

# DARK SUN CAMPAIGN GUIDE



Rules Book for Players on Athas

# INTRODUCTION

## ATHAS

*"I live in a world of fire and sand. The crimson sun scorches the life from anything that crawls or flies, and storms of sand scour the foliage from the barren ground. This is a land of blood and dust, where tribes of feral elves sweep out of the salt plains to plunder lonely caravans, mysterious singing winds call travelers to slow suffocation in the Sea of Silt, and selfish kings squander their subjects' lives building gaudy palaces and garish tombs. This bleak wasteland is Athas, and it is my home." —The Wanderer's Journal*

Beneath a crimson sun lie wastelands of majestic desolation and cities of cruel splendor, where sandal clad heroes battle ancient sorcery and terrible monsters. This is Athas, the world of the DARK SUN campaign setting, a dying planet of savagery and desolation. Life hangs by a thread in this barren land, it is unforgiving to the weak, and now it is up to you to write your own story in blood and glory.

## EIGHT CHARACTERISTICS OF ATHAS

### 1. THE WORLD IS A DESERT

From the first moments of dawn until the last twinkling of dusk, the crimson sun shimmers in the olive-tinged sky like a fiery puddle of blood. It climbs toward its zenith and the temperature rises relentlessly: 100 degrees by midmorning, 110 at noon, 130 - sometimes even 150 - by late afternoon. A man cannot drink fast enough to replenish the fluids he loses. As the days drag on, he feels sick and feeble. If he does not have enough water, he grows too weak to move. His mouth becomes dry and bitter, his lips, tongue, and throat grow swollen. Before long, his blood is thick and gummy. His heart must work hard to circulate it. Finally his system overheats, leaving him dead and alone in the sands.

There are no rivers or lakes and pockets of civilization are concentrated in isolated oases where water is more precious than life. But, this is not all a wasteland. Under the sands lie ancient ruins, testament to a time before the desert, and the city-states are a wonder in and of themselves.

### 2. THE WORLD IS SAVAGE

Life on Athas is brutal and short. Bloodthirsty raiders, greedy slavers, and hordes of merciless savages overrun the deserts and wastelands. The cities are not much safer; each choke in the grip of an immortal tyrant. Slavery is widespread on Athas, and many unfortunates spend their lives in chains,

toiling for brutal taskmasters. Every year, hundreds of slaves, perhaps thousands, are sent to their deaths in bloody arena spectacles. Charity, compassion, kindness—these qualities exist, but they are rare and precious blooms. Only a fool hopes for such riches.

### 3. METAL IS SCARCE

Most weapons and armor are made of bone, stone, wood, and similar materials. Mail or plate armor exists only in the treasuries of the sorcerer-kings. Steel blades are nearly priceless; many heroes never see such weapons during their lifetimes.

### 4. ARCANE MAGIC DEFILES THE WORLD

Reckless use of arcane magic during ancient wars reduced Athas to a wasteland. To cast an arcane spell, a magic user siphons power from the living world. Nearby plants wither to ash, crippling pain wracks animals and people, and the soil is permanently sterilized. It is possible to cast spells with care, avoiding any more damage to the world, but defiling is easier and faster than preserving. As a result, sorcerers, wizards, and other wielders of arcane magic are reviled and persecuted across Athas regardless of whether they preserve or defile. Only the most powerful spellcasters can use their arcane abilities without fear of reprisal.

### 5. SORCERER KINGS RULE THE CITIES

Terrible defilers of immense power rule all the city-states. These mighty spellcasters have held their thrones for centuries; no one alive remembers a time before the sorcerer-kings. Some claim to be gods, and some profess to serve gods. Some are brutal oppressors, while others are subtle in their tyranny. The sorcerer kings govern through priesthoods or bureaucracies of greedy, ambitious templars, who channel their power. In all appearances, they are gods of this world.

### 6. THE GODS ARE SILENT

Athas is a world without deities. No clerics, no paladins, and no prophets live here. Religious orders are dedicated to sorcerer-kings who claim godhood. Old shrines and crumbling temples lie amid ancient ruins, testimony to a time when unknown agents spoke to the people of Athas. Those who lay claim to clerical powers do so through worship of the elements: the sun, the sand, the storm, and the rarest of all, water.

## 7. FIERCE MONSTERS ROAM THE WORLD

The desert planet has its own deadly ecology. Many creatures that are familiar sights on milder worlds have long since died out or never existed on Athas. The world has no cattle, swine, or horses; instead, people tend flocks of erdlus, ride on kanks or crodlus, and draw wagons with inixes and mekillots. Wild creatures such as lions, bears, and wolves are almost nonexistent. In their place are terrors such as the id fiend, the baazrag, and the tembo. Perhaps the harsh environment of Athas breeds creatures tough and vicious enough to survive it, or maybe the touch of ancient sorcery poisoned the wellsprings of life and inflicted monster after monster on the dying world. Either way, the deserts are perilous, and only a fool or a lunatic travels them alone.

## 8. FAMILIAR RACES AND CLASSES AREN'T WHAT YOU EXPECT

Typical fantasy stereotypes don't apply to Athasian heroes. In many fantasy settings, elves are wise, benevolent forest-dwellers who guard their homelands from intrusions of evil. On Athas, elves are nomadic herders, raiders, peddlers, and thieves. Halflings aren't amiable river-folk; they're xenophobic headhunters and cannibals who hunt and kill trespassers in their mountain forests. New races thrive here: the monstrous half-giant, the insectoid thri-kreen, the half-breed mul. There are no paladins, bards serve as assassins, and the mental force of psionics can be found even amongst the lowliest beggar and slave.

### THE CALL

*"Athas is an endless wasteland, yet it has a majestic and stark beauty. When first light casts its emerald hues over the Sea of Silt, or when sunset spreads its orange flame over the Mekillot Mountains, the world's feral beauty stirs the untamed heart in each of us. It is a call to take up spear and dagger, to flee the cities, to go and see what lurks out in the barrenness."* - The Wanderer's Journal

### PLAYER TIP

The DARK SUN setting isn't a place for your typical bearded dwarf with a love of beer and gems, cherubic halfling, or charging knights and gnome wizards. In this setting, some races don't exist, and the dwarf might instead be a hairless devotee to the sun, the halfling a stealthy cannibalistic hunter, and any wizard likely hides her spellcasting lest a mob hang her for defiling what precious life clings to the earth. Half-giants and thri-kreen are part of the dominant races, and the scarcity of metal leads crafters to creative uses of alternative materials and an entirely different economy. This book expands your usual options and will help you and your friends create characters uniquely invested in this world.

Athas waits to challenge you. Whether you are a mul gladiator, competing for the cheers of thousands, or the elven trickster selling contraband goods as part of your cover for the Veiled Alliance, or a thri-kreen hunter enthralled by the irregular behaviors of humanoids, you will face the same basic question: are you here simply to survive, or do you dare to do more?



Gerard Brom

Dane Foder

# PART 1

## Character Creation

### 1. CHOOSE A RACE

This guide provides the racial traits and roleplay aspects of the eight available classes: dwarf, elf, half-elf, half-giant, halfling, human, mul, and thri-kreen.

### 2. CHOOSE A CLASS

The traditional classes and archetypes may have been modified or do not exist. This Guide lists any changes to each class. The classes of Athas are: barbarian, bard, cleric, druid, fighter, monk, psion (new), ranger, rogue, warlock, and wizard. The Paladin does not exist on Athas and the Sorcerer is restricted to NPCs.

### 3. ASSIGN ABILITY SCORES

Standard array (15, 14, 13, 12, 10, 8).

### 4. DESCRIBE YOUR CHARACTER

- No evil characters allowed.
- Literacy is banned in cities, so consult the DM when choosing a background as to whether your social class enables your character to read and write.
- Decide whether to run your character in the first person ("I throw a dagger") or third person ("Grok throws a dagger") and stick with it.
- The following backgrounds are available: Charlatan, Criminal, Entertainer, Folk (slave) Hero, Guild artisan (merchant or trader), Hermit, Noble, Outlander, Sage, Soldier, Urchin.
- The social hierarchy in cities generally is: templar (city official), noble, merchant, freeman, laborer/soldier, tribesman, slave, hermit. Decide where you fit in during this phase.
- Be descriptive! A character is more than numbers or a "build." Come up with personality traits and use the Ideals, Bonds, and Flaws to assist with remembering to play the character itself.

### 5. CHOOSE EQUIPMENT

Consult this Guide's Equipment section for purchases, currency, and changes in material. Because of the rarity of metal and water, the economy and gear of Athas has developed quite differently from other settings. For example, the primary currency is a "ceramic piece (cp)."

### 6. ASSIGN WILD TALENT

Non-psion characters are likely to have a Wild Talent. Known as the "Will and the Way," most sentient creatures on this world have some form, even if limited, of psionic ability. For the people of Athas, psionics are special because it's the one source of extraordinary power that does not make them beholden to someone or something else. Templars need a sorcerer king. Clerics must pray to the elements. Wizards leech life from plants. Soldiers need someone to make and maintain armaments. Consult the Wild Talent section if you are a non-psion.

### 7. COME TOGETHER

Most campaigns begin with a starting hook or story. The DM is encouraged to run a Session 0: Prologue, in which players should bring a character concept to the table, roleplay how they arrived at their current situation with one another, and work together in developing a narrative that may affect your choice of assigning scores, features, and background to your character.

### 8. OPTIONAL RULES

Consult the DM for which optional rules will be in use and which supplements are permitted. This Guide makes reference to *Xanathar's Guide to Everything* but it is not necessary to play in Athas.

# PART 2

## Races of Athas

### DWARF



*“The worst thing you can say to a dwarf is ‘It can’t be done.’ If he’s already decided to do it, he may never speak to you again. If he hasn’t decided to take up the task, he may commit himself to it simply out of spite. ‘Impossible’ is not a concept most dwarves understand. Anything can be done, with enough determination.” - Sha’len, Nibenese trader*

On Athas, dwarves are not subterranean miners but rather, a long-lived, slowly dying race known for their relentless focus on a task to the single exclusion of all others. A dwarf’s chief love is toil, and one is never happier when tasked with a cause he can approach with a stoic, single-mindedness for weeks, months, years, or even decades. Once his mind is committed to a task, it is near impossible to sway him away from it as he will fail to listen to reason. Dwarves live for their focus, for those who die unable to complete a focus return from the dead to haunt their unfinished work. A dwarf rarely divulges his focus to anyone.

#### SHORT AND STOUT

Short and powerful, dwarves stand between 4 ½ and 5 feet tall. Their frames are massive and an average dwarf weighs in the vicinity of 200 pounds. Life in the Athasian wastes makes them rugged, tanned, and callused. Dwarves are hairless and find the very idea of it repulsive.

#### THE FOCUS

A dwarf’s relation is often a function of his focus. Those who help him are respected, sensible companions. Those who hinder him are obstacles that must be removed. There is very little room for compromise in a dwarven mind.

##### Focus

Focus is the central point of your existence, and no simple job will suffice. Work with your DM to come up with a starting focus and a new one if completed. None should be easy to complete and should take at least 1 week or longer to finish to be worthwhile.

*For example, Grelak, protector of his village, makes the retrieval of a sacred book stolen by raiders his focus. After a week of gathering clues, he sets out to liberate the artifact from its current owner in a trading post weeks away. On the way there, he gains the benefit of his dwarven focus for anything that would slow him because he is trying to reach the book. Later, he stops in Nibenay to rest and gets in a brawl. He doesn’t receive any bonuses because he isn’t actively pursuing his focus.*

#### DWARVEN SOCIETY

Dwarves are close-knit, formed around clans and focused on family. Ties of blood are honored above all but the focus. Family honor or dishonor is passed down to generations. A community is led by the *Urhnymous* (over-leader), and each clan by an *uhrnius* (leader). There are 3 main dwarven settlements in the Tablelands: Kled, near Tyr, and the twin villages of North and South Ledopolus on the southwestern edge. Dwarven oral tradition shares that they were once a mighty people living in vast cities, and many of these ancient ruins are still out there, buried and forgotten.

## DWARF NAMES

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Names are granted by the clan leader, the *uhrnius*, after completing one's first focus. Dwarves do not have a surname and like many on Athas prefer just one name, using a town (Drog of Kled) if distinction is needed.

**Male Names:** Baranus, Biirgaz, Bontar, Brul, Caelum, Caro, Daled, Drog, Fyra, Ghedran, Gralth, Gram, Jurgan, Lyanius, Murd, Nati, Portek, Rkard, Sa'ram, Sult, Veso.

**Female Names:** Ardin, Erda, Ghava, Greshin, Gudak, Lazra, N'kadir, Palashi, Vashara.

## DWARF TRAITS

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Dwarves are nonmagical by nature and abhor arcane casters. They cannot take an arcane casting class. Their priests lean towards steady earth and avoid chaotic air, and they take to psionics with a vengeance. Dwarves leave villages at times to further a focus and to search for ancient dwarven ruins. They are highly prized as mercenaries because once contracted, their loyalty will never change.

**Ability Score Increase.** Your Constitution score increases by 2, and you choose to increase your Strength or Wisdom by 1.

**Age.** Dwarves mature around age 35 and live up to 250 years, though the dangers of Athas often claim them well before this time.

**Alignment.** Dwarves tend lawful and good to neutral. Their devotion to an established hierarchy in villages means they tend to follow rules even to the point of ridicule.

**Size.** A typical dwarf stands about 4 ½ to 5 feet tall and weighs 200 pounds. Your size is Medium.

**Speed.** Your base walking speed is 25 feet. You are not slowed by wearing heavy armor.

**Darkvision.** Despite living aboveground, your heritage allows you to see in dim light within 60 feet of you as if in bright light, and in darkness as if it were dim light. You can't discern color in darkness, only shades of gray.

**Dwarven Focus.** When making an ability check or saving throw directly related to your Focus, you are considered proficient and double your proficiency bonus.

**Dwarven Resilience.** You have Advantage on poison saves and resistance to poison damage.

**Tool Proficiency.** You gain proficiency with the artisan's tool of your choice: smith's tools, brewer's supplies, or mason's tools.

