





PLAYER'S HANDBOOK

by David Noonan • illustrated by Eric Polack, Todd Harris, and Jason Engle

DARK • SUN

DARK SUN SETTING & RACES

Struggling to Survive in a Savage World

by David Noonan • illustrated by Todd Harris and Jason Engle

The world of DARK SUN is a harsh wasteland created by evil magic that sucked the life from the planet. Once, it was a lush, green world of vast oceans and teeming jungles, but mighty dragon-kings, mad for power, developed magic that sapped life energy. As they used this defiling magic against each other, they turned oceans into deserts and forests into ash.

Today, the dragon-kings have become petty godlings, ruling over the lands they ruined. Each controls a massive city-state and is the object of worship by the corrupt theocracy that does the day-to-day ruling. Every city-state has a large army,

but the dragon-kings rarely war against each other anymore. Indeed, the templars who worship the dragon-kings rarely even see them.

Life is hard on Athas, the world of DARK SUN. Slaves toil endlessly in temperatures that often exceed 110 degrees. Merchants and nobles are subject to the cruel whims of the templars and the intrigues of their fellows. DARK SUN is a place of scarcity, and many hands grasp at the few remaining gifts the world has to offer.

Do you have the strength and will to take what you need to survive and conquer in the desert wastes?

HOW TO EXPLORE THE WORLD

This update of DARK SUN is broken up into a number of articles. Everything you need as a player can be found in this magazine, at the page numbers indicated below.

Introduction and Races: Page 18.

Classes: Page 32.

Equipment and Rules: Page 38.

DUNGEON #110 contains the DM's Guide to DARK SUN, designed to help a DM get a DARK SUN game up and running. DUNGEON #110 also features "Last Stand at Outpost Three," an adventure for beginning DARK SUN characters. The PCs find themselves besieged by marauding elves in a wilderness trading outpost.

"Last Stand at Outpost Three": Page 32.

DM's Guide to DARK SUN: Page 58.

DARK SUN Monster Supplement: Page 82.

WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE

DARK SUN has a rich history established with a boxed campaign set published in 1991, an update of the setting in 1995, and a line of adventures and accessories that stretched until late 1996. Yet the revision of the D&D rules in 2000 meant that many aspects of the DARK SUN campaign became problematic.

The setting is as evocative as ever, but many of the specific mechanical elements (such as half-giants who always got dice for Hit Dice and defiler wizards as a separate class from preservers) don't work with the new D&D rules. In this DARK SUN update, the current D&D rules take precedence over specific rules from old DARK SUN products—as long as the flavor of the world is maintained. There's no separate gladiator class, for example, because a fighter with the right feat choices does everything a gladiator needs to do.

This update of the setting also avails itself of the new rules elements in the *Expanded Psionics Handbook*. Psionics has always been an important part of DARK SUN, and Athas is a great place for a psion, psychic warrior, wilder, or soulnife to adventure. This article also introduces two of the *Expanded Psionics Handbook's* new races, the elan and the maenad, to the world of DARK SUN.

Some players who fell in love with the DARK SUN setting in the 1990s have already updated their campaigns to take advantage of the new D&D rules. If you're one of those players, keep doing what you're doing, but you might get some good ideas from what you're about to read.

This update also sets the timeline of the game forward 300 years and restores the political situation to something like it was when the first DARK SUN product was published. Like many campaign settings of the time, DARK SUN had a strong metaplot, and the situation in the city-states of Athas changed dramatically from sourcebook to sourcebook. This update provides a stable starting point, but what happens to the

world of Athas from this point forward is up to you.

RACES OF ATHAS

There are twelve PC races to choose from in the DARK SUN campaign. DARK SUN PC races—even those from the *Player's Handbook* and *Expanded Psionics Handbook*—are often more powerful than their standard versions, and all have a level adjustment of +1 or +2. The harsh world of DARK SUN produces tough people, and characters in the campaign begin play able to face greater threats. For fans of the old DARK SUN setting, this emulates the tougher races it presented and the rule that players must begin play with 4th-level characters.



Aarakocras

The winged birdmen known as aarakocras are a rare sight in the settled parts of Athas. Only aarakocra travelers, traders, diplomats, and exiles spend much time among the city-states.

Personality: A typical aarakocra is known for his need for freedom, both in the literal and figurative sense. Most aarakocras are quite claustrophobic and intensely uncomfortable when restrained in any way; they also dislike long-term obligations to others, and many become depressed or suicidal when pressed into military service or slavery.

Physical Description: An aarakocra's arms form the leading edge of his wings, which also attach to his torso at the hips. About midway along each wing is a clawed hand with fine motor ability rivaling that of a human. When flying, aarakocras can manipulate items in their foot-talons as well as they could if they were holding them in their hands.

An aarakocra's plumage varies from white to bluish-gray.

Relations: Aarakocras tend to get along well with most other races. Because they come from isolated communities far north of the city-states, they are sometimes surprised by the quirks of other races.

Alignment: Aarakocra society is loosely knit and seminomadic,

so aarakocras have a tendency to be chaotic.

Aarakocra Lands: The vast majority of aarakocras come from a region hundreds of miles north of the Tablelands called Winter Nest. Some few are born in aarakocra trading outposts or diplomatic enclaves in the city-states.

Religion: Some aarakocras rely on clerics of Air for religious guidance, while others heed the teachings of the few druids in their midst. Those aarakocras confronted with the theocracies of the city-states pay only lip service to the notion of worshipping the dragon-kings.

Language: Aarakocras speak their own language, Aarakocra. Most aarakocra in Winter Nest and elsewhere have enough contact with merchants from the city-states that they speak Common as well. An aarakocra's beak has an easier time with the clicking sounds of the Thri-Kreen language than humanoid mouths.

Names: Aarakocras tend to have a single multisyllabic name with lots of vowels and soft consonants in them.

Adventurers: A burning desire to explore and a natural inquisitiveness serve aarakocra adventurers well, although few aarakocras stray from Winter Nest. Those who leave find the city-states fascinating, if puzzling and sometimes dangerous.

Aarakocra Racial Traits

- +4 Dexterity, -2 Strength. Lightweight but fast, aarakocras are built for speed over strength.
- Medium: As Medium creatures, aarakocras have no special bonuses or penalties due to their size.
- Monstrous Humanoid: Because they aren't humanoids, aarakocras are immune to spells such as *charm person* and *hold person*.
- Aarakocras have a base land speed of 20 feet. Their fly speed is 90 feet, with average maneuverability.
- +1 natural armor.
- Natural attacks: A flying aarakocra can attack with two talons, dealing 1d4 points of damage each, or he can use a weapon in his talons. An aarakocra on the ground can wield weapons in his wing-claws at his base attack bonus and

PLACES IN DARK SUN

The following terms appear in various places throughout this article. The short definitions here are further expanded upon in *DUNGEON* #110.

- **Athas:** The world of the DARK SUN campaign setting. It is a desert planet where magic is relatively rare and psionics are as common as heat and sand.
- **City-States:** Seven independent cities, each a small nation unto itself. Six are ruled by dragon-kings and the seventh, Tyr, is called a free city. The cities are Balic, Draj, Gulg, Nibenay, Raam, Tyr, and Unik.
- **Crimson Savannah:** Beyond the Jagged Cliffs is the home of the Kreen Empire, a vast swath of land with reddish soil.
- **Cromlin:** This is a village of silt-skimming sailors on the shores of the Sea of Silt. It is an unruly place, home to those unfit for city life.
- **Forest Ridge:** Likely the largest forest on Athas, Forest Ridge lies just west of the Ringing Mountains and is home to the halfling town of Ogo.
- **Hinterlands:** The uncharted and mostly unknown areas beyond the Ringing Mountains and Forest Ridge. Few who attempt to travel there make it, and fewer still return.
- **Jagged Cliffs:** An area north of the Tablelands and west of the Forest Ridge, this area is infested with halflings.
- **Ledopolus:** The independent towns of North and South Ledopolus form the ancestral home of dwarves. Its leaders are careful not to anger the nearby dragon-kings.
- **Ringing Mountains:** Massive, nearly impassable mountains that form most of the border separating the Tablelands region from the uncivilized Hinterlands.
- **Sea of Silt:** A vast ocean of silt and sand, the Sea stretches from the Tablelands and defines its eastern border. The people of Balic make their living sailing its shallower areas.
- **Tablelands:** What little civilization there is on Athas is concentrated in the 1,000,000 square-mile area called the Tablelands.
- **Tyr Region:** The area around the city-state of Tyr.

DARK SUN WITHOUT PSIONICS

If you want to run a DARK SUN campaign without psionics, you can do so simply by ignoring the references to psionics in the rules presented here. In that case, also remove the elans and maenads from the world, but retain the level adjustments for the races you play with.

attack with his bite as a secondary attack, dealing 1d3 points of damage.

- **Weapon Proficiency:** Aarakocras are proficient with the javelin. Aarakocras learn to use these throwing weapons at an early age.

- **+2 racial bonus on Craft (any one), Knowledge (nature), Listen, and Spot checks.** Aarakocras spend a great deal of their time hunting, building nests, and making tools.

- **Claustrophobic:** Aarakocras suffer a -4 penalty on all attack rolls and skill checks when in an enclosed area.

- **Inborn Power:** Aarakocras gain 3 extra power points at 1st level, regardless of whether they choose a psionic class or not. They can use the power points provided to manifest *elfsight*. If you take levels in a class that offers a repertoire of psionic powers, simply add the 3 power points to your power point total, and add your inborn power to your list of powers known. Aarakocras use their inborn power at a manifester level equal to their character levels. They use Charisma to set the save DC unless they have levels in a psionic class such as psion or psychic warrior that uses a different ability score to set the DC. In that case, they choose either Charisma or the psionic class's relevant ability score to set the save DC.



ECL AND LA

A creature's effective character level (ECL) is the sum of its Hit Dice, level adjustment, and class levels. Use character level for all game functions except awarding experience, determining starting equipment, and determining how much experience the character needs to gain a new level. For all three of those functions, use effective character level instead.

Level adjustment (LA) is a measure of how much more powerful a creature is than other creatures of its Hit Dice. A level adjustment provides a numeric comparison with the seven standard races from the *Player's Handbook*, showing how much "more powerful" that creature is than one of the standard races, in terms of levels.

For more information on ECL and LA, see the *Monster Manual* glossary.



- **Automatic Languages:** Aarakocra and Common. **Bonus Languages:** Auran, Halfling, and Thri-Kreen.

- **Favored Classes:** Ranger.

- **Level Adjustment:** +2.



Dwarves

On Athas, dwarves aren't subterranean miners. They are a long-lived but slowly dying race known for their relentless focus on a single task to the exclusion of all others.

Personality: How a dwarf behaves depends greatly on his focus, a single task that dominates every aspect of his life until it's completed. Each dwarf has a focus that guides his actions during every waking moment. A focus is usually a specific goal, such as "dig a new irrigation ditch," "convince the merchants of House Stel to improve our trade terms," or "slay the gaj that's been terrorizing our outpost."

If you're roleplaying a dwarf, you should be able to describe your current focus in a single sentence without a moment's hesitation. You can change your focus anytime you like simply by telling the DM, although most dwarves don't change their focus until the task is completed or it's apparent that it never will be completed. Think carefully about choosing a focus that'll make your goals diverge from those of the other PCs. Your focus should make for interesting roleplaying, but it shouldn't form a wedge between you and the other players.

Physical Description: Dwarves tend to be shorter and stockier than humans, but their eye, skin and hair color falls into the same ranges as humans. Adult male dwarves all have beards, although most keep them closely trimmed.

Relations: Dwarves categorize people according to their relation to their focuses, not by race, gender, or other characteristics. If someone can aid a dwarf in the resolution of his focus, he'll be at least marginally polite and helpful. However, standing between a dwarf and his focus makes the person an enemy, and not relating to his focus at all makes the being irrelevant.

Alignment: A dwarf's respect for those who fulfill their stated objectives gives most a lawful outlook.

Dwarf Lands: Dwarves are found intermingled with the human populations of the city-states; dwarves do not have communities to call their own anymore. The towns of Ledopolus are an ancestral home of the dwarves, so the dwarven population there is larger than it would be otherwise. In most city-states, dwarves congregate in certain neighborhoods to the exclusion of others.

Religion: Most dwarves worship one of the dragon-kings, although many heed the words of elemental clerics, especially those of earth and fire.

Language: Dwarves have overwhelmingly adopted the language of the humans they live with. They only use their ancestral language of Dwarven among each other and on ceremonial occasions.

Names: Dwarves once had an elaborate naming structure that detailed a particular dwarf's heritage by describing his ancestors. The naming system was unwieldy, however, so it has fallen into disuse, and dwarves have adopted human naming conventions.

Adventurers: Dwarven adventurers are driven by a focus that puts them in harm's way, such as "map the Jagged Cliffs region," "overthrow the dragon-king," or "make enough money to buy the freedom of my family."

Dwarf Racial Traits

Athasian dwarves have all the dwarven racial traits listed in the *Player's Handbook*, except as follows:

- **+4 Constitution, +2 Wisdom, -2 Charisma:** Dwarves are stout and tough but tend to be gruff and reserved.

- **Dwarves lose stonecunning, weapon familiarity, their +2 racial bonus on saving throws against poison, their +1 racial bonus on attack rolls against orcs, their +4 dodge bonus to Armor Class against giants, their +2 racial bonus on Appraise checks, and their +2 racial bonus on Craft checks.**

- **Inborn Power:** Athasian dwarves gain 3 extra power points at 1st level, regardless of whether they choose a psionic class or not. They can use the power points provided to manifest



Elans

vigor. If you take levels in a class that offers a repertoire of psionic powers, simply add the 3 power points to your power point total, and add your inborn power to your list of powers known. Dwarves use their inborn power at a manifester level equal to their character levels. They use Charisma to set the save DC unless they have levels in a psionic class such as psion or psychic warrior that uses a different ability score to set the DC. In that case, they choose either Charisma or the psionic class's relevant ability score to set the save DC.

