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Cambridge CB1 3LB

United Kingdom

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Elves of Athas

by Bill Slavicsek

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Daled's Tale

I am Daled, dwarf and ex-slave, wandering the burning

sands of Athas like a faro leaf caught in a hot breeze.

This breeze is my focus, to learn all I can about the slave

tribes that fill the endless wastes, and it drives me in

directions I never contemplated going.

In my travels I have gathered more knowledge than my

focus would indicate. Perhaps it was inevitable. Knowl-

edge comes with experience, and my experiences have

been as varied as the viewpoints of a half-giant—and as

fickle. At the least, all have been educational (at least in

hindsight).

My memories include long periods of thirst and

hunger, dark days under the lash of templars, and even

brief stretches of contentment. Let me share one of these

memories with you before the fire fades and the crimson

sun burns away the night. Let me tell you of the time I ran

with the elves of Athas.

In truth, it was but a single tribe of the long-limbed

nomads, and compared to the grace and swiftness of a

desert elf, the way I traveled could hardly be called run-

ning. But I kept up with them, for my life and my focus

depended upon it.

I was traveling across the Tablelands in the company

of a small merchant caravan of House M’ke. The cara-

van was going my way, and I was glad for the companion-

ship and protection its wagons and crew offered. We

were on the road from Nibenay to Raam, moving through

a region of sandy wastes, when a terrible storm blew in off

the Sea of Silt. The winds were fierce, the dust as thick as

kank honey. The caravan tried to push on, but it wasn’t

long before we were lost in the swirl of choking dust and

stinging sand. I cursed the caravan master for trying to

forge a path through the storm, but the words were

drowned in the raging wind.

For two days the wind swirled around us, whipping our

breath away and burning our skin raw. The sand pelted

us as the master pushed the wagons and pack beasts for-

ward. For two days we wandered blindly through the

storm, and those who could not keep up were lost to the

angry elements. The storm finally began to subside as the

second day neared its end, though more than half the

caravan was gone. What remained huddled around the

master, hoping for protection and guidance.

When the sun rose on the third day, there were still

large clouds of silt filling the air. But the dust was not as

thick or as violent as it had been, and visibility had

improved considerably. I almost wished it hadn’t, for

what we saw sent a ripple of fear through the remaining

caravan members. Our makeshift camp was surrounded

by figures wrapped in tattered cloaks and clinging dust.

These figures were tall and thin, with long limbs and sav-

age bearings. There was no doubt in my mind that we

were surrounded by the dread desert runners: elves.

Two of the guards who still held positions at the cara-

van master’s side moved to drive off the raiders. They

were cut down quickly and without fanfare. Then one elf

stepped forward and declared that our goods were now

the property of the Wind Dancers tribe. Any further

show of resistance would result in the slaughter of the

entire caravan. She spoke with a detached calmness that

was more frightening than any arrogant boast I had heard

from other raider leaders. I knew she meant what she said,

and so did the caravan master.

It did not take long for the elves to strip the caravan

bare. They moved with speed, grace, and an unnatural

silence that made us even more uneasy. When they were

done, not a single trade good remained. They even took

our weapons, food, and water. These elf raiders were not

blaodthirsy, but we would die as surely from lack of sup-

plies as if they had cut us apart with their weapons of

stone and bone. Without a word, they prepared to fade

away as silently as they had come.

If I remained there, without weapon, water, or even a

clue as to where I was, then I would die without complet-

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ing my focus. This was unacceptable. There were still

slave tribes to visit, still experiences and knowledge to

add to my continuing chronicle. Worse, there were the

legends of what happened to dwarves who die with their

focus unfulfilled—legends as dark and disturbing as the

inner sanctums of the sorcerer-kings. I had to survive—

my focus demanded it.

I called to the chief and insisted she let me join her

tribe. If she noticed the fear in my eyes or the urgency in

my voice, she made no mention of it. Instead, she listened

quietly, with an intensity that unnerved me even more.

My arguments steadied me, however, as I used those I

had heard in the slave tribes and even invented a few as I

rambled on. I offered reasons for accepting me into the

tribe, listing my skills and accomplishments. I even

called out challenges and demanded a rite of initiation,

knowing full well that my words could just as easily get

me killed as they could perhaps save my life. The chief’s

eyes examined me, measuring me by more than just the

sounds that emerged from my mouth. When I finished, I

thought I saw her smile.

“So the dwarf wants to be an elf,” the chief replied.

“Then run with us, Short Sprinter, and we shall see.”

And ran I did, though not swiftly and certainly with no

grace. Sheer force of will kept my legs pumping and my

eyes on the fading backs of the racing elves. For three

days I did my best to keep up. Then, when it seemed

weariness and thirst were about to overcome me, I crested

a sand dune to find the chief waiting for me beside a well-

traveled road.

The chief held out a skin of water, which I wearily

snatched. “You were lucky, Short Sprinter,” she said

through a wide grin. “You gave us three days of laughter,

and laughter has been in short supply of late among the

Wind Dancers. For that, you have earned this drink. Fort

Isus lies along this road. Go there or not. The choice is

yours.” She turned to leave, then paused and called back,

“Remember the time you ran with the Wind Dancers,

because the Wind Dancers will remember you,

Sprinter.” Her laugh followed her into the dunes, but I’ll

never forget its wild, savage sound. . . .

They run across the burning sands like whirling dust

sweeps across the baked dunes and parched steppes of

the Tyr region. By day they are untamed winds, blowing

hot gusts of chaos from one end of the Tablelands to the

other. By night they are swift shadows, always in motion,

dancing beneath the light of Athas’s twin moons. They

are the elves of Athas, and the twisted path they trace

over the landscape is fast, furious, and more than a little

dangerous.

Like all of the accessories for the DARK SUN® cam-

paign setting, this one requires the AD&D® rule books,

the DARK SUN boxed set, and The Complete Psion-

ics Handbook to make full use of its contents. Elves of

Athas features details on the tall, long-limbed race of

desert runners. While they share certain similarities with

the elves of other AD&D campaign worlds, these elves

are definitely a breed apart. They are a race of mystery

and danger whose very nature is alien—not only to

humans, but to other elven species as well.

Because Athasian elves are so different from other

types of AD&D elves, much of those rules and concepts

do not apply. This book presents new rules and details

specific to the elves of the DARK SUN campaign set-

ting. While other AD&D books provide information on

elves, including the useful PHBR8, The Complete

Book of Elves, none cover the unique nature of Athas’s

desert runners. For this reason, the rules in this book

take precedence as far as the elves of Athas are con-

cerned. They enhance and expand upon the rules pre-

sented in the DARK SUN boxed set, providing all the

details needed to understand, run, and play elves on the

burning world.

Prepare to leave all you know or think you know about

elven nature behind. Whatever erroneous beliefs you

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still hold will quickly be boiled away by the truth of the

desert, dried up as fast as a puddle of water in the burn-

ing heat of a crimson sun. Know this: Athas is cut from a

different cloth. It has been sliced from a torn, blood-

crusted swath with a broken blade to fashion a world

more deadly than any that has come before. As such, its

elves do not fit the patterns established in other settings.

They are Athasian elves, driven by all the brutal twists

and harsh surprises that the environment that spawned

them implies.

In the paragraphs which follow, Elves of Athas brings

you to the desert camp of the Star Racers. This proud

tribe of elves presents a festival dedicated to the very first

elf chief. Witness a dance of celebration and hear a song

of legend as an elf maiden sings the ballad of creation.

Afterward, we’ll examine the physical and psychological

natures of Athasian elves, looking at what makes the

desert runners move and behave the way they do. A sec-

tion on elven society provides details about how Athas’s

elves live and love. To understand the desert runners, we

must understand the tribes they live in, and we’ll take a

close look at a number of the tribes roaming the Tyr

region. Finally, we’ll explore some of the character kits

available to the elves of Athas.

Elves of Athas places these savage wasteland runners

before you, giving you a rare and vivid look at their cul-

ture, habits, and daily lives. We’ll look into their oddly

shaped eyes and search for the passions that drive

them—the wanderlust, the love of life, the need to live for

the moment no matter what the cost. Of course, to stare

into the cunning, all-seeing eyes of an Athasian elf is to

invite a returning glance. So be on your guard, for an elf’s

fingers are as quick, as thieving, and as deadly as the

blink of his wild, feral eyes.

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Now prepare yourself. The time has come to travel the

sands where the long-legged elves of Athas dance and

hunt and raid. The time has come to run!

The Song of Creation

Music rises from the camp. An alien sound, it is formed

from the deepest wells of elven emotion and given voice

by strangely shaped elven instruments. The music

touches everyone, permeating mind and body. It plays

across different levels. Sounds sweep into tapered ears on

melodious winds of noise. Rhythms pulse in time with

fast-beating hearts and rushing blood. Other tones go

beyond such physical trappings, leaping from the air

itself to ignite inner fires and arouse elven souls.

Driven by the swift, chaotic beat of mythic drums, the

tribe begins to move. The elves follow the music’s wind-

ing path, keeping time to tempos that no human could

match. Male and female, elder and child, the tribe

dances to the wild elven sounds. Then, from the midst of

the furious motion, Utaa the elf maiden’s clear, liquid

voice sings out . . .

“Death is stillness, so run, you elves. Dance to the

beat of life, for the moment is quick and oh so short.

There is nothing as fast nor as proud nor as wonderfully

made as an elf,” Utaa smiles proudly, wickedly, “and

there is no elf to match a Star Racer!” The tribe shouts in

joy, and Utaa sings on with even greater enthusiasm and

power. “Let us celebrate the now with a song of remem-

brance! Let us dance to the song of the first Star Racer.

Coraanu, we remember you!”

The tribe twirls and leaps, each member like an indi-

vidual grain of sand in the elven music storm. Each elf

follows the beat while not conforming to the movements

of the others. Still, out of this chaotic swirl a sophisticated

harmony forms. The dancers mimic Utaa’s words with

subtle motions as well as unrestrained gyrations, adding

form and substance to the verbal images she has wrought

for the tribe. A male warrior spins out of the crowd. His

name is Botuu, but for the now he is Coraanu—he is the

first Star Racer. Utaa’s eyes fill with joyous light, and she

prepares to sing again.

“Before the deserts filled the world, in a now when the

wasteland ruins were bright and new, the elves lived high

in the sky,” Utaa sings in reverence, her eyes lifted toward

the burning sun. “These elves, the stories tell us, were

small and frail—not Athasian elves at all! One elf was

faster and stronger than his fellows, the elf named

Coraanu. When the rest of his tribe decided to settle

down and build cities like the slumbering humans,

Coraanu refused to join in. He was a runner, and the

wanderlust danced in his feet and sang in his blood! He

laughed at his tribe and ran in search of wealth and

adventure.”

Utaa lets the music move her, her body dancing to the

beat of the instruments and her own singsong words. Her

voice low and husky, she sings on, “Coraanu raced across

the stars by night, avoiding the heat of the day and the

eyes of his slow, clumsy enemies. His feet barely touched

each glowing step in the night-sky road, and he carried

only the most precious items with him. Some were his at

the start, others were found along the way, taken from

those with slow minds and slower bodies.

“For a trader’s year Coraanu ran,” the elf woman tells

her tribe, letting her words gain speed to match the build-

ing rhythm. “He rested by day, taking a single nibble of

his loaf and a single swallow from his waterskin before

resuming his race when the sun left the sky. When he

could not run and could not win by wits and cunning,

Coraanu won by war. He wielded a wicked blade of glow-

ing iron that cut through foes with a brutal, savage joy.

None were his equal—and only fools chose to stand

against him as he sped through the night.

“He raced across the sky, gathering followers from

among the slumbering tribes,” Utaa sings as Botuu

dances through the crowd. He taps a male here, a woman

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there, a child by his side, motioning for them to join him

in his story dance as Utaa’s words fill the camp. “Elves

with restless spirits and courageous hearts flocked to his

side, and Coraanu became chief of a new, growing tribe.

He decided to leave the slow, settled elves behind to find

a place where his elves could run free.

“‘We shall run as far and as fast as our legs will take

us,’ Coraanu told his tribe. ‘We shall run day and night

on roads of clouds and paths of stars. We will carry all the

food and water we can, never stopping until our wa-

terskins run dry. Then, with nothing to sustain us but

heart and courage, we will run still more until we find a

place to dance and hunt and run as we please.’”

The music builds in intensity, pulsating through the

crowd of frenzied dancers. Now other elves leave the cir-

cle to join Botuu—Coraanu—as he dances/runs in the

center of the crowd.

“On and on Coraanu ran,” Utaa’s voice informs the

gyrating crowd. “Some of his new tribe could not keep up,

so they were left behind. But those who raced beside him

became stronger with every long stride. Every step

stretched them, adding length to their limbs and height

to their lithe, powerful frames.

“When so many nows had passed that not a single elf

could count them, Coraanu and his followers stepped

down into the flat, unmarred Athasian wilderness,” the

elf woman sings with gladness and awe, throwing her arms

wide. A lyran joins in, its strings vibrating with unre-

strained joy as Utaa sings. “The land stretched in all

directions like the endless width and breadth of the sky.

There was game to hunt and enemies to battle, room to

run and no walls to choke them in.

“‘This wilderness is ours!’ Coraanu cried out. ‘It

belongs to the elves, and any who dispute that will taste

our elven blades!’ The others added their voices to his

song, and Coraanu looked upon the people he had gath-

ered. As the song and celebration continued, Coraanu

danced among the elves. He formed them into smaller

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groups and danced with each for a time, finally singing

out a name before spinning away to the next group. The

name suited each group, and one at a time they danced

away from the others. Thus were the tribes born; thus did

the elves claim the endless wilderness as their home.”

Utaa pauses, letting her ballad rest between the beats

of the music so that anticipation can build. She spins

beside Botuu, matching his frantic steps for a time. Then

she twirls away and sings, “Finally, only one group

remained. These were the best of the elves that ran with

Coraanu—the strongest, the swiftest, the smartest. This

was the tribe he had always dreamed of leading.

“‘You are the Star Racers,’ Coraanu proclaimed. ‘Let

this celebration continue through every now to come, so

that you will always remember the time when we ran

across the sky and found this wilderness to sustain our

bodies and our ways!’”

Utaa dances into the crowd, fading away so that only

Botuu remains as focus and spoke in this living wheel.

He leads the crowd through moves and steps so fast and

furious that they seem almost supernatural. For this

moment, he is truly Coraanu, the first Star Racer, and

these are his ardent followers. The dance continues, car-

rying each elf on a wild, savage ride as the music reaches a

furious beat. Legs and arms pump, heads rock from side

to side, and joyous screams vibrate through the camp.

Then, all at once, the music ends and the dancers

drop exhausted to the ground. Silence fills the air as

loudly as the sounds of elven instruments did but a

moment before. The song of creation, however, remains.

It echoes in every elf’s heart and soul, there to be remem-

bered when next the music plays. . . .

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Any discussion on Athasian elves must start with the

obvious—the things we can see, hear, and feel. There is

no mistaking an elf for a human or a mul, for example,

because we can see that the elf stands taller and is leaner

in form. We can touch the thick, callused skin of a dwarf

and note how much more rugged it is as compared to the

smoother, sleeker elven flesh. This is not to say that elves

display no evidence of wilderness life—just that elves

weather it differently than other races.

The desert runners tower over halflings as the Dragon

towers over all. From a purely visual perspective, the only

thing these two races share is a tendency to be in top

physical condition. Of the most common races, only

half-giants and thri-kreens grow larger than Athasian

elves, though neither has an elf’s grace or pleasing form.

All of this falls under the heading of physical nature.

There are certain physical traits, attributes, and bodily

functions that all the elves of Athas share. From appear-

ance and stature to natural physiological abilities and

the effects of aging, elves are very different from the other

races of Athas. This suits them just fine, for the elves con-

sider themselves as beings above and apart from all

others.

Elves Under a Dark Sun

The crimson sun blazes in the sky, casting light and broil-

ing heat upon sorcerer-king and slave alike. On the arid,

barren plains of the Tablelands, where the last remnants

of civilization huddle around pools of brackish water and

clumps of withered vegetation, the elves of Athas run

free.

To an elf of the Tablelands, the hot wind offers a

promise of adventure, and the burning sun provides a

challenge to be met head on. Only the best survive the

fires of Athas’s wilderness, for they are made strong like a

bowl in a craftsman’s kiln. While any elf is quick to

admit that others come through the challenges of sand

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and sun intact, few races do it as well or with as much fer-

vor as those of elven stock.

Thousands of elf tribes wander the dunes and steppes

of the Tyr region. They compete with each other and with

the other races, battling for the food and water that will

keep them strong. Moreover, the elves recognize no

boundaries beyond the limits of the walls of the city-

states (and even these they pay only surface homage to).

As such, every mile of stony barrens, scrub plains, and

salt flats is their territory; every caravan and solitary trav-

eler fair game. Most tribes stake out a particular area for a

time, wandering a specific path for months or even years.

Then, when the mood strikes them, they abandon the ter-

ritory for whatever lies over the heat-soaked horizon.

Athasian elves are forged in the endless desert

—burned dark by the sun, toughened by the swirling

sand, and given strength and speed by the constant wind.

Legends proclaim this and songs make it fact, for an

elven adage states, “If we sing of it, it must be so.” Elves

are tall, usually standing between 6½ and 7½ feet. As

with all races, there are a few exceptions to these generali-

ties, but most elves fall within these parameters. They are

thin for their height, lean, and always appear in peak

physical condition.

An elf’s limbs are slender and longer than his body

size would indicate. His legs seem to stretch forever, and

it is easy to see why he is a born runner. Though lean, his

limbs are not as fragile and weak as they might appear.

Long, slender muscles ripple inconspicuously beneath

robust, weathered flesh, giving the elf strength to flourish

under the dark sun.

Unlike the elves of other campaign worlds, Athasian

elves are not pale-skinned, delicate beings. Athasian

elves’ pigmentation is as varied as the flesh of other races

and as affected by the rays of the sun. They grow no facial

hair, but the locks atop their heads come in all colors

—from sun-bleached blond to red to brown to darkest

black. Finally, there are no subraces of Athasian elves.

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They are not divided into High or Grey or Drow. There

are only elves, and the only allegiance they hold to is that

afforded their own particular tribes.

Physical Pursuits

Elves are seen as lazy and deceitful, and in most ways

they are. They strive to lead short, happy lives as opposed

to long, sad ones. If work can wait for even another

moment, then it will. For an elf, the future is a dark,

deadly place, so he or she strives to make every now as

enjoyable and full as possible.

Still, elves do work. In some ways, they work harder

than members of other races. Because they do not farm

and the only herd animals they raise are kanks, elves

must spend a lot of time and energy hunting and foraging

in order to supplement their diets. While they detest

hard labor and will never voluntarily set out to construct

anything more durable than a tent or small hut, they will

spend hours on end haggling and negotiating with poten-

tial customers.

If captured and forced to toil as slaves, elves will seek

the first opportunity to escape. Only a few of those who

cannot escape survive in captivity. Elven spirits crave free,

open spaces, and many elf slaves quickly succumb to the

claustrophobic cells, the restricting chains, and the joy-

less labor.

In the wild, elves temper hard work with frenzied feast-

ing and raucous revelry. For every hour spent working, two

are spent celebrating the now. “What good is the work,”

an elf adage asks, “if you do not take the time to enjoy its

fruits?”

There are certain physical pursuits that elves do not

consider tiring or boring. For example, an elf can practice

with her long bow and long sword for days on end. She

finds joy and fulfillment in honing her martial skills.

Likewise, another elf spends every waking moment study-

ing magic or thieving techniques if the rest of the tribe

will let him. Try to get the same devotion out of a herder,

and he’ll just laugh as he seeks some diversion to fill one

of his frequent breaks.

This attitude makes other races think of elves as lazy.

Elves apply considerable energy to activities others con-

sider frivolous, while spending as little time as possible in

“gainful” endeavors. Dwarves and humans toil the day

away, but elves dance and laugh and run and sing. In fact,

they have raised celebrating to an art form. There is noth-

ing as beautiful or captivating as an elven dance, nothing

as inspiring as the haunting music produced by elven

instruments.

Between constant practice and naturally quick

reflexes, elves are lightning fast in combat. Their swift-

ness makes them extremely dangerous enemies, and

there are few things more brutal than the savage tech-

niques devised by elf minds. They prefer long, slender

weapons that can be whirled with speed and agility.

Swords and polearms are particular favorites. Elvenmade

weapons are never cumbersome or bulky, for mobility in

combat is preferred over strength of attack. “Strike three

times before your enemy knows you are there,” advises an

elven ballad. The sentiment has become a part of every

elf’s combat philosophy.

Elves will do whatever is necessary to keep themselves

alive and prosperous—but no more. When the work is

done, and not a moment later, the fun begins.

Elven Abilities

Elves have natural abilities that make them unique

among the intelligent races of Athas. To an elf, each dif-

ference makes him that much better than his counter-

parts in other races. While elves do not make a point of

openly degrading the deficiencies in others, they do take

great pride in their own inborn talents. Consummate

merchants to all outward appearances, elves believe deep

down that they are better than everyone else.

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They hold a secret contempt for those things that are

not elven—for those who are slower, less cunning, who do

not know the songs of Athas’s nature. This contempt

even stretches across tribal boundaries. For example, Sun

Runners claim to be faster than Wind Dancers, and

Wind Dancers boast they are craftier than the Silver

Hands.

In the physical realm, elves believe that their form,

speed, strength, and other natural abilities put them at

least one step ahead of Athas’s other beings.

What the Elves of Athas Have

All Athasian elves start with the following abilities:

• Attack Bonus. As proud warriors with warrior tra-

ditions, elves have mastered two specific weapon

types—the long bow and the long sword. This tradition

translates into constant training from an early age, giving

all elf characters a bonus of +1 to their attack rolls when

using these weapon types. However, the bonus only

applies to weapons crafted by the wielder’s tribe. An elf

who uses a long sword or long bow crafted by anyone

else—including a member of another elf tribe—receives

no attack roll bonus.

The bow and sword were the weapons favored by

Coraanu Star Racer, the legendary first chief of the elf

tribes. He chose them because they fit so well with his

long-limbed frame, and in his hands they were deadly in

the extreme. These weapons became the traditional arms

of the elven tribes, and each tribe developed fighting

styles to make best use of their individual crafting tech-

niques. Though every tribe crafts weapons of elven

design, each adds slight variations to make them uniquely

their own. Such variations can be so small as to defy

notice by non-elves, but they make all the difference to

the wielder.

An elf child is trained to become one with his or her

blade and bow, and tribal crafters balance weapons to an

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individual’s specific strengths and weaknesses. This gives

them attack bonuses when using the specially crafted

weapons, bonuses that cannot be employed when using

nontribal bows and swords.

Elf crafters can fashion weapons out of any material

that is available, including metal, but the most common

are crafted from bone and stone.

• Surprise Bonus. Because of their intimate ties with

Athas’s wilderness and wastes, elves gain a surprise

bonus over their opponents when in these areas. Alone

or in the company of other elves, an elf can move with

great stealth through the deserts and steppes of the Tyr

region. Non-elves or mixed groups suffer a –4 penalty to

their surprise rolls when approached by elves.

However, elves do not gain this surprise bonus against

other elves, when they are in the company of non-elves, or

when they are not in the appropriate terrain. This bonus

reflects the fact that elves spend so much time learning

the ways of the desert that they can blend into its natural

flow.

• Infravision. Elvensight, or infravision, enables the

desert runners to see up to 60 feet in darkness. This abil-

ity, they believe, was developed during Coraanu’s race

across the stars, although we know that elves of other

worlds have elvensight as well. In addition, elves have

extremely keen natural vision. They can see farther and

with more clarity than a human or half-elf.

• Ability Adjustments. Being nimble and blessed

with incredible speed, Athasian elves receive a +2 to

their initial Dexterity scores. They also receive a +1 to

their initial Intelligence, reflecting their natural genius.

This intellect suffers from a lack of common sense, how-

ever, giving them a –1 to their initial Wisdom scores. A

high metabolism and relatively weaker physical nature

tends to tire elves out faster (except when running; see

“Elf Run” on the next page). This weakness is reflected

by a –2 penalty to their initial Constitution scores.

• Resistance to Heat and Cold. Athasian elves are

less affected by their world’s temperature extremes than

are other races. For this reason, elves do not suffer as

greatly from the heat of the day or the chill of the

night—and thus they appear less weathered than mem-

bers of other races. The sun still bakes their flesh dark,

and the cold still causes them discomfort, but not to the

same degree as humans, dwarves, and halflings.

Until the temperature climbs above 110°F or dips

below 32°F, elves exhibit no undue stress. They lose no

body water to sweat until the heat of the day surpasses

their tolerance limit, and they do not need to protect

themselves from the night cold until it drops below freez-

ing (a rare but not unheard of occurrence in the Athasian

wastes). This resistance does not, however, extend to mag-

ical or supernatural heat or cold.

• Natural Swiftness. While elves have the same base

movement rate as humans and half-elves (12), they do

not move at the same speed as the shorter, bulkier races.

This inbred swiftness is related to the “elf run,” which

courses through elven systems (see below). In game terms,

elves receive bonuses to their base movement rate

according to their Dexterity scores. Dexterity determines

how swift elves are in normal movement situations (walk-

ing, in combat rounds, etc.), while Constitution deter-

mines swiftness when elves are engaging in long periods

of overland movement.

To determine a particular elf’s natural swiftness, find

his or her Dexterity score on the table on the opposite

page. This table gives a bonus that is then applied to the

elf’s base movement rate. So, while all elves start with a

base rate of 12, most are naturally faster than this base

rate indicates.

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Natural Swiftness Table

Dexterity

Score

12-13

14-15

16

17

18

19

20

Bonus to Base

Movement Rate

+ 1

+ 2

+ 3

+ 4

+ 5

+ 6

+ 7

• Elf Run. If the elves of Athas have one ability for

which they are primarily known, it is running. They con-

dition themselves to speed over sandy and rocky terrain

as their usual method of travel. To an elf, it is dishonor-

able to ride either animal or vehicle when his or her own

legs can do the job as well. (Or better, as most elves

believe.) They attribute their marathon swiftness to a

condition called the “elf run.”

Elves are swift-footed nomads who can cover as many

as 50 miles per day when the “elf run” flows through their

long, pumping legs. Individually and as a tribe, elves can

induce this state of grueling endurance for as many as

seven days in a row before fatigue begins to overtake

them. Elf run is a state of mind that causes adrenaline to

flow which inhibits the tiring nature of an elf’s weaker

constitution.

Elves receive 24 movement points to apply to overland

movement (30 when undertaking a forced march). With

the aid of the elf run, they can add their Constitution

scores to the base movement to determine the distance

they can travel in miles (or points) per day.

An individual elf can induce an elf run with a mini-

mum of concentration (one turn) and a Constitution

check. The Constitution check determines how many

days the elf run lasts before fatigue sets in, as shown on

the Elf Run Table below.

Elf groups of three or more (up to an entire tribe) can

induce a mass elf run using the Constitution score of

the lead runner as the basis for the check. (This is differ-

ent from the rule for other racial types, and the leader

must be either the tribal chief, a clan head, or the elf

with the highest Charisma score—not necessarily the

elf with the highest Constitution.) The lead runner also

grants all members of the group an additional number

of movement points equal to his or her Constitution

score. In a mass elf run, every individual must use the

lead runner’s movement bonus, even if his or her own

bonus would normally be higher. This reflects the fact

that they have become as one for the duration of the elf

run.

A mass elf run requires group concentration for one

hour before beginning a trek, but the runners share each

other’s strength, thus allowing for longer runs. (See the

Mass Elf Run Leader Bonus table below.)

Elf Run Table

Days Before

Roll Equal to

Penalties Begin

Failure/no preparation

1

Constitution Score to Constitution –3

2

Constitution –4 to Constitution –7

3

Constitution –8 to Constitution –10

4

Constitution –11 to Constitution –13

5

Constitution –14 to Constitution –16

6

Constitution –17 or lower

7

Mass Elf Run Leader Bonus

Leader Type

Constitution Bonus

Tribal Chief

+ 3

Clan Head

+ 2

Highest Charisma

+ 1

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If elves must start an elf run with no preparation (as

when they must flee a city marketplace, for example),

they can still run for a full day before they start to

fatigue. Once fatigue begins (after a number of days as

determined by the Elf Run Table above), elves in an elf

run receive a –1 penalty to all attack rolls for each day

they engage in the elf run beyond their predetermined

limit. A full day’s rest is required to remove one day’s

penalty.

What the Elves of Athas Don't Have

Athasian elves do not receive some of the abilities avail-

able to elves of other campaign worlds. The common

abilities not available to them are as follows:

• Spell Resistance. Athasian elves have no special

resistance to spells, including sleep- and charm-related

spells. As a race, the elves of Athas never had a chance to

develop these resistances—or perhaps they lost them as

the years of magic deprivation took a toll.

• Find Secret and Concealed Doors. The elves of

Athas are nomads who dwell in the deserts and wastes.

They shun settlements except for brief stops to trade or

steal. Because of this, they never developed any special

abilities for spotting hidden portals.

• Attack Bonuses. Athasian elves receive no attack

bonuses other than those described above. Remember,

the only weapons that grant them such bonuses are tribal

elf-crafted long bows and long swords.

• Surprise Bonus. Only the surprise bonus described

above is available to Athasian elves. It is terrain specific

and does not apply to other situations.

• Communion. This ability, described in PHBR8,

The Complete Book of Elves, faded away on Athas, per-

haps because Athasian elves are so fiercely independent.

It is not available to the desert runners.

• Manifestation. Another ability described in The

Complete Book of Elves, manifestation never developed

for the elves of Athas. Athasian elves already have a

daunting presence and do not need additional help to

impress others.

• The Reverie. Athasian elves have much shorter

life spans than the elves of other worlds. For this reason,

they must engage in normal sleep patterns, complete

with dreams and nightmares. While the condition

known as the reverie (see The Complete Book of Elves)

is not unheard of, it is extremely rare in Athasian elves

and must still be supplemented by regular periods of

sleep.

Stages of Life

Athasian elves do not live as long as the elves of other

campaign settings. In fact, on average both half-giants

and dwarves live longer than the desert runners. Death is

a very real part of life on Athas, and only the strongest,

craftiest and luckiest elves live to see old age, let alone to

die a peaceful, natural death. They have no sense of

sweeping periods of time, or of the broader range of val-

ues that go with such longevity, for elves naturally live

only to around the age of 140 years.

Unlike elves of other worlds, Athasian elves do not

mysteriously disappear after a certain stage in their lives.

There is no hidden elven homeland that calls to them,

no otherworldly realm waiting to welcome them with eter-

nal rewards. To the elves of Athas, there is only the now.

They live in the moment, perhaps to an even greater

degree than humans and halflings.

They do share a few traits with their non-Athasian

counterparts. Aging is not as radical a transition to elves

as it is to other races. There is little outward difference

between an adult elf and an old elf. Only when they

reach venerable age (100 years old and beyond) do elves

begin to display obvious signs of wear. Even these signs

are slight and mild when compared to a venerable

human; in elves, their hair begins to dull and turn gray,

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their shoulders stoop slightly, and their reflexes start to

slow. But they do not suffer the crippling diseases of old

age, such as senility, that plague humans.