**Dwarven Toughness.** Your hit point maximum increases by 1 and it increases by 1 every time you gain a level.

**Languages.** You can speak Common and Dwarvish. With DM permission, your character might be able to read Dwarvish with an appropriate background. Dwarves keep a long and proud oral history, and they have an old written language mostly used for writing history that they will never share to outsiders. Their native language is deep and throaty, full of guttural sounds and harsh exclamations that cause most non-dwarves to get raw throats if spoken for long.

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## ROLEPLAYING A DWARF

Remember the intensity of your focus. Breaking it has social, philosophical, and spiritual repercussions. If you die before completion, your spirit will return as a banshee and you will have shamed your clan for generations to come. For someone to intentionally stand in the way of your focus is an assault on you. Your greatest satisfaction is completing the focus. Keep a serious attitude always. The only time you show your festive side (you have one) is when you have recently fulfilled a focus or between setting a new one. At this time, your full joy and humor show, but you are vulnerable in some ways because you are lost in purpose.

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# ELF



*"Honor? The word does not exist in the elven language."* – Tharak, human guard

*"Better to die with a spear in your hands than to live with shackles around your wrist."* – Elven adage

Athas' wilderness is home to the long-limbed elves, a race of traders, herders, and fast moving raiders. Running is the key to acceptance and respect amongst them. Elves who are injured and cannot run are often left behind to die. Most rarely stay in one place for long, both physically and emotionally, and this is seen as a sign of strength in their people - an absolute freedom.

Elf culture, while savage, is also rich and diverse. They have turned celebrating into an art form, and elf song and dance is captivating and seductive to non-elves. Elven war parties are greatly feared in the deserts, for they are a deadly force of endurance and maneuverability.

Others see elves as dishonest and lazy; generally, a fair assessment. Elves idle for days until compelled to exert themselves, but they can run for days without complaint. No self-respecting elf will ride an animal, and it is a severe dishonor to do so. Custom dictates those who cannot keep up are left behind, and this includes the pregnant and the elderly. Elves prefer to live short, happy lives rather than long, boring ones. Unlike traditional settings, Athasian elves rarely live past 140 years. Seeing the future as a dark, deadly place, they prefer to live in the "here and now." They thrive in open spaces and tend to wither in captivity, making them poor choices on the slave block.

## LONG AND LEAN

Elves are long-limbed sprinters who stand between 6 ½ and 7 ½ feet tall with slender yet muscular builds, averaging 175 pounds. They have deeply etched features with rugged skin as varied as the other races of Athas. They grow no facial hair but the locks atop their heads comes in from lightest blond to darkest black. They dress in garb designed to protect them from the elements.

## TRUST IS FOR FOOLS

Elves keep to their own tribe – there is no racial unity - and the rare friend, unless there's an angle to be gained. Strangers are potential enemies waiting to take advantage of an elf, so they look to get the advantage first. If a companion shows promise, the elf devises a series of "tests" of trust that allows them to prove their friendship is "stronger than the bonds of death," as elves say. Once gained, one is forever a friend, but if that trust is betrayed, it is gone forever. In the tribe, elves are all equals, except the Chief. The Chief is elected and rules for life, making all major decisions for the tribe, and elves are expected to tithe a choice piece of loot. Holding out suggests a lack of loyalty to the tribe. Your natural enemy are the thri-kreen who view your people as a delicacy.

## THE RUN

Those who cannot keep up die, and freedom in all matters is life. Most elves don't lie, cheat, or steal out of malice. They see an opportunity and the gullible can't keep up. In their culture, an elf is rewarded for being faster, both in wit and running. If you stop running, if you settle down, you wither.

## HOME IS WHERE YOU RUN

Elves are nomads by nature, though they maintain semi-permanent settlements in the wilderness. Their ability to cover vast distances makes them master raiders, and they consider anywhere their legs can take them as their territory to take from as they see fit.

Elves may flippantly adventure for wanderlust, but those who persist often do so for a desire for profit, glory, revenge, or loyalty. They like to boast about their accomplishments, weaving these into song. Elves often take keepsakes from memorable raids and sew these into their cloaks. Elves are pleased by flaunting a stolen item before an owner. Elven custom dictates the victim congratulate the thief on his possession of such an attractive item (those who don't are poor sports).

Unlike most other races, elves have no issue with defiling magic and arcane practice.

## ELF NAMES

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Naming of young runners is a sacred responsibility, given after the first interesting thing the child does while learning to run. With the right name, an elf child can grow to greatness, but the wrong name may cause one to vanish in the wastes. A child's name can be changed because of an extraordinary deed performed during the rite of passage. Elves take the surname of their tribe.

**Male Names:** Botuu (Water Runner), Coraanu (First Elf, the Warrior Thief), Dukkoti (Wind Fighter), Haaku (Two Daggers), Lobuu (First Runner), Mutami (Laughs at Sun), Nuuko (Sky Hunter), Traako (Metal Stealer).

**Female Names:** Alaa (Bird Chaser), Ekee (Wild Dancer), Guuta (Singing Sword), Hukaa (Fire Leaper), Ittee (Dancing Bow), Nuuta (Quiet Hunter), Utaa (Laughing Moon)

**Tribe (Clan) Names:** Clearwater Tribe (Firesaper, Graffyon, Graystar, Lightning, Onyx, Sandrunner, Seafoam, Silverleaf, Songweaver, Steeljaw, Wavedivers, Windriders clans); Night Runner Tribe (Dark Moons, Full Moons, Half Moons, Lone Moons, New Moons, Quarter Moons clans); Shadow Tribe; Silt Stalker Tribe (Fire Bow, Fire Dagger, Fire Sword clans); Silver Hand Tribe; Sky Singer Tribe (Dawnchaser, Dayjumper, Twilightcatcher clans); Swiftwing Tribe; Water Hunter Tribe (Raindancer, Poolrunner, Lakesinger clans); Wind Dancer Tribe (Airhunter, Breezechaser clans)

## ELF TRAITS

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Elves tend to any profession and trade that let's them act freely. This makes them poor students of the rigorous study of psionics, and rarely does anything but Air draw them to clerical study.

**Ability Score Increase.** Your Dexterity score increases by 2, and you choose to increase your Intelligence or Charisma by 1.

**Age.** Elves reach physical maturity at the same rate as humans but must pass the tribe's rites of initiation before being recognized as adults, typically around 20. Elves can live to 140 years.

**Alignment.** Elves tend chaotic because of their love of freedom, variety and self-expression. They tend neutrality, though they tend good (self-sacrifice) when the tribe is concerned. Although they will steal everything in sight, they are not murderous and avoid unnecessary violence.

**Size.** A typical elf stands about 6 1/2 to 7 1/2 feet tall and around 175 pounds. Your size is Medium.

**Speed.** Your base walking speed is 35 feet.

**Burst of Speed.** Your heritage allows you to move in sprints. When you move on your turn in combat, you can double your speed until the end of the turn. Once you use this trait, you can't use it again until you move 0 feet on one of your turns.

**Elven Resilience.** You are conditioned to the extreme weather of the wastelands and have advantage on all saves against extreme heat and cold.

**Mask of the Wild.** You can attempt to hide even when you are only lightly obscured by terrain, weather, or other natural phenomena.

**Elf Run.** You add your Constitution score to the number of miles you can travel in a day. You have advantage on forced march saves.

**Languages.** You can speak Common and Elvish. Each tribe has a distinct dialect. The language is filled with short, clipped words, run with a rapid staccato pace difficult for others to pick up. They disdain the slow, tedious languages of others but condescend to learn Common. Elves that learn other tongues hide it to gain advantage.

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## ROLEPLAYING AN ELF

Rely on guerilla combat skills – distance, maneuverability and speed. The elven philosophy is never to stand up in a fair fight, and running is prized, whether it be from an equal combat, an awkward situation, or a pregnant lover. When someone professes to be your friend, dismiss them at first then offer them a test of trust (don't tell them). Ask them to give you a prized possession or see if they take one of yours left out in a conspicuous place. Pretend to sleep and listen to what they say about you. Maybe allow yourself to be captured and see if this presumed friend will rescue you!

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# HALF-ELF



*"People are no good. You can only trust animals and the bottle."* – Delmao, half-elf thief.

Unlike the parents of mules, elves and humans are often attracted to each other, but just as often, they are the unwanted product of a casual encounter. Born from two worlds but not welcome in either, they find an attraction to the solitary wastes. In conjunction with a lack of unifying culture, most turn into lonesome, self-sufficient folk. Elves have no tolerance for them (the mother is expected to get rid of the child or be cast out) and most, though not all, humans believe their ears make them just another lazy thief and trickster. When everyone sees you as the worst quality of your parent race, the half-elf turns away and has found a kinship in the animal world unmatched by either of their parent races.

## HALF AND HALF

Half-elves are taller than most humans, standing 6 to 6 1/2 feet tall, bulkier than elves and able to pass themselves off more as humans than full elves. The men can grow beards and they have a full range of skin tones and hair colors. Some enjoy proving themselves better than humans or elves at a task, and others simply turn to different cultures, such as thri-kreen or muls, for friendship. They rarely maintain a friendship for long as it is their experience that everyone is going to let you down or betray you eventually, but at times it is necessary to ally or simply not be alone.

## NO CULTURE

Half-elves don't form communities despite their numbers, and they can reproduce with either parent race. Most will never know their elven parent and they aren't welcome in elven tribes, seen as an embarrassment who can't keep up. Their affinity to beasts leads them to be valuable animal handlers. Some find acceptance in the ranks of templars, where service to the sorcerer king or queen provides a welcome home. In adventuring parties, they tend to be aloof because it's likely to be a short-lived experience.

## HALF-ELF NAMES

Most have human names as they cannot run as elves to gain a given name, nor an accepted tribal name. Some warp the elvish custom and simply take a name, much to the anger of elves. Like most races, half-elves use only one name, though they may adopt a city or village surname, or a profession, to distinguish themselves.

**Male Names:** Boaz, Brazin, Ero, Fyrian, Gathalimay, Laban, Lafus, Luris, Melestan, Mirch, Navarch, Poortool, Regg, Ruach, Solzak, Vok, Wek, Wheetan, Xutan.

**Female Names:** Alie, Arya, Aso, Drewet, Feera, Feykaar, Krysta, Lorelei, Mila, Ranis, Sareka, Thania, Vaerhirmana.

## HALF-ELF TRAITS

Half-elves are influenced by both parents, even if not accepted by either race.

**Ability Score Increase.** Your Wisdom score increases by 2, and two other ability scores of your choice increase by 1.

**Age.** Half-elves mature as humans, reaching adulthood around 20, and some live to 130 years.

**Alignment.** Lawful and neutral half-elves labor for acceptance from a parent race while chaotic ones have given up, rejecting a society that has rejected them.

**Size.** A typical half-elf stands close to 6 1/2 feet tall and weighs 140 pounds. Your size is Medium.

**Speed.** Your base walking speed is 30 feet.

**Nomadic Life.** You have proficiency in the Survival and Animal Handling skills.

**Speak with Animals.** You can communicate simple ideas with medium size or smaller beasts using sounds and gestures. This does not make the animal friendly to you or able to respond in kind.

**Animal Affinity.** At 3rd level, you can use an Action to attempt to charm a medium size or smaller beast with Intelligence 3 or lower. You must be able to touch and talk to the beast. It must pass a Wisdom save or be charmed for 24 hours. The saving throw is 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Wisdom modifier. If you or a companion damage the beast, the charm ends. You cannot use this trait again until you complete a long rest.

**Languages.** You can speak Common and Elvish, and if a city dweller, likely you adopt the distinct dialect of your home.

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## ROLEPLAYING A HALF-ELF

You don't consider yourself a separate race. You pride yourself on your self-reliance and refuse patronizing offers to help you. You'll do fine on your own, thank you very much. Take any chance to show humans you're just as talented as them or elves you're just as clever. If others view your attempts as irrational, well, they get to be wrapped in the blankets of racial acceptance. You're left out in the cold. Praise should be viewed with suspicion because no one hands that out without an angle in mind. Other half-elves don't interest you by default. Just because they have the same ears doesn't mean you suddenly have anything in common. In an adventuring group, you don't need charity and don't need someone else to cook your food or take your watch.

This does not mean you'll never form a lasting friendship. But it's hard to get over a lifetime of being on the outside and being constantly reminded of that. This is why you feel affinity with the beast. They're simple. They don't judge, and they don't act with malice.

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# HALF-GIANT



*“Mind of a child, strength of three grown men. I’ve seen a half-giant tear the walls out of a building because he wanted a better look at the tattoos on a mul inside.” – Daro, human trader*

Legend holds in ages past a sorcerer king or queen used wizardry to beget a union of giant and human to make a race of powerful slaves. Whatever the truth, the half-giant race has thrived, able to reproduce with one another, and are sought out as gladiators, soldiers, guards and mercenaries across the tablelands.

Because of their artificial origins, there is no half-giant culture, tradition, or homeland. They readily imitate customs and cultures of those they admire or associate with. They are very imitative, eager to fit into a world that is not built for their size. One observing a dwarf quarry might watch for a time then try his hand at it, moving on if he does not excel at it. Many find they excel at breaking bones and imitate those who are also skilled at this practice.

## BIG AND STRONG

Half-giants are enormous individuals, generally 10 to 12 feet high and weighing in upwards of 1600 pounds. Though they have human features, these tend to be exaggerated in some ways. Skin tones range from light brown to deep tan, like sand. They vary in hair color and tend to wear whatever hair style or fashion they currently are emulating. Absent that, their giant heritage makes for thick hair amenable to braids. There is no economy for half-giant stature, so their clothing would likely consist of several human-sized articles of clothing stitched together. A tavern would charge extra for filling enough plates for a half-giant sized appetite, and any armor would have to be specially crafted. Most nobles, templars, and merchant houses feel the investment is worth the return when they have 1500 pounds of enforcement at their command.

## IMPRESSONABLE

The most powerful warriors on Athas, half-giants seem content to dwell in humanity’s shadow and drift towards charismatic leaders of all races. For example, if a half-giant village is near elven raiders, they are likely to emulate the guerilla tactics of the elves. However, this innate need to fit in is more than a whim. It is inherent to the half-giant’s creation. A half-giant farmer’s village might be raided, and he may soon adopt the morals of the invaders because they seem to know what they’re doing, and the half-giant finds he’s pretty good at smashing heads too.