- +2 racial bonus on saving throws against psionic powers, spells, and spell-like effects: Dwarves have an innate resistance to magic spells and psionic powers.

- Focus: Dwarves are notoriously single-minded, focusing on one task to the exclusion of others. This focus is something that can be simply stated, such as "overthrow the government," "get the caravan to Urik," or "find the twelve ruby chrysalises." Dwarves gain a +4 racial bonus on Will saves against charm or compulsion effects that would change, delay, or distract from their focus.

- Dwarven Blood: Dwarves are resistant to venoms and toxins, getting a +4 racial bonus on Fortitude saving throws against poison.

- Automatic Languages: Dwarven and Common. Bonus Languages: Terran.

- Favored Class: Cleric.

- Level Adjustment: +1.

Originally created as a secret network of court agents by a powerful society of psions known as The Order, elans are not born; they are made. It is said that The Order erred when it created the first elans because it gave them too much free will. Some elan enclaves still owe allegiance to The Order, although the group was factionalized and driven underground after a failed plot a century ago. Other elans have turned their backs on The Order and are determined to forge their own destinies in the harsh lands of Athas. The average Athasian has never heard of an elan, but most noble families, merchant houses, and high-ranking templars have learned of their existence within the last few years.

Elans all have one thing in common: previous lives as humans. A special elan council screens living humans from a pool of applicants who've volunteered to make the transition into elans. Those who pass muster undergo a secret psionic process in one of several hidden elan enclaves, where organic life transitions to psionically-energized animation. Newly created elans retain the basic memories and personalities of their previous lives, but they keep none of their class skills, powers or spells (if any), or previous class abilities. Elans are a secretive lot in this regard, and they do

not publicly reveal their enclaves or places of making. If one is to become elan, he is usually selected. Thus, elans do not reproduce biologically, but rather psionically, through the *transition life* power. Even then, their "children" are usually fully-grown adult humans. Non-human elans are never created, and it could be that the *transition life* power simply doesn't work for any other creatures but those who were originally human.

Personality: Elans are nearly as adaptable, flexible, and ambitious as the humans from which they are made. Because their state of existence sometimes leads other races to think the worst of them, elans practice a certain restraint, especially in regards to their origin. Otherwise, their personalities vary widely.

Physical Description: Elans typically stand just under 6 feet tall and weigh about 180 pounds, with men sometimes taller and heavier than women, but not always. Because new elans are selected, those who choose currently favor elans with pale skin, reddish hair, and a youthful quality. However, the first elans vary in looks as widely as humans. Elans dress in the styles similar to humans, including the adoption of unusual hairstyles, fanciful clothes, tattoos, body piercing, and the like. Elans have unlimited lifespans—as long as they are not destroyed, their mental arts could conceivably continually energize and rebuild their bodies for over a thousand years.

RACIAL ABILITY ADJUSTMENTS

Race	Racial		Ability Adjustments	Favored Class
	LA	HD		
Aarakocra	+2	—	+4 Dexterity, -2 Strength	Ranger
Dwarf	+1	—	+4 Constitution, +2 Wisdom, -2 Charisma	Cleric
Elan	+1	—	+2 Wisdom	Psion
Elf	+1	—	+4 Dexterity, -2 Constitution	Rogue
Half-elf	+1	—	+2 Dexterity	Any
Half-giant	+1	—	+2 Strength, +2 Constitution, -2 Dexterity	Barbarian
Halfling	+1	—	+2 Dexterity, +2 Wisdom	Druid
Human	+1	—	+2 any score, +2 any other score	Any
Maenad	+1	—	+2 Strength, +4 Charisma	Wilder
Mul	+1	—	+2 Strength, +4 Constitution	Fighter
Pterrhan	+2	—	+2 Strength, +2 Constitution, -2 Wisdom	Barbarian
Thri-kreen	+2	2	+2 Strength, +4 Dexterity, +2 Wisdom, -2 Intelligence, -4 Charisma	Psychic warrior

However, The Order only recently established the first elan enclaves, so no known elans are more than twenty-five years old (not counting their time as humans).

Elans do not sleep as members of other races do. Instead, an elan meditates in a deep trance for 4 hours a day. An elan resting in this fashion gains the same benefit that a human does from 8 hours of sleep. While in trance, an elan concentrates on suffusing his body with psionic energy, healing the hurts and random lacerations of the day, and restoring animation and resiliency to his tissues.

Relations: Elans mix well with members of other races, especially humans. It is probable that their relations would undergo a shift should their true nature become widely known, so one of the essential tenets of elan existence is secrecy.

Alignment: Elans tend toward no particular alignment, not even neutrality. The best and the worst are found among them.

Elan Lands: Wherever humans are found, there, too, are elans.

Religion: Some elans revere the dragon-queen Lalali-Puy because the city of Gulg has the oldest and largest elan enclave. Newer elan enclaves are less likely to serve a dragon-king or elemental power, as they feel that any grace or continued existence they might hope for will depend on their own efforts and continual mastery of inborn psionic talent.

Language: Elans speak Common. They typically learn other languages, including obscure ones, and they are fond of sprinkling their speech with words borrowed from other tongues: Pterran curses, Elven musical expressions, Thri-Kreen military phrases, and so on.

Names: Elan names vary greatly and often are simply the same as the human name they possessed before they crossed into their new existence. This is particularly true when an elan wishes to pick up his old life where he left off. Others view their second chance at existence as an opportunity to start anew and might pick completely new names.

On the other hand, titles are important to the elan, although they are used only

among themselves. Freshly transitioned elans have the title of Newmade, those who have had at least a few years of animate "life" have the title Made, and those over two decades old have the title of Eternal. Those that belong to the group that chooses new elans have the title of Culler (although any elan who knows the power *transition life* might take this title, whether part of the Culler Council or not).

Adventurers: Elan adventurers are akin to humans in their daring and ambition. Because some effects that afflict other races leave elans unscathed, they sometimes seem extraordinarily brave to those who do not know the secret of their existence.

Elan Racial Traits

Athasian elans have all the elan racial traits listed in the *Expanded Psionics Handbook*, except as follows:

- +2 Wisdom. The selection process that creates elans favors those who demonstrate keen perception and insight.
- Automatic Language: Common.
- Bonus Languages: Any (other than secret languages, such as Druidic).
- Favored Class: Psion.
- Level Adjustment: +1.



Elves

On Athas, elves have pointed ears and dwell in the wilderness, but comparisons to traditional fantasy elves end there. The elves of DARK SUN are clannish, nomadic desert-dwellers said to be as fast—and as mercurial—as the sirocco.

Elves are tireless wanderers, scouring the desert sands for whatever sustenance and riches they can find. They travel on foot in tribal groups, engaging in thieving and raiding, then disappear in a cloud of dust. Some tribes trade on a more-or-less regular basis with the city-states, but elves are known for their willingness to fleece customers not of their tribe.

Personality: An elf would rather live a short, happy life among friends than toil for centuries like a dwarf. Many take a perverse pride in the stereotype that labels them as untrustworthy thieves and bandits. Most are pos-

sessed by an incurable wanderlust, always moving on to see what lies beyond the next ridge—or what's in the poorly guarded caravan approaching from the west.

Physical Description: Elves are tall and lean beyond what would be possible for humans, but their slim frames hide a deceptive, wiry strength. Both males and females wear their hair long. Facial hair never grows on their pale skin. They favor voluminous robes that protect them from the wind and sand.

Relations: It is said that the only thing harder than finding an elf you can trust is finding an elf who trusts you. Elves either ignore or hold in contempt those not of their tribe, especially nonelves. An elf living among other races carefully tests the friendship of would-be allies before letting his guard down.

Alignment: Elves tend strongly toward chaotic alignments. Whether elves are good or evil depends on what's standing between them and their next drink of water.

Elven Lands: Some elven tribes have taken up residence in the city-states—usually in their own ghetto—but most roam the sandy wastes, coming into the cities only to trade. Many tribes of elven bandits congregate along major trade routes where they can pick off heavily laden caravans.

Religion: Few elves serve the dragon-kings—or anyone else for that matter. Many of the larger tribes have druids that provide a measure of spiritual guidance, and clerics of fire and earth aren't unheard of either.

Language: Elven is the elves' native tongue, a vowel-heavy language with a singsong quality. Most elves speak at least a smattering of Common as well, whether to demand valuables from bandit victims or strike a better deal in a city-state's bazaar.

Names: Elves take a simple name in their own language, and among the tribe they'll append a descriptive term, such as "Vilyaa the Tall," if a particularly common name is causing confusion. Elves separated from their tribe often take the tribe's name as a de facto last name. Tribe names include Night Runners, Silt Stalkers, Silver Hands, Sky Singers, Water Hunters, and Wind Dancers. Many elven names

have doubled vowels, indicating that the vowel sound is stretched out slightly.

Adventurers: An elf's wanderings often develop into adventures whether he likes it or not. Some elves can't resist the temptation to fleece locals as they travel, while others find themselves the target of prejudiced harassment.

Elf Racial Traits

Athasian elves have all the elven racial traits listed in the *Player's Handbook*, except as follows:

- **+4 Dexterity, -2 Constitution:** Elves are graceful but frail. An elf's grace makes her naturally better at stealth and archery.

- **Elves lose their +2 racial bonus against enchantment.**

- **Elf base land speed is 40 feet.** At 10th level, it increases to 50 feet.

- **Elf-Running:** Athasian elves gain Endurance as a bonus feat, for they are accomplished long-distance runners.

- **Inborn Power:** Athasian elves gain 3 extra power points at 1st level, regardless of whether they choose a psionic class or not. They can use the power points provided to manifest their *conceal thoughts* power. If you take levels in a class that offers a repertoire of psionic powers, simply add the 3 power points to your power point total, and add your inborn power to your list of powers known. Elves use their inborn power at a manifester level equal to their character levels. They use Charisma to set the save DC unless they have levels in a psionic class such as psion or psychic warrior that uses a different ability score to set the DC. In that case, they choose either Charisma or the psionic class's relevant ability score to set the save DC.

- **Weapon Proficiency:** Elves receive the Martial Weapon Proficiency feats for the falchion, rapier, scimitar, longbow (including composite longbow), and shortbow (including composite shortbow) as bonus feats. Elves esteem the arts of swordplay and archery, so all elves are familiar with these weapons.

- **+2 racial bonus on Listen, Search, and Spot checks.** At 5th level, these racial bonuses increase to +4, and at 15th level these racial bonuses increase to +6.

- **Elven Discernment:** Elves are highly attuned to their environment, and they have an instinctive sense that detects when things are out of place. Elves gain a +2 bonus on saves against illusion spells and effects.

- **Automatic Languages:** Elven and Common. **Bonus Languages:** Gith and Ptarran.

- **Favored Class:** Rogue.

- **Level Adjustment:** +1.



Half-Elves

The half-elves of Athas have no true home: They are regarded as outsiders in both the human-dominated city-states and the elven tribes of the wilderness. Unlike their parents, half-elves have no culture or community to call their own, but the flip side to being an outsider is being able to come and go as you please. Just to get through the day in a world that regards them as half-breed mongrels, half-elves have become adept socially, using keen perception and a diplomatic demeanor to deflect prejudice.

Personality: Most half-elves grew up as orphans or in broken homes, and most live uneasy lives in human or elven communities that don't truly accept them. Thus, a half-elf tends to be very loyal when he makes friends.

Physical Description: Half-elves look like thin humans with slightly pointed ears.

Relations: Half-elves generally get along well with most other races, especially muls and half-giants, their fellow crossbreeds. They often grow frustrated with human and elven prejudice.

Alignment: Half-elves have no affinity for a particular alignment.

Half-Elven Lands: Because they have a hard time keeping up with elven tribes in the wilderness, most half-elves live in the human city-states. They are too widely scattered to form their own communities, instead living as best they can within human society.

Religion: There are more half-elves than one might expect among the ranks of the templars, because a regimented life spent in dragon-king worship avoids

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many of the day-to-day difficulties of being a half-elf. Those half-elves who embrace their outcast nature often become elemental clerics, because fire, wind, water, and earth regard half-elves for who they are, not for who their parents were.

Language: Half-elves speak Common. Those with connections to the elven tribe of a parent learn Elven as well.

Names: Half-elves adopt the naming conventions of whatever society they live in.

Adventurers: Almost by definition, half-elves have to make their own way in the world, without a family or community to help them. Thus, the adventurer's life appeals to many.

Half-Elf Racial Traits

Athasian half-elves have all the half-elven racial traits listed in the *Player's Handbook*, except as follows:

- **+2 Dexterity.** Half-elves gain some of the agility of their elven parents.
- **Half-elves lose their +2 bonus against enchantment effects.**
- **Immunity to sleep effects.**
- **Inborn Power:** Athasian half-elves gain 3 extra power points at 1st level, regardless of whether they choose a psionic class or not. They can use the power points provided to manifest their *psionic charm* power. If you take levels in a class that offers a repertoire of psionic powers, simply add the 3 power points to your power point total, and add your inborn power to your list of powers known. Half-elves use their inborn powers at a manifester level equal to their character levels. They use Charisma to set the save DC unless they have levels in a psionic class such as *psion* or *psychic warrior* that uses a different ability score to set the DC. In that case, they choose either Charisma or the psionic class's relevant ability score to set the save DC.

At 5th level, half-elves gain an additional 3 psionic power points and the *detect hostile intent* power. At 10th level, half-elves gain an additional 5 psionic power points and the *danger sense* power. At 15th level, half-elves gain an additional 7 psionic power points and the *aura sight* power. As with other inborn powers, if the half-elf character has psionic classes that pro-

vide knowledge of higher-level powers, simply combine the power points and inborn powers known with those attained from the class.

- **+2 racial saving throw bonus against illusion spells or effects, due to the discernment that is part of their elven heritage.**
- **Automatic Languages:** Common. **Bonus Languages:** Any (other than secret languages, such as *Druidic*).
- **Favored Class:** Any.
- **Level Adjustment:** +1.



