part Two, it's time to issue the call for troops. Have the players turn to the *Players' Book*, p. 39—Roll Call.

Start. Read the following to the players.

The time has come at last. King Tithian has announced that the Urikite army is near. Heeding the advice of his councilors, especially the respected Commander Rikus, Tithian orders the Army of Tyr into the field. On the appointed morning, official runners are sent to villas of the nobles, the quarters of the templars, and the old arena. All day long, men gather at the muster ground outside the city—motley assortments of men and equipment. Commander Rikus and the other officials watch from the top of the city wall.

As the citizen-soldiers come onto the field, the various lieutenants sort the men by training, equipment, faction, and class. Clerks note the numbers of men arriving and estimate the supplies needed. Gladiators, among Tyr's few experienced in the trade of war, prowl the ranks to size up each new trooper. Commander Rikus wants to know the caliber of his army.

Encounter. As the PCs watch the troops gather, a courier arrives. He is looking for the warrior PC with the highest combined level and Charisma (the messenger asks for that PC by name). That character is given a papyrus scroll commissioning him as one of Rikus's lieutenants; the post cannot be declined. (The promotion can be explained as either reward for services rendered or a means of getting rid of a troublesome PC.) The commission gives the PC the authority to give orders to the troops and allows him to appoint others (the remaining party members) as his aides. The new rank brings 5 silver pieces a month.

No matter how many encounters from Part Two the PCs completed or what their success, the new lieutenant is given command of a small number of units. (Further troops may join the force depending on the outcome of various missions in Part Two.) Each unit arrives separately. As they arrive, read the troop description below. The PCs must decide whether to keep the troops in rank or release them from duty. Once the choice is made it cannot be rescinded.

Core Troops: The main body of soldiers is made up of three units. The first is a band of ex-gladiators, 20 strong. These men are still raw, apparently not yet finished with their training. Still, they know how to fight, though they do have an odd assortment of weapons. By the *BATTLESYSTEM*[™] rules, these men are irregulars/skirmishers, but can quickly be trained as regulars. The second group, again 20 strong, are templars armed with maces and bone-edged swords, wearing giant hair armor. These men are trained to fight as regulars, but their old arrogance makes them difficult to command. The last group is a collection of nobles' guards. These men have stone clubs and bone spears. Their armor is simple padded cloth. They fight as regulars.

Part Three: Day I—The Muster (Cont.)



Persuasion: Senator Tyrthani provides the agreed-upon number of troops. The men are all unarmored 0-level humans armed with an assortment of farming implements. In *BATTLESYSTEM™* rules, these recruits can only fight as irregulars. The commander is a former slave overseer, Urvas. Vildeen discovered the man taking bribes and punished him with this duty. All of Urvas's men hate and fear him.



Deals: If the PCs bungled the raid, the Minthurs provide only 30 men. If the raid caused modest damage, 50 men arrive. For serious and extreme damage to the Freydlav estate, the numbers are 75 and 100 respectively. The Minthurs take pride in their troops. Each man has a simple cloth uniform and a bone-tipped spear. Poalic Vorddman, a dwarf sergeant of the Minthur household guard, commands the Minthur men. His focus is to protect the Minthur lands. Fear of becoming a banshee drives him to great efforts, sometimes at his men's expense.

Templars: If the PCs have persecuted the templars, the templar unit mutinies in the field, affecting other units. Every day in the field, 2d10 soldiers will desert until the PCs are left without a command. A strong show of force (a few executions, for example) will stop the desertions.

Blood Lust: If any PC killed Quick Wenzer in the duel, 20 more gladiators join their fellows. The gladiators have no armor and, as before, carry a variety of exotic weapons.



Supply and Demand: If the PCs rescued Turloff, 40 merchant guards join their command. These men have leather armor and stone axes. They fight as irregulars, but can be improved to regulars. In addition, they can build and supervise the construction of earthworks, simple fortifications, and siege weapons. Their commander is Turloff's senior apprentice, the half-elf Feylan, who keeps to himself. However, his ease of command suggests that he is more than an apprentice....

If the PCs sided with the merchants, no merchant troops arrive. However, a representative of the merchant houses comes by to arrange for better equipment, improving all units' AC by one.

The Voice of the People: If the PCs exposed Puram as a spy, an additional 20 citizens (the dispossessed) join up with them. These extra men can be added to any irregular unit except the Minthur faction. Once assigned, these volunteers automatically have the same equipment as the rest of the unit.

Next. Once all troops are mustered and the PCs have selected their units, continue with *Friends and Enemies*.

Part Three: Day I—Friends and Enemies

Setup. Have the players turn to the *Players' Book*, p. 7—The Scorecard. This page is not an encounter, but gives you an opportunity to remind the players of who their friends and enemies are. You may want to review the Part Two encounters, noting the PCs' solution (if any) for each one.

The Tally. The Scorecard in the *Players' Book* shows the players the names and faces of all the important NPCs the heroes met in their encounters. The list below matches those pictures. Go through the NPCs' names with the players and describe how each NPC they dealt with feels about them in general. These descriptions should be based on what the PCs know or believe—they do not have to be honest. For example, Hasaval, the scheming templar, always pretends to be a friend—even when he is lying outrageously.



Councillor Turloff



Hanfros



Master Sintha



Puram of Uruk



Quick Wenzel



Senator Turax



Senator Vildeen



Templar Girias



Templar Hasaval



Templar Rhac



Verrasi of Minthur

As you go through the NPC roster, mark each NPC's attitude toward the heroes below his picture. This page becomes a convenient reference in later stages of the adventure.

Part Three: Day I—Reactions

Some of these NPCs may be in a position to help or harm the PCs as they prepare to march out. The NPCs' actions depend on their current attitude toward the PCs. The information below is a guide: modify the NPCs' reactions if your players have done something unexpected, highly creative, or incredibly inept. Likewise, NPCs not listed here may have the opportunity to act in unanticipated ways.

Councilor Turloff. If PCs rescued the good Councilor, he vehemently takes their side in all council challenges. Before the army leaves the city, the Councilor sends a message: "If you need anything, inform me."

If the PCs sided with the merchants, Turloff takes no action unless the PCs cross his path again.

Master Sinthe. If the PCs sided with Turloff, Sintha retaliates. Through the other merchants, he arranges a slowdown of all supplies sent to the PCs' units. Food, spare weapons and more are in "short supply." Goods are often sub-standard—arrows crooked, meat wormy, and water sour. The PCs' troops will grumble and may mutiny.

If the PCs took a stand against Turloff, the situation is reversed. The group gets lavish supplies and their men are well-fed. Sintha sends messengers offering the PCs positions among the merchant houses. (Such posts are highly sought after and pay well.)

Puram of Urik. If Puram was seen by the PCs, he avoids them. When the army marches out, he trails after, passing reports back to the commanders of the Urikite army. If unseen by the PCs, he joins their force and spies from the inside. As the final battle nears, Puram attempts to sabotage the PCs' plans.

Senator Turax. If the PCs foil Turax's bid for power, he tries to discredit them. If the player commander suffers a setback on campaign, Turax immediately demands the PC be recalled and face inquiry. If the PCs pause, he calls them cowards and slackers. If they are successful, the senator suggests the PCs may become too popular with the people. Such suggestions may eventually sway King Tithian.

Senator Vildeen. Senator Vildeen will never consider the PCs friends or allies. If the PCs have embarrassed, threatened, or hurt the Senator, he opposes any measure that could help them. He will eventually send his household bard to eliminate the PCs.

Templar Girias. If the PCs placed him in command, Rikus gets rid of him by assigning the old man to the player commander. Girias questions, debates, double-guesses, abuses, or ignores every order he gets. His concepts of strategy and warfare are ludicrous. He is a massive obstacle the PCs must work around.

Next. Continue with Marching Orders.

Part Three: Day 2—Marching Orders

Setup. On day 2, the army marches out and the PC commander attends a staff meeting. The players will use the *Players' Book*, p. 18—The War Council.

Start. Describe the confusion of the day's events. Lost soldiers wander from commander to commander. Farmers stumble through simple drills, apparently unable to understand even the most basic commands. The dust of hundreds of feet clogs the air. The din numbs the hearing. The confusion continues well into the night. During all this, the PCs must organize their units. With dawn, the troops are finally assembled and orders come to march away from the city. It is early afternoon before Rikus calls for a halt. Camp is made and many guards are posted to prevent desertion. Now read the following aloud.

A courier arrives in your camp, his clothes soaked in sweaty grime. "Message for [PC commander's name] from Rikus. He requests you attend a war council—immediately." With complete disregard for the PC's rank, the messenger jabs his thumb at a small cluster of tents near the top of a nearby ridge. "Over there." Arriving at Rikus's headquarters, you meet the other lieutenants. Jaseela, commander of a private army of retainers, lounges on cushions, hardly the image of martial spirit. Grim Styan, master of the templars, broods in one corner, while behind him stands, stoop-shouldered, Gaanon the half-giant, leader of the gladiators. Agis, Sadira, and Neeva—second-in-command—stand beside Rikus looking at a map stretched out before them.

Encounter. The War Council is nothing like a proper military staff meeting. Although Rikus is called commander, he has no authority over the others. As a fellow gladiator, Gaanon generally follows his orders, but Jaseela and Styan are free to do as they please. Every meeting, they bargain and argue until everyone agrees on a plan. Commanding this army is not an easy task.

Before calling the meeting to order, Agis takes the PC aside and explains the commander's plan. Rikus wants to create a small scouting force that will find the Urikite army and report on its movements while the main army advances along the Tyr-Urik road. The scout force needs a commander and Rikus wants that commander to be the player character commander.

Reactions. If the PC accepts, Rikus calls the meeting to order (proceed with the meeting, in **Outcome**). If the PC declines, Agis points out that neither Styan nor Jaseela can be trusted with the task. Nor can Rikus send Gaanon, since the gladiators are the backbone of the army. The only real choice is the PC. Both Agis and Rikus will be grateful if the PC accept the task.

Outcome. In the meeting, both Styan and Jaseela decide to approve the choice (they think the risk is too great to assume). The PC commander gets a regional map and broad instructions to find the enemy and report on his movements.

Have the players turn to *Players' Book* p. 43—Beyond Tyr.

Next. Continue immediately with Day 1—Scouting.

Part Three: Day 2—Scouting

Setup. Use this encounter immediately after War Council. Have the players turn to the *Players' Book*, p. 8—On Patrol. They will probably also need pencils and paper.

Start. As the meeting ends, Rikus indicates that he wants the commander PC (and his aides) to remain. Read the following aloud.

Rikus waits for the others to leave, his eyes revealing his suspicion. Finally alone, he turns to you. "We have plans to make. The army marches tomorrow and I want to know where your scouts will be and what they will be doing. We're blind without you."

Encounter. The main army is at the center of the map and around it are different patrol areas (front, left front flank, etc.). Tell the players they must devise a plan for patrolling the army's front and flanks. The PCs must decide which units to assign to each area, how many men will be in each patrol, and how long a patrol remains out. Give them up to fifteen minutes to work out their ideas and then (as Rikus) demand an answer. As they explain, listen intently, nod your head several times, grunt or snort softly, and end with a growl. Even if their work is brilliant, don't sound pleased or satisfied. You want Commander Rikus to make the PCs feel intimidated and nervous.

Rikus must approve the plan or tell them to start over. He offers very little in the way of suggestion, at best asking blunt questions. Before he approves the plan, the following things must be covered:

Areas Patrolled. The players must arrange patrols to cover the regions north and east of the army. Rikus considers patrols to the south a waste of effort.

Division of Units. The players must assign specific units to patrol each area. At least half of any patrol must be made up of regular units. Rikus sneers at the slightest suggestion that farmers and ex-slaves can work well without supervision.

Security. Rikus wants to know how the PCs plan to prevent treachery. He is particularly concerned about the templars, who might betray the army to the Urikites, and who therefore cannot be sent on patrol by themselves. The PCs must decide which patrols they will lead.

Reporting. Rikus wants the PCs to report only to him or Neeva. The PCs must organize a system of runners to carry reports.

Since most players are unused to creating military plans, use Rikus to poke and prod them into making a sound one. While their plan does not have to be perfect, don't let them begin their military careers on a hopelessly tragic note.

Outcome. Once Rikus approves the plan, the PCs are sent back to their camp. Rikus wants the patrols to start at daybreak tomorrow.

Next. Continue with *Desertion*.

Part Three: Days 3 and 4—Desertion

Setup. While on the march, the PCs will need to deal with deserters. As soon as the deserters are discovered, have the players turn to the *Players' Book*, p. 4—Miserable Wretches.

Start. This encounter takes several days. Roll 1d4+1 to determine how many of these bits of gossip reach the PCs over the next few days.

- 1 This campaign was only supposed to take a few days.
- 2 This campaign will take months, not just a few days or weeks.
- 3 The gladiators claim the templars will refuse to fight.
- 4 The templars resent being commanded and may try to desert.
- 5 One of Vildeen's men says the officers have all the good food.
- 6 Tithian secretly hopes everyone will die in the desert.
- 7 That dwarf Vorddman doesn't care what happens to his men.
- 8 Urvas denied a man water because he didn't salute smartly enough.
- 9 One of the soldiers has been saying this war is wrong, that Hamanu only wants to restore order to Tyr. After all, how can a city survive without a sorcerer-king?
- 10 The templars and Vildeen's men have threatened mutiny.

