



Last Stand at Outpost Three

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As a special treat to *DRAGON* and *DUNGEON* readers, this month's issues of both magazines feature in-depth coverage of **DARK SUN**, one of the most popular and original **DUNGEONS & DRAGONS** campaign settings of all time. From its birth in 1991 to its final official RPG product in October of 1996, **DARK SUN** adventures and sourcebooks explored the world of Athas, a geologically devastated wasteland dominated by tyrannical godlike sorcerers known as the dragon-kings. From the crumbling ruins of massive city-states to the endless vistas of the Silt Sea, psionic menaces lurked in shadows cast by a dying sun, and everywhere, heroes struggled to make a difference in a hostile realm. Athas was a world of cannibal halflings, a place where the insectoid thri-kreen fought alongside bare-chested swordsmen in massive arenas. Most of all, it was a world of thrilling adventure.

Today, eight years after its cancellation, **DARK SUN** remains the preferred campaign setting of thousands of **DUNGEONS & DRAGONS** players. A dedicated community of devotees have flocked to the setting's official fan website, athas.org. The site features extensive fan-produced files detailing all manner of information about the setting, from write-ups of important locales to treatises on the unusual fruit of Athas.

But fans aren't the only ones who appreciate **DARK SUN**. Within months of the completion of **DUNGEONS & DRAGONS** third edition, Wizards of the Coast game designer David Noonan started working on a conversion of the setting to the new rules set. The recent release of the *Expanded Psionics Handbook*, from Wizards of the Coast, gave us the perfect opportunity to let Dave share his vision of **DARK SUN** with the world. *DRAGON* #319, currently available at newsstands, game stores, or direct from the source at paizo.com, contains the "*DARK SUN Player's Handbook*," a feature that provides everything a player needs to know to create a unique denizen of the world of Athas. This issue of *DUNGEON* caters to the other side of the table with the "*DARK SUN DM's Guide*" (see page 60). Skip forward to the "*DM's Guide*" for an extensive overview of the world of Athas or jump right into the action with "Last Stand at Outpost Three," a perfect introduction to the **DARK SUN** campaign setting.—ERIK MONA

"Last Stand at Outpost Three" starts a new **DARK SUN** campaign with a bang—the PCs meet in a trading outpost under siege by marauding elves. As the siege wears on, the trapped denizens of Outpost Three realize that something is driving the elves to attack heedless of their casualties. The PCs can figure out who's behind the elf attacks and either save the outpost or lead its evacuation.

Regardless of the choices they make, the players get a chance to try out the abilities of their new PCs, and they have a built-in reason to adventure together in the future—they'll all be survivors of the Last Stand at Outpost Three.

While "Last Stand at Outpost Three" is designed for **DARK SUN** characters, it's pretty easy to adapt the adventure to

other campaign settings. Most of the foes work as unusual variants of familiar D&D races and monsters. The Swiftwing tribe could just be a rare subrace of elves touched by strange magic, and the crodlus could be an uncommon breed of dinosaur. Rename the Athasian zombie template to something else (such as "dread zombie"), and you've got an adventure suitable for any desert setting.

"Last Stand at Outpost Three" was also designed to provide NPCs that will be generally useful in an ongoing **DARK SUN** campaign. Elf bandits, thri-kreen hunters, and psionic healers are staple NPCs in many **DARK SUN** games. The adventure also gives you room to improvise as a DM. You have a great degree of control over the adventure's pacing, and there are numerous places where you can insert adventure seeds that can blossom as your campaign continues beyond "Last Stand at Outpost Three."

Adventure Preparation

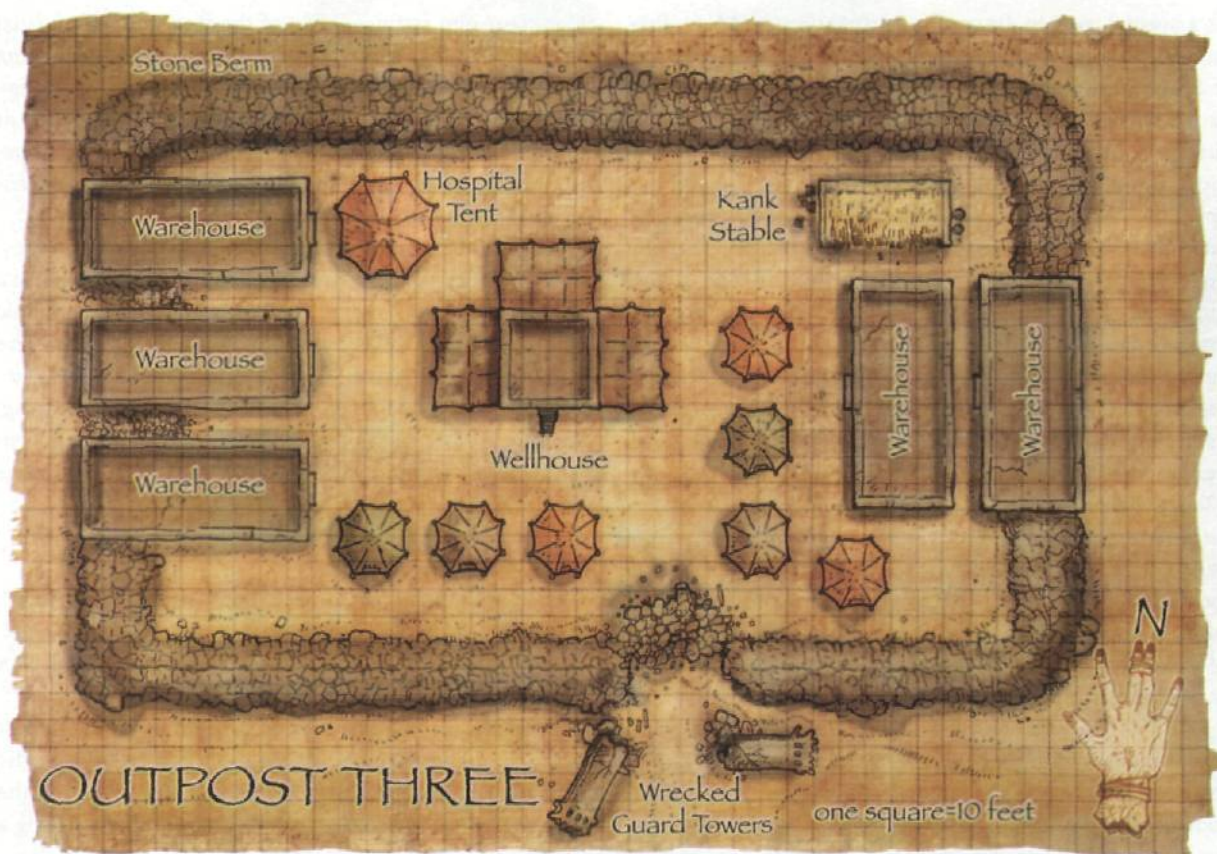
Running "Last Stand at Outpost Three" requires the *Player's Handbook*, *DUNGEON MASTER's Guide*, and *Monster Manual*, plus the *Expanded Psionics Handbook* and the "*DARK SUN Player's Handbook*" in *DRAGON* #319.

Before you run the first session of "Last Stand at Outpost Three," familiarize yourself with the psionics rules in the *Expanded Psionics Handbook*. Pay particular attention to the low-level powers and the rules for attaining and expending a psionic focus. The focus rules are important to many psionic feats possessed by NPCs in this adventure, and the PCs in your game might have these feats too.

In subsequent sessions, it's important to have a basic familiarity with the capabilities of the major NPCs, especially Laalarash, Gorgoreth, and Haalak. The PCs have a great degree of freedom in this adventure. They can defend the walls of the outpost to the last man. They can try to negotiate with the elves, with the leaders in the outpost, and eventually with Karadao himself. They can wash their hands of the entire affair and begin the trek back to civilization. The better you understand the motivations and abilities of the major NPCs, the more prepared you'll be when the PCs start getting clever.

If you're using this adventure as the start to your **DARK SUN** campaign, tell the players to build whatever character they like (subject to the rules in *DRAGON* #319's "*DARK SUN Player's Handbook*"). Then imagine a reason why their new character would be at Outpost Three, a caravan stop in the stony barrens southwest of Urik (see p. 65).

Because Outpost Three has the only known water source for many miles, creatures of all races, castes, and classes can be found here. PCs might be hunters who've come to sell hides, caravan guards, elemental clerics preaching to the denizens of the outpost, or simply travelers on their way to or from Urik or Tyr. If the PCs want to establish how they know each other, so much the better. But the very first encounter is explicitly designed to turn strangers into comrades-in-arms.



Adventure Background

Centuries ago, a powerful cabal of psions known as The Order researched the connection between necromantic power and psionic energy. One of the fruits of their research were the *rods of the dead mind*, powerful psionic items that converted psionic energy into negative energy. With a *rod of the dead mind*, a psion can rebuke and control undead much like a cleric can.

The Order only created eight of the *rods*. They planned to create more, but about three centuries ago most of The Order's leaders were killed when a plot to seize control of all Athas's psionic energy went awry. Fleeing underlings of the Order absconded with the *rods*, which were kept in one of their strongholds in the Ringing Mountains. Since then, they've passed through many hands. At least three are believed to be in Hamanu's treasure vaults in Destiny's Kingdom.

Karadao is the descendant of one of those minions who claimed a *rod of the dead mind* when The Order disintegrated. This *rod* remained in his family for generations, but because none of them were psions, they remained ignorant of its power.

Not so for Karadao. An accomplished psion, Karadao figured out how to use the *rod of the dead mind*, and his research uncovered a further secret. If a psion possesses more than one *rod of the dead mind*, the powers of the *rod* are multiplied, not just added together. Karadao isn't sure how powerful the multiplier is, but he's desperate to find out.

For years, Karadao researched the *rods of the dead mind*. When mundane research failed, Karadao resorted to magic. Six months ago, he paid a princely sum to an elemental cleric of water for a *commune* spell. Based on what the cleric told him, Karadao knows now that a second *rod of the dead mind* lies at the bottom of the well at Outpost Three.

Karadao visited Outpost Three disguised as a traveler, but he learned that only members of the Klethira merchant house can get into the well-house itself—and in any case, it's the best-guarded building in the outpost. Disappointed, Karadao retreated to the Red Tower, an abandoned fortress built by The Order, to plot his next move.

He didn't have to wait long. The Swiftwing elf tribe soon came to investigate the Red Tower's new inhabitant, and Karadao promptly *dominated* their leader, Haalak. Karadao forced Haalak to start giving his tribe redleaf, an addictive smoking-weed that gives users a sense of indestructibility and renders them more suggestible. Karadao repeated this process with two other elf tribes, the Silverseekers and the Nightcloaks, and now he has a small army at his command. Karadao need only visit each elf chief every few days and provide more redleaf from the stash in his tower, and the elves will do as he bids.

Karadao's elves have now surrounded Outpost Three, trapping a caravan inside. They attack every night shortly after

sunset, slipping back into the stony barrens when it grows too dark to fight. Sometimes they attack again before dawn.