Half-Giants

Half-giants were force-bred into existence by the cruel dragon-kings. Intended as a force of gigantic warriors and laborers, half-giants are crosses between humans and giants. With the creation of their race came also the inception of strife, as with any people kept in bondage. Some half-giants found that a relic of their forced breeding had engendered within them a spark of secret power. So it is that some half-giants flee their circumstances and seek new lands where they are free to discover their own destinies.

Personality: For the most part, half-giants retain human sensibilities. They are curious, interested in cooperation and communication, and tend to be kind (of course, there are exceptions). Because many half-giants are refugees from their former days of bondage, where they could pass down few traditions, they are quick to pick up the local tastes, morals, customs, and habits of the area in which they settle down.

Physical Description: Half-giants typically stand from 7 to 8 feet tall and weigh from 250 to 400 pounds, with men noticeably taller and heavier than women. Most half-giants have tightly braided black hair with deep coppery complexions. Half-giants often effect grandiose dress when they can afford to do so, sporting fanciful or intimidating clothing. Half-giants have longer lifespans than humans, achieving adulthood at about age 20 and usually living a little over a century.

Relations: Most other humanoids are put off by half-giants, due to their abnormally large size. However, assuming introductions can be made without violence, many find half-giants of good alignments to be outgoing, kind creatures.

Alignment: Half-giants have a slight tendency toward good alignments, but as always, there are bad apples whose hearts have been twisted by slavery.

Half-Giant Lands: Enslaved half-giants live in the human cities, where most are the property of templars. Those who've escaped or were born free tend to live in settlements in the deepest parts of hot deserts.

Religion: Freed half-giants, as a race, have a particular disdain for religion, sometimes going out of their way to speak badly of a dragon-king. It's not that they don't believe; it's that they don't believe that a dragon-king has the best interests of its worshipers at heart. Half-giants still in bondage openly worship the dragon-king who rules them; some truly believe in their hearts while others just go through the motions.

Language: Half-giants speak Common, plus any languages their masters taught them or that they learned in the wild.

Names: Half-giants have a childhood name and a given name, usually given by friends or the community in which the half-giant grew up. Most half-giant names reflect some aspect of the desert that half-giants inhabit, although a few place names are sometimes thrown in.

Adventurers: Half-giants have wandered far to found their current desert settlements. For many, wanderlust is a way of life, and seeking after glory, fortune, or even a life of high adventure is something every half-giant can understand and accept. Most half-giants, however, are content to stay in their settlements and listen to the tales of far-away lands from those who've adventured there.

Half-Giant Racial Traits

Athasian half-giants have all the half-giant racial traits listed in the *Expanded Psionics Handbook*, except as follows:

- **Automatic Language:** Common. **Bonus Languages:** Dwarven and Giant.
- **Favored Class:** Barbarian.
- **Level Adjustment:** +1.



Halflings

Feral creatures who live in the few forests remaining in the world of DARK SUN, the halflings of Athas are out of place in the city-states of the Tablelands. Yet, like how a wild creature held in a zoo can adapt to its surroundings, so too can a halfling find adventure in the cities, as well as the deserts, of DARK SUN.

Personality: Stories, song, and fine arts are of paramount importance to halflings, who have a rich oral history and collection of mythic tales. Halflings often feel sorry for creatures who have to scabble madly for water and food, as they have little difficulty obtaining either in their forest homes. This attitude sometimes appears patronizing to others.

Physical Description: Halfling physiology is as described in the *Player's Handbook*. On Athas, many halflings decorate their skin with war-paint, tattoos, and piercings.

Relations: Halflings have a mixture of pity and curiosity about the people of the city-states, but they're socially aware enough to realize that they will always be a novelty to the larger races. After they've been among humans and other races for a while, most halflings overhear enough tales about cannibal halflings to last a lifetime. However, most don't foul their dealings with those they meet by telling them that most of those stories are true.

Alignment: Halflings have no particular alignment preference, although those who travel to the city-states have a tendency to be more chaotic than those who remain in their forest homes.

Halfling Lands: Halflings are native to the Forest Ridge, a wooded mountain range northwest of the city-states. There the halflings have many villages and even larger settlements.

Religion: Halflings let their village druids tend to their spiritual needs, although elemental clerics are not unheard of. Rare indeed is the halfling who venerates a dragon-king.

Language: Halflings speak their own language. Those who travel to the city-states pick up at least conversational Common from traveling merchants and other envoys from the Tablelands.

Names: Halfling names reflect their tribal heritage, full of aggressive consonants and references to the natural world. Common appellations include Windborne Garkala, Kaishak Treetopper, and Shethac Two-Streams.

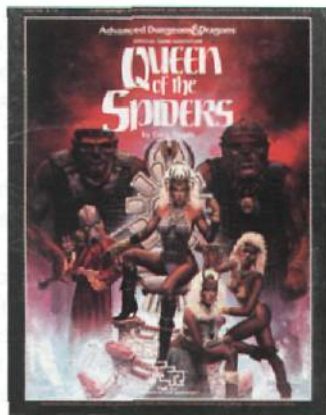
Adventurers: Halflings usually have a reason for leaving their forest homes beyond "I'm looking for adventure." Some are voluntary exiles, others are (or were) attached to diplomatic or trading missions, and some are on the run from a dark fate that awaits them back in the forest.

Halfling Racial Traits

Athasian halflings have all the halfling racial traits listed in the *Player's Handbook*, except as follows:

- **+2 Dexterity, +2 Wisdom:** Halflings are quick, agile, and good with ranged weapons. They also tend to be perceptive and strong-willed.
- **Inborn Power:** Halflings gain 3 extra power points at 1st level, regardless of whether they choose a psionic class or not. They can use the power points provided to manifest their *missive* power. If you take levels in a class that offers a repertoire of psionic powers, simply add the 3 power points to your power point total, and add your inborn power to your list of powers known. Halflings use their inborn power at a manifester level equal to their character levels. They use Charisma to set the save DC unless they have levels in a psionic class such as psion or psychic warrior that uses a different ability score to set the DC. In that case, they choose either Charisma or the psionic class's relevant ability score to set the save DC.
- **+2 racial bonus on Climb, Jump, and Move Silently checks:** Halflings are agile, surefooted, and athletic. At 5th level, these bonuses increase to +4. At 10th level, a halfling can make a standing long jump as if it were a running long jump and can engage in accelerated climbing without suffering the -5 penalty. At 15th level, the Climb, Jump, and Move Silently racial bonuses increase to +8.
- **Automatic Languages:** Halfling and Common. **Bonus Languages:** Aarakocran, Ancient Halfling, and Ptteran.
- **Favored Class:** Druid.
- **Level Adjustment:** +1.

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Humans

Humans are the dominant culture in the explored parts of Athas. Among the races, they are known for their versatility and willingness to adapt to the harsh realities of life on Athas.

Personality: Humans tend to be ambitious and individualistic; even the tyranny of the dragon-kings hasn't stamped out human 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," they say with a shrug whenever humans take some action for no apparent reason.

Physical Description: Humans on Athas tend to be dark-skinned with brown or black hair, although exceptions exist. Templar and noble humans tend to display the greatest variety of hair and skin coloration.

Relations: Humans tend to get along well with the races they come along with (dwarves, muls, elans, and maenads), although their friendly attitude sometimes seems patronizing. Half-giants and thri-kreen are regarded as somewhat fearsome and dangerous. Elves, and to a lesser degree half-elves, are considered flighty and untrustworthy. Aarakocras, halflings, and pterrans are viewed as fascinating and exotic.

Alignment: Humans have no natural alignment tendencies, although the culture of each city-state pressures its inhabitants to adopt the alignment of its dragon-king.

Human Lands: Most humans live in one of the seven city-states: Balic, Draj, Gulg, Nibenay, Raam, Tyr, and Urik. Others live in the smaller outposts and communities near oases in the desert, and some few are part of hunter-gatherer tribes in the heart of the wasteland.

Religion: Most humans worship (or at least venerate) the dragon-king of the city-state where they live. Some few follow the teachings of elemental clerics or join the druids in their nature-worship.

Language: Humans speak Common, the trade tongue, which is by far the most prevalent language on Athas. Most can read and write—even slaves are

taught basic literacy so they can read various signs and inscriptions.

Names: For most humans, a single name suffices. Templars often take an honorific based on their rank in the religious hierarchy. Nobles also have a family name, which is generally referred to after the word "of," as in "Agis of Asticles." Members of a merchant house take the house's name as their own last name. Freeman occasionally refer to their occupations to avoid confusion, as in "Barek the Weaver."

Adventurers: Human adventurers tend to be daring and relentless no matter why they're adventuring—whether for fame, fortune, or belief in a cause. Their versatility makes them suited to any class.

Human Racial Traits

Athasian humans have all the human racial traits listed in the *Player's Handbook*, except as follows:

- +2 any ability score, +2 any other ability score. As the most varied race, humans have no consistent racial modifiers, but every human has some innate talent.
- **Inborn Powers:** Humans gain 3 extra power points at 1st level, regardless of whether they choose a psionic class or not. Humans may choose any 1st-level power from the psion/wilder power list to become their inborn power, which they can manifest using their power points. Only humans have the ability to choose—the other races' choices are predetermined. If you take levels in a class that offers a repertoire of psionic powers, simply add the 3 power points to your power point total, and add your inborn power to your list of powers known. Humans use their inborn powers at a manifester level equal to their character levels. They use Charisma to set the save DC unless they have levels in a psionic class, such as psion or psychic warrior, that uses a different ability score to set the DC. In that case, they choose either Charisma or the psionic class's relevant ability score to set the save DC.

At 5th level, humans gain an additional 3 psionic power points and a 2nd-level power from the psion power list. At 10th level, humans gain an additional 5 psionic power points and a 3rd-level

power from the psion power list. At 15th level, humans gain an additional 7 psionic power points and a 4th-level power from the psion power list. As with other inborn powers, if the human character has psionic classes that provide knowledge of higher-level powers, simply combine the power points and inborn powers known with those attained from the class.

- **Automatic Language:** Common.
- **Bonus Languages:** Any (other than secret languages, such as Druidic).
- **Favored Class:** Any.
- **Level Adjustment:** +1.



Maenads

Maenads are a race of wildly emotional creatures who are known for the rare times that their legendary restraint breaks, allowing a flood of emotional turmoil to surface, often in acts of stunning bravery or violence. Maenads have a strong martial bent, useful for venting the emotional boil they constantly keep at bay.

Maenads know not the source of the spiritual anger they all keep bottled away, but part of it is undoubtedly that, as a race, they were trapped on a featureless demiplane of crystal and dust by a higher power. Early in the year of Priest's Contemplation, the dragon-king Andropinus escaped from his banishment to The Black (described in the Athasian Cosmology section in *DUNGEON* #110), bringing with him an army of maenads he discovered during his imprisonment. At first, the maenad legions conquered the city-state of Balic in Andropinus' name, but they have since spread across the Tablelands. Not all owe allegiance to Andropinus anymore, as the dragon-king seems more interested in reestablishing his control over his old subjects than considering the welfare of those he brought to Athas. Many maenads who regarded Andropinus as a savior are now disillusioned by his cruelty and saddened by the harsh land that is their new home.

Personality: Maenads seem discreet and calm, even restrained and undemonstrative, unwilling to use a sentence

where a word will do, and happier with a gesture if words can be dispensed with altogether. Their apparent calm is at odds with their more fiery reputation. However, in order to maintain a life in civilized lands and even (or especially) among themselves, maenads must practice a discipline of mental calm, lest the furies of their racial memory break forth. They are slow to make friends for this reason, but come to regard as family those that understand and accept them despite their occasional lapses.

Physical Description: Maenads are tall and have a wiry strength, standing about 5 1/2 to 6 1/2 feet tall, and typically weighing 145 to 220 pounds. Maenad men are the same height as, and only marginally heavier than, maenad women. Maenads have no facial or body hair, but usually wear the dark hair on their heads long and braided. Their skin is dusted with a peculiar sparkle, as of gem dust, giving them a striking luster in the right light. This sparkle is a natural component of their skin, which is flecked with tiny living crystals. Maenads possess grace and fine features. They prefer heavier clothes, and armor, if possible. A maenad achieves adulthood at about 25 years of age and can live to be over 150 years old.

Relations: Maenads are most comfortable with humans, finding their various temperaments similar to their own. They respect the dwarven ability to hold a grudge, but they find halflings rather silly. The other races they take as they find them, although maenads are particularly taken with elves, because the unconscious elven lightness of being is a balm to the maenad spirit. Maenads don't dislike aarakocras or thri-kreen, but they have a hard time understanding their ways.

Alignment: Maenads know that self-control is their best method of living a fulfilling life. Thus, they lean strongly toward law. Generally, they value and protect others' self control as well as their own, and so are more often good than not.

Maenad Lands: Maenads mostly live near Balic in communities of less than three hundred, where their well-hidden villages blend into the desert wastes. They hunt game and are beginning to

work small farms on the fringe of Andropinus' territory.

Maenads encountered in other lands are usually refugees, warriors for hire, or adventurers.

Religion: Some maenads still serve Andropinus, while others respond to the entreaties of the druids or of elemental clerics. Water clerics are particularly welcome among the maenads, for maenad elders say their original homeland was an archipelago teeming with life and sun.

Language: Maenads speak Maenadi, a language of strict grammar. Chants play an important part in their songmaking and literature. They have their own script, which looks surprisingly similar to Elven.

Names: Maenad names are given and used much like human names. Every maenad has at least one given name, and a family name.

Adventurers: Maenads take up adventuring out of a desire to travel and see more of the world. Moreover, some maenads tend to get along easier with other races less given to inner rage than themselves. However, maenads also are adept with the sword and some psionic power, and adventuring allows them to utilize these skills.

Maenad Racial Traits

Athasian maenads have all the maenad racial traits listed in the *Expanded Psionics Handbook*, except as follows:

- +2 Strength, +4 Charisma. Maenads tend to be physically fit, and they have forceful personalities.
- Automatic Languages: Maenadi, Common. Bonus Language: Elven.
- Favored Class: Wilder.
- Level Adjustment: +1.