## ALIGNMENT ON A WHIM

One axis of your alignment will be fixed and the other subject to change, even daily, based on influential events or persons around you that you find a reason to emulate or admire. You will try out their morals or philosophies and perhaps stick with it for a time if you’re good at it. This does not mean half-giants are unreliable - the influence must be strong for them to change, and they have a core philosophy that is fairly unchanging. A half-giant soldier might see a dwarven cleric of the sun and be impressed by her unflappable devotions. He may try shaving himself and praying to the sun until he finds he cannot stare at the sun without hurting his eyes and cannot make fire appear.

This can make role-playing a half-giant a challenge.

## HALF-GIANT NAMES

Slaves are given human names while free half-giants will take names based off the adopted culture. See other races for name suggestions.

## HALF-GIANT TRAITS

Half-giants inherit a solid balance of their bestial and human parents.

**Ability Score Increase.** You have 4 points to split between your Strength and Constitution scores. Your Strength score may reach a maximum of 22 instead of 20. Your Intelligence and Wisdom scores are decreased by 2 each.

**Age.** Half-giants mature around 24 years of age and can live up to 220 years.

**Alignment.** Your alignment may fluctuate as described in *Alignment on a Whim*. You begin with one fixed alignment axis (good-neutral-evil or lawful-neutral-chaotic) that will never change. The other axis may change depending on who you are emulating. Subject to DM approval, when imitating a charismatic leader, select an appropriate Ideal or Flaw and replace your current one. If the new Ideal is tied to a non-fixed axis of your alignment, change that aspect of your alignment.

**Size.** A typical half-giant stands 10 to 12 feet tall and weighs 1,600 pounds. You occupy a 10-foot by 10-foot space and have a 5 foot reach. Your size is Large.

**Speed.** Your base walking speed is 35 feet.

**Giant Body.** You cannot wear ordinary gear sized for smaller creatures such as boots, gloves, and rings. All clothing, armor, meals, and lodging cost double for you.

**Giant Appetite.** You require double the daily amount of food and water as a human.

**Large Hands.** You may use versatile weapons in one hand as if wielded with both hands.

**Colossal Endurance.** Your immense body mass allows you to occasionally shrug off injury. When you take damage, you can use your reaction to reduce that damage by your Constitution score. After using this trait, you cannot use it again until you finish a short or long rest.

**Giant's Toughness.** You gain +3 hit points per level.

**Languages.** You can speak Common. Your voice is always low, making it difficult for most to hear and understand more than a rumble.

## ROLEPLAYING A HALF-GIANT

Always remember how much bigger and heavier you are than everyone else. Take advantage of your height in combat, but remember the disadvantages. Between your size and your lesser wits (even if you are a relatively intelligent half-giant people will assume you to be dull), you find yourself an object of comic relief. You are used to being teased and will endure more witty remarks than most people, but when you have been pushed too far your personality can suddenly shift, and you can unleash astonishing violence on your tormentors and any who stand in your way. Less frequently, these shifts can happen to you without provocation — you just wake up with a different ethos and altered disposition.

Remember you are influenced by powerful personalities, and can shift your personality and ethics. You tend to imitate the tactics, clothes and demeanor of your “little master.”

## SIZE AND MAGIC ITEMS

Magical gear adjusts for the size of the wearer from Small to Large. A half-giant or halfling can wear the same pair of boots if magical, but ordinary kank leather boots sized for a human simply won't fit. For creatures with an alien physique, such as a thri-kreen, certain items like boots will never work, magical or not.

# HALFLING



*“Be wary of the forest ridge. The halflings who live there would as soon eat you alive as look at you. Chances are you won’t even notice them until you’ve become the main course.”*  
—Mo’rune, half-Elven ranger

Halflings are masters of the jungles of the Ringing Mountains. They are small, quick and agile creatures steeped in an ancient and rich culture that goes back far into Athas’ past. Although they are not common in the Tablelands, some halflings leave their homes in the forests to adventure under the dark sun. While omnivores, halflings prefer raw flesh and let no meat go to waste, including that of enemies, humans, and other sentient creatures.

Halflings have difficulty understanding others’ customs or points of view, but curiosity helps some halflings overcome their xenophobia. Little concerned with material wealth, halflings are more concerned with how their actions will affect other halflings.

## SMALL AND SAVAGE

Halflings are small creatures, standing only about 3 1/2 feet tall and weighing 50 to 60 pounds. Rarely affected by age, halfling faces are often mistaken for the faces of human children, even the elderly among them. They dress in loincloths, sometimes with a shirt or vest, and paint their skins with bright reds and greens. Forest halflings rarely tend to their hair, and some let it grow to great lengths, though it can be unkempt and dirty.

## ANCIENT CULTURE

Halfling culture dominates their relations with others and predates human civilization. Rarely will they ever draw the blood of another halfling. Halflings of different tribes share a tradition of song, art and poetry, which serves as a basis of communication. Creatures that do not know these cultural expressions are often at a loss to understand a halfling’s expressions, analogies and allusions to well-known tales. Halflings can easily become frustrated with such “uncultured” creatures lose patience with outsider intolerance of their ways, such as eating other humanoids. They abhor slavery and most halflings will starve themselves rather than accept slavery.

## FEAR OF OUTSIDERS

Halflings have no desire to see their home become like the rest of Athas. They are fierce and merciless in its defense, uncaring about the struggles and excuses of other races. Halflings’ bond with nature extends into most aspects of their culture. A shaman or witch doctor, who also acts as a spiritual leader, often rules their clans. This leader is obeyed without question. Halfling fighters willingly sacrifice themselves to obey their leader, leaving outsiders to perceive them as fanatics when halflings dearly love and enjoy life.

Exploring the Tablelands gives curious halflings the opportunity to learn other customs. Although they may at first have difficulty in understanding the numerous practices of the races of the Tablelands, their natural curiosity enables them to learn and interact with others. Other halflings may be criminals, renegades or other tribal outcasts, venturing into the Tablelands to escape persecution by their kin. Most tribes reject arcane magic, but a few have preserver chieftains who would sacrifice an entire tribe to keep one defiler out.

## HALFLING NAMES

Halflings have only one name assigned at birth.

**Male Names:** Basha, Cerk, Derlan, Drassu, Entrok, Kakzim, Lokee, Nok, Pauk, Plool, Sala, Tanuka, Ukos, Zol.

**Female Names:** Alansa, Anezka, Dokala, Grelzen, Horga, Jikx, Joura, Nasaha, Vensa.

## HALFLING TRAITS

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Halfling traits reflect their savage nature.

**Ability Score Increase.** Your Dexterity score increases by 2 and your Wisdom score by 1.

**Age.** Halflings reach adulthood at the same rate as humans and live to be about 120 years old.

**Alignment.** Halflings tend towards law and evil. Uncomfortable with change, halflings tend to rely on intangible constants, such as racial identity, family, clan ties and personal honor. Halflings generally have little respect for the laws of the big people.

**Size.** Halflings average around 3 ½ feet tall and 50 to 60 pounds. Your size is Small.

**Speed.** Your base walking speed is 25 feet.

**Halfling Nimbleness.** You can move through the space of any creature that is of larger size than yours.

**Savage Attacks.** When you score a critical hit with a melee attack, you can roll one of the weapon's damage dice one additional time and add it to the extra damage of the critical hit.

**Fury of the Small.** When you damage a creature at least one size larger than you with an attack or spell, you can cause the attack to add extra damage equal to your level. Once you use this trait, you cannot use it again until you finish a short or long rest.

**Languages.** You can speak Halfling and Common. Your culture uses drawings and tales rather than a written language. Halflings rarely teach others their language, but some individuals of the Tablelands have learned the wild speech. Halflings found in the Tablelands learn Common to survive, but it is generally unknown past the Ringing Mountains.

## ROLEPLAYING A HALFLING

Remember to consistently take your height into account. Role-play the halfling culture described above: eating opponents, treating fellow halflings with trust and kindness, suspicion of big people, and general lack of interest in money. Conquest and plundering have no place in your society; rather the most important value is the ability of the inner self as it harmonizes with the environment. You should be sickened by the landscape of the Tablelands and desperately want to avoid any risk that devastation ever spreading to your homelands in the Forest Ridge. You will learn about other cultures, but you should firmly believe halfling culture to be innately superior to all others. However, you don't try to change other's cultures, no more than you would try to convince a tembo to change its diet. While omnivorous, you vastly prefer meat, and everything is a source of food. You should presume most other races will eat anything, including halflings, if they are hungry enough, and this makes it hard to trust them.

# HUMAN



*“Humans are fools and hopelessly naïve as well. They outnumber us; they are everywhere, and yet they have no more sense of their strength than a rat. Let us hope that the Datto stay that way.”* —Dukkoti Nightrunner, elven warrior

Humans are the dominant culture in the explored parts of Athas, known for their versatility and adaptability. Most tend to be ambitious and individualistic; even the tyranny of sorcerer kings hasn't stamped out this diversity. Other races often don't know what to expect when meeting a human for the first time because predicting their behavior based on cultural norms is difficult. “It's human nature” is a common saying when humans appear to take action for no apparent reason.

Humans tend to get along well with races they come in contact with (most often dwarves and muls). Half-giants and thri-kreen are seen as dangerous monsters. Elves and half-elves are considered flighty and untrustworthy. Halflings are exotics. Humans often serve as a go-between when one race deals with another.

## A BROAD SPECTRUM

Men average 6 feet tall and 200 pounds while women range around 5 ½ feet tall and 140 pounds. They tend to dark-skin and bronzed tones with darker hair, though all colors exist with nobility tending to the greatest variety. Humans are prone to mutations, and it is not uncommon to find exaggerated features, webbed feet, or even extra digits on hands and feet.

## MUTATIONS

Centuries of abusive magic have taken their toll on the human body. Some humans have marked alterations to their appearance, such as a bizarre symmetry, exaggerated facial feature, pointed ears, no facial hair, unusual skin coloration like copper or grey, etc. Humans are familiar and generally unsurprised by such differences. Ultimately, these give no benefits or hindrances in gameplay and are for flavor.

## HUMAN NAMES

Human names vary by region. For most a single name suffices. A noble will have a family surname but often revert to use of one name. Freeman occasionally refer to their occupations to avoid being taken for laborers or slaves, such as “Barek the Weaver.”

**Tyr/Urik Male Names:** Agis, Amilanu, Baal, Banoc, Duzi, Ea, Gulkishar, Igigi, Markduk, Rim-Sin, Sargon, Silani, Tithian, Utuaa, Zu

**Tyr/Urik Female Names:** Amata, Bau, Belili, Damkina, Gula, Ishtar, Kishar, Mummu, Mylitta, Neeva, Ninsunu, Rubati, Shala, Zakiti.

## HUMAN TRAITS

Humans are hard to generalize.

**Ability Score Increase.** Your ability scores all increase by 1.

**Age.** Humans tend to reach adulthood in their late teens and can live to around 80 years.

**Alignment.** Humans tend to no particular alignment. The best and worst are found among them.

**Size.** Men average 6 feet tall and 200 pounds while women range around 5 ½ feet tall and 140 pounds. Your size is Medium.

**Speed.** Your base walking speed is 30 feet.

**Languages.** Common and one other language of your choice.

## HUMAN VARIANT

Instead of increasing all ability scores, you may increase two different ability scores by 1, gain proficiency in a skill, and gain one feat.

# MUL



*“See, the trick is to break their will. Not too much, mind you. Nobody wants to watch a docile gladiator, and muls are too expensive to waste as labor slaves. But, you don’t want them trying to escape every other day. Would you like to tell the arena crowd that their favorite champion will not be appearing in today’s match because he died trying to escape your pens?” —Gaal, Urikite arena trainer*

Born from the unlikely parentage of dwarves and humans, a mul (pronounced “mull”, from the dwarven word “*mulzhennedar*” which means “*strength*”; “mule” is used as a derogatory pronunciation) combines the height and adaptable nature of humans with the musculature and resilience of dwarves. Muls enjoy traits that are uniquely their own, such as their robust metabolism and almost inexhaustible capacity for work. The hybrid has disadvantages in a few areas as well: sterility, and the social repercussions of being created for a life of slavery. Humans and dwarves are not typically attracted to each other. The only reason that muls are so common in the Tablelands is because of their value as laborers and gladiators: slave-sellers force-breed humans and dwarves for profit.

While mul-breeding practices are exorbitantly lucrative, they are often lethal to both the mother and the baby. Conception is difficult and impractical, often taking months to achieve. Even once conceived, the mul takes a full twelve months to carry to term; fatalities during this period are high. As likely as not, anxious overseers cut muls from the dying bodies of their mothers.

## STRENGTH AND ENDURANCE

Second only to the half-giant, the mul is the strongest of the common humanoid races of the tablelands. Muls grow as high as seven feet, weighing upwards of 250 pounds, but carry almost no fat at all on their broad muscular frames. Universal mul characteristics include angular, almost protrusive eye ridges, and ears that point sharply backwards against the temples. Most muls have dark copper-colored skin and hairless bodies. They are always sterile.

## BRED TO SLAVERY

Muls are bred to fight or labor. Most mul laborers master the conventions of slave life, figuring out through painful experience who can be trusted and who cannot. Muls learn from their mistakes in the slave pits to a greater extent than other races not because they are cleverer, but because unlike slaves of other races they tend to survive their mistakes, while other slave races are less expensive and therefore disposable. Only the most foolish and disobedient mul would be killed. Most masters will sell a problem mul slave rather than kill him. Their mastery of the rules of slave life and their boundless capacity for hard work allows them to gain favor with their masters and reputation among their fellow slaves.

## LIFE OF A SLAVE

All gladiators who perform well in the arenas receive some degree of pampered treatment, but muls receive more pampering than others. Some mul gladiators even come to see slavery as an acceptable part of their lives, being given good food, good housing, and mates.

However, those that acquire a taste of freedom will fight for it. Stoic and dull to pain, muls are not easily intimidated by the lash. Masters are loath to slay or maim a mul who tries repeatedly to escape, although those who help the mul’s escape will be tormented in order to punish the mul without damaging valuable property. Once a mul escapes or earns his freedom, slavery remains a dominant part of his life. Most muls are heavily marked with tattoos that mark his ownership, history, capabilities and disciplinary measures. Even untattooed muls are marked as a potential windfall for slavers: it is clearly cheaper to “retrieve” a mul who slavers can claim had run away, than to start from scratch in the breeding pits.