You can add other small events—slights, suspicious looks, missing equipment, etc.—to build an ominous air.

Encounter. Matters come to a head after leaving the green belt. The citizens believe civilization ends at the edge of the desert; monsters and savages lurk in the wilderness beyond. Most men never thought the army would leave the greensward, assuming that the battle would be fought somewhere close to the city. Now the men watch every notch and shadowed wadi of the stony barrens with fearful suspicion, strain already showing on their faces.

While the troops are gathering wood for the night fires, there is a commotion from the Tyrthani troops' camp. Urvas is heard bellowing all across the camp. Five of his men were attempting to desert—with food and supplies.

Role-Playing. Urvas, pudgy, quivering, and livid, wants the five staked out to die in the sun or slowly tortured to death. The deserters are a wretched sight, trembling from fear and dehydration—it's clear Urvas has been withholding supplies from his men. The other commanders insist that the deserters be punished as an example.

Outcome. The PCs must immediately decide what to do. If the deserters go unpunished, 2d10 men disappear that night and 1d6 each day thereafter. The NPC commanders treat the PCs with the disrespect they deserve. If the PCs are too severe (executing the deserters), the morale of the men drops by 2 (for *BATTLESYSTEM™* purposes). An appropriate punishment would be a beating for the deserters, accompanied by orders that Urvas release the food and water he has been hoarding.

Next. Continue timetable with *Attacked!* or *Merchants*.

Part Three: Attacked!

Setup. This encounter occurs while the PCs are leading a patrol. Have the players turn to the *Players' Book*, p. 48—Mid-Day March.

Start. Read the following to the players.

This morning, a patrol reported many tracks moving through one of the great cuts in the rugged buttes. For the townsmen, identifying what made the tracks or how many there were was too difficult a task. Indeed, you should be thankful they noticed the tracks in the first place. More information is clearly needed. Fortunately, their sergeant at least had the sense to note landmarks and is confident he can guide the way back.

Encounter. The PCs (or at least one of them) are best qualified to examine the tracks (druids and rangers especially so) and so must go out on the patrol. Remind the players that other patrols must still be run and that they should leave a reserve force behind.

The trek takes two hours of hard marching through the rocky badlands. Tell the players to look at Mid-Day March several times to remind them of their discomfort. The sergeant eventually finds the trail. It is still fresh and the wind has not yet obliterated it, so even the inexperienced can follow it. Skilled trackers can estimate the number (around 15), type (gith), and speed (slow) of the creatures that made the prints. The gith seem to be paralleling the army. The patrol should easily catch up with the creatures.

If the PCs follow the trail, they walk for about an hour through the bottom of a sandy ravine. Unless the PCs state they have been advancing with great caution, spears suddenly hurtle down on them from the top of the ravine—the patrol is ambushed! The PCs are automatically surprised unless they have special abilities to prevent this (and are using them at the time).



The gith noticed the PCs' noise and dust behind them. Their leader, Firagk, told his followers to circle back and wait in ambush for the PCs. (This tactic is called the buttonhook. Use it often on unwary PCs.) The gith now have the advantages of high ground and surprise. Tell the players to turn to p. 12, *Bushwhackers*, in the *Players' Book*. Have the players pick locations at the bottom of the ravine for the PCs and NPC sergeant. One gith is at each odd numbered location

(even numbered spots are decoys); Firagk is at position 1. He uses psionic powers to attack the most dangerous-seeming character while the remaining gith spring to the attack.

Outcome. The gith fight until they can carry off at least four bodies. (Those carrying bodies cannot also fight.) If they are winning easily, they will attempt to kill more. If the gith begin to take serious losses, they will flee. They do not fight to the death unless trapped. If the PCs save most of their patrol, the morale of all irregular units improves by 1 (for *BATTLESYSTEM*™ purposes). If many troopers die, morale drops by 2.

Next. Continue with either Merchants or Elf Raid.

Part Three: Day 5—Merchants

Setup. Use this encounter when the PCs are in camp, between patrols. The players will need the *Players' Book*, p. 10—Traders.

Start. Read the following to the players.

A runner sprints into camp, gasping for breath as he presents himself. Trembling with exhaustion and excitement, he can barely choke out, "Sir, there's a dust cloud on the road! Coming our way!" He waves madly in the direction he came from—directly along the army's route.

Encounter. One of the patrols along the road has spotted an approaching force. Its number and composition are unknown, but it's definitely heading toward the Tyrian army.

When the PCs investigate, they see a small dust cloud coming their way. Encourage caution and paranoia, letting them waste time moving slowly closer. Eventually they discover the cause of the dust cloud is a merchant caravan of a lone mekillot wagon. Outriders on inixes escort the patrol to the wagon. Have the players look at Traders.



Under a hastily erected pavilion, the PCs parley with Kazhal, the caravan captain, and Dlasva, a senior merchant of the Uinjinjum house, headquartered in Raam. The caravan came from Altaruk via Urik, but that was many months ago. They are now bound for Tyr.

Role-Playing. Captain Kazhal is an older man, his short hair shot through with white. The captain worries they may be part of a large raiding party. Polite and helpful within reason, he probes their motives. The neutrality of the merchant's code permeates his bones and he will not permit any men under his command to violate it by helping the PCs.

Dlasva keeps his mouth shut. News of the war is clearly a surprise and piques his interest. Should the opportunity to buy or sell present itself, the senior merchant handles any sale—a diversion from the boredom of the trail.

Dialogue.

"We've been on the road from here to Altaruk and saw no armies."

[Haughtily] "We are of Uinjinjum House. We do not serve the overlord of Urik."

Outcome. *If the PCs share information* on the situation in Tyr (what factions to talk to, etc.), Kazhal cuts the price on any item by 20%. He is carrying a small assortment of metal weapons and armor in addition to his other goods. *Should the PCs accuse the merchants* of being Urikite spies, they are offered a bribe of 300 silver—the merchants are accustomed to paying bribes to be left in peace. *If the PCs arrest the merchants*, the caravan captain surrenders and simply buys his freedom once at Rikus's camp. *If the PCs try to seize the wagon*, they have a fight on their hands. The wagon is a fortress housing 30 armed mercenaries (use Mercenary entry on the NPC List).

Next. Continue with *Attacked!* or *Elf Raid*.

Part Three: Days 6 and 7—Elf Raid

Setup. This encounter occurs around 3:00 AM. Have the players turn to the *Players' Book*, p. 1—The Camp Map, once the battle starts. You will need a sheet of paper listing the number of soldiers in the PCs' command.

Start. If any PC is awake, read the following to that player only. Otherwise, go straight to the Encounter section.

Tonight your bones ache from the strong desert chill that accompanies the dark. As you wrap your blanket tighter around yourself, you hear a soft gurgle from somewhere nearby. Do you investigate?

If the character checks on the noise, continue reading. Otherwise, skip to the next section.

As you advance carefully, your foot brushes something soft. Stooping to investigate, your fingers brush something warm and wet—the cut throat of a guard! Suddenly there is a flash! The black glint of obsidian nicks past your cheek, just missing you. A tall thin figure, jagged sword in hand, looms out of the darkness toward you.

The PC can now raise an alarm.

Encounter. Fifty elf marauders are attacking the camp. They have already murdered the guards and are now slaughtering the sleeping. Have the players choose their tent(s) on the map.

The elves attack in three groups. Thirty enter the camp from the north, while 10 press in on the east and west flanks. They have left the troopers an escape route, hoping the men will bolt, leaving their goods behind. Each round, 2d10 soldiers flee into the night.

If the PCs stand and fight, they can easily find 2d6 elves to battle. Characters who spend an entire round trying to organize the troops must make a Charisma check. On a successful check, 2d8 soldiers line up (subtract them from the troop total). The men can defend the camp or block the elves' advance. However, they must remain within sight of the PCs or they will flee.

The battle quickly becomes a race against time: each round 2d10 men flee while 2d8 may remain. The battle ends when 30 or more elves are slain, 50 or more soldiers are rallied, or all the troopers are dead or missing. In the last case, the elves pillage the camp and disappear into the night.

Outcome. If the PCs win, they find little of value on the dead elves. They have earned the respect and trust of their men, particularly the experienced gladiators and templars. These units' morale is improved by 1 (in *BATTLESYSTEM*[™] statistics).

If the elves win the battle, dawn reveals a shattered and broken camp. Only 75% of the surviving soldiers return to camp; the rest have had enough of army life. Large stocks of equipment and gear are also missing. The AC of every unit is reduced by 2. The men look and act defeated. All morales are reduced by 2.

Next. Continue with Skirmish, according to the timetable.

Part Three: Day 7—Skirmish

Setup. Before beginning this encounter, conduct a number of ordinary patrols, letting the players feel the pressure to succeed. Run this encounter while the PCs are leading a patrol. Have the players turn to the *Players' Book*, p. 35—Wilderness Map.

Start. Read the following to the players.

Today's search has carried you out onto the sandy dunes beyond the broken lands. The undulating mounds, with deep valleys and foot-slogging slopes, are difficult to traverse. You are in a bowl, where the winds have scooped out steep sides. Once at the top, you will have a good view of the surrounding area.

Encounter. Have the players select a route. If they do not specify special precautions, assume the patrol continues as it has up to now.

Cautious advance: As the patrol nears the rim of the bowl, a far-sighted trooper calls out, pointing to a plume of dust rising from a nearby wadi. The PCs see a group of soldiers, but can't tell whose side they're on (as yet, they've seen no Tyrian patrols). The PCs have ample time to prepare an ambush.

Normal advance: As the party approaches the top of the ridge, one of the soldiers shouts in surprise, and nearby voices echo his. Perhaps fifty yards distant, a band of soldiers shouts for their commander. At a barked command, the other group scuttles for the shelter of the rocks.

Reckless advance: The PCs blunder into the Urikite ambush once they reach the ridge. The PCs are automatically surprised.

Statistics. Human Templar. AL LE; AC 5; MV 24; Tpl 8; hp 43; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8+2 (+1 steel sword); ML 14; Str 16; Dex 13; Con 11; Int 15; Wis 14; Cha 13. Spells: 1) *command, remove fear, shillelagh*; 2) *hold person, messenger, slow poison*; 3) *animate dead, prayer*; 4) *giant insect*; Psionic Wild Talent: *mind bar*; PSPs 50.

Half-Elf Defiler. AL NE; AC 9; MV 12; Dfl 7; hp 21; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4+1 (+1 steel dagger); SZ M; ML 11; Str 11; Dex 1x3; Con 12; Int 15; Wis 13; Cha 16. Spells: 1) *detect magic, magic missile (x 2) phantasmal force*; 2) *detect psionics, Melf's acid arrow, whispering wind*; 3) *fleet feet, lightning bolt*; 4) *psionic dampener*; Psionic Wild Talent: *spirit sense*; PSPs 34.

Human Soldiers (x15). AL N, AC 7; MV 12; hp 4 (x15); THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6-2 (Obsidian spears).

Reaction. Unless one side surprises the other, the groups must get within 30 yards of each other to make positive identification. Enemy soldiers dart from cover to cover, trying to get closer. Once battle is joined, the enemy's goal is to report to their army (PCs should attempt this as well). They will break off the battle in an attempt to carry the news back. Try to encourage a running battle.

If the PCs win the battle, they can follow the enemy's trail to the Urikite army or learn the location from a prisoner. Remind the players that Rikus needs the exact location and size of the army—finding a single patrol is not enough.

Next. Continue immediately with The Black Plain.

Part Three: Day 7—The Black Plain

Setup. Begin this encounter as soon as the battle from Skirmish ends. Do not give the PCs any time to regroup or recover. The players will need the *Players's Book*, p. 11—Assembled Multitude.

Start. Read the following aloud.

The trail plunges into the desert, roughly holding to the course of the Tyr road. For miles it winds its way past gaunt outcroppings of rock rising above the sandy dunes. Jagged stones slice your sandals. There is little time to waste, for even now the trail is vanishing as the winds sweep the sands smooth again.

Your men are thirsty and tired; the day is still broiling hot even at this late hour. The men rouse from the torpor of the march only long enough to look anxiously toward the setting sun. Soon darkness and all its horrors will sweep down upon them far from camp.

Encounter. If the PCs went to turn back, remind them that the trail is not likely to be here tomorrow, but do not stop them if they insist. By the time they resume the trail tomorrow, the Urikites will be on the alert and send out a force of 20 soldiers, two templars, and a defiler (use the statistics provided on the Master NPC List for this encounter). Unlike the Urikite patrol, this larger force will try to annihilate the PCs.

If the PCs can avoid this peril, they can get close enough to observe the Urikite army. Well before they are in sighting distance, describe a greasy haze in the sky—the smoke of innumerable cooking fires—then closer still, a muted rumble of thousands of men. Tracks abound throughout the area.

Assuming the PCs advance with caution, they can reach a weathered sandstone outcrop near the main army camp. From the top of this tor, the PCs have a good view of the Urikite army that darkens the sandy plain below. Have the players look at Assembled Multitude. At this point the PCs can count standards, fires, wagons, or whatever to get an estimate of the army's size. (The Urikite army is approximately 10,000 strong.)

At dusk, a psionist rides to the tor, intent on meditating at the top. The PCs will not be surprised unless they are obviously completely inattentive. The psionist fights until it is clear he is outnumbered.

