

Rays of Life & Death

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Feature:

[\[Monster Calc\]](#)

[\[ECL Calc\]](#)

Gabriel Cormier

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Rays of Life & Death

"I should just kill you now and be over with it."

- Agis to Tithian, PPI

Welcome to Athas...

News:

Visit the [official Dark Sun web site](#).

2005.08.10

Added a [Partial Armor](#) calculator, based on rules by Bengeldorn from the DS Message Boards.

2005.05.05

Updated the [Random Athasian Name Generator](#).

2005.05.02

Added a [Random Athasian Name Generator](#).

2004.08.10

Added a [Poison Price](#) calculator. Based on rules from DreamReality Press.

2003.10.16

Slight update to the [Monster Calc](#). Monster skills can now be calculated.

2003.08.23

City-State of Draj is now available at athas.org!

2003.07.17

Dark Sun 3 is available at athas.org! This 16MB PDF contains all you need to run 3E Dark Sun games.

[\[News Archive\]](#)





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Partial Armor for Dark Sun

Rules by Bengeldorn. See [this thread](#) on the Dark Sun Message Boards.

Head:	Bonus:		
Left Arm:	Bonus:	Right Arm:	Bonus:
Left Leg:	Bonus:	Right Leg:	Bonus:
Upper Torso:	Bonus:		
Lower Torso:	Bonus:		

Results:

Total AC:	Max Dex bonus:
Total Check Penalty	Spell Failure:
Weight:	Total Value:
Armor Type:	Total Bonus

Note: **Bonus** refers to the enhancement bonus of the piece of armor.

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Athasian Name Generator

Select Race:

The data for this generator comes from [this website](#).

Random Name Generator

This generator uses random syllables to form names.

Select Race:

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Poison Price Calculator

[From [DreamReality Press](#)]

Initial Damage

Normal Damage:

Initial Ability Score

Damage:

Quantity:

Conditions:

Constitution Damage

Permanent Damage

Secondary Damage

Normal Damage:

Secondary Ability

Score Damage:

Quantity:

Conditions:

Constitution Damage

Permanent Damage

DC and Delivery Method

DC

Delivery method:

Final Cost

Poison cost:

Poison Prices

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Hit Dice:

Initiative:

Armor Class:

Attack:

Grapple bonus:

Fort:

Ref:

Will:

Total Skill points:

Feats:

Poison Save DC:

CR

Estimate Minimum

Final Stats (used for advancement):

Str:

Dex:

Con:

Int:

Wis:

Cha:

Natural Armor:

Notes:

Stuff that is not included in the current version:

- Creatures with HD less than 1.
- Restrictions for vermin (Int 1-2) and plant (Int 1-2).

I used the monster creation guidelines from "*How to create a Monster*" from Dragon. So the skill points and number of feats follow those guidelines.

- **Creature Type** affects: Hit Die Type, Base Attack Bonus, Base Saves, Skill Points, Feats.
- **Creature Size** affects: Attack, Armor Class
Creatures with less than 1 HD should have HD that are either 1/2 (0.5), 1/4 (0.25), 1/8 (0.125) or 1/16 (0.0625).
- **Incorporeal**: These creatures have no Str. They use their Dex modifier for attack. They have no natural armor, but rather a *deflection bonus* that equals their Cha bonus.
- **Weapon Finesse** is for creatures of size Small or less, using light weapons or natural weapons. These creatures use their Dex modifier for attack purposes instead of Str.
- **Attack** is modified by creature type, strength (or dex if

- incorporeal or using weapon finesse) and size modifier.
- **Armor Class** is modified by natural armor (or Cha bonus for incorporeal), Dex and size.
- **Advancement** is used when a creature increases size from its standard size in the MM. Bonuses and/or penalties to Strength, Dexterity, Constitution and Natural Armor are applied, as per the rules in the MM. The corresponding new size modifiers are also applied. Simply adjust the new HD to its increased value and select the new size.
- **CR Estimate:** This is based only on the Hit Points of the creature. It doesn't take into account Stats and Special Abilities. Add +1 CR for every two or three special abilities.

See the MM for more details.

Version history:

- 1.4: Bugs fixed, stat block generation added.
- 1.3: Advancement added.
- 1.2: November 14th, 2001: Added bonus HP for oozes. Minimum HD for creature size added. Elemental types divided into correct sub-type.
- 1.1: October 22nd, 2001: Fixed skill points and EHD bug. Added feats.
- 1.0: October 17th, 2001: First version.

Suggestions on improvements welcome

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News Archive

- 2003.01.16 - I've added a new monster conversion, the [kalin](#).
- 2002.10.03 - [Monster Calc](#) updated. Fixed a bug with Con bonus not registering for Dragons. Added a Stat Block generator.
- 2002.10.01 - Dark Sun [Calendar](#) calculator. Get the year in King's Ages or Free Year.
- 2002.08.08 - [Rhul-Thaun](#) name generator. Found this old thing while cleaning up my HD.
- 07/03/02 - Monster Calc updated. Fixed a bug with minimum HP per HD. Added poison save DC.
- 09/02/02 - Updated the thri-kreen Monster PC class. Natural armor now fixed at all levels. ECL is also correctly scaled at each HD. Thri-kreen now only medium size.
- 19/01/02 - Updated the thri-kreen Monster PC class. Fixed error in the ECL, and changed the natural armor progression.
- 12/01/02 - Bvanen and Reggelid monster conversions.
- 09/01/02 - Thri-kreen Monster PC (MPC) class.
- 05/12/01 - Pit Snatcher monster conversion.
- 29/11/01 - Floater monster conversion.
- 25/11/01 - Cloud Ray monster conversion.
- 17/11/01 - Updated the Monster Calc to include creature advancement.
- 15/11/01 - Added a 3E Monster Statistics Calculator. In the Handbook Section.
- 20/08/01 - Added a Monster page, for 3E Monster conversions.
- 06/04/01 - Updated some links, online community. Sorry, DS 3E is taking up most of my free time.
- 09/12/00 - Converted some spells to 3e.
- 20/09/00 - Updated some info for Draaj.
- 09/09/00 - My email address has changed: Gab@athas.org.
- 10/07/00 - Updated the Famous Athasian Last Words
- 05/07/00 - Updated the Druid page. Added an explanation of the druid's spellcasting abilities.
- 04/07/00 - Minor update. Used CSS to trim some pages, the Monster Directory. Managed to cut about a third from each page using CSS.
- 12/06/00 - The Dark Sun Distance Calculator. Look in the Handbook section.
- 06/04/00 - A WYFTY short story for Draaj. This short story

summarises the beliefs and culture of Draja.

- 12/03/00 - The DM's Summary Statistics for Draja are done. Sorry for the long wait, I'm now a part of the design team of the official DS website (Burnt World of Athas) and I've put in some time there. Don't worry, I'll still be updating RoL&D as much as I can.
- 17/01/00 - Added the Comprehensive Athasian Monster Directory by Eric Anondson. Many hours of work were put in by Eric to create this directory, so check it out! In the Handbook Section
- 07/12/99 - I've finally put up my section on Draja. Read all about the People, Places, Rituals of Draja. Although it isn't complete, you should find a lot of the information here helpful.
- 10/10/99 - I know it's been a long time, but my 4th story is finally finished. It's entitled The Shadows Thicken and is set in Draja. Look for it in the Shadow Wizard section, or on my Creations page.
- 18/07/99 - Added the 5th essay for the "What Your Father Told You" Net Project, the Sun cleric.
- 15/07/99 - Added the 3rd and 4th essays for the "What Your Father Told You" Net Project, the Air & Water clerics. They're in their respective sections.
- 11/07/99 - My second essay for the "What Your Father Told You" Net Project is up. In the Earth cleric section.
- 07/07/99 - Modified my essay on the Athasian Cleric with discussions with Brax. Remodeled the look a bit.
- 29/06/99 - Finally did an essay for the "What Your Father Told You" Net Project. My first (of hopefully more) essay is about the Fire Cleric. It's in the Fire Cleric Section, obviously.
- 28/06/99 - A list of Dark Sun Net Projects available online.
- 26/02/99 - Added an article on the Athasian cleric discussing motivations, faiths and belief. In the Cleric section.
- 17/08/98 - Compiled the Famous Athasian Last Words, from the Dark Sun Mailing List. In the Handbook Section.
- 13/08/98 - Detailed the structure of the Disciples and added the stats for the leader.
- 29/05/98 - My 3rd story, Breath of Freedom. It's about an Air Cleric's initiation. Look in the Priest-Clerics-Air Clerics section to find it.
- 28/05/98 - A List of Dungeon Articles with Dark Sun related content. In the Handbook Section
- 13/04/98 - A great discussion on portals by Pete Poulos (DSDragon@aol.com). It's in the Psionics section. Read it, it's really good!
- 23/02/98 - The Undead of Athas is finally done. Go check it out!

By Aaron Garvey and me.

- 15/02/98 - I'm now a mirror site for the Dark Sun Net.Book! Download it from the Handbook section.
- 22/01/98 - Added my 2nd short story - Birth of Fire. It's in the Fire cleric section.
- 29/11/97 - Added a Fire Cleric spell and a Shadow wizard spell.
- 27/11/97 - I've added some simple Javascript to my web page.
- 13/11/97 - I've added a few things to the Disciples of Xerma kit: restrictions concerning multi-class and dual class options. I've also added a bit more info on the current situation of the Disciples.
- 12/11/97 - That new character class is ready. Look in the Psionics section to find them. As they are still in development, any comments would be appreciated.
- 19/10/97 - Added a Text editor I created. It's in the Handbook section.
- 29/09/97 - Added a Disclaimer page. Added a link to TSR's official web site.
- 22/09/97 - Added the 2nd druid kit.
- 21/09/97 - Added a Magma cleric spell. Added a 'Creations' page, which is a listing of all new DS stuff I created.
- 19/09/97 - Corrected a few errors in my short story (with help from Rand Ratinac). Added a link to Rand's short story in the Handbook section. Added one new Earth cleric spell.
- 10/09/97 - Added one druid kit to the druid's page. Added some more info on the Templars. Updated my Bios page. Added the Cleric of Sun, Magma and Rain pages.
- 08/09/97 - Added the Cleric of Silt page.
- 03/09/97 - Added the druid's page with suggestions on how to create a druid's magical grove. Also added a short story about an Earth cleric's initiation.
- 28/08/97 - Changed my page's name to something more original. Modified the Priests page (formerly Clerics page).

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Races

Here you'll find some new races to add to your Dark Sun campaign. Hopefully these will be of some interest. If you do use them, please report any problems or imbalances.

- [Bvanen](#) - an intelligent species that lives at the bottom of the Jagged Cliffs.
 - [Thri-kreen](#) - a thri-kreen monster PC class.
-

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Classes

Clerics

The Clerics of Athas worship the elements. As there are no gods on Athas, the clerics had to find a source of magic, and the elements provide this source. The elements give spells to the clerics in order to increase the presence of their element on this sun blasted world. Elemental clerics worship Earth, Air, Fire, or Water, and are concerned about the restoration of Athas to its former splendor. [More on [Elemental](#) clerics]

Paraelemental clerics worship the Sun, Silt, Magma, or Rain. The proliferation of these para-elements on Athas depends on the destruction of the elements, and such these paraelemental clerics are often are odds with the elemental clerics. Only clerics of Rain realize that for Rain to become more abundant, they need more forests and a revitalized Athas, so these clerics understand the need to protect Athas. [More on [Paraelemental](#) clerics]

The character willing to enter into service with an element (or para-element) must suffer through an initiation, and must accept the Pact that the elemental powers impose unto them. Refusing the pact during initiation is often fatal, or can lead to madness or permanent disability. Once on the road to serving an element, a cleric can no longer choose to serve another element.

[Of faith, belief and elements.](#) - an article written by me to help you understand the Athasian cleric.

Druids

- [Druids](#)

Shadow wizards

Shadows wizards have found another way to power their spells: the Black. They use the cold energies from this plane to power their spells, instead of using plants.

- Shadow wizard [spells](#).
- Shadow wizard [items](#).

Disciples of Xerma

This is a kit for AD&D; these are psionicists who devote their life to unarmed combat; sort of like a psionic monk. [[Disciples of Xerma](#)]

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Spells

New spells for your use. Some are 3E, some aren't.

Animate Shadow

Level: Wiz 1

Range: 30 yards

Components: V, S

Duration: 1 round + 1 rnd/level

Casting Time: 1

Area of effect: 5 sq yards + 5 sq yards/level

Saving throw: None

This spell permits the simple animation of a shadow. The animated shadow is harmless and cannot be used for any attack form whatsoever. The wizard must concentrate while animating the shadow, making spellcasting impossible. If the wizard stops concentrating or is interrupted, the shadow regains its original form. The shadow must remain on a flat surface (i.e. 2D) and remains attached to the creature or object producing it.

Black Bolt

Level: Wiz 2

Range: 10 yards + 10 yards/level

Components: V, S

Duration: Instantaneous

Casting Time: 3

Area of Effect: 1 creature

Saving throw: half damage

When casting this spell, the wizard opens a small gate to the Black, releasing a bolt of energy that causes 1d4 damage per level of the caster to the target. The cold of coming in contact with the Black imposes a +2 initiative penalty to the victim the following round. A successful **Saving throw:** halves the damage and negates the initiative penalty. This spell can only be used by a Shadow wizard.

Black Plague/Creeping Death (necromancy)

Level: Wiz 9

Range: 20 yards/level radius

Components: V, S, M

Duration: Special

Preparation time: 1 turn

Casting Time: 1 round

Area of Effect: Special

Saving throw:: half

When a wizard casts this spell, a river of shimmering black issues forth from the caster's feet, spreading out in all directions. This coat of black nothingness covers everything in its path, moving at the rate of 1 foot/sec. Creatures (people, demi-humans, animals, plants...) touched by this black river take 1d10 of damage per round spent covered. This is a horrifying experience, as creatures can feel their life-force slowly being sucked out. Once covered, a creature must expose himself to full sunlight in order to remove the black stuff. Any creature that is killed fades away; nothing remains, not even bones. The black river cannot be stopped. The only escape is to run. Non-living things and undead are not affected. Once the river reaches the end of its course, it fades away to nothing. The material component of this spell is a 1 foot diameter sphere of obsidian, and a crushed diamond of no less than 100gp. This spell can only be cast in daylight, and can only be cast by a Shadow wizard. The wizard temporarily loses 2 points of constitution (which return after rest), and must rest a full 8 hours before being able to cast another spell. The caster of this spell is immune to its effects. After one round, the caster is free to move about.

Obsidian Barrier

Level: Wiz 2

Range: Special

Components: V, S, M

Duration: 1 round + 1 round/level

Casting Time: 2

Area of Effect: Special

Saving throw:: none

A wizard uses this spell to cause a wall of obsidian to spring up from the ground. This wall is a 10' high by 10' long wall of obsidian 1' wide. The wizard must have in his possession crushed obsidian which he enchants and then throws. When the obsidian shards hit the ground they create the wall. The wall lasts only for a short time, but is useful for blocking passages or corridors. The enchanted obsidian is just like normal

obsidian, i.e. the enchantment doesn't make it more durable or more resistant..

Shadow transfer

Level: Wiz 4
Range: Sight
Components: V, S, M
Duration: Instantaneous
Casting Time: 2
Area of Effect: Caster
Saving throw: none

The wizard uses this spell to transfer himself from one shadow to another shadow. The wizard must step into a shadow and then cast this spell while looking at the target shadow. The wizard then seems to disappear into the ground and pop up in the target shadow. The target shadow must be big enough so that the wizard can fully fit into it; if not, the wizard takes crushing damage (1d8) from trying to fit into a space too small. The wizard must make a constitution check to withstand the transfer as he is using the Black to go from one shadow to another. The constitution check is made with a -1 penalty for every level under 9th, at which point the wizard is immune to the Black. If the check fails, the wizard takes 1d4 damage. The material component of this spell is a small twig or branch which is held in a closed fist. The wizard then makes the twig disappear into his fist using his other hand. This spell may only be cast by a shadow wizard.

Step in Darkness

Level: Wiz 5
Range: Touch
Components: V, S
Duration: Instantaneous
Casting Time: 3
Area of Effect: 1 creature
Saving throw: Neg

This spell opens a gate to the Black, instantly sending the creature touched to the Black. In order for this spell to work, the wizard must be in a shadow. The wizard must make an attack roll or must have a firm grip on the creature. Only size L or smaller creatures can be sent to the Black. A successful **Saving throw:** vs Death magic negates the spell.

This spell can only be cast by a Shadow Wizard.

Sand Pillar

Conjuration [Earth]

Level: Clr 2

Components: V, S, M, DF

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Medium (100 feet + 10 feet/level)

Target: 1 creature / 2 levels

Effect: Knocks down creatures for 1d4 rounds and 1d6 damage.

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving throw: Reflex negates

This spell lets you knock down creatures from afar. When you bang your hand upon the ground, a pillar of sand or earth will spring forth from the ground and strike the desired target in the chest, hopefully knocking them down. One pillar bursts forth from the ground for every 2 casting levels, up to a maximum of 10. Creatures hit take 1d6 points of damage and must spend 1d4 rounds getting up. A successful Reflex save means the creature has managed to avoid the effects of the spell. Only creatures of size L or smaller can be knocked down, with creatures of size L getting a +2 Reflex bonus. You can only cast this spell on soft earth or sand; stone or obsidian does not work.

Shelter

Conjuration [Earth]

Level: Clr 2

Components: V, S, M, DF

Casting Time: 3 rounds

Range: Close (25 feet + 5ft./2 levels)

Effect: Half-sphere of earth whose area is 2ft. radius/level

Duration: 10 minutes

Saving throw: See text

Spell Resistance: No

This spell allows you to create a shelter for yourself and some companions. You must first create a circle of small stones on the ground in the shape of the shelter. Then, after casting the spell, a small dome of earth or sand will rise up and create a shelter. The dome is made up of the same material as the ground you are on. For example, a dome of sand will rise up if you created the circle on sand, or a dome of stone

will rise up for a circle created on stone. The shelter lasts for 10 minutes, after which it disintegrates. Once the dome is created, you don't have to concentrate to maintain it.

If a creature attempts to enter the dome from the outside, it must break through whatever material you have created the dome with. For a dome of sand, this could be easy, but a dome made of stone will take much longer.

This spell can be very useful to protect yourself from the fury of a Typhoon. Alternatively, if you can coerce a creature to step into your circle of stones, you might be able to trap a creature and buy yourself some time to get away. The creature does receive a Reflex save to avoid being trapped, though.

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3E Monster Conversions

Here is a listing of the monster conversions I've done for 3rd edition.

For monster conversions, there's an excellent article in Dragon Magazine, from October 2000 called *How to Create a Monster*. There are excellent guidelines in that article about creature attacks, damage, hit die, CR, abilities, etc. There's also the conversion book, available on Wizards' website. And of course, the Monster Manual is an excellent source as well. For calculating stats, use my handy [Monster Calculator](#).

- [Bvanen](#) - from WRotJC.
- [Floater](#) - from DSMCI.
- [Jade Golem](#) - from Marauders of Nibenay.
- [Kalin](#) - from CbtSS.
- [Pit Snatcher](#) - from CbtSS.
- [Reggelid](#) - from WRotJC.

Here is an attempt at creating a Monster PC class for the [thri-kreen](#).

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Dark Sun NPCs

Here are some NPCs to enhance your campaign. Hopefully I can do one every couple of weeks, and you can drop these characters into your games. If you include any in your games, let me know how it goes.

- [Nurghash](#), 5th-level rogue, thinking zombie.
-

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Handbook

This is where the traveler will find a few things to help him on his journey....

[List of Dark Sun Net Projects available online.](#)

[Athasian Monsters](#) - A list of monsters for the Athasian campaign.
Compiled by [Eric Anondson](#).

[Monster Stat Calculator](#) - Use this program to calculate vital statistics for 3E Monsters.. **NEW!**

[Dark Sun Calendar Calculator](#) - Use this to calculate the year in King's Ages or Free Year... **NEW!**

[Dark Sun Distance Calculator](#) - Dark Sun Distance Calculator via the Major Trade Routes.

[Poison price calculator](#) - Calculate the price for a new poison. Based on rules from DreamReality Press.

[Rhul-Thaun name generator](#) - Generate a random rhul-thaun name.

[Dragon Articles](#) - A list of Dragon Articles available from TSR's web site that might interest any Dark Sun fan.

[Famous Athasian Last Words](#) - A list of Famous Athasian Last Words, compiled from contributions by members of the Dark Sun Mailing List. Download the [Last Words](#) in RTF format.

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Community

Here are some links to message boards, news, and other items on the Net to keep you up-to-date on Dark Sun.

Message Boards

- Wizards of the Coast's Official [Dark Sun Message Board](#).
- The [Psionics boards](#).
- [Dark Sun Message Board](#) at The Realms of Evil.

News:

- Trent Bartlem had the most up-to-date [Dark Sun News](#) Site on the web. Not working at the moment, though.
- [EN World](#) has all your news for 3E.

Mailing List:

Wizard of the Coast's Official [Dark Sun mailing list](#). Join here to participate in Dark Sun 3E.

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Fiction

Here are all the stories I've written for Dark Sun, as well as entries for the "What Your Father Told You" series of essays that were going around the Dark Sun mailing list a few years ago. Note that the "What Your Father Told You" essays are written from a biased viewpoint; these are the particular motivations of the person talking. In other words, for example, the fire cleric text is a fire cleric's point of view of the world; it will obviously be different from a water cleric's. Also, some of the info in these texts may be contradictory; some may know of Athas's past, some may not, or they may have been told lies and are simply repeating what they think is the truth. These are meant to be given to new players who may not know much about Dark Sun; it should give them a starting point.

- [Birth of Fire](#) - a story about the fiery rebirth of a young man into a fire cleric.
- [Breath of Freedom](#) - the story of an elf's initiation as a cleric of air.
- [Initiation](#) - a small story about an earth cleric's initiation.
- [The Shadows Thicken...](#) - a story of the discovery of shadow magic of a young defiler.
- What Your Father Told You - An [air cleric](#) to his initiate.
- What Your Father Told You - An [earth cleric](#) to his initiate.
- What Your Father Told You - A [Draji](#) to his son.
- What Your Father Told You - A [fire cleric](#) to his initiate.
- What Your Father Told You - A [sun cleric](#) to his initiate.
- What Your Father Told You - A [water cleric](#) to his initiate.

Articles:

- [On the relationship between druids and Spirits of the Land](#) - about the druid's spellcasting abilities.
 - [Of Faith, Belief, and the Elements](#) - about the elemental clerics in Dark Sun.
 - [The Nature of Portals](#) - by Pete Poulos. Theories and explanations of portals.
 - [Tyrian Irrigation System](#) - by Jan Gijsbrechts.
-

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Links

Here are the Dark Sun links I frequently visit. If you'd like me to add your link to this list, send me an [email](#).

The Burnt World of Athas	The OFFICIAL DARK SUN WEB SITE. New kits, weapons, magical items, and stuff for DMs: slave costs, travel time via the Trade routes. Also has LOTS of links.
Ur-Braxa	Brax's page. He's got maps of Athas, many house rules: Priests, psionics, races. Has adventures info on Balic, and much more. This site will definately enhance your campaign. Lots of excellent content.
Athas Online	Jon Sederqvist's web site. 3E content, including Prestige classes, some stories, etc. Very good.
Freedom	A lot of interesting Dark Sun stuff here.
Dessicated.Net	Trent has the most up to date Dark Sun news site. He also has a discussion board.
Crimson Sun	DS Monster conversions for 3E. Gladiator prestige classes.
Distant Paths	Templar spells, Maps of Athas, A guide to creating New Races, a short story.
Gerald Arthur Lewis's DS page	Lots of material available here... A different way of looking at spellcasting, the Dead Lands Net Project , how to create one of the New Races.
The Dragon's Sanctum	Dark Sun items, programs, LOTS of Brom art, and the Undead of Athas. Also has the Dark Sun Merchant Calendar program, an excellent resource for DS DMs.
The Unofficial Dark Sun Page	This page has a lot of Dark Sun material. Info on Dark Sun products, novels, some short stories, Dark Sun computer games, the plant life of Athas, MPGN Dark Sun list.
Other Web sites	

The Secrets of the Kargatane	An excellent web site! Even though this isn't a Dark Sun site, it is <u>really</u> worth a visit. It has a really good layout, excellent graphics, fonts, and a lot of content. The Official Ravenloft Web site.
Lich's Dungeons & Dragons Campaign	A campaign set in the world of Glen Cook's Black Company series. You'll find D&D 2nd and 3rd edition stuff.
NETBOOKS	
The S&P Psionics Net Book	Want Psionics? Get them here.
The Great NetBook Archive	Home of the Great Net Spell Books and other net books. Has close to 200 netbooks, including kits, spells, items, adventures, stories, programs, etc.....
GAMING STORES	
Cyberdungeon	Get all you need to play AD&D (and other games) at Cyberdungeon. This is the store that I buy all my D&D stuff.
RPG Book NetMarket	Shop for your RPG materials online! The neighborhood role playing game store that you remember from your childhood -- open again, online! We offer new & rare items. Most products at 10% to 30% off! Free gaming materials and fantastic online RPG tools. Come in, we are always open!

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The use of male pronouns in all material in this site is done only to alleviate the text; it is not intended as discrimination.

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Soldarin's ECL Calculator

Please read the [guidelines](#).

Type: _____ Size: _____

Hit Dice: _____ Natural Armor: _____

Movement:

Speed: _____ Extra mode (more than 10ft.) _____ Flight _____

Extra Attacks: _____ Reach: _____ Incorporeal: _____

Stats: Str: _____ Dex: _____ Con: _____ Int: _____ Wis: _____ Cha: _____

Skills:

Skill bonus total: _____ Provisional bonus: _____

Estimated ECL:

Major powers: +1, examples include:

- Regeneration 3 (or greater)
- Spell Resistance (SR) 15 (or greater)
- Damage Reduction (DR) 10/x (or greater) or x/+2 (or greater)
- Multiple resistances of which at least one is 15 (or greater)
- Immunities to more than 1 energy type (includes Undead and Constructs)
- Breath weapon that increases with level
- Baatezu Qualities
- Tanar'ri Qualities

Total Majors: _____

Minor powers: +0.2, examples include:

- Single energy resistance of 15 or less
- Immunities to a handful of spells
- Fear (DC 14 or less), Poison (DC 14 or less)
- Blindsight
- Saving throw bonuses (saving throw bonuses for particular effects count for half)
- Special combat modifiers (per +5 bonus)
- Feats beyond what an elf rogue would have of the same amount of HD (per feat) [1 HD races do NOT get more feats than 1, unless specifically noted as bonus feats!], Improved grab, Swallow whole, Trample, Scent, Turn resistance, Stonecunning, Charge

Total Minors: _____

Spell-like abilities

Major powers

- Any spell level over 4th, once or more per day
- 10 spells/day
- more than 3 spells at will

Minor Powers

- Anything else
- Any 0th level powers not included in a "package" of spells above.

Equivalent casting ability:

Levels as cleric, bard or druid

Special Weaknesses

Medium powers: +0.5, examples include:

- Regeneration 2 (or lower)
- SR 14 (or lower)
- DR 9/+1 (or lower in one or both traits)
- Natural cunning, Multiple resistances 15 (or lower)
- Immunity for 1 energy type (or single resistance 15+)
- Breath weapon
- Energy drain
- Fast healing
- Fear (DC 15 or greater)
- Ethereal (able to manifest; this is in addition to the +2 for being incorporeal)
- Poison (DC 15 or greater)
- General combat modifier (against all enemies, per +5 bonus)

Total Mediums: _____

Medium Powers

- At least one spell level 2 or 3.
- 3-9 spells per day
- Any spell over 1st level at will

No Powers

Levels as sorcerer, wizard or psion

Major weaknesses: -1, examples include:

- Unability to exist in sunlight
- Cannot use equipment

Total Majors:

Minor weaknesses: -0.2, examples include:

- Light sensitivity
- Normal vision
- Hard to get armor due to body form
- Cannot be raised from the dead

Total Minors:

Estimated ECL:

System designed by Soldarin

Javascript by [Gabriel Cormier](#)

Bugs in the code should be sent to Gabriel Cormier.

Medium weaknesses: -0.5, examples include:

- Can be turned
- Double damage from energy type
- Take moderate damage in sunlight
- Can hardly use any equipment (usually these creatures can still use adapted items like barding or special miscellaneous equipment; this weakness does not apply to incorporeal creatures, as these can use ethereal equipment)
- No hands

Total Mediums:

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d20™ System Conversion of "Kalin"

An ESD copy of the above product can be obtained from: [\[http://www.svgames.com/downloads-wotc-adnddksun.html\]](http://www.svgames.com/downloads-wotc-adnddksun.html)

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Kalin	[from CbtSS]
Large Aberration	
Hit Dice:	7d8+14 (45 hp)
Initiative:	+3 (+3 Dex)
Speed:	50 ft., Climb 25 ft.
AC:	16 (-1 size,+3 Dex, +4 natural)
Attacks:	2 claws +7 melee, bite +2 melee
Damage:	Claws 1d6+3, bite 2d6+1
Face/Reach:	5ft. by 10ft./10ft.
Special Attacks:	Improved grab, rend
Special Qualities:	-
Saves:	Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +6
Abilities:	Str 16, Dex 17, Con 14, Int 4, Wis 12, Cha 9
Skills:	Climb +15, Hide +5, Move Silently +7, Spot +6
Feats:	-
Climate/Terrain:	Subterranean
Organization:	Solitary or pair
Challenge Rating:	4
Treasure:	Standard items
Alignment:	Always neutral
Advancement:	8 - 14HD (Large); 15 - 21HD (Huge)

Kalin are large insectoid creatures that serve as mounts for the dray of New Giustenal. They look like large spiders, with claws at the end of their six legs. They are at home in the dark caverns under ground, and can walk on walls as easily as humanoids walk the ground. Kalin have mottled yellow or brownish colored chitinous plates covering their bodies.

Combat

Kalin prefer to grab hold of an opponent and tear into it until is it dead. They will sometimes concentrate on the prey in their grasp to the exclusion of more dangerous prey. Kalin can use their bite as well as their claws in an attack.

- **Improved grab (Ex):** If a kalin hits an opponent that is at least one size category smaller than itself with a bite attack, it deals normal damage and attempts to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity (grapple bonus +11). If it hits with both claws, it can also use its rend attack in the same round.
- **Rend (Ex):** If a kalin hits with both claws, it latches onto the opponent's body and tears the flesh. This attack automatically deals 2d4+4 points of damage.