The outpost chief, Gorgoreth, and the caravan master, Laalarash, have mustered every able-bodied creature to man the walls of the outpost and repel the elves who seem determined to seize Outpost Three regardless of the casualties they take in the process.

Adventure Synopsis

The adventure begins at sunset on the third day of the siege, when Laalarash assigns part of the northeast wall to a mix of otherwise unaffiliated defenders—the PCs, in other words. They repel an elven assault, then a second one later that night. The following day, they might have a prisoner to interrogate, and they'll see evidence of a rift between Laalarash and Gorgoreth.

The following night, a duststorm engulfs Outpost Three, temporarily driving off the elves. Yet there is no relief for the Outpost, for Karadao sends Athasian zombies against them that night.

As the situation grows more desperate, the PCs strike out from Outpost Three (either of their own volition or as part of Gorgoreth's plot).

Chapter One: Under Siege

The elves have been making hit-and-run attacks on Outpost Three for two days, and the outpost's defenders are nervous, exhausted, and in many cases wounded.

The battles throughout the night are a chance for the players to get used to the abilities of their new PCs and practice teamwork. Accordingly, you have control over the pacing of the first four encounters. If the PCs are doing well, start the next encounter just as the PCs are finishing off the previous encounter. If the PCs are low on hit points, give them a few rounds to heal before starting the next encounter. If the PCs' spells and powers are badly depleted, save the rest of the encounters in Chapter One for a pre-dawn attack and give the PCs time to rest and recover.

As you run the first four encounters, keep close track of elves who reach negative hit points, tracking whether they stabilize or eventually succumb to their wounds. When the battle's over, it's possible the PCs take an unconscious but living elf captive for interrogation.

Elves on the Wire (EL 4)

Light: Twilight (50 ft. normal illumination and 50 ft. shadowy illumination; double for creatures with low-light vision).

Sound: Elven whoops and war cries (automatic).

Reaction: To casualties—elves make fighting withdrawal into the stone field.

Auras: Faint psionic (*tattoo of concealing amorphia*, DC 17, metacreativity), faint psionic (*tattoo of animal affinity*, DC 17, psychometabolism), 2 faint magic (*potion of cure light wounds*, DC 16, conjuration).

Important Rules: Hide (sniping and creating a diversion to Hide), *Player's Handbook* 76.

For the last two nights, you've been trapped at Outpost Three, a small trading post and oasis northwest of the city-state of Urik. Bands of marauding elves have attacked the base every night, and their archers have sniped at anyone visible during the heat of the day. At sunset, you share an evening meal in the hospitality tent with many of the outpost's defenders. You see dozens of weary faces, and many bandaged bodies from the previous night's fighting.

You're wiping out your bowls when you hear the cry from the well-house that provides the best vantage point in the outpost: "Elves! Archers to the north! And the east! They're on all sides!"

Laalarash, a human who led a House Klethira caravan into the outpost three days ago, stands and starts barking out orders: "All able-bodied to the wall! Be brave! Defend the house with honor! Gorgoreth, make wall assignments—I'll command from inside the well-house."

Gorgoreth, a human who serves as the outpost's station chief, points at you: "Take the northeast corner of the berm. Defend it as best you can. Fall back if you hear the well-house bell."

You should adjust the text above to account for the PCs in your group. Depending on the PCs' backgrounds, they probably know either Laalarash or Gorgoreth, though probably not well.

Creatures: Let the PCs station themselves anywhere they like below the crest of the berm (see the Northeast Corner map). As soon as the elves (with their +8 Spot bonus) notice someone over the crest of the berm, roll initiative and start the fight. The elves attack in waves. The first wave consists of two elf rogues.

➤ **Swiftwing Rogue, Elf Rog2 (2):** CR 2; Medium humanoid (elf); HD 2d6+2; hp 9 each; Init +4; Spd 50 ft.; AC 18, touch 14, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +1; Grp +2; Atk/Full Atk +2 melee (1d6/18–20, masterwork bronze scimitar) or +6 ranged (1d8/x3, masterwork longbow); SA psionics, sneak attack +1d6; SQ elf traits, evasion, low-light vision, trapfinding; AL CN; SV Fort +1, Ref +7, Will +1; Str 12, Dex 19, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 13, Cha 8.

Skills: Balance +6, Bluff +4, Diplomacy +1, Hide +9, Intimidate +1, Jump +16, Listen +8, Move Silently +9, Search +7, Spot +8, Survival +1 (+3 following tracks), Tumble +11.

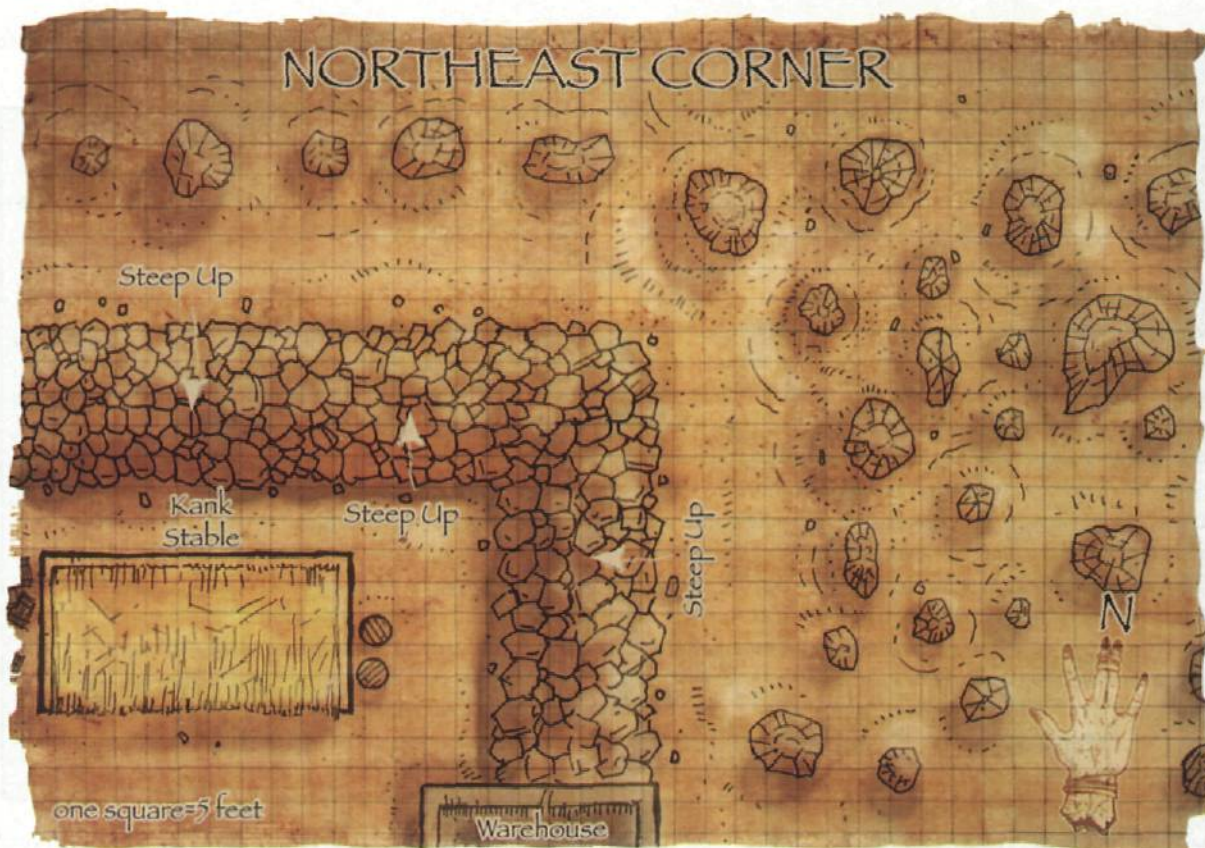
Feats: Endurance[®], Speed of Thought.

Languages: Common, Elven.

Powers Known (3 PP; save DC 9 + power level): 1st—conceal thoughts.

Possessions: Masterwork bronze scimitar, masterwork longbow, 10 iron arrows, masterwork studded leather, masterwork buckler, *tattoo of concealing amorphia*, *tattoo of animal affinity*, 2 *potions of cure light wounds*, 5 cp.

Tactics: The two elves prefer to take pot shots with their longbows from behind the rocks. They'll hide (+9 Hide



bonus) and sneak attack the first defenders they see over the stone berm. After the first round, the rogues can use their Bluff bonus of +4 (opposed by Sense Motive) to create enough of a diversion to hide again behind the rocks.

Once the elves start to face opposition, they'll take time to use their *tattoos of animal affinity* (bringing their scimitar attack bonus to +4 and damage to 1d6+2) and *tattoos of concealing amorphia* (20% miss chance). They won't both activate their tattoos at the same time. One elf continues the attack while other uses tattoos, then the first elf uses tattoos while the other attacks.

If the PCs come out to get the Swiftwings, the elves use their speed of 50 feet and Tumble of +11 to get into as many flanking situations as possible.

The rogues' Armor Class falls to 17 if they used their longbows in the previous round, because they have bucklers.

Swiftwing rogues retrieve and drink a *potion of cure light wounds* whenever they're reduced below 5 hp, withdrawing from melee if necessary to avoid an attack of opportunity.

Development: The first challenge for the PCs is relatively straightforward: two elf snipers. Just as they're finishing off the rogues in this encounter, introduce the elves from the Second Wave encounter. Depending on how closely that encounter follows this one, you may or may not want to reroll initiative.

Second Wave (EL 4)

Light: Twilight (50 ft. normal illumination and 50 ft. shadowy illumination; double for creatures with low-light vision).

Sound: Elven whoops and war cries (automatic).

Reaction: To casualties—elves make fighting withdrawal into the stone field.

Auras: Faint psionic (*tattoo of concealing amorphia*, DC 17, metacreativity), faint psionic (*tattoo of animal affinity*, DC 17, psychometabolism), 2 faint magic (*potion of cure light wounds*, DC 16, conjuration).

Important Rules: Bluff (feinting in combat), *Player's Handbook* 68.

The elf attack is disorganized; they're arriving at Outpost Three in small groups. Now another pair of elf rogues from the Swiftwing tribe arrives to continue the assault.

Creatures: If the characters took out the first two elves with little difficulty, just introduce the new foes, rolling initiative for them at the top of a combat round. If the PCs are wounded or spread out, give them a few rounds to regroup before these emerge from the stone field.

Swiftwing Rogues (2): hp 8, 9; See *Elves on the Wire*, page 35.

Tactics: As described in the *Elves on the Wire* encounter above, but these rogues are more likely to have melee targets on the outside on the berm. After using their tattoos, the rogues try to flank a foe in melee and cut him down with their scimitars.

If the rogues can't get into a flanking situation, they can try to deny a foe his Dexterity bonus and thus set up a sneak attack

the following round. Their Bluff check of +4 is opposed by the PCs' Sense Motive check result + base attack bonus.

Development: Depending on the PCs' situation, either allow a few rounds to elapse before continuing to the Crodlu Assault encounter below, or introduce the NPCs from the next encounter just as the PCs are finishing off the elf rogues.