Statistics. *Human Psionist.* AL LE; AC 6; MV 12; Psi 9; hp 30; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (club); ML 10; Str 12; Dex 17; Con 13; Int 12; Wis 15; Cha 9. Psionics—Sciences: *animal affinity, detonate, mindlink, telekinesis*; Devotions: *adrenalin control, animate object, body weaponry, contact, control body, control flames, displacement, ESP, inertial barrier, inflict pain, molecular agitation, psychic messenger, send thoughts, soften*; Def Modes: IF, TW, MB, M-, TS. PSPs 100.

Outcome. If not rendered unconscious or killed in a single round, the Urikite psionist uses his powers to alert others in his camp.

Next. If the alarm is raised, continue with Reconnaissance Reports. Otherwise, the PCs are able to report back safely (go to Last Night on Athas).

Part Three: Day 7—Reconnaissance Reports

Setup. Use this encounter only if the alarm has been sounded in the previous encounter. There are no player aids for this encounter.

Start. This encounter is a running battle as the PCs attempt to avoid detection and capture by Urikite pursuers. It begins fifteen minutes after the encounter with the enemy psionist (The Black Plain). Characters on watch see several groups of soldiers, some on foot, some mounted, and some leading beasts, all heading in the PCs' direction. Highlight the fact that the enemy is moving quickly and seems to be headed straight for the tor.

Encounter. The PCs must avoid or win a series of battles in order to reach the safety of Rikus's army. The PCs are 15 miles from their own camp.

To determine the number of encounters, find the PCs' movement rate. (Humans on foot move at 24; forced march means a move of 30; kank riders can move at 15, 30, or even 45, with the attendant risks.) Compare the party's movement to that of the encounters listed below. Those with greater or equal speeds will eventually catch the PCs. At that point the PCs can either fight or hide. If the PCs hide, they have a base 50% chance of success. You can increase or decrease this percentage if the circumstances seem warranted.

Battles cause delays, allowing the enemy time to gain ground, so for each fight subtract one from the PCs' movement rate—for the purposes of calculating encounters only. Encounters, in order of overland movement rate, are listed below. Some groups may be traveling at double or triple time.

Statistics.

Mil Kank Riders (6): AL NE, AC 7; MV 12; Ftr 3; hp 21 (x 6); THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6-1 (bone light lance); SZ M; MV 45; ML 12.

Kanks (6): AL N; AC 5; MV 15; HD 2; hp 12 (x 6). SZ L; ML 14. These domesticated kanks will not fight.

Thri-Kreen Mercenaries (4): AL N; AC 6; MV 22; Gld 4; hp 25 (x 4); THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 2d4-1 (bone gythka); SZ L; ML 14.



Braxat: AL NE; AC 0; MV 15; HD 10; hp 58; THAC0 11; #AT 1; Dmg 2d4+10; acid breath; steel or magic to hit; SZ L; ML 18; Psionics-Sciences: *psychic crush*; Devotions: *mind thrust, psionic blast, awe, contact, inflict pain, invincible foes*; Defenses: IF, MB, M-, TS, TW; PSPs 80. (If the PCs do not have any steel or magical weapons and are without a strong psionist and/or mage, do not use this encounter.) The braxat has attached itself to the Urikite army in

exchange for flesh.

Anakore Guides (2): AL NE; AC 8; MV 3; HD 3; hp 14 (x 2); THAC0 17; #AT 2; Dmg 1d4/1d4; surprise -3; -2 to be hit; paralyzing bite; SZ M; AL 8.

Next. If the PCs return to camp, they must make their report. Continue with Last Night on Athas.

Part Three: Days 7-8—Last Night on Athas

Setup. This encounter takes place after The Black Plain or Reconnaissance Report; there are no player aids for this encounter.

Start. Begin this encounter as soon as the PCs return to camp. Again, don't allow them any rest. Stress that every delay increases the risk to the army.

Encounter. When the PCs arrive at Rikus's headquarters, they must convince the guards their news is important: this should not be difficult, but is necessary. The PCs must wait while Rikus is awakened and the commanders assembled. Only then will the group be shown into his tent. Make the players give a report, describing what their PCs saw. As before, Rikus comments little during their speech, only making grunts and concerned noises. When the players are done, evaluate what they have reported. There are certain facts that Rikus must know.

Location. Rikus must know the direction and distance of the Urikite army. If the PCs failed to bring this information back, the commander is enraged. He launches into a tirade against the PCs, berating them for their incompetence, ineptitude, and stupidity. The other commanders either remain silent or darkly agree. Only Agis remains calm, probing the PCs to gain clues to the army's whereabouts.

If questioning is insufficient, the commanders fetch a psionicist. A thin, humorless fellow arrives and subjects the PCs to mental probing. This should be an emotional (but not physical) ordeal. The PCs have messed up and should feel it.

Size. Rikus also needs an estimate of the army's size. Since this is a more difficult task, the commander is much more forgiving. If the PCs cannot give an immediate estimate, he asks about such things as standards, flags, fires, wagons—anything that will give a clue.

Role-Playing. Upon learning the immensity of the Urikite army, a pall descends on all in the tent. Despair and panic seize Styan and Jaseela, as they believe themselves defeated before the battle has begun. Even Agis and Sadira wilt. Only the gladiators (Rikus, Neeva, and Gaanon) seem unmoved. The mul angrily snaps at the others to show courage, saying that he has fought worse odds before. Gradually the group takes heart once more.

Dialogue.

"So close! Then we fight tomorrow."

"Stop being children; be warriors! A gladiator never admits defeat until the spear is in his guts! We have the advantage; we know where they are."

Outcome. The PCs are ordered to wait outside while Rikus and the others plan. The PCs are eventually called back in. The mul points at the PC commander and says, "Tomorrow we'll defeat the Urikites in an ambush—but only if you can lure their scouts away. Succeed, or tonight will be our last night on Athas." Sadira then arranges for the PCs to have the necessary information to make their plans.

Next. Continue with Planning.

Part Three: Day 8—Planning

Setup. In this encounter, the PCs must make their plans to distract the Urikite army. Have the players turn to the *Players' Book*, p. 33—The Wasteland Map.

Start. Read the following to the players.



Sadira returns with a parchment scroll, which she carefully unrolls to reveal a map of the area. Explaining what Rikus wants, Sadira explains: “The Urikite army will have a screen of scouts patrolling in front of their army. For our trap to work, their scouts must not find our army. If they do, we will lose the surprise we need to ambush them. You and your men must lure the scouts away so we can slip past their vanguard. Make your plan good. We’ll be waiting to hear it.”

If you feel the PCs need more troops to accomplish their goal, Sadira provides them with 50 additional soldiers (common troopers). She can give no more, nor should they expect any more aid.

Have the players look at the Wasteland Map, which shows the region’s terrain. Rikus’s army is at location A; the Urikites are at B. The location of the intended ambush is at C. The PCs must lure the enemy vanguard as far from point C as possible.

Encounter. Allow the players ample time to make their plans, up to as much as a full gaming session: remember that their characters have four or five hours to plan. Answer their questions as needed, especially those that relate to army details—movement, available troop numbers, general lay of the land, time when Rikus will move out, etc. The PCs’ troops can reach any point on the map with hard marching. Likewise, the two armies are within a day’s march of each other. Try to be helpful without telling the players what to do.

After the group has prepared their plan, have a meeting so Rikus and the others can evaluate it, as before. Ask hard questions and see how the group answers. How will they lure the enemy away? Where will they lead the enemy? How long do they think they can hold out? If need be, help the players improve their plan by letting Rikus, Agis, Neeva and Sadira give advice. Do not let the PCs leave the council with a disastrous scheme you know is sure to fail.

The plan must involve some trick to convince the enemy the PCs’ force is much bigger than it really is. The troops could drag tents and brambles to create a huge dustcloud, like that of an army on the march. Units could be spread out over a large area, appearing and disappearing as if a large column was marching by. The PCs could move their force some distance away and then build hundreds of bonfires, making the enemy think the army camped there.

Outcome. Once the PCs have a plan that meets with the council’s approval, they are sent back to their camp to prepare. They must be ready to go no later than an hour before dawn. What little remains of the night must be spent preparing.

Next: Continue with Dawn.

Part Three: Day 8—Dawn

Setup. Role-playing the movement of units according to the PCs' plan requires you to improvise. To help you, this encounter includes devices you can use to improvise the day's events. Have the players turn to the *Players' Book*, p. 32—Pursuers, once the encounter begins.

Start. Read the following to the players.

The first glow of the false dawn is coloring the burnt red-brown sands of the waste when a rider gallops into camp. Barely letting his kank stop, the messenger, a mere youth, drops from his saddle and hurries to where you wait. "Commander Rikus asks if you would please start your plan so he can begin his march with the other commanders." In the spirit of the new democracy, he asks, "Shall I tell him you have decided to grant his request?"

Encounter. The time has come to put the PCs' plan to the test. The success of their feint depends on your assessment of their plan. The following ideas should give you a further indication of success or failure. *Good ideas* include making the PCs' small force seem much larger than it really is, goading the enemy with a few short attacks, or threatening their flanks. *Bad ideas* include open assaults and excess timidity. The PCs must use their troops boldly but wisely.

Throughout this encounter, it is not recommended that you role-play any battles. Instead, encourage the PCs to send NPC patrols out to fight, letting the players feel the pressure commanders face.

Initial Snafus. To let the players know this will not be easy, create confusion even before the enemy is sighted. If Girias is in command, he gives confusing orders that delay the start of the march. Of course, the PCs don't learn this until the last minute. Other problems include units getting lost in the dark, animals running away, and even arguments over which noblemen's unit will lead the advance.

Contact. First terrify the PCs by the sheer size of the enemy's scouting force—perhaps 100 to 200 strong, with kank riders and halflings. Make the players nervous by not having the enemy immediately charge out. Force the PCs to launch some raids, then describe the enemy's advance as wary and cautious. Force the PCs to do something bold, then have the enemy scouts take the bait.

Pursuit. More than once during the chase, have the enemy turn back. The PCs must again act boldly and quickly to draw the enemy out. Or you can have the Urikite scouts move too quickly and effectively—they may overwhelm the Tyrian vanguard. Finally, at some point late in the chase, an unexpected group of enemy should suddenly appear on the vanguard's flank. Panic rises in the ranks and the PCs must act quickly to retain control.

Next. Tease your players with this cat-and-mouse game for as long you possibly can (and still hold their interest). Finally, just as the PCs troops gain a little distance on their pursuers, exhaustion sets in. The vanguard must stop and make its stand against overwhelming forces. Continue with *The Ground We Die On*.

Part Three: Day 8—The Ground We Die On

Setup. Use this encounter when the PCs and their troops finally make their stand against the Urikites. The players will need the *Players' Book*, p. 16—Terrain Map, and p. 31—Ground View for this encounter.

Start. Read the following to the players.

"This is it," the dwarf Vandoorm announces. "My men are spent; they can go no farther." The little warrior scans the surrounding land, pausing at the dust clouds of the pursuing Urikites. "I say we'll have to make a stand," he growls. "This is the ground we die on."

Encounter. Tell the PCs to study the Terrain Map and Ground View. The Terrain Map gives an overhead view of the area at a scale suitable for the *BATTLESYSTEM™* rules. The Ground View shows the same area as if the players were Urikites attacking from the east, facing the area the PCs' troops defend.

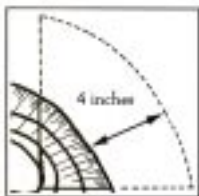
The PCs have perhaps an hour or two before the enemy is upon them. As before, let the players plan their defense and prepare any positions they want.

Remind the players that one of the PCs' units includes skilled craftsmen who can prepare earthworks. Because of the limited amount of time and lack of tools or materials, only simple defensive works can be readied. These include stone walls, pits, trenches, and perhaps deadfalls.

Walls. Rocks are abundant. Ten men (1 *BATTLESYSTEM* stand) can build 30 feet of loose rock wall, 3' to 4' high, in 1 hour.

Pits. Ten men can dig 3 pits, 6' long, 4' wide, end 5' deep, in a single hour.

Trenches. Ten men can dig a trench 3' wide, 4' deep and 30' long in a single hour.



Deadfall. If ordered, thirty skilled workmen can assemble a crude deadfall at the top of one of the steep slopes in the gap. When triggered, this deadfall causes a slide that covers the base of the area shown in the diagram. The slide does damage as AD 6 to every figure in the area.

Dropped rocks. Defenders on the cliffs can stockpile rocks to throw on the attackers. These have an AD of 4.

Scouting Reports. During the pursuit, the PCs begin to get some idea of the composition of enemy forces. They know there are halflings and kank riders, but little more. If the PCs send out scouts while making preparations, they get better reports. Scouts estimate there are between 150 and 200 halflings, 50 humans riding kanks, and another 100 human light infantry. The PCs should be outnumbered by at least 50 to 100%, so you may need to adjust these numbers.

Next. Continue with Advance of the Urikites.