## MUL NAMES

Muls are given names, and for gladiators, Draji names with harsh tones are favored to strike fear. Lacking families, a mul might use a place for a surname, such as “Mersten of Nibenay.”

**Male Names:** Aram, Athalak, Borthomar, Bost, Darok, Darus, Durn, Eben, Erekar, Gard, Harask, Marok, Morg, Rikard, Sanozar, Tomak, Uskan, Zedath, Zorus.

**Female Names:** Aisa, Aivel, Brithis, Callia, Demosis, Elina, Faivel, Himithis, Laivi, Mersten, Narisel, Raina, Reshel, Saditha, Tirshel, Uisel, Zerima.

## MUL TRAITS

The mul is bred for physical attributes but can inherit a parent's quick mind. A mul cannot be an arcane caster, having inherited their dwarven heritage.

**Ability Score Increase.** Your Strength score increases by 2 and your Constitution and Wisdom by 1.

**Age.** A mul ages like humans, tending to reach adulthood a year or two year earlier and given their lot in life rarely reach the age of 85.

**Alignment.** Muls tend towards neutrality with respect to good and evil, but run the gamut with respect to law or chaos. Many lawful muls adapt well to the indignities of slavery, playing the game for the comforts that they can win as valued slaves. A few ambitious lawful muls use the respect won from their fellow slaves to organize rebellions and strike out for freedom. Chaotic muls, on the other hand, push their luck and their value as slaves to the breaking point, defying authority, holding little fear for the lash.

**Size.** A typical mul is 7 feet tall and weighs over 250 pounds. Your size is Medium.

**Speed.** Your base walking speed is 30 feet.

**Relentless Endurance.** When you are reduced to 0 hit points but not killed outright, you can drop to 1 hit point instead. Once you use that trait, you can't use it again until you finish a long rest.

**Inexhaustible.** You have advantage on Forced March saves and all saves to resist non-magical exhaustion. If you spend 1 minute focusing yourself, you can remove one level of non-magical exhaustion. Once you use this trait, you can't use it again until you finish a long rest.

**Languages.** You can speak Common plus a language of your choice.

## ROLEPLAYING A MUL

Born to the slave pens, you never knew love or affection; the taskmaster's whip took the place of loving parents. As far as you have seen, all of life's problems that can be solved are solved by sheer brute force. You know to bow to force when you see it, especially the veiled force of wealth, power and privilege. The noble and templar may not look strong, but they can kill a man with a word. You tend towards gruffness. In the slave pits, you knew some muls that never sought friends or companionship, but lived in bitter, isolated servitude. You knew other muls who found friendship in an arena partner or co-worker. You are capable of affection, trust and friendship, but camaraderie is easier for you to understand and express – warriors slap each other on the shoulder after a victory, or give their lives for each other in battle. You don't think of that sort of event as “friendship” – it just happens.

Muls dislike what they fear, and they fear wizards. They resent that a wizard's power comes from without, with no seeming effort on the wizard's part, while the mul's power is born of pain and labor. You may never have been exposed to psionic study or clerical ways, but there is nothing preventing you from learning.

# THRI-KREEN



Race 1: Thri-Kreen

Boyd Set

*“This one does not speak with the quivering soft shells that lay about all night. This one might eat you, but never speak.”*  
—Tu’tochuk

Thri-kreen ("kreen" for short) are the strangest of the intelligent races of the Tablelands. These insectoid beings born from eggs possess a mindset very different from any humanoid being encountered. They roam the wastes in packs, hunting for food day and night, since they require no sleep. Thri-kreen are quick and agile and make fearsome fighters, feared throughout the wastes. They refer to thri-kreen who have become city dwellers as "tohr-kreen," meaning "settled person," whereas thri-kreen means "wanderer-person."

## INSECT BODY

Mature Thri-kreen stand about 7 feet tall, with a rough body length of 11 feet. Their four arms end in claws; their two legs are extremely powerful, capable of incredible leaps. However, kreen are unable to jump backwards. Their body is covered with a sandy-yellow chitin, a tough exoskeleton that grants the Thri-kreen protection from blows. Their head is topped with two antennae, and their two eyes are compound and multifaceted. The kreen mouth consists of small pincers. Male and female Thri-kreen are physically indistinguishable. Thri-kreen usually do not wear clothing, but wear some sort of harness to carry weapons and food.

Many wear leg or armbands, or bracelets. Some attach rings on different places on their chitin, though this requires careful work by a skilled artisan. While most thri-kreen appear identical to non-kreen, their nuances of exoskeleton development render them quite unique in their view. Pheromones release modifies their eye coloration: light for pleasant feelings and dark for distress. They are carnivores and become sick if eating plants, the only exception being a handful of common spices and fruit-based potions.

## NO SLEEP REQUIRED

Since Thri-kreen do not require sleep, they have difficulty understanding this state of "laziness" in others. Other behaviors of humanoids seem unnecessarily complex. A keen's life is simple: hunt prey. Kreen live for the hunt, and own only what they can carry. Their knowledge is largely passed by an instinctual racial memory shared with the clutch. At birth, they already know what animals make the best prey and ways to catch them.

## A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE

The pack mentality dominates a keen's relation with others. Kreen hunt in small groups and will move to other areas rather than depopulate an area of prey. A kreen that joins a group of humanoids will often try to establish dominance in the group. This can be disconcerting to those unaware of the keen's behavior, since establishing dominance usually means making threatening gestures. Once the matter is settled, they will abide by the outcome. Thri-kreen view humanoids as possible sources of food but rarely hunt them as humanoids are not simple prey. Many kreen have a particularly fond taste for elves; as such, meetings between these two races are often tense. However, once part of a clutch, Thri-kreen will never turn on their humanoid friends, even in the worst of situations.

Kreen have a severe fear of any water smaller than a puddle as they cannot swim or float. They have no idea how to ride another creature and find the concept alien and nonsensical.

## RACIAL MEMORY

Contrary to the variety of humans, thri-kreen are largely predisposed to tasks due to their racial memory. They have no wizards; their lack of natural sleep and need to hunt makes it impractical, but kreen take to psionics as a way of life and the hunt. They revere the elements and ancestral memory causes them to revere the Great One, a legendary leader from many clutches past.

## THRI-KREEN NAMES

The Kreen language is very different from those of the other intelligent races. They have no lips or tongues, and so cannot make the same sounds humanoids make. Kreen language is made up of clicks, pops, or grinding noises. They do not distinguish male and female names.

**Names:** Cha'ka, Chuka-tet, Drasna, Drik-chkit, Hakka, Ka'cha, Ka'tho, Klik-chaka'da, Lakta-cho, Qhak'cha, Qhik-ik-cha, Sa'Relka, T'Chai, Tak-tha.

## THRI-KREEN TRAITS

Kreen physiology gives it several natural advantages that compensate for not being able to use items used by other races.

**Ability Score Increase.** Your Dexterity score increases by 2, and your Wisdom score increases by 1.

**Age.** A thri-kreen is born from an egg and becomes fully mature at 6 years. They demonstrate no effect of aging until they reach the end of their life cycle around 30 years. Sensing their death, such thri-kreen go on a final hunt.

**Alignment.** Most Thri-kreen are chaotic, acting in whatever fashion benefits the pack mentality, and this rarely leads them to philosophies of good and evil.

**Size.** A typical thri-kreen is 7 feet tall, 11 feet long, and weighs 450 pounds. Unlike other races, variation in height and weight is nominal and a few inches or pounds at most. You occupy a 10 foot by 10 foot space and have 5 foot reach. Your size is Large.

**Speed.** Your base walking speed is 40 feet.

**Carapace.** Your chitinous plate provide a natural armor class of 12 + Dexterity modifier. You cannot wear armor but you may carry a shield.

**Thri-kreen Physiology.** You only require 1 gallon of water per week. You cannot swim. You cannot wear gloves, boots, helms, suits of armor, or other items worn by humanoids except jewelry and rings.

**Sleepless.** You require no sleep and are immune to *sleep* effects. You need only 4 hours of light activity to gain the benefits of a long rest. You are not required to make saves for a Forced March.

**Thri-kreen Weapon Training.** You are proficient with the gythka, chatkcha, and your claws and bite.

**Claws.** Your claws can be used to make a single attack for 1d4 + Strength modifier slashing damage. At 5th level, this increases to 2d4.

**Bite.** Your bite can be used to make an attack for 1d4 + Strength modifier piercing damage. At 5th level, you add thri-kreen venom to your bite. A target must make a Constitution save or be poisoned for 1 minute; if failed by 5 or more, the target is paralyzed for the duration. The target repeats the save at the beginning of its turn to end the effect. The DC is 8 + proficiency bonus + Constitution modifier.

**Venom Immunity.** You are immune to thri-kreen venom.

**Additional Arms.** You have two ancillary arms below your main ones. Each of these weaker arms can hold items but not effectively wield weapons or shields. You may use your extra arms to stow or retrieve one item each turn without using an action and may freely swap items between your arms without using an action.

**Leap.** At 3rd level, your legs have grown powerful enough to jump 50 feet forward or 20 straight up, without a running start. You cannot jump backwards.

**Languages.** You can speak Thri-Kreen and Common. Thri-Kreen is a language composed of clicks and whirring, antennae movements, and pheromone emissions that non-kreen find too difficult to interpret and impossible to duplicate. When you speak other languages, you use a high-pitched voice.

## ROLEPLAYING A THRI-KREEN

You tend to rely on your natural attacks and special kreen weapons. Everything you kill is a potential dinner. You have a strong need for a party leader – obedience to this leader in the party is important to you. If you seem to be the most powerful and capable, then you will assume leadership; if someone challenges your authority then you will wish to test whether they are in fact stronger than you. It is not a question of vanity; you won't want to fight to the death, but merely to ascertain who is worthy to lead the party. You do not have the focus of a dwarf to complete a project, but you would give your life to protect your companions. If you did not trust and honor them as your own family, then you would not travel with them and work together with them. You do not understand the concept of sleep. It disturbs you that your *dra* (sentient meat creatures like humans) companions lie unconscious for a third of their lifetimes. Spend your rest periods watching them in this state. You own only what you can carry, caring little for money or other items that other races consider as treasure. Your philosophy of ownership sometimes leads you into conflict with presumptuous *dra* who think they can own buildings, land, and even whole herds of carru!

# PART 3

## Character Classes

### BARBARIAN

The main sources of barbarians are slave tribes and hunter-gatherer cultures from beyond the Tablelands. Life among slave tribes is often brutal and short. A barbarian might be a sole survivor of a raid or monster attack. She might be an exile or returned to her tribe to find it gone. Barbarian halfling tribes that draw power from the spirits can be found in the forest ridge, and no matter their location, all share a common manifestation of fury. For some, it comes from within, amplified by horrific life events, and for others, it may come from unity with ancient spirits, contacted through rituals whose ways are documented only in oral tradition, to be lost if the tribe is ever lost.

Use the default rules for barbarians unless a change is indicated below.

#### CHANGES

##### Path of the Totem.

- Replace Bear with *Klar*, a massive Kodiak bear with chitinous plate on the back, a stub tail that helps it balance when standing, and covered in thick sandy fur. It is one of the most feared predators in the land.
- Replace Eagle with *Kes-trekel*, a deadly carrion bird with black plumage and crimson red head whose croak is considered a harbinger of death.
- Replace Wolf with *Dagorran*, a fearsome frog-like reptilian pack hunter able to track prey psionically for days or week without relenting.

##### Path of the Storm Herald (Xanathar)

- No changes to Desert.
- Replace "Sea" with "Air." At 6th, replace breathe underwater and swim features with "you take half damage from falling." At 14th, replace "struck with wave" with "struck by a powerful gust of wind."
- Replace "Tundra" with "Mountains." At 3rd level, change "icy spirits" to "earthen spirits." At 6th, replace resistance to cold with force. Replace immunity to extreme cold with "gain advantage against effects that would knock you prone." Replace make ice with "as an action, you can touch sand or silt and turn a 5 foot square of it into a solid, non-difficult terrain that can support any amount of weight for 1 minute. At 14th, replace "magical frost" with "magical stone."

##### Path of the Zealot (Xanathar)

- At 3rd level, choose to draw power from the Black, a nether realm (necrotic), or a clerical element (radiant). Those who draw from the Black cannot have a good alignment. When choosing an element, your back-story should include how the element came to accept you. See the **Cleric, Elemental Pact** for a description of how a character submits herself to the elements.

#### PROHIBITED CLASSES

The Paladin and Sorcerer do not exist as player classes in Dark Sun. Other classes have been modified or clarified as to what is permitted for a Dark Sun setting. One new class, the Psion, has been added. The Paladin was removed in the original AD&D setting as this is not a world of gods and divine warriors. The sorcerer was not a class in AD&D, and it is best suited for the NPC sorcerer kings whose powers derive from sources unknown and are unique to the setting.

# BARD

The minstrels of Athas are entertainers to the wealthy and powerful elite of the city-states. Singers, acrobats, poets, dancers, and storytellers, minstrels tour the cities of Athas in troupes or individually, making a living with their wits and talents. Among them, hiding in plain sight, are an offshoot mutation of wizards

who have, over time, come to utilize magic without spellbooks, augmented by music. To survive and avoid the fate of most wizards, they take their natural affinity to music and have mixed with the minstrel culture.

By tradition all but the poorest or most suspicious of hosts are proud to open their doors to traveling performers. Hosting a minstrel or sponsoring a troupe's performance reflects well on the host, and most Athasians are eager to forget their troubles with a few hours of song and dance. Nobles often send troupes of minstrels to one another as gifts; it is seen as a great insult to refuse such a gift, even when all involved know that minstrels are often spies or assassins.

Fortunate minstrels are highly paid companions to nobility, trusted advisors or agents who enjoy the most intimate confidences of their patrons. Minstrels are often retained by noble houses to tutor young nobles or teach them about the world. They might serve as bodyguards and fighting instructors at the same time. Minstrels who belong to a troupe lack the comfort and trust bestowed on a kept minstrel, but they enjoy the freedom to travel and the aid of a network of informants and allies. The poorest and most humble minstrels are simple wandering storytellers or jugglers who perform for their supper from night to night.