Muls

Sterile crossbreeds of humans and dwarves, muls have great stamina. Accordingly, the templars, noble families, and merchant houses breed them as slaves. Many of the same attributes that make them effective manual laborers serve them well in gladiator arenas.

Personality: Muls often have gruff, taciturn personalities, seen as a sort of

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social defense mechanism in the slave pits most call home. Many lash out in spite whenever they can avoid the consequences, having never known a friend or companion. Those muls who have escaped the toil of the typical slave (usually by excelling as a gladiator, being set free, or escaping) handle social situations better, but most remain wary of strangers and anyone who hasn't proven their trustworthiness.

Physical Description: Muls have a fast metabolism, so most of them are squat and muscular, with broad shoulders and very little body fat. Were it not for their pronounced brow ridges, slightly pointed ears, and lack of body hair, they could pass for human.

Relations: Muls are somewhat antisocial, but they don't have a particular enmity for any race. They get along slightly better with their forebears (humans and dwarves) and half-giants, who are often fellow slaves.

Alignment: The taskmaster's whip has instilled a lawful attitude in most muls, although those who have fled from slavery are usually chaotic (ex-slaves almost always have a hard time with authority figures). Mul slaves who are treated poorly—which are almost all of them—can nurture such hatred and spite in their hearts that they become evil.

Mul Lands: Muls have no culture of their own; they're entirely products of the city-states where they're bred. Some escaped slaves make a home for themselves among the desert tribes, but because no mul can start a family, they have no place to call their own.

Religion: Most muls are heavily indoctrinated into the worship of whichever dragon-king rules the city-state where they were born. Like half-giants, some enthusiastically take to the state religion, while others curse it under their breath each day.

Language: Muls are taught Common in the slave pits. If they learn other languages, it's often from captured slaves.

Names: Muls favor one simple name, generally a human one. They don't have families, so they don't take last names except in unusual circumstances. To avoid confusion, some muls will add an appellation such as "Rikus the Gladiator" or "Kalaa the Stone-Grinder."

Adventurers: Muls generally come to the adventurer's lifestyle in one of three ways. Some escape slavery and must remain one step ahead of their former masters. Others win their freedom through luck or skill—often by success in the gladiator arena. Finally, some are former soldiers under the command of the dragon-kings or in the pay of the merchant houses.

Mul Racial Traits

- **+2 Strength, +4 Constitution.** Muls are strong and known for their great stamina.

- **Medium:** As Medium creatures, muls have no special bonuses or penalties due to their size.

- **Mul base land speed is 30 feet.**

- **Hardy:** Muls need only half as much rest to eliminate the effects of fatigue and exhaustion.

- **Faster Natural Healing.** Muls heal damage at twice the normal rate, recovering 2 hit points per level per day. At 10th level they gain fast healing 1, and at 15th level they gain fast healing 3.

- **Inborn Power:** Muls gain 3 extra power points at 1st level, regardless of whether they choose a psionic class or not. They can use the power points provided to manifest their *offensive prescience* power. If you take levels in a class that offers a repertoire of psionic powers, simply add the 3 power points to your power point total, and add your inborn power to your list of powers known. Muls use their inborn power at a manifest level equal to their character level. They use Charisma to set the save DC unless they have levels in a psionic class such as psion or psychic warrior that uses a different ability score to set the DC. In that case, they choose either Charisma or the psionic class's relevant ability score to set the save DC.

- **Automatic Language:** Common.

Bonus Language: Dwarven.

- **Favored Classes:** Fighter.

- **Level Adjustment:** +1.



Pterranns

Reptilian creatures from the Hinterlands, pterranns are a rare sight among the city-states of Athas. A massive earth-

quake in the year of Desert's Fury shook pterrann society out of its isolation; many young pterranns now leave their villages and explore the strange wonders of the rest of Athas.

Personality: Pterranns tend to be wary and subdued at first meeting, and most never get used to the stares of every passerby. Among other pterranns and trusted friends, though, most pterranns are open and caring. They have a subconscious politeness of demeanor, giving thanks for the smallest kindness.

Physical Description: Pterranns stand about 5 1/2 to 6 feet tall, and have light brown, scaly skin, three-fingered talon-like hands (with opposable thumbs) and three-toed feet. Vestigial leathery flaps of skin hang down under their thin arms. Their snouts are beaklike and long, and their narrow heads and long necks give them a birdlike profile.

Relations: Pterranns have been isolated long enough that they don't have any particular racial friendships or enmities, with two exceptions. The pterranns' villages have suffered from thri-kreen raider attacks of late, making the average pterrann regard thri-kreen as dangerous bandits. Halfling culture and pterrann culture have many parallel spiritual aspects, so pterranns get along well with halflings.

Alignment: Pterranns have an ingrained tendency to make sacrifices for the welfare of others, so most are good. They show no proclivity toward law or chaos.

Pterrann Lands: Lost Scale and Pterrann Vale are the two known pterrann villages. All pterranns hail from there.

Religion: Pterrann druids wield great spiritual influence in Lost Scale and Pterrann Vale, and most pterranns celebrate the "Earth Mother" with brief prayers and ceremonies several times a day. Pterrann travelers generally find worship of the dragon-kings distasteful, although they might swallow their abhorrence for the sake of politeness.

Language: Pterranns have their own tongue, but they're the only ones who use it. They've begun teaching Common to everyone in the community so they can better deal with the outside world.

Names: Pterranns use family names first, followed by a personal name that's often descriptive rather than abstract

(Ptellac Coldeye, for example, is the brother of Ptellac Greentail and Ptellac Flinttooth). Few Athasians understand the distinction, however, and call their pterranean companions by their family names.

Adventurers: Pterranean culture is actively sending out young members of the community to learn more about the world. Pterranean PCs are likely part of this wave of travelers.

Pterranean Racial Traits

- +2 Strength, +2 Constitution, -2 Wisdom. Pterraneans are physically powerful, but not particularly observant or willful.
- Medium: As Medium creatures, pterraneans have no special bonuses or penalties due to their size.
- Reptilian: Pterraneans have the reptilian subtype.
- Pterranean base land speed is 30 feet.
- +5 natural armor bonus: The thick skin and scales of a pterranean make them difficult to harm.
- Natural attacks: A pterranean can attack with two talons, dealing 1d4 points of damage each, or he can use a weapon in his talons. He can also attack with his bite as a secondary attack, dealing 1d3 points of damage.
- Because of their tails, pterraneans have a +4 racial bonus on Balance and Jump checks.
- Inborn Power: Pterraneans gain 3 extra power points at 1st level, regardless of whether they choose a psionic class or not. They can use the power points provided to manifest their *burst* power. If you take levels in a class that offers a repertoire of psionic powers, simply add the 3 power points to your power point total, and add your inborn power to your list of powers known. Pterraneans use their inborn power at a manifester level equal to their character levels. They use Charisma to set the save DC unless they have levels in a psionic class such as psion or psychic warrior that uses a different ability score to set the DC. In that case, they choose either Charisma or the psionic class's relevant ability score to set the save DC.
- Automatic Languages: Pterranean and Common. Bonus Languages: Giant and Gith.
- Favored Classes: Barbarian.
- Level Adjustment: +2.



Thri-kreen

Mantislike creatures from the desert wastes, the thri-kreen are the most alien of the PC races in DARK SUN. They are pack predators with six limbs, a poison bite, and an obsession with hunting.

Personality: Thri-kreen have a pack mentality, and they're always concerned with their position in the "clutch." This makes them good team players, but a thri-kreen in charge expects his orders to be followed without question. Thri-kreen place great importance on knowing where their next meal is coming from. Because they wander in packs, thri-kreen rarely have any possessions they can't easily carry on their backs. They also don't object to eating other intelligent races if no other food source is available. Some thri-kreen hunting packs say elves are particularly delicious.

Physical Description: They have one set of legs they use for locomotion and two pairs of arms for manipulation. They have short antennae, multifaceted eyes, and a yellow, brown, or gray exoskeleton.

Relations: How a thri-kreen relates to others depends entirely on whether they're members of his clutch; thri-kreen apply notions of clutch allegiance to almost every social situation. A thri-kreen will leap to the defense of a clutchmate without question, but anyone outside the clutch is a potential rival.

Alignment: Thri-kreen respect the order of the clutch, so most tend toward a lawful alignment. Thri-kreen don't think of the world in the absolutes of good and evil as do other races, and so they have no tendency toward one or the other (nor even to neutrality).

Thri-Kreen Lands: Beyond the Jagged Cliffs, north of the city-states, are the great mantis-cities of the tohr-kreen, a settled, civilized group of thri-kreen. Most thri-kreen have no permanent communities, wandering wherever good hunting takes them.

Religion: Thri-kreen find worship of the dragon-kings puzzling, because the dragon-kings don't look after their worshippers the way a clutch leader should. Elemental clerics are respected for their

power. Thri-kreen often come into conflict with druids; to a thri-kreen, the animals druids want to protect and preserve are merely tasty meals.

Language: Thri-kreen have no lips and a different tongue than humans have, so they can't make the following sounds: p, b, f, v, m. Their own language, Thri-Kreen, includes a series of clicks and pops that humans have a hard time imitating. Thri-kreen also supplement their verbal communication by emitting pheromones; the pheromone "vocabulary" has only vague, general meanings, but the faint smells enable thri-kreen to express fine shades of meaning and cultural idioms. Only creatures with scent can make out thri-kreen pheromones, and they only understand their meaning if they speak Thri-Kreen.

Names: Thri-kreen have single names that have many glottal stops (denoted with apostrophs) and hard consonant sounds.

Adventurers: Thri-kreen are well suited to the adventurer's life; they're mobile, effective in a fight, and they have a number of useful racial abilities. Furthermore, their clutch-based way of looking at social situations means that they fit in better with a small, egalitarian group than they do a large hierarchy or a teeming city-state.

Thri-Kreen Racial Traits

- +2 Strength, +4 Dexterity, +2 Wisdom, -2 Intelligence, -4 Charisma. Thri-kreen are strong and quick, but they think differently than most humanoids, and have a hard time relating to folk of other races.
- Medium: As Medium creatures, thri-kreen have no special bonuses or penalties due to size.
- Thri-kreen base land speed is 40 feet.
- Immunity to *sleep*. Since thri-kreen do not sleep, they are immune to magic *sleep* effects. A thri-kreen spellcaster still requires 8 hours of rest before preparing spells.
- Darkvision: Thri-kreen can see in the dark up to 60 feet.
- +3 natural armor: A thri-kreen's exoskeleton is resistant to blows.
- Multiple Limbs: Thri-kreen have four arms, and can take the Multiweapon Fighting feat (see the *Monster Manual*)

instead of the Two-Weapon Fighting feat. Thri-kreen can also take the Multiattack feat. These are not bonus feats; thri-kreen characters must spend feat slots to learn these feats.

- **Natural Attacks:** Thri-kreen can attack with four claws and a bite. The claws deal 1d4 damage, and the bite is a secondary attack (-5 penalty on the attack roll, and half Strength bonus on the damage roll) that deals 1d4 damage. A thri-kreen can attack with a weapon (or multiple weapons) at the normal attack bonus and make either a bite or claw attack as a secondary attack. For example, a thri-kreen ranger with the Multiweapon Fighting feat and armed with three short swords could attack with all three swords at a -2 penalty (the normal penalty for fighting with multiple weapons while using light weapons in its off-hands), and also make a bite attack at a -5 penalty.

- **Poison (Ex):** Bite, initial damage 1d6 Dex, secondary damage paralysis, DC 11 + Con modifier. A thri-kreen produces sufficient poison for only one bite per day.

- **Leap (Ex):** Thri-kreen are natural jumpers. They gain a +30 racial bonus on Jump checks.

- **Weapon Familiarity:** The gythka and chatkcha are martial weapons for thri-kreen.

- **Naturally Psionic:** Thri-kreen gain 1 extra power point at 1st level, regardless of whether they choose a psionic class or not. They do not gain an inborn power as other races do, instead receiving a number of psi-like abilities.

- **Psi-like Abilities:** 3/day—chameleon, know direction; 1/day—psionic displacement, metaphysical claw. These abilities are as the powers manifested by a wilder of 1/2 the thri-kreen's Hit Dice (minimum 1st level).

- **Monstrous Humanoid Hit Dice:** Thri-kreen are 2 HD monstrous humanoids before adding any class levels. A thri-kreen character has 2d8 racial Hit Dice, and receives maximum hit points on his first racial Hit Die (but not his first class Hit Die). A thri-kreen's racial Hit Dice also provide a +2 base attack bonus and base saving throws of Fort +0, Ref +3, and Will +3.

- **Racial Skills:** A thri-kreen's monstrous humanoid Hit Dice grant him skill points equal to (2 + Int modifier, minimum 1) × 5. Class skills for these skill points are Balance, Climb, Hide, Jump, Listen, and Spot.

- **Racial Feats:** Thri-kreen gain Deflect Arrows as a racial bonus feat. A thri-kreen's monstrous humanoid levels grant it one feat (although thri-kreen with class levels gain feats based on its total Hit Dice, just like any other character).

- Thri-kreen receive a +4 racial bonus on Hide checks in sandy or arid settings.

- **Automatic Languages:** Thri-Kreen and Common. Bonus Language: Giant and Halfling.

- **Favored Class:** Psychic warrior.

- **Level Adjustment:** +2. 



AGING EFFECTS

Race	Middle Age ¹	Old ²	Venerable ³	Maximum Age
Aarakocra	30 years	50 years	65 years	+2d10 years
Mul	40 years	53 years	80 years	+1d10 years
Pterrhan	30 years	40 years	50 years	+1d10 years
Thri-kreen	25 years	33 years	40 years	+2d8 years

¹ At middle age, -1 to Str, Dex, and Con; +1 to Int, Wis, and Cha

² At old age, -2 to Str, Dex, and Con; +1 to Int, Wis, and Cha

³ At venerable age, -3 to Str, Dex, and Con; +1 to Int, Wis, and Cha

Races from the *Player's Handbook* and *Expanded Psionics Handbook* are as listed in their respective rulebook.