Like other races, elves go through a variety of stages of

life. From childhood to adolescence, adulthood through

middle age, and to old age and beyond, the elves of

Athas dance and steal their way from birth to often-

violent death. The Athasian Elves Stages of Life Table on

page 17 lists the passages described in the following text

and provides details on adjusting elf characters as they

progress through life, for even elven abilities rise and fall

as each now passes. These changes vary slightly from the

table in the DARK SUN® Rules Book in order to repre-

sent the differences between elves and the other races of

Athas.

Childhood

Elf children develop at much the same rate as do human

children, except that they begin to crawl and stand much

earlier in their development. They learn to run when

humans are learning to walk, and by the age of two they

can run with the tribe when speed is not a necessity.

Adult elves carry their children in back harnesses or on

their shoulders when the tribe must make an overland

run.

Prior to learning to run, elf children do not have

names as such. They are called by descriptive terms or

nonsense names, such as Little One or Flop Ears. An elf

child receives her first true name based upon the first

interesting thing she does after learning to run.

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By the time an elf is four years old, he or she has grown

to nearly 3 feet. Most of this height is in an elf’s legs,

which are long, lean and strong. Now the elf child can

run alongside the adults and begin to learn the skills

needed to perform as a member of the tribe.

As elves never completely lose their childish ways (it’s

a part of their makeup), elf children are encouraged to

play. Much of their play has educational benefits, for

elven amusements include races, games whose objective

is to steal items from other tribe members, and mock

combat with practice bows and swords. Through these

activities the children learn the basics of warfare, desert

survival, haggling, thievery, raiding, and many of the

social customs of their tribes. Other types of play have no

other purpose than to entertain and create joy. These

include many elven dances and silly games of luck and

nonsense.

Childhood is not all fun and games, however. Elves,

like the desert that spawns them, are hard parents. They

provide no comfort to their young, no soft shoulders to

cry upon. Elf children must learn that although they are

part of a tribe, they are also on their own. They must learn

to be brave and to stand on their own, no matter what

anguish or heartache assails them. They must learn to be

elves.

As young elves gain more strength and height, they

begin to take on jobs to help the tribe. From around the

age of 10, elf children are expected to assist with simple

chores as a precursor to the apprenticeships to come.

Adolescence

Between the ages of 13 and 17; elves undergo radical

changes as they mature. By the time adolescence ends,

both male and female elves have reached their full height

and have learned enough to take on adult roles and

responsibilities in the tribal community.

Adolescence is a time of structured learning, wherein

adult elves instruct young ones in the business of the

tribe. There are no roles specific to the sexes (with the

exception of childbirth), and males and females learn the

same things. For the first year or two, young elves learn as

much as they can in as many subjects as possible.

Besides formal training in wilderness lore and survival,

archery, swordplay, and tribal customs, they also receive

instruction in trade practices, hunting, tending herds,

raiding, and other profitable ventures.

When an elf reaches the age of 15 or so (or when a

chief or other tribal leader feels the elf is ready), he or she

is apprenticed to an adult. Whatever area the elf has

shown particular talent in becomes the focus of this

learning period. If, for example, an elf demonstrates a

knack for magic, he or she becomes a pupil of the tribe’s

mage. Others are apprenticed to hunt masters, scouts,

herders, trade leaders, war chiefs, clerics, or some other

experienced adult—all for the purpose of learning spe-

cific skills and honing natural abilities.

Even this period of growth is not all work and study.

Elves must also learn to enjoy and appreciate the now,

and new entertainments are introduced to help accom-

plish this. Many of these entertainments involve interac-

tion with the opposite sex, and more and more often

adolescents are allowed to participate in adult dances

and festivities.

As elves approach their eighteenth year of life, they

begin to prepare for the tribal ceremonies that will usher

them into adulthood. Some may be granted the full rights

and responsibilities of adulthood as early as their six-

teenth year, while others must wait until the age of 20 or

beyond to engage in the tests and initiations of the tribe.

Adulthood

Simply because an elf is born to a tribe doesn’t mean he

or she automatically gains full membership tights. While

there are specific privileges afforded those of a particular

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tribe’s blood, for an elf to reach adulthood he or she must

pass the tribe’s rites of initiation. Elves are considered

ready to face these grueling tests when they reach their

full height and have demonstrated not only bravery and

mastery of a particular job, but when the tribe’s leaders

determine the time is right.

Elf children receive names based on the first interest-

ing thing they do when initially learning to run. These

names may change when they reach adulthood, for often

the rites of passage suggest new, more appropriate desig-

nations. Long-standing traditions determine what form a

particular rite of passage will take, as well as the signs

given to a tribe’s element singers (clerics) during periods

of reflection. While dangerous, few rites are deadly, and

most adolescents ascend into adulthood with little trou-

ble. However, young elves who suffer from maladies or

extremely weak constitutions may not survive the tests

placed before them.

Some may see this as cruel, but the lifestyle of the

desert runners leaves no room for those who cannot hold

their own. “Run, or be left behind,” proclaims an elven

adage. That is the truth and the reality of life on Athas.

Adult elves are in the prime of their lives. They feel

invincible and full of energy, ready to live every now to the

fullest and face anything the wastes can throw in their

way. They proudly take their place in the tribe. Never in

their lives have elves been more free, and everything they

do affirms the strength and independence of their spirits.

While most elves remain with their tribes, a few

decide to take up a life of wandering. Those who become

adventurers by choice must fulfill the curiosity and long-

ings that sing in their souls. Those who do so because of

circumstance are often a sadder lot, for something has

forcibly ripped them away from their tribes. They could

have been captured as slaves, or cast from their tribes for

some unspeakable transgression. Some are the lone sur-

vivors of a desert war, others the remaining members of

tribes that fell to the deadly nature of Athas’s untamed

Elf adventurers who leave their tribes voluntarily or

because they were forced to by nontribal agents may stay

away for years on end, but eventually the songs of elven

blood call them home. When they return, their tribes

typically welcome them with open arms and wild celebra-

tions.

Those who are cast out of their tribes or who have no

tribe to return to feel a similar call, but they have no way

to answer its summons. These elves must find a way to

stay focused on the now or yearnings for dead yesterdays

and impossible tomorrows may drive them mad.

wastes.

Athasian Elves Stages of Life Table

Childhood

Adolescence

1-12

13-17

Adulthood\*

Middle Age\*\* Old Age†

Venerable††

Maximum

18-49

50-66

67-77

100+

100+2d20

\* Full normal abilities

† –2 Str/Con, –1 Dex; +1 Wis

\*\* –1 Str/Con; +1 Int/Wis

†† –1 Str/Dex/Con; +1 Int/Wis

Note: Modifiers to abilities are cumulative per age category. For example, the total ability adjustments to an Athasian elf of venerable age would

be as follows: –4 Str, –2 Dex, –4 Con, +2 Int, and +3 Wis. Intelligence and Wisdom scores cannot be increased above 20 except by magical

means. All abilities can never deteriorate below the following minimums except by magical means: Str 5, Dex 12, Con 8, Int 8, Wis 5, Cha 5.

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Middle Age

At the age of 50, Athasian elves enter middle age. Now

they begin to slow, though few non-elves can perceive any

change. Disease and injuries become more prevalent,

but not to the extent that middle-aged humans must

endure. These elves know their own capabilities, when to

push forward and when to retreat. They have gained some

wisdom, and they constantly seek new challenges and

diversions to make the now more enticing.

Athasian elves who survive to middle age typically

choose to become the leaders of their tribe. They turn to

teaching, seeking to pass on what they have learned to the

next generation of elves. Some continue to adventure,

especially those who have no other choice, but most

return to their tribes in order to participate in the daily

dance of survival.

Old Age

Around the age of 67 or so, an elf begins to show visible

signs of age. This is the beginning of an elf’s twilight

years, when old age sets in and the end becomes a tangi-

ble possibility. Not the end that every elf faces every

day—the possibility of violent death that marks each now

under Athas’s crimson sun—but an end that comes

from weariness and fatigue, that creeps up like a thief in

the night to steal away the now and all nows to come. Old

elves must make a concentrated effort to run and stay in

the lead, for to rest for even a moment is to invite the end

to catch up and overtake the runner.

These elves do not look old to members of other races.

Although they no longer appear as vital young runners,

by no stretch of the imagination do they look like they are

on their last legs. To other elves, however, looking upon

elves who have reached old age is to look into the very

depths of night. It saddens them to see the once-proud

racers slow, to know that their limbs have lost vitality and

speed, that their aim is no longer true and sure. But the

younger elves also rejoice at the knowledge these elders

have gained, for they seek their wisdom when faced with

problems or indecision.

Venerable Age

The dark years for an Athasian elf begin around his or

her hundredth birthday. Age has finally begun to take a

significant toll on the elf, and the years can now be seen

in both body and bearing. Hair that was once shiny and

full full of color has dulled and turned to gray. Wrinkles

spread across weathered features, and pain starts to

intrude upon limbs that once knew only vitality. Though

a venerable elf is in much better physical condition than

the average human of comparable age, he or she is far

from the excellent form of youth.

Sometime between the start of old age and the onset

of venerable age, an elf finds that he can no longer keep

up with his tribe. Many simply fall behind and die, losing

the will to live. Some, however, refuse to lose the now with-

out a fight. These ancient elves become hermits, living as

best they can in the bleak wilderness. A few even find a

place among other non-elf tribes, for the knowledge and

skills they bring to a struggling settlement can mean the

difference between survival and death. Of course, such

non-elf communities must overcome their natural aver-

sion and distrust of the desert runners to even contem-

plate such an arrangement.

If an elf can survive all the hazards of life on Athas

into her venerable age, then she can expect death by nat-

ural causes to finally catch up with her sometime before

her one hundred-fortieth birthday. When a venerable elf

passes from the world in such fashion, it is said that all

the tribes across the deserts mourn. At such a rare and

poignant time, the songs of grief can be heard echoing

across the dunes like the cries of the world itself, carried

on the hot, boiling winds.

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Elves and Half-Elves

The elves of Athas may have an instinctive distrust of out-

siders, but they must still deal with them from time to time.

As so often happens in the wilds and in the cities, some-

times the two find common ground. In the case of humans,

whether through force or shared passions, children of

mixed heritage are born into the world: the half-elves.

Half-elves are generally taller than humans, but rarely

They will work with half-elves, but few will call a half-elf

friend. Elven tradition demands that children born from

the union of elf and human be left for lirrs and other

predators, and some tribes even drive out mothers of

such children. A half-elf born in a city has a greater

chance to survive, as humans do not have a comparable

tradition. Still, life is not easy for half-elves. Elves distrust

the half-elf’s human side, and humans have no faith in

the elf side.

grow as tall as their elf parents. Most stand between 6

Half-elves go through life as outsiders, developing self-

and 6½ feet. However, half-elves are not as lean as desert

reliance in order to survive. They may go out of their way

runners, for they inherit some of the bulk of their human

to find acceptance among their parents’ people, but

side. In most cases, it is easier for a half-elf to pass himself

rarely does this acceptance come their way. Typically, they

off as a human than as an elf, but elven features can be

grow to adulthood as loners, seeking to hide their mixed

spotted if one looks closely enough.

heritage as best they can in order to avoid the discrimina-

Elves have no tolerance for mixed children. Humans

tion that waits to batter them with angry words and dis-

are more accepting, but only in certain circumstances.

trustful glances.

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What do I contemplate as I run beneath the crimson

sun? What thoughts occupy my silent reverie? Do I pon-

der the now among the rolling dunes, listening to my

heart pound a tune and my blood sing its sweet life song?

Do I dwell on the adversity that chases behind me, for its

jaws are wide and hungry, and its hot, foul breath scalds

me with hardships and misfortune? Or do I consider

death, awaiting me over the approaching crest and in the

cracked canyon, behind the rise of rubble and around

the next bend?

With these choices, how can the other races ask such a

question? How can a dwarf look behind and a human

look forward when either direction is as endless and as

bleak as the burning wastes? I think of the now and revel

in its moment! I dance to the music of the elf run! I sing

the joy of today that swirls in my head!

What do I contemplate as I run beneath the crimson

sun? I ponder the now, for anything else is too terrible to

imagine!

—from Utaa Star Racer’s

‘Song of the Elusive Now’

World View

The minds of Athasian elves are complex and full of

seemingly blatant contradictions. They love to laugh and

play, yet they are as hard and unforgiving as the vast

desert they run through. They are savage warriors, but not

bloodthirsty killers. They easily switch mindsets like

nobles in the city-states change wardrobes, operating as

vicious raiders one moment and friendly traders the next.

They appear lazy, lacking the motivations that drive other

races. When necessary, however, they can become indus-

trious workers, toiling with as much zeal as the hardiest

dwarf until the work ends—then they put as much effort

and even more energy into the wild celebration that fol-

lows. To outsiders, they are untrustworthy liars. To their

tribe mates, they are loyal and true.

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How do elves justify this seemingly unbalanced

behavior? In truth, they feel that no justification is neces-

sary. They simply live according to their world view, which

holds that only the moment is important—the moment,

or what the elves call the “now.” The now is time as it

exists, the present, where every being resides. To waste

time recalling the past or contemplating the future lets

the now slip away. Lost nows are gone forever, and with

them are lost that many brief chances for happiness in

this world of unrelenting grief.

To preserve these easily lost nows, elves live every

moment in expressive joy. This outward celebration hides

a deep sorrow, however, for every elf knows that tomorrow

will be worse than today. Nothing can change that fact.

All elves can do is keep moving, hoping to stay ahead of

the misfortune and tragedy that follow on their heels like

hungry thri-kreen.

To an elf, the goal of life is to live a short, happy exis-

tence. They have no desire to endure a long, cheerless

one. An elf knows that death and hardship are his con-

stant companions in his journey through the Athasian

wastes, so he does everything he can to make the now

more enjoyable. This outlook should not be mistaken for

a suicidal nature, just a very short-ranged view of life. All

elves want to live the now to the fullest; they don’t want to

imagine all the dreadful nows to come (and the inevitable

death that waits in ambush among them).

Unlike elves from other worlds, the desert runners

have no patience. They are always in a rush, figuratively

and literally racing to stay in the now. Emotional in the

extreme, elves seem driven by the whims of the moment.

This, they feel, is simply a reflection of the world they live

in, where fate changes as quickly as the desert breeze.

Elves are free spirits, content with living a nomadic

existence. They derive a portion of their daily joy by

relenting to the wanderlust that sings in their long limbs.

Only when hunting and foraging fail to meet their needs

do elf tribes put aside their wanderings and turn to trad-

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ing and raiding for sustenance. They do not consider

these activities to be good or evil. They are simply alterna-

tive ways of making the most of the ever-elusive now.

Intelligence and Wisdom

Elves have an inherent tendency to be highly intelligent.

This intelligence manifests itself not as introspection and

complex planning but as intuitive leaps of genius in the

now. They can determine the best course of action from

moment to moment, thinking on their feet with nearly

flawless mental agility. They can formulate plans in an

instant, reasoning their way through the most unexpected

situations. This high level of intelligence makes elves very

comfortable with magic, whether they are gathering spell

components or practicing spellcraft themselves.

High intelligence must be tempered with common

sense, however, and this is a trait most elves are deficient

in. Nature has not been generous with elves as far as wis-

dom is concerned. In practice, elven genius can seem

undirected because of poor judgment or a lack of

willpower. While elves understand and appreciate magic

(at least more so than the general population), they have

little understanding of the spheres clerics operate in.

Thus, elf tribes often have significantly fewer clerics than

mages.

Elves and Outsiders

On Athas there are endless ways to die. Besides the nat-

ural hardships of thirst, hunger and heat, there are the

countless enemies that Coraanu Star Racer made when

he ran across the sky. These enemies include halflings,

humans, dwarves, half-giants, muls, thri-kreen, and the

horde of lesser races and creatures struggling to survive

the now. Even other elves are grouped among these ene-

mies and potential enemies, for Athas makes desperate

people turn to desperate means.

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To elves, all outsiders are potential enemies. Everyone

they meet is presumed guilty of a future crime, and it falls

upon the outsiders to prove their trustworthiness and

friendship. Anyone not of a particular elf’s tribe is an

outsider—including other elves. The concept of racial

unity means nothing to the elves of Athas. Severe desper-

ation and common greed have shown them that anyone

can turn on them, so they must remain vigilant and on

guard whenever “outsiders” are around.

This view of outsiders helps form the elven code of

ethics, which states that when dealing with outsiders, no

code of ethics applies. Because they believe that out-

siders are potential enemies waiting to take advantage of

them (or worse), elves feel that it is in their own best inter-

est to take advantage first. This includes lying, cheating,

stealing, tricking, and swindling outsiders at every oppor-

tunity. This free-for-all attitude means that everything is

fair game—property, people, and territory.

The true dividing line in an elf’s mind centers on his

or her concept of equality. All members of a given tribe

are equal. All outsiders are less than equal. If an elf can-

not look upon someone as his equal, then he cannot treat

that person with the same respect he affords the members

of his tribe. To an elf’s way of thinking, only the fastest,

strongest and smartest can survive the hardships of the

now. Those who do it best are the members of his tribe.

Everyone else is less successful at surviving (sometimes

despite evidence to the contrary), and it is the elf’s obliga-

tion to take advantage of that inequality. Of course, if an

outsider can prove he is the elf’s equal, then the rights

afforded other members of the tribe are extended to

include the outsider. Until then, there are no limits

imposed on the elf, either by conscience or concern.

To an elf trader, there is no professional pride concern-

ing quality of goods or guarantee of services. In fact, hag-

gling a higher price than an item is worth provides

enjoyment for the merchant and makes her feel success-

ful. To an elf raider, all property falls into two cate-

gories—what’s hers and what will soon be hers. Outsiders

have no substantial claims to the items they possess. Even

artificial boundaries mean nothing to an elf. Doors,

locks, walls, and fences are only as sturdy as the warriors

protecting them (which is why most elf tribes pay at least

outward respect to the walls of the city-states).

Only time and tests of trust can cause an elf tribe to

accept an outsider. More often (though still rare as far as

the number of occurrences go), individual elves will

accept outsiders who have befriended them and earned

their trust.

Tribal Bonds

The rules of conduct (or lack thereof) that govern an elf’s

dealings with outsiders do not apply once you enter the

tribal community. Within the tribe, elves must obey a

strict code of honor. There are definite limits and guide-

lines, established by tribal law and tradition, concerning

the liberties that can and cannot be taken with the rights

of other tribe members. Two major factors contribute to

the trust and loyalty that elves demonstrate to their tribe

mates: the elven concept of equality and the need every

desert dweller has for aid and companionship.

Elves have no problem treating those they consider

less than their equals with disdain and deceit. This view

allows them to carry out their normal business practices

without guilt or shame. By tradition, however, all full

members of a tribe are equal. With this equality comes a

special rule of elven conduct: treat those who are your

equal as you yourself want to be treated. Remember, only

members of an elf’s tribe and a few select outsiders ever

receive this level of equality. By definition, outsiders can-

not be an elf’s equal until they have not only proven their

trustworthiness, but have also passed trials similar to the

elven rites of passage—just like the elf’s tribe mates.

Like all those who seek to survive in Athas’s burning

wilderness, elves need the help and companionship of

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those they can depend on. They must be able to place

their lives in the hands of others and trust that those

hands will not fail. No matter what peril springs up in an

elf’s path, as long as he is the member of a tribe he never

has to face the peril alone. All tribe mates are brethren,

defending each other from every danger that comes

along. A tribe is a close-knit community, an extended

family that takes care of its own. Even the most fiercely

independent elf needs help from time to time, and his

tribe mates are always nearby to provide it.

This is not to say that every member of every tribe

loves (or even likes) each other, but they all offer the same

amount of respect and assistance they wish to receive in

return. If there is one thing in all of Athas that an elf can

count on, it is the support of his or her tribe.

The bonds of tribal loyalty are like ancient steel,

forged in the fires of adversity and linked by the chains of

tradition. “Care for each other as you would have the

world care for you,” Coraanu Star Racer told the mem-

bers of his tribe (according to accepted legends sung by

ritual dancers). All elves know that Athas has no regard

for those who inhabit its wastes, so they find comfort in

the bosom of their tribes.

Members of a tribe stand together against every hard-

ship the now may hold. The elements, outsiders, even the

land itself will rise against the tribe. That is the way of

things on Athas, and it is no more and no less than an elf

expects. But the elves face these challenges as one,

stronger for every elven link in the tribal chain. “If you

need me, my run brother, I will be there,” the elves of the

desert tribes sing. They add, “I am your shadow, your

strong right arm. Know joy since we are one! Find comfort

in our union!” These are more than words to the elves.

These are truths that survive the sun and wind and shift-

ing sand.

Few acts can break the bonds that hold tribes together.

If an elf does transgress against a tribe mate, there are lit-

erally dozens of ways to mend feelings and egos. From

contests of strength and skill to gifts of apology, most

social blunders can be repaired in the context of tribal

life. There are transgressions, however, that require a

greater price be paid. Spilled blood must be compen-

sated with spilled blood, and death (brought on by acci-

dent or intent) must be answered with death. The foulest

crimes usually lead to the guilty party being cast from the

tribe, as elves abhor killing tribe mates. Once outcast, the

abhorrence quickly fades away for the elf is no longer a

member of the tribe. A death sentence can then be car-

ried out if the tribe so chooses.

Independent Spirit

The elves of Athas possess a great love of personal free-

dom and a driving need to remain independent and self-

sufficient. While few elves would willingly trade away

their tribal bonds, all experience a need to be alone regu-

larly to prove their individual worth. It is not uncommon

for an elf to disappear for weeks or even years at a time

when the wanderlust grips her. Besides seeking new joys

in every now, she will seek new challenges to test her met-

tle. Such tests may even include joining up with adven-

turers for a time to face the dangers of the burning world.

At no time is an elf more independent and the need for

self-reliance so great as when an elf travels among non-

elves.

Elven ritual dancers and element singers believe that

this fierce independence comes from the elves’ commu-

nion with the wilderness. There are no walls in the desert

that can long stand against the driving winds and smoth-

ering sands. The wind goes where it wants to go, and it

has taught the elves to do the same. The wind is like the

tribe, the sand like individual elves. Usually the wind car-

ries the group in the same direction, but sometimes indi-

vidual grains will drift away to follow a different breeze.

Eventually, if they are able, the grains will return, but

until then they are on their own.

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An elf needs wide open spaces. She must be able to

run across the horizon, to feel the sun on her skin and the

wind in her hair. She needs to see the sky and touch the

ground. For this reason, most elves do not last when

forced into slavery. The wastes have made the elves a

claustrophobic people. They dislike walls and hate the

feel of bindings, which inhibits their ability to run.

If an elf is captured, he will spend his initial days in

captivity seeking a way to escape. The need to run free

burns in his heart, keeping him focused on the now and

ever alert for some opening to exploit. Once an elf gives

in to despair and loses his hope of freedom, he succumbs

to the rigors of slave life and dies.

Do not think that this love of freedom extends to out-

siders, however. Elves are only concerned with their own

freedom and the freedom of their tribe mates. They will

not go out of their way to set other slaves free. Unless

there is some hope of personal gain involved, an elf will

simply leave an outsider to find his own way out. After all,

if the elf could escape, then anyone who is his equal

should be able to escape, too.

Elves and Love

Their independent spirits allow elves to love freely. Elven

love comes with no obligations or promises beyond the

now. This does not make elven love less intense or less

real than the love exhibited by other races. On the con-

trary, like other elven emotions, love is unrestrained and

overflowing. Elves do nothing halfway. When they com-

mit to love, they commit fully and completely, with every

fiber of their wild souls. However, because they refuse to

think or plan beyond the now, their love can be over in an

instant. It lasts for as many nows as it lasts, then it ends

with no regrets or compromises.

Elves readily fall in love with members of their own

tribe, elves from other tribes, and even with humans—it

all depends on whether the spark fly. (Rumors of elf and

halfling dalliances have yet to be confirmed.) When the

sparks do fly, the love that follows burns like the sun itself,

with heat and passion. But elves cannot stand to be tied

down with obligations any more than they can endure

being bound with ropes and chains. Elven love does not

come with any guarantees or promises other than those of

the moment. For the now, an elf loves fully and without

restraint. Who knows what the next now will bring? Cer-

tainly not the elf, who cannot contemplate the future the

same way members of other races can.

Madness and Elves

Two types of madness often strike at elves, shattering

their fine minds and breaking their soaring spirits. The

first type of madness appears in most elves at one time or

another. This is the madness brought on by confinement,

crowds, or enclosed spaces due to an elf’s natural claus-

trophobia. This madness is rarely disabling. Instead, it

causes depression, mild panic attacks, or even moderate

physical discomfort. In rare cases, it can cause elves to be

gripped by such an intense panic as to become nonfunc-

tional or to even lash out with wild, frenzied attacks.

The other type of madness usually strikes elves who

have lost their tribe through disaster or who have been

cast out. If these elves ever lose the ability to focus on the

now, longings for the past or for futures that will never be

can drive them into a state of depression and insanity.

This form of madness often takes a destructive course,

leading the elves it inflicts toward a quick, violent end.

Elven Honor

To outsiders, it appears as if elves have no concept of

honor. On the contrary, elven honor is as virtuous as

human honor—it just doesn’t apply to anyone who is not

of an elf’s tribe. To those who are considered an elf’s

equal, an elf must behave according to a strict code of

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honor. This code incorporates honesty, integrity, trustwor-

thiness, and virtue (as the terms are understood in the

context of an elf tribe). Those who are an elf’s equal are

afforded rights and given the same considerations the elf

wishes to receive. Property, for example, belongs to who-

ever possesses it, and it is dishonorable for an elf to take

liberties with the property of a tribe mate.

Elven honor never extends to outsiders. Those who are

not members of an elf’s tribe are expected to behave just

as an elf would behave when meeting an outsider—they

are expected to look out for themselves.

However, when an elf finally accepts an outsider as an

equal, the paths to friendship open wide. These friend-

ships often flourish when an elf joins a group of adventur-

ers (by choice or circumstance) and the party passes

whatever tests of trust and friendship the elf devises.

Once an elf accepts an outsider, he or she treats that per-

son with all the honor afforded tribe mates and other

equals. Only acts of severe dishonor and untrustworthi-

ness can break these bonds of friendship.

Mental Pursuits

Elves enjoy thinking that involves their current situation.

They don’t like to dwell on the past, except for an occa-

sional legend that takes the form of a song and dance.

They also do not enjoy contemplating the future, for all

they see are the tragedies to come. But they can spend

countless nows thinking about the moment. In many

ways, elves find more enjoyment in mental activities than

they do in physical ones.

Learning for learning’s sake occupies much of an elf’s

free time. On average, a greater percentage of the elf pop-

ulation can read and write than the populations of other

races. Not only do they study their own written language,

but they make a habit of becoming proficient in the com-

mon language, partially because it is useful when a tribe

engages in trading activities.

Mental challenges make up the majority of elven pas-

times. Puzzles, word and logic problems, and even math-

ematical riddles fill the time on elf runs or when the tribe

is camped. Elves who create challenging problems re-

ceive as much or even more admiration as those who are

quick with solutions. Some of these problems become so

complicated as to take years to figure out, and a few even

become part of a tribe’s tests of passage.

Elves and Magic

Elven intelligence makes the desert runners’ association

with magic almost inevitable. On average, they are the

one race most comfortable with the arcane arts and their

accoutrements. They have no problem gathering and

selling spell components, and they see no inherent evil in

either preservers or defilers. Since they believe that pain

and death are the obvious results of life, then a defiler is

only a single catalyst for the unavoidable outcome. Both

approaches to magic can make the now more bearable, so

both find a place among the elves. Individual tribes may

have restrictions concerning one type of mage or the

other, but in general both are accepted and even wel-

comed among elven ranks. As a personal matter, pre-

servers and defilers do not like each other, so though elves

may not have any bias concerning the two, they will rarely

be found operating in the same tribe.

Whereas other types of tribes may either openly hate

or barely tolerate the presence of a magic user, elven

tribes accept them the same way they accept a good

fighter or a skillful rogue. Mages receive no special con-

siderations within a tribe, but they also receive no undue

restrictions and are not objects of fear and suspicion.

Because of their ready acceptance of magic, elves have

no problems combining arcane mental activities with

more physical training. It is not uncommon, therefore, to

meet an elf who displays skills as a fighter, thief, cleric, or

psionicist along with his or her magical abilities.

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Elves and Clerics

Priestly magic, on the other hand, is as mysterious to elves

as wizardly magic is to the other races. Most tribes offer

positions of power and respect to clerics (whom they call

“element singers”), though they hold those who com-

mune with the elements in awe and feel at least some fear

toward them. Because of this, tribes will rarely have more

than one full element singer among their number, and

never more than two.

Each tribe’s particular traditions often dictate the type

of singers they seek, and if none of that type are born to

the tribe they will try to steal one (literally) from another

tribe. Those clerics born to a tribe who worship an ele-

ment other than what the tribe is dedicated to are

directed to become multiskilled practitioners. These

clerics combine priestly talents with warrior, mage, psion-

icist, and thief skills to better serve their tribes. They are

never afforded the title of element singer.

Elves and Psionics

Because psionics are so vital to life on Athas, the elves

have embraced this field of study with the same enthusi-

asm they show the martial and thieving arts. While elven

attitudes preclude them from developing anything as for-

mal as the schools devoted to the Way of the Mind, elder

psionicists among the tribes teach young talents how to

harness their developing abilities. Even wild talents are

encouraged to practice their skills in order to best use

them for the benefit of the tribe.

Every so often, a talented elf psionicist will leave his or

her tribe to search for a more qualified teacher. Those

who voluntarily reject their tribal affiliation take up plain

brown wrappings to signify this decision, showing all they

meet that they are elves without a tribe. It is rumored that

some of these “brown elves” even find a place among the

legendary Order.

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Another hunt has been successful, another raid has

reaped rewards. We stole from slow-limbed humans, we

traded with dull-witted dwarves. Another day of adversity

assailed us, another day of hardship endured. Now we

put the day behind us, now we set the work aside. Elves,

take up your drums and horns and lyrans! Elves, hear the

music and sing the night’s song!

—from Utaa Star Racer’s

‘Prelude to Revelry’

From the point of view of non-elves, elven society is sav-

age and unpredictable. Few non-elves even admit that

the elves have a society, let alone the rich, varied culture

that truly exists. At best, other races see elves as uncivi-

lized, despite the fact that elven society is made up of

ancient traditions and longstanding customs that go

back at least as far as those remembered by any of the

other races.

While all elves share a number of general traits,

lifestyles, and traditions, each tribe approaches life a little

differently. The information that follows can be taken as

a very generalized view of elven life, without any of the

twists or enhancements made by individual tribes. Also,

where a tribe operates has a way of determining the type

of society it currently adheres to. Elves living in a city-

state, for example, behave differently than their brethren

running across the desert.

It should also be noted that elves are the eternal wan-

derers. In a particular elf’s lifetime, the elf may live in the

desert for a while, take up residence in a city-state market,

return to the desert, live alone in the wilderness, join an

adventuring party, then return to his or her tribe as it wan-

ders the wastes. The elf is likely to start the cycle all over

again, repeating it any number of times as the mood and

circumstances direct. In other words, what may be true of

a tribe and its members one season may be totally false

the next. As the elves see it, “The now is not stable and

fixed in its ways. Neither are we.”

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Tribal Life

Other races normally come into contact with elf mer-

chants or raiders, but the majority of elf tribes operate as

nomads and herders. These are the roles they feel most

comfortable filling. Elves love to wander, and as nomads

they are free to forage and hunt as they travel the desert

wastes. Raising kanks requires almost no special effort, so

elves who are herders have plenty of time for celebration

and revelry.