Crodlu Assault (EL 6)

Light: Twilight (50 ft. normal illumination and 50 ft. shadowy illumination; double for creatures with low-light vision).

Sound: Elven whoops and war cries (automatic).

Reaction: To casualties—elf makes fighting withdrawal into the stone field.

Auras: Faint psionic (+1 *studded leather*, DC 17, metacreativity), faint psionic (*tattoo of animal affinity*, DC 17, psychometabolism), faint psionic (*tattoo of dimension swap*, DC 17, psychoportation).

Important Rules: Handle Animal (list of commands), *Player's Handbook* 74.

Creatures: The next wave of Swiftwings attack the northeast corner of Outpost Three. This group consists of a ranger with a trained crodlu.

➤ **Swiftwing Crodlu-Tamer**, Elf Rgr3/Ftr1; CR 4; Medium humanoid (elf); HD 3d8 + 1d10; hp 19; Init +5; Spd 40 ft.; AC 19, touch 15, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +3; Grp +5; Atk +10 melee (1d6+2/19–20, masterwork iron short sword) or +9 ranged (1d8+2/x3, masterwork composite longbow); Full Atk +8 melee (1d6+2/19–20, masterwork iron short sword) and +8 melee (1d6+1/19–20, masterwork iron short sword) or +9 ranged (1d8+2/x3, masterwork composite longbow); SA favored enemy (human) +2, psionics, two weapon combat style; SQ low-light vision, elf traits, wild empathy +4; AL NE; SV Fort +5, Ref +8, Will +2; Str 14, Dex 20, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8.

Skills: Handle Animal +6, Hide +11, Listen +9, Move Silently +11, Search +2, Spot +9, Survival +7.

Feats: Endurance^B, Psionic Weapon, Track^B, Two-Weapon Fighting^B, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (short sword).

Languages: Common, Elven.

Powers Known (3 PP; save DC 9 + power level): 1st—*conceal thoughts*.

Possessions: +1 *studded leather*, 2 masterwork iron short swords, masterwork composite longbow (+2 Str), 20 iron arrows, *tattoo of dimension swap*, *tattoo of animal affinity*, 25 cp.

➤ **Crodlu:** hp 34; *DUNGEON* #110 87.

Tactics: The crodlu-tamer has a *tattoo of animal affinity*, which he uses before combat if possible to improve his Dexterity by +4. This improves both melee and ranged attacks by +2 (because he has the Weapon Finesse feat) and improves his Hide and Move Silently skills and Reflex saves by +2.

The crodlu-tamer is the only elf who can control the crodlu. It takes a move action and a DC 10 Handle Animal check to give a crodlu the Attack, Stay, or Guard commands. If the check fails, the crodlu keeps doing whatever it was doing last round.



The crodlu-tamer also has a *tattoo of dimension swap*, which he uses as a surprise tactic to switch places on the battlefield with the crodlu.

If the crodlu is dead, the crodlu-tamer flees once reduced to less than 10 hp.

The crodlu charges into combat as soon as it can, because it can charge and still make a full attack (due to its pounce ability). It makes as many melee attacks as it possibly can. Unless ordered to stay or keep attacking by the crodlu-tamer, the crodlu flees when it falls below 10 hit points—and with a 250 ft. run, it gets far away quickly.

If the crodlu's handler dies, it attacks any nonelf it can find. If it gets line of sight to the kank stables, it ignores other foes and starts slaughtering kanks.

Development: This is much more serious threat than the elf rogues the PCs have been facing up until this point. If the PCs are doing poorly, introduce one or two caravan guards or Haalak the fire-cleric (described on page 39). If the crodlu gets into the kank stable, Gorgoreth redirects troops from elsewhere to bolster the defense of the northeast corner.

After this encounter, the PCs may need to spend a few rounds healing magically or psionically. Once they've done so, start the Final Push encounter.

Final Push (EL 5)

Light: Twilight (50 ft. normal illumination and 50 ft. shadowy illumination; double for creatures with low-light vision).

Sound: Elven whoops and war cries (automatic).

Reaction: To casualties—elves make fighting withdrawal into the stone field.

Aura: Faint psionic (*tattoo of concealing amorphia*, DC 17, metacreativity), faint psionic (*tattoo of animal affinity*, DC 17, psychometabolism), 2 faint magic (*potion of cure light wounds*, DC 16, conjuration).

Important Rules: Bluff (feinting in combat), *Player's Handbook* 68.

Creatures: This is the last group of elves to attack the northeast corner of the outpost—although the PCs don't know that.

Swiftwing Rogues (3): hp 11, 9, 8; See *Elves on the Wire*, page 35.

Tactics: These elf rogues take up positions in the rocks and attack with ranged or melee weapons, depending on the situation. If the crodlu and the crodlu-tamer are still fighting, they run for the berm while keeping their distance from the crodlu. They hope to either draw some of the PCs away from the crodlu fight or get inside the wall themselves.

Development: When these elves fall or flee, the sunset attack is over. PCs with line of sight to the other stone berms can see outpost defenders at the ready, but no fighting going on elsewhere. The survivors soon start to tend to the wounded, carrying those most in dire need of aid to the well-house.

If the PCs chase the elves into the stone field or try to track them, go to the Rearguard encounter below. Otherwise Gorgoreth visits the northeast wall in about 10 minutes and tells

the PCs they can stand down, saying, "None of you are on night watch, so you can get some rest."

Rearguard (EL 6)

Light: Twilight (50 ft. normal illumination and 50 ft. shadowy illumination; double for creatures with low-light vision).

Sound: Faint shouts from outpost defenders (automatic).

Reaction: None.

Aura: Faint psionic (+1 *composite longbow*, DC 17, metacreativity), faint psionic (+1 *studded leather*, DC 17, metacreativity), faint psionic (*tattoo of animal affinity*, DC 17, psychometabolism), faint magic (*potion of invisibility*, DC 17, illusion), 4 faint magic (*potion of cure light wounds*, DC 16, conjuration).

Important Rules: Track, *Player's Handbook* 101; Invisibility, *DUNGEON MASTER'S Guide* 295; Poison, *DUNGEON MASTER'S Guide* 296.

Once the elves are repulsed by the defenders at Outpost Three, they flee into the surrounding desert. PCs who chase them run into one of the Swiftwing tribe's best raiders. This elf tries to drive the PCs back to the outpost—or at least occupy them long enough for the others to escape.

Unless the PCs can somehow maintain line of sight to the fleeing elves, they'll have to follow tracks to trace the elves' path through the stone field. A DC 17 Survival check is required to track the elves.

If the PCs penetrate more than a few hundred feet into the stone field, they'll run into one of the Swiftwing tribe's subchiefs guarding the elves' path of retreat.

➤ **Swiftwing Boss, Elf Rgr2/Rog4:** CR 6; Medium humanoid (elf); HD 2d8+4d6+6; hp 29; Init +5; Spd 40 ft.; AC 19, touch 15, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +5; Grp +6; Atk +7 melee (2d4+1/18–20, masterwork iron falchion) or +11 ranged (1d8+2, +1 *composite longbow*); Full Atk +7 melee (2d4+1/18–20, masterwork falchion) or +9/+9 ranged (1d8+2, +1 *composite longbow*); SA psionics, favored enemy (human) +2, sneak attack +2d6; SQ elf traits, evasion, trapfinding, trap sense +1, uncanny dodge, wild empathy +3; AL CN; SV Fort +5, Ref +12, Will +2; Str 13, Dex 20, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8.

Skills: Balance +7, Handle Animal +4, Hide +14, Jump +16, Listen +10, Move Silently +13, Spot +10, Survival +6, Tumble +15.

Feats: Endurance^a, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot^a, Track^a, Weapon Focus (longbow).

Languages: Common, Elven.

Powers Known (3 PP; save DC 9 + power level): 1st—*conceal thoughts*.

Possessions: +1 *composite longbow* (+1 Str), masterwork iron falchion, +1 *studded leather*, *tattoo of animal affinity*, *potion of invisibility*, 20 iron arrows, 4 *potions of cure light wounds*, 1 dose large scorpion venom.

Tactics: The elf's first standard action in combat is to activate his *tattoo of animal affinity*, increasing his Strength to 17. This gives him a +9 melee attack with his falchion (2d4+4)

but doesn't increase his +1 *composite longbow* damage since its Strength rating is +1. He then takes a full-round action to retrieve and drink a *potion of invisibility*. Once he's invisible, he sneaks around the PCs, looking for a good sneak attack opportunity. If he uses his bow on a target within 30 feet, he gains an additional +1 on attack and damage due to the Point Blank Shot feat.

The Swiftwing boss can maneuver around the battlefield well with his speed of 40 feet and his +15 Tumble bonus. He's also stocked with healing potions, so he can withdraw for a round or two, quaff some potions, then return to the fray.

If one PC in particular seems dangerous, the Swiftwing boss spends a full-round action to retrieve and apply scorpion venom on an arrow. If he later hits with that arrow, the poison deals 1d6 points of Strength damage (initial and secondary) and has a Fortitude save DC of 18.

Chapter Two: Between Battles

When the PCs aren't on the wall, they can get rest or explore other parts of Outpost Three. If they did well defending the northeast part of the outpost, the other outpost defenders treat them with a degree of deference and the PCs gain a +2 circumstance bonus on any Diplomacy or Gather Information checks made in the outpost.

If the PCs want to check out the various tents and buildings within the outpost, they can wander around as they like. The inside of the well-house and the western warehouses remain off-limits to anyone who isn't a member of House Klethira (which is everyone but Laalarash and Gorgoreth in the outpost at this time). Gorgoreth used his *psionic lock* power to secure the doors to the western warehouses, and a *forbiddance* (cast last year by an Urikite templar) bars entrance to the interior of the well-house. A rune of warning over the doorway warns casual thieves of the danger of entering; a successful Knowledge (arcana) check (DC 21) allows a character to realize the rune specifically warns about a *forbiddance* spell. Of those present, only Gorgoreth and Laalarash know the password ("Keltivarn"). The spell effect is at caster level 12 and is keyed to the lawful evil alignment.

Creatures: It's not likely the PCs ever fight the outpost guards, but they may come to aid the PCs if they get in over their heads in a fight. Some of these guards are permanently stationed at Outpost Three and some of them came in on Laalarash's caravan.

If the guards are drawn into a fight involving the PCs, they tend to be cautious and seek cover long enough to manifest *offensive precognition*. They then shoot their bows at the nearest foes. Because the guards have Point Blank Shot, they have an extra +1 to attack rolls and deal an extra point of damage against targets within 30 feet.

Guards flee or seek total cover when reduced to 5 hp or less.

➤ **Outpost Guards (12):** Human Ftr 2; CR 2; Medium humanoid (human); HD 2d10+4; hp 15; Init +2; Spd 20 ft.; AC 16,

touch 12, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +2; Grp +5; Atk/Full Atk +5 melee (2d4+2/18–20, bronze falchion) or +6 ranged (1d8+3/×3, masterwork composite longbow); SA psionics; SQ —; AL N; SV Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +1; Str 17, Dex 14, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8.