Part Three: Day 8—Advance of the Urikites

Setup. If you are going to use the *BATTLESYSTEM*[™] rules to resolve the battle, you need to prepare a playing area according to the Battle Map on p. 46 of this booklet and have figures available to represent the various units. In addition to the terrain, the Battle Map shows the Urikite's advance and battle plan, assuming the PCs have chosen the most defensible ground on the board. *BATTLESYSTEM* statistics for all Urikite units are on the next page. Statistics for player units are on the *Players' Book*, p. 9; pages 17—The Attack, 42—Break in the Line, and 38—The Last Charge illustrate the critical scenes described below.

Start. Those who won't be resolving the battle using *BATTLESYSTEM* rules can use this encounter, which describes critical scenes—moments in the combat where the PCs' actions can save or lose the day.

The Attack. To the east is the attackers' highly visible dust cloud. Within minutes, a long line of wild halflings comes into view. With their reputation for savagery, the halflings are particularly terrifying to the citizen-soldiers of Tyr. Urvan, in particular, is incapable of inspiring his troops, since he is hiding behind an outcropping 30 yards back.

The PCs must inspire their troops to stand firm. Rousing speeches about their hard-won freedom, entreaties to stand fast for family and friends, even reminders of the humiliation and punishment of retreat are all suitable. Make your players role-play the part—have them give speeches or make heroic stands. Do not resolve this encounter with a roll of the die. If Puram the spy is still around, he moves among the troops, urging the men to flee. If the PCs are rousing enough, their men stand firm. If they fail, the Tyrthani troops flee in panic before the battle is joined, leaving a gap that must be closed immediately.

Break in the Line. The first wave of the battle begins with numerous small skirmishes as the Urikites probe the lines for weaknesses. Describe these skirmishes quickly and briefly—here a troop of halflings charges forward only to be forced back, there kank riders feint and retreat, testing. Add a few tense and colorful moments near the PCs—a maddened kank crashes through the stone wall or a squad of halflings breaks through the lines. Then the general attack begins and the troops are hard pressed. Suddenly there are screams as a small break appears in the line. If the PCs send reserves, another break appears elsewhere. Unless the breach is sealed, the Tyrian forces will be routed. Repeat this until the PCs respond personally; they must battle three mul kank riders and eight halfling warriors (see next page for statistics).

The Last Charge. If the PCs hold the line, the Urikite commander, Salovar, personally leads an assault. The line is stretched to the breaking point all along the front, but is in the most danger where Salovar is attacking. The PCs must face and defeat Salovar, his staff, and 4 kank riders, thereby breaking the back of the assault. See the next page for statistics on Salovar and his aides.

Next. Whether the PCs succeed or fail, continue with Aftermath.

Part Three:
BATTLESYSTEM™ Statistics: Urikite Vanguard



Salovar—Army Commander. AL LE; AC 4; MV 24; Tpl 8; hp 36; THACO 16; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 (steel sword); SZ M; ML 14; Str 14; Dex 12; Con 13; Int 14; Wis 15; Cha 19; *bracers of defense* AC 4; Templar Spells: 1) *command* (x2), *cure light wounds*; 2) *augury, chant, hold person*; 3) *animate dead, summon insects*; 4) *repel insects*; Psionic Wild Talent: *know location*; PSPs 38.

BATTLESYSTEM stats: AD 8 AR 7 Hits 3 CD 14



Gorash—Half-Giant Gladiator Bodyguard. AL N; AC 6; MV 30; Gld 5; hp 76; THACO 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8+3 (club); SZ L; ML 13; Str 20; Dmg 13; Con 15; Int 12; Wis 10; Cha 13; *ring of x-ray vision*; Psionic Wild Talent: *cell adjustment*; PSPs 101.

BATTLESYSTEM stats: AD 9 AR 8 Hits 5 CD 5



Vemet, the Foul-Human Defiler. AL NE; AC 10; MV 24; Dfl 6; hp 13; THACO 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 (steel dagger); SZ M; ML 10; Defiler Spells: 1) *chill touch, sleep, shocking grasp, taunt*; 2) *detect psionics, mirror image*; 3) *fireball, slow* Psionic Wild Talent: *all-round vision*; PSPs 42.

BATTLESYSTEM stats: AD 3 AR 10 Hits 2 CD 3

None of the Urikites accept Vemet as a commander because he is a defiler.

Halfling Scouts (10 figures): AL N; AC 7; MV 12; HD 1; hp 6; THACO 21; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6-1; SZ S; ML 12.

BATTLESYSTEM stats: AD 4 AR 8 Hits 1 ML 12 MV 12

Halfling Slingers (5 figures): do not enter melee combat, so AD&D statistics are not provided.

BATTLESYSTEM stats: AD 4*6 AR 8 Hits 1 ML 13 MV 12

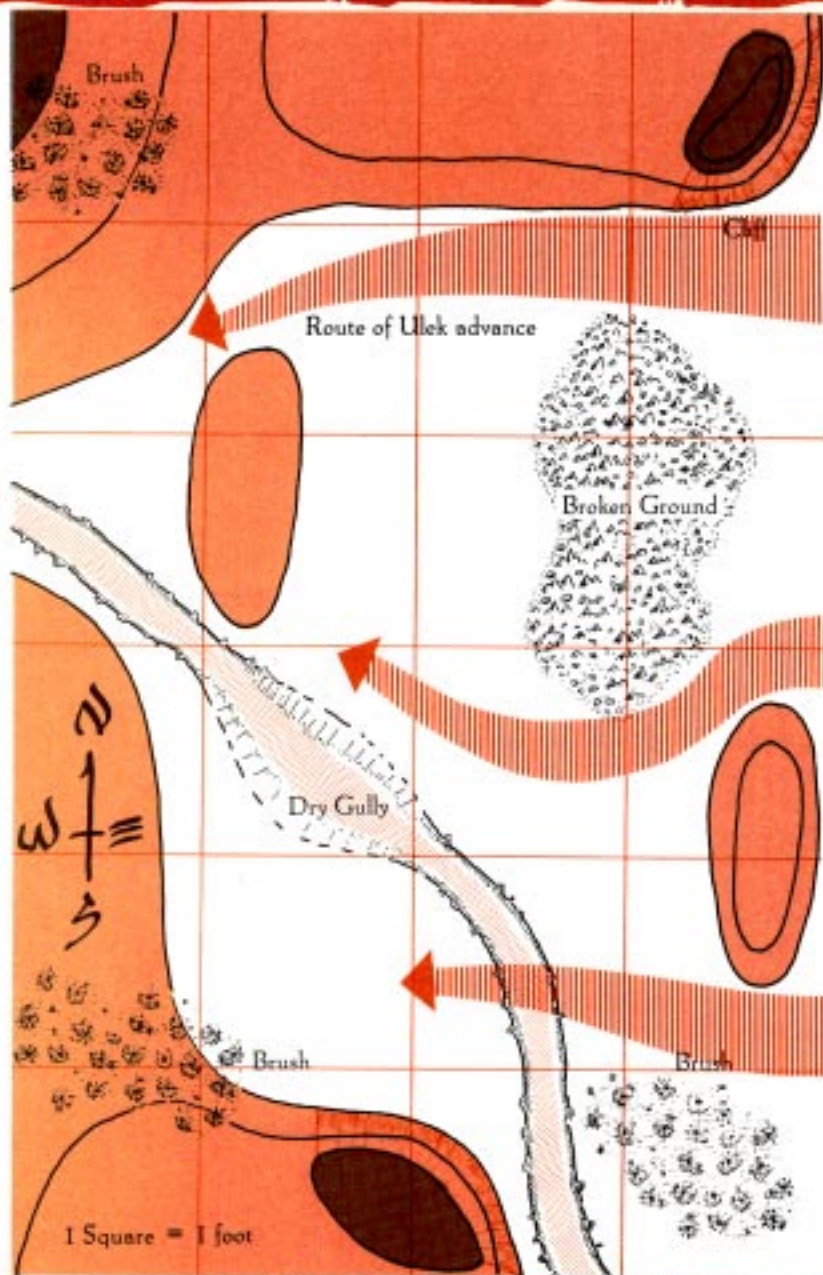
Kank Cavalry (5 figures): AL CE; AC 7 (kank 5); MV 15 (kank); HD 1 (kank 2); hp 5 (kank 10); THACO 21; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6-1 (light lance); SZ L (kank); ML 13 (dismounted 12).

BATTLESYSTEM stats: AD 8 AR 8 Hits 2 ML 13 MV 15

Human Infantry (10 figures): never go near the PCs, so no AD&D statistics are provided.

BATTLESYSTEM stats: AD 6 AR 9 Hits 1 ML 9 MV 24

Part Three: Battle Map



Part Three: Day 8—Aftermath

Setup. Have the players turn to the *Players' Book*, p. 37—The Fruits of Victory.

Start. Whether the PCs were victorious or defeated, read the following aloud:

As the din of combat dies away, you can hear the sound of distant battle, but it is impossible to go to their aid. Your men are too busy treating the wounded and burying the dead to bother; the Urikites will be left for the desert beasts, as they deserve. Even with all your exhortations it is several hours before the army can move. The exhausted soldiers, carrying their wounded comrades, seem to crawl across the desert plain.

It is after sundown by the time the PCs find the main army. Since dusk your march has been guided by the glow of the camp's hellish fires and the droning moan of thousands of wounded. Finally, a courier leads your men through the battlefield to Rikus's camp. The gladiator commander, bloody and battered but victorious, meets you.

Encounter. If the PCs succeeded in leading the enemy scouts away, then Commander Rikus hails the group as heroes, regardless of the outcome of their battle with the scouts. Indeed, if the PCs were victorious, Rikus is amazed—he believed he was sending the vanguard to its death that morning. His opinion of the PCs rises considerably.

After greeting the group, Rikus invites them into his tent. There, equally haggard and blood-stained, are the other army commanders—Ganon, Styan, Jaseela, Neeva, Sadira, and Agis. All seem amazed and jubilant just to be alive, much less victorious over the forces of Urik. Wine is freely passed about and the PCs are told how Urik's army was defeated.

However their battle went, the PCs succeeded in doing the most important task, Senator Agis explains, for the Urikite scouts eagerly took the bait. With the eyes and ears of the enemy chasing around the desert, the small Tyrian army moved forward between the Urikite scouts and army, on ground the Urikites thought was safe. The Tyr army set up its ambush and the Urikites blundered right in. Even so, the day was hard fought and victory uncertain until the very end. The Urikite army finally retreated blindly from the field. The threat to Tyr is not just delayed, but completely broken!

Now, flushed with his victory, Rikus says that the army should press on and take the war to Urik. Their army is destroyed, he argues, so what better time is there to overthrow the warlord of Urik? Tonight, though, the others are too tired to listen to his words. They are happy with what they have done.

Next. This concludes the encounters for *The Road to Urik*. *Returning Home* describes where you can go from here with your player characters—new heroes of Tyr.

Part Three: Returning Home

Player characters who survive *The Road to Urik* must choose what to do next: they can return to Tyr, as many soldiers will do, or join Rikus in pursuit of the Urikite forces. Clearly, the path they choose will affect their future...

Whatever their choice, before the PCs leave the battlefield, be sure that each collects his "reward." Relieving the fallen of their weapons is an ancient and time-honored tradition on Athas, and the booty is part of their pay. If they take the time, let each PC find one or two small magical items, a good steel weapon (if they do not already have one), and some other non-magical or non-metallic item—better armor, a chariot, a pair of kanks, etc.

Returning to Tyr. Those returning to Tyr are hailed as heroes. This is especially true for the player characters who commanded the vanguard—even more true if the vanguard was victorious. The city, by King Tithian's command, will hold a festival for the returning warriors, a parade that stretches from the Caravan Gate all the way to the Golden Tower. (Tell the players to turn to the *Players' Book*, p. 40—Triumph!) The PCs ride in commanders' chariots and receive the honors of victory—a steel scepter—from the hand of King Tithian himself. Every commander is given the honorary title of Gallant of Tyr; every common soldier receives the title Defender of Tyr. For days, perhaps weeks, the heroes will be hailed and feted at parties and taverns throughout the city.

But such bliss cannot last forever. People will eventually tire of the newly proclaimed heroes. Those in high positions will grow concerned at the popularity of the field commanders while the common folk tire of buying drinks for every "war hero." A backlash develops as stories of the war's grimmer side surface.

Player characters who stay in Tyr should be drawn into the murky arena of politics. Some back-room kingmakers may urge the PCs to run for a council seat in the next election. Others who fear the PCs' growing popularity may order them assassinated. Ugly rumors may surface about their conduct in the war, forcing the PCs to defend their honor. In general, the PCs may wish they had remained with Rikus in the field.

The March on Urik. If the player characters follow Rikus, you (the DM) are strongly urged to read *The Crimson Legion*, a novel that describes many events following the war. However, aside from the events of that novel, many other things can happen to your player characters in the wilderness. The march is long and hard. There are many possible side adventures—remember that the PCs are not bound to the army and can leave at any time. They may decide to join a caravan, investigate a distant ruin, or fall in with a band of mercenaries. As with all wilderness adventures, the choices are limited only by your imagination.

Loyalties

M. C. Sumner

Few things are as witless as mekillots. They're stubborn, vicious, prone to eating people that wander too close to their sticky tongues, and they smell bad. But their massive legs can carry a load that would require two dozen lesser beasts, and that makes them worth the trouble. Most of the time.

Tarsal arrived at the center of the Elven Market to find one of the massive creatures blocking the main street. Tumbled stones and torn cloth from broken stalls littered the pavement. A few men were jabbing at the mekillot's tail with polearms, but whenever the creature turned, they were quick to scramble out of its way.