Tribal life consists of the daily struggle to survive

Athas’s dangers and the constant search for ways to make

each now more enjoyable. Joy comes from a great many

sources, all fleeting, ready to evaporate like a desert pud-

dle. Survival includes not only battling the beings and

creatures that seek to harm them, but finding ways to

obtain their daily requirements of food and water. When

the two primary occupations of trading and herding fail

to meet these needs, then elf tribes are forced to find new

occupations.

Elf tribes normally have one primary leader or chief.

The chief wins his or her post by demonstrating qualities

of leadership—exceptional strength and speed, cunning,

charisma, intelligence, wise planning, and martial skills.

Once named chief, an elf holds the position for life.

Until accident, force of nature, or usurper comes along to

dethrone him, an elf chief remains in charge of his tribe.

Some tribes have adopted different traditions concerning

their chiefs, including limited terms of office, rule by con-

sensus or committee, and even open election. The chief-

for-life pattern is the most prevalent of the governing

systems, however.

An elf chief makes the major decisions concerning

the tribe—where to hunt, when to make camp, when to

run. The chief, either alone or in consultation with other

tribal leaders, determines the nature of the tribe at any

given moment. It is the chief who declares the tribe

herders one season and traders the next. The chief has

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the respect of his tribe, and often its admiration and loy-

alty. Only when a chief is ineffectual or when the tribe is

plagued by successive disasters does this loyalty begin to

wane.

Most tribes select chiefs from the same blood line. A

chief’s son or daughter, while not automatically guaran-

teed to assume leadership upon the death or retirement

of the parent, often takes or is given the crown by tradi-

tion or circumstance. The current leader of the Night

Runners tribe, for example, is Hukaa New Moons. As

the daughter of the previous chief, Traako, she was given

the initial opportunity to prove herself as Traako’s worthy

successor. When the time comes for her to relinquish

leadership, the new chief will probably be one of her chil-

dren, either one of the twins Nuuta and Lobuu, or her

youngest son Haaku. If none of her children demonstrate

the proper qualities of leadership, candidates will come

forth who have blood ties to Hukaa or Traako. Only when

these individuals cannot gain the tribe’s support does the

chiefs position in this tribe open up for another clan or

family to claim. Even then, most tribes have traditions

concerning the order of succession.

Depending on size, a tribe can be made up of a single

family or of many families comprising a number of linked

clans. In smaller tribes, the chief is assisted by leaders

made up of the best the tribe has to offer—the best

hunters, the best warriors, the best traders, and so forth.

The most powerful wizard in the tribe also serves as an

adviser to the chief, as does the tribe’s element singer. In

larger tribes, each clan leader serves as a member of the

tribe’s ruling council. The chief needs these leaders to

help run the tribe and to offer advice, but few chiefs are

bound by council dictates. A chief who ignores his advis-

ers too often, though, can find himself with no supporters

when an usurper makes a claim for his position.

Elves do not spend vast amounts of time huddled in

conference with their chief or following the chief’s orders.

On the contrary, their love of freedom keeps elves from

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becoming embroiled in the complicated court intrigues

that other races constantly gravitate toward. Elven society

is not totally free of these internal games of deceit, but it

does have far fewer examples of them than other societies.

Elves prefer to engage in intrigues that involve outsiders,

leaving the internal workings of a tribe nearly trouble free.

The chief and his or her advisers meet and make deci-

sions when necessary. The rest of the time, tribal elves are

free to do as they see fit, as long as they keep to the elven

code of honor. Within a tribe, all elves are considered

equal. Even chiefs and leaders must abide by the elven

code—their leadership status does not give them dictato-

rial reign over those they lead. They have certain rights

and responsibilities due to their ranks, but no special

privileges beyond those granted them by the elves they

lead. Even the level and form of their authority is often

dictated by their tribe’s long-standing traditions.

Tribal Occupations

Every tribe engages in some sort of gainful endeavor.

Whether a tribe barters trade goods or forages in the

rocky badlands, elves need to acquire the daily necessi-

ties of life. If they can add a few items of personal value

along the way, just for the joy of it, so much the better.

Tribal elves, in general, fill the following occupations:

nomadic herders, hunters, traders, and raiders. In rare

instances, elf tribes can be found working as mercenaries

or engaging in the “shadow arts” of espionage and assas-

sination. Few tribes stick to only one occupation, how-

ever, for circumstances and their own restless natures

often lead elves from one endeavor to another and back

again.

Raising herds is the traditional elven occupation on

Athas. For as long as anyone can remember, elves have

bred kank. While the kank is inferior as a herd animal, it

suits the habits and lifestyle of the elves. The kank can

travel for long periods of time at the rapid pace elves nor-

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mally set. They can eat nearly anything, allowing the elf

tribes that keep them to travel almost anywhere their wan-

derlust directs. Also, kanks are instinctively self-suffi-

cient, requiring little care from the elves. This leaves the

herders free to spend more time finding pleasures in the

now. Kanks do not supply everything an elf tribe needs to

survive, however, so herders must also spend time hunt-

ing and foraging for necessary dietary supplements.

Elf hunters form a vital subunit in nearly all tribes.

While few tribes attempt to survive solely as either

hunters or foragers, almost all tribes use hunters to sup-

plement whatever comprises their primary source of sup-

plies. Because of their knowledge of and connection to

the wastelands, elf hunters are generally more successful

than the hunters of other races. Indeed, legends from

some races claim that when elf hunters sing, prey offers

itself willingly to their arrows. Although elf hunters per-

form song and dance rituals of good fortune prior to a

hunt, no magical connection exists.

Elf hunters do more than stalk and capture creatures

for food and other uses. They also hunt the land, seeking

plants, water, shelter, and performing the duties of scouts,

spotters, and advance guards. “There is more to hunt

than food,” an elven song proclaims, “more prey than

simply desert creatures.”

Many tribes turn to trading at some point in their exis-

tence, finding new challenges and unexpected pleasures

as merchants. Their wandering nature lends itself well to

the trading life, for elf tribes regularly move from place to

place. In their journeys, they find or otherwise acquire

trade goods to bring to market. Elf merchants set up mar-

kets in the city-states, near villages or other settlements, at

oases, and even in the wastes if customers are available.

Elf traders are not known for carrying high-quality goods

(although there are exceptions, and rare items of crafts-

manship and beauty can be found), but they are an

excellent source of banned, illegal, or hard-to-find items.

Spell components, magical items, and rare goods are the

elf merchant’s stock-in-trade, though a customer is as

likely to purchase a fake article as a genuine one. Elf

traders do not set up merchant houses as such, and only

a select few establish any kind of permanent facilities.

The rest remain constantly on the move, trying to stay

ahead of templars and rival merchant houses, or simply

following their own need to wander.

Elf raiders are rare, but not unheard of in the Tyr

region. Some tribes are forced to become raiders because

of circumstance—sickness, lost herds, poor hunting, or

some other catastrophe that befalls the tribe. To survive,

these elves must prey on other tribes, passing caravans, or

small settlements. Once the tribe is back on its feet, it

usually returns to a prior occupation. However, there are

a few tribes that enjoy raiding, and thus make raiding

their primary endeavor as a matter of choice. These tribes

often add a flourish that human raiders lack—elves pre-

fer to plunder through stealth and thievery as opposed to

ambush and force. This is not to say that elf raiders won’t

use force from time to time, but that they find more chal-

lenge in striking quietly and getting away before an alarm

can be raised. Elves will steal everything they can carry,

but this doesn’t mean they are murderous in that pursuit.

If they can get their bounty without drawing blood, they

will. If they must fight to take what they consider belongs

to them, they will. They are not opposed to killing; they

just don’t make it the focus of a raid.

When times are particularly bad, some elf tribes will

sell their martial skills to those desperate enough to pur-

chase them, becoming mercenaries for hire. Those who

employ elf mercenaries must be more concerned with

what might be after them than with leaving their lives and

property in the protection of “untrustworthy” elves. A

few merchant houses hire elf mercenaries when they can

find them, using them as advance guards for caravans.

Settlements in need of protection also employ elf war-

riors, but they typically find most of their possessions

missing once the mercenaries have departed.

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The “shadow arts” are the rarest of all elf

occupations, and few tribes deal in these dark trades.

Only two such tribes are known to exist in the Tyr

region—the Shadows and the Night Runners. These

tribes specialize in intrigue, espionage, and even murder-

for-hire. They trade in contraband, slaves, and stolen

items. When you need something that someone else pos-

sesses, when you need to smuggle something through the

most elaborate safeguards the sorcerer-kings can devise,

or when you require information that no one else can

obtain, you turn to these infamous elf tribes. The services

of the Shadows and the Night Runners are in great

demand by the heads of dynastic merchant houses, as

well as by nobles, templars, and occasionally sorcerer-

kings—provided these tribes can be found and their

exorbitant prices can be met.

Optional Barter Rules System

Elves are master bargainers, skilled in the arts of decep-

tion, flattery, and haggling. The rules for simple and pro-

tracted bartering presented on page 49 of the DARK

SUN® boxed set Rules Book work very well in most role-

playing game situations. When the thrust of an encounter

is the bartering session, optional bartering rules can be

applied to give the session more flavor. These rules help

visualize the give and take between two haggling parties

and incorporate new rules that reflect the edge Athasian

elves have when it comes to bargaining. If either side feels

that the other’s offer is too outrageous, then the bartering

session can be halted before any dice are thrown. How-

ever, with the first toss of the dice, both sides must accept

the terms decided by the subsequent bartering.

As in the protracted barter system, the Charisma

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scores of the parties involved must be known. The

DUNGEON MASTER™ (DM™) uses the Optional

Barter Table and a marker, such as a die, to track the

progress of the haggling session. The marker is placed on

the True Value space and represents the true market

value of the item in question. True market value can

change, depending on location, supply and demand, and

a host of other factors, so the true value of an item can be

higher or lower on any given day. (The DARK SUN®

boxed set Rules Book, Dune Trader, The Ivory Triangle,

and other accessories contain price lists of common

items haggled over in the markets of Athas.) Then, as

many as three rounds of haggling ensue, following the

rules as outlined below. (Note: An example using these

rules is presented on page 34.)

When two parties come together to trade, three things

are present: an item that one side has and the other side

wants, an offer, and a counteroffer. The offers are the

ideal goals of each side, and the winner of a haggling ses-

sion is the side that gets a price closest to its offer. Offers

cannot exceed 10 times the True Value of an item, nor

can counteroffers be less than 10% of the item’s True

Value.

Using the various accessories listed above or establish-

ing a price of his or her own, the DM decides the true

market value of the item in question (be it a sword, a

kank, a skin full of water, or whatever). He or she sets a die

(or other marker) on the True Value space on the

Optional Barter Table, which represents the market-

value price of the item. (The DM also determines the

opening offer or counteroffer of any NPC participants.)

If one of the participants is an elf, the DM checks for

any applicable bonus on the Elf Charisma Bonus Table

(see the following page). This bonus adjusts the starting

position of the marker toward or away from the elf charac-

ter’s desired goal (either the Offer or Counteroffer end of

the Barter Table). This bonus has no effect after the first

round.

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

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

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Barter Rules Difference Table

Difference Between

Move Item

Die Rolls

Marker

13-16

6 spaces

9 - 1 2

5 spaces

7 - 8

4 spaces

4 - 6

3 spaces

2 - 3

2 spaces

1

1 space

0

No space

After the offer and counteroffer are made, participat-

ing characters who have the Bargain proficiency make

proficiency checks. If their checks are successful, they get

to roll 3d6. All others roll 2d6 and add their totals to

their Charisma scores. The winner (the character with

the higher total of dice roll plus Charisma score) moves

the item marker the number of spaces listed on the

Barter Rules Difference Table toward his end of the

Optional Barter Table.

Either side can end negotiations now, but both sides

must abide by the item’s price as determined by the first

round of haggling.

Note that the item marker can never advance beyond

the Offer or Counteroffer spaces, no matter how many

spaces the Barter Rules Difference Table says to move it.

In this way, a merchant can never receive more than he

asked for, and a customer can never pay less than he

offered.

If either side wishes to continue to haggle over the

item’s price, a second round of haggling occurs. Charac-

ters who have the Bargain proficiency can make checks to

gain an extra die. All other characters roll 2d6 and add

their totals to their Charisma scores. The winner calcu-

lates how much he won the roll by and checks on the

Barter Rules Difference Table to determine how many

spaces the item marker moves in his favor.

Elf Charisma Bonus Table\*

Charisma Score

19-20

17-18

15-16

13-14

7-12

7-8

5-6

Bonus

+4 spaces

+3 spaces

+2 spaces

+1 space

No bonus

–1 space

–2 spaces

\* Adjusts the starting position of the item marker when an elf is trad-

ing with a non-elf, or when an elf trader is dealing with an elf of

another class.

Either participant can end negotiations now, but the

current price of the item being haggled over is binding to

both sides.

If either side wants to try to gain the advantage, a third

round of haggling can occur. It follows the same steps as

the second round, with die-roll winners checking the

Barter Rules Difference Table to determine how many

spaces the item marker moves.

Negotiations end after this round, setting the final

price on the item in question. This final price is binding

to both sides. To calculate the final price, determine the

difference between the True Value and the Offer (or

Counteroffer, depending on which side won). The per-

centage shown is of this difference, which is then added

or subtracted from the True Value to determine how well

the haggling went.

For example, if the winning offer was 30 ceramics, and

the true value was 10 ceramics, the difference would be

20 ceramics (30–10=20). To calculate the final price,

look at where the marker ended movement (assume it was

at 25%). Taking 25% of the difference noted above

(20 cp) yields 5 cp. Add that to the True Value (10 cp),

for a final price of 15 cp (5+10=15).

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Haggling Example

Round One, Role-Playing. One character makes an

offer on the item in question. It doesn’t matter who makes

the first move in a session of haggling. Either the mer-

chant (item owner) or customer (item buyer) can make

the opening offer. The other character then makes a

counteroffer, thus establishing the haggling parameters,

as in the following example.

“I know you want this well-crafted elven sword,” the elf

merchant declares. “Look at the workmanship in the

bone, the loving attention to detail. You’ll be stealing it

from me at 90 silver.”

“It seems like you’re the one doing the stealing, my

friend,” replies the warrior cheerfully. “Look at the chips

along the cutting edge, and that extra gouge in the pom-

mel. It’s not worth more than 30.”

Round One, Game Mechanics. The DM deter-

mines that the bone long sword’s true value, according to

the current market, is 40 sp. He sets the item marker on

the True Value space on the Barter Table.

The elf merchant has a Charisma score of 14. Accord-

ing to the Elf Charisma Bonus Table, this gives her a

slight edge in the negotiations. To reflect this, the DM

moves the item marker one space toward the elf’s end of

the Barter Table, which starts the marker at 10%.

Now the elf makes a proficiency check for her Bargain

proficiency. She needs to roll a 12 or less. She rolls a 5,

granting her an extra die in the haggling roll to come.

The elf merchant rolls 3d6 for a total of 12, which she

adds to her Charisma score: 12+14=26. The warrior

rolls only 2d6 (no Bargain proficiency) for a total of 4. He

adds this to his Charisma score of 16: 4+16=20. The

elf wins. The DM looks up the difference in the totals on

the Difference Table (26–20=6) and moves the item

marker the number of spaces it directs (3 spaces) toward

the elf’s end of the Barter Table (Offer). At the end of the

first round of haggling, the sword’s price has been negoti-

ated up to the true value plus 50% of the difference of

the elf’s opening offer and the true value. This is calcu-

lated by determining how much greater the opening offer

is than the true value (90–40=50 sp), taking 50% of

that number (25 sp), and adding it to the true value. This

places the current negotiated price of the sword at 65 sp

(40+25=65).

The bargaining continues.

Round Two, Role-Playing. The character who made

the opening offer in the first round of haggling makes a

new offer based on what occurred. The other character

then makes a new counteroffer, as follows.

the elf merchant says, giving the warrior her best, most

disarming smile. “Because I have a fondness for humans,

especially male humans, I’ll let you have this priceless

weapon for only 65 pieces of silver.”

“You must take me for a near-sighted dwarf, good sir,”

“And you must take me for a thri-kreen who doesn’t

know the value of currency,” the warrior laughs back. “I

could probably find as many as 35 silver pieces in my

pouches—if I look hard enough.”

Round Two, Game Mechanics. The item marker

starts this round on the 50% space of the Offer side of

the Barter Table, as was determined by the first round of

haggling. So far, things have been going in the elf mer-

chant’s favor. She makes a new check to see if her Bargain

proficiency continues to help her. She rolls a 17—too

high! No extra die for the elf this round.

The elf rolls a 6 on 2d6. Added to her Charisma

score, this gives her a total of 20 (6+14=20). The war-

rior rolls 12 on 2d6, for a total of 28 (12+16=28). The

warrior wins this round, rolling 8 better than the elf. On

the Difference Table, an 8 means the marker moves 4

spaces in the winner’s favor. This slides the marker back

down to the true value space. If negotiations were to end

now, the warrior would be able to purchase the sword for

40 sp.

Both sides agree to continue haggling.

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Round Three, Role-Playing. As in the previous

round, the character who made the opening offer makes a

new offer based on what has occurred so far. The other

character then makes a new counteroffer, as follows.

“You are as shrewd a negotiator as you are powerful a

fighter, my well-built friend,” the elf merchant whispers as

she presses close to the warrior. “What I wouldn’t give to

have someone like you guarding my fine wares. Because I

have grown to like you, I’ll let you have this exquisite

weapon for only 40 silver pieces. What do you say?”

“You flatter me with your fine words, but wound me

with your lofty prices,” the warrior scowls. “I would love to

take that less-than-perfect sword out of your more-than-

perfect hands, but I simply cannot afford to pay more

than 37 pieces of silver.”

Round Three, Game Mechanics. The item marker

starts this round on the true value space, as was deter-

mined by the second round of haggling. The elf makes a

final Bargain proficiency check. She rolls a 15, once

again failing to make use of her skill.

Now the final haggling rolls are made. The elf rolls a

10 on 2d6 for a total of 24 (10+14=24). The charis-

matic warrior again rolls a 12 on 2d6 for a total of 28

(12+16=28). The warrior wins by 4, which the Differ-

ence Table shows as a 3-space-move in the warrior’s favor.

Negotiations end with the sword priced at the true

value of the sword minus 40% of the difference between

the warrior’s opening offer and the sword’s true value

(40 sp – 30 sp = 10; 40% of 10 = 4; 40 – 4 = 36 sp).

Both parties are bound to abide by this price.

Role-Playing, Final Words: “You drive a hard bar-

gain, warrior,” the elf merchant declares. “Because I like

you, I’ll give you the sword for 38 silver.”

The warrior smiles. “And because I like you, I’ll give

you 36 pieces of silver—and not a ceramic more. Take it

or leave it.”

“Very well,” the elf sighs, “36 silver pieces it is. Just

don’t tell anyone how badly you robbed me.”

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City Life

While there are proportionately fewer elves living in the

city-states, their presence is nevertheless felt. There is

always an elf to be found in any given city-state. Elves in

the cities come in three varieties: slaves, merchants, and

free wanderers.

Elf slaves are rare, but a small number annually finds

its way into the crowded pens of the city-states. Those

slave elves who can be restrained or otherwise prevented

from escaping are forced to work as farmers in the fields

outside the walled cities. A few are turned into artists,

where their skills earn large profits for their masters. Some

elves even wind up in the gladiatorial pits, fighting for

their lives as arena slaves. Many patrons of the games

enjoy watching elf gladiators perform, for such slaves use

speed and stealth the way muls use brute strength and

endurance to win matches.

The second variety of city elf, the merchants, is by far

the largest group of the three. They frequent the trading

bazaars, representing their tribes in the city markets.

Those tribes that have a long-standing tradition as

traders may leave tribe members in a particular city-state

for years at a time. Tribes rent old buildings or set up

semipermanent stalls on the edges of trading quarters.

These areas are known as the elven markets, and every

city-state has one. When the tribe leaves, a few of its

members remain behind to conduct business and to

maintain a presence in the market. These elf traders

become very cosmopolitan, learning the ways of the cities

and keeping up on important news and gossip. Many

engage in acts of thievery, collecting goods that their

tribes can sell in other locations. When their tribes

finally return, the city-bound elf merchants are ready

with a store of new goods, a prime selling location, a

wealth of news and rumors, and a great desire to set out

into the wastes once again.

Elf free wanderers can be found wherever free adven-

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turers travel. These are the elves who have left their tribes

by choice or circumstance to explore the wonders and

mysteries of Athas. Free wanderers are the most solitary

elves, for they do not have the immediate support of their

tribes, and everyone they meet considers them the most

untrustworthy of all elves.

No matter what reason an elf has for visiting a city-

state, he or she must be extremely careful within its

guarded confines. Some elves may experience bouts of

claustrophobia on the crowded streets and between the

tall, thick walls. These bouts can manifest as depression,

physical illness, paranoia, or even temporary madness.

When such madness grips them, elves can become vio-

lent, careless, or totally helpless until the episode passes.

A recent example of city madness took hold of the elf

raider Ventuu, of the Silt Stalkers tribe. He had entered

Fort Inix, east of Nibenay, as an advance scout for his

tribe. When a guard who was familiar with the markings

of the desert raiders recognized the symbols of the Stalk-

ers, he called for his fellows to bind the elf. That’s when

the madness overtook Ventuu, and he fought with a fury

that surprised and overwhelmed the handful of guards. A

hail of arrows from other guards stationed on the fort’s

walls finally brought Ventuu down—but not before he

had killed or wounded more than a dozen guards and

merchants.

Templars and city guards are always on the lookout for

any minor infractions, for they are trained to expect elves

to be guilty of a crime at some point during their stay.

Templars will use any excuse to capture or chase elves out

of the cities. Even lowly citizens can cause trouble for

elves. They may seek out elves when they need to pur-

chase a banned or rare good, but otherwise they adhere to

the prejudices that have hampered elves throughout the

ages. If something is missing, they reason, elves must have

stolen it. If something fails to do what was promised, they

further argue, it is because elves are untrustworthy. Of

course, if elves are in the area, the fault usually can be

traced to them, but that does not excuse the times they

are blamed purely because of their race.

When elves live in the cities, they tend to put aside

most of their tribal habits in favor of the cosmopolitan

lifestyle occurring around them. According to an elven

song, “When in Tyr, do as the Tyrians.” This allows tribal

elves to experience the wonders of city life while visiting

one of the great city-states. They must abide by the elven

code of honor, but are otherwise free to follow the tempt-

ing curves of the city streets and seek out the tantalizing

secrets that wait behind every door.

Wilderness Life

At certain times in an elf’s life, wanderlust becomes so

powerful and urgent that the elf must leave his or her

tribe in order to see what lies beyond the horizon. These

lone explorers are but one type of elf that populates the

wastes. There are also the outcasts, those elves who have

been driven from their tribes because of acts of dishonor

or other transgressions. In addition, those elves who have

become too old or too ill to keep up with their tribes are

left behind to fend for themselves in the wilderness. They

must find a way to survive on their own or die.

These are the elves who live alone in the wilderness.

Should they fall in with non-elves, they are still consid-

ered alone. By elven tradition, no elf may find compan-

ionship among “outsiders.” In practice this is not always

true, for a lone elf can become part of any group and even

find friends among outsiders. To elves who are secure in

their tribal standing, however, there can be no compan-

ionship outside the tribe. Most tribes have traditions of

accepting outsiders into their ranks, but such occur-

rences are rare.

Free wandering elves who strike out of their own

accord find joy in surviving the challenges of the

Athasian wastes. They run where they will, often streak-

ing across the horizon as they seek new experiences to

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encounter and new locations to explore. They are among

the most feared of the Athasian elves, for they will steal

what they need at every opportunity, and usually in such

a manner as to thoroughly confound caravan and settle-

ment guards. Free wandering elves are whispers in the

night, solitary thieves and explorers seeking nothing more

than the joy of the now. They live by their wits and skills,

honing their wilderness proficiencies like a craftsman

hones his art. If and when they finally return to their

tribes, free wandering elves find a place of honor and

prestige because of the skills they have mastered.

Outcasts, on the other hand, do not have the inner joy

that marks a free wanderer. An outcast elf has been cut

off from the support and companionship of his tribe, set

adrift in total solitude. There is no end to his wandering,

his suffering, no future now when he can return to his

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

in the world.

Often, outcasts take on a dark attitude and persona.

They become moody, forlorn, and sometimes excessively

violent and cruel. These elves join slave tribes and

marauding bands, venting their rage and utter loneliness

on those they prey upon. Outcasts lose the love of life

that permeates the very spirit of other elves. Instead of

seeking joy in the now, they embrace the dark sides of life

that other elves accept but pay little heed to. In many

ways, death and darkness become the only true compan-

ions for outcasts, and the result creates truly terrible

elves.

Of course, not all outcasts become terrors of the

wilderness, but all live dark, nearly joyless lives. Only a

select few can find meaning and joy apart from the tribes

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they once called home. These may be the strongest, most

independent elves on all of Athas—the elves true heroes

are made from. Take, for example, the case of Kureggi No

Tribe. This elf warrior wanders the wastes north of Tyr,

often helping the slave tribe called the Free perform some

service against the forces of the city-states. She also

appears out of the swirling sands from time to time to

assist a caravan against thri-kreen hunters or human

marauders.

Lastly, the wilderness becomes either home or grave for

the ill and aged of the elf tribes. Most ill and elderly elves

simply lose the will to live once they can no longer run

with their tribes. They become food for predators and

scavengers, contributing one final time to Athas’s natural

cycle. A few of these elves, however, refuse to submit to a

natural end. They reject the notion that the elf run is over

simply because the tribe has left them behind. Yet, no

matter how strong their spirit, only the strong of body can

long survive the wilds of Athas on their own. Thus, even

those elderly elves of great heart eventually succumb to

the desert wastes.

Some settlements and wilderness communities will

take in elderly elves who show no obvious signs of disease

(small communities are notoriously fearful of unknown

sicknesses, especially if they do not have a powerful cleric

among their numbers). The wealth of wilderness lore that

old and venerable elves possess can often mean the differ-

ence between survival and death for these struggling set-

tlements. Of course, they must put aside their

distrustfulness and fear if they are to make good use of an

elf’s talents and knowledge. The elf, too, must reconcile

his position among outsiders. He may even subject the

settlement to a battery of tests of trust and friendship

before he feels comfortable enough to extend his elven

honor to its members. If the elf and the community can

survive this period of testing, then both can come together

as a single unit. Often, however, settlement members who

do not understand elven ways will grow impatient or even

hostile toward the elf’s tests and aloof manner. Then the

elderly elf is turned away or killed, and both sides lose out.

Some elderly elves become hermits, living isolated

existences in some of Athas’s most inhospitable lands.

These elves may no longer be as swift as they were in their

younger days, but they can still move faster than most

other races and creatures. Elf hermits can be the best

friends travelers in the wastes can meet—or their worst

enemies. Some want companionship so badly that they

will welcome friendly visitors with open arms. They will

share water and provisions in exchange for news, items of

interest, or assistance with a task or problem. Others want

nothing to do with outsiders, seeing them as nothing

more than another one of Athas’s multitude of dangers.

These hermits remain hidden, fearful that revealing

themselves will invite violence and hatred. Then there

are those hermits who see travelers as nothing more than

prey. They will attempt to steal goods and supplies by

whatever means are available, even going so far as to set

traps for unsuspecting wanderers. These hermits can be

deadly, for they have no qualms about using excessive

force to acquire the things they need to survive.

Enemies

Elven songs tell the tales of Coraanu Star Racer, the hero

who shaped the elves of Athas. These same songs tell of

the enemies Coraanu made as he raced across the sky.

“The enemies of Coraanu are legion, chasing him wher-

ever he goes,” declares one chorus. “All elves share these

foes."

According to elven tradition, almost every force of

nature, creature, monster, and intelligent race can be

counted among Coraanu’s (and therefore all elves’) ene-

mies. Legends abound that explain these animosities:

Coraanu stole from that one, cheated this one, embar-

rassed a third, insulted one over there, and even defeated

another in a fair (or unfair) contest.

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Who and what do elves consider to be their natural

enemies? Humans, dwarves, halflings, muls, giants, half-

giants, the horde of creatures which roam the endless

wastes, and even the land and sky can be numbered

among the enemies of the elves. The worst scourges,

though, giving young and old elves alike nightmares, are

the undead and the thri-kreen.

Elves accept the natural order of the world. They

understand the cycle of life and death, and they know

their own place in it. They cannot abide anything that

exists outside this order, for such unnatural things defy

the world view upon which so much of the elven mindset

hinges. To elves, the undead epitomize the break from

the natural order. Elves see them as foul creatures to be

feared and avoided. If an undead creature is known to be

in the area, an elf tribe will move as quickly as possible.

Only when absolutely necessary will an elf try to fight

and destroy one of the undead.

Luckily, the undead of Athas are rare, but there are liv-

ing enemies waiting among the shifting dunes. Thri-

kreen are the worst of these enemies, for the insect-men

actively hunt elves as a source of food. Perhaps thri-kreen

warriors enjoy the taste of elf flesh because the hunt usu-

ally presents such an enormous challenge. The insect

men are never far from an elf’s thoughts. Elf children

grow up deathly afraid of thri-kreen, for older elves use

real and imagined thri-kreen threats to make young elves

move faster or otherwise influence their behavior. This

fear becomes a deep hatred as young elves grow to adult-

hood, for by the time an elf undergoes the rites of passage

he or she has lost more than a few friends and loved ones

to the many limbs of the insect-men. The fear, however,

can never totally be erased, even by hatred. It stays in the

back of every elf’s mind, a reminder of terrifying yester-

days and deadly tomorrows.

When an elf and thri-kreen must work together, they

adopt an uneasy peace. The thri-kreen must keep its

hunger and desire in check, while the elf must hold back

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the fear and hatred that would otherwise compel him or

her to attack and flee.

Elven Beliefs

The elves of Athas bow to no gods or sorcerer-kings. They

have, however, a deep respect for the elements, which

shows in the reverence they display toward the clerics

they call elemental singers. Theirs is a sort of ancestor

worship that manifests in the form of tribal heroes. By

definition, every tribal chief is a hero, and songs of his or

her exploits fill many a starlit night. Additionally, signifi-

cant individuals from past generations are remembered

and glorified in song and dance. This is one of the few

examples of elven behavior not based on the current

moment. In the legends and histories of past heroes, elves

find inspiration for the now.

Some of these ancient heroes are common to all elves.

Others are limited to specific tribes. Perhaps the greatest

of these heroes is Coraanu Star Racer, who supposedly

led the elves to Athas and established their most basic

traditions. He taught the elves to run, to fight, to use the

sword and bow, to steal, to sing, and even to dance. All

tribes acknowledge his contributions, and most revere

him as the greatest elf ever to run beneath the crimson

sun.

All tribal heroes receive honor through the celebra-

tions of the elves. When a hunt goes well, a tribe showers

praise and thanks upon one of its legendary hunt masters.

To celebrate a marriage, elves dance to the tales of long-

remembered lovers. When an elf child first learns to run,

the tribe sings of the exploits of its most revered racers.

Even hardship and misfortune often finds expression

in the adoration of ancestral heroes. When adversity

befalls a tribe, elves celebrate the ritual songs and dances

of whatever hero they wish to draw inspiration and solace

from. The songs and dances are believed to honor the

hero’s memory. If the celebration is sincere and powerful

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enough, a bit of what made that ancestor so heroic will be

transferred to the tribe.