Skills: Climb +8, Listen +5, Spot +5, Survival +2.

Feats: Alertness, Point Blank Shot, Weapon Focus (falchion), Weapon Focus (composite longbow).

Languages: Common.

Powers Known (3 PP; save DC 9 + power level): 1st—*offensive precognition*.

Possessions: Bronze falchion, masterwork composite longbow (+3 Str), 10 iron arrows, bronze breastplate.

Getting Healing (EL 3 or EL 5; see text)

There are two NPCs present who can heal the wounded—and both Amanyas and Haalak are busy doing just that after the latest assault. The PCs have to negotiate with them if they want healing. Haalak the fire-cleric is easier to get healing from, but Amanyas the egoist is a better healer.

Creatures: Haalak the fire cleric, an older human male with shaggy white hair, wanders around the outpost at random, muttering to himself a lot. He wears chitin armor and his hands are black, as if he rubbed charcoal on them.

Haalak is an engaging conversationalist, but his tries to turn any discussion toward his favorite topic: burning things. His initial attitude is indifferent, but that's a reflection of how he feels about topics that aren't fire-related. He's friendly enough—just obsessed with fire and more than a little crazy.

Amanyas is an older gray-haired human woman who wears an ill-fitting bronze breastplate. She rarely leaves her hospital tent, which is crowded with the wounded and dying.

Amanyas lives at the outpost, and she's a good friend to Gorgoreth. She's not happy that Laalarash arrived and pulled rank on Gorgoreth—and she gets angrier each time Laalarash retreats to the well-house during a fight.

➤ **Haalak, Human Clr3 (Fire):** CR 3; Medium humanoid (human); HD 3d8+6; hp 20; Init +1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 17, touch 11, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +2; Grp +2; Atk/Full Atk +3 melee (1d8/×3, masterwork iron spear) or +4 ranged (1d8/19–20, masterwork light repeating crossbow); SA psionics, spells, turn undead; SQ —; AL CG; SV Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +6; Str 10, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 17, Cha 15.

Skills: Concentration +8, Survival +6.

Feats: Exotic Weapon Proficiency (light repeating crossbow), Psionic Endowment, Wild Talent.

Languages: Common.

Spells Prepared (4/3+1/2+1; save DC 13 + spell level): 0—*detect magic* (3), *detect poison*; 1st—*burning hands**, *detect evil*, *entropic shield*, *sanctuary*; 2nd—*bull's strength*, *produce flame**, *summon monster II*.

*Domain Spell; **Domains:** Death (death touch 1/day), Fire (turn or destroy water creatures).

Powers Known (5 PP; save DC 12 + power level): 1st—*energy ray*.

Possessions: +1 chitin armor, masterwork light repeating crossbow, 5 iron arrows, masterwork iron spear, scroll of *lesser restoration*, scroll of *cure moderate wounds*, scroll of *speak with dead*.

➤ **Amanya, Human Psi5 (egoist):** CR 5; Medium humanoid (human); HD 5d4+15; hp 27; Init +0; Spd 20 ft.; AC 14, touch 10, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +2; Grp +1; Atk/Full Atk +1 melee (1d6+1, iron shortspear) or +2 ranged (1d6+1, iron shortspear); SA psionics; SQ —; AL LG; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +7; Str 8, Dex 10, Con 13, Int 18, Wis 16, Cha 12.

Skills: Autohypnosis +11, Concentration +9, Heal +11, Knowledge (history) +12, Knowledge (local) +12, Knowledge (psionics) +12, Psicraft +12.

Feats: Body Fuel, Mind Over Body, Overchannel, Psionic Body, Talented.

Languages: Common, Aarakocra, Elvish, Ignan, Thri-Kreen.

Powers Known (41 PP; save DC 14 + power level): 1st—*detect psionics*, *empathy*, *far hand*, *inertial armor*, *missive*, *thicken skin*; 2nd—*detect hostile intent*, *empathic transfer*, *mass missive*, *psionic identify*, *psionic tongues*; 3rd—*body adjustment*, *body purification*.

Possessions: Bronze breastplate, iron shortspear, iron dagger, *dorje of psionic restoration* (9 charges left).

Haalak Tactics: If Haalak is acting as a battlefield healer, he casts *sanctuary* on himself and scurries from ally to ally, casting two *cure light wounds* and two *cure moderate wounds*. He also has *burning hands* and *produce flame* at his disposal, but casting either spell ends his *sanctuary*.

If Haalak is fighting, he casts *summon monster II* from behind cover to summon a cinderbrute (p. 86). Then he casts *entropic shield*, then uses *produce flame* and his *energy ray* psionic power (choosing fire, of course) to attack at range. Once those spells and powers have been used, Haalak fires his crossbow from behind cover, saving *burning hands* for any foes that try to engage him in melee.

Haalak is very aggressive in a fight. He only retreats if PCs convince him to do so (his starting attitude is unfriendly for this purpose).

Amanya Tactics: Amanya can use her *empathic transfer* power to take others' wounds upon herself, healing a wounded ally in this way. Then she uses *body adjustment* to heal herself.

If Amanya runs low on power points, she can use her Body Fuel feat to get additional power points for each point of Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution damage she takes. She naturally heals 3 points of ability score damage per day (due to her Mind Over Body feat) and she has a *dorje of psionic restoration*, so she's willing to suffer a lot of ability score damage if the need is dire.

If Amanya gets into a fight, she is very cautious, fleeing at the first available opportunity. She knows how important she is to the defense of the outpost.

Haalak Development: The following circumstance modifiers apply to the PCs' attempts to influence Haalak: Characters talk about burning something (+2); PCs help him light

something big on fire (+4); Characters let it slip that they think he's crazy (–2); Characters put out a major fire (–4).

If *Hostile* (Attacked by PCs): Attacks, but retreats when endangered.

If *Unfriendly* (Check Result 0 or Less): Ignores PCs or threatens them with the power of fire.

If *Indifferent* (Check Result 1–14): Lights things on fire for them, but that's it.

If *Friendly* (Check Result 15–29): Puts half his spellcasting at the PCs' disposal.

If *Helpful* (Check Result 30 or More): Puts spellcasting and scrolls at PCs' disposal.

Amanya Development: Amanya's initial attitude is unfriendly to any PC who hasn't lived at the outpost for at least six months. The following circumstance modifiers apply to the PCs' attempts to influence her: Amanya learns of PCs' prowess (+2); an NPC other than Laalarash vouches for them (+4); Laalarash gets involved (–2); PCs imply that she's "wasting" healing on others (–4).

If *Hostile* (Check Result 4 or Less): Has orderlies "escort" PCs from hospital tent.

If *Unfriendly* (Check Result 5–14): Brusquely explains the concept of triage, telling the PCs she has more serious cases to deal with.

If *Indifferent* (Check Result 15–24): Grudgingly spends one-third of her available power points on PCs.

If *Friendly* (Check Result 25–39): Spends one-half of her available power points on PCs.

If *Helpful* (Check Result 40 or More): Spends two-thirds of her available power points on PCs.

Ad-Hoc Experience Award: If the PCs successfully negotiate with either Haalak or Amanya for healing, award them experience as if they'd defeated that NPC in combat. Subsequent negotiations for healing don't earn experience.

Talking to Laalarash

Laalarash is in way over his head. The master of a caravan bringing tools and "comfort items" (booze and food) to one of Urik's obsidian mines in the Ringing Mountains, he found himself trapped inside Outpost Three when the elves surrounded the place. He's assumed command, but he knows very little about even basic military tactics—his expertise lies in profit margins and negotiating tariff rates with Urik's templars.

Creature: Laalarash is determined to put on a brave face for those under his command, so he often "tours the battlements" (always during the day when attacks are unlikely) and "drills the troops" (always a pointless marching exercise or parade inspection). He watches fights from the relative safety of the well-house tower, too frightened to approach the battle further and too indecisive to issue orders.

But away from an actual battle, Laalarash is less of a pushover. He's absolutely determined to save both the outpost and his caravan, and he brooks no talk of abandoning

Laalarash



Outpost Three or negotiating surrender with the elves. He's eager to "improve morale" among the outpost defenders by talking tactics, and he entertains reasonable suggestions, making them seem like his own ideas if possible.

➔ **Laalarash Human Rog4/Rgr3:** CR 7; Medium humanoid (human); HD 4d6 + 3d8; hp 27; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16, touch 11, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +6; Grp +6; Atk +8 melee (1d6+1/19–20, masterwork blood obsidian short sword) or +8 ranged (1d8, masterwork light crossbow); Full Atk +6/+6/+3 melee (1d6+1/19–20, two masterwork blood obsidian short swords) or +8 ranged (1d8, masterwork light crossbow); SA psionics, favored enemy (elves) +2, sneak attack +2d6, two-weapon combat style; SQ evasion, trapfinding, trap sense +1, uncanny dodge, wild empathy +9; AL LN; SV Fort +4, Ref +8, Will +3; Str 10, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 14, Wis 13, Cha 18.

Skills: Appraise +8, Bluff +11, Diplomacy +13, Disguise +4 (+6 acting), Gather Information +13, Handle Animal +12, Intimidate +13, Knowledge (geography) +6, Knowledge (local) +9, Knowledge (nature) +9, Listen +8, Profession +8, Ride +12, Sense Motive +8, Spot +8, Survival +6 (+8 above ground).

Feats: Inquisitor, Dodge, Endurance[®], Psionic Dodge, Track[®], Two-Weapon Fighting[®], Weapon Focus (short sword).

Languages: Common, Dwarven, Maenadi.

Powers Known (6 PP; save DC 14 + power level): 1st—*conceal thoughts*; 2nd—*psionic lock*.

Possessions: +2 studded leather armor, cloak of protection +1, 2 masterwork blood obsidian short swords, masterwork light crossbow, 10 iron bolts, 2 *potions of cure moderate wounds*, *potion of fly*.

Tactics: Laalarash prefers not to fight, using his social skills to talk his way out of a battle. Failing that, he puts as many loyal troops as possible between himself and the enemy, then acts as a sniper, hiding behind cover and using his crossbow to sneak attack nearby enemies. In melee, he fights cautiously, trying to leave himself a path of withdrawal at all times.

Because Laalarash has both the Dodge and Psionic Dodge feats, his Armor Class is two points higher against a single foe he designates—usually the strongest enemy melee fighter he can see.

If Laalarash takes more than 10 points of damage, he drinks one of his *potions of cure moderate wounds*. He saves the *potion of fly* for a getaway if he can't flee on foot.

Development: Laalarash's initial attitude is indifferent—a reflection of the airs he's putting on as commander of the outpost's defense.

The following circumstance modifiers apply to the PCs' attempts to influence him: Characters use military jargon to get their point across (+2); PCs suggest ideas that make Laalarash seem clever or brave (+4); Characters mention Gorgoreth in a positive way (–2); PCs cast aspersions on Laalarash or the importance of the command structure (–4).

If Hostile (Attacked by PCs): Orders nearby caravan guards to apprehend the PCs, then retreats to safety.