RANDOM STARTING AGES

Race	Adulthood	All Classes
Aarakocra	10 years	+1d4
Mul	15 years	+1d6
Pterrhan	12 years	+1d8
Thri-kreen	4 years	+1d4

Races from the *Player's Handbook* and *Expanded Psionics Handbook* are as listed in their respective rulebook.

RANDOM HEIGHT AND WEIGHT

Race	Base Height	Height Modifier	Base Weight	Weight Modifier
Aarakocra, male	4'4"	+2d8	80 lb.	x (1d6) lb.
Aarakocra, female	5'10"	+2d10	120 lb.	x (2d4) lb.
Mul, male	5'2"	+2d10	200 lb.	x (2d4) lb.
Mul, female	5'0"	+2d10	185 lb.	x (2d4) lb.
Pterrhan, male	5'10"	+2d10	140 lb.	x (2d4) lb.
Pterrhan, female	5'8"	+2d10	115 lb.	x (2d4) lb.
Thri-kreen, male	5'10"	+2d10	160 lb.	x (2d4) lb.
Thri-kreen, female	5'10"	+2d10	160 lb.	x (2d4) lb.

Races from the *Player's Handbook* and *Expanded Psionics Handbook* are as listed in their respective rulebook.



DARK SUN CLASSES

Heroes of a Dying World

by David Noonan • illustrated by Todd Harris and Jason Engle

Players can choose from the base classes listed in the *Expanded Psionics Handbook* and the *Player's Handbook*. The unique nature of the DARK SUN setting leads to some changes to character classes.

BARBARIAN

The two main sources of barbarian characters in the DARK SUN campaign are the slave tribes and hunter-gatherer cultures from beyond the Tablelands.

Slave tribes are groups of escaped slaves and their progeny; they live in the wastes between the city-states, desperately trying to eke out a living as they avoid recapture. Life among the slave tribes is brutal and frequently short. A barbarian PC might be the sole survivor of a natural disaster, slaver attack, or predation by Athas's fearsome monsters. He or she might be exiled from the tribe after a dispute with the chieftain or tribal elders. Because barbarian tribes are generally nomadic, a particular barbarian might return from a long



hunt or scouting expedition to simply find no trace of his or her tribe's encampment.

The forest ridges northwest of the Tyr region have some barbarian halfling tribes, and the Crimson Savannah further northwest is home to thri-kreen barbarians and tribes of other races. Due north of the Tablelands is the unknown; barbarian PCs could hail from there as well. Unlike members of slave tribes, these barbarians will likely be unfamiliar with the customs and power structure of the city-states. If you want to play a stranger-in-a-strange-land PC, choose a barbarian from beyond the Tyr region.

Barbarians otherwise function as described in the *Player's Handbook*.

BARD

While rare, bards do exist on Athas in small, well-organized groups known as troupes. Most bard troupes make their members wealthy not by their frequent performances in the service of nobles and templars, but in their clandestine operations.

As arcane spellcasters with various other abilities, bards work hard to cover their magical abilities with their performances. Spending their lives hiding behind the façade of simple performers, bards learn the intricacies and techniques of covert activities, and as such make excellent spies and assassins. Bards try to keep their abilities secret, despite their fame and familiarity among nobles. Thus, the bard class is relatively unknown by most residents of Athas, as they are seen as mere performers.

Bards otherwise function as described in the *Player's Handbook*.

CLERIC

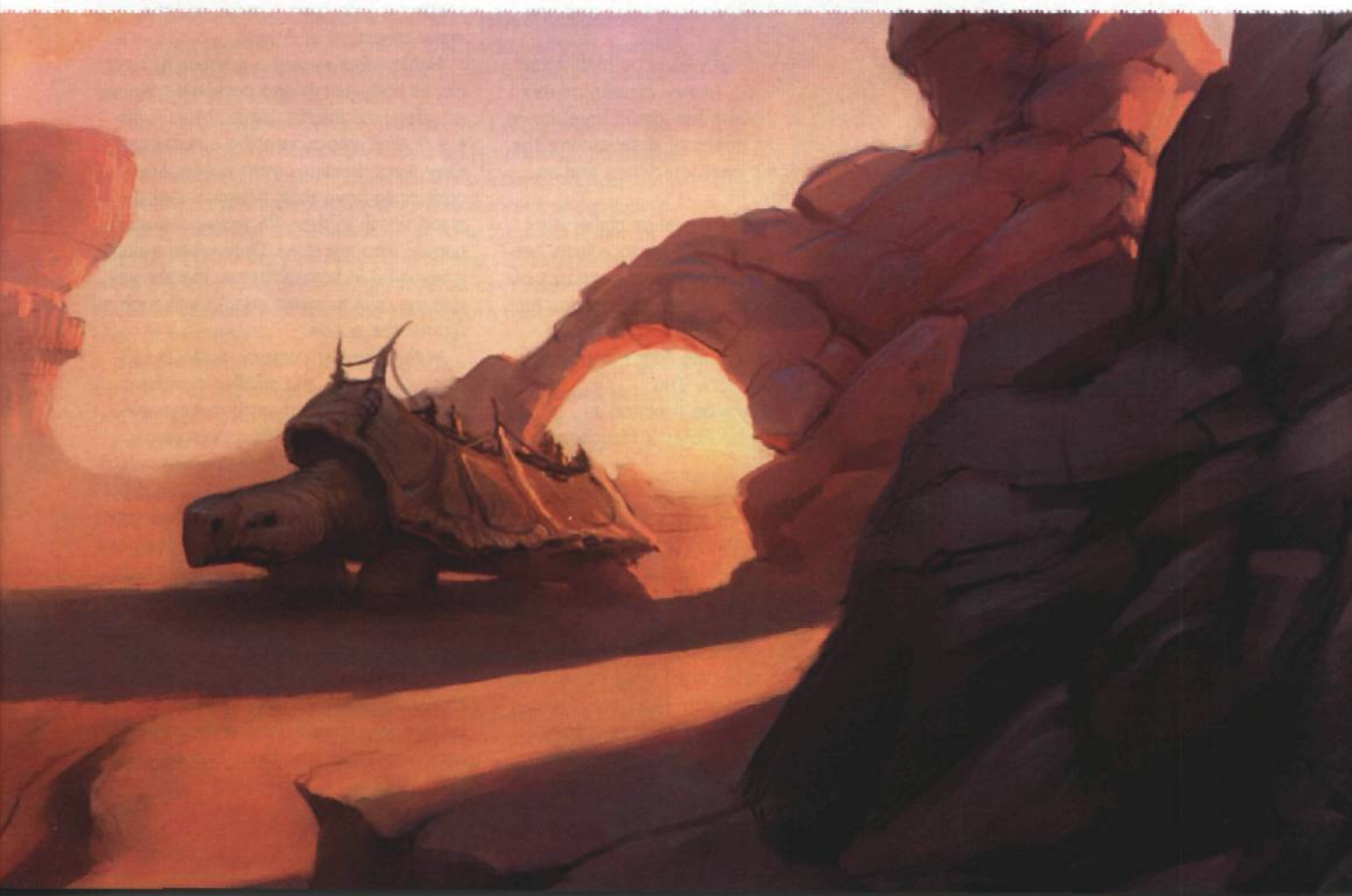
Unlike most D&D campaigns, DARK SUN has no true gods. Instead, clerics draw their power from one of the elemental planes or a dragon-king. Some clerics treat their favored elemental power or dragon king with obeisance akin to worship, while others are more mercenary, describing their relationship in terms of power exchanged for fealty.

A cleric of a particular element must take Air, Earth, Fire, or Water as one of

his domains and can choose any non-elemental domain as his other domain. Elemental clerics tend to be loners, preaching the power of the elements from the wilderness or the street corner. There isn't an organized hierarchy, and there aren't grand temples or cathedrals. Elemental clerics can be of any alignment.

Almost all PC clerics are elemental clerics. The stereotypical elemental cleric is a little crazy, and here's why: To make a pact with the elemental powers, a would-be cleric must put himself completely at the mercy of his chosen element. This means throwing himself 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 an elemental power, obviously—become elemental clerics. Many supplicants fail to capture the attention of the elements and become just one more casualty of the harsh world of Athas.

Clerics of a dragon-king, commonly called templars, control the massive



DRAGON-KING GRANTED DOMAINS

The dragon-kings of the city-states offer the following domains.

Andropinus (Balic): Evil, Law, Travel, War.
Arzetuk (Draj): Destruction, Evil, Magic, Sun.

Dregoth (Raam): Chaos, Death, Evil, Knowledge.

Hamanu (Urik): Evil, Law, Protection, Strength.

Lalali-Puy (Gulg): Evil, Healing, Law, Plant.
Shadow King (Nibenay): Chaos, Evil, Trickery, War.

bureaucracy that runs each city-state. The templars enforce the strict laws of the dragon-king, command the city guard, and otherwise project the will of the dragon-king. Because the dragon-kings are evil, most templars are evil as well, although some neutral templars exist. Depending on their rank within the city-state's bureaucracy, templars usually have a measure of legal authority. Most mid- to high-level templars have the authority to make arrests, seize property, and even render legal judgments on behalf of the dragon-king that rules the city. Even low-level templars can usually give orders to the city guard and arrest free citizens who aren't nobles or merchants.

Dragon-kings don't respond to prayers or grant spells to individual clerics the way most D&D deities do. Each dragon-king controls a conduit to the elemental planes and can grant or deny a templar access to spells with a simple ritual. However, a dragon-king isn't aware of which spells a particular templar is preparing. Dragon-kings can only grant or deny access to the conduit—they don't directly control how the energy passing through the conduit is used.

Clerics otherwise function as described in the *Player's Handbook*.

DRUID

Druids are highly organized in the DARK SUN setting, forming an underground religion that stands in opposition to the dragon-kings and templars. They have

major shrines in the wilderness and form revolutionary cells in the cities.

The DARK SUN game has druids that patrol a specific territory and druids who wander Athas, healing the land as they can. PC druids are generally in the latter camp, but they can expect at least a degree of aid from other druids (how much aid depends on how well they're known in druidic circles).

Animal Companion: A druid may begin play with an animal companion selected from the following list: baazrag, kank, kes'trekel, snake (Small or Medium viper), and yallix.

A druid of 4th level or higher can select an animal from the following list: erdlu, jhakar, monitor lizard, seskarran, and snake (constrictor or Large viper). Doing so adjusts her druid level down by 3 for purposes of determining the companion's characteristics and special abilities.

A druid of 7th level or higher can select an animal from the following list: boneclaw baazrag, crodlu, pterrax, razorwing, and snake (Huge viper). Doing so adjusts her druid level down by 6 for purposes of determining the companion's characteristics and special abilities.

A druid of 10th level or higher can select a cilops, heavy crodlu, or inix. Doing so adjusts her druid level down by 9 for purposes of determining the companion's characteristics and special abilities.

A druid of 16th level or higher can select a mastyril. Doing so adjusts her druid level down by 15 for purposes of determining the companion's characteristics and special abilities.

Animals not in the *Monster Manual* appear in *DUNGEON* #110.

Druids otherwise function as described in the *Player's Handbook*.

FIGHTER

Most fighters in a DARK SUN game are either arena gladiators, soldiers serving in a dragon-king's army, guards of merchant caravans or a noble villa, or mercenaries.

Gladiators tend to focus on melee combat, because that's what the Athasian crowds like to watch. Most are slaves—the property of nobles or merchant houses—but a few have earned their

freedom by fighting particularly well. Free gladiators support themselves with the prizes they earn in the arena or by training new gladiators.

For more information on the gladiator events in a typical Athasian arena, see the *Complete Warrior* or *DRAGON* #303.

The bulk of a city-state's army consists of conscripted slaves with only rudimentary martial training, but each dragon-king also keeps several legions of elite soldiers that constantly drill, parade, and patrol. Among the most famous—or notorious—are Urik's Obsidian Guard and the all-female Shadow Consorts of Nibenay. Most military units are commanded by a high-ranking templar in the service of the ruling dragon-king, but particularly prestigious units receive orders directly from the dragon-king they serve.

The merchant houses of Athas likewise have highly organized caravan guards that function like military units in their own right. Most merchant houses have mounted cavalry guards that patrol ahead of caravans and keep the trade routes clear. They also employ foot soldiers that march along with the caravan, keeping it safe from bandits and the many monsters of Athas.

Nobles also employ a number of fighters as bodyguards and personal retainers to safeguard their holdings. Most fighters regard employment by a noble as easy work, because most nobles are content to have their personal guards stand watch in the villa and occasionally parade through town. Only when a noble is involved in some intrigue, the slaves rise up, or a monster attacks will such a fighter see action.

Within the last century, some enterprising freemen and smaller merchant houses have formed small mercenary companies that offer the services of experienced fighters to nobles, merchant houses, and (in times of war) even the dragon-kings themselves. Individual soldiers of fortune have always existed, but organized units-for-hire are a relatively recent development. Most mercenary companies use armed camps in the desert wastelands as their headquarters, with small business offices in the nearest city-state where they make deals and recruit new troops. Among the mercenary companies, the Black Reavers

northwest of Urik and the all-Maenad Vareshi Brigade (hidden within the walls of Balic) are the most famous.

Fighters function as described in the *Player's Handbook*.

MONK

Large monasteries for training monks don't exist in DARK SUN, and so the monks of Athas learn their techniques directly from lone, more experienced monks.

Popular in the gladiatorial arenas for their skill fighting without weapons or armor, many monks make their living as relatively pampered slaves of powerful nobles and templars. A monk is seen as a less dangerous slave than a psychic warrior, yet one almost equally capable of providing unusual and crowd pleasing martial displays. Athasian monks have no problem using their myriad special abilities to impress a crowd. After all, a popular (and profitable) gladiator slave is a safe, well-cared-for one.