Tarsal spotted a silver-bearded man wearing the colorful clothing of a caravan leader and hurried to his side. "Is this your animal?"

"That's right," said the man. He squinted at Tarsal's ragged clothing, then at the bone sword that hung from his waist. "You with the army?"

Tarsal nodded. "You've got to get this animal out of the street. Where's your mekillot handler?"

The man pointed at the giant lizard. "Under the mekillot."

"I see." Tarsal closed his eyes, partly to help his concentration but mostly to hide his nervousness. He could hear the mekillot's mind, a swirling spot from which the only real thoughts were hunger and confusion.

He quickly discovered that the creature was not really being stubborn; it was simply unable to decide what to do. Tarsal soothed the creature as best he could, then picked a direction and thrust it at the animal. It took several repetitions of the simple thought before the mekillot turned and began to lumber up the street. A few of the onlookers drifted over to examine the remains of the unfortunate handler.

"My thanks," said the caravan leader. "Should you ever seek a position with a caravan . . ."

Tarsal looked around to be sure that no one was watching before he replied. "Thank you. I'll keep it in mind."

The caravan leader followed the slow-moving mekillot out of the market. The body of the dead handler

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was taken away, and the elven shop owners began to clean up the damage done to their stalls. Tarsal watched until the colorful robes of the caravan leader were lost in the chaos of the market, then he turned and walked away.

The dusty streets of Tyr were crowded with men and women that, like Tarsal, had once been slaves. Only weeks had passed since they had cheered their freedom under the new king. Now, many lacked even the scant food and water that their masters had provided. They stood alone or in small groups on the edge of the twisting street, watching everything pass with eyes dulled by the blistering sun. Seeing them only made Tarsal more grateful for his position in the army.

A roaring began in his ears. Then came a clawing pain that seemed to tear through his skull.

Tarsal?

The voice was like broken glass moving over slate, each sound a separate agony. Tarsal clapped his hands to his head. Communicating with animals had always come easily to him, but telepathy with another human was misery.

Yes, he sent, I'm here.

This is Salidius, said the rending voice. *Come quickly.*

Involuntarily, Tarsal spoke his answer aloud. "I'm coming." The noise in his head subsided, and he leaned against the sun-heated wall of an elven shop to wait out the lingering pain. When the ache faded, Tarsal stepped into the street and began to run.

It took him only minutes to wind his way through the twisting streets of the market, around the towering mass of the ziggurat at the heart of the city, and across the broad central avenue to the milling mass of men, women, dwarves, muls, and half-elves that were Tyr's army. Some of the soldiers were erecting tents in what had recently been the slave yards. Others tended enormous clay pots from which Tarsal caught the smell of thin stew. A dozen waited for admittance to a two-story adobe building that Rikus had adopted as

his headquarters. Tarsal moved toward the building.

Salidius was at the door, his bald pate shining in the afternoon sun. Like Rikus, the former gladiator who had lead the rebellion to overthrow the old king, Salidius had spent many years in the arena. He still wore his hard inix-hide armor, and the scars of battle were a pale webwork on his dark skin.

The old fighter turned at Tarsal's approach. "Still the fastest runner in the city, eh, young Tarsal?"

Tarsal ventured a nervous smile. "Yes, sir."

Salidius grunted. "Follow me. We're about to put your talents to good use."

He trailed behind Salidius as they moved past the outer room of the low building and through a curtain of hide strips. Tarsal blinked in the dim light. A figure rose before him, tall and draped in loose robes.

"This is Bay Saleam," said Salidius.

Tarsal moved forward to take the man's hand, but he stopped when he saw the sharp features of the face within the cowl of the robe. "He's an elf!"

"A half-elf," corrected Bay Saleam. His face was as hard as desert stone.

"He comes from a slave village a few days away," explained Salidius. "If our army moves north against forces from Urik, we'll need help in protecting Tyr against attack from the south."

"Truly," said Bay Saleam. "If you do not guard against the desert tribes, you will not long hold this city."

Tarsal looked back and forth between the gladiator and the half-elf. "I don't understand. What does this have to do with me?"

"We need someone who can negotiate with the leader of Bay Saleam's village," said Salidius.

"Why don't you just do it from here? They must have someone there who can communicate with telepaths in Tyr."

Bay Saleam shook his head. "Our leader keeps the village shielded, lest the emanations of our minds reveal our location to enemies."

"We need someone to go to them in person," said



Salidius. "Someone we can trust. Will you go?"

Tarsal swallowed hard and tried to cover his surprise at being given such an important task. "What about the animals? If I'm not here to take care of them . . ."

"Don't worry about the animals," said Salidius. "I'll see to it that they get what they need."

Tarsal looked at his commander, hoping that Salidius would keep his word. Tarsal had no friends among the men of the army, but the animals were his family. Still, he could not help them by refusing Salidius. "Yes," he said. "I'll go." Tarsal again extended his hand to the half-elf.

Long fingers took his in a painful grip. "Prepare yourself to run," said Bay Saleam. "We will leave tonight." The tall figure stepped from the room with a swirl of dusty robes.

Salidius looked at the doorway for a moment, then stepped closer to Tarsal. "With their village watching out for us, we can afford to send more of our troops against Urik."

"But what do I offer the villagers?" asked Tarsal. "What can I give them for helping us?"

Salidius clamped a heavy hand on Tarsal's shoulder. "We will give you something to take to them as a token of our good intentions. As for any other demands they might make, negotiate hard, my young friend. But in the end, promise them anything they want." A peculiar smile had come over Salidius' blunt features. "I don't intend to give them a thing."

The robes of the three villagers snapped in the wind. Sand hissed under their boots. For such a small group, the villagers included a great deal of variety. Besides the tall half-elf, there was a heavily muscled mul whose left arm ended just below the elbow, and a young woman who would have been quite lovely were it not for the long scar running the length of her face.

While the villagers could not have been more different physically, they were alike in their running style: relentless. Tarsal did his best to keep up.

The star-filled sky brightened with impending dawn, turning dirty red as Athas's bloated sun sprang into the sky. The group ran south along the hard-packed surface of the trade road, then left the road and plunged into the wilderness of bare stone and drifting sand. The walls of Tyr vanished in the distance as the chill of night turned to the blazing heat of day.

Tarsal looked around at the barren country, searching in vain for anything familiar, but there was only rock, sand, and the occasional stunted thorn bush. He fought back panic at leaving behind the streets he had known all his life for this trackless wilderness. The leather straps of his pack chafed at his shoulders. His eyes smarted from the bright light. His throat turned dry, and his mouth was filled with a bitter taste.

He was relieved when the group plunged into a steep defile and ran in the shade of its sheer walls. As they pounded on, he spotted movement along the cliff above. He sent his mind toward the creatures but found only slaving hunger that rejected any contact.

Bay Saleam looked over at Tarsal with eyes that were midnight black. He gave an order and the other villagers increased their speed.

Now Tarsal began to struggle as the swifter pace, uneven ground, and terrible heat took their toll. His legs sang a rising song of pain, and his lungs felt seared by each breath. Again and again, he fell behind and was forced to sprint to keep up with the sure-footed tread of the others. By the time the sun fell to the horizon, Tarsal was near exhaustion. He collided with Bay Saleam and fell to the hard ground.

"Be still," hissed the half-elf. "Something is not as it should be."

Struggling to quiet his heaving chest, Tarsal nodded. The canyon had become wider and the distant walls shorter. Just ahead, it opened on a stony plain stained by the sanguinary light of the setting sun. The woman villager whispered something in a dialect that Tarsal didn't understand.



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"The Alreefa Wells are very near," translated Bay Saleam, "but danger awaits us there. Prepare your weapons."

Tarsal shrugged out of his pack and searched through its contents. As a slave, he'd had little chance to handle weapons and even less chance to use them. Two weeks of doing guard duty in the city hadn't done much to change that. Inside his pack was a bundle wrapped in oiled leather that contained a long knife of gleaming metal. It was a treasure that Tarsal had been given to entice the village leader. He thought of using it for a moment, then he hastily shoved it back to the bottom of his pack. It was a masterful weapon, but its metal was so valuable that Tarsal did not trust his traveling companions not to kill him to obtain it.

He turned his attention to his sword. In the failing light, Tarsal examined the bone blade whose edges were lined with flakes of chipped obsidian. He supposed the sword was as ready as it would ever be.

At a quiet command from Bay Saleam, the group loped off at an easier, more stealthy pace. A few minutes later they halted again. After another whispered exchange in their own language, Bay Saleam came to Tarsal's side.

"We have determined what we face. The wells have been taken by Hawazar."

"Hawazar?"

Even in the dim light, Tarsal could see the disgust that twisted the tall half-elf's features. "One of the elven tribes. Our village has been troubled by them before."

He spoke in a louder voice. "The wells are owned by no one. We will approach them openly."

The villagers brushed the dust of travel from their robes and adjusted the knives in their belts. Standing stiffly erect, they began to walk.

The last edge of the sun disappeared, and a breeze came up from the west. Fine grit danced along the ground in miniature dust-devils. Tarsal took a position behind the villagers with his hand resting on the hilt of

his sword. Soon, the flickering light of a campfire became visible in the distance. The villagers went on without a word, their stride unchanged.

When they were a hundred yards away, there was a sudden chorus of shouts and a flurry of activity around the fire. Tarsal was startled to see dozens of forms moving in the twilight. At first he thought that a whole tribe of elves had settled around the wells, but a few more steps revealed that only three of the dark figures were elves. The rest were erdlu.

The flightless birds hooted and hissed as the villagers continued to advance. The elves stepped through the flock and moved to place themselves between the villagers and the birds.

"Hawazar," hissed Bay Saleam.

When Tarsal and the villagers were only a short distance away, one of the Hawazar shouted for them to stop. Unlike the simple robes of the escaped slaves, the Hawazar wore cloaks of sharply patterned erdlu feathers studded with bits of polished bone.

For a long moment, the two groups stared at each other, neither side moving so much as a finger. Then the tallest and most elaborately decorated of the elves spoke. "Half-elf, mul, a pair of humans. You must be escaped slaves," he said. "How come you to be at our well?"

"We are no longer slaves. We have freed ourselves," said Bay Saleam. "And the Alreefa Well is not your well. It is open to all. A rare place of peace in a world of affliction."

"Now this is a Hawazar place," said the elf. "And slaves are not permitted to drink at a Hawazar well." There was a murmur of agreement from the other elves, and a rumble of anger from the throats of the villagers. The elven leader stepped forward so that his face was only a handsbreadth from that of Bay Saleam. "Slaves may not drink here. Unless they are prepared to pay."

"Pay!" shouted Bay Saleam. "We will never pay for what the elements intended to be shared among all."



The elf took a step back. "You will pay, half-elf, if you wish to drink."

"We will not pay."

"Then you will die of thirst," snarled the Hawazar. "There is no water between here and Silver Springs. And finding no water, you will all die."

"We will have our water," said Bay Saleam. "Even if we must soak the sands with your blood to get it." The elves and villagers all snatched at their weapons.

Tarsal did not draw his sword. Instead, he reached out and found the minds of the erdlu. They were little more intelligent than mekillots, bred for nothing but their meat and their eggs, but they were not helpless. And even the tiny mind of a erdlu harbored some enmity for those who enslaved it. Tarsal found this resentment. Fed it. Watched it grow.

The Hawazar leader lifted a long bone sword. "It is you slaves who will feed your blood to . . ."

The long neck of an erdlu darted forward and a sharp beak jabbed at the elf's face. The Hawazar turned to meet this unexpected attack, and the erdlu delivered a kick that sent the elf rolling across the sand.

The one-handed mul leaped on the fallen elf. His long wooden sword slashed down with terrible effect.

Bay Saleam swung his curving blade at a second elf. The weapon cut through the elf's cloak and filled the air with feathers, but the elf blocked the blow before it could do damage. The young woman darted between the combatants, striking at the elf with long stone knives.

Tarsal rushed the remaining Hawazar, but the elf had gathered his wits and his blade met Tarsal's in a stinging parry. Sparks flew as the stone-edged blades collided.

Tarsal backed away, only vaguely hearing the fighting on his left. The elf circled, looking for advantage. More erdlu were scattered about. Tarsal reached his thoughts toward them. He felt at the animals' minds, looking for the strings by which they could be encouraged to fight.

A searing bolt of mental energy swept through Tarsal's unprotected mind. He fell to his knees, his sword forgotten at his side, and clutched at his ringing skull. He heard the harsh laugh of the Hawazar and the whistling of a blade through the air. He felt the blade bite into his shoulder, the edge grating across bone. Tarsal looked up and saw the Hawazar drawing back for another blow.

A robed form dived into Tarsal's view and bowled over the elf. There was the sound of a bone blade being driven deep, and a single cry.

Bay Saleam stood over Tarsal. "The Hawazar are dead."

"That's good," Tarsal tried to reply, but no sound came from his mouth.

The half-elf's long arms reached down, and strong hands drew Tarsal to his feet. "We will go to the wells. There we can better tend your wound."

Tarsal turned his head enough to see the damage done by the Hawazar blade. The flesh was torn, and he could feel the warm wash of blood down his side. But there was no pain.