City By the Silt Sea, The Complete Gladiator's Handbook, Dark Sun Campaign Setting, Dragon Kings, The Ivory Triangle, MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM: Dark Sun Appendix Terrors of the Desert, MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM: Dark Sun Appendix II Terrors Beyond Tyr, Psionic Artifacts of Athas, Thri-Kreen of Athas, Valley of Dust and Fire, Windriders of the Jagged Cliffs, DUNGEONS & DRAGONS, D&D, ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS, AD&D, the D&D logo, the AD&D logo, the d20 System logo and d20 are trademarks owned by Wizards of the Coast, Inc., a subsidiary of Hasbro, Inc., and are used with permission. All titles, and all proper nouns, including character names, locations, and named items are considered Product Identity per Section 1 of the Open Game License v1.0a and are exclusively owned by Wizards of the Coast, Inc. ©2002 Wizards of the Coast, Inc.

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Calendar

One of the confusing aspects of Dark Sun is the calendar. How does one get the equivalent in King's Ages from the Free Year? Or from the King's Age Calendar get the Free Year?

Free Year to King's Age

Enter Free Year:

Equivalent in King's
Ages:

King's Age to Free Year

Select King's Age:

Select Cycles

Free Year:

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Rhul-Thaun Name Generator

One of the longest parts of character creation is coming up with a good name for the character. The quick program below will generate an authentic Dark Sun name for you online. Just click the *Generate Name* box, and you'll be given one of nearly half a million possible names. Special thanks to Drellon Askar for the original javascript. All names come from *Windriders of the Jagged Cliffs*.

I found this while cleaning up my hard drive. I had compiled the rhul-thaun names and sent them to the DS Resource Site, probably 4 or 5 years ago. Have fun. :)

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d20™ System Conversion of "Bvanen"

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Here's a write-up for the use of bvanen as a player character race. The bvanen are from *Windriders of the Jagged Cliffs*, TSR 2439

Bvanen

Bvanen are a race of benevolent amphibians that live at the base of the Jagged Cliffs. Although not an evil society, bvanen are distrustful of outsiders and their mistrust often leads to conflict with others.

Personality: Bvanen are highly suspicious of others and tend to engage in conflict rather than trust strangers. They are generally good-natured, though, and do not have any malicious intentions.

Physical Description: These mishappen humanoids have a thick outer shell; their ribs show on the outside and protect their vital organs, while the rest of their body is covered with a strong exoskeleton. Bvanen have sharp claws and sharp teeth, and their eyes can rotate along an axis impossible to normal humanoids. Bvanen secrete a very hard substance they use to build their dwellings. This secretion also helps to heal wounds. Bvanen typically stand 5 feet high.

Relations: Because of their suspicious nature, bvanen tend to avoid other races, sometimes preferring to hide rather than be seen. Their society is strictly hierachical, where each individual has a specific function within the tribe. The two largest divisions are caretakers and hunter/gatherers. The caretakers tend the flocks of giant fish, frogs, water inix that serve as food and sometimes transportation. The hunter/gatherers go hunting for food, and also to find materials for weapons and shelter.

Alignment: Most bvanen are neutral good, looking out for themselves, but respecting other races.

Bvanen Lands: Bvanen are know to only at the base of the Jagged

Cliffs. They live in swamps, building shelter out of their secretions and wood and various plants.

Religion: Bvanen do not have an organized religion, though some individuals may worship water or rain.

Language: The bvanen have developed their own language, which is quite different from the common tongues of the Tablelands. Bvanen may learn the languages of the Tablelands, and vice-versa.

Adventurers: The lone bvanen who adventures is a rare one indeed. Very few choose to leave the relative peace and security of the swamps. Bvanen that are encountered outside the Jagged Cliff region are usually exiles who have been banished for committing a serious crime. They tend to avoid the Tablelands, as the hot dry air makes them uncomfortable.

Bvanen Racial Traits

- +2 Strength, -2 Dexterity, +4 Constitution, +2 Intelligence: Bvanen are strong and resilient, though they are less agile than most races.
- Medium: As Medium-size creatures, bvanen have no special bonuses or penalties due to their size.
- Bvanen base speed is 20ft., though they can swim with a speed of 30ft.
- Darkvision: Bvanen can see in the dark up to 60 feet. Darkvision is black and white only, but the bvanen can function normally without any light at all.
- +4 racial bonus to Spot: a bvanen's eyes are sharp and alert.
- Natural Armor +7: The bvanen have a strong shell covering their bodies.
- Immune to *wounding*: The bvanen's secretion closes wounds almost instantly.
- Damage Reduction 1/-: The bvanen are resistant to blows.
- Automatic Languages: Bvanen.
- Favored Class: psion. A multiclass bvanen's psion class does not count when determining whether he suffers an XP penalty for multiclassing (see Experience for Multiclass Characters, PHB).
- Level Adjustment +2: Bvanen are stronger than most races of the Tablelands and gain levels more slowly.

Level Adjustment Description

Using [Soldarin's ECL guidelines](#):

Ability	ECL Adjustment
Speed 20 ft.	-0.2 ECL
Swim 30 ft.	+0.2 ECL
AC +7	+1.4 ECL
Immune to <i>wounding</i>	+0.2 ECL
Ability Scores	+0.5 ECL

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Monster PC Thri-Kreen

Based on abilities described in AoH, p.18-19.

This is an attempt to create a monster PC class (MPC) for the thri-kreen. A MPC class works just like any other standard PC class. When you go up a level, you can choose to take another level of kreen or a level in any PC or PrC class (if you qualify). For example, K'klik is a thri-kreen 3 / fighter 2. When he reaches 15,000XP, he can choose to:

- Take another level of thri-kreen and become: TK 4 / fighter 2.
- Take another level of fighter and become: TK 3 / fighter 3.
- Add another class.

The thri-kreen racial class **never** counts for XP penalties: treat it as a favored class.

Thri-kreen racial progression

Kreen HD	BAB	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Natural Armor	Speed	Jump	Special	ECL
1	+1	+0	+2	+2	+5	30ft.	+0	-	+1.2: Blindsight, Sleep immunity, unusual form
2	+2	+0	+3	+3	+5	30ft.	+10	WP (Gythka)	+2.2: Weapon prof
3	+3	+1	+3	+3	+5	40ft.	+10	Multiattack, speed 40	+3.3: Bonus feat, Leap
4	+4	+1	+4	+4	+5	40ft.	+20	-	+4.1

5	+5	+1	+4	+4	+5	50ft.	+20	Poison (scaling DC), WP (chatkcha)	+5.4: Poison
6	+6	+2	+5	+5	+5	50ft.	+30	Deflect arrows	+6.2: Bonus feat

Racial abilities:

- Dex +4, Int -2, Wis +2, Cha -4. Thri-kreen are quick and agile, but so different from the other intelligent creatures of the Tablelands that it causes some problems.
- Type: Monstrous Humanoid. Unlike most monstrous humanoids, however, thri-kreen have low-light vision rather than darkvision. As monstrous humanoids, thri-kreen gain +2 skill points per level.
- Class skills: Balance, Climb, Hide, Intuit Direction, Jump, Listen, Move Silently, Search, Sense Motive, Spot.
- Antennae: A thri-kreen's antennae grant it the benefit of the Blindfighting feat.
- Bite: Thri-kreen may make a bite attack for 1d6 points of damage. This is the kreen's primary attack.
- Natural Weapons: Thri-kreen may strike for 1d4 points of damage with each of their 4 claws. As secondary attacks, these are made at -5.
- Leap: The thri-kreen may now ignore height restrictions on maximum jumping distances.
- Poison: The kreen can poison its victim on a successful bite attack. Initial damage is paralysis for 10 minutes, no secondary damage. Poison DC is 10 + thri-kreen's Constitution bonus + 1/2 HD.
- Sleep Immunity. Thri-kreen do not sleep, and are immune to sleep-inducing psionics, magic and effects. Thri-kreen who have levels in a class requiring sleep, such as psion, may enter a 4 hour meditative state, which grants the benefits of 8 hours of sleep.
- Alien Form: Due to their unique form, thri-kreen may not wear armor or magic items designed around the humanoid form, including (but not limited to) rings, bracers, helms and boots.
- Favored Class: Psychic Warrior. A multiclass thri-kreen's psychic warrior class does not count when determining whether it suffers an XP penalty for multiclassing (see Experience for Multiclass Characters, PHB page 56).

Notes on the ECL:

- Jump shows up as a provisional bonus. Applies only to leaping. And jump is less unbalancing than other skills, ie, +30 jump = +10 climb as Flip mentionned. So the bonus is provisional, gives +0.6 ECL for jump +30.

- Sleep immunity = +0.2 ECL, minor advantage.
 - Unusual form is a medium weakness, -0.5 ECL.
 - Weapon proficiency is only used once, since the calc says 1 or 2 weapons is worth +0.2 ECL.
-

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Elemental Clerics

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Read about an [Air Cleric's initiation](#).

- [What Your Father Told You - An Air cleric to his Initiate](#) - This is a small essay, in question / answer format, of an Air cleric Initiate talking to his mentor. It is meant to give the feel and mood of how to play an Air cleric.



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The Earth cleric is the defender of everything that lives off the earth or comes from it: rocks, sand, trees, etc. He is the defender of these things. He is the one who teaches the people to farm, the rotation of crops, in order to maximize the output of the land and the return of organic waste to the earth so that it recycles the nutrients.

[[Monster Calc](#)]

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The Earth cleric is the enemy of the defiler. The act of defiling takes energy from the earth and gives nothing in return. This energy is wasted forever. Nothing will grow in a defiled area, so the earth cleric will defend his land against any defiler. How to defend? The best defense is usually a good offense. The Earth cleric has a variety of spells he can use to defeat any offender. The sand may be soft, but underneath it there is cold hard stone.

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- [Read about an initiation](#).
- [What Your Father Told You - An Earth Cleric to his Initiate](#). -- This is a small essay, to set the mood and give the feel of how an Earth Cleric could be played. It is written as if an Initiate were asking questions to his mentor.
- [New spells](#): Spells I've created aren't listed on this page.

Fire Clerics

Fire clerics are the most unpredictable of all the elemental priests: just as fire can warm you, it can also easily burn. Fire clerics are feared by the population for this unpredictable nature, and because of two things: Fire clerics are very aggressive and very offensive. They laugh like madmen while watching their enemies burn, and seem to enjoy the chaos they cause.

Fire clerics are feared by defilers and Sorcerer-Kings alike, because fire can destroy what these people need most: plants. Although burning plants destroys Athas, new plants will grow soon, as vibrant and alive as if no fire had come. This fire is often cleansing, and burned forests grow stronger than before. But other clerics sometimes can't understand this, and conflicts often erupt between Fire clerics and other elemental priests.

The Pact of Fire requires the initiate to pass a searing test of flame, but if passed the cleric gains access to powerful destructive spells. The Pact is the most ironic of all Pacts, requiring clerics to preserve Athas so that it may burn once again in raging forest fires & burning plains of grass.

- [Read about a Fire cleric's initiation](#)
- [What Your Father Told You - A Fire Cleric to his Initiate](#). This is a small essay, to set the mood and give the feel of a Fire Cleric. It is written as if an Initiate were asking questions to his mentor.

Water Clerics

The Water cleric is the most desperate of all elemental clerics. Because of defiling magic, Athas no longer has abundant water sources. Water is scarce, it is more precious than gold, and it is life. Although the water cleric may wield the fewer spells, he is very vengeful, because the Water elementals are so desperate.

The Water cleric is a healer and a giver of life; even though the Elemental powers are weak, they still perform their age-old duty. The Pact of Water requires a Water cleric to help those in need, and it requires them to protect every source of water they can; anyone wasting water, especially a defiler, will be subject to the Water cleric's most vengeful wrath.

- [What Your Father Told You - A Water cleric to his Initiate](#) - This is a small essay in question / answer format of a Water cleric Initiate talking to his mentor. It is meant to help set the mood and feel of playing a Water cleric.

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Paraelemental clerics

Magma Clerics

Magma clerics are rare. They live in isolated mountains near their beloved magma, watching it bubble and ooze from the earth. They are loners, strange beings often driven mad by the incessant cries of their patron. They are unpredictable and unstable beings, but since they live in isolated spots, they are usually hard to find.

The Pact of Magma requires the cleric to continue the expansion of magma on Athas and destroy anything that might stop magma from expanding, like rain or any body of water. They are also required to give fuel to the magma to keep it burning.

Rain Cleric

The Rain cleric is the only para-elemental cleric welcomed by the general population and by the elemental clerics. They often conflict with sun and magma, but share the same goals as Water clerics. They are most often found near the Forest Ridge, although a few walk the surface of Athas to try and create forests in barren landscapes.

The Pact of Rain requires the cleric to protect the forests that hold the world's water and collect rain. The cleric must protect existing forests and promote the growth of new ones.

Silt Clerics

The Silt cleric is a destroyer. He lives to destroy the grass, the trees, and fauna that retain moisture and prevent the advance of silt. He is the enemy of all the Elemental clerics, but his most hated enemy is the Rain cleric. Fortunately for him, Rain clerics are as rare as the rain on Athas, and so the Silt cleric doesn't have much to fear from them. The Silt cleric often finds an ally in a Sun cleric.

The Pact of Silt requires one very simple thing of the Silt cleric: the tides of silt on Athas must always expand.

Sun Clerics

Sun Clerics are strange beings. They sit and stare mindlessly at the sun for days at a time. Little challenges them, and only the trees and cities provide relief from their patron. The sun is the most powerful of the para-elementals, and so one must beware when crossing a Sun cleric. But they do have one serious weakness: they can't recharge their spells at night, during a storm, or while underground.

The Pact of the Sun requires that the cleric remove anything that obscures the sun's rays. Nothing would be better than a flat, barren landscape, although this would kill everything.

- [What Your Father Told You - A Sun cleric to his Initiate](#) - This is a small essay, in question / answer format, of a Sun cleric Initiate talking to his mentor. It is meant to give the feel and mood of how to play a Sun cleric.

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Of faith, belief and elements

Foreword:

This was a text I originally created. I've added and rearranged it since then with the help of an excellent discussion with Brax. Paragraphs that are in Italics are his saying, to which I respond in the following paragraph.

The Athasian cleric. A mysterious and often misunderstood individual. What motivates him? What are the reasons for his devotion? Why devote one's life to an element, a power felt but rarely seen and heard?

What is an Athasian cleric? To understand the Athasian cleric, one must forget most knowledge learned about the role of clerics, the kind seen in most fantasy settings. Clerics of other settings worship a deity, a godly being, immortal, with almost unlimited power. These deities often have a specific agenda, and reward their followers, build churches in order to increase their presence (or power).

Athasian Elementals inhabit other planes, but they receive their power from the abundance of their element on the Prime Material Plane (Athas). Unlike Elementals, standard AD&D gods very often receive their power according to the number of followers they have. They are usually responsible for one specific aspect of the Prime, such as magic for Mystra (in Forgotten Realms), or healing for Mishakal (Dragonlance). They thus try to promote their cause above all else, and will give followers specific powers to accomplish this. Like Mystra granting magic spells to people of all alignment, simply because it increases the presence of magic on Toril. Standard gods can only be killed by other gods, and very rarely by mortals wielding artifacts of tremendous power, usually with the help of some other god. They have the power to raise the dead, kill on a whim, and grant tremendous spells (such as Quests). The Elementals cannot grant these powers to their followers. Why? I think it doesn't fit with the Elementals' goals: the restoration of Athas.

Standard gods have their followers build churches, and followers gather for masses, which are reflections of the faith and worship of the followers, and where the gods gather their power. Some Athasian clerics do build churches, but I don't think the Elementals really care. It does

nothing for their power. It is the physical appearance of the elements that gives them power. Whether 1 or 1 million people pray to them makes no difference, but a square meter of land reclaimed from the Silt Sea does (though a small difference).

But on Athas there are no gods. There are sorcerer-kings, beings immortal, but they are not deities. They wield the power of gods, for no ordinary Athasian knows the difference. Some templar worship their Sorcerer-Monarch as deities, but some know the truth.

There are also Spirits of the Land --also beings immortal-- but these Spirits have no interest in the doings of mortals, except for how those mortals affect the land. A druid obeys the Spirit of his own land as if it were a god. A few druids teach the locals to revere a Spirit, but this is rare. Most Spirits have little interest in events outside the boundaries of their own land, where their considerable powers end.

But the Athasian cleric does not serve a deity. He makes a pact with an elemental. For what purpose? Power?

Survival is the only thing in the mind of many Athasians, and rightfully so. They live under the constant threat of templar, of beasts so violent they make one's heart shudder at the mere thought, they live under the harsh rays of the sun, rays that give warmth and life but also death, for the sun burns up their water and renders them thirsty. So an Athasian devoting himself to an Element makes sense, since he receives powers the ordinary Athasian does not have. Certainly the powers offered by Elementals are attractive to some. The ability to control the elements, to heal, to harm, can make the offer quite tempting. The chance of survival is increased, the chance for revenge upon one's enemies, the chance for one to carve himself a place on Athas.

Power is an attractive incentive to make a pact with an elemental, but some Athasians are also motivated by a higher purpose. These rare individuals truly wish to restore Athas to its former splendor. These individuals wish for a revitalized Athas, an Athas where their element is most plentiful. They recognized that a revitalized Athas means that all four elements must increase their presence, that a bountiful combination of the 4 is required. Druids are often of this frame of mind. They seek to restore Athas one piece of land at a time. Clerics like this will often wander, helping the local population to grow crops, teaching conservation and restraint, how to best utilize Athas' dwindling resources.

Elemental Motivations

The Athasian cleric makes a pact with an Elemental, to further increase that element's power on Athas. But why would the Elements ally themselves with mere mortals? The primes are the Elements' feeding grounds (EAFW). They receive their energy and sustenance from the elements on the prime material plane. But on Athas, where the land is scorched and burned, where water exists only in small pockets or deep underground, where piles of ash are testament to the mighty power wielded by Sorcerer-Kings, the Elemental are starving. They need help to restore Athas to a lush verdant paradise. They need help to feed. And so in exchange for power, for spells and ethos, the Elementals require the cleric to increase the presence of their element on Athas. It is the *quantity* of their element that increases the Elemental's power, and not the faith they receive, nor the worship. The Elementals need more of the physical substance of which they are made, not the spiritual power.

But if the elemental forces are not interested in worship, then why the physical changes in the initiated fire priest? The distinct codes of behavior of the elemental priests? Their designated dress, armor, and allowed weaponry? If these are not components of worship, then what practical reason do they serve?

As far as I know, the Elementals are not interested in worship. I don't recall reading anywhere, either in EAFW or in the PP, that an Elemental was concerned with worship. So why these codes?

It would be too easy to say "TSR made it that way without really thinking about it". Physical changes in the fire priest could be a result of the initiation spell. That's kind of easy. Weapons allowed are related to the element the priest worships, I guess that would probably be a result of the cleric's own choosing... kind of looks bad if you worship earth and throw darts at everyone.

One possible theory, to explain the need for the codes of behavior (from Brax):

The elemental lords get nothing from the worship, BUT the clerics need to be "IN TUNE" with their element in order to receive and cast their spells. This requires some degree of physical and spiritual change in the cleric (hence the change to the fire priest), and also a certain amount of day-to-day WORSHIP-- elemental style. Certain equipment/armor/weaponry/diets/behavior/meditations/etc. help the cleric to stay in tune with the element. Hence if a cleric becomes "impure", i.e. out of tune with his element, he is not "punished" by elemental patrons, but he finds himself less able to effectively (or safely) handle their gifts. The game

result is roughly the same, but the tone is quite different. It also helps to reinforce the cleric's commitment to his element.

Example: A water priest allows her party to poison a desert well, in order to hurt an enemy party. From then on, the priest suffers magnified channeling penalties whenever she casts any elemental water spells -- until she manages to "get back in tune" with the personality and spirit of elemental water.

What about spells? Why don't the clerics have major access to the Sphere of Cosmos? Why aren't clerics healers?

I think the problem here is that we think of clerics in terms of other fantasy settings, where they are mostly there to serve the population, meaning healing, curing disease, etc. (for good clerics). This is not the case for Dark Sun. Remember, an Athasian cleric's primary mission is to serve is element (or para-element), and not be at the service of the population. Sure, the Earth cleric helps people learn how to correctly grow crops, but that is only in order to preserve his precious element. The underlying motive for all DS clerics is to further their patron's goals. In other fantasy settings, there are gods of healing, song, and all other happy-joy-joy ethos. Making the cleric a healing machine doesn't fit the Dark Sun setting; giving them only minor access to Cosmos reinforces the survival aspect of Dark Sun, one of its primary strengths. If characters knew there was always going to be a cleric around with powerful healing spells, PCs would be less likely to think about their actions and just jump into battle. It makes one think about alternatives to battle, or to better execute their combat strategies, better utilizing (sp?) their abilities, instead of only relying on their THAC0 and HPs. The non-healing cleric better fits into the Dark Sun system.

As Brax points out:

Furthermore, Medieval and Renaissance medicine dealt with an imbalance of "humors" which were based on the four elements: Earth, Air, Fire, and Water. This is where bleeding people came in I think that this paradigm adapts nicely to fit the elemental Cleric's view. Each elemental cleric would assume that wounds and injuries could be fixed by an infusion of the "holy" element, as Gerald describes. I see most elemental clerics (not the paraelemental ones) as knowing the healing proficiency, but using it differently according to their patron elements. Bringing balance to the body can be seen as a type (a symbol) of bringing balance to the elements.

My response:

Healing does not increase the Element's presence on Athas. Since the

Elemental clerics do not gather followers, there is not much motivation to heal, except money. A healthy body does not increase the presence of Earth, Air, Fire, Water, or any para-element on Athas.

Money is motivation enough! Also good will, food, shelter etc. The priest has to get by and popularity and utility are big advantages worth working for.

That is true. I guess that's why clerics have access to cure light and cure moderate wounds. Payment for services rendered. But I still think the higher level healing spells are the druid's domain.

Survival includes having something to offer one's society. More than any other setting I can think of, Dark Sun sets up clerics as the most trusted and liked characters, and the most natural shoo-in for leadership of a non-military community. Cities are dominated by SKs, Forts by merchants, and slave tribes by gladiators, but villages and nomadic communities that hang on the edge of survival would IMO tend to be led by elemental clerics.

I agree with your reasoning. This would go with the Shaman kit in EAFW, but I don't think it fits for a Wanderer, Shrine or City (a bit more though for City) cleric.

Shriners would probably only need to heal themselves, which could be done with the 1st level spells. Wanderers and city-clerics still need money, shelter, etc. -- and it seems reasonable to me that they would leverage their special powers and skills, but I agree that healing knowledge would be less important to them than to the shamans, and less to the wanderers than to the city-clerics.

There are other ways to give services... an earth cleric can help in the creation of a wall around a small village, a water cleric might help to establish a well, a fire cleric might get rid of a dangerous creature. I'm not saying that clerics would not do any healing, just that their role isn't defined as such. And creating a wall or a well does help their element while helping people (will have to find a better example for the fire cleric, though).

Why aren't the spells different for each element?

As for differences in spells, I refer you to an excellent article on [Gerald Arthur Lewis' web site](#) . There he discusses the nuances of magic. How

even though the spell description is the same for all who use it, the visual (or sensory) effects of that spell can differ, and should be encouraged to do so. As Teos mentioned (in v1998.#229), an Earth cleric healing some wounds might be required to rub earth or sand in the wound, the earth then solidifying, creating a sort of crust, stopping bleeding and such. A Fire cleric might cauterize a wound, burning the flesh to "bond" it together. Although the end result is the same (a healed patient), the treatment is different, and a Fire cleric's healing might demand more pain than the Earth cleric's healing, but the crust provided by the Earth cleric might be more prone to falling off should one inadvertently bump it or scratch it, thereby reopening the wound. Higher level cure spells might require even more different methods, such as burying the injured person in soil for 1d8+2 hours for an Earth cleric.

Which brings us to worship and faith.

How is elemental 'worship' different than the 'worship' of other types of priests? What precisely is 'worshipped': The raw element? An elemental patron? The elemental forces? DMs can explore these questions as they build their own worlds. It is also possible to have a mix of these different types of worship:

- One cleric might worship the patron who bestows him power.
- Another one might revere the element, and view his patron only as a manifestation of that element.
- Some clerics might view their patron as simply a being more powerful than themselves who give spells.

Is it wrong to view it as such? I don't think so. Certainly the Elementals don't care. They only want to increase the presence of their element on Athas. I don't think it matters to them whether or not they are worshiped. Their power doesn't come from the faith of their followers, as is the case in many fantasy settings. They do not collect the souls of their servants for servitude in the afterlife. Often they do not directly interfere in the lives of their clerics: they only bestow spells and powers. They are not the hand that stops their cleric's death. They do not build churches of followers. They do not require sacrifices (IIRC). A cleric might chose to worship an element because of something that happened earlier in his life. Maybe he was saved from falling off a cliff by a giant wind, maybe he saw his enemies burned by fire. I think the motivations will be different for each character, and trying to fit a mold to everyone is not the way to go. Individuals often base their decision on earlier circumstances and events, on their past experiences, and the same should be done for clerics. Seeing a Silt cleric choke his enemies to

death might motivate one individual to worship silt or simply make a pact with a silt patron, while another individual is repulsed by this. I just don't think there is a simple solution applicable to all cases here.

The one major thing to remember, IMO, is that the Athasian cleric is not the same as his counterparts in other fantasy settings. They share the same name and they both wield spells, but the resemblance ends there. Their motivations are different, spells are different, rewards are different.

Hope this little thing helps some who have trouble understanding Athasian clerics.

- *Gab*

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Druids

Druids are the protectors of nature; they are the allies of the various Spirits of the Land. They are usually loners, but well respected by the population, because they are the preservers of Athas. They live solitary lives, devoting themselves to guarding their chosen piece of Athas.

Druids chose a piece of land that they guard. This can be any parcel of Athas: a plain, a stretch of desert, an oasis. The young druid may spend as much or as little time on his guarded land as he wants. The rest of the time is spent wandering Athas, learning of the ways of people, possible enemies, the ecology of Athas, the ways of its creatures. As a druid learns more & more about the world around him, he spends more & more time on his guarded land. At 12th level, the druid must spend half his time on his guarded land.

Depending on the land he chooses, a druid may have Major access to one Elemental sphere and minor access to another Elemental sphere, or simply Major access to one Elemental sphere. Regardless of the land he chooses, a druid always has Major access to the sphere of Cosmos. Druids cannot turn undead.

Druids are neutral. They believe in the Balance of nature, in the natural cycles of life & death. They are the enemies of the Defilers, because the defilers take from the earth and give nothing in return. Their defiling violates the balance of nature, because even when an animal dies, it returns to the earth as fertilizer, and therefore brings new life; but a defiler breaks this cycle. And so a druid's mercy versus a defiler is as rare as rain on Athas.

The information in this page was collected from the *Druid's Handbook* and three of the *Chronicles of Athas* series books, especially *The Brazen Gambit* (the other books used are *Cinnabar Shadows* and *Rise & Fall of a Dragon King*). I've tried to incorporate the information in those sources to create a guide for Athasian druids.

[A Treatise on the Spellcasting power of the Athasian Druid](#) - A little discussion on where wandering druids get their spells & powers and their relationship with the Spirit of the Land.

Druid kits

- [Hunter](#)
- [Restorer](#)

Druid Sacred Groves

A druid may construct a Sacred Grove on his guarded land. This Sacred Grove is a small area of the druid's guarded land that receives more attention than the rest of the land. The area should be fairly obvious to someone entering the grove. There is a small place where the druid may meditate and pray to the spirit of the land. There is a commanding feature that serves as an altar for the druid: this can be almost anything, like a great oak tree for forest druids, or a great mound of earth for a druid of a mountainous area. There is also a source of water, to be used as drinking water or in the nurturing of the land. The druid must regularly tend to his grove, so a wandering druid might assign an initiate the task of tending the grove. The grove must remain undefiled at all times, so the druid is much stricter in protecting his grove, and so:

- No trees or plants within the grove may be cut or harmed intentionally.
- No bird or animal may be harmed while inside the grove, even if it's for food.
- No one may fish in the grove, or foul the waters.
- None may light a fire inside the grove, not even a tinder.

Deliberate failure to observe these rules may result in death. For those who break these rules unknowingly, punishment may be less severe. A druid breaking these rules to protect his guarded land or grove probably won't be punished, but he must repair the damage as quickly as possible. What sort of punishment would the druid be subjected to? There are many ways, such as: revoking spells or revoking powers, for relatively minor offenses; a decrease in level for more serious offenses; and death for extreme cases.

Protecting the Grove

Since the grove has magical abilities and is a focus for the spirit of the land's powers, the grove is well defended. Usually, the location of a grove is kept secret. Ways of keeping this location secret include *hallucinatory forest* spells, false trails leading away from the grove, pits and snares, lots of *snare* and *plant growth* spells, and first knowledge of

people entering the guarded land.

Sanctifying a Grove

A druid may sanctify his grove, creating a magical area on his guarded land. A sanctified grove becomes the focus of the spirit of the land's powers, and such is the most guarded place on the druid's guarded land. In order to sanctify his grove, a druid must spend a full day of uninterrupted prayer on his grove. The sanctified grove is not automatically magical; it takes a minimum of seven years of worship for a grove to "awaken". But after a grove has awakened, it slowly absorbs some of the magical powers of the druids worshipping there, and becomes more and more powerful as the years pass. *Awakening* a grove creates a link between the Spirit of the Land of that particular location and the druid. As the years pass and the grove is tended, the connection between the druid and the Spirit of the Land results in both of them gaining more and more power. A sanctified grove has several powers, such as:

- A druid that enters the grove senses that he is being watched and feels a sense of power. For every 3 rounds spent on the grove, the druid learns of one of the grove's powers, through a vision or intuition.
- All druids receive a +1 bonus to all saving throws vs. spells, death magic and wands. The grove's master receives a +2 bonus.
- All druids inside the grove are immune to magical *fear*
- *Dig* spells never work on a grove
- The grove is protected from natural storms, such as Tyr storms.
- A defiler attempting to enter the grove suffers 1d10 of damage from the grove (save vs spells negates), because it recognizes the taint of defiling. In addition, the grove's protectors are summoned.

Should the grove ever be defiled, the grove loses all of its powers. The grove may be resanctified, but the process will take a long time. A defiled grove must be restored to its original splendor before being sanctified once again. This process usually takes many years, as plants do not grow on defiled ground, and so the earth must be tendered very carefully for a long time. The amount of time depends on the druid and on the radius of defilement; the more time the druid spends restoring his grove, the faster it recovers. Should the whole grove be defiled, it can never again serve as a grove; the defiling has permanently tainted it.