Due to their popularity, monk gladiators are frequently freed in their later years, and most of them train other freemen in their ways. These free monks often follow their teachers into the arenas in search of wealth and further training. Others use their skills to survive the harsh world outside the cities, finding their abilities and discipline boons in the chaotic and unpredictable sands of Athas.

Monks function as described in the *Player's Handbook*.

PALADIN

Like the monk, a paladin relies on her discipline to make sense of a chaotic world. While others might panic when faced by some new and unexpected threat bursting from the sands, the paladin quickly assesses the situation and forms a plan of action.

Athasian paladins don't worship any particular god, but they have a strong and unbending belief in the supremacy of law and goodness.

Paladins are extremely rare in Athas for several reasons. The harsh nature of the desert world puts a high premium on flexibility and adaptability, neither of which the paladin is particularly known for. In addition, dragon-kings take umbrage at a paladin's unerring goodness and continuous striving for the freedom of city-states from the tyranny of dragon-kings. Finally, most paladins are loners, as many beings in Athas can't reconcile the needs of survival with the paladin's stubborn adherence to a strict code of morality.

Special mount: The paladin's special mount is typically a kank (for a Medium paladin) or a baazrag (for a Small paladin). See *DUNGEON* #110 for a description of these creatures.

Paladins otherwise function as described in the *Player's Handbook*.

PSION

Psionics are commonplace in the DARK SUN setting—more so than traditional magic.

Because many residents of the city-states have a little psionic power themselves, psionics are part of everyday life. A resident of Tyr expects a master blacksmith to use *psionic fabricate* in addition to the mundane skills of the smith. Many nobles employ egoist healers to keep themselves healthy and telepaths to keep their slaves in line. Each city-state has one or more colleges and academies devoted to the pursuit of psionic knowledge, and a



FAMILIARS ON ATHAS

The following creatures are available as familiars in a DARK SUN campaign. Each creature is described in detail in *DUNGEON* #110.

Familiar

- Critic lizard
- Floater
- Hurrum, speckled
- Jankx
- Kes'trekel
- Mulworm
- Ramphor
- Snake, Tiny viper
- Z'tal

Special

- Master gains a +2 bonus on Reflex saves
- Master gains a +3 bonus on Sense Motive checks
- Master gains a +3 bonus on Diplomacy checks
- Master gains a +3 bonus on Listen checks
- Master gains a +2 bonus on Fortitude saves
- Master gains +3 hit points
- Master gains a +3 bonus on Spot checks
- Master gains a +3 bonus on Bluff checks
- Master gains a +3 bonus on Intimidate checks

powerful psion can easily find work with a merchant house or noble family.

The templars that rule each city-state don't fully trust powerful psions, however, because they draw power from a source that the dragon-king can't control. Most mid- to high-level psions are watched closely for signs of disloyalty to the city-state. The dragon-kings—powerful psions themselves—are smart enough not to spurn psionic subordinates completely. Most dragon-kings have small cabals of well-trained psions that provide espionage and security.

Psions function as described in the *Expanded Psionics Handbook*.

PSYCHIC WARRIOR

Psychic warriors often belong to one of several esoteric, quasi-religious orders. The dragon-kings tolerate and encourage some psychic orders, while they ruthlessly oppress others; it all depends on how willing the order is to kowtow to the dragon-king and his templars.

Atzetuk, dragon-king of Draj, and Lalali-Puy, dragon-queen of Gulg, have orders of high-level psychic warriors as their personal guards. Because those psychic warriors are ruthlessly indoctrinated to obey their masters without question, it's more likely that PC psychic warriors come from an independent order. The Order of the Feral Claw (in the Forest Ridge northwest of the Tablelands), the Pale Faction (with its secret monasteries in each of the seven city-states), and the Disciples of Szanae (headquartered in Cromlin) train many

psychic warriors and grant their graduates a degree of autonomy. Other groups of psychic warriors form secret cabals devoted to specific martial arts and psionic fighting techniques. Whether they're open or secretive, independent or controlled by a dragon-king, groups of psychic warriors combine rigorous physical training with guided meditations that gradually unlock psionic potential.

Most psychic warriors retain the self-discipline they learned during their initial training and have lawful alignments, although this isn't a requirement. A few psychic warriors have spurned the monastic lifestyle completely and do battle in Athas's gladiator arenas.

Psychic warriors function as described in the *Expanded Psionics Handbook*.

RANGER

Ranger PCs are somewhat more important in a DARK SUN game than in traditional D&D, because more of the action takes place outdoors rather than in a dungeon. The wilds of Athas are a treacherous place, where a party unskilled in survival won't last for more than a day or two.

Most ranger PCs learned their skills while traveling the wastes of Athas as guides, hunters, or scouts for a military organization. Many rangers enjoy good relations with druids, and some gain their first animal companion after a druid shows them how to call one to them. Unlike druids, however, rangers

tend to prefer solitude or small, informal groups. The streets and buildings of an Athasian city seem as dangerous to a typical ranger as the wastes are to a typical citizen of a city-state.

Rangers function as described in the *Player's Handbook*, except that a ranger's choices for animal companions are different (see the Druid section), and the list of potential favored enemies includes different monsters in each category. In other words, some of the obvious choices for favored enemy in standard D&D (evil outsiders, dragons) might come up less in a DARK SUN game.

ROGUE

DARK SUN rogues come from all walks of life: slave, freeman, merchant, and noble. The dominant settings for DARK SUN adventures are the wilderness and the city-states—both places that reward the skilled PC, and no PC has more skill points than a rogue.

Many caravan masters working for one of Athas's merchant houses are mid- to high-level rogues, and most senior members of the merchant class have at least some levels in the rogue class. Those who take valuable cargoes along the dangerous roads of Athas have to be shrewd bargainers, astute wilderness guides, and trained combatants.

Every city-state has one or more thieves' guilds, although they're circumspect enough to avoid the attention of the dragon-king. From their well-hidden lairs, the thieves' guilds often run the black market in everything from arcane spell components to illegal drugs and poisons. Many members are accomplished burglars and bandits, surrendering a percentage of their ill-gotten gains in exchange for the guild's protection and support. Thieves' guilds also fence stolen goods, often selling them to less scrupulous merchant houses whose caravans then spirit the loot out of the city-state.

Rogues function as described in the *Player's Handbook*.

SORCERER

Rarest of the spellcasting classes, sorcerers combine the flexibility of psions with the potentially devastating power of the wizard. The ability to become a

sorcerer seems to occur randomly, and most of those who discover they have the gift do not reveal it to anyone.

Unlike wizards, who typically spend many years honing their craft, sorcerers generally gain their abilities suddenly, during adolescence. Without quite understanding the destructive power they wield, most youths who discover their latent sorcery find it exciting and cast the most powerful spells they can. They often learn the difference between preserving and defiling magic the hard way.

Because of the destruction wrought by defilers, and the difficulty in discovering who has the ability to cast sorcerous spells, every city-state has outlawed sorcery. Known and suspected sorcerers face execution. As a result, sorcerers have learned to hide their spellcasting, by masking their arcane gestures, whispering their verbal components, and hiding on their persons the strange materials and components they need to cast spells. Many attempt to pass themselves as psions, while bolder sorcerers carry a fake spellbook, knowing that the laws are slightly more lenient on wizards than on sorcerers.

Sorcerers function as described in the *Player's Handbook*, except as noted below.

Skills: Sleight of Hand is an additional class skill for sorcerers, who often use it to obscure their somatic gestures from the prying eyes of any nearby templars.

Familiar: Sorcerers can choose animals from the Familiars on Athas table for their familiars. They otherwise follow the rules set out on page 32 of the *Player's Handbook*.

SOULKNIFE

Soulknives are rare on Athas. This poses no particular restriction for PCs, but among the general populace, there simply aren't many soulknives. Most denizens of Athas don't make the distinction between psychic warriors and soulknives, and indeed, few organizations devoted to training would-be soulknives exist.

The Whetstone Temple in Tyr trains soulknives, and claims to be able to teach the ability to manifest a mindblade to anyone willing to undergo their rigorous mental and physical training.

Conversely, the Order of Maulirik in the city-state of Draj contends that only those of certain bloodlines are capable of becoming soulknives, and even then, the ability can lie latent for generations. They use a combination of clairsentient probing and genealogical research to identify those with the potential to become soulknives, then offer membership in the order for those who qualify. Groups of soulknives aren't as well-established as the psychic warrior orders, so most mid- to high-level soulknives are either actively leading such organizations or completely independent of them.

Some soulknives wind up using their martial prowess as gladiators, because the sparkle of their mindblades are sure crowd-pleasers. They also can't be disarmed for more than a few seconds, and a sundered mindblade can simply be reformed with a thought. Soulknife gladiators tend to be patient combatants who wear down their foes gradually.

Other soulknives favor more subtle work. Many high-ranking nobles have been slain by a soulknife who walked into a "safe" area and created a weapon out of thin air.

Soulknives function as described in the *Expanded Psionics Handbook*.

WILDER

Wilder PCs are generally mixed in with their psion brethren. The distinction between wilder and psion is lost on most residents of Athas. Accordingly, NPCs with a level or two of wilder are common in a DARK SUN game.

Among the city-states, the ability to use psionic powers like a wilder seems to emerge in outcasts of one kind or another—often after a physical or emotional trauma of some sort. Folk tales abound involving badly beaten slaves who become wilders and take vengeance on their cruel masters. Slave tribes wandering the desert sometimes find that the combination of heat stroke and starvation causes wilder abilities to emerge.

Finally, maenads seem to have a natural affinity for wilder-style psionics. Among maenads, it's the psions who are rare and the wilders who are relatively common.

Wilders function as described in the *Expanded Psionics Handbook*.

WIZARD

Arcane magic is against the law in most of the city-states of Athas, because the dragon-kings don't want further defiling (other than by themselves), and they're loath to support potential future rivals. In secret, however, wizards still study the arcane arts, gathering in secret cabals or reading ancient texts in solitude.

Except in the city-state of Tyr, using arcane magic is illegal, so by definition most wizards are criminals or rebels. Yet many of the other groups opposed to the rule of the dragon-kings and their templars, such as druids and elemental clerics, distrust wizards because any wizard is a potential defiler of Athas's remaining life energy. Wizards don't even necessarily trust other wizards, because every wizard is sorely tempted by the additional power that defiler magic offers.

Most PC wizards are revolutionaries, working secretly to overthrow the dragon-kings and create a more just society in their place. However, wizards face greater temptations than most characters, because every spell they cast is an opportunity to ravage the planet further in exchange for more power. Only those wizards who never succumb to the temptation have the right to call themselves preservers. All others are, to greater or lesser degrees, defilers.

Wizard PCs generally don't reveal their true nature to others. If you play a wizard, you'll want to think about a "cover story" to present to NPCs, and you'll want to consider whether and how you'll let your fellow PCs in on your secret. Many wizards pretend to be psions or elemental clerics.

The wizard class functions as described in the *Player's Handbook*, except as noted below.

Skills: Sleight of Hand is an additional class skill for wizards, who often use it to obscure their somatic gestures from the prying eyes of any nearby templars.

Familiar: Wizards can choose animals from the Familiars on Athas table for their familiars. They otherwise follow the rules set out on page 32 of the *Player's Handbook*. 



DARK SUN

EQUIPMENT & RULES

Tempered by a Burning World

by David Noonan · illustrated by Eric Polack, Todd Harris, and Jason Engle

The world of DARK SUN is extremely metal-poor, with only a few bronze and iron mines turning out ore in any quantities. Thus, many items that would otherwise be made from metal are fashioned from stone, bone, or ceramics instead. It's common to see a short sword made from the tooth of a spineworm, or an axe of glossy obsidian.

The shortage of metal affects character equipment in three important ways: Athasian currency is based on ceramic coins, the cost of gear varies depending on what it's made of, and more exotic metals are simply unavailable.

CURRENCY

Gold is too scarce to make good currency (most of it is used in expensive jewelry), and silver is only slightly more common. For millennia, templar-controlled kilns in each of the city-states have manufactured ceramic coins with the visage of a dragon-king on one side and a cluster of notches on the other. The ceramic piece (cp) is the basic unit of currency across the Tablelands. The notches on the "tails" side radiate from a center point so you can break a ceramic piece into ten pie-shaped "bits." Ten bits equal one ceramic piece. An Athasian ceramic piece has the same purchasing power as a D&D gold piece, while a bit has the same purchasing power as a standard D&D silver piece. In most cases, you can simply translate the gp cost into a cp cost, but weapons and armor have special rules.

The merchant houses mint metal coins, which are stamped with the symbol of the house on one side and the year they were made on the reverse. A silver "house coin" is worth 10 ceramic pieces, and a gold "house coin" is worth 100 ceramic pieces. It's uncommon to see house coins in general circulation; the houses mostly use them in large transactions with each other and with the city-state governments.

WEAPONS

The harsh DARK SUN setting lacks the expert metallurgy of normal D&D worlds, due in no small part to its lack of large

metal deposits. Athas is not devoid of weaponry, however, as protection is needed from the terrible monsters that lurk just outside (or within) the gates of the city-states. Those who live on Athas have adapted to their environment by crafting weapons from whatever material they have at hand, whether bone and wood or low-quality bronze and iron.

Weapon Materials

The ability to make steel is largely unknown on Athas, and even the iron implements crafted by smiths often have flaws invisible to the eye. Metals such as mithral, adamantine, and platinum simply don't exist, or they've never been discovered. The following describes how the materials most DARK SUN weapons are made from affect their use.

Bone: Most weapons in DARK SUN are made of bone or stone. Weapons made of bone have a -2 penalty on attacks and damage (with a minimum damage of 1). Bone has a hardness of 6 and 10 hit points per inch of thickness. Bone weapons weigh half as much as their listed weight in the *Player's Handbook*.

A bone weapon has the same price in ceramic pieces as its gold-piece price in the *Player's Handbook*. The New DARK SUN Weapons table lists prices presuming the weapons are made of stone, bone, or wood.