If Unfriendly (Check Result 0 or Less): Orders the PCs to man the walls immediately. A half-hour later, he orders Gorgoreth to check up on the PCs and make sure they're truly loyal.

If Indifferent (Check Result 1–14): Entertains obvious suggestions that directly improve the security of the outpost, such as digging trenches or establishing a reserve of troops to counterattack.

If Friendly (Check Result 15–29): Considers—and possibly even suggests—activities that send a strike team (the PCs, basically) beyond the walls of the outpost for reconnaissance or a commando raid.

If Helpful (Check Result 30 or More): Gives PCs indirect control of the outpost's defenses. Laalarash still issues the orders, but he takes PC advice as long as it's plausible.

Talking to Gorgoreth

Gorgoreth is in the unenviable position of not commanding his own outpost. For three years, Gorgoreth managed Outpost Three, keeping it safe from elf bandits (though never ones as persistent as the current groups), belgoi tribes, and other monsters from the surrounding wasteland. But since Outpost Three's purpose is to support House Klethira's caravans, he's subordinate to Laalarash and was forced to concede command of the outpost to him.

To say that Gorgoreth chafes under Laalarash's diffident command is an understatement. Most of the outpost defenders (caravan guard and outpost guard alike) can tell that Gorgoreth isn't happy. But Gorgoreth has seen ineffective caravan masters before, so he's determined to suffer Laalarash while he quietly does his best to keep Outpost Three safe.

Creature: Gorgoreth has a secret. He's in the pay of House Stel, the dominant merchant house in Urik. Stel's agents pay Gorgoreth to use his *remote viewing* power to periodically report on House Klethira's caravan schedules. When the elves started attacking Outpost Three, Gorgoreth sent word

to both House Klethira headquarters in Urik and his contact with House Stel.

Gorgoreth knows that House Klethira has sent a relief column that'll arrive in three days time. He also suspects that House Stel might be sending aid—although House Stel might just keep Outpost Three for itself if it arrives to find it ill-defended.

The PCs could talk to Gorgoreth for any number of reasons, from the tactical ("What's in the western warehouses?") to the strategic ("What if we abandon the outpost for a few days, then reoccupy it once the elves move on?"). Gorgoreth's specific responses to PC inquiries thus can vary quite a bit; don't be afraid to diverge from the suggested responses given in the Development section.

Gorgoreth Human Psi7 (seer): CR 7; Medium humanoid (human); HD 7d4+24; hp 41; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 11, touch 11, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +3; Grp +2; Atk/Full Atk +2 melee (1d6-1, quarterstaff) or +4 ranged touch (3d6, *dorje of crystal shard*); SA psionics; AL CN; SV Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +5; Str 8, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 16, Wis 10, Cha 13.

Skills: Concentration +12, Gather Information +3, Knowledge (geography) +13, Knowledge (local) +13, Listen +12, Psicraft +13, Spot +12.

Feats: Alertness, Greater Psionic Endowment, Narrow Mind, Psionic Body, Psionic Endowment, Psionic Meditation.

Languages: Common, Elven, Maenadi, Thri-Kreen.

Powers Known (62 PP; save DC 13 + power level): 1st—*detect psionics*, *force screen*, *inertial armor*, *mind thrust*, *precognition*, *psionic charm*; 2nd—*clairvoyant sense*, *detect hostile intent*, *id insinuation*, *object reading*, *psionic lock*; 3rd—*dispel psionics*, *energy bolt*, *mental barrier*, *psionic blast*; 4th—*mindwipe*, *remote viewing*.

Possessions: *Cognizance crystal* (3), *dorje of crystal shard* (augmented to 3d6; 21 charges remaining), quarterstaff, power stone of *psionic dimension door*, power stone of *wall of ectoplasm*.

Tactics: Moreso than most NPCs, Gorgoreth needs a few rounds to prepare before he enters battle. He relies on his psionic powers for protection, so he manifests *inertial armor* (spending 7 power points to get a +7 armor bonus to AC) and *force screen* (spending 1 power point to get a +4 shield bonus). In a fight, Gorgoreth can also increase his AC by +4 as an immediate action by manifesting the *mental barrier* power (which costs 5 power points). Thus his Armor Class is usually 22 or 26, depending on his *mental barrier*.

Gorgoreth has the Greater Psionic Endowment, Narrow Mind, and Psionic Meditation feats, so he prefers to manifest a power that requires a saving throw, expending his focus to add +2 to the save DC. Then he'll spend a move action to refocus (+16 Concentration check, DC 20). He's also not shy about augmenting his powers—Gorgoreth considers combat something to be ended as quickly as possible.

In rough order of preference, Gorgoreth's powers that require saving throws are: *mindwipe* (two negative levels, Fort negates DC 17, 7 power points), *psionic blast* (stuns for 2 rounds, Will negates DC 16, 7 power points), *energy bolt* (7d6

Gorgoreth



electricity, Reflex half DC 19, 7 power points), *id insinuation* (3 targets confused, Will negates DC 17, 7 power points), *mind thrust* (7d10 damage, Will negates DC 17, 7 power points), and *psionic charm* (extra creature types, Will negates DC 16, 5 power points). Increase all saving throw DCs by +2 if Gorgoreth expends his focus.

If Gorgoreth isn't directly threatened (he's manning the walls with others against an elf attack, for example), he manifests powers to increase his Armor Class, then fires his *dorje of crystal shard* every round from behind cover.

Gorgoreth retrieves and activates his power stone of *psionic dimension door* to get away if he falls below 15 hit points.

Development: Gorgoreth's initial attitude is unfriendly, which represents his brusque nature and the fact that he has a lot competing for his attention more than any actual malice toward the PCs. The following circumstance modifiers apply to the PCs' attempts to influence him: the PCs tell Gorgoreth that they're frustrated with Laalarash (+2); he witnesses the PCs handily defeating elves (+4); the PCs suggest mutiny against Laalarash (-2); PCs advocate abandoning the outpost (-4).

If Hostile (Check Result 4 or Less): Gorgoreth orders the PCs to guard the walls, and uses psionics to force them from his presence if necessary. "Beat it, or I'll make your brains leak out your ears."

If Unfriendly (Check Result 5-14): Tells PCs to go deal with Laalarash. "He's in charge here, not me."

If Indifferent (Check Result 15-24): Answers questions as long as the PCs have a satisfactory explanation for why they want to know. "The picks and shovels are locked up in the northwest warehouse; why do you ask?"

If Friendly (Check Result 25-39): Takes the PCs into his confidence—to a degree. "If we could just set up a parley with the elves, we might be able to work something out. The raiders themselves aren't willing to talk, but if we could get to the chiefs somehow..."

If Helpful (Check Result 40 or More): Takes the PCs completely into his confidence. "There's help on the way from Urik, but it'll take three days to get here. If we can just bog the elves down in negotiations for a few days, the relief column will be here."

The friendly or helpful results set up the PCs for Chapter Four, when they leave Outpost Three to find the elves and the mysterious leader behind them.

The Third Degree (EL 2)

If the PCs (or perhaps other outpost defenders) took an elf captive during the sunset raid, the prisoner regains consciousness at about 3 bells after sunrise the next morning unless he receives magical healing before then.

Creature: Alie-Aka is an elf rogue from the Swiftwing tribe. He's been stripped of everything but a loincloth and sandals. Scars and fresher wounds crisscross his torso and especially his back. While conscious, he's probably still at negative hit points; use -5 if NPC outpost defenders took him captive.

Alie-Aka (2): hp 9; other stats as for the Swiftwing rogues in *Elves on the Wire*, page 35.

Development: Alie-Aka's initial attitude is hostile. At first he'll only curse in Elven at his captors, but it's possible for skilled interrogators to draw him out with either Diplomacy or Intimidate.

The following circumstance modifiers apply to the PCs' attempts to influence him: PCs use a good cop/bad cop technique, with a Diplomacy check assisting an Intimidate attempt or vice versa (+2); PCs threaten Alie-Aka with imprisonment (+4); PCs speak to him in Elven (+4); PCs threaten him with pain or death (-2); PCs knock him out again (-4 after he regains consciousness.)

If Hostile (Check Result 19 or Less): Insults but says nothing further. Accidentally gives his name.

If Unfriendly (Check Result 20-24): Reveals Swiftwing strength in general terms, and anything else that'll scare his captors. Tries Bluff to set himself up as a guide through Swiftwing lands (he actually plans to lead the PCs into an ambush).

If Indifferent (Check Result 25-34): Brags about how the Swiftwings are still "strong in numbers and pure of spirit." Explains that if they set him free, he'll sketch them a map that avoids the Swiftwing cordon. The route leads straight past a Swiftwing observation post, which Alie-Aka won't mark on the map, but the map is otherwise reasonably accurate.

If Friendly (Check Result 35-49): Describes Swiftwing forces in detail, but can't explain the sustained siege. Draws an area map that's accurate, including the location of Swiftwing observation posts and the general location of the other two elf tribes.

If Helpful (Check Result 50 or More): Explains that a mysterious cloaked figure named Karadao visits the chieftain every week or so. Alie-Aka has seen Karadao only once, and noticed that there was a bulky—maybe obese—figure under those black robes.

It's unlikely that the PCs' Intimidate or Diplomacy checks improve Alie-Aka's attitude to friendly or helpful, but *psionic charm* and *charm person* immediately improve Alie-Aka's attitude to friendly.

Ad-Hoc Experience Award: If the PCs are able to improve Alie-Aka's attitude at least to indifferent, they earn experience as if they had defeated him in combat.

A Gathering Storm

One bell before sunset on the second day, read or paraphrase the following.

Following the gaze and pointed fingers of the guards on the stone berm, you look to the east. The horizon is obscured by a massive gray-black cloud that stretches high into the sky, roiling as if it were a thing alive.

A successful Survival check (DC 15) is sufficient to confirm the rumor sweeping across Outpost Three: a massive dust-storm is bearing down on the outpost and will arrive shortly after nightfall.

After about 15 minutes of game time have passed, read or paraphrase the following.

Laalarash has assembled all the able-bodied outpost defenders near the well-house. "My weather observations indicate that a duststorm is on its way," he says. "A big one."

"At least we won't have to worry about the elves tonight—they're probably scurrying into whatever holes and crevices they can find. Disassemble all the tents and anything that won't withstand a storm, then report to Gorgoreth, who will assign you to one of the warehouses. You'll stay there until the dust storm has passed."

The PCs are expected to help dismantle the tents, but don't dwell on this overlong. Once the PCs are ready, Gorgoreth assigns them to the center western warehouse. Read or paraphrase the following:

Gorgoreth dismisses the *psionic lock* and lets you inside, then closes the door behind you. "It should be obvious when the duststorm has passed. Until then, stay inside. Oh, and Laalarash says to stay out of the crates—it's mostly dried food and rootwine for the obsidian mines. That's what Laalarash says."

If the PCs previously talked to Gorgoreth and know about the relief column heading toward Outpost Three, Gorgoreth adds that he's worried. "If they can't reach shelter, the storm'll wipe them out," he says grimly.