He tried to take a step. The ground came up quickly and struck him in the face.

When Tarsal awoke, he found the villagers sitting around a small fire. "Ah," said Bay Saleam. "Come and join us."

A jabbing pain from his shoulder warned Tarsal not to put too much weight on his arm. Twisting his head, he saw that his chest and upper arm were swathed in cloth. He levered himself upright with his uninjured arm and walked over to the fire. "My thanks for taking care of my wound."

Bay Saleam waved a dismissive hand. "Tell me, was it you who caused the erdlu to attack?"

"Yes," said Tarsal. "It seemed like the thing to do."

"You see," said Bay Saleam, turning toward the other villagers, "I told you he was the one. His power may have been all that saved us from death. Come, my friends. This city dweller has run with us and



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fought by our sides. Should we not welcome him as our companion?"

"I am Aloh," said the young woman, "the village tracker." It was the first time Tarsal had heard any of the villagers except Bay Saleam speak in the common tongue.

"My name is Chak," said the mul. He pulled down his hood to reveal a frightful rendition of the dragon tattooed on his bald head. "My greetings."

Tarsal was unsure of how to reply. "I am pleased to know you."

Bay Saleam spoke again. "The elf with whom you fought carried a strong blade. Do you claim it?"

Tarsal looked at the weapon. It was finely made, certain to fetch several days' meals in the markets of Tyr. But it must mean more than that to people who depended on weapons for survival. "No. You keep it."

Bay Saleam nodded slowly. "Tell us of yourself. If we are traveling together, we should know something about you."

"I'm afraid I've very little to tell," said Tarsal. "Until a few weeks ago, I was a slave. Very little happens to a slave."

"We were all slaves once. There is no shame in it," Aloh said. She arched an eyebrow and gave Tarsal a mischievous look. "How did you become a slave? Did you seek to steal the king's concubine?"

Tarsal felt the blood rising in his cheeks and looked away from the enquiring faces. "No. It was something that happened when I was very young. Something my father did."

"Ah," said Aloh, "it was he who stole the concubine!" The villagers shared a laugh.

"Actually," said Tarsal softly, "he was arrested for using magic."

The villagers stopped laughing. When Tarsal lowered his eyes, he found them glaring at him.

"This is one point on which we and the city dwellers agree," said Bay Saleam. "Users of magic are not to be trusted. They seek control of others by use of dark powers."

Tarsal's jaw grew taut. "My father wasn't after power," he protested. "He cared only for animals and plants. He used his skills to improve the fields around our city."

"How could the king object to that?" asked Aloh.

Tarsal started to answer, but Bay Saleam was faster. "The sorcerer kings always fear other users of magic, no matter what their motives."

Tarsal nodded. "And when my father was found out, they came in the night and took us away." A cold wind whistled in across the sands, rippling the flames of the campfire. "I never saw him again."

"You see," Bay Saleam said. "You did have an interesting story. A story with a king, a magician, a just cause, and unjust suffering. Do not worry that it was not a happy story. We have all been slaves ourselves, and we know there are lessons in the sad and the joyous alike."

The half-elf stood. "Now it is time for rest. Our new companion is injured, and tomorrow we must cover thirty miles if we are to reach our village on the following day. I will take the first watch."

The winds picked up during the night, blowing small drifts of sand around each reclining form. The temperature dropped until Tarsal shivered in his thin clothes. He sat up and crawled closer to the low flames of the campfire. He looked at his companions: Aloh sleeping with her hood pulled down across her face, Bay Saleam's lengthy form stretched out on the sand, the powerful shape of Chak as the mul took his turn at watch. All of them had once been slaves in one of the cities, but they had given up the cities for rough freedom in the vast desert. Could Tarsal make such a decision? He fell into slumber beside the fire and stayed there through the rest of the night, freezing on one side and roasting on the other.

The villagers rose before dawn and breakfasted well on meat and eggs from one of the Hawazars' erdlu. Tarsal refused the meat; he wanted nothing to do with the butchering of the bird. All members of the party drank their fill from the bitter water of the wells, and



every waterskin was filled to overflowing. With still no hint of sunrise, the group started off under the circling stars.

The stones that they ran over had been polished by the constant wind and infrequent rain. Tarsal found them very slippery footing. His stiffly bandaged arm upset his balance and he stumbled frequently. The villagers were more talkative, but despite the increase in camaraderie, they did not slacken their harsh pace. As Bay Saleam had said, to do so would be to spend another day between wells, and they did not have enough water for another day.

Bay Saleam allowed a rest from the afternoon heat. With no stone larger than a man's fist in sight, the group was forced to lie under the broiling sun. While they were resting, a swarm of biting flies found them and Tarsal thrashed hopelessly as the insects worried his wound. The villagers simply wrapped their robes tightly closed and waited out the attack.

"Tell me," called Bay Saleam, his voice muffled by his robe, "what do you think of your new king?"

Tarsal thought a moment before answering. "He freed the slaves. That makes him better than the old king."

"He has freed the slaves, you say? And whom do you serve now?"

"I'm in the army," said Tarsal.

"Is this not just another form of slavery?" asked Bay Saleam.

"I serve my city," said Tarsal. "Don't you serve your village?"

There was a long pause before the half-elf replied. "Truly. Even a free man must serve some cause. The difference between a free man and a slave is that the free man chooses where his loyalties lie."

As they were preparing to leave, Aloh picked up a bit of desiccated wood from the desert floor. "Part of a shaft," she said. She held the fragment against her forehead and closed her eyes. "Thri-kreen."

"How long ago?" asked Bay Saleam.

The woman shook her head. "Hard to tell. I never

get strong readings from thri-kreen."

Tarsal looked around anxiously. He had encountered the mantis warriors several times in Tyr, and he had no desire to be hunted by the tireless man-sized insects.

Bay Saleam gave the signal, and the group set out once more. At the end of the day, they came to the edge of the rock-covered plain and reached the beginnings of a field of pale sand that was dotted with small dunes and patches of stunted brown grass. There they camped.

Even though the villagers had cared for him while he was wounded, Tarsal was still nervous about sleeping in the presence of these strangers. But he was glad that Bay Saleam did not assign him any hours of watch. Soon after they had eaten their meager supper, laden with grit, he fell into a sleep not even the cold winds of night could disturb.

Bay Saleam woke Tarsal as the villagers were preparing to leave and handed him a length of dried meat. "Today," announced the half-elf, "we will reach the Sea of Silt. From there, it is but a short run to our village."

Running on the sand was tiring, but the dunes were much better footing than the slick rocks of the previous day and the group made good progress. The sun rose on their right, casting stark shadows across the pale sand. The chill of the night was rapidly driven away. By midmorning, the desert sweltered in the heat. Tarsal's injured arm was stiffer than on the day before, and it ached with every step. It also sweated and itched maddeningly inside the cloth sling. It was just enough to throw Tarsal's running off and make him struggle even more to keep up with the villagers. When a long, craggy formation of stone rose from the plains ahead, Tarsal was very glad that Bay Saleam called for a momentary rest in its shade.

As they drew closer, Tarsal saw that the stones were covered in carvings and row upon row of precisely graven runes. Around the base of the formation were piles of broken stone and house-sized blocks that bore



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the marks of quarrying tools.

Bay Saleam called for attention. "It is early to stop for rest," said the half-elf. "But we have run far this morning and we will find no other shelter on this day. We will stay here until the sun is falling."

"Good," said Tarsal. "What is this place? Who made all these markings?"

Bay Saleam looked up at the walls of worn gray stone. "We do not know. It has always been so."

Before Tarsal could sit, a muscle in his leg was struck by a painful spasm. He limped away, rubbing at his thigh as he tried to walk out the cramp, hobbling along for several minutes before it started to ease. As the pain faded, Tarsal spotted a wide fissure in the stone wall and stepped into the cool darkness. His eyes had almost adjusted to the dim light when a pain went through his head and drove him to his knees. It was over in a second and could have been no more than a rapid mental inspection.

He hurried from the cave, but only two steps from the entrance he heard shouts and the sounds of fighting in the clear desert air. Tarsal drew his glass-edged blade and ran.

As he came around the last block of fallen stone, he saw that the villagers were locked in combat with a band of thri-kreen.

Two of the mantis warriors had been felled, but the rocks were smeared with as much red blood as thri-kreen ichor. Already, Aloh lay still, her small form sprawled across a pile of rubble. With his back against the gray stone of the ruins, Chak held off a pair of the monsters with an oversized sword. Bay Saleam stood atop a heap of stones, slashing downward at a thri-kreen that tried to climb up to join him. Both of the surviving villagers had been scored by slashes from the thri-kreen weapons.

Tarsal tried to take control of the mind of one of the six-legged fighters, but the thri-kreen's mind was as slick and hard as glass. He ran up behind one of the mantis warriors that was assaulting Chak and swung his sword in a long whistling arc. The sharp edge of

his blade struck the thri-kreen, cracking the hard skin of its thin neck. Chak's blade snaked out and struck just above Tarsal's. The mul's weapon lifted the thri-kreen's head into the air. The gruesome object fell into the sand at Tarsal's feet, the dull black eyes no different in death than in life.

The other thri-kreen jabbed at Tarsal with a crystalline spear. Tarsal jumped back, but the point gazed his ribs, drawing a thin line of blood, and cutting free his collection of waterskins. The precious water splashed on the stones.

Chak moved toward the thri-kreen. It turned to meet this threat. Tarsal moved in again. The mantis warrior swiveled its bulbous head back and forth between Tarsal and the mul. For a moment, the triangle of fighters was transfixed as each weighed the choices, then the thri-kreen backed rapidly away. It turned and disappeared among the blocks of stone.

Chak fell back against the wall. Wounds on his sword arm and chest bled profusely. Looking up the heap of rubble, Tarsal saw that Bay Saleam continued his duel with the last thri-kreen. Every blow that Bay Saleam attempted, the mantis parried. With each lunge of the thri-kreen, Bay Saleam dodged back. But the half-elf was tiring, and his robe was tattered and bloodstained.

"Go to him," said Chak. The one-handed mul slid downward until he was sitting. "I cannot."

Tarsal started for the base of the mound, but Bay Saleam stopped him. "Run!" he cried. "Take Chak and run!"

Tarsal looked up and saw that the half-elf was pinned against a block of stone. He was still trying to parry the mantis warrior's blows, but his bone sword was splintering under the force of the attack.

Bay Saleam raised his free hand and pointed across the sands. "More are coming! Run!"

With that, he lunged forward. The thri-kreen's blade sank into the meat of his leg, but Bay Saleam wrapped his long arms around the mantis and together the foes tumbled from their stony perch. The thri-



kreen made a keening sound as it fell. They rolled down in a shower of dust and cobbles. When they reached the bottom of the slope, the mantis warrior lay broken.

Bay Saleam sat up with a groan. "Get Chak. From the rocks I could see more thri-kreen moving toward us."

Tarsal ran back to where Chak rested against the stone wall. "Come quickly, we have to leave."

The mul nodded dully, but stayed sitting.

Tarsal seized Chak by his good arm and tried to lift him to his feet, but he was too heavy. The mul moaned and slumped back to the sand.

Tarsal ran back to Bay Saleam. "Chak is badly wounded. I'll need help with him."

The villager shook his head. "We must go now."

"We can't just leave him behind!"

"Neither of us can carry him," said Bay Saleam. "If we stay, we will all die. You must help me to my feet, so I can lead us to the next oasis."

"But he's your friend! How can you just leave him?"

Bay Saleam looked across the sand at the fallen mul. "He was my friend. Now he is only a burden, and the desert does not suffer those who travel with a burden."

Scrambling sounds echoed from the wall of stone as the thri-kreen approached. Tarsal reached down. Bay Saleam seized his hand and came to his feet, hissing in pain between tight lips. The half-elf ventured a few tottering steps before Tarsal positioned himself under Bay Saleam's arm. With blood soaking through the pale cloth of villager's robe and Tarsal grunting with each movement of his injured arm, they limped into the desert.

"The thri-kreen," Tarsal gasped. "Will they follow us?"

"We are nothing but food to them," said Bay Saleam. "They will stop for Aloh and Chak. But if they are hungry enough, they will follow."

The sun blazed a painful crimson, and the air filled

with grit driven by a blast furnace wind. Bay Saleam was barely conscious, and his damaged leg left a trench behind as it dragged through the sand. For Tarsal, each step became a challenge. Many times, the pair tumbled to the ground, and each time they fell, they were slower to rise. In the furious heat of the afternoon, Tarsal hallucinated that the other villagers were still beside them, he could clearly see the thri-kreen shaft protruding from Chak's side, and Aloh's face was so pale that her scar could not be seen. At sunset, these ghostly companions faded back into the endless vista of the desert.

Tarsal stopped. There was no shelter or water in sight, and he no longer knew if he was walking toward the Sea of Silt or back toward the thri-kreen. He released Bay Saleam, and the half-elf fell to the sand as if dead. They were injured and exhausted, but worst of all, neither had made it away from the fight with any water.

A single afternoon without water had reduced Tarsal to painful dehydration. With each breath, he thought he could hear his dry lungs rustling. His skin felt as it were stretched tight over muscles that had turned to brittle wood.

Bay Saleam lay on his side, his eyes dull and yellow, his hard face gone blank. "Here we die."

"We must find water," said Tarsal around his swollen tongue.