Suggested Grove powers

d10 Power

- 1 Awakened plants
- 2 Bountiful
- 3 Control Temperature
- 4 Faerie fire
- 5 Healing
- 6 Prophecy
- 7 Protective aura
- 8 Still winds
- 9 Sweet winds
- 10 Warning plants

Greater Groves

A grove that has existed for a millennium is considered a Greater grove. Greater groves have more powers and more potent powers than normal magical groves, but are very rare. During the *Eradication*, many Greater groves were destroyed by Sorcerer-Kings, along with the druids protecting them. But some Greater groves may still be found in the Ringing Mountains, and other far away places of Athas. Often druids guarding Greater groves preferred to flee their groves in order to protect them from the Sorcerer-Kings, and so a few abandoned groves may still be found.

Suggested Greater Grove powers**d12 Power**

- 1 Awakened tree
- 2 Beast speech
- 3 Concealment
- 4 Earth power
- 5 Know alignment
- 6 Peaceful
- 7 Reincarnation
- 8 Waters of life
- 9 Scrying pool
- 10 Magic fruit
- 11 Forbiddance

Grove Master

The master of the grove, who is the druid that uses it to meditate and is the principal caretaker, has a few special powers other than those of the grove itself. These powers come from an intricate knowledge of the grove's surroundings, its animals and its plants. Long hours of tending to the grove have created a sort of harmonium for the druid, a peace of mind that comes from such a familiar place, a place of spiritual union with the spirit of the land. These powers function only if the druid is in the grove.

- The grove master casts spells as if he were two levels higher.
- Damage from spells (aimed at the druid) of the druid's Major Elemental sphere is halved.
- The druid heals at twice the normal rate.
- The druid can hide in his grove and can close off the grove, so that it can't be found by normal means.

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Disciples of Xerma

The Disciples of Xerma are psionicists, true believers of the unification of body, mind and soul. They are stubborn individuals, believing that the only path to true enlightenment is the purification of the soul, the unification of all that comes from within, and the rejection of all that comes from without.

The Disciples reject all forms of power that do not come from within one's own body, believing it the fate of the weak to rely on outside sources for power. They despise mages, who utilize the energy of plants to power their spells and they also dislike the clerics, whose powers come from the elements.

Believing that only the body must provide everything that is needed for survival, the Disciples study the long-forgotten techniques of martial arts to defeat foes who would attack them physically. They never rely on weapons, believing that the body is able to provide every weapon they'll ever need, against any foe.

The Disciples also study psionics, for the mind is also a powerful weapon, a tool to be sharpened and honed to better understand and survive in this harsh world of Athas. As one enlightened student once claimed: " The brain is a muscle that can move the world*". The Disciples mainly study Psychometabolic powers, to increase their formidable combat abilities, but also study the paths of Clairsentient and Telepathic powers. Of course, all paths of psionics are accepted, it's just that some are more studied than others.

[History and current situation](#)

[Structure of the Disciples and Important NPCs](#)

Disciple of Xerma

The Disciples are psionicists, a sort of sub-class. Note that to become a Disciple of Xerma, a PC must find (or be approached by) a Disciple and go to their hideout to learn the secrets of martial arts and receive his psionic training.

Races:All

Requirements: Same as psionicist, Str 13.

Role: As stated above, the Disciples believe that only the body must provide the necessary tools of survival, and that the perfection of the mind-body-soul relationship is the ultimate goal of one's existence. Of course, being specially trained in the combat arts and capable of using mind-bending powers does help one's survival.

Multi-class options: None. Devotion to the Disciples of Xerma is total, irrevocable, and absolute.

Dual-class options: A character might be from another class before joining the Disciples, but no Disciple will ever change after joining (see current situation).

Weapon proficiencies: None. The Disciples only study the martial arts, and every weapon slot (or CP) should be spent towards further improving these abilities.

Non-weapon Proficiencies: *Required:* Healing. *Recommended:* Endurance, Rejuvenation, (don't have my books here; I'll add more later)

Special Benefits: The Disciples' training in martial arts and especially against armed opponents negates the -4 penalty an unarmed character has when fighting an armed opponent. Also, because of their extensive training, Disciples are considered Masters at 5th level, High Masters at 10th level, and Grand Masters at 15th level, according to the rules in the PO: Combat & Tactics. They also have an improved THAC0, advancing at the Priest rate of advancement.

Special Hindrances: The Disciples abhor anything that hinders their 'perfect' abilities, and so **never** use any weapon in combat nor do they use any armor; these things are for the weak. They are also required to meditate for a minimum of one hour per day, uninterrupted. They may forego their meditation for a maximum of days equal to their Wis/2. After this period the Disciple loses his combat bonus (and so gaining a penalty) at -1 per day against armed opponents until they reach the normal -4 penalty. The Disciple who doesn't meditate for a period of days equal to Wis/2 also loses access to **all** his sciences. These lost abilities return at the rate of one per 3 levels per day when the Disciple again starts meditating, meaning a 7th level psionicist can regain 2

Wealth Options: The Disciple of Xerma starts with the standard wealth for psionicists.

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d20™ System Conversion of "Bvanen"

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Bvanen	[from WRotJC]
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Medium-size Abberation

Hit Dice:	3d8+9 (22 hp)
Initiative:	+3 (-1 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)
Speed:	20 ft., swim 30 ft.
AC:	16 (-1 Dex, +7 natural)
Attacks:	2 claws +4 melee, bite -1 melee
Damage:	Claws 1d3+1, bite 1d4+1
Face/Reach:	5ft. by 5ft./5ft.
Special Attacks:	Secreted Ooze, Psionics
Special Qualities:	Immune to Wounding, Damage reduction 1/-
Saves:	Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +7
Abilities:	Str 13, Dex 8, Con 15, Int 18, Wis 19, Cha 10
Skills:	Climb +5, Hide +5, Listen +10, Move Silently +5, Search +10, Sense Motive +10, Spot +10, Swim +7
Feats:	Improved Initiative, Rapid Metabolism, Toughness

Climate/Terrain:	Base of the Jagged Cliffs
Organization:	Group (3 - 12)
Challenge Rating:	3
Treasure:	Standard items
Alignment:	Neutral Good
Advancement:	4 - 6HD (Medium-size); 7 - 9HD (Large)

Bvanen are good, intelligent creatures that live at the base of the Jagged Cliffs. These strange amphibians have a bony plating in the front of their body that protects all major organs. On their backs, the spine and

ribs are above their scaled skin, letting the bones show clearly. Their head is flat with a long snout, with jagged teeth and a three-forked tongue. Their eyes can move in almost any direction.

Their distrustful nature makes them hesitant to trust any outsiders. This often precipitates conflicts the bvanen would prefer to avoid.

Combat

Bvanen attack using their claws and bite. They will often surround a foe and render it completely immobilized by using their special secreted ooze.

- **Secreted Ooze:** All bvanen secrete a special ooze through their pores. This ooze hardens extremely fast and is very strong. It provides the bvanen with protection from blows, as well as giving it the ability to immobilize foes. On a normal hit, a bvanen can choose not to inflict damage, but rather to stick this ooze to his foe. The struck body part cannot be used. Roll 1d8 to determine the body part affected (1d8: 1-head, 2-3: right arm, 4-5: left arm, 6-8: either leg). A successful Strength check will allow the foe to break free of the ooze.
- **Immune to Wounding:** The strange nature of their constitution allows the bvanen to ignore any spell, power or weapon that causes *wounding*.
- **Psionics (Sp):** At will - *aversion, animal affinity, displacement, lesser domination, lesser mindlink*. These abilities are as the powers manifested by a 3rd-level psion.
Attack/Defense Modes (Sp): ego whip, id insinuation / mind blank, thought shield.

City By the Silt Sea, The Complete Gladiator's Handbook, Dark Sun Campaign Setting, Dragon Kings, The Ivory Triangle, MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM: Dark Sun Appendix Terrors of the Desert, MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM: Dark Sun Appendix II Terrors Beyond Tyr, Psionic Artifacts of Athas, Thri-Kreen of Athas, Valley of Dust and Fire, Windriders of the Jagged Cliffs, DUNGEONS & DRAGONS, D&D, ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS, AD&D, the D&D logo, the AD&D logo, the d20 System logo and d20 are trademarks owned by Wizards of the Coast, Inc., a subsidiary of Hasbro, Inc., and are used with permission. All titles, and all proper nouns, including character names, locations, and named items are considered Product Identity per Section 1 of the Open Game License

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d20™ System Conversion of "Floater"

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Floater	[from DSMCI]
Small Aberration	
Hit Dice:	3d8+3 (16 hp)
Initiative:	+0 (+0 Dex)
Speed:	Fly 30 ft. (Good)
AC:	13 (+1 size, +0 Dex, +2 natural)
Attacks:	6 tentacles +4 melee
Damage:	Tentacle 1d4+1 and poison
Face/Reach:	5 ft. by 5ft./5ft.
Special Attacks:	Psionics
Special Qualities:	Vulnerable to fire
Saves:	Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +3
Abilities:	Str 12, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 7, Wis 10, Cha 14
Skills:	Hide +10, Search +4, Spot +6
Feats:	none
Climate/Terrain:	Sea of Silt
Organization:	Troupe (2-8)
Challenge Rating:	2
Treasure:	None
Alignment:	Neutral
Advancement:	4 - 6HD (Small); 7 - 9HD (Medium-size)

Floater are a kind of levitating jelly-fish. They float around the Sea of Silt, looking for food, but they are sometimes found inland. They have 6 tentacles filled with poison pods they use to paralyse their prey.

These small creatures have a round, bulbous and translucent body, mostly made of a gelatinous substance. They are herbivores, not hunting any animals and only fighting when cornered.

A floater's body is filled with hydrogen, helping it to float around the

Sea of Silt. The gas is produced by a floater's internal glands, who convert food into hydrogen in quantities sufficient to keep the creature floating.

Combat

Floaters use their tentacles and numerous psionic powers to disable and defeat their attackers.

- **Poison (Ex):** Floaters inject poison into their victim if any of their tentacles scores a hit. Fortitude save (DC 13), initial damage is paralysis for 2d6 minutes; no secondary damage.
- **Vulnerable to Fire:** Because their bodies are filled with gas, any floater hit by fire has a 75% chance of exploding, causing 1d8 points of fire damage to anyone in a 5 foot radius. A successful Reflex save (DC 15) negates damage.
- **Psionics (Sp):** At will - *aversion, chameleon, claws of the vampire, displacement, inflict pain, natural armor*. These abilities are as the powers manifested by a 3rd-level psion.
Attack/Defense Modes (Sp): mind blast, psychic crush/empty mind, intellect fortress.

City By the Silt Sea, The Complete Gladiator's Handbook, Dark Sun Campaign Setting, Dragon Kings, The Ivory Triangle, MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM: Dark Sun Appendix Terrors of the Desert, MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM: Dark Sun Appendix II Terrors Beyond Tyr, Psionic Artifacts of Athas, Thri-Kreen of Athas, Valley of Dust and Fire, Windriders of the Jagged Cliffs, DUNGEONS & DRAGONS, D&D, ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS, AD&D, the D&D logo, the AD&D logo, the d20 System logo and d20 are trademarks owned by Wizards of the Coast, Inc., a subsidiary of Hasbro, Inc., and are used with permission. All titles, and all proper nouns, including character names, locations, and named items are considered Product Identity per Section 1 of the Open Game License v1.0a and are exclusively owned by Wizards of the Coast, Inc. ©2002 Wizards of the Coast, Inc.

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Jade Golem	[from Marauders of Nibenay]
Medium Construct	
Hit Dice:	12d10+20 (86hp)
Initiative:	+0
Speed:	20 ft.
Armor Class:	16 (+6 natural), touch 10, flat-footed 16
Base Attack/Grapple:	+9/+15
Attack:	Slam +15 melee (2d10+6)
Full Attack:	2 Slams +15 melee (2d10+6)
Face/Reach:	5ft./5ft.
Special Attacks:	Gaze
Special Qualities:	Construct traits, damage reduction 10/metal, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to magic, low-light vision
Saves:	Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +4
Abilities:	Str 23, Dex 10, Con -, Int -, Wis 10, Cha 1
Skills:	-
Feats:	-
Environment:	Any
Organization:	Solitary
Challenge Rating:	7
Treasure:	None
Alignment:	Always neutral
Advancement:	13-24 HD (Medium); 25-36 HD (Large)

Rising up from the floor is a humanoid-shaped figure, standing approximately 6 feet tall. Its whole body is made of jade, its smooth surface glistening in the faint torchlight. Its yellow eyes look at you with a cold, angry stare...

A jade golem is made polished jade, assembled into a humanoid form.

Its face has perfect humanoid proportions, though the features are more rough cut, angular. It stands 6 feet tall and weighs almost 500 pounds.

A jade golem rarely speaks, though it can emit a hoarse roar of sorts. It walks and moves in slow, precise motions.

Combat

- **Gaze (Ex):** Turn to jade permanently, range 30 feet; Fortitude DC 16 negates. The save DC is Wisdom-based.
- **Immunity to Magic (Ex):** A jade golem is immune to any spell or spell-like ability that allows spell resistance. In addition, certain spells and effects function differently against the creature, as noted below.

A transmute rock to mud spell slows a jade golem (as the slow spell) for 2d6 rounds, with no saving throw, while transmute mud to rock heals all of its lost hit points.

A stone to flesh spell does not actually change the golem's structure but negates its damage reduction and immunity to magic for 1 full round.

Construction

The pieces of a jade golem are all made from pure, white jade. When binding the pieces together, the defiling magic used in its creation gives the jade its usual, more common green color.

Assembling the body requires a DC 16 Craft (sculpting) check or a DC 16 Craft (stonemasonry) check.

CL 11th; Craft Construct, animate objects, antimagic field, caster must be at least 11th level; Price 40,000 gp; Cost 21,500 gp + 1,540 XP

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d20™ System Conversion of "Pit Snatcher"

An ESD copy of the above product can be obtained from: [\[http://www.svgames.com/downloads-wotc-adnddksun.html\]](http://www.svgames.com/downloads-wotc-adnddksun.html)

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Pit Snatcher	[from CBtSS]
Medium-Size Elemental (Earth)	
Hit Dice:	5d8+25 (47 hp)
Initiative:	+0 (+0 Dex)
Speed:	30 ft.
AC:	16 (+0 size, +6 natural)
Attacks:	2 Slams +6 melee
Damage:	Slam 1d6+3
Face/Reach:	5 ft. by 5ft./5ft.
Special Attacks:	Psionics, Improved Grab
Special Qualities:	Bound to location, Taint
Saves:	Fort +9, Ref +1, Will +1
Abilities:	Str 17, Dex 10, Con 20, Int 5, Wis 10, Cha 12
Skills:	Hide +8, Search +3, Spot +5
Feats:	none
Climate/Terrain:	Tar Pits
Organization:	Gang (1-4)
Challenge Rating:	3
Treasure:	None
Alignment:	Chaotic Evil
Advancement:	6 - 10HD (Medium Size); 11 - 15HD (Large)

Pit snatchers are twisted, evil creatures that prey upon any living being that ventures too close to their pit.

They resemble earth elementals, but their form is made of dripping, molten tar. They have three openings in their head: two eyes, and a wide, gapping mouth twisted with pain and torture from which black smoke escapes.

Rumors say these creatures were once earth elementals, whose life-force

was drained by intense defiling magic. These elementals are now unable to return to their home plane, and suffer a tortured existence living in the tar pits.

Combat

Pit snatchers will attack anything living that comes close to their pit. They can reach up to six feet out of the edge of the pit to grab their prey.

- **Improved Grab (Ex):** To use this ability, the pit snatcher must hit with its hand. If successful, the pit snatcher drags the victim into its body and down in the tar pit. A creature dragged into the pit takes 3d8 points of heat damage upon contact with the pit, and 1d8 points of heat damage every round after. Victims in the pit also start to suffocate (see p.88 of the DMG for rules on suffocation).
- **Taint (Ex):** If a pit snatcher scores a critical threat with its slam attack, the creature hit becomes permanently marked with a black marl that never fades. Nothing short of a *limited wish* spell can remove the taint.
- **Bound to an Area (Ex):** The pit snatcher cannot get out of its pit. They can transfer from pit to pit through the earth if the other pit is less than 20 feet away, but otherwise cannot move on dry land. If, by some means, the pit snatcher is brought out of a pit, it will ooze through the ground and return into a pit in 1d10 rounds. If a pit snatcher is kept out of a tar pit for more than one hour, it will dissolve into a puddle of gelatinous goo and die.
- **Psionics (Sp):** At will - *attraction, augury, feel light, feel sound, know direction, know location*. These abilities are as the powers manifested by a 5th-level psion.
Attack/Defense Modes (Sp): ego whip, id insinuation / empty mind, thought shield.

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City By the Silt Sea, The Complete Gladiator's Handbook, Dark Sun Campaign Setting, Dragon Kings, The Ivory Triangle, Marauders of Nibenay, MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM: Dark Sun Appendix Terrors of the Desert, MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM: Dark Sun Appendix II Terrors Beyond Tyr, Psionic Artifacts of Athas, Thri-Kreen of Athas, Valley of Dust and Fire, Windriders of the Jagged Cliffs, DUNGEONS & DRAGONS, D&D, ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS, AD&D, the D&D logo, the AD&D logo, the d20 System logo and d20 are trademarks owned by Wizards of the Coast, Inc., a subsidiary of

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d20™ System Conversion of "Reggelid"

An ESD copy of the above product can be obtained from: [\[http://www.svgames.com/downloads-wotc-adnddksun.html\]](http://www.svgames.com/downloads-wotc-adnddksun.html)

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Reggelid	[from WRotJC]
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Medium-size Monstrous Humanoid

Hit Dice:	3d8+3 (16 hp)
Initiative:	+0 (+0 Dex)
Speed:	30 ft.
AC:	13 (+3 natural)
Attacks:	Quarterstaff +4 melee
Damage:	Quarterstaff 1d6+1
Face/Reach:	5ft. by 5ft./5ft.
Special Attacks:	Spells
Special Qualities:	Magical Lore
Saves:	Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +3
Abilities:	Str 12, Dex 10, Con 13, Int 18, Wis 10, Cha 8
Skills:	Knowledge(arcana) +13, Listen +6, Search +6, Sense Motive +7, Spellcraft +11, Spot +7
Feats:	Combat Casting, Heighten Spell, Skill Focus (Knowledge(arcana)), Still Spell

Climate/Terrain:	Lower Jagged Cliffs, Swamp
Organization:	Band (1 - 10)
Challenge Rating:	3
Treasure:	Standard items
Alignment:	Neutral Evil
Advancement:	By character class

Reggelids are strange creatures that live at the base of the Jagged Cliffs. They are tall and extremely thin, looking like a mass of bones over which there is only thin skin. Their facial features resemble those of elves, with pointed ears, but they have an exaggerated mouth and thick brows. They have six digits, however, on each hand and each foot.

Reggelids have only one love, and that is magic. They spend their days in run-down tents made of wood and animal skins, learning whatever sorcery they can. They care little for material things; their existence is not one of luxury or comfort.

Combat

Reggelids fight using their magic, although a few are fighters and prefer weapons to spells. When fighting, they use their magic cooperatively, one reggelid using offensive spells while another uses his magic to defend the group.

- **Spells:** Reggelids have the spell abilities of a defiler of equal level.
- **Magical Lore:** Because of their innate magical abilities and their life-long study of magic, reggelids gain a +1 effective casting level when using magical devices such as wands, staves or scrolls. This means that the level of the spells in the item are effectively increased by +1 (for things such as damage, DC, range, etc) when used by a reggelid.

City By the Silt Sea, The Complete Gladiator's Handbook, Dark Sun Campaign Setting, Dragon Kings, The Ivory Triangle, Marauders of Nibenay, MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM: Dark Sun Appendix Terrors of the Desert, MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM: Dark Sun Appendix II Terrors Beyond Tyr, Psionic Artifacts of Athas, Thri-Kreen of Athas, Valley of Dust and Fire, Windriders of the Jagged Cliffs, DUNGEONS & DRAGONS, D&D, ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS, AD&D, the D&D logo, the AD&D logo, the d20 System logo and d20 are trademarks owned by Wizards of the Coast, Inc., a subsidiary of Hasbro, Inc., and are used with permission. All titles, and all proper nouns, including character names, locations, and named items are considered Product Identity per Section 1 of the Open Game License v1.0a and are exclusively owned by Wizards of the Coast, Inc. ©2002 Wizards of the Coast, Inc.

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Nurghash

Thinking Zombie, Halfling Male, Rog5; CR6; Small Undead; HD 5d12+0; hp 38; Init +3; Spd 20ft.; AC 20 (touch 18, flat-footed 17); Atk +8 melee (wrist razor 1d4+2/19-20x2) or bite +6 melee (1d3+1) or +7 ranged (By weapon); SA Disease; SQ Evasion, uncanny dodge(Dex bonus to AC), immunities, vulnerabilities, undead traits, halfling traits; SV Fort +1, Ref +7, Will +2; AL NE; Str 14, Dex 16, Con -, Int 17, Wis 12, Cha 11.

Skills & Feats: Balance +11, Bluff +8, Climb +12, Gather Information +8, Hide +13, Intimidate +8, Jump +10, Listen +11, Move Silently +13, Pick Pocket +6, Search +9, Sense Motive +4, Spot +7, Tumble +9; Weapon Finesse(wrist razor), Weapon Focus(wrist razor).

Disease (Su): The thinking zombie's bite causes a fatal disease in its victim, just like the arcane spell *contagion*.

Immunities (Ex): Electrical and cold-based attacks only do half damage against the thinking zombie. The creature is also immune to all mind-affecting attacks and death magic. Note that this makes it essentially immune to telepaths and all psionic attacks, as well as most necromantic magic.

Vulnerabilities: Holy water splashed on the thinking zombie will cause 2d4 damage. A *raise dead* spell will destroy the thinking zombie if it fails its Fortitude save.

Undead Traits: Immune to poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, disease, death effects, necromantic effects, and any effect that requires a Fortitude save unless it also works on objects. It is not subject to critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage, ability drain, energy drain, or death from massive damage.

Equipment: 2 wrist razors

Nurghash was born to a tribe of halflings, in the Ringing Mountains, as the son of a well respected member of his tribe. The pressures of his upbringing were too much; all other halflings expected him to be like his father, a reputation to which he never lived up to. Nurghash turned to thievery and troublemaking, resulting ultimately in his being banished from the tribe by his own father.

Left to fend for himself, Nurghash wandered through the Ringing Mountains, searching for a way to get accepted back into his tribe. His wanderings brought him to the foothills of the Ringing Mountains, where Nurghash almost set out to explore the desert, but then thought better of it. On one of his visits to the foothills, Nurghash was set upon by

the dreaded agony beetle. Unable to get it off himself, Nurgash died in pain, deploring the fact that he would never see his tribe again.

His anger at his situation was enough to sustain him into unlife. Nargash arose as a thinking zombie, aware of his condition and his burning desire to go home. However, knowing he is unable to return home, Nurgash has begun a slow descent into madness. He awaits travellers in the foothills, wanting them to feel what has been torment to him for many years: the thought of never returning home.

Open Game Content is designated by text in this color.

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Net Projects

This is a list of completed Net Projects that are available on the web. There are many more Dark Sun Net Projects out there, it's just that many aren't available online or haven't been completed. If anyone finds a Net Project out there that isn't listed here, send me an email.

Projects	Author	Description
Dark Sun Net Book	Darknight	The netbook contains a compilation of: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Errata corrige for the official TSR manuals 2. Useful compilations of important informations otherwise listed in several different books (eg: weapon tables) 3. Fan-created races, spells, classes, kits, weapons, rules.
Athasian Cleric Net Book	Darknight	This netbook contains new clerical classes along with their role, ethos and some spells & items unique to them.
The Dead Lands	Gerald Arthur Lewis	The Dead Lands cover a large expanse of land far south of Tyr. This area is host to a multitude of Undead, both free-willed and unthinking. The ground is covered by obsidian, and there's not a place to get food or drink in sight.

<u>The Athasian Ecology Book</u>	Teos Abadia and Gerald Arthur Lewis	The whole thing on Athasian Ecology. How big creatures survive, the food chain, everything's in here.
<u>The Kurn Spy Manual</u>	Brax	Information from Kurn spies on their view of Athas. Lots of good info here.
<u>Brax's House Rules</u>	Brax	House rules on almost everything. The House Psionic Section is very complete.
<u>Bodach Net Project</u>	William W. Connors	A jewel in the crown of the ancients, the great city of the ancients was sacked by the left hand of Rajaat during the latter days of the cleansing wars.
<u>Athasian Book of Humanoids</u>	Gerald Arthur Lewis	New races to use as PCs on Athas.
<u>Dark Sun FAQ</u>	Chris Flipse	The official FAQ of the Dark Sun Mailing List. Answers to all questions frequently asked, as well as answers to questions rarely asked.
<u>Athasian Weapons</u>	Teos Abadia	Like the title suggests, new weapons for Athas.
<u>The City-State of Draj</u>	Gabriel Cormier	Everything you want to know about Draj.
<u>What Your Father Told You</u>	Mike Cugley	A series of essays that help set the mood and culture of the various peoples in the game. Structured as a set of questions to a parent, priest, tribal chief, or whomever, and their answers; just the sort of questions a child might ask the adults around them. Hosted on Brax's web site.

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Comprehensive Athasian Monster Directory

By Eric Anondson...

So, have you ever wondered where to find that certain monster to add a little more spice into your Dark Sun campaign? Well, here you go. If it ever was published with a MC type entry in a Dark Sun Accessory, and ever listed in a Dark Sun random encounter table, it should be here.

- Eric Anondson

This list was compiled by [Eric Anondson](#). Many hours of work from Eric are involved here, so take a look and enjoy!.

Click here for a [list of the abbreviations used](#).

Click here for [Notes on on which creatures were included](#).

[A-H](#) | [I-S](#) | [T-Z](#)

SOURCEBOOK	CREATURE	TERRAIN ENCOUNTERED
DSMC2	Aarakocra	Athasian Deep desert, Sea of Silt, islands
MCAvIII	Alaghi	Mountains
	ANIMAL, DOMESTIC	
DSMC2	Aprig	Verdant belt
DSMC2	Carru	Verdant belt
WC, WJ	Erdlu	Tablelands/Hinterlands
WC, WJ	Inix	Tablelands/Hinterlands
WC, WJ	Kank	Tablelands/Hinterlands
WC, WJ	Mekillot	Tablelands/Hinterlands
DSMC2	Mulworm	Verdant belt
DSMC2	Sygra	Verdant belt
	ANIMAL, HOUSEHOLD	

DSMC1	Hurum	Any
DSMC1	Critic	Any
DSMC1	Renk	Any
DSMC1	Ock'n	Any
	ANIMAL, HERD	
DSMC1	Kip	Scrub plains
DSMC1	Z'tal	Any
DSMC1	Jankz	Sany wastes, stony barrens
MM	Ankheg	Rocky badlands, stony barrens, silt basins
	ANTLOID, DESERT	
DSMC1	Dynamis	Sandy Wastes
DSMC1	Soldier	Sandy Wastes
DSMC1	Queen	Sandy Wastes
DSMC1	Worker	Sandy Wastes
DK	Avangion	Any
DSMC2	Aviarag	Any land
	<hr/>	
DSMC1	B'rohg	Any
#185, DSMC2	Baazrag	Stony barrens
DSMC2	Baazrag, Boneclaw	Stony barrens
	BASILISK	
MM	Dracolisk	Sandy wastes, salt flats
MM	Greater	Stony barrens, silt basins
MM	Lesser	Stony barrens, silt basins
	BAT, ANY	
MM	Common	Mountains
MM	Huge	Rocky badlands, scrub plains, stony barrens

MM	Large	Salt flats
MM	Mobat	Sea of Silt (Deep silt)
MM	Bear	Forest
	BEETLE	
DSMC1	Agony	Any
MM	Death watch	Valley of Dust and Fire (Dead Forest)
CbtSS, MCAvII	Dragon	Guistenal under-region
MM	Fire	Mountains, rocky badlands
MM	Giant Boring	Stony barrens
MM	Slicer	Valley of Dust and Fire (Smoking Lands, mountains, salt flats)
MM	Behir	Forest, scrub plains, stony barren
MCAvIII, WJ	Belgoi	Tablelands
DSMC1	Bog Wader	Verdant belts, scrub plains
MM, PHBR5	Brain Mole	Any subterranean
DSMC1	Brambleweed (and Tree)	Any
MCAvIII, WJ	Braxat	Tablelands, Hinterlands, mountains
MM	Bulette	Mountains, stony barrens
DSMC1	Burnflower	Any
MCAvIII, WotJC	Bvanen	Base of the Jagged Cliffs
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	CAT, GREAT	
MM	Cheetah	Scrub plains, forest
MM	Jaguar	Scrub plains, forest
MM	Leopard	Mountains, forest
MM	Lion, common	Rocky badlands, forest

MM	Lion, spotted	Sandy wastes, forest
	CAT, PSIONIC	
DSMC1	Tagster	Tablelands sandy wastes
DSMC1	Tigone	Mountains, Hinterlands
MM	Cave Fisher	Jagged Cliffs
PHBR5	Cerebral Parasite	Any
DSMC1	Cha'thrang	Sandy wastes, stony barrens, and rocky badlands
DSMC2,tIT	Cilops	Salt flats, stony barrens
DSMC1	Cistern Fiend	Any water
DSMC1	Cloud Ray	Any
	CRODLU	
DSMC2	Crodlu	Desert, scrub plains
#185, DSMC2	Crodlu, Heavy	Sandy wastes, stony barrens
BF	Cursed Dead	Black Water Oasis
	DAGORRAN	
DSMC2	Dagorran	Tablelands
DSMC2	Dhaot	Any
MCAvIV, MlotLS	Dolphin, Athasian	Last Sea
DK	Dragon, Athasian	Any
MM	Dragonne	Rocky badlands, sandy wastes
	DRAKE, ATHASIAN	
DSMC1	Air	Mountains
DSMC1	Earth	Any
DSMC1	Fire	Any
DSMC1	Water	Any
	DRAKE, ATHASIAN, LESSER	
DSMC2	Magma	Any volcanic

DSMC2	Rain	Verdant belt
VoDaF,DSMC2	Silt	Sea of Silt
DSMC2	Sun	Any
	DRAY	
CbtSS, DSMC2	1st generation	Kragmorta
CbtSS, DSMC2	2nd generation	New Guistenal
	DRIK	
#185, DSMC2	Drik	Rocky badlands
DSMC2	Drik, High	Rocky badlands
WJ	Dune Freak (Anakore)	Any sandy region
	DUNE REAPER	
DSMC2	Drone	Any
DSMC2	Warrior	Any
DSMC2	Matron	Any
DSMC1	Dune Trapper	Sandy wastes, salt flats
	DWARF	
#173, DSMC2	Athasian	Any land
CbtSS	Cursed Dead	Groaning City
	ELEMENTAL, ATHASIAN	
DSMC1	Greater Air	Any air
DSMC1	Greater Earth	Any land
DSMC1	Greater Fire	Any dry land
DSMC1	Greater Water	Large areas of water
DSMC1	Lesser Air	Any air
DSMC1	Lesser Earth	Any land
DSMC1	Lesser Fire	Fire or dry land
DSMC1	Lesser Water	Any water
	ELEMENTAL, BEAST	
DSMC2	Air	Any air

DSMC2	Earth	Any land
DSMC2	Fire	Any dry land
DSMC2	Water	Any water
DK	Elemental, Character	Any
#173, DSMC2	Elf, Athasian	Any land
DSMC1	Erdland	Any
DSMC1	Esperweed	Forest Ridge, and mudflats
MM	Ettercap	Mountains, stony barrens
MM	Ettin	Forest, mountains, stony barrens
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DSMC2	Fael	Anywhere there is food
DSMC2	Feylaar	Forests
DLMC	Fire Minion	The Ring of Fire
	FISH, ATHASIAN	
MCAvIV, MlotLS	Kreel	Last Sea
MCAvIV, MlotLS	Puddingfish	Last Sea
MCAvIV, MlotLS	Shark, Athasian	Last Sea
MCAvIV, MlotLS	Skyfish	Last Sea
DSMC1	Flailer	Stony barrens
DSMC1	Floater	Sea of Silt
DSMC2	Fordorran	Tablelands
<hr/>		
WJ	Gaj	Sandy wastes, stony barrens, rocky badlands and Sea of Silt islands, Valley of Dust and Fire
	GHOUL	
MM	Ghoul	Any
MM	Ghast	Any

	GIANT, ATHASIAN	
MCAvIV, MLoLS	Crag	Lonely Butte
WC, WJ	Desert	Sea of Silt/Tablelands
WC, WJ	Plains	Sea of Silt/Tablelands
WC, WJ	Beasthead	Sea of Silt Islands
DSMC2	Giant, Shadow	Any
MM, WJ	Gith	Tablelands, mountains
	GOLEMS, ATHASIAN	
DSMC1	Ash	Any
DSMC1	Chitin	Any
DSMC2, VoDaF	Magma	Ring of Fire, Ur Draxa
DSMC1	Obsidian	Any
DSMC1	Rock	Any
DSMC2	Salt	Any
DSMC1	Sand	Any
DSMC1	Wood	Any
DSMC2	Gorak	Any desert
MLoLS	Guardians	Last Sea region
<hr/>		
#173,DSMC2,MCAvII	Half-giant	Any land
#173, DSMC2	Halfling	Forest Ridge
DSMC1	Halfling, Renegade	Temperate jungle/ Forest Ridge
MM	Hatori	Deserts
DSMC1	Hej-kin	Subterranean
DLMC	Horax	Great Ivory Plain
	HUMAN	
DSMC2	Ex-gladiators	Any land
DSMC2	Ex-slaves	Any land
DSMC2	Herdsman	Any land

DSMC2	Dune Traders	Any land
DSMC2	Nobles	Any land
DSMC2	Templars	Any land
VoDaF	Draxans	Valley of Dust and Fire
VoDaF	Ka'Ardani	Valley of Dust and Fire
BF	Hungry Bodies	Black Waters Oasis

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Distance calculator for Dark Sun

Want to get from one place to another but don't want to calculate how far it is? Wondering what's the best path from one place to another? Use the Dark Sun Distance Calculator. Simply choose the Origin and the Destination, and the appropriate speed and click the **Go!** button. Everything is done for you.