Language and Nomenclature

The elf tribes of Athas have a language common to all

elves. One tribe can readily communicate with another.

However, each tribe adds nuances of its own to its

speech, giving different tribes accents and jargon that

make the language wholly their own. These differences

seem slight or even nonexistent to non-elves, but to other

elves they are readily noticeable.

Short, clipped words make up the elven language. It is

spoken in a rapid staccato pace that is difficult for

novices to pick up. When speaking with individuals who

are not native speakers of the elven language, elves must

talk slowly in order to be understood. Of course, doing

anything at a slower pace can make elves irritable and

angry.

In addition to the elven language, most elves learn the

common tongue so that they can deal with outsiders.

Many tribes also develop a series of codes or a primitive

sign language so that they can communicate among

themselves even in a crowd of outsiders. Those tribes that

specialize in the shadow arts have a more advanced sign

language.

Because of the way elves feel about outsiders, most will

not make any effort to learn other languages (with the

exception of the common tongue). You will rarely find

elves who speak dwarf, thri-kreen, halfling, or some other

racial language. If they did not need the common tongue

in order to conduct trade, elves probably wouldn’t make

the effort to learn it either.

Of all the uses for language, it is in the choice of

names that elves truly take a great deal of time and care.

Names are very important to elves. Much thought goes

into the selection of names, and tribal leaders (including

element singers) consider naming young runners as one

of their most solemn duties. Elven names are derived

from two sources. First, elves take the surname of either

their tribe or clan. To this surname, they receive a given

name based upon the elven tradition of naming a child

for the first interesting thing he or she does when learning

to run. While this might seem an easy task, tribal leaders

watch for occurrences that are both significant and that

fit the child’s personality, for traditions hold that names

help shape the elves they are given to. With the proper

name, a young elf can grow to become a great elf. With

the wrong name, the same elf will disappear in the wastes.

Some childhood names are changed because of extraor-

dinary actions undertaken during a youth’s rites of pas-

sage, but such changes do not happen very often.

The following tables present male and female given

names, as well as tribal surnames. The Tribal Surname

Table also lists any clans that belong to a given tribe. For

added flavor, the Elf Insults Table provides a sample of

insults that players can use when role-playing their elf

characters.

Female Elf Given Names Table

Elven Word

Alaa

Ekee

Guuta

Hukaa

Ittee

Nuuta

Utaa

Translation

Bird Chaser

Wild Dancer

Singing Sword

Fire Leaper

Dancing Bow

Quiet Hunter

Laughing Moon

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| --- |
| **Page 42** |

Male Elf Given Names Table

Elven Word

Botuu

Coraanu

Dukkoti

Haaku

Lobuu

Mutami

Nuuko

Traako

Translation

Water Runner

First Elf, the Warrior Thief

Wind Fighter

Two Daggers

First Runner

Laughs at Sun

Sky Hunter

Metal Stealer

Tribal Surnames Table

Tribe Name

Clearwater\*

Clan Name

Fireshaper

Graffyon

Graystar

Lightning

Onyx

Sandrunner

Seafoam

Silverleaf

Songweaver

Steeljaw

Wavedivers

Windriders

Night

Runner\*\*

Dark Moons

Full Moons

Half Moons

Lone Moons

New Moons

Quarter Moons

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| **Page 43** |

Tribe Name

Shadow\*

Silt Stalker\*\*

Clan Name

Fire Bow

Fire Dagger

Fire Sword

Silver Hand\*\*

Sky Singer\*\*

Dawnchaser

Dayjumper

Twilightcatcher

Swiftwing\*

Water

Raindancer

Hunter\*\*

Poolrunner

Lakesinger

Wind

Airhunter

Dancer\*\*

Breezechaser

\* Tribe described in DSR2, Dune Trader accessory.

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

Elf Insults Table

Elven Word

Otuuk fe!

Gotii

Egotti

U’Raanu

Athuum

Jukkete

Ud’Raan

Kuu datto

Translation

Kank rider!

Outsider

Less than an outsider

Elf with no tribe

Sand crawler

City dweller

Half-elf

Swift as a human

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Music and Dance

The elves of Athas are a musical people. Song and dance

play a major part in their lives, from helping them remem-

ber history and legends, to keeping time when working or

on long runs, to providing a primary outlet for celebra-

tion. And in case this fact is still in doubt, elves celebrate

everything. From the rising and setting of the sun and

moons to the death of a revered leader, the elves have a

revelry to observe it. To non-elves, this music is captivat-

ing and seductive. Its haunting sounds and joyous beats

seem otherworldly and out of place under Athas’s harsh

sun. There are two types of elven music, each with its own

accompanying dances and songs. First there is the music

of the elven markets, designed for outsider and elf ears

alike. This is the music most outsiders associate with the

elves, for it spills out of tavern and entertainment tents to

lure customers. For outsiders, elf musicians weave tunes

that spark emotions in most listeners. The desired

response is usually joy, for happy customers spend money

freely and often come back for more of the same. But

these musicians also weave tunes of sadness, love, or even

hatred when a particular performance calls for it. The

songs and dances that accompany these melodies range

from ribald to extremely seductive—what male can forget

Areela Steeljaw’s Dance of the Four Swords after catch-

ing even a brief glimpse of her captivating moves?

There is also the music of the tribes, which rarely (if

ever) is performed in the presence of outsiders. These

songs and dances have almost a religious connotation, for

they are linked with elven revelry and celebration—the

closest thing to prayer and worship any elf ever engages

in. Whatever beautiful sounds you hear in an elven mar-

ket, multiply them a hundredfold: that is the music they

reserve for themselves. When elves play for elf ears alone,

the music that emerges carries a piece of their indepen-

dent, wandering souls in its melody. The sounds,

rhythms, and beats are almost divine.

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Elven music is produced on a number of traditional

instruments. The most basic is an elf’s own voice, which

can create a range of sounds far beyond what even the

most talented human bard can accomplish. Other

instruments are fashioned of bone or animal hides.

These instruments can be as beautiful as the sounds they

produce, for elf crafters have learned to shape bone as

others shape glass or iron.

Three traditional elven instruments are the lyran, the

palm drums, and the staff pipe. The lyran is a stringed

instrument constructed of bone or even the armored

shell of a large animal. Hollow paths are carved through-

out the body of the lyran, which create different notes

depending on which string, or combination of strings, is

strummed. Eighteen strings stretch from a single point to

two ends of the lyran, while an additional seven strings

cross the instrument’s face. Palm drums fit in the palm of

the hands. As elves dance, they slap the palm drums

against their bodies to produce a percussion beat. A staff

pipe is a tall, slender staff of bone. Hundreds of tiny holes

are carved into its shaft. When an elf blows into the staff,

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he or she can produce haunting sounds to accompany

any song or dance.

Courtship and Other Customs

When elves reach adulthood and decide to find mates,

they engage in elaborate courting rites. Both males and

females can take the initiative in locating potential

mates. It all depends on which partner wants to remain

with his or her tribe. That elf goes on a “mating hunt.”

Mating hunts involve spying on other elf tribes until an

unattached male or female catches the hunter’s interest.

These hunts are dangerous affairs, for any outsiders

caught close to an elf camp risk death for their troubles.

Once the hunters spot elves that catch their interest, they

must leave signs for their desired ones to let them know

that a hunt is under way. If the object of the hunt agrees to

the mating, then a capture occurs with only a token show

of resistance. If the potential mate wants nothing to do

with the hunter, the struggle could prove fatal to one or

both parties.

When a hunter brings his or her mate back to the

tribe, runners are sent to inform the other tribe that a

wedding will take place. Now the captured elf loses all

ties with her old tribe. After the three-day-long celebra-

tion, the abductee receives status as a daeg in her

spouse’s tribe. A daeg lives in a state of serfdom until the

chief decides that past loyalties have been forgotten. It

takes years until a daeg becomes a full member of the

spouse’s tribe—and some never do. Why then, do some

elves agree to become daegs? For love, of course, which

burns brightly and intensely in the hearts of elves.

Other tribal customs include the following:

• When elves return from raids or thieving expedi-

tions with prizes, it is customary to give their chief first

pick of the booty.

• When elves die, general practice is to let them lie

where they fall. Elves do not bury or burn their dead. It is

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| **Page 45** |

seen as an elf’s final task and hardship to serve as food for

scavenging beasts.

• When an elf becomes a full member of his or her

tribe (either upon passing the rites of adulthood or when

daeg status is changed), it is customary to shower the new

member with gifts. These gifts carry obligations, however,

which usually take the form of voiced support when the

gift-bearer petitions the chief.

• When seeking a favorable decision from the chief, it

is customary to offer bribes. These bribes must not be

blatant, but instead should be made under suitable pre-

texts: “This gold piece would be much safer in your

hands, my chief; now, if I could ask you to name my son as

apprentice to the hunt master . . .”

Families

Elves place more stock in their clans and tribes than they

do in individual families. However, there are some tradi-

tions associated with family units that should be ad-

dressed. Only children born of the same mother are

considered to be true siblings. Children who share the

same father but have different mothers are considered to

be long-brothers or long-sisters. Tribal traditions forbid

long-brothers and long-sisters from bearing children

together, even though they do not have the same ties as do

true siblings toward each other.

Elves do not have the same traditions concerning male

parents as do other races. Because elves spread their

affections so easily, and mating with only one partner is

the exception rather than the rule, male parents are much

harder to determine than female parents. The elven term

for mother, “mamuk,” means “the birthing parent.” An

elf mamuk receives a measure of respect, but the entire

tribe shares in the raising of the young. The maternal

bonds stretch throughout the tribe, as opposed to being

concentrated between a single mother and child. On the

other hand, there is no elven term for father. The closest

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is “tada,” which applies to any male whose blood runs in

a child’s veins.

Native Dress

While elves typically dress to survive in the desert envi-

ronment, individual tribes often design garb that show-

cases their own customs and traditions. Even when

visiting an oasis or city, elves tend to favor their native

dress. If this garb has anything in common from tribe to

tribe, it is its functional design. Elven garb tends to pro-

tect its wearers from the brutal elements while allowing

for freedom of movement.

Some tribes wear cloaks made of sharply patterned

erdlu feathers that have been studded with bits of pol-

ished bone. Others wrap themselves in tight-fitting carru

leather that has been decorated with bright colors and

strange patterns. Feathers, bones, hides, stones, and even

metal (when available) is often woven in varying ways to

make clothing that is recognizably elven in origin while

remaining uniquely the product of an individual tribe.

A few tribes, especially those that regularly engage in

raids, have started incorporating plunder into their native

garb. To a typical elven cloak, an elf warrior might add bits

of clothing stolen from caravans and settlements. This

hodgepodge of elven and human (or other race) design

creates a look that can be at once striking and frightening.

Elves are known for wearing clothing that is both func-

tional and flattering. Part of an elf’s daily joy is to look

good to himself and to his tribe mates. An elf will spend

hour upon hour crafting garments to accomplish these

goals.

Most tribes also have traditional war dress which they

wear when going into battle. Unlike everyday garb, war

dress is designed to protect and to instill fear in the

enemy. From frightening war paint to terrifying and pro-

tective wrappings, when an elf dresses for war he or she

also dresses to scare and disturb the enemy.

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Our road is the burning desert, our home the endless

wilderness. We are runners, as fast and furious as the

storm-blown sand. We are hunters, as quiet and deadly as

the silt that lends us its name. We are the Silt Stalkers,

and everything in the Tablelands is ours. Who can stop

us? Who can outrun us? Who can resist our swords and

spears? We are the Silt Stalkers, and we take what is ours

by force and by stealth. No caravan can avoid us, no vil-

lage wall can hold us back. We are the Silt Stalkers; we

are the swirling sand.

—An elf-run song of the Silt Stalker tribe

Thousands of tribes of nomadic elves wander the dunes

and steppes of Athas. They race across the bleak land-

scape, stealing, fighting, or cheating sustenance out of the

land and its inhabitants. While all elf tribes share certain

traditions and customs, each approaches these customs in

a unique manner. The elves of Athas are extremely indi-

vidualistic, as the behavior and outlook of each tribe

demonstrates.

To gain a better understanding of these individual tra-

ditions and customs, it is helpful to examine a few specific

tribes. The tribes that have been selected are all currently

operating in the Tablelands, and each represents a differ-

ent aspect of the elven lifestyle.

In the entries that follow, each tribe is presented in a

uniform manner. An overview of the tribe starts each entry.

Then we examine the tribe’s organization and society, its

area of activity and current endeavors, and its recent his-

tory. Finally, we look at the tribe’s relations with outsiders

and its most important members. In two cases, we also deal

with specific locations (namely, the Sky Singers’ market in

Nibenay and the Silver Hands’ oasis at Silver Spring).

Sky Singers

When someone mentions elf merchants in the Tyr region,

they are probably talking about the Sky Singer tribe.

While not as old a tribe as their chief rival, the Clearwater

elves, the Sky Singers quickly established themselves as

traders of note. The semipermanent market the tribe

maintains in Nibenay, for example, is a feast for the senses,

full of both exotic and commonplace goods presented so

as to fascinate customers as they wander among the color-

ful tents and crowded stalls. Most customers come away

from the market feeling as though they received the better

part of any deal they participated in, even if they didn’t.

It’s just another part of the illusion of quality and service

the Sky Singers have expertly woven into their repertoire

of merchandising.

The Sky Singers tribe embraced trading as its primary

means of existence long before their current chief (or the

chief before him) was born. Every activity the tribe engages

in contributes in some manner to its mercantile endeav-

ors. They enjoy this approach to life, and seem content to

continue as merchants—at least for the now.

Organization

The Sky Singers’ chief rules for life, but does so in strict

consultation with his advisers and clan leaders. If the tribe

ever fails to turn a profit after a trader’s year, the leaders

can challenge the chiefs right to rule. The only memory of

such action being taken is in the Song of Temtaa, which

tells of a time long ago when trading was so bad that the

tribe had to turn to raiding to survive.

The current chief, Muuton Sky Singer, is considered a

member of all clans, so that no clan can claim superiority

over another. The tribe has approximately 3,500 members

divided among three clans. Of these, the Dayjumpers

clan is the largest, with about 1,500 members. The rest of

the tribe is divided evenly between the Dawnchasers and

Twilightcatchers.

Each clan shares most of the tasks necessary to main-

tain a successful elven merchant house. Contrary to the

activities of other elf tribes, the Sky Singers actually gather

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| **Page 47** |

their market goods by mostly legitimate means. They

trade and purchase goods from the outlying settlements to

bring to market in the city-states, and then gather mer-

chandise in one city to trade in another. Outright theft

accounts for only a fraction of their total stock.

If one clan does poorly during a given period, it is not

considered an infraction by the tribe as a whole. The

entire tribe shares the assets and deficits of the individual

clans, spreading the wealth and good fortune around.

After a trading period, the chief and clan leaders inven-

tory the tribe’s assets, relegate a portion to use to restock

trade goods, then distribute a share of the remaining prof-

its to all tribe members.

Even though the clans coordinate their profit-making

ventures, each clan specializes in a few select areas. The

Dawnchasers, for example, continue to operate as herders.

Members of this clan are responsible for not only the

tribe’s animals, but also for the animals customers pay to

have tended in the markets. They also raise or secure ani-

mals by other means to sell in the markets, from pack and

riding beasts to personal pets. The Dayjumpers clan spe-

cializes in major commerce and understanding city laws

and customs. Members of this clan maintain the tribe’s

permanent markets in the city-states, dealing, trading, and

securing new goods while the remainder of the tribe travels

elsewhere. Finally, the Twilightcatchers clan deals in

things pertaining to the arcane arts. Spell components,

magical items, and wizardly texts of all descriptions are

their stock-in-trade.

The chiefs advisers consist of the leader of each clan,

the flame singer, the elder wizard, the commander of the

elven guards, and the nine trade masters who oversee all

mercantile activities. While clan leaders keep their posts

for 12-year terms, the other advisers represent the best

individuals the tribe produces—the most powerful cleric

and wizard, the best warrior, and the most talented mer-

chants, for example. The elves in these posts are reviewed

regularly, with their advisory seats often changing hands as

other elves demonstrate better skills and abilities in the

appropriate areas.

Where other tribes organize raiding parties, the Sky

Singers use small trading parties to scout market loca-

tions, make major deals, and find new supply sources.

These trading parties are led by merchant captains and

consist of as few as six elves or as many as several hundred

when transportation and protection are required.

Recent History

The Sky Singers recently returned to Nibenay after a six-

month absence. What the tribe discovered produced

shock and anger in its members—all of the elves left

behind to oversee daily mercantile activities were either

dead or missing. Of the 16 elves who remained in

Nibenay, 11 were found slaughtered. The other five have

not yet been located, and the tribe fears the worst.

The building used as the permanent living quarters for

the elves stationed in the city seemed oddly quiet and

deserted when Muuton and his warriors arrived. At first,

Muuton thought that the templars had run off his traders,

as was sometimes the case, but the awful truth soon

became evident. The bodies of the traders were scattered

about the building’s dark interior, each more brutally bat-

tered than the one before. While a few of the bodies dis-

played evidence of fighting back, most appeared to have

been killed before they could even draw their weapons.

Muuton and his advisers suspect either House Stel or the

Clearwater elves of orchestrating the murders, but neither

side has claimed responsibility as yet.

Despite the murders and missing elves, the Sky Singers

have decided to open the Nibenay market as scheduled.

Muuton believes that the murders were committed in order

to delay or even cancel the Sky Singers’ market, and he has

no intention of letting either of those possibilities occur.

Muuton has ordered several trading parties into the

streets to search for the five missing elves or for news pertain-

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ing to the deadly attack. It has even been whispered that the

chief wishes to meet with either the Shadows or Night Run-

ners, but no adviser will confirm this. All that can be said

for sure is that the Sky Singers desire revenge, and a war that

involves more than trade might be on the horizon.

Relations with Outsiders

House Stel, a merchant house operating out of Urik, has

shown a deep hatred of nonhuman races, especially elves.

As the house is busy trying to take parts of House Shom’s

market in Nibenay, it has come into open conflict with the

Sky Singers. House Stel thought to capitalize on the cur-

rent household pet craze sweeping Nibenay because

House Shom was showing little interest in handling live

merchandise. The Sky Singers, however, quickly captured

a larger share of this market. The elves are able to bring

animals to market faster and in larger quantities, and their

expertise makes for healthier, more robust creatures.

House Stel’s agents are already working to change this sit-

uation, and some of Muuton’s advisers attribute the

recent murders to this war-loving merchant house.

If the tribe can be said to count any outsiders as

friends, then those outsiders would be members of

Nibenay’s Veiled Alliance. Guvaano, the tribe’s elder

wizard, has a number of contacts in the Alliance. While

most of the Twilightcatchers know about this connection,

Muuton and the rest of the tribe only suspect that these

ties exist. Guvaano sometimes dines with Thagya Phon,

the leader of the city’s Alliance, but he usually meets with

Allya Durz, a female half-elf who serves on the Council.

She passes along important information, news, rumors,

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| **Page 50** |

Sky Singers Market

(in Nibenay’s Hill District)

One Square = 10 Feet

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2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

Permanent Market/Dayjumpers Clan Camp

Happy Hurrum Tavern

Flame Singer’s Tent

Twilightcatchers Clan Camp

Chief’s Camp

Dawnchasers Clan Camp

Ancient Ruin

Animal Corral

9. Fountain

10. Tent of the Dancing Swords

11. Tent of the Singing Sands

12. Wizard’s Quarters

13. Artisan’s Tent

14. Smuggler’s Den

A. Weapons (bone/stone)

B. Weapons (metal)

C. Fine clothing

D. Spell components

E. Dried meats

F. Shoes/boots

G. Guards

H. Magical items

I. Elven instruments

J . Gems/jewelry

K. Alcoholic beverages

L. Armor

M. Bargain clothing

N. Fruits/vegetables

O. Pottery

P. Pets

Q. Candles

R. Leather goods

S . Tattoos

T. Confections

U. Stone/bone carvers

V. Weaver

W. Wooden goods

X. Fine art

Y. Glassware

Z. Travel supplies

\*Magical items available in these stalls

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| **Page 51** |

and even what the Alliance knows about templar activity

in the Hill District, making Guvaano’s council to Muu-

ton highly valued.

Of the other elf tribes, the Sky Singers are in open

competition with the Clearwater tribe, and in open con-

flict with the Silt Stalkers. The Clearwater elves, long con-

sidered the most powerful and successful of the elven

merchant houses, fear that the Sky Singers are becoming

too prominent in their own right. The two tribes have

begun to compete for the same markets, the same sources

of goods, and the same trade routes. Some of Muuton’s

advisers believe that the recent murders of the Sky Singer

traders were the work of the Clearwater elves. If this belief

is proved, then the trade war could escalate into more vio-

lent conflict. The Silt Stalkers, on the other hand, regu-

larly raid the Sky Singers’ trading parties as they return

with goods for market. The Sky Singers have lost signifi-

cant amounts of goods to these raids, and ways to better

defend the small trading parties are being debated by

Muuton and his advisers.

Current Endeavors

The Sky Singers operate as merchants, and all of the

activities the tribe participates in furthers this occupation.

The entire tribe is geared toward mercantile endeavors of

all sorts. These elves love to discover new sources of trade

goods and new customers to deal with. More than any-

thing, the Sky Singers find enjoyment and satisfaction in

haggling a deal. While they love to come out ahead, they

also simply enjoy a good session of wheeling and dealing.

The tribe has been doing very good business recently

trading in domestic animals. Kanks, erdlu, and crodlu are

always in demand, but the Sky Singers have also found a

thriving market for carru and household pets. Carru

leather is currently the rage in Gulg, for the nobles and

templars of the city have discovered it as a “high-fashion”

material.

Meanwhile, animals that can be used as pets, such as

hurrum and critics, have become favorites of Nibenay’s

elite. The Dawnchasers clan can’t keep enough of these

creatures in stock, and their trading parties are traveling

farther and farther to find new supplies to bring to market.

Even with the high demand and low supply cache, the Sky

Singers have been able to bring more domestic animals to

market than their primary rival in this venture, House

Stel. House Stel agents are already seeking ways to hinder

the elves and turn the market to their favor.

The Twilightcatchers, meanwhile, have been busy

bringing magical items to market. As dealing in arcane

merchandise is highly illegal, these elves must exercise

extreme caution and take every possible safeguard when

hawking these wares in the city-state marketplaces. In

addition to the normally brisk trade in spell components,

mildly enchanted items (presented as powerful magical

objects), and genuine magical items crafted by the elves,

the clan has procured a number of ancient artifacts.

These magical metal weapons, armor pieces, miscella-

neous items, and texts can each command an exorbitant

price—but they must be marketed slowly and carefully to

avoid undue notice. The Twilightcatchers refuse to say

where these genuine articles come from, but their trading

parties have been active near the ruins of Giustenal and

Bodach.

Area of Activity

Muuton and his tribe of elf merchants operate within the

region of the Tablelands known as the Ivory Triangle,

though they often range outside this area to secure new or

unusual trade items. The Sky Singers maintain a perma-

nent presence in Nibenay’s Hill District, and usually

have representatives in Gulg and Balic.

When the Sky Singers enter a city or village, they

quickly set up an elaborate bazaar of colorful tents and

well-stocked stalls. Their marketplace in Nibenay is their

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most flamboyant showing, for the tribe owns or leases a

number of buildings around a large square. This gives

them plenty of room to display their wares, and they have

learned to make the most of the location. In the other

cities and villages the Sky Singers visit, they do not have

access to as much space. The bazaars they set up in these

locations are not as extensive, but they remain showcases

of exotic items from all over the Tyr region and beyond.

At least once every trader’s year, the Sky Singers set up

an outdoor bazaar somewhere along one of the trade

roads leading out of Gulg or Nibenay. These bazaars have

a festive feel, providing not only opportunities for trade

but a party atmosphere for those who venture into the city

of tents that springs up out of the wastes. Many merchant

houses send representatives to the Sky Singers’ bazaar to

find exotic goods to market in one of the farther cities, but

the majority of customers are travelers and people from

the desert settlements. It is not unusual to see members of

the shunned races wandering among the tents in search of

deals, and even some of the slave tribes come to secure

supplies and other items from the Sky Singers.

While the bulk of the tribe stays close to the Ivory Tri-

angle, trading parties bearing the mark of the Sky Singers

can be encountered from the Forest Ridge to the Sea of

Silt as they seek out new deals to negotiate and new stock

to fill their markets.

Sky Singers' Market

The Sky Singers’ market in the heart of Nibenay’s Hill

District becomes a bustling center of trade and entertain-

ment whenever the tribe is in the city. Nestled among

ancient ruins and dilapidated buildings, the market fea-

tures a crowded square of tents and stalls of all sizes.

When the tribe is off wandering, many of the tents are

stored in the buildings, which the elves rent year round. A

small market is maintained throughout the year, and elf

traders take turns staying behind to run it.

This market is the largest the tribe ever establishes—

bigger than their bazaars in Gulg, Balic, or any of the vil-

lages and oases of the Ivory Triangle. While the following

details pertaining to the many tents and stalls specifically

describe the Nibenay market, they are applicable (albeit

on a smaller scale) wherever the tribe sets up to trade. Any

tents that stock illegal goods also have a supply of mun-

dane items to use as cover should the templars or city

guards wander by.

Note that on the accompanying map (pages 48 and

49), the shaded buildings represent multistoried struc-

tures, and the locations of elf guards (both hidden and in

plain sight) are marked with a “G” for guard. The num-

bered locations are either permanent structures or those

areas important to the tribe. Lettered locations refer to the

stalls and tent shops that make up the bulk of the bazaar.

1. Permanent Market/Dayjumpers Clan Camp.

This large building was once the home of a wealthy noble

who long ago fell out of the sorcerer-king’s favor. It is now

leased to the Sky Singers, serving as the tribe’s headquar-

ters and permanent market. The Day-jumpers clan pro-

vides the majority of the elf traders who elect to stay in the

city, and this building also serves as the clan’s camp while

the full market is open. The year-round traders conduct

deals, store goods, and even operate a small number of

market tents as time and circumstances permit. If adven-

turers need spell components, banned goods, or even nor-

mal traveling items, this building and its inhabitants can

usually accommodate them.

2. Happy Hurrum Tavern. This crumbling clay-brick

building becomes a lively, often unruly tavern when the

entire tribe is present. The Dayjumpers clan operates the

tavern, providing food, drink, and light entertainment to

visitors who have money and a desire to enjoy themselves.

Elf serving girls constantly flirt with male customers, urg-

ing them to eat and drink with smiles, winks, and gentle

touches. The same can be said of the male servers who

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concentrate on female patrons. The servers work the

crowd, swiping a coin pouch here and a treasured item

there—but they never take so much as to draw significant

attention. Elf warriors stand in as bouncers and protectors,

though most of the young servers can protect themselves.

Tale singers wander the floor, telling stories and providing

news to the accompaniment of elven instruments. Games

of chance (both legitimate and crooked) can be played

here, and many deals are struck over pitchers of elven wine

and plates of steaming food. The clan maintains a limited

number of sleeping chambers for those visitors desperate

enough to pay for a room at an elven inn.

3. Flame Singer’s Tent. The tribe’s cleric, an elemen-

tal fire singer named Jaraati, tends to spiritual needs from

this location. The flame singer and her apprentices sell

their skills to those in need, healing the wounded, curing

the ill, and casting whatever other priestly spells are

required—all for a negotiated price. Jaraati and her

helpers are mostly honest, though they have been known

to charge more than a spell is worth and even to sell a spell

that none of the clerics could actually cast. If a customer

makes a donation to the spirits of fire while recuperating

(read, while the customer is unconscious or otherwise

unaware), so much the better. The flame singer may seek

to strike a deal, but she never refuses to help someone in

need unless her spells have been exhausted.

Jaraati Dayjumper: C9; AL CG; AC 5 (leather

armor plus Dexterity); MV 15; hp 37; THAC0 16

(18 with club); #AT 1; Dmg 1d6–1 (stone club); Str

14, Dex 16, Con 13, Int 17, Wis 14, Cha 17;

Spells—4 1st, 4 2nd, 3 3rd, 2 4th, 1 5th.

4. Twilightcatchers Clan Camp. These two brick

buildings are in fairly good shape, and they serve as the liv-

ing area for the Twilightcatchers clan while the market is

in session. The larger, two-storied structure is used primar-

ily as a sleeping barracks. The smaller building also serves

this purpose, but has another use as well. Its shadowy inte-

rior holds many of the tribe’s most potent magical items,

including the bulk of the ancient artifacts that recently

came into the Sky Singers’ possession. Powerful elf wiz-

ards, warriors, and multiclassed individuals maintain a

constant vigil over the arcane stock. Only customers who

have been thoroughly checked (through mundane, magi-

cal, and psionic means) are admitted to this building, and

even then spells and psionics are used to distort the cus-

tomers’ memory and perceptions to safeguard the loca-

tion. Note that PCs cannot purchase or otherwise secure

more than two major magical items from the tribe, and the

price of these items should be tied to the main plot of a

major adventure.

5. Chief’s Camp. Chief Muuton, his guards, and his

aides reside in this tall stone building while the market is

in session. He conducts fairly little tribal business within

the building’s confines, however, as Muuton believes it is

bad luck to discuss important matters hidden from the

sun, moons, and elements. There are always 12 seasoned

warriors near the chief, though most of them remain hid-

den until needed.

6. Dawnchasers Clan Camp. These two buildings of

ancient stone once housed wealthy free craftsmen in the

days when this area of the city was rich and prosperous.

Now it serves as the living area for the Dawnchasers clan.

The buildings only see use while the market is open and

the bulk of the tribe is in Nibenay. The clan operates a

number of stalls out of one of the buildings. These deal in

traveling supplies, fresh food, clothing, leather goods, and

other animal byproducts. A larger tent on the roof of the

building offers a selection of elf-crafted weapons made of

bone and stone.

7. Ancient Ruin. This extremely old building proba-

bly has ties to the ancient palace called the Hill, which

gives this section of Nibenay its name. Unlike the Hill,

this structure is not used to house either elves or trade

goods. The Sky Singers refuse to enter its dark confines,

and all kinds of legends and horror stories have grown up

around it. Ancient carvings and tile mosaics show scenes

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of lush forests being savaged by foul creatures straight out

of nightmares. The elves set guards atop the building’s

lowest roof to watch over the market, but that’s the extent

of their dealings with the place.

8. Animal Corral. The fences around the Dawn-

chasers clan building mark the boundaries of the animal

corral. Here, the Dawnchasers watch over the tribe’s ani-

mals (including kanks, crodlu, and a few carru) that have

been brought into the city. The majority of the herd

remains outside, under the watch of other Dawnchasers.

The corral can be divided to make room for outsiders’ ani-

mals. The elves will watch and care for these animals for a

price: 2 cp per day for kanks and crodlu, and 5 cp for inix.

They do not offer facilities for mekillots.

9. Fountain. This old, badly maintained fountain

offers a trickle of water to thirsty residents. At certain

times of the day, the fountain’s trickle refuses to run. The

elves are ready for these dry periods. Each of the potters

also carries stored water for purchase.