The half-elf shook his head slowly. "There is no water. If the thri-kreen do not come for us during the night, the sun will finish us when it rises again."

Tarsal cast his mind across the desert. If he could find animals on this barren plain, then perhaps he could follow them to an oasis. Failing that, the animals themselves might provide the needed liquid. At first he found nothing. He forced his mind farther and tried again. This time he felt . . . something. Something unfamiliar.

"What lies to the west?"

"It matters not what direction you try," said Bay Saleam. "We are over a day from water. Soon we will



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nourish the desert, as Aloh and Chak do now.”

“If it doesn’t matter which direction we go,” replied Tarsal, “then we’ll go west.”

It took him several minutes to get the half-elf standing, and again Tarsal was forced to bear much of the effort. They shuffled slowly across the sand as the sky darkened and the air cooled. The moons rose, and the desert turned yellow under their baleful light. As Tarsal walked, he sent his thoughts again and again toward the west. And always he found the tantalizing, undefined sensation he had encountered before.

After hours of walking, they came at last to an immense ruin, a circle of black stones that stretched up toward the stars. Within the circle, the ground dropped steeply away in level after level of cracked and broken stone. The center of the ruins was lost in black shadows.

“Do you know this place?”

Bay Saleam raised his head. “No, I—By all the elements, we must leave!” He pulled against Tarsal with surprising force.

Tarsal looked around but saw nothing. The animals he had sensed were near, but he still didn’t know their nature. “What is this place?”

“This circle of stones. I have never been here, but I have been warned of this place. It is called Alassam’s Pit. It is a place of evil magics and monstrous creatures.”

As if in response to his words, a bellow rose from the pool of blackness below. With slow footsteps that made the ground shake, a pair of dark forms ascended the ledges of tumbled stone. As they came up into the light of the moons, Tarsal could make out gleaming eyes set in heads like those of immense birds. Then came broad shoulders, strong arms, and huge hands that held swords longer than a man.

“Hawk giants!” shouted Bay Saleam. Again he tugged at Tarsal’s arm, trying to pull him away from the ring of stones.

Tarsal had seen such creatures in the arena at Tyr. Four, sometimes five powerful gladiators were needed

to subdue even one such beast. The animal side of their nature might give Tarsal’s psionic ability some control over them, but he knew that he could not master two at once.

The giants were approaching slowly, their beaks gaping open in anticipation of a meal. They made a low rumbling growl that Tarsal felt more with the soles of his feet than his ears.

He reached for his sword, but it was gone, lost somewhere in the blur of the afternoon. Bay Saleam was transfixed, staring at the approaching beasts with an expression that had gone beyond terror to acceptance.

The giants reached the ring of stones. Tarsal flung his mental power at them in a desperate effort and encountered . . . nothing. No mental shields, not even the dim awareness of the lowest beast. Nothing.

Pulling his sleeve free from Bay Saleam, Tarsal took a step toward the giants. The hawk-headed monsters stayed within the stone ring, growling and waving their massive swords. Another step. The giants roared louder and fairly split the air with the speed of their swings. Another step. The giants froze.

The two hawk giants faded into the moonlight, their roars hanging on the air long after their image had gone.

“What madness is this?” gasped Bay Saleam. The half-elf stumbled forward to stand at Tarsal’s side.

“You were right about one thing. There *is* magic here. But those monsters were only illusion.”

With Bay Saleam following behind, Tarsal passed between the stones. The steps that the giants had so easily ascended were each a fall greater than the height of a man. Tarsal sat down and looked over the first edge. “I’m going to need some help with this,” he said, raising his injured arm.

Bay Saleam’s face looked at Tarsal, then at the blackness below. “Are you truly going to descend into this terrible place?”

“Yes,” said Tarsal. “You said yourself we could not



survive another day. We might as well see what is here."

"That is so." The half-elf glanced up at the stars above. "Welcome me, elements." He helped lower Tarsal to the ledge below, then pushed himself over the edge. His injured leg buckled and he fell onto the rough stone. "How many such steps must we descend?"

Tarsal peered into the darkness. "Not many. Come on."

They had repeated their fall three times when Bay Saleam put his hand on Tarsal's shoulder. "By all the elements! Do you smell it?"

Tarsal inhaled the cold night air. No odor, but that tingling sensation of an unfamiliar animal mind was much stronger. "I don't smell anything."

"Then the city has ruined your nose. I smell water! Lots of water!"

Hurrying, they descended the next three steps. The ledges were growing shorter as they went down, until at last they assumed the size of human steps. With the moons rising higher in the sky to light their way, they moved toward the center of Alassam's Pit.

On close inspection, Tarsal found the bottom of the pit contained a dome of black stone. Reaching around the dome was a spiral pattern made from hundreds of incised runes. "I've seen these before," said Tarsal.

"Do you know what they say?"

Tarsal shook his head. "No. But my father used some of these symbols in his magic."

After several minutes of searching, they found a recess in the smooth rock and a panel slid aside. Pale blue light spilled out. They stepped through the door.

The black dome proved to be only the cap over an immense underground chamber. It covered a platform ringed by another series of low steps. But where the outer steps had led down into darkness, these led into light—a brilliant blue light that rose from a body of water surrounding them on all sides. A ring of clear water several hundred paces in diameter.

"Praise the elements!" cried Bay Saleam.

Tarsal was dumbstruck. Around him was abundant life, all of it supported by magic. It was the proof of what his father had told him as a child, that good magic could nurture and protect. And there was something more. The faint flickering of animal minds that he had felt while approaching the pit was now overwhelming. He went down to the lowest step and saw that the water swarmed with forms of yellow and red, black and orange, white and green. Fantastic numbers of them, moving together like clouds of birds.

"What are they?"

Bay Saleam limped over and frowned down at the things in the water. "Animals that live in water? I have never heard of such a thing. They must be the experiment of some mad wizard."

The minds that reached out to Tarsal were tiny, but their thoughts were like nothing he had experience before. Cool thoughts. Thoughts like water moving over mossy stones. Though he had yet to take a drink, Tarsal's thirst had receded to a distant memory. "They're wonderful," he said.

Bay Saleam grunted. "Let us hope they do not ruin the water," The half-elf kneeled and scooped up a handful of water. He sipped cautiously at first, then drank greedily.

Tarsal sat down on the bottom step and allowed his feet to dangle in the water. Most of the animals dashed away, but a few braver ones stayed. The brightly colored forms circled around his feet, waving sheets of translucent membrane and pecking against the worn leather of his boots with mouths ringed in drifting tendrils.

"It's not as much water as Silver Springs," said Bay Saleam. "But it is sweeter."

"Yes," said Tarsal. "It's sweet." He tried to send a message to the water animals, but he could not understand their reply. One of the largest of the creatures drifted up to the surface and turned so that one bulbous eye was looking at Tarsal. As it regarded him, Tarsal felt more mental activity. He realized that it was



Loyalties

not one creature that spoke to him, but groups of them. Their simple thoughts overlapped and echoed into something that was just beyond Tarsal's understanding. Something that was far beyond the dull deliberations of an animal.

Tarsal could hear Bay Saleam speaking to him and vaguely saw the half-elf moving around the chamber, but he paid no attention. Just a little more study and he would understand what these incredible creatures were trying to say to him.

The elf's fingers closed on Tarsal's shoulder. "It is a wonder that this place is still here. Those illusions are powerful, but they cannot protect this wealth forever. I've made some containers from plants growing along the edge of the pool. We must leave now if we are to get back to our course before the sun rises."

Tarsal stood, his eyes still on the ever-changing patterns of the animals moving in the blue water. His father had often said that the beauty of the world was in its creatures. Never had Tarsal seen a place where that was more true. Bay Saleam followed his gaze. "We will come back here soon," he promised.

The closing of the door in the dome reduced the thoughts of the water animals to a murmur. With Tarsal's bandaged arm and Bay Saleam's damaged leg, the climb up the giant steps consisted of gathering blocks of crumbled stone and stacking them until they could pull themselves up. The fragile baskets that Bay Saleam had constructed to hold water only added to the burden and slowed their ascent further. The swollen sun was already rising over the horizon by the time they reached the top.

The water had revived Bay Saleam. He favored his injured leg and could manage no better than a walking pace, but his posture was erect and his hard face was softened by a smile. Through the morning, they crossed low dunes and fields of glittering salt. When they stopped for the midday rest, it was at the edge of a field of low grass and stunted bushes.

"We will reach the village either tonight or early the next day," said Bay Saleam. "And with the news we

bring, our leader will surely look favorably on your mission."

Tarsal was puzzled. "News?"

"Truly. News of the oasis we have found. When we move the village to the pool, we will become one of the richest tribes in all the tablelands."

"You think they'll move the village to the pit?"

"Of course."

"But what of the animals? The things that live in the water?"

Bay Saleam waved a dismissive hand. "Many slaves in our village worked in city fields. They know the art of moving water through ditches to farm miles of desert."

"For how long?" asked Tarsal.

"For enough years to increase our flocks and the strength of the village. Perhaps we will become a city ourselves." The half-elf gave a harsh laugh. "Perhaps we will have slaves of our own!"

Tarsal pulled open his battered pack. "That reminds me, I have another gift for your leader." He pulled out the leather bundle and unwrapped the knife. The polished blade reflected gory light from the sun.

"A beautiful weapon. Our leader will be pleased."

"Yes, I'm sure he will." Tarsal weighed the blade in his hand. "Is it a difficult journey to your village from here?"

"No," said Bay Saleam. "A child could make the journey. The village lies in that direction." He pointed across the rolling sands to the north.

Tarsal planted the dagger in the half-elf's back and held it there until Bay Saleam ceased his struggles.

"You were right," Tarsal said. "A free man must decide where his loyalties lie." He rested for a few minutes, then started back toward the pit.

Road to Urik Nonplayer Characters

This section describes four NPCs who may become powerful, long-term enemies of the player characters. The heroes may not meet all these NPCs, nor necessarily antagonize them during the course of the adventure. However, the possibility of making enemies of these characters clearly exists, so they are detailed here.

The previous adventure, *Freedom* (which you need not have played to enjoy this adventure), includes several potential allies for the player characters. If these NPCs have survived, they can be counterpoints to the foes below. By combining the background information and characters from both these adventures, Tyr is transformed from just another city-state into an exciting, realistic campaign base for your DARK SUN™ campaign.

As with *Freedom*, the information here includes statistics, background, and behavior for each NPC. Naturally, you should feel free to change this information in any manner you see fit for use in your own campaign.

Eordornik Hasaval

Male Human Templar

6th Level

Neutral Evil



STR 11 INT 18
DEX 15 WIS 16
CON 14 CHA 9

AC 6; hp 14;
THAC0 18;
#AT 1;
Dmg by weapon

Templar Spells: None.
(At Kalak's death, all

his templars lost their spells. They may regain spells only by allying themselves with another sorcerer-king.)

Eordornik Hasaval, better known as Hasaval the Varl (a small, disgusting creature that looks like a scaled slug), is a short, furtive man: the epitome of what many hate about the templars.

A sickly and unlikable child, Hasaval spent his youth tormenting those weaker than himself while manipulating stronger and more outgoing people. Hasaval honed his skills over time and was always able to con others into doing his work or fighting his battles for him. Thus, it seemed that Hasaval was a natural talent destined for greatness when he entered the ranks of the templars.

It was the new power gained with the black robes that was Hasaval's undoing. The mere mantle he wore gave him authority, but Hasaval never fully appreciated this. He continued his threats and manipulations, even conniving against his fellow templars. While some infighting was expected, Hasaval took it to extremes. Soon the other templars grew suspicious—no, angry. "Hasaval the Varl" was whispered behind his back. He was regularly passed over for promotion, which delighted his foes and only caused Hasaval to manipulate and threaten further. Finally, all promise of a brilliant career died, and Hasaval's reputation withered. Others saw him as a weasel, a shoveler of dirt, a slug with a sting.

While he does not deserve respect, the bitter templar is still powerful and cunning enough to bite those who hurt him. Most templars avoid him, only approaching him when they need dirty work done. Even that is a risk, for Hasaval always has some scheme in mind for his own aggrandizement. If he becomes an enemy of the PCs, they should forever be wary for hurtful gossip, sly innuendos, and traps contrived to undo them.



Road to Urik Nonplayer Characters

Puram of Urik

Male Half-Elf
Templar/Psionist
8th Level/8th Level
Lawful Evil



STR 15 INT 13
DEX 13 WIS 15
CON 14 CHA 16

AC 6;
hp 32;
THAC0 16;
#AT 1 (club);
Dmg 1d6

Magical Items: *Bracers of defense, AC 6; dust of sneezing and choking.*

Templar Spells: 1) *command, curse, endure heat*; 2) *hold person, messenger, silence, 15' r.*; 3) *speak with dead, stone shape*; 4) *cure serious wounds.*

Psionic Powers Disciplines: *clairsentience, psychometabolism, psychopotation*; Sciences: *clairaudience, life draining, precognition, teleport*; Devotions: *aging, all-round vision, body control, body weaponry, combat mind, danger sense, dimensional door, double pain, dream travel, poison sense, spirit sense, teleport trigger, time shift*; Def Modes: IF, MB, TS, TW. PSPs 90.

Puram of Urik is a personable, well-spoken, yet forceful young man. He exudes energy and enthusiasm, the very image of a man who can get things done—and he can.