Origin:

Destination:

Choose creature speed:

Note: Distances are those given by Chay0s and Bobby Stewart, at [The Burnt World of Athas](#). They did a lot of the work.

I used their information to get an array of origin->destination distances. I then used this array in Dijkstra's algorithm to compute the shortest path from the selected origin to the desired destination.

The total time in hours is based on a rough estimate of the average terrain type between destinations. I averaged, again from the table by Chay0s, the terrain value.

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Dragon Articles

Below is a list of DRAGON® Magazine articles, including those written specifically for the Dark Sun setting, and those that might be relevant or useful to Dark Sun DMs. The links no longer work, as TSR / Wizards keeps moving things around. Also, I believe the articles are available via CD-ROM from [Wizards](#).

Issue	Article Name	Author	Topic
#158	Rules of the Game	Thomas M. Kane	How to teach someone to roleplay.
#173	A Letter From the Wanderer	Troy Denning	A discussion on necromancy, how to create undead on Athas.
#173	Random Magic For Organized Minds	Timothy B. Brown and William W. Connors	Tables to allow DMs to quickly determine what spells are found in, say, a recently unearthed spell book.
#173	The Monstrous Side of the DARK SUN World	Timothy B. Brown and William W. Connors	The stats for the races of Athas: dwarves, elves, half-giants, halflings, muls, thri-kreen; and some races from other MCs that are suitable for Athas.
#174	Out of the Mists	William W. Connors	A Ravenloft article, it contains info on the psionic lich.
#182	Psionics - in living color	Jan Berrien Berends	An article on how to spice up psionics game-play.
#185	The Arena Master's Arsenal	Timothy B. Brown	New weapons for Dark Sun.

#185	<u>Mastered, Yet Untamed</u>	Timothy B. Brown	Athasian Beasts of burden; some of these are detailed in the Dark Sun MC2.
#191	<u>Open Your Mind</u>	Michael John Wybo II	New kits for psionics.
#194	<u>Slave Hunters & Silt Sailors</u>	L. Richard Baker III	Kits for every Athasian class.
#197	<u>Beyond the Dark Horizon</u>	Gregory Detwiler	New spells for the Athasian wizard & priest.
#200	<u>The EVEN MORE Complete Psionicist</u>	Jon Winter	Some more kits & proficiencies for psionics.
#215	<u>Gaming With Style</u>	Thomas M. Kane	An explanation of the different types of gaming styles.
#220	<u>The Thought Police</u>	Lisa Smedman	An article on how to keep players in line using psionics. Although not written for Dark Sun, still interesting.
#221	<u>Ecology of the Crystal Spider</u>	???	Everyone's favorite Athasian Arachnid, the Crystal Spider.
#222	<u>Adding Substance to Psionic Combat</u>	Bill Slavicsek	The mindscape, harbingers, etc. Some of this material can be found in <u>The Will & the Way</u> .
#226	<u>Magical Sands</u>	Rudy Thauberg	New ways to use Athas' most abundant resource, sand. Not written for Dark Sun, but could generate some interesting ideas.

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Famous Athasian Last Words

Here are various last words from among Athas's least intelligent and quite dead heroes. These quotes were collected from the various members of the Dark Sun Mailing List.

Contributors (in order of email received):

Jon Sederqvist | Dcee | Lim Du'l | Red Chocobo | Matthew Hatfield | Rive | Troy | Aleksei Andrievski | BeerGroin | Sorak Main d'Argent | John Tkalcich

From Jon Sederqvist:

"I open the door and go inside. Hey, there are bodies right? I'll loot them."

(After having teleported a set of spores containing lethal poisonous gas into a warehouse)

"Hey, what a stupid spell, I'm dancing the macarena." (quickly followed by disintegrate)

"Check out those nice, orange flowers. Why, they're warm."

"Mmm... berries!"

"Come on, how's Borys gonna stop us? We've got the Dark Lens, we're 2 avangions and an elemental and the thri-kreen's using the Scorcher and the Scourge!"

(said just before the Dragon's 25 kaisharga appeared with a rift spell cast on them)

"My thri-kreen ranger/psi has 48 attacks! Banzai!" (against the psionicist with kinetic control).

"I lost my cp!"

"There it goes, under the mekillot."

"I'll go get it."

For those of you who don't know, mekillots always drop flat on anything of considerable size that comes under them - in our gaming group some evil characters fooled a new player to make his character roll under a berserk mekillot in order to stab it in the stomach region - they claimed it was softer there and much easier to hit. The halfling went splat.

"What's that?"

"Just a cloud, forget it."

"The Alliance will help us. Especially when we bring all these spells we got from the Black Sand wizard!"

"Die, silly king!"

Human trader: "Hi, honey. How much to make you available tonight?" (First time in Nibenay, addressing a bare-chested templar standing on a street corner)

PLAYER to DM: "Hey, you're wrong. I know elves, I've played AD&D for eight years. They're noble, sylvan creatures who will honor their word."

Same PLAYER: "Look, halflings! Let's ask them if we can spend the night or at least stay for dinner."

Elf thief to a thri-kreen: "Hey, bug-face! I'm talkin' to you. That's right, you. Move outta my way!"

The same elf thief after a severe beating, to a dwarf: "Move outta my way, shorty."

Half-giant fighter to elf psionicist: "I challenge you." (was promptly disintegrated)

Mul gladiator: "Die, silly king!" (inspired by Rikus, and the player had watched Black Adder)

Half-giant gladiator: "You're gonna kill me with a wood dagger? Ha, that just tickles." (to a bard who just learnt how to make poison e)

PLAYER to PLAYER: "Hey, I was just kidding about that clerics suck remark. Come on, get me me out of this coma."

PLAYER: "I'm tellin ya, that roc can't see us when it's soaring 300 feet above us. It's called hawkeyes, not roceyes!"

DM: "Well, that's because rocs are fantasy creatures, and hawks aren't. This bird sees ya!"

Half-giant fighter: "Mmm... berries"

Half-elf and human discussing:

Human: "That's a cloud."

Half-elf: "No. I don't think so."

Human: "I'm tellin ya, it's a cloud."

Half-elf: "Maybe you're right."

Human: "Well, come to think of it..."

Half-elf: "When you mention it..."

-- Instants later the cloudray swept down and caught them both --

Human bard: "Wow! I've never seen so many flowers. Look, they're opening as the sun rises. This is so beautiful - so much orange... ZAP!"

Human fighter: "Abalach-Re's a wuss! She doesn't even dare to show her ugly face outside her palace. We can take her!"

Mage who just found the Alliance: "Cool! I can't wait to tell all my friends about you guys!"

From Dcee:

"Now, we are powerful enough to kill that rampager, en garde!"

"Hey look! A halfling tribe, they look hungry..." (they were hungry)

"Hey look! A Thri Kreen pack!" (he was an elf...)

"Geez... I ressurected as a plant? and there is a defiler casting?? no way!"

"But in Rise And Fall Of A Dragon King, the dragon died!!"

"Lets go to this island full of giants." (they weren't invited...)

"On my map, this portion of the sea of silt is really not deep."

"Woaw... I'm really thirsty."

"Pff, Tyr templar don't have magic left since Kalak's death."

"Here is a magic missile!" (cast in the market place, crowded... they didn't like it...)

From Lim Du'l:

"Oh quit worrying, we've got more than enough water!"

"He's only a gladiator , how tough can he be?"

(said during combat rounds) "Where did the halfling go?"

(also said during combat) "Where did the defiler go?"

"I'll try summoning a fire elemental to help us."

"Sure I'll be OK, I've got "poison simulation"!"

"The only way we're gonna get that kind of money, is if we mug a Templar." (spoken while not smiling.)

"I locked the keys in the Mekillot!"

From Red Chocobo:

"Why should we care about hiding our wealth? Tyr's a free city now!"

"In Rise and Fall of a Dragon King, Hamanu calls the Oba a fool, so we should be safe."

"Hey, can you tell me where I can find a person who will buy this steel sword?"

"I don't care if he's busy, I want to see the Shadow King!"

"I'll just slip into the gray, I'll be safe there."

"I'm sure we can find some kind of Oasis along the way."

"How powerful can a Merchant House be? They're traders, not fighters."

"So we finally got down into the crimson savanna. This place hasn't been spell-blasted, so it's got to be incredibly easy."

"Ha, Dregoth, everyone knows there were no gods on Athas and there never will be. So THERE!"

"So what? I'm a wizard, he's a wizard. Defiling, preserving, they're just little differences in how we cast spells."

"Para-elemental cleric? Yeah, everyone knows that the para-elements are really weak."

"Hey, fire cleric! How would you feel if I just stomped out this fire. Oh, was that your boss? I'm sorry. Ha!" ...or... "Hey, druid! We're on your protected lands? Well how would you feel if I just lit this brush fire."

"Silt Sea? That's really shallow, all the way through, we should be fine."

"Hello, do you know where I could get change for these 500 GP and this steel sword?"

"Well you just tell Sadira that we're friends of Hamanu! Then she'll be happy to see us."

"Hey, Dregoth! How do you pronounce the name of your city? Gwin-sten-all? Goon-sten-ale? It's a pretty pathetic name, and you are a pretty pathetic person!"

"Thri-Kreen are weak, barbaric, and spend 15 hours a day sleeping, I say we CHARGE!"

From Matthew Hatfield:

"Of course the templars will help us! They represent the law, remember?"

"Hey... how come that guy has a big black circle around him?"

"Nah, we'll just bribe our way into the Thri-Kreen encampment.... it worked on the elves!"

"C'mon, we'll sneak up on those elves while they're asleep!"

"Look at this vintage cask of elven wine I got from the Bard's Market!"

"We'll be safe in Gulg.... the Oba likes Druids."

"Dumb cat! Look, it isn't even trying to get away!" (said while the rest of the tigrone pack gathers behind the speaker)

From Rive:

"Ha! That Silt Sea is not what they say it is. Looks like another desert to me!" ::Runs and jumps into the sea::

"Why do I need any money? Tyr is a free city now."

"Relax. We got two kanks to eat if we run out of food."

"Hey, when I grow up I want to be an obsidian miner in the Smaking Crown. Yep, that's my dream job."

"I heard drakes make really good pets."

"Hey look over there. The guys with the black masks riding those kanks, we'll ask them for directions."(aka, Black Sand Raiders)

"Look at those big giants. They are climbing ashore, let's see what they want."

"I'll show whatever I bloody please! I found this steel sword and I will take it for a walk in the elven market."

"I'm pretty sure that's the dragon."
"No its not, just some cliff glider."
"Fine! I'll bet you two bits that's the dragon."
"Fine! Watch me prove its a cliff gli..."

From Troy:

An Elf to a Halfling: "Okay, what's for dinner?"

or a Merchant to a Mul, "Hello sir! I have a two for one special on condoms today".

From Aleksei Andrievski:

"C'mon, we'll sneak up on those thri-kreen while they're asleep!"

From Kul the Drake:

"Drakes Are Wise, Noble creatures."

"Did I say I wanted to be reincarnated? No. We know what to do about that, don't we."

"Wanderer or not, we don't let no ---**Censored**----- inix crap in here!"

"I'm sure that the bard said that this wizard is a preserver."

"Sadria's not a defiler. I'm sure she'll help us!"

From BeerGroin:

I actually heard a player say this!

(Upon being approached by a draqoman)

"Its all right, templars aren't smart enough to have undercover agents."

This was just after casting a wizard spell in full view of the front gate of Tyr and the slaves in the fields.

From Sorak Main D'Argent:

==>One of my player said this once... only once.

In the market at the city-state Urik:

"All right folks, check up my new wizard spell."

a merchant said: "Actually, I've never seen what such a beast can do but I only know that I can sell their skin 10 gp."

===>before going in the wanderland, trying to catch a fire drake alone.

"I know I'm very lucky to have you as one of my best friend!"

==>Said a man to a templar

From John Tkalcich:

"Preservers, defilers what's the difference?"

"Who's the idiot who runs this place?" (said in Ur-draxa)

"What's everyone's problem?" (in Eldaarich)

"Life sucks!" (In Saragar)

"What do you mean NPC's get to use the critical hit charts too?"

"That merchant in Tyr will give us an SP per square foot for this drake's hide!"

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Birth of fire

He was exhausted. Kargath had been running all night, trying to catch up to the raiders, but had been unable to gain any ground. As the day approached, he could see the small band of raiders in the distance, a small speck on the horizon shadowed by the rising sun. His hair, once a luxurious mane of black, was soaked with sweat and filled with sand. His whole body ached, and what remained of his clothes offered little protection from the wind. He wasn't particularly muscled, had never done much exercise beyond what his parents had him do, and so all this running had exhausted him. His burn marks itched in the constant wind, and Kargath feared the burns might infect, but that didn't matter. As he stopped to catch his breath, his mind tried to make sense of the last day.

The raiders had approached silently, unexpectedly, and the small caravan had no chance. In one fell swoop, the raiders had disarmed and killed almost all the guards. Before anyone had even realized what had happened, the raiders had already circled his parents and him, toying with them before the inevitable happened. The few remaining guards desperately tried to fend off the raiders, but they knew they had no chance. They were surrounded, outnumbered and cornered. In a final attempt to escape, the guards rushed the raiders, trying to create a small opening to let his parents escape. They almost made it. Before they broke free, one raider managed to block off their escape, and his father had swung his sword at the attacker, a small dark-eyed human, to make him get out of the way. But the raider was good, and his father hadn't managed to make him move. Kargath cursed his own folly at never having learned to use a sword, cursed the paralysis that had claimed him at the most important time in his short life. He might have been able to make a difference, and maybe his parents would still be alive.

In the ensuing confusion, he had received a nasty hit on the back of the head, and had crumpled to the ground. The last thing he had seen before the blackness had claimed him was his father, a sword through his belly, vainly trying to defend his mother.

He had woken up on a huge pile of debris, the remnants of their small caravan. He had heard the raiders talking, and when he tried to sit up to look, he found that he was bound to planks, his hands and legs tied together.

"So, you've finally woken up." Kargath turned his head to look at who had spoken. A burly human glanced up at him from the bottom of the pile. He had long black hair, dirty clothes, and Kargath could smell him even from up where he was.

"Ready to burn?" The raider looked at him and laughed. In his hand he held a torch, and his eyes gleamed with a small light. Kargath looked at those half-mad eyes and started to scream. Just as the raider was about to light the pile of debris, someone yelled.

"Stop!" The raider turned his head to see who had yelled.

"Looking for a new pet Marisha? He's a bit young for you. I think he'd be too much trouble, although he didn't put up much of a fight..." The raider looked up at Kargath and laughed.

"Didn't put up much of a fight? Untie me, you sick excuse for a human, and I'll give you a fight!" Kargath screamed at the raider. He struggled to free himself, but he was tied down pretty good. The raiders were obviously used to doing this.

"Shut up, kank-dung. If you think I'll untie you so you can die easily on my sword, you're wrong. If you had put up a fight, I might've killed you then, but then again, maybe not!"

"Daskinon, stop!" A woman had approached them while they were arguing. She was very muscled, had a voluptuous figure and a face that seemed unable to smile. She was dressed in tight-fitting clothes, with boots of tanned Z'tal hide, and her blond hair was tied back in a long ponytail. Her eyes were small pupils staring out from under her eyebrows. Not a very pleasant person to spend a day with: she had to be this Marisha. "I'll not have this idiot's spirit haunting me for the rest of my life. Get him down from there, and we'll set him loose in the desert."

"Set him loose? The sun must've fried your brain, Marisha." Mimicking Marisha's voice, although with a slightly higher pitch, Daskinon said: "Wow, let's just set him free, he'll never tell the templars where we raided this caravan, now will he? He's just a good little boy." Turning to look at Kargath, Daskinon said: "If you promise not to tell, we'll cut you free. I know you're a boy I can trust!" He looked at Marisha and laughed once more.

"Get him down from there. He'll never get far anyway." Marisha glared at Daskinon, her look a bit more imperious than the last, the words a command meant to be obeyed. "I lead this band, now untie him! Or would you rather I teach you another lesson?" Marisha looked at Daskinon and smiled, a cold smile with as much warmth as the dark of an Athasian night.

Conflict within! If Kargath could just exploit this, he might be able to escape when the two were fighting.

But then Marisha smiled at Daskinon, walked up to him and gave him a full kiss right on the lips. Both raiders looked up at Kargath. "Think me might set you free? Hmm? Think you're just gonna walk out of here? Hope you enjoyed our little show, cause it's the last thing you'll ever see. Burn him; he's provided enough entertainment."

"No!! Stop!!" Kargath yelled, but to no avail. Daskinon smiled and then lit the pile of debris. As the flames burned higher and higher, Kargath screamed from the pain, and then finally passed out.

He had woken up on a smoldering pile of ashes, slightly burned but still alive. How he had survived the fire, he didn't know, but he wouldn't complain. He had risen and found out he could still move. After looking around he had found the raider's trail, and had set off in pursuit.

Now he didn't know what to do. He knew he wouldn't be able to catch the band of raiders, but he didn't stop. He had nothing else to do, nowhere to go. His whole life had simply crumbled away. All that remained was avenging his parent's death.

As he crested another hill, Kargath saw a man, looking towards him. When the man saw him, he waved. Might this be an ambush? Had the raiders spotted him? Kargath approached the man cautiously, looking for signs of others, but this man seemed alone. When Kargath got closer, he saw that it wasn't a man, but a mul, a dwarf-human crossbreed. The mul was standing, leaning on a staff of agafari wood with a polished obsidian shard on top. Kargath stared hard at the mul, trying to determine his actions, wondering what a lone mul was doing out here far from any village.

The mul looked intently at Kargath, then smiled, his smile showing a

row of razor sharp white teeth. "Going somewhere? Trying to catch to your 'friends'? It'd probably go faster if you had a kank to ride." The mul said. Kargath looked closely at the mul. The first thing he noticed was his eyes. They were black! In fact those eyes virtually glowed, as if they proclaimed to the world that inside this mul burned a red hot fire. The mul was scarcely dressed, in fact looked like a beggar, and had numerous burn marks over his hairless body. His skin was deeply tanned, and had a fairly muscular built. But what Kargath noticed most was the eyes. They seemed the only interesting trait of this mul, as if nothing else mattered but the eyes.

"Who are you? Where did you come? What do you want?" Kargath asked.

"Patience, young one. Temper your vengeance for a few moments that I might explain myself." The mul paused, then looked at Kargath with those black eyes, a hard penetrating stare, as if he could see directly at the core of his being, "How had you planned to accomplish your act of vengeance? Just walk right in to camp and demand that everybody dies? Think those raiders would just curl into a ball and turn to dust? Oh, maybe you planned on attacking with your arsenal of weapons, and... oh silly me. You don't even have a sword." The mul laughed.

"How do know what I planned to do?" Kargath was suspicious now. How could this mul have known what he was about to do?

"How do I know? My dear boy, you should have brought along a sign that says: 'I want to kill those raiders', because it's so obvious to me."

" And how would you help me? Why would you help me?" Kargath asked. He was cautious. Although not very old, Kargath had seen his father at work many times, and knew that nothing was freely given in this world. His father had been a trader for a small merchant house, and he had brought along Kargath many times with him so that he might learn the tricks of the trade. And so Kargath had learned that a trade always required an equal exchange.

"I will help you get your revenge, and in return you will serve me and my master." The mul replied in a cold tone, a deadly serious voice.

"And if I refuse?"

"Then I shall take back what I have given you. Your life."

"I guess I don't have a choice. If you help me get my revenge, I will serve." Kargath replied. If this mul could help him kill his parent's murderers, it would be well worth a life of servitude. "Now tell me who you are."

"Who am I?" The mul looked at him now, his eyes turning to pools of midnight black, his face a mask of anger, "I am the raging fires of vengeance, the noose that hangs the rapist, the sun that burns down upon the desiccated corpses of my enemies. I am the cleansing flames of the fire, he who cleanses the world, the one who gives birth to new life by killing the old. I am the smallest spark, the huge bonfire; I am fire, I am flame. I am passion, I am lust, but I am also rage; cold, hard, terrible rage. I am the dying who find the strength to go on, the will to survive. I am free, free to dance on the whim of the flame, bound to nothing and to no one." The mul stared hard at Kargath. "Accept the pledge of fire, and you will have your revenge."

"I accept. Now help me kill them!" Kargath replied. He didn't have time to waste. He wanted his parent's murderers dead immediately.

"You will need to prepare yourself first. Follow me."

They walked for more than three hours, Kargath getting more and more impatient, thinking maybe he had made the wrong decision. He wasn't sure he would be able to find the raiders again, although the mul had told him it wouldn't be difficult. Kargath thought back to all that the mul had said. He realized he didn't even know his name. When he had asked, the mul had just replied, "Call me Master." Another thought nagged at his conscience. He had heard the mul saying it was he who had saved him from the fire. When Kargath had asked him why, the mul had replied that all would be made clear when they arrived at their destination.

Finally, they arrived at a small clearing at the foot of the mountains. There were small bushes everywhere, and in the center of the clearing was a large circle of stones. There seemed to be little else around.

"Go gather as many bushes that you can find. Bring as many flammable things as you can. Put them all in the circle. Make sure you have a huge pile." The mul said to Kargath.

"And what are you going to do?"

"Me? I'm getting some rest. Don't think about running away, else you'll never get the revenge you desire. And don't think about trying something stupid. Last time the fire didn't burn, but this time I can guarantee you a very fiery death."

Kargath gathered all the scrubs and bushes he could find, and put them all inside the circle. After a few hours, he had a huge pile. He thought about what the mul wanted to do with his pile. It was obviously going to be used for a fire, but what purpose would that serve? They didn't need a fire this big to warm up, and night was approaching fast. A fire that big might be used as a signal to someone, but who might that be? Well, he had no answers. He would just have to wait and wish that he didn't fall asleep while listening to an explanation.

When the mul woke up, which was about the same time as when Kargath finished gathering all the wood, it was nearly dusk. The sun was setting fast, and the temperature was starting to fall. The mul looked at Kargath and said: "It's time. I will light the fire." The mul looked at the huge pile, whispered some strange words, and then a small flame appeared in the mul's hand. The mul approached the pile, then seemed to talk to the flame, as if asking it to jump to pile of wood. Then the mul put his hand on the pile, flame and all, and everything caught fire. There was now a huge bonfire! Kargath could feel the heat of the flames from nearly 20 feet away. It was even starting to make his hair curl.

The mul looked at Kargath, his coal-black eyes narrowing, and said: "Ready to accept your bargain? Are you ready to gain the power you need to seek revenge?"

"Of course. I've already agreed to do what you wanted in return for revenge. Let's get this over with." Kargath replied.

"Then come over here."

Kargath walked to the mul, and the mul put his hand on Kargath's forehead. The mul whispered some strange words that Kargath couldn't quite understand, and then said: "Walk in the fire. It is safe for those who do not fear the flame."

Kargath looked doubtfully at the mul, wondering if this was some sort of joke, or some kind of trap. Well, the mul could have killed me anytime, Kargath thought, and he looks very serious. So Kargath took a deep breath, then walked directly into the fire, the heat becoming so

intense before he stepped in that he almost couldn't breathe.

It was warm inside the fire, but it didn't hurt. The flames hadn't burned him. As he was wondering what was going to happen, Kargath heard a strange voice inside his head. It was smooth, soothing, but also had a hint of madness, a strange touch of insanity. The voice, the presence inside his head made him remember his parent's murder, the savagery of the raiders, but it also talked of fire. It talked of Athas' current situation, of the grand plan to preserve Athas so that it may once again burn in one raging never-ending fire. It talked of the joy of burning the guilty, those who had wronged it. It talked of the power of fire, of its gentle caress, of its ravaging flame. The voice promised to help him kill his parent's murderers, to help him gain the revenge he yearned for. So when the voice asked him if he would accept the Pact of Fire, if he would serve to preserve Athas so it may once again burn, Kargath accepted, the memory of his father with a sword through his belly still fresh in his mind. The voice then proceeded to explain to Kargath all that would be required of him in his service, and explained how it would grant him his powers whenever he needed it.

When he emerged from the fire, Kargath saw that it was nearly dawn. He had spent the whole night inside that fire, but he wasn't hungry and he felt fully replenished. The mul was gone. Kargath yelled for him, tried to look around, but couldn't find the priest. When Kargath took a drink from a nearby pool of water, he saw that his hair was red, as red as brightest flame, and that his eyes were black, two pools of darkness. He looked around the pile of ashes, searching for anything that might help him to gain his revenge. He found a small medallion on a rock. The medallion was made of obsidian, with runes carved on its surface. When Kargath picked it up, it was warm to the touch, and a voice inside his head, the same voice he had heard in the fire, told him: "Wear this always on your body, so that others will know and fear the power of the flame. When you go and seek your revenge, show this to all so that they may know their folly."

He'd finally caught up to the raiders. After spending nearly a month at the clearing where he had undergone his initiation, it had taken him another month to find the raider's trail and catch up to them. But here he was, ready to exact his revenge.

He walked towards the raider's encampment, taking his time, walking boldly, his head up high. Soon one raider spotted him and yelled a

warning to the others. A man came towards him, and Kargath saw that it was Daskinon. Daskinon looked at Kargath, stared hard then said: "Is that you, kid? What in Ral's name is going on here?"

"What's going on here?" yelled a female voice from afar. Around one tent came Marisha. When she spotted Kargath, her eyes opened wide. "I don't know how you survived the fire, but if you think that dying your hair red will impress us, think again." She turned to one raider and said: "Perimeter check. Make sure he's alone."

"You should have killed me when you had the chance. It's too late now. You murdered my parents, and now its your turn to die." Raising his voice, Kargath yelled: "It's time for all of you to die. Feel the power of the flame, the flames of vengeance!" And with these words, his heart heavy with guilt over his parent's death, burning rage against these people who had so callously killed them, Kargath opened himself to the flame, letting his vengeance fuel the fire inside him. He grasped the medallion his patron had left for him, called out to the fire he now loved so dearly and held the medallion up high for all to see. He felt the power of his patron filling him, his blood beginning to boil, so intense was the heat inside him, and knew that now he could let it go. Almost bursting from the inside, the pain so intense he almost couldn't think, Kargath first pointed two fingers at Daskinon and Marisha, and they burst into flames. As their screams filled the air, more raiders rushed him, but they too burst into flame. As Kargath turned his gaze everywhere around the encampment, everything burst into flame. More raiders died, running while on fire instead of dropping to the ground to extinguish the flames. As more screams filled the air, an air filled with the smell of sulfur and burned flesh, the only other sound came from Kargath, his laughter filling the air. As he looked around, fire and smoke filling his sight, the screams of the dying in his ears, maniacal laughter coming from deep in his throat, he thought that yes, Athas would burn once again.

And so was born another priest of fire.

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Breath of Freedom

Maric paused to look at the setting sun. Its rays were now partially hidden behind the distant mountains, and provided a beautiful view. Maric arched her back to relieve her cramped muscles. Working in the fields was tiresome work. The sun beat relentlessly, and often not a breeze stirred to provide some sort of relief from the sun. All day long she had been working, with only a slight break to eat at midday. The tip of her elven ears were becoming red from working in the sun.

"Get back to work!", shouted the overseer. Maric felt the sharp sting of the whip across her shoulders, which immediately brought her back from her dreaming. Her back was full of these marks, and the small wind blowing rubbed sand into her wounds, making them itch. Another crack of the whip sent another wave of pain through her body. Maric dropped into a ball on the ground, awaiting another strike. The overseer, whom Maric had never known his name, walked up to her and grabbed a handful of her hair. He pulled her head back, then brought his face mere inches from hers. "You're no good to Lord Korin if you don't work. Think he'll feed you if you don't work? Would you rather serve your master in another way?" the overseer asked, a leering grin on his face. Maric stared long and hard at overseer, her mind racing with a hundred different ways of killing him, then a hundred reasons why that would accomplish nothing.