Not long after Gorgoreth shuts the warehouse door, the PCs hear the wind pick up, eventually reaching a dull roar

that makes sleep somewhat difficult. The PCs can pilfer the trade goods in the warehouse if they like—there's no real consequences if they do.

Chapter Three: Night of the Duststorm

While neither elves nor PCs can function long in the midst of a duststorm, Karadao has other minions at his disposal. During the night, he sends Athasian zombies (a template described in the Appendix) against the PCs.

This sets up another cascade of linked battles using a common map. As in Chapter One, use your own sense of pacing to determine how quickly one encounter follows another. The first encounter occurs about three bells after sunset.

Zombies at the Door (EL 7)

Light: Torches inside warehouse (normal illumination).

Sound: Roaring duststorm outside (automatic; imposes a -4 penalty on Listen checks to hear anything else).

Reaction: None.

Aura: Faint evil (zombie rogues).

Important Rules: Turn or Rebuke Undead, *Player's Handbook* 159; Greater duststorm, *DUNGEON MASTER's Guide* 94.

You're finally getting used to the roar of the duststorm outside and the hiss of fine sand seeping into the warehouse through cracks in the walls and ceiling.

With a boom and a crack, the top half of the warehouse door staves in. Through the dust you can dimly see elves bearing a makeshift battering ram.

Have the PCs make Spot checks immediately, and tell anyone who gets a DC 10 or better that these elves are pale white and glassy-eyed.

Then have the players roll initiative as the elf zombies start to clamber into the warehouse.

Creatures: Because they don't breathe and are immune to nonlethal damage, zombies can survive in a duststorm with little difficulty. They attack several of the warehouses, including the one the PCs occupy.

➤ **Zombie Swiftwing Rogue, Athasian Zombie Elf Rog2 (4):** CR 3; Medium undead; HD 2d12; hp 13; Init +4; Spd 40 ft.; AC 20, touch 14, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +1; Grp +4; Atk +4 melee (1d6+3, slam) or +6 ranged (1d8/x3, masterwork longbow); Full Atk +4 melee (1d6+3, slam) and -1 melee (1d4+1 plus disease, bite) or +6 ranged (1d8/x3, masterwork longbow); SA disease, psionics, sneak attack +1d6; SQ damage reduction 5/slashing, darkvision 60 ft., undead qualities; AL CE; SV Fort +0, Ref +4, Will +3; Str 16, Dex 19, Con —, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 4.

Zombie Plague (Su): Supernatural disease—bite, Fortitude DC 8. Incubation period 1 minute. Damage 1d6 Con and 1d6 Cha.

Skills: Balance +6, Bluff +2, Diplomacy -1, Hide +9, Intimidate -1, Jump +18, Listen +7, Move Silently +9, Search +7, Spot +7, Survival +0 (+2 following tracks), Tumble +11.

Feats: Endurance^B, Speed of Thought.

Languages: Common, Elven.

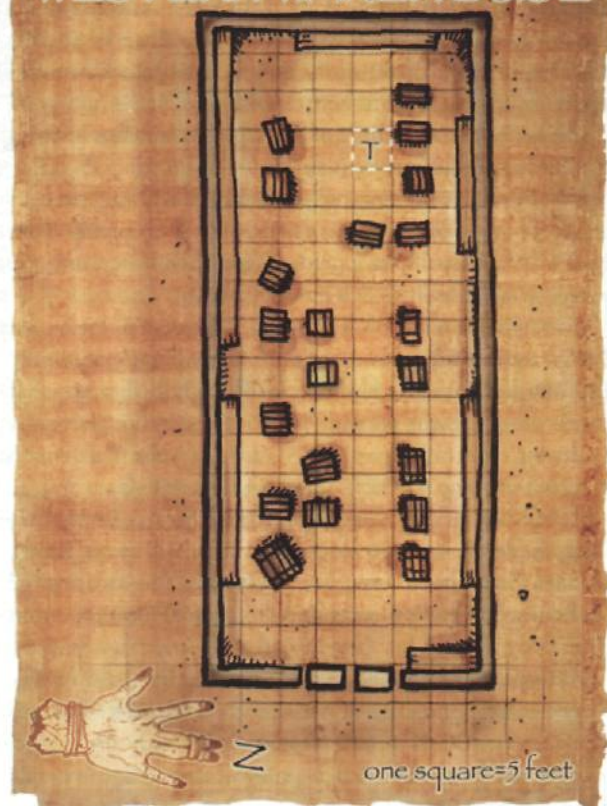
Powers Known (3 PP; save DC 9 + power level): 1st—conceal thoughts.

Possessions: Masterwork longbow, 5 iron arrows, masterwork studded leather, masterwork buckler.

Tactics: Players used to standard D&D zombies are in for a surprise—these zombies are fast, smart, and skilled. Play up their speed, and make sure you check for zombie plague infection with each successful bite. The zombie rogues' Armor Class goes down to 19 if they used their bows in the previous round, because they use bucklers. Don't forget that they have damage reduction of 5/slashing and are immune to mind-affecting spells and powers.

The PCs have one key advantage in this fight: the zombies must climb through the hole in the warehouse door to get inside. The zombie rogues have a Climb bonus of +3 and getting through the gap in the door is a DC 0 check, but the zombies use accelerated climbing (taking a -5 penalty on the roll), so there's a chance they'll fail and make no progress. If a zombie succeeds on the climb check, it takes 10 feet of movement to get through the door. While

WESTERN WAREHOUSE



entering, the zombies can't use their bucklers and don't get their Dexterity bonus to Armor Class, so they're AC 15 until they get inside and spend a move action to ready their bucklers again.

Development: These zombies are tough to fight for PCs without slashing weapons. If few or no PCs have slashing weapons, put a box of bronze scimitars (captured from the elves) somewhere in the warehouse.

When this encounter is wrapping up, move to the Zombie on the Roof encounter below unless the PCs need time to heal. Because the next encounter starts with two rounds of a thudding sound from outside the warehouse, it is a particularly good encounter to begin while the PCs are still occupied with this encounter.

Ad-Hoc Experience Award: Because the PCs have a significant terrain advantage in this fight, award 10% less experience than you otherwise would. It's a high-EL encounter relative to the PCs' level, so it'll still be a big experience point award.

Zombie on the Roof (EL 5)

Light: Torches inside warehouse (normal illumination).

Sound: Roaring duststorm outside (automatic; imposes a -4 penalty on Listen checks to hear anything else).

Reaction: None.

Aura: Moderate evil (zombie crodlu-tamer).

Important Rules: Turn or Rebuke Undead, *Player's Handbook* 159; *Greater duststorm*, *DUNGEON MASTER's Guide* 94.

You hear a thud every second or so, coming from the trap door in the roof. With each thud, the trap door seems to shiver.

Creature: A zombie atop the warehouse jumps up and down on the trap door, trying to cave it in. The zombie crashes through the trap door into the warehouse after two rounds of jumping. The ten-foot drop inflicts 1d6 points of damage to the zombie unless it makes a Jump check (DC 15) to reduce the effective height of the fall to zero feet.

➤ **Zombie Swiftwing Crodlu-Tamer, Athasian Zombie Elf** Rgr3/Ftr1; CR 5; Medium undead; HD 4d12; hp 26; Init +5; Spd 30 ft.; AC 20, touch 15, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +2; Grp +6; Atk +6 melee (1d6+4, slam) or +8 ranged (1d8/x3, masterwork longbow); Full Atk +6 melee (1d6+4, slam) and +1 melee (1d4+2 plus disease, bite) or +8 ranged (1d8/x3, masterwork longbow); SA disease, favored enemy (human) +2, psionics, two weapon combat style; SQ damage reduction 5/slashing, darkvision 60 ft., undead traits; AL CE; SV Fort +1, Ref +6, Will +4; Str 18, Dex 20, Con —, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 4.

Zombie Plague (Su): Supernatural disease—bite, Fortitude DC 9. Incubation period 1 minute. Damage 1d6 Con and 1d6 Cha.

Skills: Handle Animal +4, Hide +11, Listen +8, Move Silently +11, Search +2, Spot +8, Survival +6.

Feats: Endurance[®], Psionic Weapon, Track[®], Two-Weapon Fighting[®], Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (short sword).

Zombie Elf



Languages: Common, Elven.

Powers Known (3 PP; save DC 9 + power level): 1st—*conceal thoughts*.

Possessions: Masterwork longbow, 5 iron arrows, masterwork studded leather.

Tactics: This zombie has both a potent ranged attack and a good set of melee attacks. It hangs back and shoots arrows at PCs if it can, then moves into melee and makes as many full attacks as possible. It has damage reduction of 5/slashing, and it's smart enough to use its arrows on PCs with slashing weapons, then stand toe-to-toe with a foe wielding a bludgeoning or piercing weapon.

Development: This encounter leads right into the Zombies Everywhere encounter below, subject to your sense of pacing.

Zombies Everywhere (EL 6)

Light: Torches inside warehouse (normal illumination).

Sound: Roaring duststorm outside (automatic; imposes a -4 penalty on Listen checks to hear anything else).

Reaction: None.

Aura: Faint evil (zombie rogues).

Important Rules: Turn or Rebuke Undead, *Player's Handbook*, p. 159; *Greater duststorm*, *DUNGEON MASTER's Guide*, p. 94.

After a moment of quiet, another zombie appears at the door. You also hear footsteps on the roof.

This encounter is simple, but dangerous. Two more zombies (one rogue and one crodlu-tamer) attack the warehouse. One drops through the open trap door and another comes through the hole in the front door.

➤ **Zombie Swiftwing Rogue:** hp 12; see *Zombies at the Door*, above.

➤ **Zombie Crodlu-Tamer:** hp 24; see *Zombie on the Roof*, above.

Development: If the PCs are too worn out for this encounter, it's OK to skip it.

Aftermath

Once the zombies have been defeated, the PCs can patch up the trap door and warehouse door using packing material from the warehouse. PCs can try to check on the other warehouses, but surviving exposure to the greater duststorm for more than a few rounds is difficult.

The duststorm abates at about two bells after sunrise. When the PCs emerge from the warehouse, they quickly learn that most of the other warehouses were breached and many of the outpost defenders slain. The carnage of the zombie attack increases the pressure on Laalarash and/or Gorgoreth to somehow end the siege. Their plans (attack the elves or parley with them, respectively) will definitely involve the PCs, sending them beyond the outpost.

Chapter Four: Beyond Outpost Three

At this point, "Last Stand at Outpost Three" becomes less of an adventure and more of a jumping-off point for your DARK SUN campaign. The PCs almost certainly leave the outpost on a journey of some sort, but its purpose and destination is up to you and the players.

Some possible journeys include:

- Gorgoreth sends the PCs to negotiate with the elves. The PCs must brave the rigors of the stony barrens, survive the

elves guarding the Swiftwing camp, then negotiate with the elf chief. If they succeed at a DC 15 Sense Motive check or use *detect psionics*, they'll be able to tell that the chief of the Swiftwing tribe has been *dominated*.