Many minstrels have a dark side they conceal beneath their charm and talent. Those with ambition and ruthlessness find opportunities in the employ of the elite classes. Minstrels often lead double lives as blackmailers, thieves, spies, or assassins; a minstrel's visit or a troupe's performance might conceal a mission of espionage or murder. They are renowned as masters of poison, concealed weapons, and subtle trickery. Even the humblest wandering minstrel with threadbare cloak and battered lyre might be more than he or she seems there's no better spy than someone who seems harmless and is welcome wherever he or she goes.

The most dangerous of these - spellcasting bards - are employed in stables by sorcerer kings and employed ruthlessly against their most dangerous and well-protected foes.

Use the default rules for bards unless a change is indicated below.

## CLASS CHANGES

**Instruments of Athas:** Common instruments and their prices if not listed in the PHB are: lap harp (30cp, 6lbs.), lyre, lute, reed pipe (2cp, 1 lb.), horn trumpet (3cp, 2 lbs.), and drum. Unless one has access to extravagant resources, these have no metal components.

**Music of Athas.** Slower, haunting voices punctuated with the pluck of stringed instruments are the most popular kind. For an example, see [Stef Conner's the Flood](#).

**Defiling.** Bards are subject to the rules of defiling contained in the wizard section.

**College of Glamour (Xanathar).** Does not exist.

### BARD AND "BARD"

The people of Athas widely accept that even the most shabbily dressed troubadour might be an undercover spy or assassin. The term "bard" is used interchangeably for any performer, whether they have arcane talent or not, and could include a charming rogue assassin who can play the lyre. Most civilized creatures would, however, kill a bard on sight if they learned the bard had arcane talent. Those with it take great measure to hide their powers. If a sorcerer king learns of the existence of a caster-bard in his city, he will take great steps to ensure the bard is destroyed.

# CLERIC

Unlike most D&D campaigns, Dark Sun has no true gods. Instead, clerics draw their power from one of the elemental planes. Some treat their element with obeisance akin to worship while others are more mercenary, describing their relationship in terms of power exchanged for fealty. An elemental cleric must take Air, Earth, Fire, or Water as her domain. Elemental clerics tend to be loners, preaching the power of the elements from the wilderness or street corner. There isn't an organized hierarchy nor grand temples or cathedrals. Elemental clerics can be of any alignment, arriving at the same goal of advancing their element by different paths. They all share one common universal trait: all distrust undead and wizards, recognizing both as a severe threat to a dying planet.

## ELEMENTAL PACT

Not everyone who wants to become a cleric will. To make a pact with the elemental powers, a would-be-cleric must put herself completely at the mercy of her chosen element. This means acts like throwing herself off a tall cliff (air), being buried alive (earth), burning at the stake (fire), or falling down a well (water). Those who survive the experience – through direct intervention of the elemental power – become elemental clerics. Many fail to capture the attention of the elements or are not truly devoted to the task, and they become just one more casualty of the harsh world of Athas.

Use the default rules for clerics unless a change is indicated below.

## CLASS CHANGES

**New Domains.** The traditional domains are replaced with **Air** (also known as storm), **Earth** (sand), **Fire** (sun) and **Water** (rain).

**Holy Symbol.** Traditional symbols are replaced with a physical embodiment of your element. Earth clerics commonly use small chunks of granite, quartz, or precious metal, and those with resources may mount it in a staff or medallion. A water cleric likely has a vial of pure water worn around the neck, though a waterskin of untainted water could suffice. Fire clerics prefer obsidian stone, often carved into the shape of flames. Air clerics are the most fortunate, not tied by material possessions, and may use a gentle puff of their own breath as a holy symbol.

**Bonus Language.** You can speak the Primordial language of your element at 1st level.

**Spell changes:** *Create or Destroy Water* affects and produces only 1 gallon per casting and at each higher spell slot. Only Water clerics can learn this spell. The spell *Create Food and Water* does not exist.

## AIR CLERICS

The wind and storm represent the freedom, erratic nature, and raw strength of air as it stirs other elements to action. You rarely stay in one place and find it difficult stay focused to causes for long. You worship by exposing yourself to the winds, reveling in its random gusts, and most have a flushed, at times wind burnt appearance as a result. Your kind usually has a preference for ranged weapons, trusting in the air to guide them.

Air can be destructive and powerful, but it also can distract and obscure. Choose either the **Tempest** or **Trickery** domain from the PHB, adjusted as follows:

**Air Weapon Proficiencies:** At 1st level you gain proficiency with all ammunition weapons. This replaces the Tempest bonus proficiency and is added to the Trickster domain.

### Tempest (fury of the storm) Domain Spells

Cleric Level	Spells
1st	<i>feather fall, thunderwave</i>
3rd	<i>gust of wind, shatter</i>
5th	<i>call lightning, fly</i>
7th	<i>conjure minor elementals (air), freedom of movement</i>
9th	<i>conjure elemental (air), destructive wave</i>

### Trickster (the elusive wind) Domain Spells

Cleric Level	Spells
1st	<i>disguise self, unseen servant</i>
3rd	<i>mirror image, silence</i>
5th	<i>blink, dispel magic</i>
7th	<i>conjure minor elementals (air), dimension door</i>
9th	<i>conjure elemental (air), mislead</i>

**Trickster Divine Strike:** replace poison damage with lightning damage.

## EARTH CLERICS

The earth represents the enduring cycle of life, immovable and resilient, and is especially opposed to undeath. You have a utilitarian outlook on life. The death of a comrade, while tragic, is simply one stage in an endless cycle of creation and annihilation. You worship by immersing yourself in the sands or soil and are somewhat offended by the thought of "cleaning" yourself from your holy element.

All things return to the earth and all elements are dependent on the earth. This gives Earth clerics diversity in their selection of powers. Choose from the **War**, **Nature**, or **Grave (Xanathar)** domains, adjusted as follows:

### War (the slow anger) Domain Spells

Cleric Level	Spells
1st	<i>shield of faith, thunderous smite</i>
3rd	<i>magic weapon, spiritual weapon</i>
5th	<i>elemental weapon (acid or thunder), spirit guardians</i>
7th	<i>conjure minor elementals (earth), stonewall</i>
9th	<i>conjure elemental (earth), wall of stone</i>

**Channel Divinity:** Replace *Guided Strike* with "Rock Solid." You can use your reaction when being hit to gain resistance to all damage from that hit except psychic damage, and you are immune to effects from that hit that would knock you prone or shove you. At 6th level, rename *War God's Blessing* to "Earth Fury."

### Nature (the cycle of creation) Domain Spells

Cleric Level	Spells
1st	<i>animal friendship, speak with animals</i>
3rd	<i>barkskin, spike growth</i>
5th	<i>plant growth, meld into stone</i>
7th	<i>conjure minor elementals (air), grasping vine</i>
9th	<i>conjure elemental (earth), insect plague</i>

**Replace Master of Nature** with "Avatar of Earth." At 17th level, you gain resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from non-magical sources.

### Grave (the cycle of annihilation) Domain Spells

Cleric Level	Spells
1st	<i>bane, false life</i>
3rd	<i>gentle repose, ray of enfeeblement</i>
5th	<i>revivify, vampiric touch</i>
7th	<i>conjure minor elementals (earth), death ward</i>
9th	<i>antilife shell, conjure elemental (earth)</i>

## FIRE CLERICS

Fire is the feared domain of destructive power, rarely seen as nurturing and life-giving. Most fire clerics are aggressive, impulsive, and destructive like their element, and they are seen as wandering madmen who squander their powers and randomly destroy precious organic material. Yet, fire wipes away the old so the land can grow back stronger, whereas defilers sterilize the earth for millennia. They sometimes jest "to destroy the world is to destroy the defilers," and no one is quite sure if they are truly joking. Sun clerics are a variant who focus on an even balance of its destructive and life-giving aspect and are considered more "sane."

Fire is a destroyer and creator. Choose from the **Light (sun)** or **Forge (Xanathar)** domains, adjusted as follows:

### Light (the searing force) Domain Spells

Cleric Level	Spells
1st	<i>burning hands, hellish rebuke</i>
3rd	<i>flaming sphere, scorching ray</i>
5th	<i>daylight, fireball</i>
7th	<i>conjure minor elementals (fire), wall of fire</i>
9th	<i>conjure elemental (fire), flame strike</i>

**Bonus Cantrip.** Replace *light* with *produce flame*.

### Forge (the fire that creates) Domain Spells

Cleric Level	Spells
1st	<i>continual flame, searing smite</i>
3rd	<i>heat metal, magic weapon</i>
5th	<i>elemental weapon (fire), protection from energy</i>
7th	<i>conjure minor elementals (fire), wall of fire</i>
9th	<i>conjure elemental (fire), creation</i>

**Channel Divinity.** Replace *Artisan's Blessing* with "Fiery Defense." At 2nd level, as an action, you channel fiery energy into an ally that you can see within 30 feet of you. The first time that ally is hit by an attack within the next minute, the attacker takes fire damage equal to 2d10 + your cleric level.

## WATER CLERICS

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Water is the rarest of domains, life-giving and life-taking, with a severe and unforgiving animosity to any who would defile a well or plants. Clerics of water instinctively sense a duty to perform an age-old function of being healer and bringer of life, and a sadness to the moisture that has been lost by defilement. Some eventually go insane, consumed by the thirst of this land and an inability to quench it. You worship by finding the dew of the morning and encouraging it, or keeping the lifeblood from needlessly spilling onto barren land (if it falls on fertile land, that is another matter). Because water can be found in all living things, you have access to powers that can restore, or manipulate, beings.

Water nourishes and is a part of all beings. Choose from the **Life** or **Knowledge** domains, adjusted as follows:

**Gift of Life.** You require half the daily requirement of water.

### Life (the healing waters) Domain Spells

Cleric Level	Spells
1st	<i>create or destroy water (modified), cure wounds</i>
3rd	<i>lesser restoration, spiritual weapon</i>
5th	<i>beacon of hope, revivify</i>
7th	<i>conjure minor elementals (water), death ward</i>
9th	<i>conjure elemental (water), mass cure wounds</i>

**Divine Strike.** Replace radiant damage with cold damage.

### Knowledge (the water within) Domain Spells

Cleric Level	Spells
1st	<i>command, create or destroy water (modified)</i>
3rd	<i>augury, suggestion</i>
5th	<i>nondetection, speak with dead</i>
7th	<i>conjure minor elementals (water), confusion</i>
9th	<i>conjure elemental (water), scrying</i>

**Channel Divinity.** Modify *Knowledge of the Ages*. You may also gain proficiency with a weapon or armor that you touch.

**Visions of the Past.** Modify: object reading also functions as an *identify* spell.

# DRUID

**D**ruids are the only force truly dedicated to opposing sorcerer kings, templars, and defilers, forming revolutionary cells in cities and major shrines in the wilderness. Some druids patrol and protect a particular swath of land, and others travel to heal the wounds of the land and eliminate those who would harm it. As such, druids tend to be a tight knit community, and a druid can expect to find aid from other druids.

Each druid is linked to a particular lifegiving feature or aspect of Athas, called a *Guarded Land*, such as a specific pooled oasis or stretch of verdant belt. While some druids may roam, they may find sanctuary in their Guarded Land. Druids, like nature itself, are neutral and see the balance of all things, and when that balance is tilted, they have little reservation about the means necessary to restore harmony. They have an intense hatred of defilers and at times are in congruence with clerics, but because clerics advance one element rather than a true balance of all things, the spirits of the land cannot speak to them. Because of the druidic devotion to balance, they have been hunted to near extinction by sorcerer kings and queens, who see the land as theirs to do with as they see fit. Consequently, druids must keep a low profile. To reveal their powers is to bring down the wrath of the sorcerer king or queen and their entire compliment of templars.

Use the default rules for druids unless a change is indicated below.

## GUARDED LAND

Choose one specific geographic feature to be your Guarded Land. This may be a particular stretch of desert, an oasis, a cave, a belt of scrub grass, and so on. While you are within the boundaries of your Guarded Land, you are under a constant *pass without trace* effect.

## CLASS CHANGES

- You must have a neutral aspect to your alignment.
- See the **Beast Shapes** section for **Wild Shape** options.
- Replace Religion skill option with Stealth.
- The spell *goodberry* does not exist. *Create or destroy water* only affects 1 gallon per casting, and another gallon per slot above 1st.

## ARCHETYPE CHANGES

**Circle of Land.** The terrain of Athas is much different than that of most D&D worlds. Remove Arctic, Coast is renamed Oasis, Forest includes jungles, Grassland includes savannah, scrublands, and verdant belts, Swamp includes mud flats and salt marshes, Underdark is renamed Cave.

**Circle of the Moon.** No changes except to Wild Shape beasts.

**Circle of Dreams (Xanathar).** Does not exist.

**Circle of the Shepherd (Xanathar).** Remove all references to Fey. Modify *Speech of the Woods*. Remove ability to understand Sylvan. Modify *Spirit Totem*. Rename Bear as *Klar* (see barbarian), Hawk as *Kes'trekel* (see barbarian), and Unicorn as *Spirit of the Land*. A Spirit of the Land is an enigmatic force that infuses particular lands. Only a select few druids know how to tap into the energies of these silent, ancient powers.

## BEAST SHAPES

CR	Beast
0	Cranium rat
0	Giant fire beetle
0	Scorpion
1/8	Poisonous snake (swim)
1/4	Giant centipede
1/4	Giant poisonous snake
1/4	Constrictor snake (swim)
1/4	Jhakar
1/4	Kes'trekel (fly)
1/2	600gp
1	Erdlu
1	Kank
1	Razorwing (fly)
2	Baazrag
2	Crodlu
2	Giant constrictor snake (swim)
2	Pterrax (fly)
3	Cilops
3	Giant scorpion
3	Kirre
3	Sloth, athasian
4	Inix
5	Id fiend

# FIGHTER



he fighter is universal no matter what world she may be found. Most serve as gladiators, soldiers, merchant guards, or mercenaries.

Most gladiators are slaves, but some can make a lucrative living as freemen, training a stable or earning prizes. The city-states rely on slave conscripts for the bulk of their forces, but all

maintain a core of elite, trained soldiers such as the all-female Shadow Consorts of Nibenay or Urik's Obsidian Guard. The merchant houses employ their own armies to protect trade, including well-trained cavalry and foot soldiers. Nobles keep their own bodyguards and small forces, considered a fairly easy job since most nobles are content to avoid conflict. Soldiers of fortune can be found in all settings, and a few have united to form small units operating from fortified bases, such as the Black Reavers outside of Urik.