Puram is almost never introduced by his real name, for he is a spy. He may appear as merchant, mercenary, peddler, beggar, physick, barber, farmer, or slave—whatever suits his purpose at the moment. He gathers information for his master, High Templar Unamas of Urik (in service to Hamanu, the sorcerer-king

of Urik).

Puram did not come to his duties by being a fool. Although he looks young and impetuous, he is actually quite cautious and methodical, organizing his moves and planning his activities well in advance. At the same time, he understands the value of sudden and decisive action and is not afraid to take risks in the service of his master.

Part of Puram's boldness springs from his confidence in his own abilities, particularly his psionic powers. The powers of a templar, he realizes, are transitory, granted him only so long as he retains the favor of his dread sorcerer-king. His powers as a psionist, however, are his alone, and have let him escape more than one deadly trap. Puram wisely keeps his abilities secret: there's no point in letting his enemies know the full extent of his powers.

In this adventure, Puram has been sent to Urik (disguised as a mercenary caravan guard named Shikarva) to serve as a special scout for the army. His task is to learn about Tyr's defenses and, where possible, hinder or sabotage them.

Puram's greatest weakness is his vindictive streak. He often rationalizes personal vendettas under the guise of security for his mission. If the PCs run afoul of this half-elf, he will not lose any opportunity to harm them—telling himself that they are jeopardizing his mission.

Road to Urik Nonplayer Characters



Senator Vildeen of Tyrthani

Male Human Fighter

4th Level

Lawful Neutral



STR 11 INT 13
DEX 9 WIS 14
CON 9 CHA 17

AC 5;
hp 24;
THAC0 17;
#AT 1 (metal sword);
Dmg 1d8

Magical Items: *Ring of protection +5, cloak of fire and smoke*, rod of negation*

Although Senator Vildeen is aged and not physically powerful, player characters would do well to remember that physical prowess is not the same as real power. Real power, as Vildeen has discovered, lies in wealth and influence—a combination that can pose a threat to anyone. It is to the goal of gaining power that Vildeen has devoted his entire adult life.

Vildeen's ambitions were fired while he was young, when his father filled the seat of family senator. In those days, Kalak's brutal templars dominated the city. The boy quickly learned that wealth conferred power only when it was given to the right people, so in his teens Vildeen set out to refine his skills at bribery. He learned how to determine the right targets and the right amounts, and these bribes translated into influence, protection, and prosperity for the Tyrthanin house, even during the hard years of Kalak's madness.

In the years after he ascended to the senate, Vildeen carefully maintained the delicate balance—never powerful enough to be a threat to the templars, never weak enough to be ignored.

Since the revolution, the Vildeen house has fallen

on harder times. Many of Vildeen's favored templars died or changed sides suddenly, and the freeing of the slaves reduced revenues from the family estates. The Tyrthani suddenly found their power greatly weakened, though not broken.

Although unhappy with this turn of events, Vildeen views it as only a temporary setback. Already he has set to the task of rebuilding his network of contacts, cultivating new friends and adopting a more democracy-loving image. If possible, Vildeen would prefer to work with the PCs and not against them.

However, the senator's business with the player characters is colored by his feelings toward the rebels. Uncertain of their true goals and aims, he assumes that anyone not for him must be against him. If the PCs are not willing to meet his terms, he supposes that they have some secret agenda to destroy the nobility: that is, after all, the way of revolutionaries.

Once set against the PCs, Vildeen does not act openly. He is very conscious of his family's position, and brazen attacks against the PCs could destroy what he has carefully rebuilt. But ignoring any threat the PCs pose could bring equal disaster. Vildeen therefore works quickly but secretly against the party. He might send a bard to poison their food (one of his favorite tactics). A quartermaster in Vildeen's pay may withhold crucial supplies that the player characters need for their troops. Bills helpful or favorable to the PCs' cause may be held up forever in council. Fatal accidents may "just happen" to them.

If the PCs make a foe of Vildeen, they will have a near-impossible task proving his involvement in any plot against them. Neither can they just attack him: the senator spends most of his time at his heavily fortified villa outside the town, well-protected by fanatically loyal dwarf bodyguards.



Road to Urik Nonplayer Characters

Master Sintha

Male Human Thief (retired)
7th Level
Neutral



STR 13 INT 17
DEX 16 WIS 12
CON 13 CHA 16

AC 10;
hp 29;
THAC0 17;
#AT 1;
Dmg by weapon type

Master Sintha started his career as a junior agent of one of the many merchant houses of Tyr, the Valex. Specifically, he was the fourth son of the house leader, so low in the customary order of precedence that little was expected or demanded of him. Still, the future master of the Valex was not to be deterred.

As a young man, Sintha learned the larcenous arts—skills he appreciated not for monetary gain but for the leverage they gave him in closing a sale or beating out the competition. Did he want a vital sales report from a rival house or a peek at a contract it was negotiating? Sintha found it far surer to trust his own skills than those of a hireling. He gained a reputation as an uncanny negotiator who always seemed to have the right fact at hand.

Sintha, unlike so many thieves, did not grow to love the thrill of the job. Instead, his eye was firmly fixed on the highest office of the Valex house. So he began to change his image and sharpen his administrative skills. He set aside his studies of the pilfering arts and devoted himself fully to the management of the family business. His vigor and ambition exceeded his brothers' and sisters', and it became impossible to deny his position as heir apparent to the family fortunes.

Sintha wisely made sure that all his brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles, and cousins were secure and com-

fortable. Thus, when his father finally died, power smoothly transferred into Sintha's hands. The merchant house continued to prosper and, in many regions, outstripped its competition.

Sintha did not get to the top by being a nice guy. The man is ruthless and cold with those outside the House of Valex and the merchant community. Any outside threat is dealt with quickly and efficiently, oftentimes with complete disregard for the law. Sintha has no fear of retribution because of his power. Even the high templars are loath to anger one of the powerful merchant houses: it's far easier to accept the bribe and turn a blind eye.

If Sintha believes the PCs are or could be a threat to the House of Valex, he does not tread lightly. The player characters will discover that, for them, the cost of everything is doubled, even tripled. Sintha's influence extends far beyond the Caravan Way, reaching into the wineshops and craftsmen who rely on him for supplies.

NPC Master Table

Name	A L	A C	M V	LvL	hp	THAC0	#AT	D	ML
Bard, human*	N E	6	12	5	20	19	1	1 d 6 - 1	10
Defiler, half-elf**	C E	8	12	4	10	20	1	1 d 4 - 1	11
Gladiator, 1/2G	N ?	5	15	4	40	15	1	1 d 8 + 5	13
Guard, dwarf	N	6	6	F3	12	18	1	1 d 6 + 2	12
Guard, human	L N	7	12	F3	11	18	1	1 d 8 + 1	11
Mercenary, human	N	7	12	F4	15	17	1	1 d 8 + 1	10
Pionicist, human***	LE	8	12	5	18	19	1	1 d 4 - 1	13
Soldier, halfling	N	8	6	F3	14	19	1	1 d 6 + 1	12
Soldier, militia	Var	9	12	0	4	23	1	1 d 6 - 2	8
Solider, regular	Var	8	12	F1	7	22	1	1 d 6 - 1	10
Templar#	LE	4	12	6	27	18	1	1d8	14

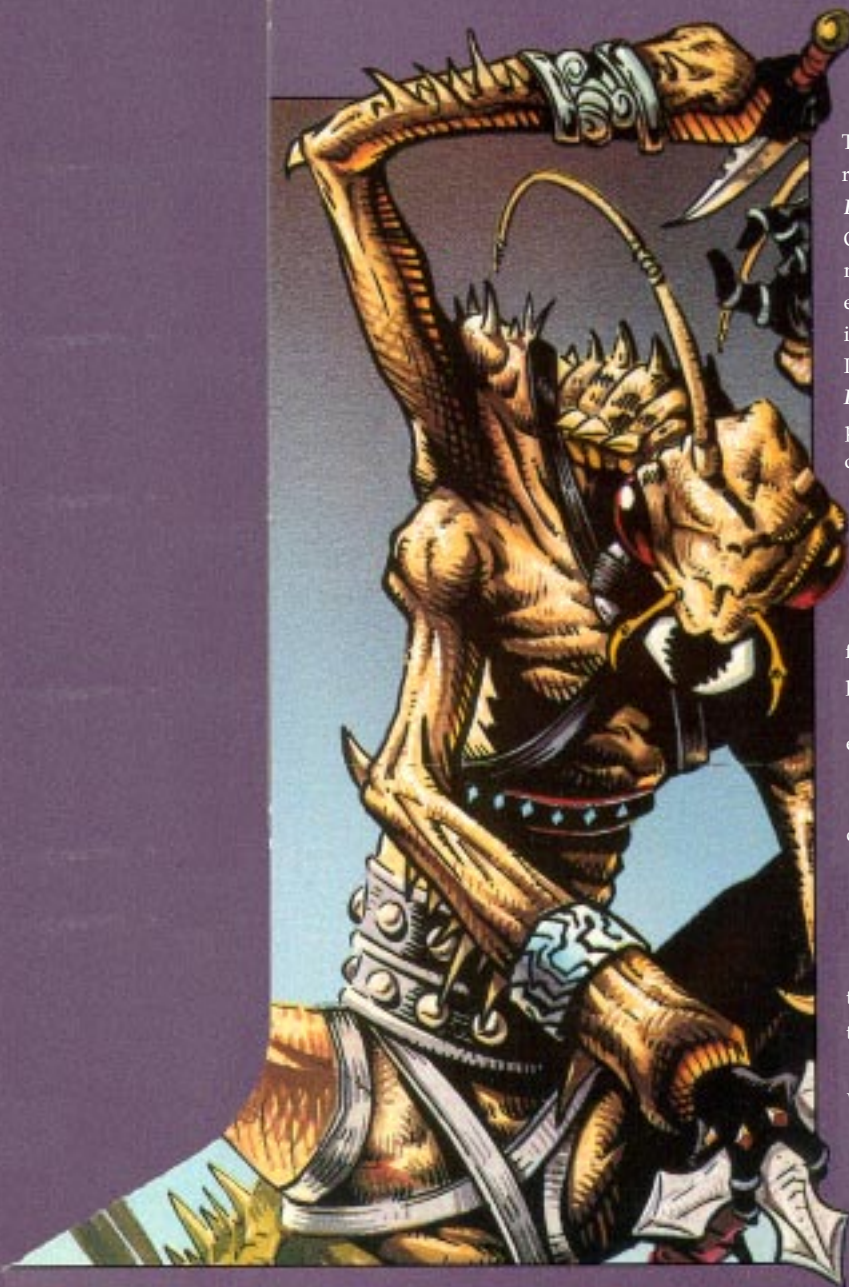
*Can use 1d6-1 poisons of the DM's choice.

**Spells: 1) *magic missile, shield, wall of fog*; 2) *detect invisibility, improved phantasmal force*

***Psionics—Sciences: *life-draining, shadow form, mindlink*; Devotions: *body weaponry, catfall, conceal thoughts, contact, double pain, ego whip, flesh armor, heightened senses, id insinuation, life detection*; Defenses: *IF, TW, MB; PSPs 72*

#Spells: 1) *bless, cause light wounds, cure light wounds*; 2) *hold person, messenger*; 3) *curse*.

How to DM *Road to Urik*



The two spiral-bound books here contain the role-playing adventure *Road to Urik*. The *DM's Book* contains each encounter the DM needs. Other parts of the *DM's Book* provide background material the DM needs to run a series of encounters. The *Player's Book* contains maps, illustrations, and text the players need for reference. Players should not casually look through the *Player's Book*— the *DM's Book* indicates when the players should turn to a page. The *Story Book* contains a short story that broadens understanding of the world of Athas. At the back of this booklet are detailed descriptions of various NPCs.

Each encounter in the *DM's Book* contains information arranged under the following headings.

Setup. This section tells the DM how to prepare for the upcoming encounter, including what page or pages of the *Player's Book* will be used.

Start. This section tells how to begin the encounter and usually includes a section to be read to the players.

Encounter. The main action of the encounter is detailed in this section.

Role-Playing. Descriptions of NPC personalities and tips on role-playing, including sample lines of dialogue, are given here.

Statistics. Vital game statistics are given here or the DM is referenced to the Master NPC Table on the inside cover of the module.

Reactions. This section occasionally appears, when the anticipated reactions of PCs and NPCs are important to the encounter.

Outcome. This section indicates what should result from the encounter.

Next. This section tells the DM what encounter to run next.

Road to Urik

by David "Zeb" Cook



"Tyr is free! Tyr is free!" Such is the heedy cry that echoes from the darkest warrens to the gleaming chambers of the Council in that ancient city. Now is your chance to savor life released from the oppressive gloom of the sorcerer-kings—but for how long?

New forces threaten the newly-born independence of Tyr, as outside forces march upon the city. King Tithian is determined to resist, but there are others



on the Council of Advisors less eager to risk their wealth and lives for the cause of independence. It falls upon you to help mobilize and lead the citizen-army of Tyr on the road to Urik.

*Designed for four to six characters of 4th to 7th level, **Road to Urik** is set in and around Tyr, the campaign base for your DARK SUN™ game. A stand-alone adventure, **Road to Urik** can also be played as the sequel to **Freedom**.*

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