10. Tent of the Dancing Swords. When the entertain-

ment offered in the Happy Hurrum isn’t enough, cus-

tomers can file into this large, elaborate tent for a good

time. Male and female elves dance to seductive elven

music as customers cheer and whistle. Drinks and light

meals are available. The talented members of the

Dayjumpers clan have even been known to serve a tem-

plar from time to time. When the dancers aren’t perform-

ing, elven acrobats demonstrate their skill and derring-do.

Admission to the tent is 1 cp.

11. Tent of the Singing Sands. The Dawnchasers clan

operates this entertainment facility, which specializes in

music and song. Customers come in to hear the captivat-

ing voices of the tribe’s most gifted singers, who regale

them with heroic ballads, bawdy limericks, and humorous

songs. The clan also performs a new form of entertain-

ment—group storytelling, or plays. Members of the clan

became captivated by the performances made famous by

the ex-slaves of Salt View, and they have since been per-

fecting their own version of the art form. Instead of simply

telling a story with a large cast of actors, the Dawnchasers

sing their tales to the accompaniment of elven music.

Admission to the tent is 1 cp (2 cp on the night of a play).

12. Wizard’s Quarters. The tribe’s elder wizard

resides in this stone building when the market is open.

The current elder wizard is Guvaano Twilightcatcher, a

12th-level preserver. He shares the building with his

apprentices. Many arcane wards protect the dwelling, as

well as fighter/mage and fighter/psionicist guards

assigned by the clan. Guvaano is an ally of Nibenay’s

Veiled Alliance, though few tribe members outside the

Twilightcatchers know this. Even Muuton isn’t sure of

this connection, though he suspects that the tribe some-

times receives help from outsiders.

Guvaano Twilightcatcher: W12; AL CG; AC 6

(Dexterity); MV 18; hp 27; THAC0 17 (18 with

dagger); #AT 1; Dmg 1d4–1 (bone dagger); Str 15,

Dex 19, Con 12, Int 18, Wis 13, Cha 13; Spells—4

1st, 4 2nd, 4 3rd, 4 4th, 4 5th, 1 6th.

13. Artisans’ Tent. Elf craftsmen labor in this large

tent, producing many of the goods sold in the stalls. The

artisans also take on special commissions, crafting items

to the specific orders of wealthy customers. Visitors may

enter the tent to observe the workers, but only expensive

custom orders may be placed here. All other sales occur

at the appropriate trade tents and stalls.

14. Smuggler’s Den. This low, dilapidated structure of

baked mud and clay is a storehouse and exchange site for

the Twilightcatchers’ smuggling operation. Goods that

have been banned or obtained by illegal means are routed

through this location to waiting customers. The clan often

takes on specific jobs, serving as carriers of banned goods

from one city to another. Psionicist guards examine

clients very carefully before any deals are struck or con-

cluded.

A. Weapons (Stone and Bone). These tents and stalls

deal in weapons of all descriptions. Some are of elven

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make and design, but many are simply weapons the elves

have gathered in their travels. These tents are the most

well-stocked of the weapons traders, for bone and stone is

in plentiful supply for constructing weapons. Some stalls

have a small number of enchanted weapons for sale,

though all will first attempt to pass a fake magical weapon

off as the real thing.

Typical Elf Trader: Tr2; AL NG; AC 5 (leather

armor plus Dexterity); MV 15; hp 7; THAC0 20;

#AT 1; Dmg 1d8–1 (bone long sword); Str 13, Dex

16, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 13, Cha 15; Bargain profi-

ciency 11.

B. Weapons (Metal). This stall carries weapons of iron

and even a few ancient metal arms. A few are magical; all

are expensive. The stall appears as a simple kank honey

shop (and kank honey items can be purchased here).

Metal weapons are kept hidden until a serious customer

is identified.

C. Fine Clothing. The best finery of elven and human

make fills these tents, offering a wide selection of expen-

sive clothing to those with the silver to afford it. The

clients usually come from the noble or merchant classes,

though an occasional freeman will come looking for a

regal outfit.

D. Spell Components. These tents carry spell compo-

nents, the ingredients necessary to cast spells. To outward

appearances, the tents seem to be selling herbs and spices,

but mages in need who have money or items to trade can

stock up on magical supplies. Because spell components

are illegal in the city-states, the proprietors of these stalls

are very careful about who they sell to, and costs start at

triple what the components are actually worth.

E. Dried Meats. Various meats are on sale here, many

prepared and spiced according to exotic recipes. The

meats are dried and preserved to last in the desert heat.

While adding to the diets of the locals, these meats also

make excellent traveling fare for independent traders and

adventurers.

F. Shoes and Boots. Footwear, both pre-made and spe-

cially crafted, can be obtained in these stalls. On rare

occasions, the tent on the roof of the Dayjumpers clan

building has a few pairs of magical footwear to sell.

G. Guards. Elf guards are posted around the market-

place. Some are in plain view, others are out of sight until

needed. They watch for troublemakers, thieves, and

agents of their competitors and the sorcerer-king. Typical

elf guards are fighters of 2nd to 4th level, though some are

multiclassed psionicists or mages.

Typical Elf Guard: F3; AL NG; AC 4 (leather armor

plus Dexterity); MV 16; hp 21; THAC0 17 (16 with

long sword); #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 (bone long sword); Str

17, Dex 17, Con 15, Int 13, Wis 11, Cha 12.

H. Magical Items. This obscure tent, hidden in the

alleys between the Twilightcatchers clan buildings, car-

ries a select supply of magical items. Potion fruits, talis-

mans, wards, and good luck charms (some of which are

occasionally genuine) make up the bulk of this tent’s

wares. Also stocked are whatever items the clan has

brought to market, including various texts and scrolls,

rings, wands, and the rare miscellaneous magical item.

This tent never has more than six genuine items available

at any given time.

I. Elven Instruments. This tent carries beautifully

crafted elven musical instruments. The wares include

lyrans, staff pipes, and more traditional instruments,

including a few of human make. The shop also stocks

some magical staves and rods for those with the money

and the knowledge to ask.

J. Gems and Jewelry. Elven jewelry is among the most

beautifully crafted on all of Athas. Since metal is so rare,

elven jewelers set precious stones in bands of stone or

bone to create rings, bracelets, and necklaces. Some of

this jewelry is enchanted, though fakes are more prevalent

than real magical items. These stalls also handle a steady

traffic of gems, which the elves convert to currency or trade

vouchers for use at other shops in the market.

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K. Alcoholic Beverages. Fermented fruit and an

assortment of wines and ales can be purchased here. In

addition to the alcoholic brews of the various city-states

and villages, the Sky Singers produce their own wine from

kank honey. This beverage is an acquired taste, however,

and profits are higher on the beers from the city-states.

L. Armor. These tents and stalls stock various pieces

of leather and hide armor. If a customer is lucky, he or she

might be able to find a piece of metal armor or even a

magical item among the wares. Pieces right off the rack are

slightly cheaper than those fitted to a customer’s specific

size and shape.

M. Bargain Clothing. Typical citizens, working

freemen, and ordinary adventurers cannot afford to pur-

chase fine suits for everyday wear. Instead, they shop at

these stalls for clothing at bargain prices. Shirts, pants,

cloaks, hats, and other traveling garments can be found

here.

N. Fruits and Vegetables. Fruits and vegetables from

the forests, verdant belts, and oases are sold here. The

quality and quantity of the wares depend on how good

trading was while the Sky Singers made their trading cir-

cuit as well as when a customer comes by. Obviously, the

earlier in the market session, the better the selection will

be. Some of the stalls stock a small selection of fruit

potions.

O. Pottery. Ceramic pots, bowls, and vases fill these

stalls. As with other trade tents, elven-crafted items are

stocked beside items made by other artisans. These shops

also sell water stored in sealed jars.

P. Pets. The Dawnchasers clan offers household ani-

mals for sale in this noisy, crowded tent. Hurrum, critics,

lizards, great cats, ock’n, and other small animals can be

purchased here. Exotic and even banned creatures may

sometimes be obtained, and the clan is not above taking

on a special commission to find such an animal.

Q. Candles. Besides purely functional candles, these

stalls sell candles in decorative shapes, some of which give

off pleasant aromas, and even a few that supposedly pro-

vide magical effects. A few actually are enchanted.

R. Leather Goods. Everything from weapon harnesses

to animal barding can be obtained here. Although boots,

clothing, and armor aren’t available, anything else made

of leather is, including belts, pouches, packs, and

sheathes.

S. Tattoos. From simple shapes to exquisite illustra-

tions, the elves of the Twilightcatchers clan produce strik-

ing examples of body art for those who can afford it. By

prior agreement with Muuton, one of the elves working

here is actually a member of the Night Runners. She

watches for customers who might need the dark talents of

her tribe.

T. Confections. Candy made from kank honey, fruit

pulp, and other ingredients are presented in a manner to

entice customers to sample the sweet wares. These types

of treats are rare in the city-states, so the expense puts

them out of reach of most citizens. Nobles, however, stock

up on the sweets whenever the market comes to town.

U. Stone/Bone Carvers. Tools, knives, and works of

art are created by elf carvers.

V. Weaver. Elven looms spin fine textiles, which are

sold in this tent. The quality and designs are particularly

good, and the sorcerer-king himself is rumored to pur-

chase cloth for his templars from time to time.

W. Wooden Goods. Wood is almost as rare as metal

on the dying world of Athas. When a supply becomes

available, it is turned into weapons and other items that

are sold here. The crafters will also create items from wood

brought in by a customer, and sometimes they even stock

wares made by the halflings of the Forest Ridge. Items

made in Gulg or crafted from wood taken from the Cres-

cent Forest are illegal. These items can be found among

the legal wares, however.

X. Fine Art. Nibenay’s nobility is especially fond of

work of art that can be displayed and admired. Paintings

and sculptures fill this tent, waiting to catch the eye of a

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noble or his or her agents. The elves consider this type of

art to be useless and even laughable, but they will produce

and stock it as long as someone keeps buying it.

Y. Glassware. Elf glassblowers create wondrously

shaped bottles, jars, and works of art to the delight of

watching customers. All have a flame motif in deference

to the element of fire, which the Sky Singers revere.

Z. Travel Supplies. To travel the burning wastes, a per-

son must be well prepared. The supplies that travelers and

adventurers need can be purchased here, though these

tents do not stock magical items of any sort. Rope, water-

skins, bedrolls, tents, and other ordinary yet essential

items fill these tents.

Important Tribe Members

Muuton Sky Singer

Male Elf Trader/Fighter, Neutral Good

Armor Class 3 (leather, Dex)

Str 15

Movement 19

Dex 20

Level 12/9

Con 13

Hit Points 47

Int 16

THAC0 12 (11 with long sword)

Wis 15

No. of Attacks 1

Cha 18

Damage/Attack: 1d8 (bone long sword +1)

Psionic Summary: PSPs 66; Wild Talent—Displace-

ment (PS Con –3; Cost 6+3/round)

Muuton Sky Singer leads the tribe with strength, cun-

ning, and a strong business sense. He loves to make deals,

and the sounds of his tribe’s market haggling give him

much pleasure in the now. Still, he dreams of bigger

things. A young 58, Muuton wants to make the Sky

Singers the most powerful merchants in the Tyr region.

Despite the pain caused by the recent slaughter of his

tribe mates, he cannot help but take that as an indication

that he is moving in the right direction. Muuton wears an

ornate cloak over decorated leather armor. A helm of

leather and roc feathers is his mantle of office.

Kiiretti Dayjumper

Female Elf Trader, Chaotic Good

Armor Class 5 (leather, Dex)

Str 11

Movement 14

Dex 14

Level 14

Con 9

Hit Points 54

Int 15

THAC0 14

Wis 18

No. of Attacks 1

Cha 19

Damage/Attack: 1d4+1 (stone dagger +2)

Psionic Summary: PSPs 72; Wild Talent—Time Shift

(PS Int; Cost 16)

Kiretti Dayjumper is the tribe’s current trade master—a

post she has held for the last five years. While other advi-

sory posts shift personnel regularly, Kiretti has been able

to maintain and even increase her personal base of

power. Besides her aggressive tactics, shrewd trading

sense, and natural charisma, the beautiful and forceful

Kiiretti also has a psionic wild talent that proves useful in

her negotiations with others. With time shift, she can peer

into the future to see what her opponents (and she treats

everyone except Muuton as an opponent) are going to

do. Then she adjusts her own plans accordingly. She has

helped the tribe grow wealthy through her endeavors, and

it seems likely she shall remain trade master for the fore-

seeable future.

Abyuuk Dawnchaser

Male Elf Ranger, Neutral Good

Armor Class 3 (leather, Dex)

Movement 17

Level 10

Hit Points 55

Str 17

Dex 18

Con 15

Int 14

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THAC0 11 (7 with long sword)

Wis 14

No. of Attacks 3/2

Cha 11

Damage/Attack: 1d8+3 (bone long sword +3)

Psionic Summary: PSPs 64; Wild Talent—Shadow-form

(PS Con –6; Cost 12+3/round)

Abyuuk Dawnchaser serves as commander of the elven

guard. He won the post through his bravery and fighting

prowess. The elven guard protects not only the Sky

Singers’ markets, but they also operate as the tribe’s first

line of defense. Abyuuk’s ranger skills and psionic wild

talent make him a very effective warrior; but he also

understands military tactics and knows how to lead fight-

ers in battle. He is particularly concerned about safety in

the wake of the recent murders and has doubled the num-

ber of guards on patrol. When the true culprit is identi-

fied, Abyuuk plans to personally lead the counterstrike

with as many warriors as he can muster.

Wind Dancers

Not all elf tribes are as prosperous or successful as the Sky

Singers tribe. Some must struggle through every now,

undergoing a constant battle to survive in the harsh,

unforgiving wastes. Such is the case with the Wind

Dancers tribe. The Wind Dancers once roamed the

Great Alluvial Sand Wastes from Tyr to Balic, tending

huge herds of kanks and living a rich and peaceful exis-

tence. The tribe was beginning a small business in trade,

mostly as carriers of goods between the two city-states. But

as every elf knows, hardship strikes when the now is happy

and bright, and that is what happened to the Wind

Dancers.

Two years past, a terrible disease ravaged the tribe’s

kank herd. No matter what the elves or their element

singers attempted, the kanks continued to die. Worse, the

elves themselves were not immune to the disease. Many

died, and those who didn’t were incapacitated, until only

a small percentage of the tribe remained on its feet to offer

care and provide protection. Fewer than 50 elves were suf-

ficiently strong enough to cook, tend the remaining kanks

and tribe members, and stand guard. It was then, at the

height of the Wind Dancers’ vulnerability, that a thri-

kreen hunting pack attacked.

The horde was the largest number of thri-kreen the

Wind Dancers had ever seen assembled. Perhaps some

similar disaster had befallen the insect-men, for never had

so many of them banded together before. They were hun-

gry and desperate, and the Wind Dancers were a feast set

before them. Between the disease and the hungry thri-

kreen, the Wind Dancers lost all their remaining kanks

and most of their numbers. Of 2,000 elves, only 400 sur-

vived the twin plagues. There was some retribution, how-

ever: the disease ravaged their thri-kreen attackers a few

weeks later, killing large numbers of the insect men.

Until the Wind Dancers tribe can rebuild itself, it

must do whatever it can to survive. Now, with hungry

mouths to feed and few choices on how to accomplish

this, the elves have turned to raiding. While the majority

of the tribe hopes to return to herding, a small but vocal

minority has enjoyed taking sustenance by force. They are

determined that raiding shall be the new road to follow in

the elves’ journey through the nows.

Organization

Santhaal Wind Dancer took command of those elves who

escaped the vicious thri-kreen attack. She forced them

past their despair and onto a productive course of action.

Before disease and battle decimated the Wind Dancers,

Santhaal had been the tribe’s warlord; she had been

responsible for commanding the warriors and defending

the tribe. When the tribe’s chief died in the plague, the

elves lost all cohesiveness. They needed a strong leader

who could inspire them if they were to survive the nows to

come. Santhaal decided she was the elf for the job. After

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gathering the survivors and organizing the first successful

raid, she was declared chief.

Only two clans remain of the five that originally made

up the Wind Dancers tribe. The handful of members of

the other clans that survived have been assimilated into

the two clans by order of Santhaal. These clans, the

Airhunters and the Breezechasers, form the basis for the

Wind Dancers’ return to glory. Even though the two clans

continue to maintain separate leaders, Santhaal makes

them operate together by intermingling members in the

same raiding parties. As far as the chief is concerned,

Airhunters and Breezechasers must be as one clan if the

Wind Dancers tribe is going to survive.

Santhaal’s advisers are drawn from the warrior classes.

Even the tribe’s element singer and master mage have a

militaristic approach to life. For a tribe of simple herders

turned raiders, the leadership that warriors can provide

takes precedence over every other concern.

The tribe is divided into raiding parties consisting of

50 elves—men, women, and children from both clans. A

raid master commands each party and also serves as one

of Santhaal’s advisers. Parties can be combined when

larger numbers are needed. In such cases, Santhaal her-

self operates as raid master, or she assigns a leader to com-

mand the combined forces.

Recent History

After spending more than a year on the run and subsist-

ing on starvation rations, the Wind Dancers have begun

to make a name for themselves as capable raiders. They

do not yet inspire the levels of fear and terror associated

with the Black Sand Raiders or the Silt Stalkers, but the

traders south of Tyr have learned to be wary of this desper-

ate tribe of elves. In the wake of the ravaging plague and

the subsequent attack by thri-kreen hunters, the tribe was

reduced to few possessions, almost no supplies, and less

than a quarter of its number. The elves literally had to

start from scratch. While things have gotten better than

they were in the dark days that witnessed their desperate

flight from the thri-kreen, the Wind Dancers remain on

the brink of extinction.

During a recent raid on Fort Adros, the Wind Dancers

were ambushed by gith warriors. The fort, located about 35

miles north of the Lost Oasis, opened its gates so that a car-

avan carrying gold bound for Altaruk could exit. As the

caravan moved away from the protection of the fort, the

Wind Dancers swarmed out of the wastes. The raid was

going smoothly when the gith decided to attack. They

came out of the mountains north of the Lost Oasis, seek-

ing to take what the elves had fought for. The three-way bat-

tle ended with the elves and gith running off with about a

third of the cargo each. The rest was carried back to the fort

by the remaining members of the caravan. This was the lat-

est incident in the growing conflict between the Wind

Dancers and the Blood Clan gith of the southern wastes.

To bolster the strength of the Wind Dancers, Santhaal

has allowed outcasts from other elf tribes to join her

raiders. The newest of these outcast elves is a defiler

named Duukodo. Many of the tribe members feel

uncomfortable with this addition, for the tribe has tradi-

tionally been home to preserver magic. The tribe’s master

mage, a preserver named Riikaa Breezechaser, doesn’t like

the defiler, but she has agreed to his inclusion at the insis-

tence of the chief and because the tribe needs the power

Duukodo’s magic provides. Horuum Airhunter, the

tribe’s wind singer, has not accepted the defiler, however.

His vocal protests could force Santhaal to choose

between her chief cleric and the new magic-user.

Such a decision will have to wait, though, as Santhaal is

busy planning a major raid on House Wavir’s Outpost

10. The small trading post on the edge of the Ringing

Mountains has been receiving large shipments from the

Forest Ridge, and Santhaal wants to plunder as much as

she can before the caravans arrive from Balic to haul the

goods away.

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Relations with Outsiders

All outsiders, with the exception of outcasts from other elf

tribes, are looked upon as enemies or sources of plunder

by the elves of the Wind Dancers tribe. Elven outcasts are

offered a place in the tribe if they agree to swear loyalty to

Santhaal. The chief has decided on this practice in order

to increase the tribe’s depleted numbers. The rest of the

Wind Dancers aren’t pleased by this disregard of tradi-

tion, but they understand that the tribe must grow quickly

if it is going to survive. The initiation process does include

a number of tests of loyalty, many of which Santhaal

administers herself. This testing has mollified the two

existing clans to a degree.

House Wavir of Balic and House Inika of Gulg have

bolstered the caravans that service this portion of the Tyr

region with more guards, but this has not yet served to

deter the desperate Wind Dancers. Because the two mer-

chant houses currently operate as allies, the possibility of

them raising an army of mercenaries to send after the

Wind Dancers is a virtual certainty.

A tribe of gith that inhabits the mountains north of the

Lost Oasis has come into conflict with the Wind Dancers

on at least six separate occasions over the past year. The

Blood Clan, as the gith call themselves, are attracted to

the same targets of opportunity that interest the Wind

Dancers. Santhaal doesn’t believe her tribe is ready to go

to war with the gith, but she may be forced to if the foul

creatures continue to strike at the elves’ raiding parties. In

fact, the Blood Clan has recently begun shadowing the

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Wind Dancers, waiting for the elves to launch a raid—and

then swooping in to take a portion for themselves.

The Wind Dancers recently made another enemy.

The elves plundered a small caravan on its way to

Altaruk, killing all its members when they refused to sur-

render their possessions. This caravan was made up of ex-

slaves from a tiny village near Grak’s Pool, and their

deaths did not go unnoticed. The slave tribe called Sor-

tar’s Army, which considers itself locked in a war against

the city-states, sees all those who would harm or hinder ex-

slaves as enemies to be destroyed. Sortar and his berserk-

ers are now looking for the Wind Dancers, and they have

retribution on their minds. (See DSR1, Slave Tribes, for

more information on Sortar’s Army.)

Current Endeavors

Once the Wind Dancers were prosperous herders begin-

ning to develop a trade route between Tyr and Balic; now

they live as savage raiders. In the two years since disease

and war reduced the tribe, Chief Santhaal has been train-

ing her elves to fight, to steal, and to take what they require

by force of arms. With the constant threats of thri-kreen,

gith, slave tribes, and caravan guards looming over

them—not to mention the other hazards of the

wastes—Santhaal wants her tribe to be as prepared and

capable of defense as possible.

The tribe tends to be extremely violent during the ini-

tial moments of a raid. They strike swiftly, hoping to crip-

ple their target so that the rest of the raid goes smoothly.

During these sweeps of bloodthirsty violence, the tribe

seeks to vent some of its pent-up anger and sorrow. How-

ever, once the first line of defense is broken, the raiders

seem to recover their composure. They become almost

apologetic and careful not to kill any more people than

they must. But make no mistake: the tribe remains in des-

perate straits and will go to any lengths to secure the things

it needs to survive.

Other than Santhaal’s push to train her tribe for battle,

the Wind Dancers have no set plan or agenda. The elves

have learned where the best ambushes can be set, but they

rarely make grand plans or elaborate preparations prior to

engaging in a raid. They are marauders of opportunity,

taking advantage of whatever travelers, caravans, or poorly

defended settlements happen across their paths. They do

make periodic checks on the forts and oases of the wastes

to see what kind of activity is in progress, but that is the

extent of their planned routine.

The Wind Dancers became raiders because of the

circumstances that battered them into poverty. The tribe

is a long way from becoming well-seasoned raiders, and

many of its members aren’t sure that they want to be

raiders once the herd has grown to sufficient size to sup-

port them. Most of Santhaal’s advisers, however, like the

direction the tribe is taking. They are elves with a mili-

tary mindset, and they see raiding as the best way to keep

the tribe strong.

As long as the tribe follows a philosophy of combat,

these advisers believe they will maintain their positions

of power. If they can continue to convince Santhaal

that marauding is the best direction for the Wind

Dancers, then the tribe will remain a hindrance to the

southern traders.

Area of Activity

The Wind Dancers tribe wanders the Great Alluvial

Sand Wastes, traveling as far north as Tyr and as far south

as the Lost Oasis in its search for plunder. The tribe has

only a limited number of kank to haul supplies, and each

elf must carry his or her own items.

Santhaal regularly leads her raiders against House

Wavir’s Outpost 10 and the caravans from Balic that ser-

vice it. She also orders periodic attack on Fort Adros and

the traders it defends along the gold route between Walis

and Altaruk.

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Important Tribe Members

Santhaal Wind Dancer

Female Elf Fighter, Chaotic Neutral

Armor Class 1 (war smock +1, Dex) Str 16

Movement 17

Dex 18

Level 11

Con 12

Hit Points 64

Int 14

THAC0 10 (11 with long sword)

Wis 11

No. of Attacks: 3/2

Cha 16

Damage/Attack: 1d8 (stone long sword, Str)

Psionic Summary: PSPs 54; Wild Talent—Project Force

(PS Con –2; Cost 10)

Santhaal was originally charged with the defense of the

herders of the Wind Dancers tribe. She carried out this

position well—until the illness struck. No matter how

strong she was, no matter how skilled with sword and bow,

there was no way for Santhaal to fight the disease. It even

claimed her beloved, Chief Wooguun. Unable to strike

back at the plague, Santhaal stood helpless as those whom

she’d sworn to protect died. When the thri-kreen attacked,

all she and her warriors could do was flee.

Now Santhaal rules the tribe, and she promises that

every member will learn to protect him- or herself. Her

vision is that, though the Wind Dancers are now weak,

soon their raids will be the stuff of song.

Santhaal wears a leather smock covered with flat

squares of carved stones and bones that have been

engraved with arcane symbols of protection. The scar

across her face has done little to mar her natural beauty

and charismatic nature.

Duukodo

Male Elf Defiler, Neutral Evil

Armor Class 7 (Dex)

Movement 16

Str 9

Dex 17

Level 9

Con 10

Hit Points 26

Int 19

THAC0 18 (17 with dagger,

Wis 12

19 with staff)

Cha 16

No. of Attacks: 1

Damage/Attack: 1d4+1 (metal dagger +1),

1d6–1 (bone staff)

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

Duukodo joined the Wind Dancers only a short time ago,

taking advantage of Santhaal’s offer to elves who had been

cast out from other tribes. He impressed the chief with his

displays of arcane might and has since taken an unofficial

role as one of her advisers. He has been very quiet about

his past, though his future plans seem obvious to those

not taken in by his power and charisma. Duukodo wants

to lead the Wind Dancers—or at least become the power

behind the throne. Why he wants this tribe remains a

mystery, but it might have something to do with his expul-

sion from his previous tribe. Duukodo knows that the

tribe’s wind singer does not trust him and will eventually

step forward to oppose him, but he plans to eliminate that

threat before it comes to bear. Duukodo’s spells are

inscribed on the bone staff he carries, and he keeps his

enchanted metal dagger hidden in his desert wrap.

Meebog Airhunter

Male Elf Fighter/Trader, Neutral Good

Armor Class 8 (Dex)

Str 12

Movement 16

Dex 17

Level 6/2

Con 13

Hit Points 27

Int 13

THAC0 15

Wis 16

No. of Attack: 1

Cha 13

Damage/Attack: 1d8–1 (bone long sword)

Psionic Summary: PSPs 36; Wild Talent—Truthear

(PS Wis; Cost 4+2/round)

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Meebog Airhunter was one of the first traders in the

Wind Dancers tribe before the disaster struck. He had

been learning the intricacies of mercantilism and helping

to establish the tribe’s first trade route. The illness that

claimed so many of the elves also hampered Meebog, but

he eventually recovered whereas most simply died. Since

then, the tribe has changed direction dramatically. He

understands the need for raiding, but he wants the tribe to

return to its herding ways so that he can go back to learn-

ing how to be a merchant. He fears that Santhaal and her

advisers want to remain raiders, and that would leave little

room for peaceful trade. Meebog has become withdrawn

and quiet since his illness, and his mood has not been

helped by the marauding mentality hanging over the

tribe. He would rather plunder through negotiation and

wits than with a sword and bow, but he may have to leave

the tribe in order to follow his desires.

Silver Hands

The Silver Hands aren’t a typical elf tribe on Athas.

While other elves run free, the Silver Hands have decided

to settle down. The tribe has claimed a small oasis as its

own and bestowed upon it the lofty name of Silver Spring.

Do not be deceived: there is nothing silver about this oasis

except for the coins that the tribe’s chief craves. The water

is foul-tasting and less than clear, but it is safe to drink

—and therein lies its attraction to the elves.

Silver Spring Oasis blossoms from the Tablelands near

the main trade road from Urik to Tyr. It is a prime location

that has long provided relief to travelers, offering a bit of

shade and enough water to quench the thirst of even the

largest caravan crew. Although its location made it a nat-

ural stopping point, its poor appearance and less-than-

perfect water never inspired a settlement or fort to spring

up around it. Then the Silver Hands tribe discovered the

oasis, and everything changed.

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

way to fill his packs and pockets than finding targets to

rob. “Better to let them come to you and then rob them,”

Toramund decided. When the tribe happened upon the

oasis during its wandering, the chief declared that the spot

belonged to the Silver Hands. The tribe has controlled

the oasis ever since. At first the elves simply set up a camp

around the oasis and demanded payment from all travel-

ers who stopped there. Eventually, they constructed a forti-

fied compound to better enforce their claim to the

property and to ensure that the area was protected from

those who didn’t want or couldn’t afford to pay.

Organization

Toramund leads the Silver Hands elves with humor and a

driving obsession for wealth. He has a particular fondness

for silver, and when he took command he changed the

name of the tribe to reflect his own tastes. He is a cunning

warrior and a crafty defiler who has infected his tribe with

his own greed and desires. Unlike other elf leaders of a

similar mold, Toramund readily shares all the wealth that

comes his way with the entire tribe. He believes that by

being generous to his followers, they will be less likely to

hold back whatever wealth they obtain. He prefers to

receive a portion of most of the tribe’s income rather than

hoarding all the obvious assets and missing out on

income he might otherwise know nothing about.

The Silver Hands elves have long been a tribe of out-

laws and raiders, though they never achieved the numbers

necessary to make a name for themselves across the Table-

lands. Toramund wrested control of the tribe from the pre-

vious chief by challenging her to a fight after a particularly

long and festive celebration. While Toramund was clear-

headed and alert, his rival Vorundi was intoxicated with

too much fermented kank nectar and a potent jug of

dwarven whiskey from South Ledopolus (graciously

offered to her at the start of the festivities by Toramund).

In addition to being Toramund’s chief, Vorundi was also

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his mother. The fight did not last long. Toramund killed

Vorundi and declared himself chief of the tribe.

The tribe has no separate clans. All its members are

Silver Hands elves. There are approximately 100 elves in

the tribe; fully half that number are warriors. The rest of

the tribe is composed of assorted thieves, traders, psioni-

cists, and children. There are also a few defilers and cler-

ics to add power to the tribe.

There are only three official posts in the tribe—chief,

protector of the wall, and keeper of the silver. Toramund,

of course, is chief. The fighter Basettu is protector of the

wall. It is his responsibility to defend the tribe and its

property from any and all threats. Lastly, Toramund’s

daughter Torami serves as keeper of the silver. She keeps

track of and watches over the tribe’s assets, paying special

attention to the silver her father loves so well. If Toramund

ever considers that his daughter may do to him what he

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did to his mother, he never shows it. It has been noted by

older members of the tribe that he never drinks from skins

or bottles offered to him by Torami, however.

Recent History

At first, the Silver Hands tribe had to enforce payment for

using the oasis by threats, hoping that whatever travelers vis-

iting the spot were willing to turn over silver rather than

fight. This method didn’t always work, and many times the

Silver Hands had to flee in the face of stronger and larger

groups. Then Toramund had an idea. He had his elves con-

struct a wall of sun-dried mud brick to protect the spring.

This worked for a while, but then the Sun Runners tribe

decided they didn’t like the idea of a wall keeping them out.

The Sun Runners’ mage (who happened to be Sadira of

Tyr) brought the wall down in a hail of powerful magicks.