- Laalarash sends the PCs on a reconnaissance mission. As above, but the players aren't trying to talk with the elves but spy on their movements and hopefully get warning of an attack. The adventure turns into a cat-and-mouse game between the PCs and the elves, played out across the stony landscape.
- Laalarash sends the PCs on a reprisal raid. As above, but the PCs aren't trying to remain hidden. They're trying to find and slay as many elves as they can.
- Laalarash or Gorgoreth sends the PCs to find the relief column. The duststorm didn't destroy it completely, but it did leave the convoy exhausted and lost. The PCs must find the rescue convoy and then guide it back to Outpost Three.
- Gorgoreth sends the PCs to connect with House Stel mercenaries nearby. A group of maenad mercenaries in the pay of House Stel was also on its way to Outpost Three when the duststorm struck. Though their numbers are depleted, they could be useful allies in the defense of the outpost—or they could try to seize Outpost Three for House Stel.
- The PCs strike out on their own to deal with the elves—and whoever's behind them. If they got Alie-Aka to talk, it's possible they know of Karadao. If they can free the Swiftwing chief from *domination* or successfully interrogate him,



- they'll learn the location of the mysterious Red Tower and Karadao. If the PCs meet zombies during one of their other missions, they could track the undead back to the Red Tower.
- The PCs convince Laalarash and Gorgoreth to abandon Outpost Three. Miles of hostile wilderness separate a rag-tag convoy from civilization. The PCs must take a lead role in finding the way back—and defending the survivors of Outpost Three en route.
 - The PCs bug out. It's certainly conceivable that the players grow weary of the squabbling between Laalarash and Gorgoreth and decide that the fate of Outpost Three isn't important to them. They'll have to get out of the outpost alive (Laalarash is keen to shoot deserters), then make their way back to civilization, probably to either Urik or Tyr.

Let both the play style of your group and your plans for an ongoing DARK SUN campaign guide you at this point. If your players enjoy intrigue and negotiation, have them try to negotiate with the elves. If they are spoiling for another fight, send them out elfhunting. If you want to use Karadao as a master villain in your DARK SUN game, point the PCs toward the Red Tower.

The PCs have a destination in mind, whether it's the elf camp, the Red Tower, the city-state of Urik, or a relief caravan lost in the wilderness. This adventure ends—and the next one begins—when they reach that destination. But first, they must survive the wilds of Athas.

One of the greatest dangers that faces desert travelers in the world of DARK SUN is the weather. There's little chance of precipitation in the desert, but the overall temperature can impact how much ground can be covered in a day of travel.

TABLELANDS WEATHER

d%	Weather
01–10	Cooler, calm. High of 55°F + (3d4 × 5).
11–70	Hot, calm. High of 75°F + (3d4 × 5).
81–85	Hot, breezy. High of 75°F + (3d4 × 5). Moderate winds.
86–90	Hot, windy. High of 75°F + (3d4 × 5). Strong winds.
91–97	Duststorm. High of 75°F + (3d4 × 5).
98	Greater duststorm. High of 75°F + (3d4 × 5).
99–100	Tyr storm (equivalent to thunderstorm). High of 55°F + (3d4 × 5).

Weather conditions are defined in Chapter 3 of the *DUNGEON MASTER's Guide*. For simplicity's sake, the temperature high lasts from 1 to 4 P.M. and the low lasts from 1 to 4 A.M. The temperature tails off by 5 degrees per hour from 4 P.M. to 1 A.M., and rises at a steady pace after 4 A.M. until it reaches the new day's high at about 1 P.M.

The Heat Dangers in DARK SUN section of the “DARK SUN Player's Handbook” in *DRAGON* #319 has rules for functioning in the heat. Characters will find it somewhat difficult to travel in temperatures above 90 degrees because they'll probably take at least a few points of nonlethal damage. Once the temperature is above 110 degrees, characters take damage more frequently. Above 130 degrees, the damage is lethal.

The region between Outpost Three and civilization is a desolate wasteland. Check for an encounter once every hour; the chance of an encounter occurring is 5%. Most of these creatures appear in the *DARK SUN Monster Supplement* (p. 82), but some will appear in *DUNGEON* #III.

STONY BARRENS ENCOUNTER TABLE

d%	Encounter	Average EL
01–03	Thri-kreen hunters (described below)	7
04–06	Black Reavers (described below)	7
07–09	1 crodlu and 1 swiftwing crodlu-tamer	6
10–12	1 sand howler	6
13–15	1d3 zombie swiftwing rogues	5
16–17	1 gith trooper (described below)	5
18–22	1d3 very young spinewyrms (described below)	5
23–26	1d3 Huge viper snakes	5
27–31	1d4+2 baazrags	5
32–34	1d4 belgoi	5
35–40	1d4 jhakars	5
41–45	1 cilops	5
46–58	1d4 swiftwing rogues	4
59–63	1d4 Medium monstrous scorpions	4
64–68	1d3 Huge monstrous centipedes	4
69–73	1 fordorran	4
74–77	1 pterax	4
78–81	1 razorwing	4
82–86	1 boneclaw baazrag	4
87–90	1 lirr	3
91–95	1 crodlu	3
96–100	1d4 zhackals	3

Thri-Kreen Hunters (EL 7)

Two lean, dusty thri-kreen twitch their mandibles in your direction as they look at you. Each carries an iron gythka and has a pouch at its hip.

“You're not elves,” one says in a raspy voice.

Creatures: These thri-kreen are on the verge of starvation, and they're tracking some of their favorite meat: elf-flesh. They won't start a fight against the PCs unless the PCs look weak or flaunt the fact that they have food. If the PCs attack them, they'll show no mercy.

➤ **Thri-Kreen Hunters, Thri-Kreen Rgr4 (2):** CR 5; Medium monstrous humanoid; HD 6d8+6; hp 34, 32; Init +4; Spd 50 ft.; AC 21, touch 14, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +6; Grp +10; Atk +11 melee (1d10+7, +1 iron gythka) or +10 ranged (1d6+4, iron chatkcha); Full Atk +9/+4 melee (1d10+7, +1 iron gythka) and +8 melee (1d4+2, 2 claws) and +8 melee (1d4+2 plus poison, bite) or +10/+5 ranged (1d6+4, iron chatkcha); SA poison, psi-like abilities, favored enemy (elves) +2; SQ thri-kreen qualities, wild empathy +1; AL NE; SV Fort +5, Ref +11, Will +6; Str 18, Dex 18, Con 13, Int 8, Wis 14, Cha 4.

Poison (Ex): Bite, initial damage 1d6 Dex, secondary damage paralysis, DC 12. A thri-kreen produces sufficient poison for only one bite per day.

Skills: Hide +8, Jump +47, Listen +6, Move Silently +8, Spot +6, Survival +6.

Feats: Deflect Arrows[®], Endurance[®], Multiattack, Multi-weapon Fighting[®], Quick Draw, Speed of Thought, Track[®].

Languages: Common, Thri-Kreen.

Psi-like Abilities: 3/day—chameleon, know direction; 1/day: psionic displacement and metaphysical claw. These abilities are as the powers manifested by a wilder of 3rd level.

Possessions: +1 studded leather, +1 iron gythka, 6 iron chatkchas.

Tactics: These thri-kreen prefer to strike from ambush, so they withdraw long enough to use their psi-like ability of *chameleon*, which improves their Hide bonus to +23 for 30 minutes at a time. They then try to sneak up on the PCs. If they know a fight is coming, they'll use their *metaphysical claw* psi-like ability (+1 attack and +1 damage for the next three minutes). They use their *greater concealing amorphia* psi-like ability if they need to retreat from battle.

The thri-kreen often throw chatkchas, using Quick-Draw to draw between throws if necessary, then wait for the PCs to charge them. If the PCs do, the thri-kreen unleash a full attack and catch the chatkcha they threw the previous round. With a speed of 50 ft. and a Jump bonus of +47, they have terrific maneuverability.

Development: If the PCs try to negotiate, the thri-kreen might agree to a joint attack on the nearby elves. Their starting attitude is unfriendly, and the following circumstance modifiers apply to PCs' attempts to influence them: PCs offer food (+2); PCs express intent to attack elves (+4); PCs act sympathetic toward elves or have elves among them (-2); PCs insult thri-kreen heritage (-4).

If Hostile (Check Result 4 or Less): Attack immediately. "Die, fleshling!"

If Unfriendly (Check Result 5-14): Warn away, and attack if PCs don't comply. "Leave our hunt the way you came, or you'll be our next meal."

If Indifferent (Check Result 15-24): Agree to coordinate attack, but not detailed planning. "We'll attack at sunset, fine, but stay out of our way."

If Friendly (Check Result 25-39): Agree to coordinated attack, including stealth or undercover. "Plenty of meat for all hunters, eh?"

If Helpful (Check Result 40 or more): Agree to any reasonable plan the PCs suggest. "Our empty bellies can wait."

Ad-Hoc Experience Award: Award the PCs experience for this encounter if they defeat the thri-kreen in combat, or if they jointly attack nearby elves.

Black Reavers (EL 7)

The Black Reavers are a maenad mercenary company hired by the Stel merchant house in Urik. After Gorgoreth tipped House Stel

off, they immediately sent a platoon to Outpost Three. The mission: assist House Klethira in the defense of the outpost, unless the outpost had already fallen or Klethira's troops were badly depleted; in that case, kill everyone and seize the outpost for House Stel.

But the duststorm of a few days ago caught the Black Reavers out in the open, killing all the mounts and most of the mercenaries as well. The stragglers have been grimly marching onward with little food or water, trying to reach Outpost Three and complete their mission.

If Gorgoreth sent the PCs to find the Black Reavers, he'll give them passwords that convince the Reavers that the PCs are allies. Otherwise, the Black Reavers' first instinct is to attack.

➤ **Black Reavers, Maenad Psy3 (4):** CR 3; Medium humanoid (maenad); HD 3d8+3; hp 17, 16, 15, 14; Init +1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 16, touch 11, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +2; Grp +5; Atk/Full Atk +5 melee (1d6+3, *claws of the beast*) or +3 ranged (1d8+3, composite longbow); SA outburst, *energy ray*; SQ maenad traits; AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +3; Str 17, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 6.

Skills: Autohypnosis +8, Concentration +7.

Feats: Greater Psionic Fist, Point Blank Shot, Psionic Fist, Psionic Shot.

Languages: Common, Maenadi.

Powers Known (8 PP; save DC 12 + power level): 1st—*claws of the beast*, *prevenom*, *stomp*.

Possessions: Composite longbow (+3 Str), 10 iron arrows, +1 spiked bronze breastplate, power stone of *force screen*.

Tactics: A Black Reaver's first action in combat is to retrieve and activate a *power stone of force screen* to get +4 AC for the next minute. Then the psychic warrior manifests *stomp* if there's a group of enemies within a 20-foot cone or uses a longbow or its sonic *energy ray* if targets are farther away. Against targets within 30 ft., the Black Reavers' bows get an extra +1 on attack and damage due to their Point Blank Shot feat.