Fighters function as in the PHB with changes as below:

## ARCHETYPE CHANGES

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**Eldritch Fighter, Arcane Archer, and Cavalier (Xanathar).**

Do not exist.

**Samurai (Xanathar).** Rename Gladiator. While any fighter can take a weapon and enter the arena, there are a select few who have been trained to dominate and please the crowd. Outside the arena, this self-control translates well to command of soldiers.

# MONK

**M**onks are a form of psionic warrior. There are no monasteries on Athas. Rather, a style of fighting emerged from the gladiator pits in response to a demand for unarmed combat. Some of these fighters had latent psionic ability, and powerful nobles and templar

owners were able to encourage these abilities to enhance the unarmed combat that so pleased the crowds. Athasian monks have no problems entertaining the crowd, for a popular and profitable gladiator is a well-cared for gladiator. Due to their popular crowd appeal, enough have been granted freedom that they have spread out and trained others, or sought greater fame and fortune in the sands. Monks who are able to expand their powers beyond their fists have awakened latent psionic powers, and over time have shared these to other students. A monk with access to full psionic powers is as rare as steel and just as dangerous.

Psionic monk gladiators are considered by their owners to be less trouble than a true psion because their powers tend to stay restricted to their combat instead of reading minds and moving objects. A monk who displays a greater array of powers might be put down instead.

Monks function as in the PHB with changes as below:

## ARCHETYPE CHANGES

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**Way of the Shadow.** Does not exist.

**Way of the Elements.** These monks have tapped into elemental powers and, like a cleric, must have given herself to a particular element and been accepted (see Cleric, above). They have been gifted with access to a mix of psionic and clerical powers, and while they are not as bound to advance an element as a cleric, most tend to an affinity to one element and to ensure its protection, lest they risk losing these powers.

**Way of the Sun Soul.** Similar to those of the Way of the Elements, the Sun Soul monk has been accepted by the Sun itself and given powers. One must have given herself to the fire element by an act involving the sun, such as staring into the sun until either blinded or accepted, or staking one's self onto a salt flat for a full day, fully exposed to the heat and fury of the sun.

# PSION

**P**SIONICS are a daily part of life in Athas. It is not unexpected that the local smith might have some latent talent to bend leather in a particular way that improves the product. Even the beasts of the desert likely have some ability that improves their survivability. Every sorcerer king and most merchant houses keep a stable of powerful psions on staff, and in cities those who display a greater degree of power are carefully watched for signs of disloyalty.

## THE WILL AND THE WAY

The "Will" is one's innate psionic ability, and the "Way" is the art of studying psionics. Each psion refers to herself through her focus of study, and to the common folk, all psions are commonly called "mindbenders."

Every city has psionic trainers and schools of study, and it is said there is an Order of psions whose ranks consist of psions powerful enough to challenge a sorcerer-king, though if such an Order exists, its agenda has yet to be known. All races accept and have affinity for psionics.

## CLASS FEATURES

As a psion, you gain the following class features

### HIT POINTS

**Hit Dice:** 1d8 per psion level

**Hit Points at 1st Level:** 8 + your Constitution modifier

**Hit Points at Higher Levels:** 1d8 (5) + your Constitution modifier per level

### PROFICIENCIES

**Armor:** Light armor

**Weapons:** Simple weapons

**Tools:** None

**Saving Throws:** Intelligence, Wisdom

**Skills:** Choose two skills from Arcana, History, Insight, Medicine, Nature, Perception, and Religion

### EQUIPMENT

You start with the following equipment, in addition to the equipment granted by your background:

- (a) a spear or (b) mace
- (a) leather armor or (b) studded leather armor
- (a) a light crossbow and 20 bolts or (b) any simple weapon
- (a) a scholar's pack or (b) explorer's pack

Alternatively, you can ignore the equipment here and in your background, and buy 5d4 × 10 cp worth of equipment from chapter 5 in the Player's Handbook or this Guide.

## PLAYING A PSION

When you first learned to use psionics, you were taught to create a nexus — a point in the center of your being where physical, mental, and spiritual energy can be harnessed. It is the union of these powers that allows you to perform the remarkable feats you're capable of. As a psion, your choice of discipline is all-important to you.

There are six schools, taught in the Way, from which you learn disciplines. Over time, a psion may be skilled in more than one school, but her primary focus defines her.

**Empath:** a metascience of telepathy that taps into the raw emotions contained in all beings and amplify or reduce those, even to the point where a creature might lose the will to live.

**Telepathy:** a much-feared school involving breaking down mental defenses and ripping into one's mind and secrets.

**Psychometabolism:** focuses on the body to the point one can walk through fire and strike with the strength of a giant.

**Psychoportation:** manipulating space and time.

**Psychokinesis:** altering the fundamental nature of matter.

**Soul Knife:** warriors who focus on creating the perfect weapon.

## UNEARTHED ARCANA AND THE PSION

This version differs slightly than the UA version presented as the "Mystic" so as to better fit a Dark Sun campaign and to address some mechanical or wording issues. Use the Unearthed Arcana 2017 playtest, pages 9-28, for all psionic talents and disciplines. If it is not obvious, Shapers/Psychokinesis = Wu Jen and the rest have been flavored with reference to the original "order."

## THE PSION

Level	Proficiency Bonus	Features	Talents Known	Disciplines Known	Psi Points	Psi Limit
1st	+2	Psionics, Psion School	1	1	4	2
2nd	+2	Psi recovery, Telepathy	1	1	6	2
3rd	+2	Order feature	2	2	14	3
4th	+2	Ability score improvement, strength of the mind	2	2	17	3
5th	+3	—	2	3	27	5
6th	+3	Order feature	2	3	32	5
7th	+3	—	2	4	38	6
8th	+3	Ability score improvement, potent psionics (1d8)	2	4	44	6
9th	+4	—	2	5	57	7
10th	+4	Consumptive power	3	5	64	7
11th	+4	Psionic mastery 1/day	3	5	64	7
12th	+4	Ability score improvement	3	6	64	7
13th	+5	Psionic mastery 2/day	3	6	64	7
14th	+5	Order feature, potent psionics (2d8)	3	6	64	7
15th	+5	Psionic mastery 3/day	3	7	64	7
16th	+5	Ability score improvement	3	7	64	7
17th	+6	Psionic mastery 4/day	4	7	64	7
18th	+6	—	4	8	71	7
19th	+6	Ability score improvement	4	8	71	7
20th	+6	Psionic body	4	8	71	7

## PSIONICS

As a student of psionics, you can master and use psionic talents and disciplines.

### PSIONIC TALENTS

A psionic talent is a minor psionic effect you have mastered. At 1st level, you know one psionic talent of your choice. You learn additional talents of your choice at higher levels as listed on the Psion table under the Talents Known column. These cost no Psi points to use.

### PSIONIC DISCIPLINES

A psionic discipline is more powerful school of thought allowing multiple effects at the cost of Psi points. At 1st level, you know one psionic discipline of your choice. You learn additional disciplines of your choice at higher levels as listed on the Psion table under the Disciplines Known column.

### PSI POINTS

This is your internal reservoir of energy that can be devoted to psionic disciplines you know. Each discipline describes effects you can create with it by spending a certain number of psi points. The number of psi points you have is based on your psion level, as shown in the Psi Points column. The number shown is your maximum. You regain all psi points when you finish a long rest.

### PSI LIMIT

Though you have access to a potent amount of psionic energy, it takes training and practice to channel that energy. There is a limit on the number of psi points you can spend to activate a psionic discipline. The limit is based on your psion level, as shown in the Psi Limit column of the Mystic table. For example, as a 3rd-level psion, you can spend no more than 3 psi points on a discipline each time you use it, no matter how many psi points you have.

## PSYCHIC FOCUS

Each discipline list an effect that gives ongoing benefits if selected as your psychic focus. As a bonus action, you can select one of your disciplines and gain its psychic focus benefit. This lasts until you choose a different benefit or are incapacitated. You can only have one psychic focus benefit at a time.

## PSIONIC ABILITY

Intelligence is your ability score for your psionics. You use your Intelligence modifier when setting the saving throw DC for a psionic discipline or when making an attack roll with one.

**Discipline save DC** = 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Intelligence modifier

**Discipline attack modifier** = your proficiency bonus + your Intelligence modifier

## PSION SCHOOL

At 1st level, you choose a Psion School: Empath, Telepathy, Psychometabolism, Psychoportation, Psychokinesis, or Soul Knife. Each school specializes in a specific approach to psionics. Your school gives you features when you choose it at 1st level and additional features at 3rd, 6th, and 14th level.

## PSI RECOVERY

Starting at 2nd level, you can draw vigor from the psi energy you use to power your psionic disciplines. Immediately after you spend psi points on a psionic discipline, you can take a bonus action to regain hit points equal to the number of psi points you spent.

## TELEPATHY

At 2nd level, your mind awakens to the ability to communicate via telepathy. You can telepathically speak to any creature you can see within 120 feet of you in this manner. You don't need to share a language with the creature for it to understand your telepathic messages, but the creature must be able to understand at least one language or be telepathic itself.

## ABILITY SCORE IMPROVEMENT

When you reach 4th level, and again at 8th, 12th, 16th, and 19th level, you can increase one ability score of your choice by 2, or you can increase two ability scores of your choice by 1. As normal, you can't increase an ability score above 20 using this feature.

## STRENGTH OF MIND

You understand how to psionically augment your body. This understanding allows you to alter your defenses to better deal with threats. Starting at 4th level, you can replace your proficiency in Wisdom saving throws whenever you finish a short or long rest. To do so, choose Strength, Dexterity, Constitution, or Charisma. You gain proficiency in saves using that ability, instead of Wisdom. This change lasts until you finish your next short or long rest.

## POTENT PSIONICS

At 8th level, you gain the ability to infuse your weapon attacks with psychic energy. Once on each of your turns when you hit a creature with a weapon, you can deal an extra 1d8 psychic damage to that target. When you reach 14th level, this extra damage increases to 2d8.

In addition, you add your Intelligence modifier to any damage roll you make for a psionic talent.

## CONSUMPTIVE POWER

At 10th level, you gain the ability to sacrifice your physical durability in exchange for psionic power. When activating a psionic discipline, you can pay its psi point cost with your hit points, instead of using any psi points. Your current hit points and hit point maximum are both reduced by the number of hit points you spend. This reduction can't be lessened in any way, and the reduction to your hit point maximum lasts until you finish a long rest.

Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a long rest.

## PSIONIC MASTERY

Beginning at 11th level, your mastery of psionic energy allows you to push your mind beyond its normal limits, even maintaining multiple concentration effects at the same time.

As an action, you gain a pool of 9 special psi points that are tracked separately from your normal psi pool and last for 1 hour. You may spend these special points only on disciplines that require an action or a bonus action to use.

When using only these special points, you can create and sustain more than one concentration effect at the same time. Any current concentration effect ends, and if even one normal psi point is spent on a concentration effect, all effects using these special points end.

Otherwise, these points may be used for any other discipline, up to your psi limit.

At 15th level, the pool of psi points you gain from this feature increases to 11.

You have one use of this feature, and you regain any expended use of it with a long rest.

You gain one additional use of this feature at 13th, 15th, and 17th level.

## PSIONIC BODY

At 20th level, your mind transcends the body and you become a psionic conduit. You gain the following benefits:

- You gain resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage.
- You no longer age.
- You are immune to disease, poison damage, and the poisoned condition.
- If you die, roll a d20. On a 10 or higher, you disincorporate with 0 hit points, instead of dying, and you fall unconscious. You and your gear disappear. You appear at a spot of your choice 1d3 days later on the plane of existence where you died, having gained the benefits of one long rest.

## SCHOOL OF THE EMPATH

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Empaths delve into the world of emotion, mastering their inner life to such an extent that they can manipulate and amplify the emotions of others with the same ease that an artist shapes clay. These psions vary from tyrants to inspiring leaders who are loved by their followers.

Empaths can bring out extreme emotions in the people around them. For their allies, they can lend hope, ferocity, and courage, transforming a fighting band into a deadly, unified force. For their enemies, they bring fear, disgust, and trepidation that can make even the most hardened veteran act like a shaky rookie. Advanced empaths are known as Avatars, revered for their ability to affect entire groups.

### BONUS DISCIPLINES

At 1st level, you learn two additional psionic disciplines of your choice. They must be chosen from among the Empath disciplines.

### ARMOR TRAINING

At 1st level, you gain proficiency with medium armor and shields.

### AVATAR OF BATTLE

Starting at 3rd level, you project an inspiring aura. While you aren't incapacitated, each ally within 30 feet of you who can see you gains a +2 bonus to initiative rolls.

### AVATAR OF HEALING

Beginning at 6th level, you project an aura of resilience. While you aren't incapacitated, each ally within 30 feet of you who can see you regains additional hit points equal to your Intelligence modifier (minimum of 0) whenever they are healed by psionic disciplines.

### AVATAR OF SPEED

Starting at 14th level, you project an aura of speed. While you aren't incapacitated, any ally within 30 feet of you who can see you can take the Dash action as a bonus action.

## SCHOOL OF THE TELEPATH

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Telepaths seek to unlock the full potential of the mind. By transcending the physical, they hope to attain a state of being focused on pure intellect and mental energy. Telepaths are skilled at bending minds and unleashing devastating psionic attacks, and they can read the secrets of the world through psionic energy. Telepaths who take to adventuring excel at unraveling mysteries, solving puzzles, and defeating monsters by turning them into unwilling pawns. Advanced Telepaths are known as the Awakened, feared for their ability to melt minds.

### BONUS DISCIPLINES

At 1st level, you learn two additional psionic disciplines of your choice. They must be chosen from among the Telepath disciplines.

### TELEPATHIC TALENT

At 1st level, you gain proficiency with two of the following skills of your choice: Animal Handling, Deception, Insight, Intimidation, Investigation, Perception, and Persuasion.

## AWAKENED INVESTIGATION

Starting at 3rd level, you can focus your mind to read the psionic imprint left on an object. If you hold an object and concentrate on it for 10 minutes (as if concentrating on a psionic discipline), you learn a few basic facts about it. You gain a mental image from the object's point of view, showing the last creature to hold the object within the past 24 hours.