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Since then, the Silver Hands have built a bigger com-

pound with sturdier walls. This fort has been constructed

of stone, for Toramund blames the last disaster not on the

power of the rival elves’ wizard but on the vulnerability of

fragile mud. In addition, Toramund has ordered his elves

to admit the Sun Runners next time they appear. He

would rather lose out on a few fees than have to rebuild

the compound a third time. Further, if he can cause the

Sun Runners to drop their guard, his elves might get an

opportunity to strike back at them in some subtle way.

Thievery, or perhaps poison, is usually safer than direct

combat, Toramund reasons, and in some ways much more

satisfying than drawing blood.

The tribe has been searching for a powerful defiler.

Toramund prefers to keep his own wizardly powers secret,

using them only when unobserved or absolutely neces-

sary. Instead, he likes to have another defiler at his side to

offer protection and to follow his orders. None of the

mages born of his tribe are strong enough to fill his

requirements, so he seeks outcast elves or mages from

other races to serve him. His last defiler, an old human

named Bademyr, died during the Sun Runners’ last visit.

Silver Spring Oasis

A lush field of tart-smelling ashbrush fills the area around

the oasis. The brush is dun-colored and thorny, and

burnt-orange rocks jut from the scrub plains. The elven

compound—a looming fortress of stone blocks rising

above the barrens—can be seen from the road. When

travelers approach to within bowshot of the walls, elf

guards call out the rules of the compound: “Two silver

pieces each to water here and rest in relative safety. Pay or

turn back.” Then an elf appears from a hidden entrance

to collect the fees. The gates will not open until payment

is received, and most violence is returned in kind by the

bow-wielding guards upon the walls.

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

water. Around it wait the elven tents, full of goods to trade

and deals to be struck. If a traveler is careful and keeps his

wits about him, he might even come away with a worth-

while item and most of his money.

The descriptions below are keyed to the accompanying

map of the oasis.

1. Warrior Tents. The fighters and multiclassed war-

riors charged with defending the compound live in these

long tents. The warriors follow strict schedules so that

there are always guards atop the walls. If trouble occurs, all

of the warriors can be assembled within minutes. All war-

riors carry long bows, a quiver of arrows, and a long sword

made of bone or stone.

Elf Warrior: F3; AL N; AC 5 (leather armor, Dex-

terity); MV 15; hp 19; THAC0 18 (17 with long

sword, 17 with long bow); #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 (bone

long sword, Str) or 1d6 (bone-tipped arrow, Str); ML

11; Str 17, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 11, Wis 9, Cha 9.

2. Defilers’ Tent. Toramund provides this tent for the

use of whatever defiler he recruits. It also serves as the liv-

ing quarters for the three low-level elf defilers that were

born into the tribe. These elves dislike the idea that Tora-

mund seeks wizard talent from outsiders, but they also

know that they do not possess the power their chief

requires. They continue to hope that the next mage to

come to the Silver Hands will agree to tutor them in the

higher arcane arts. Until then, they continue the long

process of self-study. They are constantly on the lookout

for travelers who might be wizards, for they are eager to

increase their store of spells, arcane texts, and magical

items through whatever means are necessary.

Elf Defiler: D4; AL NE; AC 9 (Dexterity); MV

14; hp 11; THAC0 19 (20 with dagger); #AT 1;

Dmg 1d4–1 (bone dagger); ML 9; Str 9, Dex 15,

Con 9, Int 14, Wis 10, Cha 11.

3. Chief’s Palace and Common Living Tent. This

huge tent serves as Toramund’s personal living area and

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court, and as the common living area for the rest of the

tribe. Toramund and his personal guards live here in a

portion of the tent blocked off by flowing curtains. The

larger common area houses the tribe’s children and those

elves who have no other place to sleep. Sometimes the

common area is cleared so that Toramund can hold court

or entertain important visitors. Toramund’s private collec-

tion of silver and treasures is stored here, under the watch-

ful eye of his daughter Torami.

Personal Elf Guard: F/Ps 6/6; AL N; AC 4

(Braxat hide armor, Dexterity); MV 15; hp 26;

THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 (bone long sword,

Str); ML 13; Str 16, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 12, Wis

10, Cha 13.

4. Oasis Market. The tents of the oasis market are

filled with cheap, gaudy goods that carry hefty price tags.

All items have been “improved” with decorative elements

to justify prices three times more expensive than those

offered elsewhere—improvements include a few extra

stitches here, a few more beads there, etc. Common goods

of all descriptions can usually be found here, as can a few

“exotic” items that are often only slightly altered common

goods. For example, a battered bone sword might be

engraved with a few meaningless runes and hawked as the

legendary weapon of Colwyn of Bodach. The elves also

sell spell components, and every so often a real treasure

shows up in the market. But in order for a genuine trea-

sure to escape Toramund’s private collection, it must be

so obscure or disguised as to appear to have little or no

true worth.

Elf Trader: Tr1; AL CN; AC 6 (leather plus Dex-

terity); MV 14; hp 5; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg

1d8–1 (obsidian long sword); Str 11, Dex 15, Con

9, Int 15, Wis 12, Cha 16; Bargain proficiency 10.

5. Travelers’ Camp. The Silver Hands provide space

within their compound for travelers to make camp. This

area is treated as an outdoor inn. For an additional silver

piece (or something of equivalent value), the elves provide

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a sleeping mat, a small camp site, and a fire pit. Those

travelers who take advantage of the elves’ hospitality are

bothered by peddlers and wandering entertainers

throughout their stay. They must also beware of elf thieves

who regularly prey upon the campers. The thieves do not

steal so much from a single person as to be readily

noticed, but they often take possession of a valuable item

or two.

Elf Thief: T5; AL N; AC 6 (leather armor, Dexter-

ity); MV 15; hp 22; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg

1d8–1 (bone long sword); ML 10; Str 12, Dex 16,

Con 10, Int 13, Wis 9, Cha 11.

6. Camp Supplies. This tent holds all the supplies for

the travelers’ camp. Visitors pay their silver here to receive

sleeping mats and kindling from the elves on duty. The

tent also has a small cooking fire to prepare meals (which

cost twice as much as the fare at city inns), and it stocks

wine and ale for those visitors inclined to drink something

other than foul water.

7. Tent of Delights. Elf entertainers sing and dance for

audiences in this tavern/show hall. The drinks are strong

and often as foul-tasting as the water outside, but the

singers and dancers are good. Most cannot compare to

the entertainers found among the Sky Singers, for exam-

ple, but a few come quite close. Friendly customers who

can afford to pay may avail themselves of elven company

during their stay in the compound.

8. Provisions. Traveling supplies may be purchased

from the elves in this tent. The items are costly, but all are

of good quality. They stock no magical items. If visitors

anger or insult the Silver Hands, the provisions they pur-

chase might be laced with some type of poison. Occasion-

ally, the elves will poison a particularly wealthy visitor with

a deadly but slow-acting brew. Then they will follow after

in order to loot the visitor’s dead body once it falls to the

ground.

9. Warrior Leaders. Basettu, the protector of the wall,

and his warrior lieutenants share this tent. Their personal

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belongings are stored here, and this is where they come to

sleep and relax. The accommodations are less spartan

than the warriors’ tents, but not nearly as opulent as the

chief’s living area. Four leaders live here, in addition to

Basettu.

Warrior Lieutenant: F7; AL NE; AC 2 (Braxat

hide armor, Dexterity); MV 16; hp 47; THAC0 14

(13 with long sword); #AT 3/2; Dmg 1d8+2 (obsid-

ian long sword, Strength); Str 18, Dex 17 Con 14,

Int 15, Wis 11, Cha 16.

10. Living Tents. These tents serve as living areas for

other members of the tribe who do not live in the warrior

tents or in the common tent. These are elves who desire a

bit more privacy and have been granted it by Toramund.

Traders, successful thieves, and a few of the more popular

entertainers live here.

11. Animal Pen. The elves maintain this facility to

keep and tend animals brought in by visitors. The small

number of kanks that the tribe keeps are also corralled

here. The two silver piece fee must be paid for all animals

brought to the compound that wish to partake of the water

of the oasis. If an animal’s owner decides to spend any

amount of time in the compound, then the animal must

be left in the pen. The fee for using the pen is one silver

piece. Mekillots are not permitted in the compound, but

water may be brought to these creatures outside the walls

if the normal fee is paid.

Relations with Outsiders

Everyone is welcome at the Silver Spring Oasis—pro-

vided they have the monies to pay the fees associated with

resting and watering within the compound walls. Only

those who refuse to turn over the appropriate amount of

silver are turned away, usually by a hail of arrows and a few

well-placed magic spells. If a group of visitors appears

especially powerful, Toramund may decide to open the

compound gates and give them free access to the oasis in

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order to avoid a battle his tribe may not win.

The Sun Runners, led by the elf named Faenaeyon,

have been competing with the Silver Hands for a long

time. The last time the two tribes met, the Sun Runners

used powerful magic to bring down the compound walls.

The time before that, the Sun Runners robbed a large

portion of Toramund’s private hoard. When next they

meet, Toramund wants his tribe to come away with the

upper hand. He plans to be friendly and forgiving of his

elven brethren, offering them free access to the oasis.

Then, when they are off guard, he plans to strike at them

in a way that will truly hurt Faenaeyon—by stealing from

the Sun Runner chief’s own store of wealth.

The Silver Hands also have an agreement of sorts with

the Black Sand Raiders. In exchange for allowing the slave

tribe to use the oasis, the Raiders have agreed not to plun-

der or destroy the elf compound. The Silver Hands serve

as the eyes and ears of the marauders, going so far as to

actively work for them if the Raiders demand it. They

watch for choice caravans and for signs of danger that may

concern the Raiders, and sometimes even provide aid by

poisoning a particular target or by sending word to the

slave tribe of something that is sure to interest the Raiders’

leader or his defiler adviser. (See DSR1, Slave Tribes for

additional information about these raiders.)

Current Endeavors

The outlaw Silver Hands tribe has taken on an air of legit-

imacy by establishing a permanent trading post at the

Tablelands crossroads. This appearance hasn’t changed

the fact that the Silver Hands are thieves and raiders. The

elves have merely changed the method by which they

plunder travelers. Now, instead of seeking out caravans

and travelers to raid, they wait for the travelers to come to

them. Then they rob them by charging high prices for the

services they provide, and by pilfering a money pouch or

costly item or two in typical elven fashion.

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The compound that the elves have erected around the

oasis gives new meaning to the phrase, “Let the buyer

beware.” At the Silver Spring Oasis, a traveler and his

money are soon parted. The elves require payment for

everything, from watering at the pond to receiving a small

area to set up camp. Due to recent troubles, all prices have

been increased. It now costs two pieces of silver for every

person and animal that seeks admittance to the oasis.

Once a traveler steps through the fortified gates sur-

rounding the oasis, he or she receives the endless atten-

tion of peddlers and entertainers. Everyone from old elves

to young children assaults the traveler, hoping to sell or

trade some trinket for more than its worth or seeking an

opportunity to secretly swipe a prized possession. When

the parade of peddlers slows, other elves arrive to level a

series of annoying minor fees, charges, and gratuities for

the privilege of resting within the protection of the fortified

wall. The compound features an elven market where trav-

elers can stock up on supplies or find an exotic trinket or

two. Everything is extremely expensive, and most items are

of dubious quality.

If any traveler seems particularly wealthy, Toramund

takes a personal interest. He uses all of his charm and

guile to appropriate a portion of that wealth for himself,

going so far as to offer an item of true value in exchange

for an amount of silver. Once such a deal is concluded,

Toramund often sends thieves off to shadow the traveler

with orders to steal back the item at the first opportunity.

On the other hand, the chief tries to keep obvious acts of

theft and violence to a minimum. After all, if the oasis

garners an unreasonably bad reputation, business will

likely slack off.

Area of Activity

The Silver Hands operate exclusively in the area sur-

rounding the Silver Spring Oasis. Since claiming the

oasis as their own, the elves have devoted themselves to

protecting it and turning it into a profitable venture. Like

the silver he hoards, Toramund jealously guards the oasis

to the exclusion of all other activities. The tribe can never

wander too far from its muddy shores for fear that some-

one else will move in. Toramund sometimes sends small

trading parties to Fort Iron or Ablath when supplies are

low, and elf scouts watch for caravans and signs of danger

in the surrounding barrens, but the majority of the tribe

stays at the oasis.

Important Tribe Members

Toramund

Male Elf Fighter/Defiler, Neutral Evil

Armor Class 1 (leather armor +2)

Str 15

Movement 18

Dex 19

Level 9/11

Con 12

Hit Points 41

Int 18

THAC0 12 (10 with long sword,

Wis 9

13 with short sword)

Cha 15

No. of Attacks: 3/2

Damage/Attack: 1d8+2 (metal long sword +2),

1d6–1 (bone short sword)

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

Greed rules Toramund, chief of the Silver Hands tribe.

His desire to possess silver is overwhelming, and he has

infected the rest of the tribe with the same obsession. He

is proud of the fort he has constructed around Silver

Spring, and he believes that his tribe’s method of robbing

visitors is much better than actually tracking and attack-

ing caravans in the desert. He keeps his defiler skills

secret, though he is interested in any magical texts or

items his tribe acquires. He carries an enchanted metal

long sword (not of elven make) and a wicked bone short

sword. If pressed into battle, he can wield both weapons at

the same time.

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Quaar

Male Elf Trader/Psionicist, Chaotic Neutral

Armor Class 8 (leather armor)

Str 13

Movement 14

Dex 14

Level 8/7

Con 13

Hit Points 30

Int 20

THAC0 17 (19 with dagger)

Wis 15

No. of Attacks: 1

Cha 14

Damage/Attack: 1d8–1 (bone long sword),

1d4–1 (obsidian dagger)

Psionic Summary: PSPs 85; Level 7; Dis/Sci/Dev

3/4/12; Attacks MT, II; Defenses MB, TS, IF

Quaar oversees all trade within the Silver Spring com-

pound, though he is usually to be found at the market or

in the Tent of Delights. His long friendship with Tora-

mund helped him gain his position, as did his talents and

learned skills. The friendly elf loves to make deals and run

businesses—especially crooked businesses. He shares the

same obsession for silver that afflicts his chief, but he also

enjoys cheating visitors out of other types of wealth. He

sometimes sells information to the Night Runners and

agents from House Vordon of Tyr.

Water Hunters

The elves of the Water Hunters tribe wander the sandy

wastes and rocky badlands in an endless search for suste-

nance. The hunter-gatherers and herders that make up

the tribe embrace the old elven ways. They reject the

“new” ideas that other tribes have adopted, declaring mer-

cantile activities to be the province of the slower races and

not worthy of true desert runners.

The Water Hunters look down upon the Silver Hands

tribe with especial scorn. Not only has that tribe settled in

one place, its members have gone so far as to build a per-

manent fort to wall in a portion of the desert. This goes

against everything that Coraanu Star Racer taught the

elves of Athas. It is only a matter of time, the Water

Hunters believe, until the worst hardships of life catch up

with these heretics of elven nature who have given up the

gift of running free.

The Water Hunters are ferocious fighters. While they

do not actively pursue caravans to raid or search out settle-

ments to plunder, they will battle any outsiders who

invade what they consider to be their territory (currently

the area within the vicinity of Utbo Grove). They will also

attack those who interfere with their hunting and herding

activities.

These elves hold to a number of barbaric practices that

date back to an earlier time; as such, they are much like

the halflings of the Forest Ridge. The Water Hunters con-

sume raw meat, often carving it off the still-living creatures

they have chased and captured. They collect trophies

from their prey and fallen foes, proudly wearing the bones

of those they have bested in the hunt or by combat. For all

their savagery, there are no better hunters, trackers, or

scouts in the Tablelands than the elves of the Water

Hunters tribe.

Organization

Two main forces drive the elves of the Water Hunters

tribe. The first is their unyielding observance of the oldest

elven traditions. The second is their devotion to the ele-

mental spirits of water. Together, these forces shape every

course of action the tribe and its chief and clan leaders

pursue.

Three ancient clans form the basis of the tribe: the

Raindancers, the Poolrunners, and the Lakesingers. Each

clan conducts similar activities; hunting, herding, and

gathering alongside each other for the benefit of the entire

tribe. At the end of every day’s hunt, the clans gather

together to hear the legend-songs of their tribe and to

honor the water elementals who have aided them in their

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activities throughout that day.

Lismuuk Water Hunter leads the tribe in the manner

of his ancestors. According to tradition, his tribe mem-

bers are free to follow any course they wish—provided this

course doesn’t violate tradition or anger the water elemen-

tals. Like Coraanu Star Racer, Lismuuk leads by example,

providing guidance and advice when his followers seek it.

As long as the traditions of the tribe remain intact, Lis-

muuk prefers to leave his elves to their own devices. Lis-

muuk has held his post for two 10-year terms, and he feels

confident that he will remain chief after the next selection

process occurs in one year’s time.

A small grove at the base of the Ringing Mountains

west of Urik serves as a sacred place for the Water

Hunters. The grove, called Utbo (“bubbling water”) by

the elves, receives vital water from an underground spring.

Once every 10 years, water from the spring bubbles to the

surface beneath an ancient kaor tree. To the elves of the

Water Hunters tribe, this natural event marks the passage

of another chief’s term, and they gather in the grove to

select a new leader. Traditionally, a new leader is chosen

by the elemental spirits of water that dwell in the under-

ground spring. If no elemental appears to select a new

chief, the old chief continues to rule for another term.

In addition to the chief and the tribe’s water singers

and ritual dancers, there are other leaders, who come from

among the tribe’s best hunters. Hunters wear the spotted

skins of tagsters beneath their protective cloaks. The more

bone trophies that adorn their skins and head rings, the

more authority and prestige a hunter receives from the rest

of the tribe.

Although Lismuuk doesn’t exercise constant control

over the elves, the masters of the hunt demand obedience

and cooperation when stalking prey. These leaders believe

in discipline and the need to follow orders. Hunters also

serve as the main warriors for the tribe, protecting the

herds and clans from any threats that enter the territory

currently claimed by the Water Hunters. Interestingly

enough, they don’t see this possessiveness of the land on

which they are hunting to be the same as the ownership

imposed on property by the slower races. According to

elven tradition, property belongs to whoever holds it for

the now. At some future now, it may belong to someone

else, but during this now they will guard and defend it

with their lives.

Recent History

The Water Hunters have been busy protecting Utbo

Grove of late. They see the merchants of House Stel as

threats to the grove, and Chief Lismuuk is determined to

fight this threat with every resource at his command. He

has purposely ordered the Water Hunters to remain

within a day’s run (50 miles) of the grove so that the full

strength of his warriors can be mustered in case it is

needed. His best scouts range across the area, watching

for signs of a new force marching out of Urik’s high gates.

This state of war started four months ago. At that time,

the Water Hunters returned to the area to find that a

human outpost was being constructed in the shadow of

the Ringing Mountains, less than five miles south of the

hidden grove. When it was ascertained that the outpost

had ties to the city-state of Urik—whose warlike inhabi-

tants have made a practice of slaughtering elf tribes—Lis-

muuk ordered his tribe to attack. The outpost and its

defenders were surprised by the elves, who struck out of

the scrub plains without warning. Every merchant, guard,

and slave was killed in the frenzied attack.

Two months later, after the tribe engaged in a number

of skirmishes with small troops loyal to House Stel, a sec-

ond force from the merchant house in Urik arrived to

reestablish the outpost. This group contained soldiers,

psionicists, templars, and even a few defilers. Lismuuk led

his warriors to battle a second time, and though the Water

Hunters suffered a significant amount of damage, the out-

post was destroyed yet again.

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Now Lismuuk and his followers watch for the inevitable

signs of approach from an even stronger force. The chief

has heard many tales concerning House Stel’s patriarch,

Hargan Stel III, and all of them speak of a true warrior who

hates elves almost as much as he hates to lose. This partic-

ular hunt may wind up destroying Lismuuk’s tribe, but

tradition demands that the Water Hunters defend the

sacred grove—and that is what the elf chief will do.

Relations with Outsiders

Travelers in the northwestern area of the Tyr region have

good reason to be cautious: anything that comes into the

Water Hunters’ stalking grounds becomes potential prey.

It doesn’t matter if it is animal or monster, human or

demihuman. Everything is fair game to the elves of the

Water Hunters tribe.

Whether the elf tribe acknowledges it or not, the Water

Hunters are at war with House Stel of Urik. The mer-

chant house, which is also causing trouble for the Sky

Singers and Swiftwing elf tribes, has dedicated a sizable

amount of funds toward eliminating the Water Hunters

tribe. The battle that is sure to come could be almost as

devastating to the area as was the recent war between Urik

and Tyr.

The nearest neighbors to the sacred Utbo Grove are

the inhabitants of the Hidden Village. These ex-slaves,

who now call themselves the Free, faced the same prospect

that now faces the agents of House Stel—move some-

where else or risk a war with the Water Hunters. But the

leader of the Free, the ex-soldier-slave Bartras, refused to

give in to either course of action. He demanded a meeting

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with Lismuuk to prove his equality. After engaging in a

series of contests, the human won the respect of the elf

chief. Since then, the two tribes have been on good terms.

They often exchange surplus supplies, news, and even

come together for celebrations from time to time. Bartras

has offered to assist the Water Hunters against House

Stel’s troops, for the presence of a large armed force so

close to the Hidden Village threatens the slave tribe’s

security. Lismuuk has thus far refused this offer. (See

DSR1, Slave Tribes for more information on the Free.)

Current Endeavors

Following the oldest traditions of Athas’s elven people,

the Water Hunters live almost exclusively off the land.

These elves do not trade or sell wares; they do not set up

markets; nor do they craft frivolous items that serve no

purpose but to cheat the slower races out of ceramic

pieces and goods. This is not to imply that cheating out-

siders is wrong. In fact, cheating is one of the paths to

momentary happiness forged by Coraanu himself during

his race across the stars. Rather than follow the paths

taken by the other elf tribes, the Water Hunters prefer to

approach everything they do in terms of the Hunt.

The Hunt is sacred. The Hunt is all. To track, stalk,

and kill prey not only demonstrates the skills of the

hunter, but it honors the prey by giving it a chance to use

its own skills. As with the concept of outsiders, if prey is

equal to or better than the elf hunter, then it will escape or

even kill the hunter before the hunter can kill it. If it isn’t,

then its death was inevitable. Better it serve a worthwhile

purpose by feeding and clothing the tribe than to end up

as the meal of some lesser creature. The Hunt extends to

all that crosses into the Water Hunters’ current stalking

grounds, including members of the intelligent races.

When humans, demihumans, or other elves become

prey, they are afforded all the rights other types of prey

receive under the traditions of the Hunt. If they can best

the hunter stalking them, they have proven their worth

and get to survive—at least until another hunter picks up

their trail. Prey that is hunted to a successful conclusion is

often killed, but this is not always the case. Sometimes

intelligent prey is stalked for the provisions it carries. It

may still wind up dead, but that is not the intent of such a

hunt.

In addition to constantly hunting, the elves of the

Water Hunters tribe participate in only a few other regular

activities. The entire tribe tends the large herds of kanks

that are kept by each clan. These herders are also responsi-

ble for gathering the plants needed to supplement the

tribe’s diet and to provide materials for clothing, tools,

weapons, and spell components. All tribe members, with

the exception of the chief and his highest-ranking hunters,

take turns crafting and repairing weapons; gutting and

cleaning fresh kills; and making tents, clothing, and other

items necessary for the day-to-day survival of the tribe.

The other regular activity occupying the Water

Hunters is their savage hatred of the agents of House Stel.

The outpost that the dynastic merchant house has been

attempting to establish at the base of the Ringing Moun-

tains is deep within the territory the elf tribe considers its

traditional hunting ground and very close to their hidden

Utbo Grove. Twice in recent months the elves have

attacked and destroyed those sent to establish this out-

post, and they keep scouts on constant patrol to watch for

signs of House Stel’s return.

Area of Activity

The Water Hunters tribe stalks prey through the rocky

badlands that stretch from Tyr to the Smoking Crown and

farther north, as well as across the sandy wastes south of

Urik. They follow wild herds, search out water sources,

and seek grazing land while remaining relatively close to

the hidden grove they hold sacred. The Water Hunters

seek challenging and dangerous prey in the shadows of

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the Ringing Mountains, though they refuse to ascend into

the mountains themselves. Primarily hunters and herders,

the tribe occasionally raids caravans traveling to and from

area outposts or those bound for Urik. The elves cease-

lessly strike out at those who indiscriminately enter their

hunting grounds (for defensive purposes, but also to occa-

sionally supplement their stock of provisions).

Although the tribe doesn’t live in Utbo Grove, it does

consider the area to be part of its territory. Because no

full-blooded elf can become a druid, the tribe considers

it a sacred duty to periodically produce half-elf offspring

who can tend and guard the grove. A select number of

half-elves are retained by the tribe after birth and then

given over to the care of the half-elf druid of the grove.

While the tribe wanders the Tablelands in search of prey

and grazing land, these half-elf druids watch over the

grove. The Water Hunters don’t have any more love or

compassion for half-elves than does any other elf tribe,

but these elves are bound by their traditions to provide a

druid of elven blood to tend to the grove and its elemen-

tal spirits. They will do what they must to uphold the old

traditions.

Important Tribe Members

Lismuuk Water Hunter

Male Elf Fighter, Chaotic Neutral

Armor Class 5 (braxat-hide

shield, Dexterity)

Movement 18

Level 9

Hit Points 49

THAC0 12 (10 with sword)

No. of Attacks: 3/2

Str 18

Dex 19

Con 11

Int 15

Wis 12

Cha 15

Damage/Attack: 1d8+1 (bone long sword +2)

Psionic Summary: PSPs 63; Wild Talent—

Body Control (PS Con –4; Cost 7+5/turn)

Lismuuk has been chief of the Water Hunters tribe for

almost 20 years. During that time, he has struggled

against the trends affecting other elf tribes in order to keep

his elves true to long-standing traditions set down in the

distant past. Other tribes have become merchants or mer-

cenaries, and at least one tribe has established a perma-

nent settlement. Lismuuk wants to have nothing to do

with these new ideas, and any members of his tribe who

attempt to adopt them are cast out.

The chief is a tall, handsome elf who wears a crown of

tagster fur adorned with the long, sharp teeth of some

huge monster. Simple fur leggings and a tunic cover his

tanned flesh, hide boots protect his feet, and he carries a

braxat-hide shield. His long sword, lovingly carved from

bone by the tribe’s finest crafter and enchanted with a

magical edge, is as much a symbol of his station as the

crown he wears.

The only person outside his tribe whom Lismuuk con-

siders an equal is Bartras, the human leader of the Free.

As for Hargan, patriarch of House Stel, the elf chief has

declared him to be prey—to be hunted and killed at the

first opportunity. Lismuuk hopes to be the one to drive

home the killing blow.

Borjaanu Raindancer

Male Elf Fighter/Preserver, Lawful Neutral

Armor Class 3 (braxat-hide

Str 19

armor, Dexterity)

Dex 17

Movement 16

Con 15

Level 8/8

In 15

Hit Points 43

Wis 10

THAC0 13 (10 with sword,

Cha 12

11 with long bow)

No. of Attack: 3/2

Damage/Attack: 1d8+6 (bone long sword),

1d6+6 (stone-tipped arrows)

Spells: 4 1st, 3 2nd, 3 3rd, 2 4th

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Psionic Summary: PSPs 111; Wild Talents—

Combat Mind (PS Int –4; Cost 5+4/round)

Expansion (PS –2; Cost 6+1/round), Object

Reading (PS Wis –5; Cost 16)

Borjaanu Raindancer, a fighter/preserver, serves as Lis-

muuk’s hunt master, chief adviser, and bodyguard. He is

never far from Lismuuk’s side, using his fighting prowess,

spellcasting abilities, and psionic wild talents to augment

the chief’s own formidable skills. He is extremely loyal to

his chief, ready to give his own life if necessary to preserve

Lismuuk’s.

As Lismuuk’s long brother (they share the same father)

and first son of the previous chieftain, some assumed that

Borjaanu would be chosen to lead the Water Hunters. The

elemental water spirits, however, selected the younger Lis-

muuk, and Borjaanu accepted this decision without com-

plaint. He is not as charismatic or outgoing as his long

brother/chief, and he tends to be more reserved at celebra-

tions. Some credit this to his quiet nature, but Borjaanu sim-

ply takes his guardian role very seriously. No one gets near the

chief without first getting past the powerful Borjaanu.

Feykaar

Female Half-Elf Druid, Neutral

Armor Class 6 (Dexterity)

Str 16

Movement 12

Dex 18

Level 12

Con 16

Hit Points 88

Int 16

THAC0 14 (12 with sword)

Wis 17

No. of Attack: 1

Cha 17

Damage/Attack: 1d8+3 (bone long sword +3)

Spells (Cosmos, Water Spheres): 6 1st, 5 2nd,

5 3rd, 3 4th, 2 5th, 2 6th

The half-elf named Feykaar was born to a woman of the

Water Hunters tribe 33 years ago. When Feykaar turned

13, she was given to the druid of Utbo Grove to determine

if she should be trained or turned into the wastes to fend

for herself. The decision was easy, for it was evident from

Feykaar’s youngest days on that she was going to become a

druid to be reckoned with. The elemental spirits of the

grove took an instant liking to her, and she quickly picked

up skills and abilities before her formal education ever

began. She has been the druid of the grove since her twen-

tieth year, tending to its needs, protecting it, and raising

the few half-elves left for her by the Water Hunters tribe.

Feykaar has great respect for Lismuuk, though she

wishes he would show her more than the homage required

of him by tradition. She may be the druid of the grove the

Water Hunters hold sacred, but she is still only a half-elf

and not a member of the tribe.

Unlike other druids, Feykaar often emerges from hid-

ing to welcome visitors and hear news of distant places.

She worries about the threat posed by House Stel, but she

is confident that the Water Hunters will help her protect

Utbo Grove.

Silt Stalkers

One of the true terrors of the eastern portion of the Tyr

region is the ferocious elf tribe called the Silt Stalkers. This

raiding tribe attacks outsiders for the sheer pleasure; plun-

der and loot are simply added bonuses. These fearsome

elves move purposely across the area, often passing unseen

until their terrible shriek signal the start of an attack.

Very little is outside the attention of the Silt Stalkers.

Small villages, merchant-house outposts, caravans—all

appear as tempting targets to the raiding elves. Like the

Black Sand Raiders in the west, simply whispering the

name of the Silt Stalkers tribe in the east causes even the

strongest, most-seasoned caravan guards to pale. Few want

to tangle with these crazed killers, for unlike other elf

tribes the Silt Stalkers crave the blood of their victims as

well as their spoils.

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All the major caravan trails disappeared from the east-

ern region long ago, but the Silt Stalkers have little trouble

finding plunder. Many of their targets consist of tribes of

gith or belgoi. The elves also stalk caravans bound for

slave villages or the scattering of forts and outposts that

still populate the land on the edge of the Sea of Silt.

Organization

Eevuu Silt Stalker rules his tribe of elf raiders with force

and an iron will. Like the chieftains before him, Eevuu

derives pleasure from not only bringing terror to outsiders,

but by ruling over his followers through fear, intimidation,

and the occasional death-fight to prove his superiority. He

obtained his lofty position after defeating the previous

chief in a death-fight seven years ago; he has only had to

defend his station three times in the intervening years.

Eevuu’s constant companions and chief advisers are

Miiri Fire Bow, the tribe’s elemental fire singer, and

Luubarra Fire Dagger, the tribe’s master defiler. Both

females enjoy being close to the tribe’s seat of power as

much as they enjoy employing their skills and talents on a

raid.