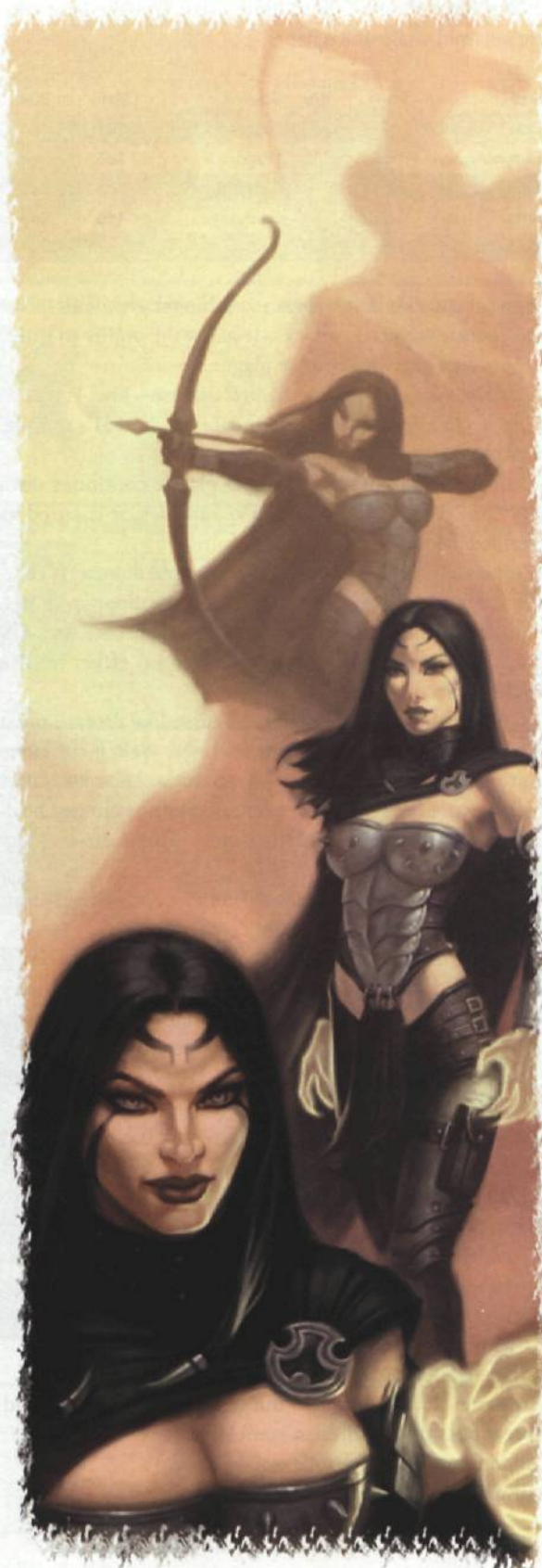
If the PCs engage a Black Reaver in melee, she responds by manifesting *claws of the beast* as a swift action, preferably spending 3 power points to augment the claws so they each deal 1d6 points of damage. The Black Reavers are all psionically focused, so their first successful melee attack deals an additional +2d6 points of damage. Black Reavers who get a round's respite during a fight manifest *prevenom* on their claws so their next attack deals 2 points of Constitution damage (Fort DC 13 negates). The *prevenom* lasts for 3 minutes.

Individual Black Reavers fight until slain, but the group makes a fighting withdrawal once they take half their number in casualties, unless their foes are likewise diminished.

Development: If this encounter seems too tough for the PCs, the maenads have taken 5 points each of nonlethal damage from dehydration and are fatigued from overexposure to the heat. These changes effectively reduce their Challenge Rating by -1.

Gith Trooper (EL 5)

Creature: This is a straightforward encounter with a battle-crazed gith trooper. He attacks on sight.



➤ **Gith Trooper, Gith Soulnife 4:** CR 5; Medium humanoid (gith); HD 4d10+4; hp 26; Init +2; Spd 20 ft.; AC 21, touch 12, flat-footed 19; Base Atk +3; Grp +7; Atk/Full Atk +9 melee (1d6+5/19–20, +1 *mind blade*) or +7 ranged (1d6+5/19–20, +1 *mind blade*); SA *mind blade*, throw *mind blade*, *psychic strike* +1d8; SQ *psi-like abilities*; AL NE; SV Fort +5, Ref +3, Will +2; Str 18, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 6, Wis 13, Cha 12.

Skills: Concentration +8, Hide +9, Move Silently +9, Spot +8.

Feats: Armor Proficiency (medium), Psionic Weapon, Weapon Focus (*mind blade*)⁸, Wild Talent⁸.

Languages: Gith.

Psi-Like Abilities: 3/day—*biofeedback*, *control flames*, *matter agitation*. Manifest level 2nd.

Possessions: +1 *heartening heavy wooden shield*, +1 *chitin armor*.

Tactics: The gith's first action is to use its *psi-like ability of biofeedback* to gain damage reduction of 2/— for the next 2 minutes. If it has time, it also activates the *heartening* ability on its shield, giving it 31 hit points for the impending fight.

It then strikes in melee or ranged combat with its *mind blade*, depending on the situation. The gith's first successful hit with the *mind blade* against a living foe deals an extra +2d6 (from the *Psionic Weapon* feat) and +1d8 (from the *soulnife's psychic strike* class feature) points of damage.

Gith troopers are ordinarily cautious foes, but this one is mad to the point of incoherence. It fights until slain.

Spinewyrms (EL 5)

These very young spinewyrms are simply floating above the Athasian landscape, hunting for food when they spy the PCs. They attack immediately.

➤ **Very Young Spinewyrms (2):** CR 3; Small dragon (psionic); HD 6d12; hp 39, 38; Init +5; Spd 40 ft., fly 60 ft. (perfect); AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +6; Grp +5; Atk +11 melee (1d8+3, bite) or +8 ranged (1d4+3, 6 spines); Full Atk +11 melee (1d8+1, bite) and +5 melee (1d4+1, spines) or +8 ranged (1d4+3, 6 spines); SA *improved grab*, *impale*, *detachable spines*, *spine volley*; SQ *blindsense*, *keen senses*, *spineworm immunities*; AL NE; SV Fort +5, Ref +6, Will +6; Str 17, Dex 12, Con 11, Int 8, Wis 13, Cha 10.

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

Feats: Flyby Attack, Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Attack (bite)⁸, Weapon Focus (bite).

Tactics: These spinewyrms are aggressive and lack the caution and cunning possessed by more mature spinewyrms. At first they'll stay up in the air, shooting quill volleys that encompass as many foes as possible (all targets of a volley must be within 30 feet of each other). But once their enemies disperse (or after three volleys in any event), the spinewyrms swoop down, making full attacks with their bite and spine attacks. Once they've taken half their hit points in damage, they fight a little more cautiously, using the Flyby Attack feat to avoid attacks from the PCs.

These spinewyrms aren't big enough to grapple the PCs effectively, so they just attack with teeth and spines. They're so aggressive that they fight until slain.

Appendix: Athasian Zombie Template

The world of Athas has almost no unintelligent undead. Whether animated by magic, spawned by other undead, or created through other means, the undead of DARK SUN keenly remember their time among the living, whom they hate with a bitter passion.

The most common form of undead is the thinking zombie of Athas. Negative energy holds their rotting flesh together—for years if the zombie can somehow keep out of the sun, but only for weeks if frequently exposed to sunlight. Unless given specific orders from a master (often its creator or a cleric who can command undead), Athasian zombies wander the world, destroying every sign of civilization they can find.

Creating an Athasian Zombie

"Athasian zombie" is an acquired template that can be added to any living corporeal creature that has a skeletal system (referred to hereafter as the base creature).

Size and Type: The creature's type changes to undead. It retains any subtypes except alignment subtypes (such as good) and subtypes that indicate kind (such as reptilian). It does not gain the augmented subtype. It uses all the base creature's statistics and special abilities except as noted here.

Hit Dice: Raise the base creature's Hit Dice to d12s. If the base creature has more than 10 Hit Dice, it can't be made into a zombie with the *animate dead* spell.

Speed: As base creature, but no higher than 30 ft. for bipeds and 40 ft. for creatures with more than two legs. If the base creature can fly, its maneuverability drops by one category. If its maneuverability was clumsy to begin with, it can't fly anymore.

Armor Class: Natural armor bonus increases by a number based on the Athasian zombie's size:

Tiny or smaller	+0	Huge	+4
Small	+1	Gargantuan	+7
Medium	+2	Colossal	+11
Large	+3		

Base Attack: A zombie has a base attack bonus equal to 1/2 its Hit Dice.

Attacks: An Athasian zombie retains all the natural weapons, manufactured weapon attacks, and weapon proficiencies of the base creature. A zombie also gains a slam attack and a bite attack (at -5 attack) if it has a mouth.

Damage: Natural and manufactured weapons deal damage normally. The slam attack and bite attacks deal

damage depending on the zombie's size. Use the base creature's slam damage if it's better.

Size	Slam	Bite	Size	Slam	Bite
Fine	1	1	Large	1d8	1d6
Diminutive	1d2	1	Huge	2d6	1d8
Tiny	1d3	1d2	Gargantuan	2d8	1d6
Small	1d4	1d3	Colossal	4d6	2d8
Medium	1d6	1d4			

Special Attacks: An Athasian zombie retains none of the base creature's special attacks. It gains the ability to infect victims of its bite with zombie plague.

Zombie Plague (Su): Supernatural disease—bite, Fortitude DC 10 + 1/2 HD + Cha bonus. Incubation period 1 minute. Damage 1d6 Con and 1d6 Cha.

Unlike normal diseases, zombie plague continues until the victim reaches Constitution 0 and dies or is cured as described below.

Zombie plague is a powerful supernatural disease. A character attempting to cast any conjuration (healing) spell on a creature afflicted with zombie plague must succeed on a DC 20 caster level check, or the spell has no effect on the afflicted character.

To eliminate zombie plague, the curse-like disease must first be broken with *break enchantment* or *remove curse* (requiring a DC 20 caster level check for either spell), after which a caster level check is no longer necessary to cast healing spells on the victim, and the zombie plague can be magically cured as any normal disease.

An afflicted creature who dies of zombie plague rises as an Athasian zombie three days after death.

Special Qualities: An Athasian zombie loses most special qualities of the base creature. It retains any extraordinary special qualities that improve its melee or ranged attacks.

All Athasian zombies gain damage reduction 5/slashing.

Saves: Base save bonuses are Fort +1/3 HD, Ref +1/3 HD, and Will +1/2 HD + 2.

Abilities: An Athasian zombie's Strength increases by +4, and its Charisma decreases by -4 (to a minimum of 1). It has no Constitution score, and its Wisdom score changes to 10.

Skills: As base creature, but modified to reflect new ability scores.

Feats: As base creature, even if the Athasian zombie no longer meets the prerequisites.

Environment: Warm desert.

Organization: Any.

Challenge Rating: As base creature +1.

Treasure: None, other than the gear the base creature had before it became an Athasian zombie.

Alignment: Always chaotic evil.

Advancement: By character class.

Level Adjustment: —. Ω