"No. I'll work. I was just stopping to rest for a minute so that I may better serve my master", replied Maric. The overseer looked at her once again. His grin turned into a mask of anger.

Raising his voice, the overseer shouted: "I decide when and if you, and all of you, should take a break! Remember that!" And with those words, he violently shoved Maric to the ground, to prove his point.

Maric tended the field for a few more minutes, but the sun was now hidden behind the mountains. By Lord Korin's decree, his slaves stopped working once the dark sun could no longer be seen in the sky.

With the overseer urging them on, the slaves slowly gathered into a line to walk back to the sleeping chambers. The walk wasn't very long, only about a mile, but the guards were constantly urging the slaves to move

faster. The overseer walked up and down the column, scolding those he thought hadn't worked hard enough, his whip accentuating the fact that he was in charge. He kept on telling the slaves that they owed their lives to their Lord, that it was by his grace that they lived, that he was a lawful and generous master. He constantly reminded the slaves that this was their lot in life, punishment for crimes they or their parents had committed. He told them they were better off as slaves than as free-men, where no one cared for you and you were on your own.

Maric sneered at all the overseer's ranting. She knew what it was to be free. Although she had been captured at a relatively young age, she remembered what it was to be free. She thought back to those days, days when she could run free with her tribe, when she felt the wind blowing through her hair. She bitterly recalled the events that had led up to her capture.

Her small tribe had been desperate in those days. They hadn't been able to find any water for almost a week, because all of their regular water holes were suspiciously dry. When they had come upon the caravan, there had been little debate about what to do. They regularly raided these human caravans, and the humans were too stupid to change their routes. Only this time the humans were prepared. When the elven tribe had descended in between the dunes, the caravan's flaps had open to reveal a small legion of human warriors. The tribe had been ambushed.

The humans hadn't tried to kill all the elves, but the elves wouldn't let themselves get captured. They would rather die than be imprisoned by humans, and many wounded elves had died by their own hands. But Maric had been captured by a human wielding a net, and he had quickly subdued and bound her securely. Only a handful of elves had survived that day, and those that had been captured had either died while trying to escape or been killed for continued disobedience.

Now the overseer was nearing her. Maric kept her head down, trying to avoid the overseer's gaze. But that was not going to happen. The overseer stopped near, and as he always did, put his hand around her waist and whispered into her ear: "You don't have to work in the fields. You know, I could find you some work inside my house. You wouldn't have to stay outdoors all day and ruin your beautiful skin." His hand crept down ever so slowly, to make sure Maric understood what he meant.

Maric looked down at her hands, hands callused and cracked, and laughed despite herself. "Beautiful skin? No, I'll work in the fields." The

overseer had tried to convince her to 'work' inside his house once, a few years ago, and when Maric had violently repelled his advances, she thought he would kill her. But for some reason he hadn't. Maybe he thought that if he worked her hard enough in the fields that he would break her spirit and she would finally 'accept' her fate. But if that had done anything, it had only reinforced Maric's determination to someday escape.

She knew her beautiful elven features and long, sinuous, legs made her attractive to this human, but she couldn't understand why a human would want to bed someone not of his own race. Their elven tribe had made it perfectly clear that they would exile anyone caught with someone of another race. She stood a few inches taller than the overseer, and her sharp pointed ears and graceful walk turned many heads among the humans. She might have been a beautiful queen, married to the chieftain's son, but now her skin was sunburned and red. Her hands were cracked, nails torn from working in the fields all day. Her back was scarred from all the whip lashes she had received in all her time as a slave, and now another bloody mark had appeared on her back. She knew she would have to sleep on her stomach for a few nights before the marks on her back healed, unless she received another lashing.

Soon they arrived at their sleeping quarters and headed straight for the mess hall. The slaves were hungry after a long day's work, and the mess hall was the only place where Lord Korin afforded his slaves the luxury of talking amongst themselves.

Maric grabbed a bowl of gruel, a gray paste she knew from experience had little taste, and sat down at the corner of a table, as far away from the other slaves as possible. Maric didn't talk that much with the other slaves, and the other slaves simply ignored her. She was the only elf in the group, and that fact made her an outsider. Maric started eating her gruel, barely tasting the bland substance on her tongue before swallowing it. She kept her face down, lost in daydream. Then an old woman sat down in front of her. She lifted her weather-beaten features to look at Maric and spoke.

"Why do ye always try to upset the overseer? Ye know he will strike ye. Can't you see 'tis the way of slaves? Accept your lot, and ye will see 't isn't so bad."

"Accept my lot?" Maric looked at the old woman, whose weather-beaten features spoke of a long life of slavery outside in the fields.

"Why are you humans so deluded? There is nothing except freedom for me. I will be free once again!"

"Free? Free to do what? The freedom to starve? The freedom to be hunted down 'cause ye escaped the Lord's servitude?"

"The freedom to chose! I would rather die by my own actions than serve these wretched human 'Lords' who have never worked a day in their entire life!" Maric stared at the old lady. Had the overseer sent her to convince her she should give up? Maric resolved that she would escape, sooner than later.

"Ye want the freedom to die young, with no food in yer belly? The masters feed us, they give us shelter and in return we serve them and work for them. I've been a slave all my life, and 'tis not so bad. I have food, clothes, shelter, but most of all, I'm alive. What will you have gained by escape? When ye find yerself crawlin' in the desert like an animal, yer mouth so dry ye can barely breath, yer belly so empty it hurts, what'll ye be then? A fool, that's what I'd say. A dead fool." The old woman replied to Maric, trying to convince her that slavery wasn't so bad.

"You have an abusive master who can take those things away from you without a second thought. You may delude yourself, tell yourself that this isn't so bad, because it is harder to accept the fact that you are bound to someone else's whims, than it is to tell yourself that this is the way things ought to be. *I know. I have known freedom, and this is but a mere speck of what it is to be free!* If you want to convince yourself that you should accept this, then that's your *choice*. But deep down inside you know that this isn't what you were born to do, you know that your heart yearns to be free. You delude yourself to try and justify your inaction, your cowardice in the face of bullies, but it tears you apart. And so rather than face your inaction, you bury your feelings under a pile of self perpetuated lies. You let them convince you that they are right. Your shame may be hidden away somewhere deep inside you, but it is still there. Feed yourself on your own lies. I hope you choke on them!" With these words, Maric got up and gulped down the last of her gruel, then walked to her bed without looking back.

Maric awoke with a sudden jerk. There was that dream again! She had been dreaming of escape for the last few weeks. In the beginning she

hadn't remembered her dreams clearly in the morning, but now the dreams happened more and more frequently, and they were becoming quite vivid and detailed. She was always working in the fields, and then some stranger (a human!) would walk up to her and extend his hand. She would grasp it firmly, and they would be gently lifted up by a blowing breeze and carried away towards the mountains. The overseer would look up at them, and then he would start yelling. But the breeze carried them over his head. They would fly to the mountains, and then start to fly up a huge cliff. Then Maric would let go of the human, and she would start to plunge downward with ever increasing speed towards the ground below. She would always wake up before hitting the ground, her body sweaty and slightly shivering in the cold night air.

Maric calmed herself and slowly tried to turn around on her back. The wounds hurt too much, so she had to roll over on her stomach once again. She tried to get back to sleep, but the dream stayed in her head and kept her awake. She tried to tell herself it was just something that would go away, but the truth was she didn't believe that. She knew something was making her dream, although exactly what she didn't know. She thought it might be something from her elven heritage, but she had never heard of any elf dreaming in such a way. Whatever it was, she didn't know and wouldn't be able to solve anything tonight. But she was determined to keep an eye out for something that might give her a clue to help her solve her mystery. Closing her eyes, she tried to fall asleep. After a long while, she did.

Maric awoke the next morning still tired from the night before. The dream was still in her head, the images locked into her thoughts. Maric ate her breakfast in silence, no one coming to bother her on this meal. When the guards came to get them for their daily work, Maric followed in line, this time determined to keep an eye out for anything that might help her figure out something from her dream.

The morning passed without incident, the dark sun beating harshly upon their heads. The air was unusually still; not even a slight breeze stirred the fields in which she worked. The heat reflecting off the ground created a strange haze in the air. When one looked at the mountains in the distance, the air seemed to ripple from the intense heat. The afternoon brought no respite from the sun. The temperature increased even more, if that was possible. Maric thought she would dry up from the heat. When the guards passed them their water rations, Maric gulped

hers down. The water was stale and hot from being in the sun all day, but that didn't matter. Water was too precious to be wasted simply because it was hot.

When the afternoon sun was beginning to hide itself, the wind finally picked up. The strong breeze was quite welcome, even if it brought along with it some sand. The slaves were all tired and hot, and the wind was refreshing. Maric paused to stand up and let the wind flow over her body to cool herself. She looked longingly over at the horizon. How she wished to be free and simply walk away. But there was no where to go. The mountains were a day or two's walk, and Maric didn't have any water. She would never get far before the guards caught her, even if she did run faster than them. Just as Maric lowered her gaze back to her work, she saw someone in the distance. At least she thought she saw someone. She had spent the whole day in the heat, and thought the figure might be some mirage.

The overseer chose that moment to check upon his favorite slave. When he saw what she was looking at, he lifted his gaze and saw the figure. He glanced suspiciously at Maric, then yelled for the guards.

The guards came running over, wondering what the overseer wanted. When he pointed at the figure, the guards tensed and waited. The figure would only arrive in a few minutes; they had time to prepare themselves.

Maric looked at the figure intently, the overseer apparently not noticing she wasn't working. She could see the figure more clearly now, and because of her elven eyesight, she saw first that it was a human male. A small wheeze escaped her throat when she realized this. The human male from her dreams! Maric didn't know what to make of this, but she would soon find out. The human was almost nearing shouting distance.

When the overseer thought the human was close enough, he shouted for him to stop. The human stopped, looked at the overseer, then turned his gaze and stared hard at Maric. Maric could see him quite clearly now. He was older than the human in her dreams, with long brown hair that dangled loosely from his head. He had eyes as blue as the bluest sky, and in his eyes one could see a spark of a careless being, one who had seen the world and accepted his place in it. He was strongly built, although a bit short, and a long brown beard hung from his face. Why he kept so much facial hair was a mystery. It must have been hot and smelly (as if humans didn't smell enough!) in this weather. He wore white robes of a strange material. The fabric appeared to be very thin

and smooth, and reflected the sunlight very well. Maric thought that this human must be rich; his clothes were obviously from far away. He had a small bag hanging across his shoulders, made of the same material as his clothes. Then the human turned his gaze at the overseer, and spoke.

"Well, well, Khazsard, you seem to have gotten yourself quite a job. Overseeing slaves, now isn't that a respectable position." The human's gaze was loaded with anger.

The overseer's face turned into a mask of confusion. He stared long and hard at the stranger, wondering who in Ral's name this was. He looked over the human's appearance, trying to remember the face, when suddenly comprehension showed on his face. His lips turned into a thin smile, and he rubbed his hands together before he spoke.

"Nilar? Is that you Nilar? I thought you were dead! I thought your good-kinded nature would have gotten you killed by now. You were always one to question your place in life, and I thought this would eventually get you in trouble. I see you're not as much an idiot as I've come to think. We might have been friends once, but if you don't leave now, you never will. I've got a good job, and you're not going to ruin that. I don't know what you're doing here, but I don't care. Guards! Capture him. One more slave for master Korin." The guards started to rush the human, and with it any hope that Maric had of escaping.

"Stop!" yelled the human, Nilar. As he spoke those words, he lifted his arms towards the sky. The wind increased, gathering into a small cyclone, pushing the guards back, scouring their skin with sand. "I've come for one thing Khazsard, and that's your favorite slave!" He looked at Maric, extended his hand, and with a strong deep voice, said: "Come, elf, or never again will you get the chance to escape."

Maric knew this was the truth. If she didn't go now, the overseer would think she had something to do with this, and would probably have her tortured to find out what she knew. And since she didn't have anything to say, he would probably kill her, whether or not she was his favorite slave; he would find another. So Maric ran towards the human. She found that she wasn't pushed back by the winds, but the sand in the air still scoured her skin. She was forced to close her eyes and mouth, and ran on blindly towards the human's voice. When she felt a hand grab her arm, she opened her eyes to see the human, Nilar, looking at her.

"You've made the right decision. You will be free once again." With these words, Nilar raised his left arm in the air, and started to chant. The

words came out of his mouth in a thunderous voice, rising almost as strong as the small wind column. Maric suddenly felt herself being lifted off the ground. She was flying!

Maric watched in wonder as she and Nilar flew over the overseer's head towards the far-off mountains. Maric felt the wind blowing through her hair, exhilarated at the feeling of flying through the air. She looked down to see the overseer shouting at his guards, his arms gesturing madly. His face was red, and he seemed on the verge to explode. Maric smiled at the overseer and blew him a kiss. When he saw that, the overseer seemed to completely lose control. He grabbed a sword from a nearby guard, and threw it towards Maric. Unfortunately for him, Khazard seemed to have forgotten the wind, and was nearly skewered by his own sword as the blade was suddenly and violently returned to its owner. He just side-stepped the sword in time.

They flew fast, Maric's arms open wide to feel the wind across her body. They flew for a short while, leaving the overseer and the other slaves behind. Maric's rescuer said nothing the whole time. His face was a mask of concentration, his eyes and face locked in a scowl, muscles clenched, arms tense at his sides. Maric could see small beads of sweat rolling down his temples. When the overseer and guards could no longer be seen, Nilar set them down on the ground.

As soon as they touched the ground, Nilar collapsed in a heap. Maric rushed to help him, but Nilar waved her off. "I have done worst than this. Let me rest for a few minutes. I will be fine."

Maric watched in silence as Nilar crouched on the hot sand, catching his breath. After a few minutes, he got up. Maric watched the human suspiciously when Nilar put his hand inside his bag, but relaxed when only a water skin came out.

"Drink. The dark sun is still high in the sky, and we have much distance to travel."

"Are we going to the mountains?" Maric asked. She was sure this was where they were headed.

"Yes we are," replied Nilar. "I see you've managed to remember the dreams."

"Were you the one who sent me those dreams? Why? Why me?" Maric

asked with a frown. "Maybe she would find out why this human has helped her escape."

"I don't send dreams. I'm only able to send *suggestions*. Your mind does the rest. But yes, it was me. Now as to the why, well, Maric, I've been watching you, from afar, for a while now. You have a thirst for freedom rarely seen in anyone. But now you have a choice to make. You may either go now, and you will probably never see me again, or you may come with me and learn more about what it is to be free; to learn about true freedom." Nilar looked at Maric, his eyes betraying the fact that her decision made him nervous.

True freedom? What would a *human* know about true freedom? Freedom was running through the plains, the wind in your hair, gently caressing your body. Freedom was getting up in the morning and having nothing more to do than get food and going off where you wanted. What could this human know about this? Maric's thoughts raced wildly through her head. The human's offer was tempting, if only because she was curious to know what he thought he had to teach her. But she was tempted to go. She would find another band of elves, and would join them. Maybe she could even get accepted as a full member of the tribe. But her curious nature got the upper hand. "Ok, human, I will go with you. I will find out more about what you claim is *true* freedom."

"Ok then, let's get going. The mountains are still about a day's walk away."

"Walk? Aren't we going to fly? I thought that's what you showed me in my dreams...." Maric replied. She was a bit confused. Why would they walk when they could fly?

"As I told you before, I only send suggestions. The rest is made up in your mind. If your mind had you flying to the mountains, well, that's not what's gonna happen. There is only so much I can do in one day. I had to fly over there, create that little wind that stopped the guards, and fly us back to here. Now unless you plan on baking in the sun, I suggest we get going before Khazsard finds a psionicist to track us down. I'd prefer not to meet him again, if you don't mind." Nilar told Maric.

They started walking, Nilar chanting softly under his breath, a gentle breeze flowing around them. The breeze was refreshing, and kept their minds off the harsh sun. They hardly spoke, preferring to conserve their strength for walking. They only stopped once more for water. When the dark sun finally set, the air turned cold. They were in the shadows of the mountains, and could see the peaks off in the distance. Maric asked if

they would stop, and Nilar agreed.

"Let's stop for the night, although it would be easier to walk during the night than during the day. I need rest. You need rest also." Looking around he said: "I will take first watch. Here take this" Nilar reached into his bag, retrieving a piece of cloth, "and lie down on it. It isn't much, but it's better than nothing. You can use it as a bed roll."

Maric took a gulp of water from Nilar's waterskin, then lay down on the cloth. The sand was still warm from a day's exposure to the sun, and it would probably keep her warm enough for a good portion of the night. Even though she didn't fully trust this human, she was pretty sure he wouldn't kill her; he hadn't gone through all this trouble just to kill her in her sleep. Still, humans were untrustworthy. She would try to keep an eye out tonight, to see what this one would do.

Nilar looked to see Maric lying down on the piece of cloth, and walked away from their small camp. He had his devotions to tend to. He had to renew his spells for their journey ahead, and give thanks to his Lord for granting him the spells he had used during the day, and thank him for the favorable outcome. With luck, they would have a new initiate in a few weeks.

Nilar tended to his devotions, keeping a look out for anything suspicious. The spell he had cast onto his amulet before he had gone yesterday was supposed to keep him undetectable, and Khazsard was too arrogant to think of trying to concentrate on a measly slave for a divination spell. Still, maybe he would manage to find another way to track him. Lord Korin could probably hire powerful telepaths to find him, and he wasn't sure exactly how his spell would block the Way.

The night passed without incident, Nilar casting a spell to protect them from the night creatures, summoning an elemental to keep watch during the night. He slept well, the small breeze whispering into his ears, telling soothing and relaxing words into his mind, strengthening his spirit.

When Nilar woke up, the dark sun was about to rise. They had almost half an hour before the sun rose. Nilar sent the elemental back to its home, which it was only too happy to do. The creatures loved to serve their masters, but didn't like the solid ground of Athas; they preferred the shifting winds of the plane of Air.

Nilar and Maric ate in silence. Nilar had brought some food, and they

quickly ate what he had. They were both anxious to get on their way, and Nilar refused to answer any of Maric's questions until they reached the base of the mountains.

They walked in silence, the dark sun beating stronger and stronger upon their heads. The air grew hot, but nearing the mountains the wind picked up. The walk wasn't too hard. There wasn't too much vegetation, but as they neared the mountains the plants grew more and more profusely. Maric almost got herself caught by a rock cactus, but Nilar steered her clear at the last moment.

When they finally arrived at the base of the mountains, Nilar turned to Maric and said: "Now we begin. In the following days, we will climb this peak. I will talk, and you will listen. If you don't understand anything, say so. You will think about what I will say, and when we arrive at the top you will have to pass a test. Whether you pass or not depends on what you will learn in the next week or two, so listen carefully. Learn. Keep the objective of freedom in your mind always. Follow me, go through with this test, and you shall learn freedom of thought and movement such as you have never felt before in your life."

Maric stared at the human once more. He had never said anything about a test. "What is this? A test? You never said I would have to pass a test." Maric looked the human over, waiting for an answer.

"I never said that learning about freedom would be free. I passed this test long ago, and I believe you can pass it also." Nilar replied. "You will see, it isn't so bad."

Maric thought about this. Still, she supposed, if this human had passed this same test, she couldn't see why she couldn't do so too. She would prove to this human that she could, not that she needed to prove anything to a *human*.

"Ok, human. Let's go. You will teach me, and I will learn. Show me what you claim is true freedom, and I will tell you if you have been deluding yourself all your life."

"Ha, ha," Nilar laughed, "I think you will find that you are the one who has been mistaken, but I will let you discover that by yourself. Come. Let us go. We have a long journey ahead of us." And with these words, Nilar started climbing up the mountain. There was a small path winding its way up, so the going wasn't too hard.

They climbed the first few days in relative silence, Nilar doing most of the talking. He would ask Maric how she felt about different things, like slavery, the rule of the merchant houses, the sorcerer-kings, the current state of Athas. Mostly these were questions which Maric had never really asked herself, and so Nilar gave her time to think before she answered. He questioned her decisions/answers every time she made one, to be sure she was deciding by herself and not trying to impress him. He wanted to be sure she could come to her own conclusions, and not be influenced by him or the world around her, such as her time spent in slavery.

They stopped twice a day to eat, Nilar always having food in his bag, even though it was dried strips of meat. They found water regularly, in small streams, and so had plenty of water to drink. They slept soundly at night, Nilar keeping watch, sometimes summoning a small elemental to keep watch.

As they climbed higher and higher, they had to take more and more breaks during the day. The air was getting a bit thinner, and Nilar and Maric were tiring faster. Nilar kept questioning Maric, making her think about a whole lot of different problems, trying to see if she would be able to master the necessary discipline required to learn spells and the way of the Air Lords. It was during one of these breaks that Nilar decided to test his subject, to see if she had learned anything in the ten days since they had started climbing the mountain.

One evening, they took a break from climbing. Nilar saw a ledge nearby, and asked Maric to join him there to enjoy the view. They climbed on the rock outcropping, which had a few plants and some grass growing on it. They reached the edge, where they had a magnificent view of the Tablelands down below. The sand was colored blood red from the setting sun, and the mountain cast large shadows across the sand. A gentle breeze was blowing, refreshing their sun-warmed and sweaty bodies. Nilar looked down, where there was a drop of about 100 feet. He felt the urge to jump and fly, to join the blowing wind in a chaotic whirl, to ride the currents of air, but knew that Maric wasn't ready for this.

"So Maric, what do you think of freedom? Who are the free races of Athas? If you had the chance to free someone, who would it be? What will you do with your new-found freedom? Have you learned anything from what I have said?" Nilar asked.

Maric looked at Nilar, wondering what he could possibly mean with these strange questions. "What do you mean? I will run free in the plains. That's what I am supposed to do, what all elves do."

Nilar walked to Maric, and put his hand on her arm. She looked threateningly at him, but did nothing. "I see you haven't learned as much as I thought..." With these words, Nilar grasped Maric firmly with his hand, and threw her over the ledge, while keeping a good grip.

Maric screamed, trying to wiggle free of Nilar's grasp, but he held her firmly. Nilar was now lying down on the ground, one arm extended over the ledge, holding on to Maric. Maric wasn't able to grab a foothold on the ledge, and so the only thing keeping her from a 100 foot drop was Nilar.

Nilar's face was now cold and distant. He seemed very angry, and started to ask questions to Maric, his deep voice booming out the words. "Have I taught you nothing? I thought you valued freedom above all else, but I see I may have been wrong. I have been watching you, your thoughts. You believe only elves are meant to run free, that humans and all others are inferior. Once again your thoughts are clouded by what you have been taught, not by what you have decided by yourself. Your ancient racial prejudices are clouding your judgment, and through all this time together this hasn't changed. I thought that questioning your decisions would lead you to better understand the true nature of freedom, that it would force you to rethink what you had been taught, but I see I might have been mistaken." Maric squirmed in Nilar's grasp, yelling to him to lift her up, but a sudden cold stare and violent shout made Maric shut her mouth. Nilar's voice turned a bit more gentle, and he spoke now with passion in his voice, a passion rarely seen in anyone: "You must learn to see that freedom includes the freedom to think, to chose, to come to one's own conclusions, to ignore ancient traditions and racial prejudices. Your thoughts must carry you above you racial restrictions, beyond the boundaries of what thousands of years of imposed thinking have done to you. You must value this freedom above all else, and see in the winds of Athas the inspiration to learn and spread this freedom. Look at the wind, Maric. It is chaotic, it does what it chooses, going anywhere it wants, free of the restrictions of the other elements. Earth is bound to its location, fire can only spread if it touches something combustible, water can only hold the shape of what holds it, doomed eventually to evaporate. But Air, Maric, Air is free. It symbolizes freedom. It is the only true element of Athas, unbound, unrestricted by anything. Learn to serve it, to caress it, and it will serve

you also. It will teach you freedom, and teach you that by spreading this freedom you are doing it and yourself a great gift."

Nilar watched Maric's reaction, to see if he had managed to pierce her long held belief of superiority. He knew he would never be able to fully convert her to the thought that all races were equal, but if he could get her to question her old beliefs, that would probably be enough. As long as she realized that her superiority wouldn't get her anywhere, and that she could keep it in check and learn to serve the Lords of Air, that would be ok.

Maric looked at Nilar, pondering his words, wondering at the same time if he would let her go should she answer wrongly. She did understand what he said, but found it difficult to rationalize with what she had always been told. She looked down upon humans, thought them inferior, beings unable to be free, restricted by their small bodies and minds. But this human, Nilar, was different. He seemed to know a lot more about the world than what she had been told by her elders. Perhaps she should re-evaluate what she had been told. She looked up at Nilar, seeing his eyes looking questioningly at her, wondering what she would answer. She decided to make him wait a bit. He didn't seem like he was tiring too much, so she thought she would make him wait. After a few more minutes of deciding exactly what she would say, Maric spoke and broke the silence that had lasted ever since Nilar stopped talking.

"You may be right Nilar. I will not say I totally agree with you yet, but what you tell me strikes a chord within my heart and soul, and that I cannot ignore. I will stay with you, listen carefully to what you have to say, and we will see. I cannot promise that I will agree with you, but I promise to try." Maric said in a calm, clear voice.

Nilar listened to Maric's answer, satisfied by what she told him. He then used both his arms to lift Maric up. When he finally got her up on the ledge, Nilar breathed a sigh of relief. The wind had supported her, but lifting her up had been hard; his arms now hurt from the effort. He took deep breaths to calm his nerves. This experience had taken a great deal out of him, if only because he wasn't really sure how Maric would react or respond to his questions. He had thought he was right about her, but sometimes he was wrong.

Maric got up and looked at Nilar. "I have one question before we go on, Nilar. Would you have dropped me?"

"Probably not, but I'm not sure. I was hoping you would answer like you

did, and I'm glad I didn't have to make that decision." Nilar replied, a thin smile on his face. He clasped his hands together, waiting for Maric's reaction.

"And your "Lord" wouldn't have stopped you?" Maric spoke, to Nilar's shocked expression. "Don't be surprised. I know you serve someone else. I heard you pray to your "Lord" the other night. If he is the one who told you to bring me here, why disobey?"

"Because he values freedom above all else, Maric." Nilar replied. "Even though he asked me to bring you here, it is *my* decision to make. He would have let me decide for myself what to do, and not influence my decision. Doing so would have violated everything he has taught me. I would still have had to face the consequences of my actions, Maric. Do not equate freedom with irresponsibility. We are all responsible for the decisions we make, whether they are encouraged by someone else or not. There are consequences to all our actions or inactions. Something we decide may affect for better or worse a lot of people, plants, animals, even the survival of Athas. Remember that when you make a decision." Nilar's eyes narrowed, and his face turned cold: "Always keep this in mind."

Nilar grabbed his bag, which had fallen during their brief "discussion", and started climbing up the mountain. Maric, still lost in thought, followed behind.

They continued climbing up the mountain, the peak getting closer and closer. Nilar and Maric continued their discussion, with Maric beginning to understand what Nilar wanted to teach her. She now viewed the races of Athas in a different light, understood the importance of freedom for everyone. After a few more days, they arrived at the top.

Once on top, Nilar said: "We are here. We will camp for the rest of the day, and Maric you will use this time to ponder over what I have said. Consider carefully everything I have told you. The decision you make tomorrow will affect you for the rest of your life."

Maric sat down on a rock, staring at the ground far below. The view was breathtaking. She could barely see the fields where she had worked in the far-off distance, but the view of the plains and tablelands was magnificent. She felt on top of the world. It was easy to meditate, being so high up in the world, and Maric did consider all that Nilar had said.

She sat there until the sun went down and obscured the land below. Maric then got up and went to bed, sleeping on the cloth Nilar had provided her. She wasn't sure what would happen tomorrow, but she was confident it would turn out all right for her.

Nilar woke her up at dawn. The air was cool, and a strong breeze was blowing, bringing the smells of the mountain to Maric's nose. The air felt fresh, clean, and invigorating. It gave her a boost of energy, and she found it strangely relaxing. Nilar walked up to her and asked: "Are you ready?"

Maric turned and looked all around her, her gaze taking in all the scenery. She recalled her decision of the previous night, her certainty. She stretched herself up to her full height, her long legs rippling in the morning sun. She turned to Nilar, and spoke: "I am ready Nilar. I have considered all you have said, and I am willing to learn more."

"Very well Maric. Come over here." Nilar walked to the rock where Maric had stood the previous night, and motioned for Maric to join him. Seeing Maric's look, he said: "Don't worry, I won't throw you over like last time."

Maric looked at Nilar, saw the confidence and honesty in his eyes and walked over to where he was standing.

Nilar placed his hands on Maric's shoulders, and sang a small melody of words that Maric couldn't understand. His deep voice boomed out the last words. Maric found herself strangely calm, at peace. Nilar spoke to Maric in a soft voice: "Go now Maric, and leave behind the shackles of the earth. Jump. Let the wind carry you, let it carry all your thoughts, your joys and your fears. No longer will you be bound to anything. Your feet will no longer need to touch the earth for you to move. Feel the *true* freedom of the Air!"

Maric turned from Nilar, and stared at the ground a thousand feet below. She understood now Nilar's definition of freedom, was now beginning to understand who his "Lord" really was. She knew that if she didn't jump, Nilar would not force her to do so, but he would be disappointed. She would be disappointed. She could now see her destiny in her service to freedom, and without another doubt, she jumped.

The wind rushed through her, and she was exhilarated at the feeling of falling, unrestricted. She felt her descent being slowed for no apparent reason, but a voice inside her head quickly cleared up any

misconceptions about what was slowing her down.

"Maric, the elf, you have chosen to take the leap of faith, to show to us that you are ready to serve in the name of Air and Freedom. Do you take this leap freely, without any restrictions?" The voice inside her head was gentle, but she could feel the power behind those words, a barely contained storm of fury. The presence in her head wasn't oppressive, it gently entered her mind, without being forceful or aggressive.

"Yes," Maric replied to the voice, "I came here willingly, and I have chosen to jump."

"Do you understand the nature of freedom, freedom for everyone? Will you make yourself a champion for those enslaved, oppressed, and know the sacrifices this will mean to you? Do you understand that Athas must be preserved, and will you strive to preserve it from all those that will try to harm it? You will find allies in the Earth, Fire and Water to help you accomplish this, but know that you must cherish freedom above all else. Do you realize that this decision will forever change your life? No more will you put your siblings and racial behavior first. You will champion me, you will champion Air. Can you accept the responsibility this decision will have on all future decisions? Can you accept the responsibility of wielding the power of Air, the responsibility that comes with the title of "champion of freedom"? Will you accept to serve me, and in return I will grant you the power to accomplish all that is asked of you?