Blood Obsidian: When volcanoes are created through defiler magic, veins of blood obsidian result. Weapons made from blood obsidian have a natural enhancement bonus of +1 on damage. This bonus does not stack with any other enhancement bonus. Thus, a blood obsidian scimitar with a +4 magic enhancement bonus effectively has a +4 enhancement bonus on both attacks and damage. In an area where magic does not function, it retains its natural +1 enhancement bonus on damage. A masterwork blood obsidian scimitar would have a +1 bonus on both attacks and damage. Blood obsidian has a hardness of 12 and 30 hit points per inch of thickness.

Weapons made from blood obsidian cost 2,000 more (in ceramic pieces) than the gold-piece price listed in the *Player's Handbook*.

Bronze: Weapons of bronze, while clearly inferior to iron items, are not nearly as bad as stone or bone weapons. Their attack and damage penalty is only -1. Bronze has a hardness of 9 and 20 hit points per inch of thickness.

Weapons forged of bronze cost 5 times (in ceramic pieces) the gold-piece value listed in the *Player's Handbook*.

Iron: Iron works as described in the *Player's Handbook*. It has a hardness of 10 and 30 hit points per inch of thickness. Iron weapons are not cold iron weapons and do not overcome damage reduction. Cold iron weapons cost twice as much as their normal iron counterparts and function as described in the *DUNGEON MASTER's Guide*.

Weapons forged of iron cost 10 times (in ceramic pieces) the gold piece value listed in the *Player's Handbook*.

Stone: Weapons made of stone have a -2 penalty on attacks and damage (with a minimum damage of 1). Stone has a hardness of 8 and 15 hit points per inch of thickness. Stone sling bullets have no penalty on attacks or damage.

A stone weapon has the same price in ceramic pieces as its gold-piece price in the *Player's Handbook*. The New DARK SUN Weapons table lists prices presuming the weapons are made of stone, bone, or wood.

Wood: Only certain weapons can effectively be made of wood. The club, quarterstaff, sap, great club, and all bows and crossbows can be made from wood without suffering a penalty. Any bludgeoning weapon can also be constructed from wood, but those not noted above suffer a -3 penalty on attacks and damage (with a minimum damage of 1). Weapons that deal piercing or slashing damage cannot be made of wood. Wood has a hardness of 5 and 10 hit points per inch.

A wooden weapon has the same price in ceramic pieces as its gold-piece price in the *Player's Handbook*.

New Weapons in Dark Sun

The following new weapons are unique to DARK SUN. The New DARK SUN Weapons table lists damage, range,

weight, and cost information for these weapons. Other data can be found in the explanatory text below.

Cahulaks: This weapon consists of a pair of four-bladed heads tied to either end of a 12-foot rope. Despite the cahulak's 10 foot reach it can be used to attack an adjacent foe.

Because the rope can wrap around an enemy's leg or other limb, you can make trip attacks with it. If you're tripped during your own trip attempt, you can drop the cahulak to avoid being tripped.

When using a cahulak, you get a +2 bonus on opposed attack rolls made to disarm an opponent (including the roll to avoid being disarmed if such an attack fails).

The Weapon Finesse feat does not apply to the cahulak.

Chatkcha: This exotic ranged weapon is a crystalline throwing wedge. This weapon is as it appears in the *Expanded Psionics Handbook*.

Gythka: This two-handed exotic melee weapon is a polearm with a blade at each end. You can fight with it

DARK SUN WEAPON HIT POINTS

	Wood (Hardness 5)	Bone (Hardness 6)	Stone (Hardness 8)	Bronze (Hardness 9)	Iron (Hardness 10)	Blood Obsidian (Hardness 12)
Light blade	—	1	1	1	2	2
One-handed blade	—	2	3	4	5	5
Two-handed blade	—	3	5	7	10	10
Light hafted weapon	2	3	5	7	10	10
One-handed hafted weapon	5	6	10	14	20	20
Two-handed hafted weapon	10	10	15	20	30	30
Projectile weapon	5	6	—	14	20	—

NEW DARK SUN WEAPONS

Exotic Weapons	Dmg (S)	Dmg (M)	Dmg (L)	Crit.	Range	Cost*	Weight	Type
<i>Two-Handed Melee Weapons</i>								
Cahulaks**	1d6	2d4	2d6	x2	—	25 cp	1 lb.	Piercing
Gythka†	1d8/1d8	1d10/1d10	2d8/2d8	x2	—	60 cp	25 lb.	Slashing
<i>Ranged Weapon</i>								
Chatkcha	1d4	1d6	1d8	18-20/x2	20 ft.	1 cp	1 lb.	Slashing

*The listed cost is for bone, stone, or wood weapons. Weapons of other materials cost more. See the Weapon Materials section.

**Reach weapon.

†Double weapon.

DONNING ARMOR

Armor Type	Don	Don Hastily	Remove*
Bone, cord, wood, leather scale	1 minute	5 rounds	1 minute
Bark, chitin, shell	4 minutes	1 minute	1 minute

*If you have some help, cut this time in half. A single character doing nothing else can help one or two adjacent characters. Two characters can't help each other don armor at the same time.

as if fighting with two weapons, but if you do, you incur all the normal attack penalties associated with fighting with two weapons, just as if you were using a one-handed weapon and a light weapon. A thri-kreen can wield two gythkas at once as double weapons due to its four arms, but takes penalties as if its off-hand weapon was a one-handed weapon, not a light weapon. This weapon is as it appears in the *Expanded Psionics Handbook*.

Dark Sun Names for Weapons

As archetypical to the DARK SUN setting as merciless gladiators and thri-kreen raiders are the savage weapons they invariably wield. Whether created by insectile hands, chipped from stone, or improvised from the sun-bleached bones of a desert monstrosity, the primitive weapons of Athas are just as deadly as those of any other world. Those familiar with the DARK SUN setting will remember weapons like the alhulak, chatkcha, and trikal. While some of these weapons

have unique statistics and abilities all their own, others duplicate the statistics of better known D&D weapons and differ only in their description. Here is a list of some well-known DARK SUN arms and the weapons in the *Player's Handbook* that they equate to.

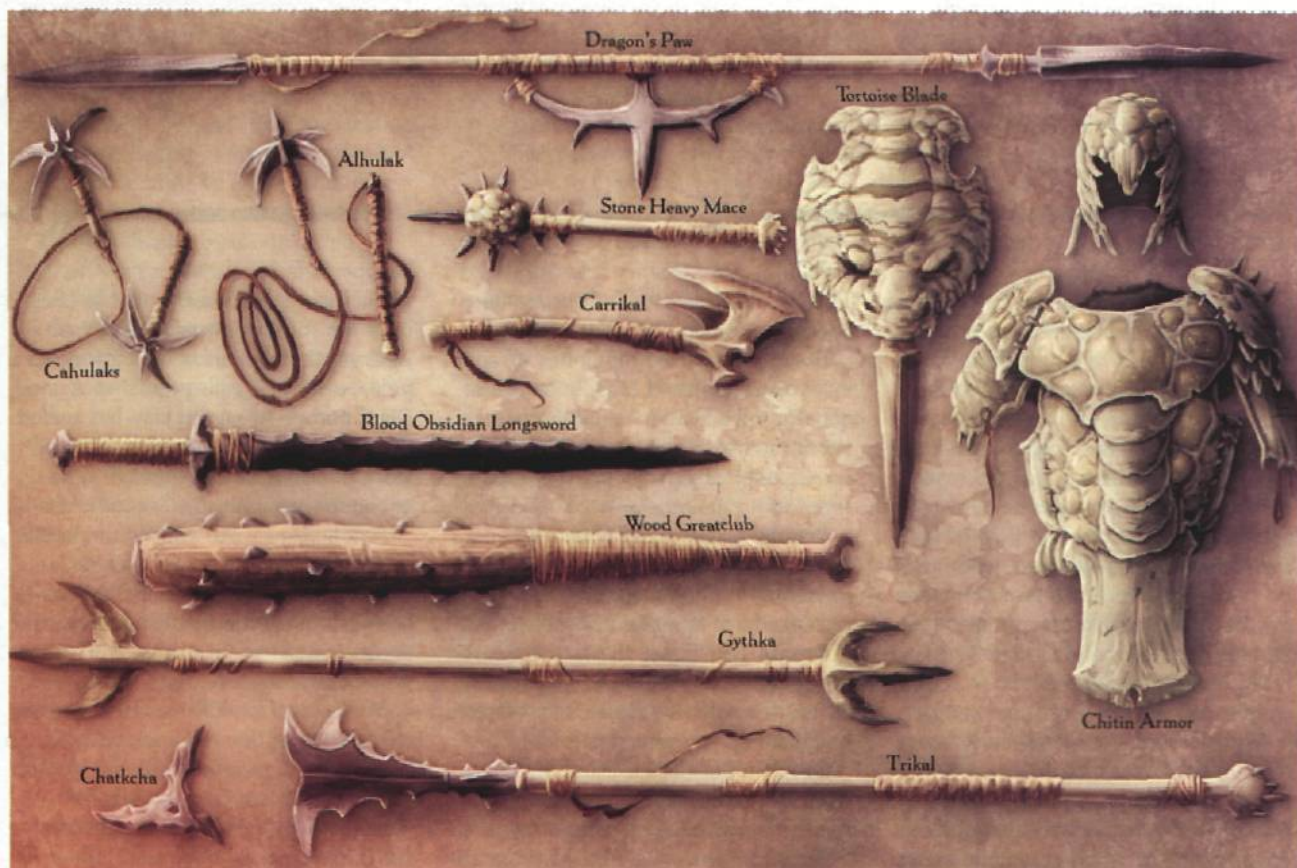
Alhulak: A 5-foot rope with a four-bladed grappling hook on the end. This weapon is effectively a heavy flail.

Carrikal: An axe made from the jaw of a mekillot, this weapon functions as a battleaxe.

Dragon's Paw: This weapon is a foot-long blade on either end of a quarterstaff. A curved blade is mounted in the middle of the staff, with gaps to put your hands through. It equates to an orc double axe.

Puchik: A dagger with hand guards and a grip perpendicular to the blade, it functions as a punching dagger.

Tortoise Blade: A small shield with a foot-long blade extending from an edge. This weapon is treated as a small shield with a shield spike that deals slashing damage.



DARK SUN ARMOR AND SHIELDS

Armor	Cost	Armor Bonus	Max Dex Bonus	Armor Check Penalty	Arcane Spell Failure	Speed (30 ft.)	(20 ft.)	Weight‡
<i>Light armor</i>								
Padded	5 cp	+1	+8	0	5%	30 ft.	20 ft.	10 lb.
Bark	5 cp	+2	+5	-2	15%	30 ft.	20 ft.	15 lb.
Cord	15 cp	+2	+5	-1	5%	30 ft.	20 ft.	15 lb.
Leather	10 cp	+2	+6	0	10%	30 ft.	20 ft.	15 lb.
Bone	20 cp	+3	+4	-3	15%	30 ft.	20 ft.	20 lb.
Wood	15 cp	+3	+4	-3	15%	30 ft.	20 ft.	15 lb.
Studded leather	125 cp	+3	+5	-1	15%	30 ft.	20 ft.	20 lb.
Leather scale	35 cp	+3	+6	-2	15%	30 ft.	20 ft.	20 lb.
<i>Medium armor</i>								
Shell	25 cp	+3	+3	-2	20%	20 ft.	15 ft.	20 lb.
Hide	15 cp	+3	+4	-3	20%	20 ft.	15 ft.	25 lb.
Bronze breastplate	200 cp	+4	+4	-4	25%	20 ft.	15 ft.	30 lb.
<i>Heavy armor</i>								
Chitin	100 cp	+5	+0	-6	35%	20 ft.*	15 ft.*	35 lb.
Bronze half-plate	600 cp	+6	+1	-7	40%	20 ft.*	15 ft.*	50 lb.
<i>Shields</i>								
Buckler	15 cp	+1	—	-1	5%	—	—	5 lb.
Buckler, beetle	6,600 cp	+2	—	-1	5%	—	—	5 lb.
Shield, light, wooden	3 cp	+1	—	-1	5%	—	—	5 lb.
Shield, light, bronze	9 cp	+1	—	-1	5%	—	—	6 lb.
Shield, heavy, wooden	7 cp	+2	—	-2	15%	—	—	10 lb.
Shield, heavy, bronze	20 cp	+2	—	-2	15%	—	—	15 lb.
Shield, tower**	30 cp	+4	—	-10	50%	—	—	45 lb.

*When running in heavy armor, you move only triple you speed, not quadruple.

**The tower shield can instead grant you cover. See the description.

‡Armor fitted for Small characters weighs half as much.

Trikal: This polearm has three blades on top and spikes below that. This weapon is effectively a halberd.

ARMOR

The DARK SUN Armor and Shields table shows what armor is generally available on Athas. It includes several armor types described in the *Arms & Equipment Guide*. Any armor not listed on the table is rare and must be made of iron. Iron armor costs 5 times (in ceramic pieces) the gold piece value listed in the *Player's Handbook* and weighs half again (+50%) as much.

Bark: Carefully crafted from the thick bark of trees, bark armor is treated to prevent it from becoming brittle over time. Large plates of bark cover the torso and back, while strips

of it are fastened to cloth or leather backing to cover the arms and legs.

Bone: Made from the bones of animals or slaughtered foes, bone armor consists of a leather or cloth coat reinforced with strips of bone. It only covers the torso, allowing the limbs freedom to move.

Bronze Breastplate: This is essentially the same as the steel breastplate presented in the *Player's Handbook*, except that it is made of bronze.

Bronze Half-Plate: The rarest noniron armor on Athas, bronze half-plate only differs from the the *Player's Handbook's* half-plate in its weaker material.

Buckler: Bucklers are usually made from the scapula of an animal and reinforced with leather straps.

Buckler, Beetle: This buckler is actu-

ally a Tiny scarab beetle that latches onto the forearm. It takes a day of wearing the beetle for it to attune to a new owner before it grants an Armor Class bonus. After this day has ended, the beetle buckler acts as a masterwork buckler with a nonmagical +1 enhancement bonus to Armor Class.