As with most raiding tribes, leadership and privileges

go to those who have the power to claim such roles and

spoils for themselves. Strong warriors, skilled mages, cun-

ning rogues, and powerful clerics rise to the top of the Silk

Stalkers’ hierarchy. The rest fall into subservient posi-

tions—or wind up dead. Life in this tribe involves not only

struggling against the natural hazards of Athas, but strug-

gling against the other members of the tribe as well. Tribal

bonds only count for so much in this violent society. They

must be cemented with blood and muscle and weapons.

The death-fight serves to adjudicate all disputes and

claims for advancement. It is the one tribal law that must

be obeyed by everyone—including the chief. If an elf is

challenged to a death-fight, he or she has no choice but to

accept or lose honor, position, and possibly even life. In a

death-fight, the only rules are that the fight continues

until one or both combatants are dead, and that the death

blow is delivered by a physical, elf-crafted weapon

(although magic and psionics may be used in the inter-

val). If an elf feels that he or she is ready to take command

of the tribe, then a death-fight challenge is issued to the

ruling chief. If the chief loses, the challenger takes the title.

As mentioned before, Eevuu has been challenged three

times, but still he remains chief of the Silt Stalkers.

The tribe consists of three clans: the Fire Bow, Fire

Dagger, and Fire Sword clans. The Fire Bow clan is dedi-

cated to scouting and wilderness skills. Their weapon of

choice is the long bow, and these archers are among the

finest in all the Tyr region. Many of the tribe’s elemental

fire singers come from the ranks of this clan. Fire Bow

clanspeople constantly range ahead, seeking targets to

raid and watching for any dangers that may threaten the

tribe.

The Fire Dagger clan follows the dark paths of defiling,

thievery, and assassination. Mostly made up of defilers

and rogues, the Fire Dagger clan stays in the background

until its specialized skills are called for by the chief

The Fire Sword clan, under the direct command of the

chief, is a warrior clan. As its name implies, clan members

make use of elf-crafted long swords. When a target is

located, the Fire Sword clan rushes forward to attack, slic-

ing a bloody path through even the toughest opponents so

that the rest of the tribe can join in the “festivities.”

Recent History

Eevuu’s advisers have been urging him to take more and

more risks of late. A few months ago, Luubarra began

whispering prophecies of power, glory, and riches into

Eevuu’s tapered ears. “These foretellings will come true,”

she assured him, “if our followers engage in even more

mayhem and bloodshed than usual.”

Eevuu complied with Luubarra’s dark desires, striking

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out and slaughtering a gith settlement in the Blackspine

Mountains, attacking the village of Cromlin (though the

Silt Stalkers were forced to retreat from its well-defended

walls), and destroying a heavily armed caravan on the

trade road between Nibenay and Raam. Each of these

raids cost the Silt Stalkers much in terms of lives and

time, and none of the raids provided any more loot than

the tribe typically gathers in easier attacks. Further,

because Luubarra coaxed Eevuu into timing these raids

extremely close to one another, the tribe has been unable

to rest and heal its wounds.

The impetus behind Luubarra’s prophecies originated

during her sojourn to the ruined city of Giustenal. When

she returned from that desolate place just over two

months ago, she immediately sent her clan to the ruins to

explore a new entrance she claimed to have discovered.

The clan has yet to return.

Luubarra has been urging the chief to send the rest of

the tribe to investigate, but thus far Eevuu has refused. He

is wary of the haunted ruins, and the tribe has expressed

concern and even fear over the fate of the Fire Dagger

clan. If something in the ruins was able to capture or

destroy an entire clan of magic-users and rogues, then it is

something the remainder of the tribe should leave alone.

Luubarra, however, dismisses these grumblings. She is

certain that the clan has simply found too much to carry

back and is waiting for additional help. Why then, Eevuu

has wondered (though he has not expressed this thought

to his master defiler), has the clan failed to send a runner

with a message? While Eevuu is deciding what to do, he

continues to listen to Luubarra’s whispered visions and

dreams of the great raids still to come for his tribe of Silt

Stalkers.

Relations with Outsiders

The Silt Stalkers tribe has no outsider allies. To them,

Luubarra, Chief Eevuu’s adviser and master defiler, has

everyone and everything that wanders the land east of the

a particular dislike of the Sky Singers tribe, though why is

Windbreak Mountains exists solely for the purpose of

being raided and killed. This niche that the Silt Stalkers

have carved for themselves is theirs, and they would have it

no other way. Yet for all their bravado, the Silt Stalkers are

cautious. Eevuu and his tribe tend to avoid nearing the

city-states of Gulg and Nibenay, for the chief knows that

his tribe cannot stand against the armies of the sorcerer-

kings—yet.

Luubarra promises that the day will come when the Silt

Stalkers can challenge a sorcerer-king, and Eevuu eagerly

awaits the chance to kill one personally. Though most out-

siders see this as an unlikely event, Eevuu and his elves

believe that, once they build sufficient numbers of war-

riors, then nothing will be beyond their grasp. They are,

after all, Silt Stalkers, the greatest elf tribe on all of Athas

(if they do say so themselves).

These raiders cause much trouble for the merchant

houses of Fyra, Inika, Shom, and Wavir. All have interests

in the area and must occasionally send caravans through

the Silt Stalkers’ territory. Traders bound for or passing

through Fort Fyra, Fort Harbeth, Fort Inix, Cromlin, and

Outpost 19 must be ever vigilant against the ferocious

and deadly elf raiders. Even Salt View, Tenpug’s Band,

and the elves of the Sky Singers tribe are not immune to

attacks by the Stalkers. The gith tribes of the Blackspine

Mountains as well as other monster settlements in the

region suffer the most from the tribe’s terrible and often

surprising raids.

Because the raiding tribe has become even more fero-

cious and active in recent months, the ex-slaves of Salt

View have doubled their own defenses in order to protect

themselves. Even the normally unresponsive House

Shom of Nibenay has reacted strongly to the recent

attacks on the village of Cromlin. The leaders of the mer-

chant house have increased their troops protecting the vil-

lage in anticipation of another Silt Stalkers’ attack.

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not entirely clear. She especially hates the Twilight-

catchers clan, for these preservers seek the same treasures

and secrets of the ruined city of Giustenal that she does.

Through her urgings, the raids against the Sky Singers’

caravans have been increased dramatically. She has even

tried to convince Eevuu that if any disaster actually did

befall her Fire Dagger clan in Giustenal, then it is the Sky

Singers who are at fault.

Current Endeavors

The Silt Stalkers are a raiding tribe, earning their way by

pillaging and plundering. They are not given to domestic

pursuits. They do not raise herds. They engage in no

trade. They simply take what they want from whoever has

it, provided Chief Eevuu feels his warriors can survive the

encounter—and there are few outsiders who can hurt

his tribe of warriors and thieves.

Where other elf tribes accomplish their daily work

and then engage in celebrations and festivities to bring joy

to the now, the Silt Stalkers consider each raid to be a fes-

tivity. They revel in mayhem and bloodshed, celebrating

their superior prowess with combat, murder, and plunder

instead of dance, song, and drink. To the Silt Stalkers,

the raid is everything. Stalking, attacking, and success-

fully defeating a target provides as much sustenance as

the loot they come away with, if only on a psychological

level. As for the plundered goods, the tribe takes only

what it can carry. It leaves the rest for whoever might come

along in its wake.

The Silt Stalkers observe their intended targets for a

time, determining strengths and weaknesses as best they

can. Then, when Eevuu gives the command, the elves

begin their raid shriek. This bone-chilling noise rises out

of the wilderness like the wind, crashing against the tribe’s

target much like waves of water once crashed along the

shores of the Silt Sea. The frightening banshee sound

usually has one of two effects: either it immobilizes the

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tribe’s targets with numbing fear or it spooks the targets

into making stupid mistakes. Regardless of the outcome,

the Silt Stalkers benefit.

Like the Wind Dancers, the Silt Stalkers have no long-

range plans. The tribe simply moves in a random spiral

from silt shore to forest and back again, watching for cara-

vans to target. Along the way, the elves may hit a fort or vil-

lage, depending on the mood and needs of Chief Eevuu

and his advisers. Usually, though, the Silt Stalkers wait for

travelers to emerge from behind village walls rather than

launch attacks against fortified locations. On a side note,

the chief does give his warriors strict orders to keep at least

a few members of an attacked caravan alive so that the

master defiler, Luubarra Fire Dagger, has subjects to

experiment on.

Area of Activity

The Silt Stalkers prowl the eastern stretches of the Tyr

region. These elves operate within the area of land that

juts into and is surrounded on three sides by the Sea of

Silt. Essentially, the area east of the Crescent Forest to the

Silt Sea, north of the Estuary of the Forked Tongue, and

south of the silt bay separating Raam from Nibenay falls

under the shadow of the Silt Stalkers. This is the land they

wander through; this is the land they plunder and raid.

The tribe engages in periodic raids against Fort Har-

beth and Fort Inix; Outpost 19 and Fort Fyra; the village

of Cromlin; and the traffic coming to and leaving from

Gulg, Nibenay, and Salt View. In fact, the travelers of the

Ivory Triangle are favorite targets for these elves. Fearing

little, the tribe sometimes camps near the ruins of

Giustenal and Bodach, even going so far as to occasion-

ally search deeper into the ruins for scattered treasure.

With the recent disappearance of the Fire Dagger clan,

however, the tribe has become wary of Giustenal. They

are unlikely to venture into the ruins until the mystery

has been solved.

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Important Tribe Members

Eevuu Silt Stalker

Male Elf Fighter, Chaotic Evil

Armor Class 3 (bone breast plate;

Str 20

bone shield, Dexterity)

Dex 17

Movement 16

Con 12

Level 9

Int 13

Hit Points 63

Wis 9

THAC0 12 (8 with sword)

Cha 16

No. of Attacks: 3/2

Damage/Attack: 1d8+9 (bone long sword +2,

flameblade)

Psionic Summary: PSPs 54; Wild Talent—

Displacement (PS Con –3; Cost 6+3/turn)

Eevuu Silt Stalker, chief of the Silt Stalkers elf tribe, is a

huge, powerfully built elf who has wild eyes and a cruel

smile. He delights in battle and in the actual kill, often

leading his warriors on raids purely for the sheer fun they

provide.

Eevuu stands more than 7½ feet tall and, while still

thin, he appears more muscular than his fellow elves. Like

the other elves of his tribe, Eevuu wears his hair in a pat-

tern of wild spikes. A bone breast plate covered with

arcane runes protects his upper body, and he carries a

bone shield.

His bone long sword, which has been used by many

Silt Stalkers’ chiefs before him, is enchanted with a magic

that causes burning flames to dance along its extremely

sharp edge when used in combat.

Eevuu’s defiler and companion, Luubarra, has been

filling his head with visions of conquest and great power.

The elf chief sees a festival of murder and mayhem in his

future, a celebration in which the very sands will turn red

with blood. He is impatient for these visions of power to

come true.

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Luubarra Fire Dagger

Female Elf Defiler, Chaotic Evil

Armor Class 2 (bracers AC 6,

Dexterity)

Movement 18

Level 10

Hit Points 24

THAC0 17 (15 with staff)

No. of Attacks: 1

Str 13

Dex 19

Con 10

Int 18

Wis 11

Cha 18

Damage/Attack: 1d6+2 (quarterstaff +2)

Psionic Summary: PSPs 55; Wild Talent—Aging

(PS Con –7; Cost 15)

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

Luubarra Fire Dagger has always been drawn to power.

She has sought it for her personal use, and she has worked

hard to position herself near those who wield even greater

power than she. Naturally, she was drawn to Eevuu, and

she has been at his side for three years now. It is her intent

to remain his companion until the time Eevuu is over-

thrown.

Like other members of the Silt Stalkers tribe, Luubarra

has a thirst for blood and violence. She especially enjoys

conducting defiler research on captured outsiders. Since

her return from the ruins of Giustenal a few months back,

Luubarra has become even more inclined toward murder

and mayhem. At her urgings, Eevuu has taken to leading

the tribe into greater and greater opportunities for death

and destruction—all because she claims that the road to

untold wealth and power must be paved with blood. This

behavior has something to do with whatever Luubarra

found in the ruins of the ancient city, but she has so far

declined to reveal any details to Eevuu or anyone else. She

also keeps her wild psionic talent a secret, employing it

against her enemies with quiet malice.

Miiri Fire Bow

Female Elf Cleric, Chaotic Evil

Armor Class 3 (carru leather,

Str 15

Dexterity)

Dex 18

Movement 17

Con 16

Level 11

Int 17

Hit Points 80

Wis 16

THAC0 14 (13 with bow,

Cha 16

15 with sword, 14 with mace)

No. of Attacks: 1

Damage/Attack: 1d6–1 (obsidian-tipped arrows),

1d8–1 (obsidian long sword), 1d6+1 (steel mace)

Psionic Summary: PSPs 55; Wild Talent—Hear Light

(PS Wis –3; Cost 6+3/round)

Spells: 5 1st, 4 2nd, 4 3rd, 3 4th, 2 5th, 1 6th

Miiri Fire Bow is an elemental fire singer—the most pow-

erful cleric in the Silt Stalkers tribe. In addition to her role

as adviser to the chief, Miiri heads the Fire Bow clan. She

participates in the daily decision-making concerning the

activities of the tribe. Her main rival for power in the tribe,

as well as for Eevuu’s attention and affections, is the

defiler Luubarra. The two elf women hate each other, for

they both covet the same thing—power. For them, Eevuu

is only a means to greater power. “Let him think he is

chief,” Miiri tells herself, “while I wield the true power

from the shadows.”

The cleric always believed that she could deal with

Luubarra and even eliminate the woman when necessary,

but the actions initiated by the defiler in the past two

months have given the fire singer cause to pause. Miiri

believes there is something more to Luubarra’s recent

erratic behavior than simple bloodlust. She has decided

to watch the defiler carefully, for Miiri’s own plans to

achieve greater power depend on an intact, powerful Silt

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Stalkers tribe. Luubarra, on the other hand, seems deter-

mined to urge Chief Eevuu to lead the tribe to its own

destruction.

Night Runners

The elves of the Night Runners tribe operate in the shad-

ows of Athas, passing from dark corner to dark corner like

whispers in the night. Like the Shadows (the elf tribe pre-

sented in DSR2, Dune Trader), the Night Runners tribe

is intended to be a mysterious group of elves who exist to

most of the people of the Tyr region as nothing more than

a legend told around a dying campfire. This secretive

group of elves is not as old or as numerous as the elves of

the Shadows tribe, but it is making a name for itself

among those who require experts of the “shadow arts.”

The Night Runners specialize in activities that most

consider covert, if not totally illegal. Espionage, theft, kid-

napping, smuggling, assassination, and extortion are just

some of the areas these elves work in. Those who can

afford their prices can hire these elves who, like their com-

petitors the Shadows, have turned smuggling, contraband

trade, and other illegal activities into art forms.

Organization

Hukaa New Moons, a powerful female thief who has the

skills of a trader, currently leads the Night Runners tribe.

She treats all the tribe’s activities like a business, conduct-

ing its operations the way the successful merchant houses

conduct theirs. The tribe consists of six clans, each of

which is responsible for a particular type of shadow art.

The chief coordinates all activities and oversees the

entire tribe, whereas each clan is headed by a master run-

ner. Master runners function much like trade masters,

overseeing all operations and directing the course of nego-

tiations and the assignment of personnel. This tribe is

considerably more organized than other elf tribes, partly

because of the attitudes and beliefs of their leader, and

partly because of the nature of the work they undertake.

Hukaa’s direction is a sound one, however, for to compete

with the ancient Shadows, the Night Runners must stay

focused and on an even course.

The Night Runners clans include the Lone Moon,

Dark Moons, Full Moons, Half Moons, Quarter Moons,

and New Moons clans. Those born to these clans

undergo specific training in a limited number of fields.

The belief is that by concentrating on a few types of skills

necessary to a specific shadow art, each elf will become a

highly trained specialist in the clan’s area of devotion.

The Lone Moon clan, for example, specializes in thievery

and mercantile endeavors. By training as legitimate mer-

chants, they have an established cover for their thieving

activities. Elves of the Lone Moon clan regularly steal

from other merchants to stock their own stores, and they

also take on special jobs that require their special touch. If

someone comes to the Night Runners in need of acquir-

ing a special item currently in the possession of someone

else, then the Lone Moon clan takes on the job. As far as

trading goes, the Lone Moon clan will buy and sell any-

thing, and they will deal with anyone. These elves will

even deal in slaves if the price is right and the opportunity

presents itself.

The Dark Moons clan produces some of the finest

assassins on all of Athas. These murderers-for-hire have

turned killing into an art form. In most cases, clients can

specify not only a target, but a means of death and a time

when the death is to occur. The Full Moons clan, on the

other hand, specializes in a more straightforward form of

death-dealing: combat. Not only does this clan serve as

the protectors of the entire tribe, it also hires its members

out as mercenaries. However, when a band of elven war-

riors from this clan goes out as fighters-for-hire, they don’t

reveal themselves as members of the legendary Night

Runners tribe. Instead, they appear as outcast elves or free

wanderers selling their swords and bows to earn a living.

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Only their great skills and high degree of professionalism

hint that they may be more than they seem to be. When

Night Runner spies overhear that someone seeks to hire

warriors, word is sent to the Full Moons clan. They

demand hefty fees, but only accept half up front. The rest

must be delivered if they prove to be as good as they claim.

The elves of the Half Moons clan specialize in magic.

Using spells of deception, stealth, and illusion, these

magic-users assist operatives from the other clans and

sometimes undertake their own missions. The Quarter

Moons clan, in contrast, is a wild, ferocious bunch of raid-

ing elves. Outsiders will hire these raiders to create diver-

sions, to disrupt supply lines and caravan routes, or just to

eliminate a competitor. Fees are usually based upon the

target in question, as the Quarter Moons clan keeps what-

ever it plunders. These elves are not hired by clients who

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want the contents of a caravan, for example, but by those

who simply want the caravan destroyed. Those who want

the goods must go to the Lone Moon clan.

Lastly, the New Moons clan specializes in espionage.

These elves search out hidden knowledge by learning the

great secrets of the nobility, the merchant houses, and

even the sorcerer-kings. In some cases, the New Moons

seek this knowledge of their own initiative, for knowledge

is not only profitable, it is a means to power. Other times,

this clan takes on contracts to find out specific informa-

tion for paying clients. These elves are trained to observe

without being observed, to follow without a sound, to get

into places considered safe and secure without leaving a

trace of their passage. In addition to its role as informa-

tion-gatherer for the tribe, this clan has long held sway

over the other clans by virtue of its proximity to the tribal

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chieftain. This clan has produced the tribe’s chief for the

past six generations, and as Hukaa’s bloodline remains

strong, it should continue in this capacity for at least one

more generation to come

Recent History

Hukaa New Moons has been busy of late. The trade war

with the Shadows has escalated, threatening to erupt into

a full-scale battle for territory. She has worked to circum-

vent the actions of the Shadows, who have interrupted the

operations of her tribe and even cost some of her tribe

members their lives.

Few outside these clandestine elf tribes know that a

trade war is underway, however, for both groups rarely

expose themselves to the light of Athas’s blazing sun or

the scrutiny of others. To those who are aware of this grow-

ing conflict, it seems obvious that this secret war will even-

tually spill over into public view. Hukaa hopes to reach a

settlement before this occurs, as such an event is sure to

hinder both tribes—and may even leave them exposed to

other enemies. The grand shadow master, leader of the

Shadows tribe, has thus far refused or ignored all of

Hukaa’s requests for parlay. In the meantime, the trade

war continues.

Current Endeavors

The biggest operation currently being handled by the

Night Runners tribe involves a contract with House Shom

of Nibenay. The merchant house has hired the Night Run-

ners to provide information concerning the plans, strengths,

and weaknesses of the traders currently operating in the

Ivory Triangle. As Shom must rely on hired help to survive,

it decided to make use of one of the better resources avail-

able to it. The Night Runners are hard at work digging up

information about Shom’s biggest and most dangerous

competitors—especially House Stel of Urik.

The elves have also been hired by the patrician Her-

iculopis, a noble of the city-state of Balic, to eliminate the

leader of a rival noble family. The target, Posidian, has so

far eluded two murder attempts. The Night Runners, who

feel their reputation is on the line, have increased their

efforts to fulfill this murder-for-hire before the trader’s year

is out. There are rumors that Posidian has hired the Shad-

ows to protect him, but the Night Runners have yet to

determine the truth of these claims.

They do know, however, that the Shadows tribe has

declared a sort of trade war against the Night Runners.

The Shadows see this elf tribe as an upstart group that has

begun to interfere with their ancient provinces, crossing

over into territory the Shadows consider theirs. This war is

being conducted in secret, known only to the two tribes

that are involved. Sometimes evidence of this conflict is

found by outsiders, but it only appears as a mysterious

event that has no rhyme or reason. A dead elf found in a

dark alley, for example, may mean nothing to an outsider,

but the two half-moon tattoos inscribed on the elf’s shoul-

der identify him to other Night Runners as one of the Half

Moons clan—another victim of the war with the Shadows.

Area of Activity

The Night Runners operate all over the Tyr region, but

the tribe tends to concentrate its efforts to the east of the

Windbreak Mountains. The tribe maintains a dagada in

Gulg, small markets in Nibenay, Balic, and Raam, and

has agents constantly on duty throughout the Ivory Trian-

gle. Members of the New Moons clan can be found in all

of the city-states and in many of the larger villages, watch-

ing and listening for news to send back to the chief and

the master runners. Like the Shadows tribe, the Night

Runners tribe places its members into other tribes. These

undercover elves serve as the eyes and ears of the Night

Runners, and operate as contacts between the legendary

tribe and potential contacts throughout the Tyr region. In

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most cases, the chief of the seeded tribes know of the

undercover elves’ connections. They allow this deception

to occur because of favors they owe the Night Run-

ners—or for favors they will receive at some future date.

Relations with Others

In one manner or another, the Night Runners deal with

all outsiders. Other elves, nobles of the city-states, agents

of the merchant houses, even templars—everyone’s

money is welcome to the Night Runners. As few can read-

ily identify a member of this secretive tribe, even those

who dislike the Night Runners never know when they are

dealing with its members. The tribe’s chief competitors in

the shadow arts are the elves of the Shadows tribe. The

grand shadow master has declared a trade war against the

Night Runners, and the Shadows have been working to

discredit and disrupt the Night Runners’ operations. The

two tribes have never gotten along, but in recent months

the Shadows have become particularly hostile.

The Night Runners have good relations with the Sky

Singers tribe, on the other hand, and at least one elf work-

ing in the Sky Singers’ market is an undercover Night

Runners elf. The chieftains of both tribes have exchanged

favors in the past, and both consider the other to be a

friend. This could have something to do with the fact that

both are born traders, or it could simply be a result of past

dealings. For whatever reason, Hukaa and Muuton often

meet to share tales and discuss business that affects their

respective tribes. Some have suggested that the two are in

love, but neither has yet attempted to steal the other or has

engaged in any other obvious elven courting practice.

One other relationship bears mentioning. The Night

Runners have always kept a wary eye on the activities of

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the Silt Stalkers tribe. Partially as a favor to Muuton Sky

Singer, and partially because Hukaa has always consid-

ered it prudent to know what the raiding tribe is up to, the

Night Runners have maintained a vigilant watch over the

elves of the Silt Stalkers. The recent disappearance of one

of the tribe’s clans, its frenzied actions of late, and the

mysterious behavior of the tribe’s master defiler have all

set off warning signals in the back of Hukaa’s mind. She

has ordered the New Moons clan to keep a careful watch

over the raiding tribe’s actions, for she feels that something

significant and important may be driving the Silt Stalkers

to new heights of ferocious pillaging. The Night Runners

hope to learn the fate of the missing clan, for Hukaa

believes that that is the key to the master defiler’s behavior

and the unprecedented actions of the Silt Stalkers’ chief.

Important Tribe Members

Hukaa New Moons

Female Elf Thief/Trader, Lawful Evil

Armor Class 3 (carru leather,

Dexterity)

Movement 19

Level 12/16

Hit Points 32

THAC0 13 (12 with dagger,

11 with sword)

No. of Attacks: 1

Str 16

Dex 20

Con 12

Int 19

Wis 14

Cha 19

Damage/Attack: 1d4+3 (obsidian dagger +3),

1d8+2 (bone long sword +2)

Psionic Summary: PSPs 92; Wild Talent—Control

Light (PS Int; Cost 12+4/round)

Thieving Skills: Backstabx4; PP 85, OL 65, F/RT 52,

MS 95, HS 95, DN 75, CW 85, RL 80

Hukaa New Moons has been chief of the Night Runners

tribe for more than 20 years, taking over the role when her

father felt the weight of his great age slowing his once light-

ning-fast reflexes. As Hukaa herself is fast approaching

middle age, she has taken a greater interest in training her

children so that at least one of them will be prepared to

lead the tribe when she finally decides to step down. For

now, she sees that event as happening far in the future.

Because she understands the mercantile arts as well as

the shadow arts, Hukaa has striven to make the Night Run-

ners operate like a successful merchant house. All opera-

tions are organized and administered in an orderly fashion,

and all missions are viewed as profit-making ventures.

While she allows her advisers and clan leaders the freedom

to operate independently of her control, she does like to

stay involved in the day-to-day operations of the tribe. To

facilitate this, Hukaa requests frequent meetings and

updates so that she can stay on top of her tribe’s activities.

Hukaa has sun-bleached white hair that shines around

her well-tanned face. Her great beauty has served her as

well as her thieving and trading skills over the years, and

she seems to have only gotten more beautiful with age.

Keelorr Dark Moon

Female Elf Fighter/Thief, Lawful Evil

Armor Class 2 (braxat hide,

Dexterity)

Movement 18

Level 10/12

Hit Points 44

THAC0 11 (10 with sword)

No. of Attack: 3/2

Str 17

Dex 19

Con 14

Int 14

Wis 11

Cha 18

Damage/Attack: 1d4 (bone dagger),

1d8+1 (bone long sword +1)

Psionic Summary: PSPs 60; Wild Talents—Contact

(PS Wis; Cost Varies +1/round), Post-Hypnotic Sug-

gestion (PS Int –3; Cost Contact +1/level or hit die)

Thieving Skills: Backstabx4; PP 85, OL 75, F/RT 65,

MS 95, HS 85, DN 75, CW 95, RL 50

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Keelorr Dark Moon is an accomplished assassin who uses

stealth and misdirection to complete her missions much

as others use poisons and ranged weapons. She almost

always takes on an assumed role, pretending to be a beg-

gar or a dancing girl, a serving wench or a common trader,

in order to get close to her target and beneath his or her

guard. Her favorite role is that of an elf dancer.

Keelorr’s dancing skills are so great that she often head-

lines at the Tent of the Dancing Swords in the Sky

Singers’ market. She lavishes attention on those she has

been hired to murder, flirting unmercilessly and dancing

only for them. It is her practice to give her victims one last

moment of joy before she strikes, making them happy with

her dancing, her smile, or the welcoming attention of her

large gray eyes. If she can make her victims love her, even

for an instant, then she experiences her own sense of joy.

Then, once this ritual she loves to perform has been com-

pleted, she carries out her mission. Her kills are quick,

painless, and accomplished with hardly any struggle.

Keelorr has been mentioned as the successor to the

current master runner of the Dark Moons clan, but it is

doubtful that she would accept the position. She enjoys

her field work much too well to accept a leadership role.

Misteek Quarter Moon

Male Elf Cleric/Defiler, Chaotic Evil

Armor Class 7 (Dexterity)

Str 14

Movement 16

Dex 17

Level 9/10

Con 10

Hit Points 28

Int 18

THAC0 16 (14 with mace)

Wis 17

No. of Attacks: 1

Cha 13

Damage/Attack: 1d6+3 (steel mace +2)

Psionic Summary: PSPs 100; Wild Talents—Ballistic

Attack (PS Con –2; Cost 5), Body Control (PS Con

–4; Cost 7+5/turn), Contact (PS Wis; Cost Varies +

1/round), Mass Domination (PS Wis –6; Cost Con-

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

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

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

Misteek Quarter Moon serves as both an earth singer and

as a master defiler for the Quarter Moons clan. He thor-

oughly enjoys his role with the raiders, for he revels in vio-

lence and destruction. Plunder is the alms that the weak

outsiders must lay at the feet of the strong elves of the

Night Runners tribe, and Misteek is happy to point this

out to those he raids. He is a tall, dark-skinned elf, with

long dark hair and hooded, shadowy eyes. He proudly

bears the mark of his clan: two quarter moons tattooed

into the flesh of his right shoulder.

As an earth singer, Misteek communes with the ele-

mental spirits of the earth, singing their songs for all to

hear. As a defiler, he takes great pains not to harm the

things of the earth when drawing forth power to cast his

spells. He has no regard for whatever else he may hurt

when drawing power to himself. He serves as one of the

clan leader’s chief advisers, and his powers and abilities

are respected throughout the tribe. When he participates

in a raid (and there are few raids his clan undertakes that

Misteek is not present for), Misteek uses his abilities to

cause as much destruction and confusion as possible. He

believes that the quaking of the earth is his elemental spir-

its’ greatest song, and he seeks to emulate its destructive

power whenever he turns his abilities against outsiders.

When the destruction and mayhem ends, he searches

through the plunder for magical items, spell components,

collections of spells, and other items of arcane interest.

Few in his clan challenge him for these things. The

enchanted steel mace he wields in combat was taken from

a caravan the clan raided a number of years ago. Since

then, Misteek has kept his eyes open for even more power-

ful items that may be hiding among the goods outsiders

like to move from one place to another on the backs of

kank, crodlu, and mekillots.

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This chapter describes a variety of character kits for use

by Athasian elf player characters. The use of kits is

optional, and players who want to create or modify exist-

ing characters to take advantage of kits should discuss it

with their Dungeon Masters.

The kits that follow are designed for use with only

those elf characters who inhabit the hostile world of the

DARK SUN® campaign setting—not for elves of any

other world. When creating an Athasian elf character

using a kit, be sure to add the details from Chapter One

to the character’s record sheet.

Proficiencies

Kits require the use of the proficiency rules as outlined in

Chapter Five of the AD&D®

Player’s Handbook and

Chapter Five of the DARK SUN boxed set Rules Book.

If you are using kits, these rules are not optional. Unless

otherwise noted in the kit description, an elf character

receives the same number of proficiency slots as listed for

all characters of his class according to Table 34 in the

Player’s Handbook.

Kit Descriptions

Each of the kits that follow begins with a brief overview.

This gives a quick example of the type of character it can

be used to create. Other sections of the kit description

include:

• Recommended Tribal Affiliation: If the kit is par-

ticularly appropriate to one of the elf tribes presented

here or in the Dune Trader accessory, the tribe is listed

here.

• Role: This section provides additional details on a

character’s place in elf society and the adventuring envi-

ronment. It shows how a member of this kit will typically

act, though player characters aren’t required to rigidly

stick to this information.

• Weapon Proficiencies: Some kits indicate that spe-

cific weapon proficiencies must be selected when the

character is created. These cost the standard number of

slots as outlined in the proficiency descriptions unless

otherwise noted.