You also learn of any events that have occurred within 20 feet of the object within the past hour. The events you perceive unfold from the object's perspective. You see and hear such events as if you were there, but can't use other senses.

Additionally, you can embed an intangible psionic sensor within the object. For the next 24 hours, you can use an action to learn the object's location relative to you (its distance and direction) and to look at the object's surroundings from its point of view as if you were there. This perception lasts until the start of your next turn.

Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a short or long rest.

### PSIONIC SURGE

Starting at 6th level, you can overload your psychic focus to batter down an opponent's defenses. You can impose disadvantage on a target's saving throw against a discipline or talent you use, but at the cost of using your psychic focus. Your psychic focus immediately ends if it's active, and you can't use it until you finish a short or long rest.

You can't use this feature if you can't use your psychic focus.

### SPECTRAL FORM

At 14th level, you gain the ability to become a ghostly figure of psionic energy. As an action, you can transform into a transparent, ghostly version of yourself. While in this form, you have resistance to all damage, move at half speed, and can pass through objects and creatures while moving but can't willingly end your movement in their spaces. The form lasts for 10 minutes or until you use an action to end it.

Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a long rest.

## SCHOOL OF PSYCHOMETABOLISM

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Those in the school of psychometabolism use psionic energy to augment and modify the physical form. Followers of this school are known as Immortals. They use psionic energy to modify their bodies, strengthening them against attack and turning themselves into living weapons. Their mastery of the physical form grants them their name, for Immortals are notoriously difficult to kill.

### BONUS DISCIPLINES

At 1st level, you learn two additional psionic disciplines of your choice. They must be chosen from among the Psychometabolism disciplines.

### IMMORTAL DURABILITY

Starting at 1st level, your hit point maximum increases by 1 per psion level. In addition, while you aren't wearing armor or wielding a shield, your base AC equals 10 + your Dexterity modifier + your Constitution modifier.

### IMMORTAL RESILIENCE

Starting at 3rd level, your psionic energy grants you extraordinary fortitude. At the start of each of your turns, you gain temporary hit points equal to your Intelligence modifier (minimum of 0) if you have at least 1 hit point.

### SURGE OF HEALTH

Starting at 6th level, you can draw on your psychic focus to escape death's grasp. As a reaction when you take damage, you can halve that damage against you. Your psychic focus immediately ends if it's active, and you can't use it until you finish a short or long rest.

You can't use this feature if you can't use your psychic focus.

### IMMORTAL WILL

Starting at 14th level, you can draw on your reserves of psionic power to survive beyond death. At the end of your turn while at 0 hit points, you can spend 5 psi points to immediately regain a number of hit points equal to your psion level + your Constitution modifier.

## SCHOOL OF PSYCHOPORTATION

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Students of this school keep their minds in a strange, rarified state. They seek to accumulate as much knowledge as possible, as they quest to unravel the mysteries of the multiverse and seek the underlying structure of all things, bending space and time in the process.

Nomads, as they call themselves, delight in travel, exploration, and discovery. They desire to accumulate as much knowledge as possible, and the pursuit of secrets and hidden lore can become an obsession for them.

### BONUS DISCIPLINES

At 1st level, you learn two additional psionic disciplines of your choice. They must be chosen from among the Psychoportation disciplines.

## BREADTH OF KNOWLEDGE

At 1st level, you gain the ability to extend your knowledge by tapping into the webs that interconnect all existence. When you finish a long rest, you gain two proficiencies of your choice: two tools, two skills, or one of each. You can replace one or both of these selections with languages. This benefit lasts until you finish a long rest.

### MEMORY OF ONE THOUSAND STEPS

At 3rd level, you gain the ability to use psionics to recall your steps. As a reaction when you are hit by an attack, you can teleport to an unoccupied space that you occupied since the start of your last turn, and the attack misses you. Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a short or long rest.

### SUPERIOR TELEPORTATION

At 6th level, you gain a superior talent for teleportation. When you use a psionic discipline to teleport any distance, you can increase that distance by up to 10 feet.

### EFFORTLESS JOURNEY

Starting at 14th level, your mind can mystically move your body. Once on each of your turns, you can forfeit up to 30 feet of your movement to teleport the distance you forfeited. You must teleport to an unoccupied space you can see.

## SCHOOL OF PSYCHOKINESIS

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This school of thought features some of the most devoted psions who seek to unlock the limits of the physical world and replace it with a reality they create for themselves. These psions, who call themselves Shapers, have learned to seize control of the fundamental elements of existence and restructure them. They can hurl objects with their minds, manipulate the four elements, and alter reality to fit their desires.

### BONUS DISCIPLINES

At 1st level, you learn two additional psionic disciplines of your choice. They must be chosen from among the Psychokinetic disciplines.

### SHAPER STUDY

At 1st level, you gain proficiency with two of the following skills of your choice: Animal Handling, Arcana, History, Insight, Medicine, Nature, Perception, Religion, or Survival.

### ELEMENTAL ATTUNEMENT

Starting at 3rd level, when a creature's resistance reduces the damage dealt by a psionic discipline of yours, you can spend 1 psi point to cause that use of the discipline to ignore the creature's resistance. You can't spend this point if doing so would increase the discipline's cost above your psi limit.

### ARCANE MIMICRY

At 6th level, you have mastered the ability to mimic by psionic energy three wizard spells of your choice and always have them prepared. The spells must be of 1st through 3rd level.

You cannot cast these mimicked spells unless you use a bonus action to spend psi points to create spell slots, detailed on the table below.

Spell Slot Level	Psi Cost
1st	2
2nd	3
3rd	5
4th	6
5th	7

Whenever you gain a level in this class, you can replace one of the chosen wizard spells with a different wizard spell of 1st through 3rd level.

### SHAPER MASTERY

Starting at 14th level, if you have resistance to a type of damage, you can spend 2 psi points as a reaction when you take damage of that type to ignore that damage; you gain immunity to that damage type until the end of your next turn.

## SCHOOL OF THE SOUL KNIFE

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A student of this school of thought sacrifices the breadth of knowledge other psions gain to focus on a specific psionic technique. They learn to manifest a deadly weapon of pure psychic energy that they can use to cleave through foes. Soul knives vary widely in their approach to this path. Some follow it out of a desire to achieve martial perfection. Others are ruthless assassins who seek to become the perfect killer.

### MARTIAL TRAINING

At 1st level, you gain proficiency with medium armor and martial weapons.

### SOUL KNIFE

Starting at 1st level, you gain the ability to manifest a blade of psychic energy. As a bonus action, you create scintillating knives of energy that project from both of your fists. You can't hold anything in your hands while manifesting these blades. You can dismiss them as a bonus action.

For you, a soul knife is a martial melee weapon with the light and finesse properties. It deals 1d8 psychic damage on a hit. As a bonus action, you can prepare to use the blades to parry; you gain a +2 bonus to AC until the start of your next turn or until you are incapacitated.

### HONE THE BLADE

Starting at 3rd level, you can spend psi points to augment your soul knife's attack rolls and damage. You gain a bonus to attack and damage rolls with your soul knives depending on the number of psi points spent, as shown on the table below. This bonus lasts for 10 minutes.

Psi Points	Attack and Damage Bonus
2	+1
5	+2
7	+4

### CONSUMPTIVE KNIFE

Starting at 6th level, whenever you slay an enemy creature with a soul knife attack, you immediately regain 2 psi points.

### PHANTOM KNIFE

Starting at 14th level, you can make an attack that phases through most defenses. As an action, you can make one attack with your soul knife. Treat the target's AC as 10 against this attack, regardless of the target's actual AC.

# RANGER

The wilds of Athas are a treacherous place, and the skills of a ranger are most often learned as a guide, hunter, or scout for a military operation. Rangers are found in every race, most prominently among halflings. To the ranger, the seared lands are not an enemy but a well-respected adversary. Rangers generally are on good terms with druids, and it is from a druid mentor that a ranger likely has experienced contact with a Spirit of the Land that can bestow upon her certain powers.

Rangers function as in the PHB with changes as below:

**Favored enemies.** Remove celestials, fiends, and fey from the list.

**Natural Explorer.** Remove arctic, rename coast as oasis, swamp includes mud flats, remove Underdark.

**Spell changes.** The spell *goodberry* does not exist.

## ARCHETYPE CHANGES

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**Horizon Walker (Xanathar).** Does not exist.

# ROGUE

**D**ark Sun rogues come from all walks of life: slave, freeman, merchant and noble. Many merchant house owners study the skills of the rogue. Those who ferry valuable cargo from city-state to city-state must be astute guides, shrewd bargainers, sharp-eyed, and able to fight in a pinch. Every city-state has a thieves' guild, and it can be expected some contact to the guild can be found in the elven bazaar. They often deal with wizards (no questions asked), who pay fees not only for illegal components but for protection and anonymity. Less scrupulous merchant houses will engage in smuggling using guild contacts.

Rogues engage in the performing arts as part of their repertoire are likely to be referred to as "bards," with the presumption they might also be serving as a covert agent.

Rogues function as in the PHB with changes as below:

## ARCHETYPE CHANGES

**Arcane Trickster.** Does not exist.

**Poison.** Is more readily available on Athas, often harvested from beasts or brewed in apothecaries, and carries less stigma than traditional settings.

# WARLOCK

Warlocks are extremely rare on Athas because they must derive their power from a patron, and to all but the most learned of sages, there are only two sources for that power: sorcerer kings and the elemental powers. Nearly all warlocks that are encountered are "Templars," men and women of all races imbued with the essence of their god-kings and queens and empowered with the authority over life and death of the commoner.

But, for a very select few, power comes from another source. The total number of mortals who wield these powers and make a pact with the unknown can likely be counted on one hand. Their agendas may be alien to the general interests of most: survive and prosper.

Warlocks function as in the PHB with changes as below:

**Defiling.** Warlocks are subject to the rules of defiling contained in the wizard section.

## PATRONS

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Players may choose between the **Great Old One** and **Hexblade (Xanathar)**. Other patrons either do not exist or are within the sole province of the sorcerer kings. The DM will replace the lore contained in the default books with appropriate Dark Sun literature.

# WIZARD

Arcaic magic is outlawed in every city-state as sorcerer kings don't need anyone else defiling but them. In secret, wizards still study the arcane arts, drawn to it even at the risk of their lives, from small cabals to isolated ancient text study. Wizards are universally distrusted, for while one may profess to not defile, the temptation will always be there, to gain greater power "just this once" and "for the greater good." To the druid or elemental cleric, there is no greater affront than seeing the precious life of Athas turn to ash, justified for a brief need.

PC wizards are likely revolutionaries, naturally in opposition to sorcerer kings. They must take extreme steps to hide their nature, including from their own companions. If you play a wizard, think about a "cover story" to present to NPCs and whether you would, or eventually will, reveal your nature to other players. Many wizards pretend to be psions or elemental clerics.

## HIDING A SPELLBOOK

Wizards learn quickly and share secrets with friends and family on hiding spellbooks, keeping one step ahead if possible from templar searches. Hollowed out walking sticks and weapons with scroll spellbooks are common, along with pages sewn between two pieces of cloth on items such as cloaks, and some carve the symbols onto items such as wooden and bone implements. Some have even risked inscribing their spells into leather garments, to be turned inside out when needed. It has been said a few desperate souls have even tattooed books onto their own skin. For most, it is best to find a careful hiding spot in each civilization.

Wizards function as in the PHB with changes as below:

**Familiars.** The *find familiar* spell summons creatures native to Dark Sun. All creatures have AC12, 4 hit points, no save bonuses or penalties, cannot attack, and features as follows:

Creature	Features
Critic lizard (a tiny, colorful reptile that senses danger, expects food after fights, is jumpy and paranoid)	Speed 30 ft., +1 initiative bonus
Hurrum (a flightless beetle that constantly produces a pleasing humming noise as it uses its wings to cool itself, dies in direct sunlight and likes to hum songs you are thinking about)	Speed 20 ft., +1 hit points regained per Hit Die spent during rests
Jank (gold furred ferret-like mammal with poisonous spurs, likes to stuff its mouth pouches full and play with objects in your packs)	Speed 30 ft., +1 bonus on Survival forage checks if it assists

## Creature

## Features

Kes'trekel (grotesque red-headed carrion bird, pecks at corpses and squawks at injured allies)	Speed 10 ft., fly 30 ft., +1 bonus on Perception checks
Kivit (gray-furred feline that secretes venomous musk to ward off predators, hates being inside and musk spell intensifies when upset)	Speed 35 ft., +1 AC against attacks of opportunity
Wrab (black-scaled winged serpent that senses emotional states, often trained for diplomatic encounters, likes to lick blood from your wounds and wrap around your arm when you attempt to persuade others)	Speed 10 ft., fly 30 ft., +1 bonus on Insight and Diplomacy checks
Z'tal (chirping feathered lizard often used as food, gets alarmed when party members stray and often bumps into your leg)	Speed 30 ft., once per short rest it can let out a piercing scream, all creatures within 5 feet of it except its master must make a DC8 Constitution saving throw or be deafened for 1 round

## PRESERVERS AND DEFILERS

Athas is a wasteland because spells are powered by living matter - plants - and centuries of wars involving the sorcerer kings, the Dragon, and constant defiling has leached the world dry. While sorcerer kings maintain gardens and hunt defilers, they still keep some on hand as a necessity. Wizards who defile can draw great power from plant life but in return will permanently reduce every tree, shrub, even underground root in the area to ash that never can again support life. This eventually leaves a taint on the wizard that can be sensed by those attuned to such things like druids. Preservers are wizards who have, at the cost of greater power, devoted themselves to taking only what is needed, from further sources until the spell can be powered. They also devote their lives to destroying defilers. Nevertheless, the temptation will always be there, to defile "just this once." To most preservers, there is no middle ground. Once a defiler, always a defiler, and better to die than cross that line. To some, when looking death in the eye, the decision becomes that much harder.

# DEFILERS OF ATHAS

When an arcane caster invokes a spell, she draws upon the life energy of Athas. Most casters are trained to take only what is needed because any more kills plant life and renders the area barren for centuries. Every spellcaster is aware she is limiting herself by voluntarily limiting her casting in this way. With any spell, she can cost off her self-imposed restrictions in exchange for a rush of power. In doing so, she marks herself as a defiler - an enemy of the land. Doing so is an evil act, but many a good-hearted caster has found herself facing impending doom and reconsidered this stance.