Maric already knew the answer to these questions. "Yes, I accept the responsibility and duties of serving as a priestess of Air. I know this is where my fate lies."

"I accept your pledge." With these words the voice in her head receded. Maric felt herself enveloped by wind, a cocoon of air that surrounded her and kept her aloft in the air. She could feel the knowledge of basic spells and rituals being entered into her mind and body, and she rejoiced at the thought that she could learn more. She felt herself lifted by the wind, carried back up to the top of the mountain, where Nilar awaited.

The wind deposited her on the rock where she had sat the previous night, to Nilar's welcome embrace. He presented her with a small medallion, a medallion made of a strange porous material. On the medallion's surface was the image of a fierce cyclone.

"Welcome, sister. Now you must chose your own path. Go forth in the

world and spread the joy of freedom." Nilar turned around, and without another glance back, jumped off the ledge.

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Initiation

Perkin knew the old man had power; he could see it in his eyes. And when the old man had asked him to follow him, Perkin hadn't hesitated, although he wasn't as sure about this as he had been when he'd left. But he was here now, and nothing was going to stop him from going through with this.

The old man had kept him up all night, talking about the earth and its need for restoration. Perkin had listened for a while, but halfway through the night his attention had started to wander. He had been thinking about the last few months, when it had dawned on him that he cared more about the crops and the soil than he did about his own parents. His friends had started drifting apart from him, starting to call him names; "earth-worm" was a favorite among them. But he didn't care, the idiots could only see as far as their own nose. Perkin had started to think more and more about the sorry state of Athas, but with a land so ravaged, he felt helpless. He had been about to give up his nurturing of the soil -- that was when the old man had come.

He had appeared late one evening, ten or eleven days ago, just as Perkin was about to leave the fields. As he approached, with a cane to help him walk, Perkin couldn't help but wonder what an old man was doing so far from the normal traveling roads. Maybe he had gotten lost, or maybe he had been attacked on the road, although he had walked quite a long way to get here, and he didn't seem injured. He had yelled to the old man, and the old man had looked up and smiled. When Perkin asked him what he wanted, the old man had replied: "I've found who I was looking for."; and when the old man had asked him if he wanted to serve the earth in a more complete manner, Perkin hadn't given it more than a second thought, and had joined the old man.

"And how do you recognize a defiler?" Perkin's head jerked up. He hadn't realized he had nearly fallen asleep. He couldn't remember the old man's question, and had to ask him to repeat it.

"You must listen while I talk, else the Earth Lords will punish you if they believe you have learned nothing tonight." Earth Lords? What was the old man talking about? Perkin looked up and saw that it was nearly dawn. He was glad the night was nearly over. Then maybe he would learn the true reason they were here.

"Are you ready, young one? Listen to the earth when it speaks to you, and you will have all you have yearned for." The old man stood up, spread his hands in a semi-circle in front of him, and spoke some strange words that Perkin couldn't understand. A hole appeared in the ground, just deep enough for him to completely hide himself.

"Get in." the old man told him. "Fear not the earth, and no harm will come to you."

Reluctantly, Perkin jumped in the hole. Instantly, he was covered with earth. Panic gripped him. Had the old man brought him here to kill him? Was he some sort of evil priest who required the blood of young people? As the words of doubt drifted through his mind, Perkin could feel the earth finding his way in his nostrils; he couldn't move, he couldn't breathe. "Help!" he yelled, and instantly regretted this. He swallowed a mouthful of damp earth and could feel the earth coming down his throat, choking him. He could feel the bugs crawling down his throat. He couldn't breathe! He was going to die here and no one would ever know what had happened to him. How stupid he was! How could he have believed the old man? He had only heard what he had wanted to hear, what he had yearned for a long time.... but just as he thought he was going to die, he heard a voice inside his head. It was a harsh, grating voice, but surprisingly gentle.

"Do not fear the earth. Relax. Become one with the earth, let it support your spirit, let it banish your fears." Knowing he had no other choice, Perkin tried to feel the earth, to let it support him, but had trouble concentrating.

"Try harder, youngling, for the earth will not accept those weak of mind."

At last Perkin thought of the soil he had cared for, the fields and crops he had given so much of his time, and found that he could breathe. The Earth Lord (for he now recognized the voice, although from where, he didn't know), spoke to him, telling him of the earth's plight, of the need to restore Athas to its former splendor, of the duties he will have to perform should he accept the offer of the Earth lord. And the more the Earth Lord talked, the more Perkin could feel a weight bearing down on his very soul, the plight of the earth, the thousands of years of frustration at seeing Athas turned into a desolate waste. And Perkin knew he had finally found his calling.

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The Shadows Thicken...

Tetlachim watched the procession from his vantage point on the obelisk. The obelisk was located at the corner of Serpent's Way and Jaguar plaza. It stood fifteen feet tall, and the base was five feet high. Three other people were sitting with him on the obelisk. From his perch, Tetlachim could see the procession coming on Serpent's Way, and he also had a very good view of the Great Pyramid.

The Great Pyramid was a magnificent construction of stone and marble. It was the tallest building in Draja and the most beautiful. Even the two temples dedicated to Ral and Guthay weren't as beautiful as the Great Pyramid. The building stood 100 feet tall, with 9 different levels. Statues of various Draja cultural icons adorned the corners of each level. There were statues of warriors eating the hearts of fallen foes, statues of winged serpents, statues of jaguars, obelisks with numerous icons, some with skulls painted in death grins, some with dark suns painted on all sides, some obelisks depicting the moons in various phases in the night sky.

The previous king, Tectuktitlay, had built the Pyramid. No one remembered exactly when it had been built, but the Great Pyramid was many centuries old. The new king, Atzetuk, continued to maintain the Pyramid, also known as The Temple of the Two Moons, as his residence.

Change was rare in Draja, in fact in all the Tablelands, but now Draja had a new king. No one remembered a time before Tectuktitlay, and it had seemed as if the King would rule Draja for eternity. But a few years ago the King had died and his son Atzetuk had taken his place. Rumors from the rare stranger that made his way to Draja told tales of other Kings being deposed, but Tetlachim had trouble believing them. Or, as he was fond of saying, that those cities that had lost their King were examples of what happened when a city descended into decadence and did not properly worship its King. The tumult of those years had reached Raam, and now Raam was a chaotic mess where no one appeared in control.

In the mid-afternoon sun, the air was stifling hot. Tetlachim was sweating beneath his robe. He looked down at his lithe form, his arms all wet from the scorching heat. He could see all around him that people

were sweating too. Some children cried for water, for which their parents quickly told them to shut up. No cloud could be seen in the olive-tinged sky. It was a perfect day for a sacrifice.

Moon Priests dressed in full ceremonial garb led the guards, a combination of half-giant and human warriors. The Moon Priests, the Draji templars, wore their blue robes, with the traditional yellow moon in front and back. The lead priest wore an elaborate headdress, a stunning combination of feathers and lirr tails that reflected the sun in many different colors. His headdress was nearly 2 feet high and descended to his knees. The High Priest also had a staff in his hand, a polished agafari staff topped with the symbol of the two moons.

Behind the guards was the "uauantin". He was the one being sacrificed today, a sacrifice deemed necessary by the new God-King Atzetuk. The last Tyr-storm had damaged a good part of the hemp crop, and it was necessary to sacrifice someone to appease the elementals. The uauantin was naked, his usually coppery skin colored all over with blue and yellow stripes. His face was painted white, black circles were painted around his eyes, and his mouth was colored bright red. His black hair was neatly trimmed just above his shoulders. He walked solemnly, no emotion showing on his face. A special cadre of four guards, the tecpatlin, one each for the cardinal points, surrounded him. These guards wore masks on their face, masks representing different emblems of Drajian worship. One wore the mask of a feathered serpent; he was the one leading the uauantin to the Great Pyramid. The tecpatlin to the right and left of the uauantin wore masks of the jaguar and the smoking mirror, respectively. The last tecpatlin, the one behind the uauantin, wore a bright yellow mask representing the sun.

Following the uauantin and his escorts were the drummers. There were approximately 100 drummers, all bearing a human-skin drum. A ringing war-chant rose from their throats, and they beat a steady rhythm in tune to the walk of the uauantin. They wore bright sleeveless shirts, green and red in color, and wore their ceremonial skirt. The skirt was made of hemp, specially dyed so the color was different depending on where you looked at it. All shades of color were present, from light green changing to blue changing to orange and red.

People were lined up all along the main walkway, the Serpent Way. Young and old alike, they were all watching as the uauantin made his way to the Great Pyramid. Children were pressed between their parents' legs, trying to catch a glimpse of this "striped one". Street vendors had their stores closed, by decree of King Atzetuk. Commerce along

Serpent's Way stopped while the procession made its way to the Great Pyramid. Crowds were massed all along the bottom of the Great Pyramid, in the Jaguar's plaza, waiting for the sacrifice.

The High Priest had reached the base of the Great Pyramid. He turned around and lifted his staff, and all the drumming stopped. The crowd hushed. The High Priest then turned around, and walked up the steps to the top of the pyramid. It took him several minutes to climb to the top of the 9-story pyramid, and he paused at the top to catch his breath. He stopped by the techcatl, the stone slab that served as an altar for the sacrifice. The stone was stained dark red, remnants of previous sacrifices. It was approximately four feet long and about two feet wide, and rested on four marble pillars. At each end of the platform on which stood the High Priest were statues. Statues with grinning faces, long curved teeth; faces depicting death in all its forms. There were statues of jaguars, statues of winged serpents. The High Priest then circled the techcatl, and stood in front of a polished obsidian slab, 10 feet high and six feet wide. The slab was standing upright, resting against the top of the pyramid. It reflected the sun, and cast an eerie light on the techcatl.

By that time, the drummers were crowded at the base of the steps of the pyramid, arranged in a 3-man-deep row. The High Priest then turned around, and motioned for the uauantin to come up the stairs. The drummers started their beating. The uauantin walked up the steps, escorted by his honor guard, the tecpatlin. As the uauantin approached the summit, the drummers increased their tempo, their throats almost screaming the war-chant, all while the crowd joined in the chorus of its praise to its God-king and to the elementals responsible for the storms.

As soon as the uauantin reached the summit, the tecpatlin grabbed him and thrust him on the techcatl. They pinned him down, violently and with great precision, and forced his chest to curve upwards. Each tecpatlin held an arm or a leg. The uauantin's back was bent backward under great tension. The High Priest then grabbed his dagger, the techpatl, and struck great blows that smashed through the chest of the uauantin. The High Priest's robe turned red with the uauantin's blood. High-pitched primal screams could be heard from the top of the pyramid. The High Priest then thrust his hand into the horrible cavity that he had opened to rip out the still-beating heart. This he held high as an offering to the sun. The screaming stopped as the High Priest held high his trophy, blood from the heart dripping down his arm.

The crowd's chant rose even higher, a high-pitched chant of frenzied screams and sounds that bordered on insanity as the High Priest held

high the uauantin's heart. The drummers were now beating their drums so rapidly it was almost impossible to distinguish a rhythm.

Tetlachim was by now standing up, his fist thrust in the air as he celebrated the sacrifice. He was chanting with the crowd, yelling out the words of the songs that he had learned long ago. His face was flushed red with excitement, his good eye dilated.

The High Priest now thrust the uauantin's heart in a special stone bowl made especially to collect hearts. The victim's body was then thrown off the pyramid, to be collected by the king's slaves and used for whatever bloody purposes the king wanted. The High Priest then stood before the crowd with his arms raised high, and yelled, his voice augmented by psionics: "All praise the God-king, King Atzetuk!!" The crowd roared its delight at hearing the new king's name. All the ten thousand or so people gathered in the plaza started chanting the King's name. Fists were raised in unison as the crowd chanted "Atzetuk, Atzetuk!". The drummers were beating a steady rhythm, in tune to the crowd's chanting.

After a few minutes of chanting, a small figure sitting in a chair appeared at the very top of the pyramid. He was dressed in a white and red robe, with a leather corset wrapped around his waist. He wore an elaborate neckpiece, made of gold and ivory. The neckpiece extended above his shoulders and covered half of his chest and upper back. The small figure's headdress was simply exquisite. It contained many different colored feathers, and three symbols to the two moons made of gold and silver. The small figure then stood up and waived to the crowd.

When the crowd saw the small figure, their chanting rose even higher. A few people even fainted. When the figure raised both its hands, the crowd stopped chanting. The drummers stopped beating on their drums. An eerie silence fell over the gathered crowd. Then the small figure spoke, in a strong voice that could be heard by all: " I, Atzetuk, your God-King, am pleased with this sacrifice. The elementals are pleased. Know that this sacrifice is not in vain." The King then disappeared from atop the Pyramid.

The crowd then started dispersing, knowing that the sacrifice was at an end. People started streaming though the Golden Gate, trying to return to their work. The merchants lined along Serpent's Way reopened their shops. They uncovered their wares and reopened their canopies.

Tetlachim watched the crowd disperse. He stayed on his vantage point, preferring to wait for the crowd to thin out. Besides, he didn't want to

mingle with the crowd. His eye patch brought stares from the people. The Draji had very little respect for those who weren't warriors or skilled artisans, and Tetlachim was neither. His hemp headdress was finely made and showed wealth, but it was plain and undecorated. Tetlachim had been born with one eye discolored, his left eye, a red eye that was very sensitive to light. To hide his disfigurement and protect his eye, Tetlachim was forced to wear an eye patch. Since he only had one good eye, his fighting skills were sorely lacking, since he lacked good depth perception.

His mother had tried to apprentice him, teaching him how to sculpt, but that had also been a disaster. He always seemed to have the proportions of his sculptures wrong, and the artistic skills of his mother seemed to have skipped him, since Tetlachim's sculptures weren't particularly good.

Tetlachim was like all other Draji youths, slim, with copper colored skin. His hair was black, his good eye was black, the same as all other Draji. He had a comely face, attractive, with thin lips and a wide mouth. He also showed no facial hair like all Draji. But the one thing Tetlachim lacked that would make him a respected member of society was a headdress.

Everyone in Draj wore a headdress. Headdresses were used to indicate station. Warriors wore feathers. The feathers were a demonstration of exploits. Young warriors wore one feather to indicate their station. The other feathers had to be earned in combat, such as the Flowery Wars. The Flowery Wars were games of combat that are held twice per year. Warriors have the chance to gain feathers in the Wars, or lose feathers. Combat is real, with real weapons. There are no simulated fights in the Flowery Wars. Losers of major events are very often exiled, shamed by their counterparts.

Artists were recognized by the stunning lirr tails on their heads. Lirrs are large, warm-blooded reptiles that live in the Tablelands. Around their neck and at the end of their tail, the lirr possesses a brightly-colored membrane. This membrane is colored in bright reds, oranges and yellows. Artists received this distinction as recognition of their work.

So Tetlachim was unable to secure a position as a warrior or respected artisan, and those were the only two things that really mattered for the Draji. Respect was earned either through fighting prowess or a display of warrior culture, either by sculpting or painting various glorifications of war and violence. And so Tetlachim's headdress, which indicated his

station, was simply undecorated. He couldn't wear any feathers on his headdress, which would proclaim him a warrior. He also couldn't wear the bright colors of a lirr tail, which would mark him as a skilled artisan. He was forced to wear his headdress plain, unadorned, since he hadn't won any combats or produced acceptable sculptures. And in a society where violence and war were glorified, it was hard to earn respect if you weren't a warrior or a skilled artisan.

Tetlachim knew he brought shame to his mother. Although his mother was one of the most skilled sculpture artists in Draj, the fact that Tetlachim wasn't was a dark stain on his family. His father had been a warrior, a respected man who had died with glory during a raid in the mud flats to find victims for the sacrifices a few years back. His mother now supported the whole family, Tetlachim and his 3 sisters. His two older sisters were already distinguished warriors, even fighting in the last Flowery Wars. His younger sister had the talent of their mother. Her sculptures, especially those depicting warriors slaying their enemies, were already drawing some attention.

Recovering from his daydreaming, Tetlachim noticed that the crowd had mostly dispersed. Some people were still lined up on Serpent's Way, buying and trading, but the crowd of onlookers for the sacrifice had departed. Tetlachim descended from his perch, climbing down from the rooftop. He made his way back towards the outside of Two-Moon City, the inner city of Draj that held the King's palace, the temples of Ral and Guthay, the Arena and the templar quarters. As always, his plain headdress drew stares and comments from people. Parents pointed him out to their children and lectured them on the importance of the warrior culture. Mostly though, he was ignored. And that probably hurt most. He didn't receive any respect. People thought him less than a person. They saw a grown man, 20 years old, with no feather or lirr tail to show for all his years. They saw a man who had accomplished nothing, no scars or rewards of any kind.

Still, his mother hadn't completely abandoned him. When she finally accepted the fact that her son wouldn't be a warrior or a sculptor, she had set out to find her son some skill at which he could be good. And that skill had turned out to be magic. His mother had discreetly been able to acquire the services of a defiler, Xaltotec. Xaltotec served the templars when the king needed some dirty work to be done, and his services didn't come too cheap. But Tetlachim's mother commanded a high price for her statues, and she could afford to pay for her son's lessons.

So Tetlachim was learning magic. Obviously, this wasn't a skill he had that he told anyone about, since mages were despised in the warrior culture of Draji. Only his mother knew about it, and Ayanys. Ah Ayanys. He hadn't known Ayanys for long, but already he had come to look forward to every second they spent together. She was the daughter of a Draji warrior, a beautiful girl. She was also a good warrior, receiving the best training because of her father's employer, Clan Chipalpec, could afford to properly train its guards. Ayanys was like all Draji, black hair, black eyes and copper skin. She had wide full lips, unlike most Draji women, but that seemed to enhance her beauty. She was of medium built, not too tall, but well toned and muscled. Warriors in Draji didn't become great by lazing around all day.

Tetlachim had arrived at the entrance to Two-Moon City, the Golden Moon Gate. It was the only entrance into the inner city. The Golden Moon Gate stood 9 meters in height and was about 3 meter in width. The Gate itself was almost a meter thick. It was made of wood, inlaid with obsidian and decorated with copper. In the afternoon sun, the copper glistened in the light. Slaves were polishing the copper, keeping it a natural color and preventing it from oxidizing and turning green. Once the Gate was closed, the Gate formed a snarling jaguar face, with teeth and eyes of copper. Rumors said that those who touched the jaguar face at night when the doors were closed invoked its guardian and were devoured by the jaguar. Tetlachim had heard the tale of one warrior who had said he wasn't afraid of the gate and went one night to touch it. He was found dead the next morning, his arms ripped off and piled on top of his chest. His decapitated head, with half of its scalp missing, was resting on his crossed arms, the tongue sticking out of the mouth and his face a smiling death grin. Tetlachim had vowed to never touch the Gate when it was closed.

The stone road that led out of Two-Moon City wasn't too occupied. Outside the Gate, a few warriors were gathered in Flower War Field, practicing their combat tactics. Tetlachim hardly glanced their way, knowing they wouldn't acknowledge his presence, and feeling a bit hurt he couldn't join them.

Tetlachim made his way to Xaltotec's study, a small villa on the outskirts of the mud flats where the destruction of a few plants wasn't too noticed. Xaltotec had many slaves who worked his hemp fields, and he always had fresh plants whenever Tetlachim arrived for study.

Tetlachim walked through the merchant district and the artist district. He couldn't see his mother's shop from the main walkway, but that

wasn't his destination. He continued walking, past many Clan compounds, and finally arrived to Xaltotec's house.

The low, flat-roofed pueblo was of medium size, not so big as to attract too much attention. A one-meter high brick fence surrounded the compound. Only one guard was posted at the entrance, and he let Tetlachim enter without any trouble. Tetlachim had been to the compound many times in the last few months, and was easily recognized.

Tetlachim entered the main building and made his way to the back, where Xaltotec's study was located. He ignored the various slaves working in the house. A guard was standing outside Xaltotec's study. When he saw Tetlachim, he held up his hand for him to stop. Tetlachim stopped, and the guard reached up and pulled a small rope. A few seconds later, a small bell rang and the guard said, "You may enter now".

Tetlachim opened the door to Xaltotec's study, and promptly closed it behind him. He was in a small room, the study's entrance, which held various decorative masks and some weapons. The room had a small bench on the left side, and a door in the back. Tetlachim then walked to the second door, the one in the back, and opened it and stepped inside.

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What Your Father Told You

An Air Cleric (maybe a bit too free) to his initiate.

What is the world like?

- Ah the world... What is it like? A good question. To see the world sometimes leads to its understanding. It is good that you ask this question. Feel free to ask more questions if anything is troubling you.

Euh, but what is the world like?

- I have not answered? Hmm... the world is a big desert, with cities placed here and there, and small villages dispersed all around. The sun beats down upon everything, and people struggle to survive. Resources are scarce, water is hard to find. The soil is often devoid of life, for the defilers have leached it all to power their spells.

What kinds of people are there?

- There are two kinds of people, Initiate: slaves and the free. You must have seen slaves! They are others property! How utterly despicable! To think that a person could be called another's property! Beings that are able to think on their own are property! This is what is wrong with this world. Slavery is an aberration. Do you see animals using others to hunt for them? No. We call ourselves better than animals, yet we enslave our own.
- There is also the Free, people who are not owned by anyone. Nobles, merchants, the people of villages are often free. But are they truly free? No. They live at the mercy of the Sorcerer-Kings. They are at the mercy of the templars. But are the templars free? Again, they are pawns of the Sorcerer-Kings. Unless you choose to serve the Air, you are not truly free.
- There are different people: elves, half-elves, dwarves, muls, half-giants, halflings and other races. Elves do know the taste of freedom; they run in the wind for most of the day. Dwarves are too focused, sometimes too stubborn to change; why, why did he not listen? No, I have decided to be a good slave, he said. Good slaves do not run away. You would rather be a slave? Follow me,

I told him. But he would not listen, and now he is dead, worked to death by his "owner"...

Okay, ... but what freedom does Air give us?

- Air is freedom, Initiate. Do you not feel the breeze on your cheek? Look around you as we sit here on this ledge, atop the mountains. Hear the wind flowing through the peaks. Can you feel the power of the Air? Chaos. Freedom. You must value this freedom above all else, and see in the winds of Athas the inspiration to learn and spread this freedom. It is chaotic, it does what it chooses, and going anywhere it wants, free of the restrictions of the other elements. Earth is bound to its location, fire can only spread if it touches something combustible, water can only hold the shape of what holds it, doomed eventually to evaporate. But Air, Initiate, Air is free. It symbolizes freedom. It is the only true element of Athas, unbound, unrestricted by anything. Learn to serve it, to caress it, and it will serve you also. It will teach you freedom, and teach you that by spreading this freedom you are doing it and yourself a great gift.
- The chaos of Air is a blessing. You will be able to peer into the future, get a glimpse of things to come. Use that to your advantage.

What else must I do?

- There are other things you must do. You must try to preserve Athas as it is, as it was and how it should be. Help the servants of other elements, the Earth, Fire and Water. They will provide help for you also. But above all else, value freedom! Teach the people to see that no one should be another's property. Try to free all the slaves you can and unjustly imprisoned people.
- Beware the Sun. It leaves the Air dry and motionless. The servants of the para-elements, those who worship the Silt, Sun and Magma are your enemies. They would turn the world into a desolate waste of one element! An unnatural combination!

Who are the Sorcerer-Kings?

They are the rulers of the cities. They permit slavery! Can you believe this? Minds of such power that cannot see this concept. They are powerful beings. Masters of the Way and magic. Long-lived, they are. They have ruled the cities for millennia. (for pre-

PP campaigns remove the following lines) But some are dead now. Change, Initiate. Change is in the air. Chaos. Tyr has abolished slavery! Go there to see the now free slaves. Talk to them and learn from their plight.

- The Sorcerer-Kings have templars to do their bidding. Templars! Despicable people. They have the power to jail people simply on a whim! Scheming and untrustworthy people. Sometimes, rarely, you will find one who will help you free a slave or two. But they are as rare as the air beast that roams the plains.

What is the Way?

- The Way is the power of those who use their minds. The mindbenders they are. Many people have some small power, but some are able to master and develop their power. They can bond weapons to their flesh, read your mind and some are even able to transport themselves from one place to another! Oh the freedom of that! Go where you want. From one place to another when you want. But sometimes these powerful beings are captured for their power. Free them!

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What Your Father Told You

An Earth Cleric to his initiate.

What is the world like?

- The world is like a dying agafari tree. Once great and tall, now it is gnarled and twisted, roots crying out for water, its branches brittle and hollow. Once, on Athas, there were great forests, mighty rivers, mountains of immense proportions, plains of grass as far as the eye could see. Now, people live mostly in cities, under the rule of Sorcerer-Kings, or they live in small villages. The world is a sun-blasted desert. The soil is barely able to support life, water seeps slowly from cracks in the sun scorched earth. The mountains bleed from Athas' core, their wind-swept peaks are devoid of life. But with careful nurturing, the dying tree can be brought back to life; so it is with Athas.

What people are there?

- There are many different people on Athas. Some have different powers, some can even move through the air, but we are all creatures of the Earth. You have seen many of Athas' inhabitants, being a city-dweller yourself. Humans, of course, are the most abundant. We are the backbone of most cities. But a fair number of Elves also live there. They are duplicitous creatures the elves, but in a strange way, reliable also. If you can make a friend with an elf, he will be a good one. But they like their money; bribery is as normal to them as drinking water is to you. Always be wary when dealing with them. Half-elves, elf-human crossbreeds, also mostly live in the cities. They are usually quick to anger, believing for some reason that the world "owes" them something. They don't often accept help from others.
- Dwarves are sometimes the best friends an Earth cleric can have. They are dependable, proud, and good in a fight. They work hard. They are a serious people, and are also suspicious of strangers. Until you befriend one, never try to act suspiciously in their presence. They are known to act first and question later.
- There are other races. Halflings, often said to be savages, have a strange knowledge of Earth and of Athas' past. Respect that, but be careful. Some really are savages. The mul, dwarven-human

crossbreeds, have the best of both parents. They are mostly bred for fighting in the cities' arenas, but you can sometimes find one in a village. They are strong and intelligent, but sometimes bear the stubbornness of their dwarven heritage. Half-giants are mostly dumb brutes, often serving as guards because of their great strength. Aarakocra are bird-people, living in the mountains. Pterrans are reptiles, beings that revere the whole of Athas. They make wonderful druids, and so are some of the Earth clerics best supporters. You will always find support among the Pterrans. Then there are the thri-kreen, fighting bugs that come from up north.

What do people do?

- There are many things people do. In the cities, you will find many slaves, people who are owned by others and work for them. The merchant houses control the cities' economies, establishing trade routes between cities. Nobles control the farms and land around the cities, where much of our work must be done. Respect them, and keep on their good side. If you can demonstrate to them that we only want to help the land, that we will increase production, they will permit us to do our work.

Our work? What do we do?

- We are clerics, my young apprentice; clerics of Earth. We are here to protect and defend the land. We are here to teach the people how to properly use the soil, so that they don't leave it barren after a few years of use. That is an important part of our training and our Pact. We must also destroy any defilers.
- Worship the Earth, for it gives us life. Look around you. It is everywhere. It is in the clay used for bricks, the soil that makes your food grow, the grass the livestock eats. It is solid, dependable. It creates the obsidian of your blade, grows the agafari wood of your handle. From the Earth comes iron and even steel. All life here depends on us. It depends upon the strength of the land that nurtures it. That is why we must care for it and protect it. We bear the heaviest burden of all clerics, but the others help us.

Pact? What is a Pact?

- The Pact is what we agree to during our initiation. Very soon,

young one, you will also make a Pact with the Lords of Earth during your Initiation. It will require you to do all that I have just stated. But it will also enrich your life. You will gain many wonderful powers during your life, and the ability to cast spells.

Who are defilers?

- Defilers are evil people who leech power from the land and use it to cast their spells. Unlike preservers, they take from the land and give nothing in return. They leave it barren for ages, uncaring of the plight of Athas. They are our worst enemy. Be careful around them, they are powerful. Let others do the fighting for you if you can, so that you may carry on against another, but if you have no choice, be forceful. Do not let him escape to destroy any more land. Hold nothing back against the defiler.

What other clerics are there?

- The other clerics worship other aspects of Athas, Air, Fire and Water. They are your allies. Sometimes they seem odd, but remember you all have a common goal. Their success depends upon our success. Earth grows the fuel for the Fire cleric's fires, it builds the mountains for the Air to scream, it grows the plants that hold the Water.
- There are also people who worship the Sun, Silt, Magma or Rain. They worship the para-elements. Rain clerics are our friends, but the others are evil. The Sun cleric will destroy anything that blocks the sun, and that leaves the soil cracked and scorched, lifeless. The Silt cleric turns the land into useless silt, in which nothing lives or grows. Magma is the bleeding of the Earth.

And the Druids?

- The druids have always been our strongest allies. They restore Athas to its former splendor one piece of land at a time. They once were many, but the Sorcerer-Kings hunted them down many years ago in the Eradication. You will find few druids now, scattered as they are across all Athas, living in isolated parts of the world to hide from the Sorcerer-Kings. But they understand our fight, and are usually willing to help, if it does not jeopardize their land.

Who are the Sorcerer-Kings?

- They're the ones responsible for the way Athas is right now, along with the defilers. They wield tremendous magics, and they are masters of The Way. They rule the cities with an iron fist. Do not cross them, for it usually means death. Use caution when dealing with their agents, the templars. If you do not seem like a threat to their authority, they will leave us alone to do our work, for it often helps the city, and the templar might be rewarded.

The Way? What is the Way?

- You must surely have seen Mindbenders before. People who can do things with their mind that ordinary people can't, like moving things or reading your mind. Their power comes from within, unlike the defilers, so using their power does not harm the land.

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What Your Father Told You

WYFTY - A Draji to his son.

Father, who are we?

- We are the Draji, my son. We are the warriors of the Tablelands, subjects of the God-King, and we live here, in Draj.

Tell me about Draj.

- You have already seen much of the city, young one. We live on a vast mud flat, on the eastern side of the Tablelands. To the east of us is the endless Silt Sea, a large body of dust and death. To the west lies the Tablelands. Our closest neighbor is the decadent city of Raam. Stay clear from there, for they are a people that have descended into chaos. Anarchy and lawlessness are the norm; order is rare in that pestilential hole. Their leader dies and they fall in chaos; our leader dies and still we thrive!
- North of us are the city-states of Kurn and Eldaarich, forgotten cities that we have recently rediscovered. The stories from merchants say they are strange people, these northerners...
- West and south of us are the city-states of Tyr, Nibenay, Gulg, and (ptah!) ... Urik. Beyond them are the Ringing Mountains. And beautiful Draj, my son, you have seen much of it. The Great Pyramid lies in the center, a testament to the greatness of our people and the God-King. We have brought you there many times to witness the sacrifices. You remember the crowds of cheering people? The screams of the dying? The sounds of the drummers? Remember these things my son. They are a part of who we are.
- And you have seen the rest of the city too: the grandiose Arena where many of us hone our warrior skills; the temples of Ral and Guthay, where you will receive some education in warfare; the Golden Moon Gate, the entrance into Two-Moon City; and of course the merchant and artisan districts. The great fields of wheat and corn that we grow provide our city with wealth. We trade these with our starving neighbors. They have neither the

fields nor the will to grow such crops. As you see, Draji is the center of the Tablelands. The mud flat prevents invasion. Upon the vast fertile mud we grow our own food. This location is an example of the wisdom and cunning of Tectuktitlay.