• Nonweapon Proficiencies: Some kits indicate that

specific nonweapon proficiencies must be selected when

the character is created. Bonus proficiencies are free and

do not use up valuable slots. Required proficiencies

must be selected and these do use up slots. Recom-

mended proficiencies are optional and cost the usual

number of slots. If a recommended proficiency comes

from a group not listed for the character’s class, the profi-

ciency costs one additional slot (unless the specific kit

states otherwise).

• Equipment: Restrictions concerning a kit’s use of

equipment are presented here.

• Special Benefits: Almost every kit features advan-

tages that set its members apart from those using other

kits. Note that bonuses are expressed as positive num-

bers and penalties as negative numbers. In this way, if a

low number is good for a particular character’s action,

then the bonus is actually subtracted from the die roll

and the penalty is added.

• Special Hindrances: Like benefits, these are

unique to each kit, prohibiting or forcing certain actions

at certain times.

• Wealth Options: All characters receive starting

funds, and these are explained here.

Warrior Kits

Warriors make up a large segment of the elf population.

In addition to the pure warrior kit of the savage hunter,

the multiclassed thri-kreen slayer fighter/psionicist kit is

included here as elves tend to readily branch out and

combine skills.

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Savage Hunter

The elves of Athas are a nomadic people, and many

tribes survive solely through the skills of their hunters.

The savage hunter is the most common elf warrior type,

serving as both a tribal defender and an important food

provider. Respected by others of the tribe, the savage

hunter uses the same skills to hunt prey and to fight out-

siders and other threats to the tribe. The ways of the city-

states are alien to these wilderness warriors, for they are

only at home in the wastes when on a hunt.

PC savage hunters either join up with an adventuring

group while on a mission for their tribe, or they join dur-

ing the period of wanderlust that comes upon most

young elves at least once in their lives. On these journeys

of adventure and discovery, savage hunters take with

them all the skills they learned as protectors and

providers for their tribes. As such, they are often valuable

contributors to a party.

Recommended Tribal Affiliation: Savage hunters

often come from the Wind Dancers or Water Hunters

tribes.

Role: Savage hunters are elves who have fighting skills,

knowledge of the wilderness, and hunting prowess. In the

Wind Dancers tribe, the savage hunters have been

turned into raiders, forced to hunt a different sort of prey

to keep their tribe alive. In the Water Hunters tribe, sav-

age hunters serve as the main warrior class. They protect

the tribe from all dangers in addition to their role as

providers of fresh meat and animal skins.

Elves have a great respect for savage hunters, even

those elves whose tribes have given up the old traditions.

Once all Athasian elf tribes survived by the skill of their

hunters, and the greatest heroes of ancient songs and leg-

ends are those proud hunters. In many cases, outsiders

first encounter a tribe through its hunters, who use

stealth and surprise to strike swiftly at those who pose a

threat to the rest of the tribe.

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In tribes that still use the savage hunter class, the

hunters are honored with respect, choice supplies, and

roles of leadership. When savage hunters go wandering

and join up with adventuring groups, they often expect

these same privileges from outsiders. The people they

travel with must show them the same respect they receive

from their tribes, and they demand the first pick of spoils.

In addition, because savage hunters fill leadership posi-

tions in their tribes, they naturally attempt to fill the same

positions in whatever group they may travel with. They

treat everything as a hunt, and on a hunt orders must be

followed and traditions kept or the prey will escape.

Savage hunters are the most stringent keepers of elven

traditions. The old ways (which hold that hunters are the

best of the elf race) are the right ways, and things that go

against these traditions smack of the slower races. Savage

hunters are intolerant of non-elves and non-elven ways.

Weapon Proficiencies: Members of this kit must take

the long bow and long sword, as these are the traditional

weapons of the elves.

Nonweapon Proficiencies: The proficiencies for the

savage hunter are as follows.

• Bonus Proficiencies: Tracking.

• Required Proficiencies: Hunting, survival (sandy

wastes or other).

• Recommended (General): Direction sense, fire-

building, heat protection, rope use, water find.

• Recommended (Warrior): Animal lore, endurance,

set snares.

Equipment: A savage hunter receives a bone long

sword and a long bow crafted for the character by mem-

bers of his or her tribe, as well as a set of leather armor.

Special Benefits: In addition to the bonus tracking

proficiency, savage hunters receive two additional non-

weapon proficiency slots when they are first created.

These slots must be filled from the recommended profi-

ciencies listed above.

Special Hindrances: Savage hunters start with only

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two initial weapon proficiency slots instead of five.

Wealth Options: Savage hunters from poor tribes

(such as the Wind Dancers) start with 2d4x10 cp, while

those from successful tribes (such as the Water Hunters)

begin with the normal 5d4x30 cp.

Thri-Kreen Slayer

Perhaps the greatest threat to the elves of Athas is the thri-

kreen. These insectoid hunters love the taste of elf flesh,

and they prey upon the desert runners whenever the

opportunity presents itself. In order to combat the threat

posed by the fast, strong, and cunning thri-kreen, a special

class of desert runner has developed—the thri-kreen

slayer. A thri-kreen slayer is a multiclassed fighter/psioni-

cist who devotes him- or herself to becoming an expert

hunter and fighter of the dread insect-men.

Wearing armor consisting of pieces of a thri-kreen’s

hard exoskeleton shell, slayers train in ways to best com-

bat the hulking insect-men. They study the fighting styles

and habits of the thri-kreen, learning all they can about

their deadly adversaries. Slayers are taught to hate the

thri-kreen with all their hearts so that the innermost fury

in their hearts can be fully tapped. Conversely, they are

also taught to admire the thri-kreen—appreciating their

tireless natures and their hunter’s hearts. Only through

understanding and a certain respect can a slayer hope to

survive the challenge of a thri-kreen warrior.

When thri-kreen slayers join adventuring parties, they

do so as part of their continuing training or to satisfy the

bouts of wanderlust that often come upon the elves of

Athas. Even away from their tribes, slayers take their roles

and responsibilities very seriously. They actively seek out

thri-kreen during combat, only turning toward other ene-

mies when all thri-kreen have been defeated or when a

much greater danger presents itself.

Recommended Tribal Affiliation: Thri-kreen slayers

can be found among most of the elf tribes wandering the

Tablelands, though the Wind Dancers and the Sky

Singers actively seek to develop these rare and special

warriors.

Role: These slayers defend their tribes from thri-kreen

hunting packs. They know what signs to look for to deter-

mine if thri-kreen are in the area. They know how to

throw a hunting pack off the trail. When a battle is

inevitable, thri-kreen slayers know the most effective ways

to kill the insect-men. These warriors are the champions

of their tribes, for they alone seem invincible before the

enemies that haunt all elven nightmares.

Slayers tend to be loners, operating independently of

their tribes for long periods of time. A tribe may not see

its slayers for weeks on end, but the elves know that they

are out in the wastes watching for the approach of the

deadly insect-men. The slayers must warn the tribe of an

impending attack, to lead any battles against the thri-

kreen, and to safely move the tribe out of danger.

Slayers are extremely confident (though some con-

sider them mad in their arrogance). Armed with an arse-

nal of weapons and always ready to leap into battle

against a thri-kreen, a slayer is as a formidable foe. Using

psionics and fighting skills to best advantage, slayers are

among the most fearsome elf opponents anyone (thri-

kreen or otherwise) will ever meet. Interestingly enough,

there are instances of slayers having worked with thri-

kreen as part of an adventuring group, but these relation-

ships are often volatile and extremely fragile, for neither

elf nor thri-kreen trusts the other.

Weapon Proficiencies: Members of this kit must take

the long bow, long sword, and one thri-kreen weapon

(either a chatkcha or gythka) among their initial weapon

proficiency selections.

Nonweapon Proficiencies: The proficiencies for the

thri-kreen slayer are as follows.

• Bonus Proficiencies: Rejuvenation.

• Required Proficiencies: Survival (sandy wastes or

other).

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• Recommended (General): Direction sense, lan-

guages (thri-kreen).

• Recommended (Psionicist): Harness subconscious,

meditative focus.

• Recommended (Warrior): Tracking, weapon-

smithing.

Equipment: A thri-kreen slayer receives a bone long

sword and a long bow crafted for the character by mem-

bers of his or her tribe, as well as a set of thri-kreen-shell

armor (AC 5).

Special Benefits: In addition to the bonus rejuvena-

tion proficiency, slayers gain a +4 bonus to attack rolls

when fighting thri-kreen, and a +2 bonus to damage

rolls. A slayer can attack with two weapons without

penalty to his or her attack rolls, though all other restric-

tions for two-weapon attacks apply (see Player’s Hand-

book, Chapter Nine).

Special Hindrances: The enmity that slayers feel

toward the thri-kreen causes them to suffer a –4 penalty

on all encounter reactions with the hated race. Thri-

kreen slayers must attack thri-kreen if such foes are pre-

sent during combat. They may only change targets once

all thri-kreen have been defeated or if an obviously more

dangerous opponent reveals itself. In addition, because of

the image they present, slayers are often targeted by those

seeking to prove their own skills or who are looking to

make a quick reputation. They must always be on guard

for attacks by those who want to prove their own tough-

ness against such worthy foes.

Wealth Options: Thri-kreen slayers start play with

3d4x30 cp as well as the weapons and armor mentioned

above.

Rogue Kits

Elves are natural rogues, and most of the non-elves of

Athas see them as thieves, raiders, and bandits. The free-

wanderer rogue kit and the multiclassed procurer

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trader/thief are included here for those who enjoy playing

scoundrels and thieves.

Free-Wanderer

At some point in an elf’s life, the wanderlust comes upon

him. He must run as far and as fast as his swift legs will

take him. He must see what lies beyond the horizon, and

he must find as many ways to enjoy the now as he possibly

can. The free-wanderer kit provides an outlet for elf rogues

who seek to explore the Tyr region in search of adventure

and riches. These thieves travel wherever the mood takes

them, joining with adventuring groups for a time before

moving on. At some point the desire to return to their

tribe will send these free-wanderers home, but until then

the excitement of the now is what they crave.

Free-wanderers survive by their wits, their quickness,

and their thieving skills. They see every guarded purse

and locked box as a challenge they must accept. The

contents of these guarded items, after all, belong to the

elves—outsiders are only holding them until their right-

ful owners come along to relieve them of their burden.

Recommended Tribal Affiliation: Free-wanderers

come from all elf tribes, though they often discard identi-

fying features of their native dress during their periods of

travel and adventure.

Role: Free-wandering elves find joy in surviving the

many challenges Athas throws at them. They steal what-

ever they need while simultaneously seeking new experi-

ences. Many view this time of wandering as a training

period, and they work to master their wilderness and

rogue skills in the interval.

Free-wanderers are adventurers, roaming the wastes

and prowling the cities in search of excitement, experi-

ence, and enough wealth to get them to the next

adventure. Free-wanderers are among the friendliest and

most outgoing of elves, for the whole purpose of their trav-

els is to learn everything they can. This doesn’t mean that

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their normal attitudes toward outsiders have changed,

only that they are more inclined to deal with these people

during the wanderlust period.

Those forced to travel the wastes for their own survival

gladly accept free-wanderers into their group for the skills

and knowledge they bring. They may not be completely

trusted, but they are given the benefit of the doubt when

their specialized skills are desperately needed.

Weapon Proficiencies: Members of this kit must

select the long bow, long sword, and dagger.

Nonweapon Proficiencies: The proficiencies for the

free-wanderer are as follows.

• Bonus Proficiencies: None.

• Required Proficiencies: Survival (sandy wastes or

other).

• Recommended (General): Dancing, direction

sense, language (choice), water find.

• Recommended (Rogue): Blind-fighting, gaming,

musical instrument.

Equipment: Free-wanderers travel light. In addition to

their thieving tools and a weapon or two, free-wanderers

have few possessions and wear only the lightest armor.

Special Benefits: Free-wanderers receive two addi-

tional nonweapon proficiency slots to fill when they are

first created. They also get an additional 10 discretionary

points to distribute among their thieving skills upon

creation.

Special Hindrances: Because of the reputation that

precedes all elves, free-wanderers receive a –2 penalty to

encounter reactions when dealing with outsiders.

Wealth Options: Free-wanderers start play with 1d6x

10 cp, thieving tools, and a bone long sword crafted by a

member of their tribe.

Procurer

Procurers are elf trader/thieves who conduct legitimate

mercantile activities with one hand while stealing with

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the other. To all outward appearances, procurers seem to

be everyday elf traders. They conduct their thefts in

secret, using normal trading practices to cover their filch-

ing activities. These elves usually work for elven mer-

chant houses, filling the market stalls with goods stolen

from other merchants, nobles, free citizens, templars, and

even the sorcerer-kings.

No matter what it may look like a procurer is doing, he

(or she) is always observing the people around him. He

knows how to spot those who can help or hinder his job,

and is always aware of his surroundings.

The procurer considers simple theft to be beneath his

station. He needs to make the big score, acquiring the

items that will bring the biggest profit at the next market-

place. Trading is all well and good, but selling a wagonful

of cactus fruit and then stealing the entire stock back to

trade elsewhere is even better.

Recommended Tribal Affiliation: Procurers can be

found among the elf tribes that conduct mercantile activ-

ities, especially the Clearwater, Swiftwings, Shadows, Sky

Singers, Silver Hands, and Night Runners tribes.

Role: Procurers are often the field agents for elven

merchant houses. They conduct legitimate trade, but

they are always on the lookout for opportunities to

increase the tribe’s stock through theft. Among elf tribes

that respect mercantile endeavors, procurers are seen as

only one step below master traders—especially if they are

any good at their job. Procurers travel far and wide, seek-

ing new markets, new suppliers, and new opportunities to

acquire a big score.

During these travels, procurers have no qualms about

joining with adventuring groups, and many know a par-

ticular group that has proven itself to be worthy of trust

and friendship. Adventuring groups offer added protec-

tion, an obvious cover story, and able bodies when a job is

extremely difficult. The procurer’s tribe and dedication

to his craft comes first, but his adventuring group comes a

close second as long as helping the group doesn’t hinder

his other affiliations. Of course, a procurer will disappear

from his group from time to time in order to pass along

goods or information to his tribe.

Procurers are skilled traders, consummate thieves, and

handy companions. Unlike most elves, they know their

way around the city-states and even have a limited under-

standing of civilization. Like other elves, they hate walls

and locked doors, but procurers see these obstacles as

challenges, and they make a study of such constructs the

way a good warrior studies his enemies.

Weapon Proficiencies: Members of this kit must

select the dagger. Remaining slots can be filled as they

see fit.

Nonweapon Proficiencies: For the procurer, these

proficiencies are as follows.

• Bonus Proficiencies: Bargain.

• Required Proficiencies: Appraising.

• Recommended (General): Artistic ability, lang-

uages (choice), rope use.

• Recommended (Rogue): Disguise, forgery, gaming,

gem cutting, reading lips.

• Recommended (Warrior): Running, tracking,

Equipment: Procurers start with thieving tools and a

dagger. They can outfit themselves with whatever else

they can afford, provided it is usable by their classes.

Special Benefits: Procurers receive one additional

nonweapon proficiency slot when they are first created.

Due to their study of human and demihuman construc-

tion techniques, procurers can spot secret and concealed

doors like the elves of other campaign settings if they are

actively searching for them. They discover secret doors on

a roll of 1 or 2 on 1d6, and concealed doors on a roll of 1,

2, or 3 on 1d6.

Special Hindrances: Curiosity is the one flaw that best

describes procurers. They can‘t help peeking behind closed

doors, opening locked gates, or seeing what waits around

the next corner. This obsession, of course, often gets them

(and their companions) into trouble. Unless a procurer has

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an extremely compelling reason not to, he won’t leave a

closed door or a concealed tent flap behind him.

Wealth Options: Procurers start play with 2d6x30

cp, thieving tools, and a bone dagger.

Priest Kits

Elf priests dedicate themselves to the element that their

tribe reveres. Presented below are the multiclassed battle

dancer cleric/fighter and the common element singer

priest kit for those who want to explore the spiritual side

of elven nature.

The battle dancer cleric/fighter is an elf warrior who fol-

lows the call of one of the revered elements. A battle

dancer is basically a specialized ritual dancer, one who

uses his or her talents not to tell stories but to defend the

tribe. In elf tribes, very few elves are afforded the title of

element singer. Others who show clerical abilities, or who

seem attuned to an element other than the one revered by

the tribe, are urged to become multiclassed ritual dancers.

Those who decide to combine the skills of the warrior arts

with priestly endeavors become battle dancers.

Full of grace and speed and agility, battle dancers per-

form across the field of battle much as the slaves of Salt

View perform across the stage. The call of combat courses

through their strong limbs while the call of their revered

elemental sings in their hearts. These religious warriors

are looked upon with awe by their tribesmates, and they

often become the champions of their tribes.

Recommended Tribal Affiliation: Battle dancers

can be found in any elf tribe, but those of the Water

Hunters and Silt Stalkers tribes are among the most

deadly and fanatical.

Role: Battle dancers dedicate themselves to one ele-

mental force, usually the one revered by their tribe

Battle Dancer

(though this is not always the case). In times of peace,

they use their skills of dance and ritual storytelling to

inspire their tribes and to help their elemental singers

administer to the spiritual well-being of the elves under

their care. When combat opportunities present them-

selves, the battle dancers welcome them. They feel clos-

est to their chosen elements when combining warrior

skills and clerical magic into a deadly dance of violence.

As spiritual leaders and defenders of their tribes, bat-

tle dancers hold a place of honor among the elves. Dur-

ing the wanderlust phase, they take their powerful

expression of faith to outsiders, demonstrating the bene-

fits of merging the priestly magic of the elements with the

strong physical nature of the elves. They are devoted to

both elven traditions and a particular element, often

exclaiming the virtues of both to all they meet. Those who

disagree may witness the battle dancer’s skills from the

point of view of the target—much to their dismay.

Through the combination of cleric powers and warrior

skills, there are few elves as deadly or as committed as the

battle dancers. They are masters of the weapons they

choose and devoted students of a particular element. In

few other kits is the concept of the superiority of elves

over outsiders more evident, for battle dancers believe

themselves to be the best of the elf race—and therefore

far above even the best outsider.

Weapon Proficiencies: Members of this kit must

select the long sword and the long bow, the traditional

weapons of the elves of Athas.

Nonweapon Proficiencies: The proficiencies for the

battle dancer are as follows.

• Bonus Proficiencies: Blind-fighting, dancing.

• Required Proficiencies: Religion, spellcraft.

• Recommended (General): Heat protection, lan-

guages (choice), singing, water find.

• Recommended (Priest): Ancient history, healing,

musical instrument, reading/writing, somatic con-

cealment.

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• Recommended (Warrior): Armorer, armor optim-

ization, bowyer/fletcher, endurance, running, sur-

vival (choice), tracking, weaponsmithing.

Equipment: Battle dancers begin with a bone long

sword and a long bow (both of excellent tribal make),

leather armor, and a holy symbol dedicated to their ele-

ment of choice.

Special Benefits: Battle dancers can attack with two

weapons without suffering attack roll penalties.

With the successful use of the dancing proficiency at

the start of combat, battle dancers receive an additional

+1 to attack and damage rolls, and a +1 bonus to their

Armor Class for a number of combat rounds equal to

the success of the proficiency check. For example, if a bat-

tle dancer needs to roll an 18 or less to successfully begin

dancing and she rolls a 14, then she receives the battle

dancing bonuses for 4 combat rounds (18–14=4). For

the next four rounds, she receives the attack, damage, and

Armor Class bonuses listed above.

Special Hindrances: If a battle dancer fails her danc-

ing proficiency roll (which must be made at the begin-

ning of every combat encounter), then she receives the

following penalties for 1d8 rounds of combat: –1 to at-

tack and damage rolls, and –1 to Armor Class.

Battle dancers can never learn to use weapons beyond

those they initially select. They receive no new weapon

proficiency slots with the advancement of levels, and if

they choose to use a nonselected weapon they suffer a –2

penalty to attack rolls.

Wealth Options: Battle dancers start play with 5d4x

30 cp as well as the items listed under “Equipment” above.

Element Singer

The element singer is an elf cleric dedicated to a single

elemental force of nature. Most tribes hold those who

commune with the elements in awe and treat them with a

small measure of fear. Elf tribes rarely have more than one

or two element singers, though they will accept any num-

ber of lesser ritual dancers and battle dancers. Element

singers are called by the element they worship—wind

singer, flame singer, earth singer, or water singer.

Most of the element singers that outsiders meet are

young singers fulfilling their wanderlust as there is no

place for them (currently) in their tribe. Others no longer

have a tribe, or they are seeking a new tribe because they

are compelled to worship an elemental force that is not

the one revered by their tribe. A select few have been sent

on some far-reaching mission by the force they worship.

Element singers are the true clerics of the elf tribes.

Each draws spells from the sphere of the cosmos as well as

from the sphere associated with their element of choice.

They fulfill roles as tribal clerics, and most have an

extreme hatred of templars and defilers who draw power

from landmarks associated with their revered element.

Recommended Tribal Affiliation: All elf tribes have

element singers, so they may have any tribal affiliation

desired.

Role: Element singers hold positions of leadership

and responsibility in their tribes, though those they

administer to do not quite know what to make of these

clerics. Elves understand the magic of preservers and

defilers, but have little knowledge of priestly magic. It

frightens them, much as the raging elements frighten

them. Those who commune with these terrible forces,

therefore, become objects of fear, too. Still, the tribes real-

ize they need the element singers, so they give them an

awe-inspired respect. In many cases, the very survival of

an elf tribe depends on its element singers.

Element singers interpret the omens and portents

inherent in the forces of nature. They advise tribal chiefs

as to the best courses of action. They lead rites of passage

and other tribal rituals. They heal the wounded and cure

the sick. When element singers leave their tribes to

explore the world of the outsiders, they take with them

their beliefs, traditions, and devotions. These clerics are

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elves through and through—savage, unpredictable, living

for each now.

Though individual tribes tend to congregate toward a

particular element, element singers are not intolerant of

other faiths, as long as they are elemental in nature.

Those who seek to worship individuals (such as a sor-

cerer-king) are seen as fools or worse, for no one—not

even a sorcerer-king—can compare to the elements that

shape the world.

Weapon Proficiencies: Members of this kit may select

any weapons allowed to the priest class.

Nonweapon Proficiencies: Proficiencies for the ele-

ment singers are as follows.

• Bonus Proficiencies: Survival (choice of terrain type

depends on where the tribe spends most of its time

and which element the singer is devoted to).

• Required Proficiencies: Healing, spellcraft, water

find.

• Recommended (General): Animal handling, artistic

ability, dancing, direction sense, fire-building, heat

protection, leatherworking, singing, weather sense.

• Recommended (Priest): Ancient history, herb-

alism, musical instrument, reading/writing, reli-

gion, somatic concealment.

Equipment: Element singers may use any equipment

available to the priest class. They begin play with a bone

weapon of excellent tribal make and a holy symbol dedi-

cated to their element of choice.

Special Benefits: Element singers receive one bonus

spell at each spell level. For example, if a 3rd-level singer

would normally be entitled to two 1st-level spells, this spe-

cial benefit gives him or her three 1st-level spells instead.

This bonus applies to each spell level, but the bonus

spells must be selected from the singer’s elemental sphere.

Special Hindrances: Element singers only receive

only one initial weapon proficiency slot (instead of two).

They must drop everything else they are doing to go to the

aid of their tribe whenever they are needed.

Wealth Options: Element singers start play with 3d6x

30 cp as well as the items listed under “Equipment” above.

Wizard Kit

The magical arts come quite naturally to the elves of

Athas. Where others fear and even hate mages, elves feel

comfortable around wizardly magic and even honor

those who use magic to benefit the tribe. One elf wizard

kit is presented here, the arcanist.

Arcanist

An arcanist is an elf wizard dedicated to learning all he

or she can about magic. The arcanist is the closest thing

there is to an elf scholar, digging through ruins and wiz-

ards’ packs in search of arcane texts and magical lore.

They find their greatest pleasures in learning new spells

and acquiring magical items to add to their collections.

Arcanists carry an extreme number of pouches and

packs upon their persons, and each one is crammed full

of items pertaining to the arcane arts. Spell components

spill from every pocket, and arcane texts carved on bone

and stone jut from every crowded pouch. Like pack rats,

every conceivable item they come across that may be

magical or that may serve some magical purpose finds a

way into their personal stores.

As a result of their searches and studies, arcanists

come to know a little about a lot of different things. They

are consulted often, becoming experts and advisers for

their tribes. They may not always have the complete

answer, but they can usually decide a course of action

from the bits and snippets of knowledge they do possess.

Recommended Tribal Affiliation: All elf tribes have

arcanists, though the Twilightcatchers clan of the Sky

Singers tribe and the Half Moons clan of the Night Run-

ners tribe have the largest numbers of these mages.

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

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nitely have their own agendas. Some seek out knowledge

for the power it provides. Arcanists believe that power is

fine (and they’ll take it when they can get it), but seeking

knowledge for its own sake is a worthy endeavor.

In tribal life, arcanists work with other elf mages to

gather and prepare spell components, create enchanted

items (both true enchantments and illusory ones to sell

to unsuspecting outsiders), and teach aspiring elf mages

the tricks of the trade. Arcanists leave their tribes for long

periods of time when they go in search of items to add to

their arcane collections. Wandering arcanists often join

up with adventuring groups, for long years of experience

have taught these mages that many of the things they seek

eventually wind up in the proximity of outsiders.

Arcanists provide a wide collection of lore to those

they travel with, as well as spellcasting abilities. They can

be either defilers or preservers. While much of the infor-

mation these mages know can be useful, a lot of it is

arcane trivia that sounds important but means nothing.

Arcanists tend to talk on and on when a question is

raised, telling much more than is necessary to adequately

answer the question. Though the arcanist is always

authoritative in his lecturing to companions and others,

he tends to keep his magical skills secret when outside his

tribe. This is to minimize the risk posed by those who

hate and fear wizards (which includes the great majority

of Athas’s population).

Weapon Proficiencies: Members of this kit may select

any weapons allowed to the wizard class.

Nonweapon Proficiencies: The proficiencies for the

arcanist are as follows.

• Bonus Proficiencies: Reading/writing, spellcraft.

• Required Proficiencies: Ancient history, languages,

ancient (choice), languages, modern (choice),

somatic concealment.

• Recommended (General): Bargain, brewing, and

cooking.

• Recommended (Wizard): Astrology, herbalism.

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Equipment: Arcanists can use any equipment avail-

able to other wizards. They prefer small weapons that do

not take up a lot of room, as this gives them more space to

store their collectibles.

Special Benefits: Arcanists can make Intelligence

checks at +1 to determine if they know anything at all

about a given subject. Even if the arcanist makes a suc-

cessful check, it is up to the DM to determine exactly

how much he or she knows. As a rule of thumb, the better

the success, the more the arcanist knows about the sub-

ject at hand.

Arcanist receive four additional initial nonweapon

proficiency slots. These must be filled from the selection

of proficiencies listed above.

Arcanists start play with a small collection of arcane

items, as described under “Wealth Options” below.

Special Hindrances: Arcanists may never become

proficient with any weapon. They always use weapons at

the –5 nonproficiency penalty. This reflects the fact that

arcanists spend much more time pursuing mental activi-

ties instead of physical ones.

Wealth Options: Arcanists start play with (1d4+1)x

30 cp. They also start with a small collection of arcane

items: one potion fruit (roll on Table 89 in the DUNGEON

MASTER™ Guide [DMG]), one stone tablet with one

1st-level and one 2nd-level spell (DM’s choice), and one

miscellaneous magical item that the arcanist does not yet

know anything about (the DM should select the item

from Tables 96, 97, 101, or 102 in the DMG).

Psionicist Kit

Psionicists are an important class throughout Athasian

society. In elf tribes, these mental masters provide many

benefits that make life easier to deal with. Outside the

tribes, the elven psionicists are often mysterious and

frightening. One elf psionicist kit is presented here, the

brown elf.

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Order or what is expected of the brown elf. When the elf

is truly ready to join the Order, then such gentle guid-

ance will no longer be necessary.

Brown elves follow the tenets of the Order, even if they

don’t realize this. They believe that psionics should only

be studied for its own sake, and that these talents should

only be used to preserve the natural order. To master one’s

psionic talents is a noble endeavor, and the strengths they

provide should never be used to further selfish ends.

Weapon Proficiencies: Members of this kit may select

any weapons allowed to the psionicist class.

Nonweapon Proficiencies: The proficiencies for the

brown elf are as follows.

• Bonus Proficiencies: Meditative focus, psionic

detection.

• Required Proficiencies: Harness subconscious.

• Recommended (General): Water find.

• Recommended (Psionicist): Hypnosis, reading/

writing, rejuvenation.

Equipment: Brown elves can use any equipment

available to other psionicists.

Special Benefits: Brown elves have no special advan-

tages other than the bonus proficiencies they receive.

Special Hindrances: Brown elves receive a –3 pen-

alty to reaction encounters when dealing with elves who

are affiliated with an elf tribe. In addition, they start out

particularly poor because of their nonaffiliated status.

Wealth Options: Brown elves start with 3d4x10 cp.

Brown Elf

Among the elves of the Tablelands, an elf who voluntar-

ily gives up his or her affiliation and loyalty to a tribe

dresses in brown wrappings to signify this decision.

These brown elves travel the region, seeking something

that they could not achieve in the tribes they were born

to. In most cases, the decision is tied to an elf’s develop-

ing psionic abilities. For reasons not completely under-

stood even by the brown elves, these individuals feel

compelled to leave their tribes to seek out masters to

teach them to fully unlock their mental powers. In many

cases, a brown elf is on his or her way to becoming a mem-

ber of the mysterious Order, though this affiliation is

years or even decades away.

Recommended Tribal Affiliation: By their very

nature, brown elves have given up tribal affiliation and

are considered outcasts—even though the decision was

of their own choosing.

Role: Elf tribes shun those elves who have chosen to

wear the brown wrappings of nonaffiliation. Brown elves

display no loyalty to tribes or traditions, and they receive

none in return. These elves wander the wastes and cities,

seeking teachers to instruct them in greater uses of their

mental abilities.

Brown elves attach themselves to adventuring groups for

a time. They enjoy the protection afforded by the adventur-

ers, and sometimes even revel in the company they have typ-

ically denied themselves for long periods of time.

These solitary wanderers are eventually contacted by

members of the Order. When a member of the Order

takes notice of a brown elf, he (or she) only reveals himself

once he is certain he wants to sponsor the fledgling psion-

icist. Even then, the high-level psionicist will never reveal

his true identity or the purpose of his visit. During the

years that follow, he may appear occasionally to offer a bit

of instruction, some needed help, or a clue as to what

direction to follow next, but he will never mention the

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Elves of Athas

by Bill Slavicsek

They run across the burning plains where others fear to

walk. They live for the moment, these savages of a dying

world. The elves of Athas are wild, dangerous, and

unlike any other elves. Forget the frail forest

dwellers of other campaign worlds. Athas’s elves

stand tall and lean, with long limbs and fearsome

faces. They are thieves and raiders, swift warriors

and terrible foes.

them, the abilities that make them different from

Elves of Athas explores the passions that drive

other races, and the outlook that lets them

survive beneath the crimson sun. This accessory

For players, there are new rules for character creation

and new Athasian elf kits—offered to DARK SUN®

includes savage encounters with the better known

tribes and an updated map of the Tablelands region.

game characters for the first time.

The elves of Athas are forged in the endless desert-burned dark by the sun, toughened by

the swirling sands, and given strength and swiftness by the constant wind. Come run with

them—if you dare!