## GAME TERMS

Those who defile can apply a metamagic effect to their non-cantrip spells. Once the spell is cast, the land around them turns to barren ash, and the caster gains one or more defiler points. A caster who defiles even once will track two new scores: her current defiler points score, and if applicable, her permanent defiler aura. The DM determines the terrain, which determines the amount of vegetation from which defiling power can be taken.

## DEFILER POINTS

Whenever you defile, you gain defiler points based on the effect applied according to the **Defiling Benefits and Cost Table**. These points have an immediate and cumulative negative effect, applied immediately from the **Accumulated Defiler Points Table**. All points can be shed in one of two ways: *assuming the taint* or *meditation with the land*.

The number of points you can spend on an effect is limited to half your caster level.

You cannot defile if the area has been drained of vegetative life.

### Defiling Benefits and Cost Table

Defiler Effect	Defiler Points Earned
Careful spell	1
Distant spell	1
Subtle spell	1
Empowered spell	2
Extended spell	2
Heightened spell	3
Quickened spell	4
Twinned spell	2 per spell level
Recover spell slot as action	2 per spell level
Cast spell without material component	1 per 100cp value

### CAREFUL SPELL

When casting a spell that requires a saving throw, choose a number of creatures up to your spellcasting modifier (minimum 1). Chosen creatures automatically save.

### DISTANT SPELL

Double the range of spells with at least a 5 foot range, or make a touch spell have a range of 30 feet.

### SUBTLE SPELL

Cast without somatic or verbal components.

### EMPOWERED SPELL

Reroll a number of damage dice equal to your spellcasting modifier (minimum 1) and use those new rolls.

### EXTENDED SPELL

Double the duration of any spell with a duration of at least 1 minute, maximum 24 hours.

### HEIGHTENED SPELL

When casting a spell requiring a save, make one target have disadvantage on its first saving throw against the spell.

### QUICKENED SPELL

Change the casting time of any spell that has a casting time of 1 action to 1 bonus action.

### TWINNED SPELL

When casting a spell that targets only one creature and doesn't have a range of self, you may target a second creature in range with the same spell. To be eligible, the spell cannot target more than one creature at the level being cast.

### RECOVER SPELL SLOT

As an action that provokes an attack of opportunity, you may draw forth life energy to renew your arcane powers and regain an expended spell slot.

### CAST SPELL WITHOUT MATERIAL COMPONENT

Cast any spell without using a material component.

### Accumulated Defiler Points Table

Defiler Points	Effect
1+	-2 on Charisma and Wisdom checks
11+	-2 Constitution score reduction. If engaged in strenuous activity (e.g. fighting, running) for at least 1 minute, you must make a Constitution saving throw or gain 1 level of exhaustion. The save DC is 0 + number of current defiler points.
21+	another -2 on Charisma and Wisdom checks
31+	another -2 Constitution score reduction. Alignment becomes evil.
41+	become an undead NPC (t'liz) under DM control

## PURGING DEFILER POINTS

A defiler has two options to purge points and remove the negative effects of defiling. In most preserver circles, it is considered better to die than defile, and even if one can remove the taint of defiling, that person will be seen as a defiler ("once a defiler always a defiler.")

### ASSUME THE TAIN

At the end of a long rest, you may purge away all your defiler points and their negative effects, including any exhaustion caused by defiling. Add half of your defiler points to your permanent *defiler aura*. Reset your defiler points to zero.

### DEFILER AURA

If you defile even once and assume the taint, you permanently gain an aura that, while having no apparent consequences, marks you for those who can detect such auras, such as a druid. Certain creatures and casters have effects that specifically target defilers, and your aura functions as a penalty on your saving throws against those anti-defiler effects. There is no limit to how high your defiler aura score may be.

### EXAMPLE OF DEFILING

Carroz, a 4th level wizard, is being chased by templars. Although taught by his mentor to never defile, he has nearly exhausted his spells. He knows the king's gardens are nearby and figures, just this once, to save his life, he must draw more energy than the plants can handle. He is surprised at the volume of energy that comes at his behest, and nearby a century-old tree begins to wither. Carroz restores a 1st level slot by taking on 2 defiler points. *He is limited to half his level in points he can assume per casting, in this case 2.* He feels slightly ill then points his finger at the lead templar and draws even more energy, destroying the ancient yew tree and twinning a 1st level *witch bolt* (2 more points) at the first two enemies he sees. Carroz now has a total of 4 defiler points, which give him a -2 to Charisma and Wisdom checks. He escapes and finds a safe house but doesn't have time to meditate so he assumes the taint. All of his defiler points are reduced to 0, the negative effects go away, and he now has a permanent defiler score of 2. His fellow preservers need never know, he thinks.

### MEDITATING

Meditating in an undefiled area of Athas is the only way to eliminate defiler points and not accumulate a permanent defiler aura. The caster is giving a small portion of her life energy back to the land as atonement for what she has done. This takes 1 day of uninterrupted contact with the earth or plants of the region per point to be purged, in at least 8 hour increments in which the caster can do nothing else but light activity like eating and drinking.

## DEFILING EFFECT

Every bit of nonsentient plant life in the immediate vicinity is turned to ash, and the land is rendered sterile, unable to sustain life for possibly decades or centuries after. For one year, no matter what is done, the defiled area can never be viable. Even afterwards, all the lifegiving nutrients have been leached from the soil, requiring skilled intervention before even one blade of grass can grow and taking up to centuries to naturally restore.

When attempting to defile or entering combat, the DM determines the terrain zone, which sets the number of defiler points that can be assumed in that area until is completely devoid of life.

### DEFILING BY TERRAIN

Determining and tracking the exact radius of defiling, and tracking that radius again if a caster were to move, is bulky and would slow down gameplay. In many events, the exact radius defiled will have no impact if not tracked. Tables for both are presented, with exact defiling radius as an optional rule.

The area affected depends on the number of defiler points spent and the available vegetation in the area. If there is no vegetation within range or the area is despoiled completely, the caster cannot defile.

Terrain	Defiling Points Available
Lush (forest, garden)	100
Abundant (farm, grassland, mud flat)	20
Fertile (oasis, inactive farm, scrub plain)	10
Infertile (rocky badlands, mountains)	5
Barren (boulder field, sandy wastes, salt flat)	3

The below **Optional Rule** table is used, when needed, to track the radius of the defiling effects. Each effect applied within 1 minute of the last increases the radius by 50% instead of 100% distance.

Terrain	Radius Defiled
Lush (forest, garden)	1 ft. per defiler point
Abundant (farm, grassland, mud flat)	5 ft. per defiler point
Fertile (oasis, inactive farm, scrub plain)	10 ft. per defiler point
Infertile (rocky badlands, mountains)	20 ft. per defiler point
Barren (boulder field, sandy wastes, salt flat)	30 ft. per defiler point

# COMBATING DEFILERS: NEW DRUID SPELLS

## BACKLASH

*1st level abjuration*

**Casting Time:** 1 action

**Range:** 30 feet (40' radius)

**Components:** V, S, M (a thorn)

**Duration:** 24 hours or until discharged

Also known as the preserver's scourge, this spell makes the ground dangerous to defilers. This spell only affects a creature with at least one point in defiler aura. Should a defiler try to tap into land that is protected by a backlash, she automatically takes 1d6 force damage. The defiler must make a Constitution save or the spell they were casting is lost. Defilers have penalty to the saving throw equal to their defiler aura points. Once it has inflicted damage, the spell is discharged and the ground returns to normal. Only one backlash can be cast on any given plot of ground.

**At Higher Levels.** When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 2nd level or higher, the damage dealt increases by 1d6 for each spell slot above 1st.

## DETECT DEFILER

*1st level divination (ritual)*

**Casting Time:** 1 action

**Range:** Self

**Components:** V, S

**Duration:** Concentration, up to 10 minutes

For the duration, you sense the presence of defilers and where the defiler is located. A defiler must have at least 1 point in her defiler aura to be detected. You learn the number of permanent defiler aura points each defiler has, and you learn whether the defiler has less, more, or the same number of Hit Dice as you.

This spell can penetrate most barriers, but it is blocked by 1 foot of stone, 1 inch of common metal, a thin sheet of lead, or 3 feet of wood or dirt.

## REVENGE OF THE LAND

*5th level evocation*

**Casting Time:** 1 action

**Range:** Self (30-foot radius)

**Components:** V, S, M (a live seed pushed into the ground at your feet)

**Duration:** Concentration, up to 1 minute

The life energy of the earth is channeled in translucent arcs of energy that radiate from the seed in the ground at your feet and unerringly seek out defilers before returning to the ground. This spell only affects a creature with at least one point in defiler aura. A defiler that starts its turn within or moves into the spell's radius must make a Constitution save. On a failed save, the defiler takes 4d8 force damage. Defilers have a penalty to the saving throw equal to their defiler aura points.

# PART 4

## Wild Talents

### WILD TALENTS

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Many of the creatures of Athas have innate psionic ability, even if they can never approach a psion in skill nor learn any additional skills. Many humanoids have experienced events or encountered psions that assisted them in unlocking a power.

Non-psion player characters may begin play with a random wild talent, but it is not required.

Once used, a wild talent cannot be used again until after a long rest.

### DETERMINING WILD TALENTS

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Roll 1d20 for your power.

**1. Aura Reading:** As an action, you focus on a target in 30 feet that you can see and learn their general social status (e.g. slave, noble).

**2. Bioflexibility:** As a bonus action, you make your body more flexible until the end of your next turn. You gain advantage on escape artist checks.

**3. Cast Missile:** As an action, you can launch a piece of ammunition as if it were fired from a weapon (e.g. a bolt as if fired from a crossbow), using your proficiency with such weapon.

**4. Cryokinesis:** As an action, your touch extinguishes an unprotected non-magical flame source such as a campfire and if used as an unarmed attack causes 1 point of cold damage.

**5. Deflect Strike:** As a reaction, psychokinetically redirect an attack on you from a source that you can see, within 30 feet. You gain +2 AC against the attack, possibly causing it to miss you.

**6. Detect Poison:** As an action, you can focus on one creature, object, or 5 foot area within 20 feet that you can see and sense the presence and kind of poison.

**7. Hush:** As an action, create a 5 foot aura of sound dampening around you that lasts for 1 minute. Creatures gain +1 on Stealth checks in this field.

**8. Photosynthesis:** You can transform light into healing energy for you. If you are immobile and exposed to the sun for at least 1 hour, you are healed for 5 hit points. This does not affect other detriments that might occur while exposed to the sun.

**9. Psionic Draw:** As a bonus action, you cause an item on your person (e.g. in a pouch) to telekinetically move into a free hand instead of using an action.

**10. Trail of Destruction:** As an action, you can determine if defiling has occurred within 100 feet of you within the last 24 hours. Your sight gives you an accurate picture of the level of the most recent spell cast and if applicable the defiler aura points of that caster.

**11. Truthhear:** As an action, you gain advantage on Insight checks to determine if someone is lying, lasts 1 minute.

**12. Wild Leap:** As a bonus action, you are immediately able to make a second jump after making a first jump. Your second jump can be up to 15 feet long jump or 5 feet high jump, allowing you to combine jump heights.

**13. Body Equilibrium.** As a bonus action, you adjust your body's weight so that you can move across semi-solid surfaces such as silt and sand without sinking or impairment for difficult terrain. This effect ceases at the end of your turn.

**14. Far Hearing.** As a bonus action, focus on a square within 60 feet of you. Until the end of your next turn, you can hear as if you occupied that square.

**15. Spark.** As a bonus action, you create a spark of fire within 5 feet of you that can light tinder and other objects amenable to ignition like a torch.

**16. Thought Projection.** As a bonus action, send a mental message of 1 word to a target within 20 feet. The target must be able to understand the language.

**17. Pheromone Discharge.** As an action, emit a pheromone that insect beasts of 1 Hit Dice or less recognize as friendly. For 1 minute they will take no hostile action towards you unless attacked by any source.

**18. Blade Meld.** As a bonus action, a one-handed melee weapon you hold becomes one with your hand. For the next minute, you can't let go of the weapon nor can it be forced from your grasp.

**19. Light Step.** As a bonus action, you alter your density and weight to improve your mobility. For the rest of your turn, your walking speed increases by 10 feet, and the first time you stand up this turn, you do so without expending any of your movement if your speed is greater than 0.

**20. Beacon.** As a bonus action, you cause bright light to radiate from your body in a 20-foot radius and dim light for an additional 20 feet. The light can be colored as you like. The light lasts for 1 hour, and you can extinguish it earlier as a bonus action.

# PART 5

## Personality and Background

### LANGUAGES

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#### Standard Languages

Language	Typical Speakers
Common	All but halfling and thri-kreen
Dwarvish	Dwarves
Elvish	Elves
Giant	Giants, b'rohg
Gith	Gith
Halfling	Halflings
Sign language	Humans, elves, half-elves
Thri-kreen	Thri-kreen

#### Exotic Languages

Language	Typical Speakers
Aarakocra	Aarakocra
Anakore	Anakore
Belgoi	Belgoi
Primordial	Clerics, elementals, drakes
Pterrann	Pterrann
Tarek	Tarek

### DARK SUN BACKGROUNDS

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Acolyte and Sailor are not available. Change Folk Hero to Slave Hero.

Next, select a Social Standing commensurate to your background: templar or city official (aristocratic), noble (wealthy), merchant (comfortable), freeman/woman (modest), slave / tribesman / hermit (wretched to poor. These are suggested levels for lifestyle expenses (PHB 157). Only city officials, nobles, and merchants are allowed under law to read and write.

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#### LITERACY IS OUTLAWED

Sorcerer-kings in all cities outlaw literacy except among the ruling class. Slaves can be executed if they are caught reading. By default, player characters are illiterate unless justified.

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### ALTERED FEATS

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- The *Magic Initiate feat* does not exist.
- The *Polearm Master feat* includes the gythka and trikal weapons.
- The *Ritual Caster feat* can only be taken by a Bard, Warlock, or Wizard, and they may not choose spells from the cleric, druid, or sorcerer classes.
- The *Spell Sniper feat* allows bards, warlocks, and wizards to choose between their classes for cantrips. The cleric may only choose cleric cantrips, the druid may only choose druid cantrips, and no one can choose from sorcerer.

# PART 6

## Equipment