- And the Black Guards are one of our finest achievements. These monoliths of obsidian are proof of Tectuktitlay's power. That he could breathe life into huge statues of lifeless obsidian demonstrates the omnipotence of our late king.

Warriors?

- We are warriors of the God-King, my son. We march in battle to face death and our enemies. Very soon you will learn how to properly behave yourself as a warrior. You will learn how to wield the bow and arrow, so that you may rain death on our enemies from afar. You will learn how to use the spear and javelin, to pierce your enemies' armor. And you will learn how to wield the maquáhuitl, our obsidian-tipped short sword. Do not be deceived by its fragile appearance, my son. The maquáhuitl can cleave a two-foot cactus in two with a single blow, or just as easily cleave a mul in two halves. As a warrior, you will learn about death.

Death? What is there to learn?

- Never fear death my son, for life and death are but two halves of the same reality. We live to serve the God-King. And we die for him when called upon. Death is not to be feared. It is better for you to die in battle, your enemy's sword piercing your entrails, than to rot away with some sickly disease. It is better to die with a spear through your heart than it is to wither away as an ignored, ignoble, toothless old man. So do not fear death, my son. It is all around us. It is everywhere: the beasts of the Tablelands, the dark sun that beats upon our heads and the savageness of the barbarians in the other city-states. Death claims us all. Even mighty Tectuktitlay gave his life to save us. Your own mother died while giving birth to you: a most honorable death. A new life is born and one is taken: a worthy sacrifice from your mother that she should die so you could be born. So when you march in battle, do not be afraid. March forth, your lungs screaming in defiance at the enemies of our God-King, your hands pounding on your shield to strike fear and your sword in your hand. The screams of your fallen foes will ignite your thirst for death. Be

strong and brave. Cowardice is for the weak. And the weak are the bones upon which we climb to greatness.

- Still not convinced my son? I will tell you a story that my grandfather told me when I was young. He once traveled to the city of Tyr, where he met a man and lived with him for a while. Well this man, he was afraid of death. He would always take a maximum of precautions, he ate as best as he could and he took the least amount of risks. He went to the temples regularly and drank all the life-giving potions he could afford. He lived only to go on living.

So what happened to him?

- He died.

That is all?

- What else is there besides death? We all die some time. When your grandfather told me this story, he no longer remembered the name of that man. All he remembered was that he had died. No one remembers that man anymore. So when you march in battle, should you strike even one telling blow, at least you will have accomplished something. It is better to die this way than live old and never be remembered.

What is important in my life?

- What is important? Much is important. The life of a warrior is important. Be bold and strong, my beloved son, for we despise the weak. Do not lie, or steal. You remember the lessons I taught you when you lied to me? The thorns of the Hunting Cactus are sharp. And should you lie to me again I will pierce more than your lower lip. Never stoop so low as to steal from your fellow Draji. Death is better than that. The thief is the worst scum. He is too much of a coward to work for his ceramics, so he steals them. Sell yourself as a slave before you grovel and beg for food. Be ready for battle whenever the God-King demands it. You must be ready to give your life for him whenever he demands, whether it is in combat or in sacrifice to appease the Elementals.

The Elementals?

- Yes, the Elementals. We must give sacrifice to appease the Elementals. They demand appeasement in blood: the blood of people. Usually we sacrifice slaves or prisoners, but sometimes we must sacrifice from our own to appease them. Do not believe that we revolt when one of our own is chosen. I would gladly give my life to the God-King. We worship the God-King, but we also worship the Elementals. The forces of nature are to be respected, as are those who devote their lives to them. The forces of Earth, Air, Fire and Water demand that we pay tribute in blood. You have seen the devastation caused by the Tyr-storms. The day our mighty king died the sky turned blue in respect to his sacrifice. And yet the great calamities that wrecked havoc upon our decadent neighbors did not affect us. We appease the Elementals and they have spared us in return. The rivers of blood that pour down the Great Pyramid keep the storms at bay, my son. Believe in the strength of the God-King.
- The twin moons of Athas are our guardians. Ral and Guthay watch over us when we sleep, assuring our well being. That is why we have two temples devoted to them.

What is the world like?

- The world is a vast desert. Some places support life, but the best of these places is right here in Draji. People assemble in cities, like ours, but they cannot match the order and structure of our society. Cities like Raam and Tyr are descending into chaos and anarchy. In other cities you will find filth and decadence. Beggars will grovel and beg at your feet for a few ceramics or scraps of food. The allies smell of refuse and sweat and excrement. Look upon our city with pride, my son. There is nay a beggar to be seen in the streets, streets that are clean. We all follow the will of the God-King. Our society has even survived the death of Tectuktitlay. And have we descended into anarchy? No. Our society is strong. The will of the warrior permeates everything, ensuring that we are strong.
- You will find vast plains of sand and scrubs outside of the cities. There is some life out there, but it is deadly. Wild beasts roam the Tablelands, and death comes from all sides, whether is the sand cactus that drains your blood from under the ground, or the dune reaper that rips your flesh to shreds, or the sun drake that descends upon your head and swallows you whole.

- You can see vast Sea of Silt to the east. It is an endless expanse of dust and death. Storms of silt and dust form on the sea. Sometimes the storms reach inland and some silt falls on our beautiful city. Old men tell of volcanoes to the east. You have seen the rare ash clouds that fall upon the city, leaving their black marks on our beautiful buildings. Some rumors say that there is a vast land of gold and steel and water far east. These are just that, my son: rumors. Those are tales told by drunken old men who wish to get a bit or two for their story. There are no cities more glorious than our own Draji.

What kinds of people are there?

- There are many different kinds of people, my son. But concern yourself most with those who live in Draji. Humans make up most of the cities. Elves sometimes live in cities, but many of them travel the Tablelands with their tribes raiding and stealing and running all day long. They are duplicitous creatures, those elves. Be wary around those you don't know. They'll steal your hard-earned ceramics. There are crossbreeds, half-elves, muls and half-giants and also dwarves. And you have seen the insectoid thri-kreen. They make fierce warriors. But mostly there are two kinds of people: the Draji and foreigners. We take care of our own, even our slaves, and the foreigners can take care of themselves. Their slaves we do not care for. You might have seen them working in the mud outside of the city: they make bricks and tend the hemp fields. These slaves are foreigners from other cities that we have bought or caught. Slaves from Draji are citizens down on their luck who sell their services. They tend the corn and wheat fields, or guard noble houses, or work as servants for the nobles. In time, they will have purchased their freedom and can re-enter society as citizens.

Nobles? Who else is there?

- Nobles tend the lands on the Draji island. They are responsible for growing corn and wheat for the King, and they also trade their surplus. They live on large clan estates, housing their own slaves and guards. They are mostly great warriors that have distinguished themselves in battle. You have seen them: they wear headdresses made of feathers. More feathers mean they have more distinction.
- The artisans of Draji are among the best in the Tvr region. You

have seen the beautiful statues of warriors that line Serpent's Way. The obelisks on Jaguar's Plaza are also the work of our artisans. But they also weave splendid hemp rugs, or make vases with the mud from the mud flat; not all are sculptors. The artisans wear headdresses decorated with lirr tails. They flash with all sorts of colors in the sun, from blue to red to shades of green. You have seen my headdress: although not overly big, I have still earned the distinction of artisan. My work is sold here in Draji and in far-off places like Nibenay.

- Some of our people are merchants. Although they are not warriors and many bear little resemblance to warriors, they are a necessary part of our society. They are the ones who deal with the foreigners, trading our goods and importing things like iron from Tyr or spices from Gulg, and even slaves from other cities.

What shall I become?

- You have many options here, my son. It depends on where your tonáli will take you. You may choose to become a warrior and serve in the army, or you may choose to become an artisan, like me. There is also the templatate, devoting your life to serving the God-King. You may also choose to serve one of the Elementals, although that will lead you to a life of depravation if you travel among the wastes. If your mind is powerful, and you have the Will, you may even join the ranks of the mind-benders. Although I have no psionic powers and you have not shown yourself to have any, they might appear as you reach manhood. The House of the Mind trains the best psionicists in the Tablelands.

What is there in the templatate?

- The templars are those who serve the God-King. They devote their lives to governing the city. They enforce the laws, they keep the city clean (even though they sometimes aren't clean themselves) and they take care of the sacrifices. You have seen the templars, my son. They dress in blue robes, yet they are usually unclean, do not wash often, and have scars all over their bodies from all the piercing and bloodletting they impose upon themselves. Yet you must show them respect, for they have given their lives to the service of the God-King. You may sometimes find them harsh in their judgments, but remember that the strictness of our laws keeps our society together. In the face of adversity, we have survived the death of our king and the

ascension of a new one, all while maintaining order, unlike our decadent neighbors. Those who do break the law are usually sentenced to death, either by sacrifice or by starvation in the prisoner cages. The prisoner cages are located inside Two-Moon City. There the prisoners are put into cages and left there without food or water until they are either brought to the Great Pyramid for sacrifice or until they die.

Who are our enemies?

- We have many enemies. We live in a savage and brutal world where only the strong survive. And the Draji are strong. We have survived the death of our king, the calamities of the Tablelands have not reached us and we are as strong as ever. Trust your own people and be wary of foreigners. There is one great evil in this world, and that is sorcery. Magic. Wizards suck the life out of plants to power their spells, an aberration of nature. Choosing the path of sorcery will lead you to a death worst than any you can imagine. There are many stories of wizards who die from the inside out because of a lifetime of sucking energy out of plants. After a while their bodies can no longer contain this energy and they are corrupted from the inside out. Be careful you do not choose this path. Although wizards hold promises of quick power, it is power with a price too high to pay.

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What Your Father Told You

A Fire Cleric to his initiate. A mul fire cleric known only as Twinflame to his initiate Kargath.

What is the world like?

- Being an initiate, you have seen some of the world already. It is a barren sand-covered world. Some parts still contain vegetation, stuff that burns, but mostly it's simply mud bricks in the cities. Nothing much interesting there.
- The world didn't use to be like this. Don't believe anything anyone says otherwise. There used to be gigantic forests of trees, huge plains of grass, even a big body of water, although I can't see why that would be important. Seems to me like the only water we need is the one we drink, and that comes from under the ground.

What people are there?

- There are different people in the world. But mostly we don't care. Their flesh burns no matter what. Except for those stupid bugs from up north. The 'kreen, they are called. Their weird sort of skeletons are a bit more resistant to fire, but they can still burn. Hehe...
- I'm a mul, of course. A cross-breed of human and dwarf, and I get the best of both races. Most of the people in cities are humans, although there are some elves, and human-elf cross-breeds, half-elves. Half-giants too. You've probably seen some. They often serve as guards because of their size. There are some other races too: halflings, small people, many are savages who live in the mountains; I've seen once an Aaracokra, bird-people, and I've heard stories of reptiles called Pterrans, though I've never seen one.

Clerics? What are we?

- Depends on whom you ask. Some think us charlatans, but we know better. There are not too many of us, and we all serve different elements. We are here to preserve and rebuild Athas to its former glory, forests and plains, so we may burn them once

again in huge fires!

Elements? What elements are there?

- There are 4 elements, Earth, Air, Water, and of course Fire. I serve Fire, but you know that. You know what power I wield. There are also clerics who serve para-elements. Those you can't trust. They only look after themselves.

Fire. Tell me about fire. Why Fire and not another?

- Be careful what you ask, Initiate. Fire is what we serve. We work with Earth and Air mostly, but sometimes we work with Water and Rain. Remember that Earth gives us plants to burn, and Air feeds the flames of our fires. Water and Rain make our fuel grow, I suppose, although on the plains plants don't need much water to grow. Fire cooks the food you eat, it keeps you warm at night, and it kills. It is unpredictable, chaotic, yet beautiful. That is why we serve it. It is both life and death. Like the sun that burns your skull.
- Fire is the ultimate element. Earth clerics are too stubborn to act sometimes, but they are dependable. Air clerics are too unpredictable, even for us. They sometimes seem lost, and are often lost in daydream claiming to be "divining". Ha! They don't have a clue what's going on. Their heads are too far up in the clouds to understand what is happening down here. And Water clerics? They're just too damn depressing. They complain, and complain; not good travelling companions. Though they do have a very good healing touch. It's nice to know where you can find one, just don't listen to him, he'll drive you mad with all his ramblings.
- I warn you again: keep clear of those who worship para-elements. Don't trust them. Respect the sun cleric, Initiate. They are powerful during the day, but weak at night. Use that to your advantage. Steer clear of the Sea of Silt. Nothing to burn there, anyway.

Who are the Sorcerer-Kings?

- Keep clear of them too. They wield powerful magic, though it doesn't come from the Elements. They are masters of The Way. They are the reason Athas is the way it is. They are immortal

beings, but they are not gods. We serve gods. The Sorcerer-Kings can die. Try to upset their plans, but be wary. Use caution when dealing with them. Best to avoid them at all costs though.

The Way?

- Are you dumb? The Way? Mindbenders? Psionics? You know what that is. Don't ask stupid questions.

Templars, who are they?

- They're the ones who do the SK's dirty work. Claim they are clerics. They are granted spells by their SK. They're obsessed with power. Never trust them. They'll do anything to rise up a rank. They have spells, same as us.

Remember that fire will give you what you need, or help you get it. Try to help those that worship Earth, Air and Water.

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What Your Father Told You

A devoted (!) Sun cleric to his initiate.

What is the world like?

- The world is our playground. It exists for the Sun to shine its beautiful rays upon its surface. The world is a desert, made of mostly sand that absorbs and reflects the Sun's wonderful heat. People live in cities, trying to escape us, but the Sun shines down upon their heads wherever they go. Some people try to live in small villages, but the Sun's glorious rays still find them. There are some mountains up north, places where sun-blocking trees grows. As if they could resist the Sun's fury! The Sun shines all-powerful upon all of Athas!

Was the world always like this?

- Always like this? Of course! Do you think that the Sun ever beat down upon your head with less power than it does now? Blasphemy! I have heard that someone long ago tried to steal the Sun's power. Can you believe this? Steal the Sun's power! Ha! I hope their sun-bleached bones are spinning in their graves! Does the Sun seem somehow diminished? No. Let it be a lesson to you. The Sun gives its power to those who worship it properly, but do not try to steal its power.

What kinds of people are there?

- People? Do not concern yourself with people. The Sun is most important. What does it matter with other people? Elves, Humans, Dwarves, crossbreeds, halflings: they don't matter. The Sun matters! It burns your skin no matter what you are!

Why worship the Sun?

- Why? Are you dumb? Power! Can you not feel the Sun's power on your arms, your face, your chest? Do you not see it when it makes the food grow; when it kills the beast; when it blinds your enemy? The Sun warms the soul. It feeds the mind. It gives you

the power to survive in this beast-infested world. It is life and death.

- Ah but I see, you are not yet strong enough to look at the Sun. That is how powerful it is. In time, when your body is capable of holding this power, you will look at the Sun in all its glory. You will sit and watch as it goes through the sky, bringing its energy to everyone. The Sun is all-powerful!

All powerful? But the night?

- The night? It does not stop the Sun. Look at the moons. They are reflections of the Sun's power! Not even the night can fully stop the Sun's power. If not even the night can stop it, then you know it is all-powerful amongst the elements.

Elements? What other elements are there? Who worships them?

- There are other elements, yes. Pitiful beings of lesser power. Priests of Earth, Air, Fire and Water. They say there is a "balance" to preserve! What utter nonsense! They say we are destroying all. They are jealous. The Sun's embrace does not reach them, so they turn to lesser powerful elements, then cry foul when they are powerless. Some others worship the Silt Sea, or even Magma. Magma. What is there for magma but a few lava pools scattered across the landscape or on top of distant peaks? Fools. And to worship Silt! imbeciles. The Silt Sea does not move. You cannot take it with you. The Sun, on the other hand, follows you wherever you go. It is always there. Even the pitiful Tyr-storms cannot block the Sun's fury for long before the Sun dissipates it to nothing. Everything eventually succumbs to the Sun's rays.

So what must I do?

- Do? Glorify the Sun! You must eliminate anything that would dare to defy its omnipotence. Clear the way for the Sun to shine its radiance upon all of Athas. Things that create shadows block the Sun. Putrid gases filter out the Sun's rays and reduce its strength. Kill them! Kill them all! Let the Sun's fury shine upon this land!

What about the cities? Who rules them?

- The cities are the domain of the Sorcerer-Kings. They rule with an iron fist. They are powerful beings, masters of magic and mind-bending. You must be careful around them. They are not as strong as the Sun, but our mortal flesh is susceptible to their power. It is best to avoid the cities. The buildings hide the Sun. You are best out here, in the plains and peaks, where nothing blocks out the Sun. The Sorcerer-Kings also have lackeys, templars they are called, who can also cast spells.

Mind-bending?

- Yes, those who use their minds. They call it the Way. Bah! Why use one's own power when the Sun is all-powerful?
-

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What Your Father Told You

A Water Cleric to his initiate.

What is the world like?

- The world is a dried-up chunk of sand. The harsh sun beats down mercilessly upon our heads; wild, savage beasts roam the wastes; Sorcerer-Kings watch over the cities as absolute rulers. We hunt or beg for meager food scraps; pay money for our most important resource, water. Water that we only find in the rare oasis in the desert, or else in the city wells.
- Most people live in cities, where they are safe from the savage beasts of the desert. But is it better? No, the templars will take your last coin as a bribe, or throw you into jail or sell you as a slave if you can't pay. Thieves will steal your food, mind-benders will steal your thoughts, all while you try to survive in this miserable existence.

Was the world always like this?

- Who knows? I don't. You'll hear from others that the world has always been like this, that the sun has always burned our heads, that slaves have always toiled in fields of dry, fickle trees. My old mentor told me once that the world, a long time ago, was a big ball of clear water. Oh how wonderful that would be! But I have trouble believing this. I tell it to you as a last favor to the old man. Whether you believe it or not is up to you. I've never seen anything to suggest that. Maybe what the others say is true after all. Maybe this is how it has always been. Maybe nothing can be changed. I don't know... Does it matter?

What people are there?

- You will find many different people in the world. Most live in cities. The humans are the most abundant, making up the majority of the cities. They are found everywhere, as nobles, slaves, freemen, templars, guards, and beggars. Some of them are very bright and interesting individuals, while others are evil and manipulative. Elves, with their slender bodies and pointy ears, are usually found in the marketplace, where they sell their over-

priced goods. Be wary! They'll sell you something and then steal it so they can sell it again! And even if you beware the elves in the market place, some thief will probably steal your purse, leaving you without even a bit to buy water! There are also some elf-human crossbreeds, half-elves, that live in the cities. They have a pitiful existence, rejected as they are by both their human and elven parentage. They lead a lonely existence, relying only on themselves.

- You'll find some dwarves in the cities, but they mostly live in a few small villages in the barren wasteland of the Tyr region. They are short, strong, stubborn creatures. They always seem to have some goal in mind, with whatever they do. You've probably seen half-giants too. Big brutes who'll crush you with their size and strength. They mostly serve as guards in the cities and on some caravans. I've seen a few halflings, small child-like creatures. My old mentor even brought me to the Ringing Mountains once in a small halfling village. But beware! Many of them are savages, and will eat you alive or sacrifice you to some long-lost god.
- There are other creatures too in this bleak world. Creatures that will rip the flesh from your bones and leave them to dry under the merciless sun. Creatures with 6 arms and legs and claws that will leave your mind empty, so you wander aimlessly while your body slowly burns to nothing. Evil beings that will steal your water while you walk in the desert and let you die of thirst. Oh how cruel! To die without that which we value most! Precious water!

How do we protect ourselves from this savage world?

- Serve, as do I, an Elemental. Serve Water. Become its champion, its servant, and it will give you what you need to help you survive in this violent world. For water, even though it is not the most abundant resource on Athas, is the most important. It gives us life!! Look around you, observe. No creature lives without water. No plant grows without its dose of water. That is why you must buy it from the city wells, or why some raiders protect their oases with deadly force. It heals, and cleans.

What do I have to do to serve water?

- There are two basic demands we must satisfy when we serve water. We are here to ease the pain and suffering of Athas'

population. Help those in need. Yes, I know, we help them, only to see them go and repeat their mistakes. They cause pain, are victims, and still nothing changes. But that is the way of this world. It sucks the life from its inhabitants and leaves only fear and suffering. We are the ones who are left to lessen the pain of the world.

- Protect all water that you see. Never waste a drop. It is so precious that we must not waste it at all. Help those in need, but protect your water. Give what you can, but do not waste. Be weary of defilers. Have you ever tasted defiled water? Its stench alone will make you gag. It tastes far worse than a rotting corpse. Stop the defiler from destroying the water.
- You must teach others to preserve water. They often do not listen, it is a long and arduous task to teach them. But if we don't do it, who will? Sometimes I wonder if we even make a difference... Never mind what I said. You must teach others the value of water. If ever you venture outside the cities, you'll find some herders or farmers in this desolate waste. Teach them to how to irrigate! They must know how to conserve water, lest it dries up under the sun's fury!

Why Water and not another?

- Water, as I've told you before is life. Weren't you listening? I guess I can't blame you if you didn't understand, with the sun beating on our heads and the howls of savage creatures in the air. There are other elements, Earth, Air and Fire, but they will not help you as much as Water. What has fire done? It destroys. You will find allies in Earth and Air, and sometimes Fire. They will help, and so you must help them also.

What other clerics are there?

- There are also people who worship the Sun, Silt, Magma and even Rain. They worship the para-elements. The clerics of Sun, Silt and Magma are there only to destroy Water. The sun dries up our lakes and wells; the silt turns the earth and water into useless gray powder. It clogs your mouth and nose, leaving you unable to breathe. The silt destroys the trees and plants that hold water, leaving the water on the bottom, useless. Magma turns our water to steam, which the sun then promptly dries up. It a hard long battle against these three.
- The Rain clerics are our allies, if only because they don't destroy. Worship Rain? Misguided people. If only someone could teach

them that rain is water! But I have tried, once, to make a Rain cleric see his error. He didn't listen to me. Or rather he did listen, just to be polite. But they are like children, I suppose. They haven't been taught the true way. But how can we do this, when we are so few?

Who else will help us?

- The druids help us, if only in a small way. They protect a small piece of land, guarding it like a beggar guards his last bit. You'll often find a small pond or stream on their land. They're usually willing to help. Use your time on their land to rest, to ease the pain of this existence if only for a while.

Who are the Sorcerer-Kings?

- They are the rulers of the cities. They have templars to serve them. Always be careful around templars. Like I said, they take your last bit or throw you in jail for even looking wrong at them. Their King grants them spells, spells that rival our own. The Sorcerer-Kings are masters of the Way and of magic. Powerful beings that you do not want to cross.

Magic?

- Yes, magic. Defilers, like I told you, suck the life from plants and the soil and water to power their spells. They leave nothing but ash and poisoned water. Some wizards, who call themselves "preservers", steal some life from the plants, but at least they don't destroy everything.

The Way?

- The Way is people using their mind powers. People who will suck your mind and devourer it whole and leave you with only a body with nothing inside. People who will steal your thoughts and then betray you to templars or thieves for a few ceramic bits.

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On the Druid & the Spirit of the Land

FOREWORD:

As you know, the druid spends a lot of time wandering the wastes of Athas during his early years. Yet the entity that grants him his spells and powers is the Spirit of the Land. According to *Age of Heroes*, the Spirit of the Land resides in the druid's guarded land. How then does the druid receive his spells?

Many ideas have been put forth from the Dark Sun Mailing List to explain the relationship between Athas, the Spirit of the Land and the druid. This was discussed some while back, and I'll try to summarize what I can remember. If anyone recognizes their idea and wishes for credit, I'll be glad to do so. Send me an [email](#).

Perhaps the best way to explain how a druid gets his spells and powers while wandering is to think of the Spirit of the Land as a "local" manifestation of a planetary Spirit. The Spirit with whom the druid communicates and receives his spells and powers is part of a larger whole, a being or entity tied to the whole ecosystem of the planet. So when the druid is away from his guarded lands he tries to communicate with his "known" Spirit but actually taps into the larger whole, of which he is unaware. Perhaps the best way to illustrate the concept is to think of the *Great Link* in Star Trek: Deep Space Nine. The Changelings there are part of a whole, but retain their individual characteristics. The druid communicates with one of these "individuals".

Why would the druid be unaware of the larger whole? Many explanations can be given:

- The *Greater Spirit* prefers to remain anonymous
- The contact would be too overwhelming for the druid:
 - Too many Spirits of the Land in contact at the same time for the druid
 - The druid is aware of other druids and Spirits of the Lands
 - The druid receives spells of higher levels than he can manage

So we have many reasons why the druid is unaware of the larger whole.

So when the druid chooses a guarded land, if the land has no previous guardian, the druid *awakens* the individual Spirit of that location. As the druid gains in power, a kind of symbiotic relationship develops between the two. The druid depends on the guardian (or Spirit) for spells and powers, while the Spirit needs the druid to care for the guarded land. As the druid reaches the upper limits of his power (level 21+), he is slowly absorbed into the Spirit and becomes a part of it (at level 30).

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A Treatise on the Nature of Psionic Portals

by [Pete Poulos](#)

FOREWORD:

When a doorway closes what happens exactly? Before we can answer what happens when the doorway closes, it is mandatory to understand how it is created. Here are a few ways that the doorway might be created. After discussing how they might be created I will discuss the results of being between the doorway when it closes (in a section below it). At the end of each method of creation will be a suggested list of related closing methods.

1. BLACK HOLE Method:

Consider, if you will, a black hole. Scientists have been pondering over how black holes work for a long time now. Some think it is the universe's way of recycling energy. My point in bringing this up is that many scientists believe that a black hole is a doorway to another part of the same universe that is thousands of miles away, or maybe to alternate dimensions (AKA a wormhole). As you probably all know, black holes are notorious for sucking things into their center, swallowing everything around them (some think this is part of the creation of suns, or the result of a supernova. ((hmm interesting side effect for abusing powers like worm hole eh??)). Perhaps the psionic powers such as worm hole, dimensional doorway or any other portal creating powers use a method similar to a black hole, but due to the smaller size the suction effect of a doorway is hardly noticeable. (some of what I have said about black holes may contain a few /many errors, I don't have time to look into it to write this article so bear with me, as it has been awhile since I have read anything about them).

Suggested Methods Below: A, D, F

2. TWO-DIMENSIONAL PLANE Method

: Perhaps these doorways (dimensional door, worm hole, etc.) are two-dimensional doorways created in a three-dimensional world. Having only height and width, the door ways are able to traverse any distance, because for the doorway distance simply doesn't exist. In reality you would be collapsing your own third dimension as you passed through,

which would allow you to also traverse any distance (through the gateway only, obviously) hence the pain. If you decide to use this method, you might require that the doorways be opened in parallel to each other, maintaining that they both exist on the same two-dimensional plane.

Suggested Methods Below: B, C, F

3. SPACE-FOLDING Method:

Many science fiction novels, movies, and game systems have adopted a principle known as space folding. I personally find the description used in the movie Event Horizon to be very self-explanatory. It is somewhat as follows: What is the shortest distance between two points on a piece of paper? A straight line is the obvious answer, but is incorrect. The shortest distance exists when you fold the paper so that the two points are touching. Space folding is very similar: it bends our three dimensional world as though it existed in 4+ dimensions, hence bringing two points that are separated by any distance into direct contact without altering the rest of the universe, once they are brought together, a hole is punched through them allowing travel between the two points.

Suggested Methods Below: A, D, (C maybe)

4. FASTER THAN LIGHT TRAVEL Method:

Ever seen the movie Stargate? They have a device that creates a doorway between two planets in separate galaxies (talk about A LOT of distance) when stepping through the stargate, the travelers are launched at incredibly high speeds upon a selected pathway through the universe, emerging on the other side of the gateway within seconds. On a side note, scientists are still uncertain what would happen to a physical object traveling at faster than light speeds. When creating a doorway, a danger-free pathway is selected upon which anything that travels through the gateway is accelerated to such high speeds that it travels from point A to point B instantaneously and is then decelerated to normal speeds as it exits.

Suggested Methods Below: A, D

5. MENTAL TRAVEL Method:

This method pertains solely to doorways created with Psionics (though with a little thought, maybe to spells and effects also). This method suggests that all the doorways are created by accessing the space through the Psionist's mind. This could mean two things:

1. Anything that enters the gateway is, in effect, stepping momentarily into the psionics mind from point A and then stepping out at point B using the psionics as a junction point to traverse the distance.<
2. Distance is never really travelled; in reality it all relies on the Psionics's strong Will and master of the Way to BELIEVE or THINK the object to its destination.

Suggested Methods Below: E

Closing results while objects exist on both sides of the doorways.

A. THE SUCK THROUGH Method:

(1, 3, 4) As the doorways close, whatever side is the original opening is considered the suction side and the side that is the planned destination is the deposit side. When the doorway closes, anything still in the doorway is sucked through and deposited on the deposition side. Damage may or may not result from this violent jerking through the portal. (This method is easy and results in quick game flow, also nice if you don't want people killing each other with methods of travel).

B. SEVERING Method:

(2) Being a two-dimensional doorway this object is sharper than any three dimensional object could ever hope to be.; This method has three things to consider:

Q1. What happens when it is opened, created.

Q2. What happens while it is in existence.

Q3. What happens when it shuts.

A1: When a doorway comes into creation, it will slice/cut anything that occupies the same space cleanly in two (open it on a person, he/she might die, on an arm it could be cut off, on the support beam in a large building, the building might collapse).

A2: Walking through a doorway that is opened functions normally, but what happens if you run upon the portals side? Being that it exists in only two dimensions it could either not effect you at all, or cut you in half (ouch); your call.

A3: What if you are in the gateway when it closes? Tough luck buddy, what ever was in the gateway is cut neatly in twain, if you're lucky it could have a heat effect also searing any wounds shut so you don't bleed to death. (By far and large this method is the most cruel and destructive

method giving these powers great offensive capability, be warned)
 (****When using this method, I would do dice in damage or a saving throw, instant deaths can be a bit cruel and harsh and detract from the sheer fun of the game IMO****)

C. A SEMI-PERMANENT DOORWAY KEEPS THE TWO CONNECTED Method:

(2 and possibly 3) With this method anything partly through the doorway when it shuts acts as a brace keeping the portal open. This could have many different effects.