A command word causes the beetle to fly around its owner, blocking ranged attacks (as the Deflect Arrows feat, but using the beetle's Reflex save bonus instead of its owner's). The beetle only attacks to defend itself.

Beetle Buckler: CR 1/2; Tiny vermin; HD 1d8; hp 4; Init +6; Spd 10 ft., fly 40 ft. (good); AC 24 (touch 18, flat-footed 18); Base Atk +0; Grp -9; Atk/Full Atk -1 melee (1d3-5/20, bite); Face/Reach 2 1/2 ft. by 2 1/2 ft./0 ft.; SQ Deflect

arrows, vermin traits; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +6, Will +0; Str 1, Dex 23, Con 10, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 2.

Skills: Hide +14, Listen +4, Move Silently +10, Spot +4.

Deflect Arrows (Ex): When detached from its shield position, a beetle buckler darts about in its owner's space, blocking one ranged attack per round as the Deflect Arrows feat.

Vermin Traits: Immune to all mind-influencing effects; darkvision 60 ft.

Chitin: Many of the creatures on Athas have tough exoskeletons made of thick chitin. As these plentiful creatures are often a source of food, it didn't take long for the people of the Tablelands to make their exoskeletons into wearable armor. Chitin armor is comprised of chitin plates covering the wearer's torso, as well as smaller pieces on the joints and limbs.

Cord: Made from knotted rope, cord armor is most common among halflings and tribes that live away from the city-states.

Hide: Cured and uncured animal skins, layered thickest over the chest and back, form this armor.

Leather: Hardened leather plates form the chest and back pieces, and are used to cover other vital areas such as joints. These hardened leather plates are held together with thinner pieces of leather to allow some freedom of movement.

Leather Scale: Made of cured leather scales, leather scale armor is identical to regular steel scale mail except in its material.

Padded: This armor is made by layering oiled canvas between silk, with a cotton or wool layer underneath. Popular among nobles, wealthy merchants, and others who wish to protect themselves without drawing attention, the outer layer of silk can be decorated as elaborately as normal clothes.

Shell: Made from the treated shells of tortoises and more exotic creatures, the alchemical process used to create shell armor makes it less brittle, so when struck it gives instead of shattering. Large shells form chest and back plates, with smaller shells covering joints and other vital areas.

Shields: Shields are large pieces of wood or metal that strap to the arm.

They have wood grips that must be held, but the grips of small shields are such that the wielder can hold other items. A weapon cannot be wielded with the hand gripping the shield.

Studded Leather: Athasian studded leather is the same as presented in the *Player's Handbook*, except that it uses bone or stone studs instead of metal.

Wood: Like bone armor, wood armor is made of cloth or leather strips with wood strips sewn in.

DARK SUN RULES

The following rules supplement those in the core rulebooks and reflect the character of the DARK SUN setting.

Caste

For centuries, the city-states of Athas have been caste-based societies. Each caste has specific legal rights, but the castes aren't as vertically hierarchical as many real-world societies are. For example, the nobles aren't necessarily in a better or higher caste than the merchants—they're just in a different caste. Obviously, the lot of a slave is worse than everybody else, and the dragon-kings sit atop it all. In between those extremes are a number of more-or-less "equal" castes.

When you make a new character, consider carefully in which caste you'd like to start. It's mostly a role-playing choice. You might occasionally face caste-related difficulties, but your choice of caste is spice for your character, not the main dish.

Slaves

Almost all manual labor and a fair degree of skilled labor and services are performed by slaves. All of the other castes can—and do—own slaves. Slaves are generally treated poorly, but they get water and regular meals because their masters have an incentive to keep them alive. Slaves have no rights, but they have the same legal protections that any other property does. A few slaves, such as temple scribes and gladiatorial champions, have lives that most residents of Athas would consider pampered. Some slaves are born to slave parents, while others began life in another caste but became slaves due to debts or as legal punishment. The labor-

ers building the new pyramid to the dragon-king and the servant who brings you cool water in the merchant palace are probably slaves.

Freemen

A relatively small class, freemen are mostly individual artisans who were born to freemen. Some few are former slaves who won their freedom or escaped slaves who've successfully left their old identities behind. Life is a struggle to earn money for enough water, food, and shelter to stay alive. The bartender in the public house and the fruit-cart vendor in the market square are probably freemen.

Merchants

Not everyone who buys and sells goods is a merchant in the caste sense of the word. Powerful merchant families form their own caste, and they are technically citizens of their merchant house, not citizens of the city in which they reside. Because the merchant houses often retaliate en masse against overzealous templars who harass their merchants, members of the caste have a degree of immunity from the petty injustices of the templars. However, the merchant houses have hierarchies and intrigues of their own, and being a merchant means being at the beck and call of your extended family. Merchants are usually born into their caste, although particularly promising freemen or nobles can sometimes marry or earn their way into the caste. The caravan leader you meet on the road is a merchant, and so is the canny bargainer in the immense tent in the bazaar.

Nobles

The noble caste is made up of powerful landowners who run the farms that surround each city-state. Most nobles have homes on the land they own, but they spend most of their time in villas within the city walls. You have to be born or married into this caste, and nobles are generally loath to marry members of other castes. Nobles have a degree of protection from the excesses of the templars—only high-ranking templars dare arrest or challenge a noble. Younger nobles with

COMMON ATHASIAN LANGUAGES



Language	Typical User
Aarakocra	Aarakocras
Aquan	Creatures from the Plane of Water
Auran	Creatures from the Plane of Air
Dwarven	Dwarves, some muls
Elven	Elves, a few half-elves
Giant	Braxats, beast-head giants, tareks
Gith	Gith
Halfling	Halflings, residents of Forest Ridge
Ignan	Creatures from the Plane of Fire
Maenadi	Maenads
Pterrann	Pterrans, nikaals, ssurrans
Terran	Creatures from the Plane of Earth
Thri-Kreen	Thri-kreen



many siblings sometimes find their way into the military or the adventuring life because they have a degree of autonomy but not much in the way of responsibilities. The people with the good seats at the arena are nobles. So are the people in the palanquins that weave their way through the streets of the city.

Templars

In addition to being clerics, templars are also the bureaucrats who keep the city-states running. They're responsible for everything from clean drinking water in the wells to the city's defenses. Each city-state has its own hierarchy of templars. Most templars can make arrests on real or trumped-up charges; in the city-states, your access to real justice depends almost entirely on your relationship to the dragon-king and high-ranking templars. Templars choose capable children from the freemen and noble classes to take templar training. The city watchman who investigates a murder is probably a templar, and so is the cleric providing healing at the dragon-king's temple.

Outsiders

As a caste (not a creature type), outsiders are those from outside the society of the city-states: thri-kreen warriors, pterrann traders from Lost Scale, and so on. They're technically freemen, but templars tend to hassle them more. Particularly exotic outsiders will attract a lot of attention from passersby.

Skills

All the skills in the *Player's Handbook* and *Expanded Psionics Handbook* are available on Athas. Three have minor changes, as detailed below.

Sleight of Hand

As an additional use of the Sleight of Hand skill, spellcasters can make their verbal and somatic components less obtrusive, muttering magic words under their breath and making magic gestures within their sleeves. When you attempt to cast a spell unobtrusively, your Sleight of Hand check is opposed by the observer's Spot check. The observer's success doesn't prevent you from casting the spell, just from doing it unnoticed.

Speak Language

The Common Athasian Languages sidebar presents the languages spoken on Athas. These are the most common languages characters will speak and come into contact with. Other languages are less common and cost three skill points to learn. You can still pick them as a bonus language if you justify it in your character's background. They are listed on the Uncommon Athasian Languages sidebar.

Dialects: Each of the seven city-states has its own dialect of Trade Tongue that its residents use in everyday conversation. The dialects (Balician, Draji, Gulgan, Nibenese, Raamin, Tyric, and Uriki) are mutually intelligible, and a DC 10 Sense Motive check is sufficient to identify the speaker's city of origin after listening to her speak for 1 minute or more. Characters attempting to conceal their regional accent or adopt another accent use a Disguise check opposed by the listener's Sense Motive check.

Swim

Only clerics with the Water domain have Swim as a class skill. There isn't enough standing water on Athas for any other character to need to know how to swim.

Magic and Psionics

The following changes apply to rules laid out in the *Player's Handbook* and the *Expanded Psionics Handbook*.

Magic and Psionics are Mostly Different

On the world of Athas, magic and psionics are different for some purposes, but equivalent for others. This reflects the unique nature of reality in the world of DARK SUN, and the fact that study of psionics and magic occur in parallel.

Same: Effects that dispel or negate magic and psionics function equally well against both, because they enforce the mundane reality of Athas. A *negate psionics* power will make a wizard's *mage armor* spell go away, and a cleric will be unable to cast spells within a *null psionics* field. Likewise, a *dispel magic* spell will end an *offensive prescience* power, and no psion could use *ego whip* from within an *antimagic* field. Similarly, spell resistance and power resistance work equally well against both spells and psionics.

Different: You can shut down magic and psionics with the same effect, but the two means of altering reality retain some important differences. *Detect magic* notes the presence of psionics, and the *detect psionics* power will spot a spell. However, such detection spells and powers only note the presence of a "foreign" aura, not its strength or school/discipline. For example, a *detect magic* spell will indicate that a psychic warrior has two auras on him, but it won't reveal that they're faint telepathy (*detect hostile intent*) and moderate psychokinesis (*inertial barrier*). The spellcaster knows only that there are two psionic auras on the psychic warrior. Likewise, a *detect psionics* spell cast on a crypt door will reveal only a magic aura, not that it's the moderate necromancy aura of an *enervation* trap.

Arcane Magic

The principles of psionics and divine magic are well understood, but arcane magic on Athas has been driven underground for centuries by the machinations of the dragon-kings. Over the years, arcane spellcasters have learned to adapt by making their spells more difficult to analyze and their castings more unobtrusive.

Accordingly, many DCs to discern or analyze arcane magic are higher than in standard D&D. In the DARK SUN campaign, the Spellcraft DC to figure out an arcane aura's school of magic (with *detect magic* or *arcane sight*, for example) is 20 + spell level. The higher DC applies whether the observer is an arcane caster or not. The Spellcraft DC to identify a spell as it's cast is 20 + spell level if it's an arcane spell. Identifying an arcane spell that's already in place (or materials created or shaped by arcane magic) requires a Spellcraft check with a DC of 25 + spell level. Identifying an arcane spell targeted on you after you attempt a saving throw requires a Spellcraft check with a DC of 30 + spell level.

Defiler Magic: When an arcane spellcaster casts a spell, she taps into the life energy of Athas. Most spellcasters train their apprentices to avoid taking too much energy and thereby killing all plant life in the vicinity, because the stolen energy doesn't return for years. Thus, arcane magic can defile the land, leaving it a scarred, lifeless landscape.

Every arcane spellcaster knows, however, that she's voluntarily limiting the power of her spells in this way. With any spell she casts, she can choose to cast off her self-imposed limits and defile the land around her in exchange for a rush of arcane power. Good aligned PCs should avoid defiling the land, and PCs of all alignments should worry about antagonizing other PCs and NPCs—in particular the dragon-kings—by doing so. For defiling rules, see "DARK SUN: Defilers of Athas" in *DRAGON* #315.

Spells and Powers

Some of the spells described in the *Player's Handbook* have been changed to reflect life on Athas.

The *summon monster* and *summon nature's ally* spells have different creatures available to them. Obviously, bears, wolves, and eagles don't exist in DARK SUN, so the real world animals have largely been replaced with Athasian ones. Summoning animals is strictly the province of druids, so they've been taken off the *summon monster* lists. Conversely, wizards and elemental clerics have a much closer connection to the Inner Planes than druids do, so druids get access to summoned elementals only at high levels. Creatures not found in the *Monster Manual* appear in *DUNGEON* #110.

Summon Monster I: Available creatures are earthdelver, firesnake, rainrunner, and windraptor.

Summon Monster II: Available creatures are cinderbrute, cloudscout, sandknight, and wavearcher.

Summon Monster III: Available creatures are crysmal; elemental, Small (any); and thoqqua.

Summon Monster IV: Available creatures are arrowhawk, juvenile; mephit (any); salamander, flamebrother; tojanida, juvenile; and xorn, minor.

Summon Monster V: Available creatures are arrowhawk, adult; elemental, Medium (any); and tojanida, adult.

Summon Monster VI: Available creatures are belker; elemental, Large (any); ravid; salamander, average; xill; and xorn, average.

Summon Monster VII: Available creatures are arrowhawk, elder; djinni (genie); elemental, Huge (any); invisible

stalker; rast; and xorn, elder.

Summon Monster VIII: Available creatures are chaos beast; salamander, noble; and tojanida, elder.

Summon Monster IX: Available creatures are elemental, elder (any).

Summon Nature's Ally I: Available creatures are baazrag, kes'trekkel, snake (Small viper), and yallix.

Summon Nature's Ally II: Available creatures are seskarran and snake (Medium viper).

Summon Nature's Ally III: Available creatures are jhakar, kank, snake (constrictor), and snake (Large viper).

Summon Nature's Ally IV: Available creatures are boneclaw baazrag, crodlu, fodorran, pterrax, razorwing, and snake (Huge viper).

Summon Nature's Ally V: Available creatures are inix and snake (giant constrictor).

Summon Nature's Ally VI: Available creatures are cilops; crodlu, heavy; and elemental, Large (any).

Summon Nature's Ally VII: Available creatures are elemental, Huge (any); mastyrial; and mekillot.

Summon Nature's Ally VIII: Available creatures are elemental, greater (any) and roc.

Summon Nature's Ally IX: Available creatures are elemental, elder (any). 

UNCOMMON ATHASIAN LANGUAGES

Language	Typical User
Ancient Halfling (dead language)	Historical texts, psionic lore
Draconic	Dragon-kings, arcane texts
Draxa (dead language)	Historical texts
Psurlonese	Psurlons
Yuan-ti	Yuan-ti