A: The doorway continues to exist as a form fitting doorway around whatever is keeping it open and exists in relation to the barring object moving with it.

B: Same as A but the doorway doesn't move with the barring object, instead it holds it tight, rendering the object immovable until it is somehow removed.

C: Using method B, a successful strength check allows whatever was in it to pull or push his way through to one side, at which point the gateway fully closes.

D: The doorway, though barred, slowly crushes the object barring it shut over a period of time, you'd better get it out of the doorway or it will eventually become severed (unless it is nigh-indestructible, such as an artifact). (this method may bring a few ideas of your own to mind, just go with them if you like em) (in regards to the rope question, this method has many different ways of approaching it)

D. EJECTION Method:

(1,3,4) Similar to the effects of a Meld into Stone spell when it expires, this method would launch anything still in the doorway to one side or the other, causing intense pain and damage (Perhaps being stretched as was suggested by jjp@xs4all.nl (Nevermelt)). This method could have drastic effects when using the Faster Than Light method, without the second doorway to slow you down, you collide with anything in the way at Faster Than Light speeds, since such travel has been suggested to have odd effects on physics the object may be unharmed as it collides to a dead stop with whatever it hits, or to the other extreme instantly destroyed, becoming splattered upon whatever it hits, the radius of such a splatter would atomize the unlucky object. Maybe it would instead bounce off the surface of any tangible objects reflecting indefinitely (until it finally stops, probably destroyed) just as light does (of course light is also absorbed by plants and other objects too. Perhaps a giant

plant absorbs the traveler and in reversion spits him out, I mean plants eat light and a human light source probably tastes horrible <ROFL>) (this too is a pretty basic and easy to incorporate method with no extreme power abuses)

E.FADING Method:

(5) As the Psionicist disbelieves the doorway, it slowly fades from reality and anything caught in-between the doorway would do the opposite, fade INTO reality. Whatever side has the greatest MASS would be the side that it fades into reality in. ((an interesting adventure could develop when equal mass is on both sides and a clone/twin of the other character is created, do they hunt each other down so that they can remerge together? Are they both semi-intangible? Are they normal and totally unaware of the other self? Are they still mentally connected, one sentience able to see/hear/taste/feel/smell and control both bodies at the same time? Many possibilities could exist... have fun with this method <g>))

F. SEVERED WORM Method:

(1, 2) I assume you all know that if you cut a worm in into many pieces, some of the pieces (usually the largest) survives and grows back the old part. Anything caught in a doorway when it is closing will be severed where the door closes, but instead of killing or destroying these objects when they are cut apart, they survive as two separate objects; the largest will slowly regrow (even if it shouldn't be possible) the lost part and the smaller piece dies. Or maybe they both survive, but the smallest piece is slowly dematerializing and then re-materializing back with the larger piece. With some deeper thought this method could entail a few interesting results

Thank you for your time,

[DS Dragon@aol.com](mailto:DS_Dragon@aol.com)

If you liked this article, please drop me a private line, I could use the congrats, or if you hated, tell me why so I can write to appeal to all audiences (Future games system developer and current DM needs constructive criticism thanks :)

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Druid kit - Hunter

Hunter

The hunter is a druid who hunts down mages while not tending to his guarded land. He believes that magic is the reason for Athas' current condition, and believes that killing defilers will restore the balance of Nature.

Races: Half-elf, halfling, human, Mul, Thri-kreen. Aarakocra and Pterrans find the idea of hunting down mages repugnant, even if defiling destroys the land, and so are unsuitable for this kit.

Requirements: Con 13

Role: The hunter is a druid who hates defilers. He is a loner, spending his wandering time doing one thing: hunting defilers. The hunter is relentless in his pursuit of defilers, never stopping for long at one place if a defiler is to be found elsewhere. The hunter will never accept payment for killing a defiler or do so at the request of others: restoring the balance of nature is the only reason and only reward the hunter wants or needs.

Weapon proficiencies: All

Non-weapon Proficiencies: *Bonus:* tracking *Recommended:* information gathering, spellcraft.

Special Benefits: Hunting down mages is a very respected profession by the general population, thus the hunter receives a -3 reaction penalty when encountering people who know his profession. This may also entitle him to a free lunch (or night's rest) sometimes, although the hunter will never abuse of this, because he will rarely stop long to rest; hunting mages is his only thought.

Special Hindrances: The hunter must take care to watch his alignment. The act of killing defilers is within the druid's calling, but the hunter must beware that the reason for doing so is the preservation of the balance of nature, and not the (personal) hate of mages, a very fine line to walk.

The hunter must also make a save vs. spells when seeing a defiler cast a spell. Seeing the destruction of plant life enrages the hunter, and it is

hard for him to stop himself from attacking the defiler without regards for his personal safety. A failed check means the druid cannot stop himself and will attack immediately, without planning or any sort of strategy.

Wealth Options: The hunter starts with 3d6x30 cp.

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Druid kit - Restorer

Restorer

The restorer is a druid who spends his wandering time nurturing any parcel of land he comes across, teaching the people of Athas to care for the land they cultivate.

Races: All druid

Requirements: Con 13; this kit is more suitable for druids that have Earth as either a major or minor element.

Role: The restorer believes that every parcel of land is important, and that all must participate in the restoration of Athas, not only the druids, but all the population. He teaches the people of Athas not to waste any resource, to use only that which can be replaced. He believes in the balance of nature, in the natural cycle of life & death. While his guarded land is more important to him, he recognizes the need to teach others about the preservation of Athas, in the hope that they too might chose a piece of Athas to claim as their own.

Weapon proficiencies: All, but the druid shall only use wood or bone weapons, never metal weapons.

Non-weapon Proficiencies: *Recommended:* agriculture, direction sense, engineering, gardening, herbalism, water find.

Special Benefits: The Restorer is at home in all Athasian wilderness. He can correctly identify plants from regions other than his own, and is well versed in the different types of herbs, gaining a +2 ability check when employing this ability. Just like all druids, the Restorer is well known by the people and well respected, and receives a -2 reaction bonus when encountering a commoner living outside a city. Also, due to his close knowledge of the earth, all Earth sphere spells are cast as if the caster were one level higher.

Special Hindrances: The druid abhors the city and will be very uncomfortable and depressed should he enter one. All saving throws receive a -1 penalty. Because he looks so uncomfortable, others believe the druid has something to hide, so the druid receives a +1 reaction penalty inside cities. The druid will always try to get outside the city at

every opportunity, and templars often take notice of someone so eager to leave their city.

The druid might also be captured by templars to work in the Sorcerer-King's garden, so the druid must be careful not to show his abilities too much inside a city.

Wealth Options: The restorer starts with 3d6x20 cp.

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Grove Powers

Minor Grove Powers

Awakened Plants

The grove's magic has awakened 1d3 10-foot-square patches of weeds, creepers, or bushes with semi-intelligence, 4 Hit Dice, AC 10 and the ability to attack as per the *entangle* spell. They will protect the grove.

Bountiful

If the grove contains plants that produce fruits, 3d6+20 of these will be enchanted, as per the *goodberry* spell. Once picked, no more will grow until the following year.

Control Temperature

Any druid inside the grove can vary the temperature by as much as 30 degrees, once per day.

Faerie fire

A druid or Ranger can produce faerie fire, as the spell, on any plant or rock inside the grove. The fire lasts for 1 turn per level of the caster, but for a druid the fire lasts for 2 turns per level, and can flicker about the grove at will.

Healing

Allies of the druid heal at twice their normal rate inside the grove, and any healing spells produce maximum effect; for example, a cure light wounds restores 8 points of damage.

Prophecy

A druid who spends the night in the grove may receive a special knowledge of the past or future. It usually concerns the grove's wellbeing.

Protective aura

Any creature other than a druid must make a save vs spells. Those who fail the save and see the grove believe it to be no more different than the rest of the guarded land. The grove also generates a permanent *protection from evil and good* that acts the same as a *protection from evil*, 10' radius spell.

Still winds

A druid or Ranger can cause winds to calm for up to 1 turn per level, as long as they concentrate on the power. This power is usable once per day.

Sweet water

Water from the grove has the powers of *sweet water*, but the water must remain on the grove for the power to work.

Warning plants

The plants warn the grove's master when someone is coming. It could be a faint rustling of the leaves, a small tremor, but the grove's master will recognize the signal.

Greater Grove Powers

Awakened Tree

A large ancient living tree in the grove gains Intelligence and Wisdom (2d6+8), the spellcasting abilities of a 3rd level druid, and the power of speech. It can use its branches as hands, and fights like an animated treant in combat. It is incapable of moving because of its roots.

Beast Speech

Any normal or giant animal with an Intelligence between animal and low can speak and understand the language of druids while it remains on the grove. Also, the casting of *animal summoning* summons 50% more animals (or Hit Die) than normal.

Concealment

All animals and humanoids within the grove when this power is used become invisible for 3 turns per level of the druid invoking this power or until they leave the grove. This power, usable once per day, ceases to conceal anyone who attacks.

Elemental power

When a druid casts a spell of the grove's major element while in the grove, all effects are doubled (range, damage, area of effect...).

Know Alignment

A druid will know the alignment of those within the grove by concentrating for one round. This power can be used any number of times.

Peaceful

Those who attack anyone within this grove find the damage inflicted upon themselves.

Reincarnation

If a druid's ashes are buried in the grove, the character becomes reincarnated (as the priest spell). The new incarnation appears in 1d6 days.

Waters of Life

All sources of water in the grove have unusual healing powers. Anyone drinking the water gains the effect of *neutralize poison*, *cure disease*, and *cure serious wounds* spells. A person may only benefit from this power once per day, and any water taken outside the boundaries of the grove loses its special powers.

Scrying Pool

Any source of still water can be used for divination. Once per day the druid may command the pool to act as a *reflecting pool* cast at the druid's level.

Magic Fruit

The grove has a tree that produces magic fruits. Examples include *Potion of animal control*, *potion of longevity*, etc...

Forbiddance

A druid can invoke the *forbiddance* power as the spell to cover the boundaries of the grove. This power can be used once per day and last for 1 hour per level of the druid.

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Disciples of Xerma

History

The Disciples of Xerma were created by a human woman named Tardana, a psionist who lived a thousand years ago. Where she got the name Xerma is unknown, although most Disciples believe Tardana took the name to protect herself from some now unknown (and deceased) enemy. Tardana was an idealist, one of the few of Athas. Raised to hate mages (her parents were killed by a defiler), Tardana scorned the teachings of the clerics who were trying to raise her. She embarked on a journey to find a master capable of teaching her how to master her growing psionic powers. After many years of searching, she finally found the house of an old hermit, who appeared young despite his advanced age. Begging him to teach his secrets, the old man finally agreed, telling her he was the last of the martial experts, who had lived for a long time in hiding, waiting only for death. He knew nothing of psionics, but taught her the basis of self-discipline, the need to master one's emotions, feelings, and this helped her develop her mind powers. When the old mentor finally passed away, Tardana vowed to continue his teachings and to develop the powers she had. She traveled the Tyr region, searching for those with the abilities to master both the mind and the body. She brought them to her secret hideout, and taught them all she had learned from the old man. And after a few years the Disciples of Xerma were born.

Current Situation

Even though Tardana teachings and objectives were noble, a thousand years have passed since the original teachings of Xerma, and so the Disciples are not quite what they used to be. Of course, they always despise mages and clerics, but they have come to respect the Necromancers. Why? Well.....

The first Disciples followed Xerma's teachings to the letter. After many years though, some began to search more and more into the body they inhabited, looking for secrets that were unknown. And so the Disciples were split in two branches, one looking to further the powers of the mind and one looking to further the powers of the body. These two branches never conflicted. Conflict within is against the teachings of

Xerma. The body-searchers began to understand the workings of the body, but their respect for it prevented them from experimenting too much. Then one day a young Necromancer, an anatomist, found his way to the Disciples' hideout. He stayed there and taught the Disciples some of the limited knowledge he had acquired in his young life, while learning from them. And so the Disciples came to respect the Necromancers, not too much, but enough to stop from killing them on site for casting a spell. This body-searching has gone since then, and the Disciples have acquired a fairly large amount of knowledge of the workings of the body. And so all Disciples possess the Healing proficiency, gaining a +2 saving throw bonus to their check.

The Disciples jealously guard their secrets, and so the initiates must pass a grueling test before being accepted into the ranks of the Disciples. Failure to pass this test results in death. Once accepted in the ranks, the initiates begin their training immediately. Training is a mix of psionics & martial arts, as well as the required training about the body's inner secrets. The temple of the Disciples is a form of academy (which has of course **very** strict entrance requirements). Initiates are taught how to battle mentally, how to achieve the inner balance needed to properly utilize their psionic powers and how to mold one's body into a formidable fighting machine.

Being chosen to be a Disciple is not easy. The initiate must be chosen (sponsored) by a Disciple. When the Disciples roam the land, they observe very carefully those who seem to possess psionic powers as well as good self-discipline. This observation may last for months, maybe even a few years, as no Disciple wishes to bring to the hideout any unworthy individual. Of course, the Disciples have no problem with killing those who fail their tests: the weak are not allowed into the ranks of the Disciples, and their secrets must be preserved. Quite naturally, a few of the Disciple are very xenophobic.

Becoming a Disciple is a one-shot deal. There is no second chance, no pardon should one break the Disciples' strict rules of conduct. Once someone is accepted as a Disciple, the only way out is death. Dedication to the Disciples' cause and objectives is total and absolute. There is no turning back.

More later.....

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Disciples of Xerma

Structure of the Disciples and Important NPCs

The Disciples are divided into 2 branches, each responsible for one aspect of their training. The Path of Heart, or "Force of Body", is responsible for the physical training of the Disciples. The Path of the Mind, or "Blade of Thought", is responsible for the psionics training of the Disciples. A "Kat-Majr", or leader, rules over each branch and reports directly to the "Inaxi-Mag", the supreme leader. The Inaxi-Mag adds the suffix of 'Dana' to his name, to remember the founder of the Disciples, Tardana. Each Kat-Majr adds the suffix of 'Tar' to his name. The rest of the Disciples are loosely ranked according to their current training expertise (in game terms, level), and must obey any command set upon them by the Kat-Majr or the Inaxi-Mag.

Important NPCs

- [Arilith'Dana](#) - Inaxi-Mag
 - [Gorn'Tar "BoneCrusher"](#) - Kat-Majr, Path of the Heart
 - [Kaelin'Tar](#) - Kat-Majr, Path of the Mind
 - [Fiberin](#) - Guardian, Temple of the Disciples
 - [Vertus](#) - Necromancer
-

Arilith'Dana

Female Human Psionist, Lawful Neutral

Armor Class 7	Str 17
Movement 12	Dex 16
Level 21	Con 18
Hit Points 73	Wis 16
THAC0 7	Int 17
No. Attacks 1	Cha 10

Damage/Attack: by attack technique

Psionics Summary

MAC: 5 (Wis+Int, Mental Armor x1)

MTHAC0: -1

PSPs: 127

Psionic powers:

Defense Modes: All	Attack Modes: All
Clairsentience	Sciences: Detection Devotions: Danger Sense, Know location
Psychometabolism	Sciences: Energy containment, Metamorphosis, Poison simulation, Regenerate, Animal affinity, Life Draining Devotions: Ectoplasmic form, Adrenalin control, Flesh armor, Cell adjustment, Spider touch, Reduction, Photosynthesis, Mind over body, Gird, Prolong, Accelerate, Body equilibrium, Chameleon power, Cannibalize
Psychokinesis	Sciences: Telekinesis Devotions: Control sound, Kinetic Control, Inertial Barrier
Psychoportation	Sciences: Teleport Devotions: Dimensional door, Pocket dimension
Telepathy	Sciences: Mindlink, Domination, Empower Devotions: ESP, Invisibility, Post-hypnotic suggestion, Mind Bar, Convergence

Arilith was born in a small village on the Estuary of the Forked tongue, the daughter of escaped slaves. Her psionic powers became apparent at a young age, and caused her parents much distress, because Arilith wasn't able to control her growing powers. She began to terrorize the small village, using her formidable psychometabolist powers to bully everyone and basically get what she wanted. Her parents couldn't afford to send her to a school, and couldn't bring themselves to kill her. One day, a stranger arrived who told Arilith's parents that he had heard of her powers and wanted to see for himself, claiming to have a "passive interest" in such psionic powers. When Arilith confronted him, at the tender age of 14, she wanted to show this stranger that she was in control of the small village.

A brief contest followed, and the stranger had no problem controlling the young girl. When he asked her parents if he could bring the girl with him so he could help her develop her powers, her parents readily agreed.

He gave them a small sum of money, to help compensate for the loss of one worker, and then walked off into the desert, a young and happy Arilith in tow. They were never heard from again.

Arilith is a very accomplished psychometabolist, having trained long and hard to hone her body's natural talents for this discipline. She is middle-aged, and has occupied the title of Inaxi-Mag for 7 years, ever since the death of the former leader. She has numerous scars, including one on her left eyebrow which descends to her nose, where a close encounter with a dune reaper took off a small chunk of her nose and nearly her eye. She is a serious but pleasant woman, who gets along very well with the rest of the Disciples, but is a strong leader and in times of crisis has no problem making decisions to protect the well-being and secrets of the Disciples. Since she took over the title of Inaxi-Mag, the Disciples have flourished under guidance.
more later...

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Comprehensive Athasian Monster Directory Pt.2

By Eric Anondson...

Part 2 of the Comprehensive Athasian Monster Directory(I to S). This list was compiled by [Eric Anondson](#). Many hours of work from Eric are involved here, so take a look and enjoy!.

Click here for a [list of the abbreviations used](#).

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SOURCEBOOK	CREATURE	TERRAIN ENCOUNTERED
DSMC1	Id Fiend	Any
	INSECT SWARM, ATHASIAN	
DSMC1	Locusts	Any plains
DSMC1	Mini-kanks	Any plains
	INTELLECT DEVOURER	
MM, PHBR5	Adult	Any subterranean or dark areas
MM, PHBR5	Larva	Any subterranean or dark areas

#185, TKoA	JalathŌgak	Scrub plains, sandy wastes
DSMC2, VoDaF	Jhakar	Any (Tablelands)
WJ	Jozhal	Tablelands, Hinterlands

DSMC2, VoDaF	Kaisharga	Any
CbtSS,DSMC2, MCAvII	Kalin	Subterranean
DSMC1	Kank, Wild	Tablelands stony barrens

MM	Kenku	Mountains
DSMC2	Kestrel	Any (especially higher regions)
DSMC1, MM	Kirre	Forest Ridge, Ur Draxa
DSMC2	Klar	Mekillot Mountains
aLK	Kluzd	Mud flats
CbtSS, DSMC2	Krag	Special
CbtSS, DSMC2	Kragling	Special
<hr/>		
LIFE-SHAPED CREATIONS: GUARDIANS		
MCAvIII, WotJC	Climbdog	Jagged Cliffs
MCAvIII, WotJC	Darkstrike	Jagged Cliffs
MCAvIII, WotJC	Protector	Jagged Cliffs
MCAvIII, WotJC	Shieldbug	Jagged Cliffs
MCAvIII, WotJC	Watcher	Jagged Cliffs
LIFE-SHAPED CREATIONS: TRANSPORT		
MCAvIII, WotJC	Ber-ethern	Jagged Cliffs
MCAvIII, WotJC	Yihn-eflan	Jagged Cliffs
MCAvIII, WotJC	Gon-evauth	Jagged Cliffs
MCAvIII, WotJC	Dhev-sahr	Jagged Cliffs
DSMC2	Lirr	Any (Tablelands)
LIZARD		
MM	Fire	Mountains
MM	Giant	Mountains, rocky badlands, salt flats
MM	Minotaur	Sandy wastes
LIZARD MAN, ATHASIAN		
MLotLS	Lizard Man	Last Sea
MLotLS	Lizard King	Last Sea

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	MASTYRIAL	
DSMC2	Desert	Desert
DSMC2	Black	Mountain
DSMC1	Megapede	Sandy wastes, salt flats
DSMC2	Meorty	Any
#173, DSMC2	Mul	Any land (Mainly urban)
DSMC1	Mul, Wild	Tablelands
<hr/>		
DSMC1	Nightmare Beast	Any
DSMC2	Nikaal	Any land
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FRMC2	Orpsu	Verdant belts (noble estates)
<hr/>		
DSMC2	Pakubrazi	Urban and inhabited areas
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	PARAELEMENTAL BEAST	
DSMC2	Magma	Anywhere there is lava
DSMC2	Rain	Anywhere is has recently rained
DSMC2	Silt	Large areas of silt
DSMC2	Sun	Any surface area
FF, MM	Pernicon	Verdant belts (farmland)
CbtSS	Pit Snatchers	Tar Pits
<hr/>		
	PLANT, CARNIVOROUS	
DSMC2	Bloodgrass	Verdant belt, forest
tIT	Bloodvine	Crescent Forest
DSMC1	Blossomkiller	Forest/Jungles
DSMC2	Cactus, Hunting	Any
DSMC2	Cactus, Rock	Any except forest

DSMC1	Dew Frond	Jungles
MM	Mantrap	Scrub plains
DSMC1	Poisonweed	Forests
DSMC2	Seed, Brain	Forest Ridge and mudflats
MM	Snapper-Saw	Scrub plains, forest
DSMC1	Strangling Vines	Jungles
MM	Thornslinger	Forest Ridge, mudflats
DSMC2	Psionocus	Any
	PSURLON	
DSMC2	Psurlon	Astral Plane
DSMC2	Psurlon Adept	Astral Plane
DSMC2	Psurlon, Giant	Astral Plane
DSMC1	Pterrann	Hinterlands, Valley of Dust and Fire (mountains and rocky badlands)
DSMC1	Pterrax	Rocky badlands
DSMC1	Pulp Bee	Scrub plains
DSMC1	Pyreen	Any
<hr/>		
DSMC2	Raaig	Any
DSMC2	Racked Spirit	
DSMC1	Banshee, Dwarf	Any
DSMC1	Dune Runner	Any
DSMC1	Rasclinn	Rocky badlands
DSMC1	Razorwing	Sea of Silt, Inland silt basins
MCAvIII, WotJC	Reggelid	Lower Jagged Cliffs, Swamp
MM	Remorhaz	Salt flats, scrub plains, Jagged Cliffs

DSMC2	Retriever, Obsidian	Any
FRMC1	Rhaumbusun	Rocky badlands
DSMC1	Roc, Athasian	Mountains
#185, DSMC2	Ruktoi	Sea of Silt, silt basins
	RUVOKA	
DSMC2	Brajeti	Sands
DSMC2	Ethilum	Winds
DSMC2	Kaltori	Volcanos
DSMC2	Zathosi	Mountains
	SAND BRIDE	
DSMC1	Bride	Sandy wastes
DSMC1	Mother	Sandy wastes
DSMC1	Sand Cactus	Sandy wastes
DSMC2	Sand Howler	Sandy wastes, Tablelands
DSMC1	Sand Vortex	Sea of Silt
DSMC1	Scrab	Sandy wastes, stony barrens
	SCORPION	
DSMC2	Barbed	Any
MM	Giant	Valley of Dust and Fire
DSMC2	Gold	Any
MM	Huge	Sandy wastes, salt flats
MM	Large	Scrub plains
WJ	Silk Wym	Badlands
	SILT HORROR	
DSMC2, VoDaF	Black	Any silt
DSMC1	Brown	Any silt
DSMC1	Gray	Any silt

DSMC2	Magma	Any volcanic
DSMC2	Red	Any silt, mudflats, sand
DSMC1	White	Any silt
DSMC1	Silt Runner	Sea of Silt Islands, Tablelands
CbtSS	Silt Serpent	Silt shallows
CbtSS, DSMC2	Silt Spawn	Sea of Silt
DSMC1	Sink Worm	Sea of Silt, sandy wastes
AG	Sitak	Athasian Forest
	SKELETON	
MM	Common	Any
#234, MCAvIV	Obsidian	Any
DLMC, DL:TotD	Skrit	Sandy wastes, salt flats
DLMC, DSMC2	Slig	Any land
DSMC1	Sloth, Athasian	Forest Ridge, Ur Draxa
DSMC1	So-ut (Rampager)	Tablelands, Valley of Dust and Fire
DSMC1	Spider Cactus	Tablelands
	SPIDER	
MM, MCvI	Brain	Forest
DSMC1	Crystal	Any
DSMC2	Dark	Subterranean
MM	Giant	Mountains, Jagged Cliffs, scrub plains
MM	Huge	Stony barrens
MM	Large	Rocky badlands
DSMC2	Mountain	Any
MM	Phase	Sandy wastes, salt flats
DSMC2	Silt	Silt
DSMC2	Spinewyrm	Tablelands
DSMC1	Spirit of the Land	Any

MCAvIV, MLoLS	Squark	Last Sea
DSMC2	Ssurran	Any
DSMC2	Stalking Horror	Any

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Comprehensive Athasian Monster Directory Pt.3

By Eric Anondson...

Part 3 of the Comprehensive Athasian Monster Directory (T to Z). This list was compiled by [Eric Anondson](#). Many hours of work from Eric are involved here, so take a look and enjoy!.

Click here for a [list of the abbreviations used](#).

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SOURCEBOOK	CREATURE	TERRAIN ENCOUNTERED
DSMC1	T'Chowb	Any
DSMC2	T'liz	Any
DSMC2	Tarek	Any plains
	TARI	
DSMC2	Tari	Any
DSMC2	Warrior	Any
DSMC2	Chieftain	Any
MCAvIII, WJ	Tembo	Tablelands and mountains
DSMC1	Thrax	Sea of Silt, Tablelands
#173, DSMC2	Thri-kreen	Any land
	TOHR-KREEN	
DSMC2	J'ez	Any land
DSMC2	J'hol	Any land
DSMC2	Mantis Noble	Any but Forest Ridge
DSMC2	T'keech	Any land
DSMC2	Tondi	Any fertile land
tIT	Treant, Athasian	Forest

DSMC2	Trin	Any land
DSMC2	Tul'k	Mountains
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CbtSS	Venger	Any
DSMC1	Vilichi	Any
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CbtSS, MCAvII	Wall-Walker	Subterranean
MM	Wasp, Giant	Any
#185	Watroach (War Beetle)	Sandy wastes, salt flats
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WEZER		
aLK	Water Fetcher	Tablelands
aLK	Soldier	Tablelands
aLK	Brood Queen	Tablelands
DSMC2	Wraith, Athasian	Any
MM	Wyvern	Sea of Silt, Jagged Cliffs, salt flats, stony barrens, Valley of Dust and Fire
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DSMC2	Xerichon	Any dry land
<hr/>		
MM	Yuan-ti	Sandy wastes, Sea of Silt, UnderTyr
<hr/>		
DSMC1	Zhackal	Tablelands, forest, mountains
TKoA	Zik-trin'ak	Any land except Forest Ridge
<hr/>		
ZOMBIE		
MM	Common	Any
MM	Juju	Any
MM	Monster	Any

tIT	Salt	Great Ivory Plain
DSMC2	Thinking	Any
DSMC1	Zombie Plant	Scrub plains, forest

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The Shadows Thicken... pt 2.

You're late! Do you think I have the time to lounge around like you? Get here on time! Just be glad your mother pays me well, or else I'll drop these lessons and turn you into a plant!"

Tetlachim winced at Xaltotec's barrage of insults. "I'm sorry", Tetlachim replied, "I was at the sacrifice, and the crowd was big". Tetlachim let his eye gaze over his mentor. Xaltotec was heavily built, a big man, descendant from a long family of warriors. His skin, the same coppery tone as everyone else, had a very faint trace of green when Xaltotec turned slightly in the light, as if the skin was rotting somehow. He had an average face, black eyes, black hair and no facial hair. He was dressed in a loose-fitting brown shirt, and wore a hemp skirt. He had a belt around his waist, holding many pouches. A skullcap was on his head, as black as his hair but decorated with a few jewels. All around him there was a smell of sulfur, of ozone, that seemed to follow him around.

"Did you bring your roll?" Xaltotec demanded, looking at Tetlachim with a stern gaze.

"Yes, I brought my roll." Tetlachim answered. He took off his shirt, showing his copper skin and multiple tattoos to his teacher. Wrapped around his waist was a roll of red cloth. Tetlachim removed the cloth from his waist and unrolled it. The cloth was well made, and written on it were various strange symbols.

Tetlachim looked around in the study. The study was filled with plants, mostly hemp since it grew so fast; plants that were hanged on the ceiling, hanged on the walls, potted on the floor, etc. There were also a few other things, like strange masks on the wall, containers filled with various substances, urns and jars on the floor, and a table near the back of the room. The table was made of gray marble, with support beams of agafari from far-off Nibenay. Small statues were hanging from the table at various places. Most of the statues were made of bone, carved to resemble jaguars heads and the twin moons. A few skulls were also hanging from the table, small skulls that might have been children or halfling skulls. Small windows around the top of the room let the light in, but still the room was dimly lit.

"Alright, there's no time to waste. Let's start with an easy one. Create light, since that's the one you seem to be able to do the easiest", Xaltotec said. He then stood back, crossed his arms and watched Tetlachim.

Tetlachim looked at his roll, his spellbook, and found the appropriate symbols. He stared intently at them, memorizing their patterns. After a few minutes, he extended his right arm towards the floor, palm facing down, and called upon the energy of the plants. He imagined the light creating itself, casting shadows all around the room. He imagined the light getting brighter, the shadows getting darker. He felt the energy gathering up to his palm. Tetlachim looked carefully; he could see small green tendrils of energy rising up to his palm. As always, he felt the rush of power when the gathered energy entered his body. He could feel it going up his arm, could feel the warmth as it spread throughout his whole body. But, as always, when he cast the Light spell, he felt a small numbness on his hand, as if his hand were getting cold. He dismissed the cold, and looking up, cast his spell at the top of a staff, directing the energy with words and gestures. The staff was in the center of the room.

A ball of light, very bright, illuminated the room. The light was so bright Tetlachim had to squint to see; he saw that Xaltotec was doing the same.

"What in Ral's fury did you do there? You've never cast a light spell so bright!", Xaltotec remarked. "Put that damn staff head in the ground before you go blind!"

Tetlachim, squinting in the bright light, reached out and grabbed the staff. He then turned it around and plunged the staff head into an urn filled with sand. The light promptly disappeared, covered by sand.

Tetlachim sighed in relief, but he was also puzzled. He had wanted to cast the light very bright, but he had never before been able to do it so well. That's when Tetlachim felt his hand prickling. He looked at it, and noticed it was slightly discolored. He touched his right hand with his left, and felt it was cold.

He looked around, wondering what had been responsible for the cold. He saw that a few plants had crumbled to ash, but there seemed to be less damage than usual. Another mystery. What had happened?

Apparently Xaltotec had noticed that fewer plants had been destroyed this time. He was staring at Tetlachim, and also staring at Tetlachim's hand.

"What did you do? What's wrong with your hand?"

"I don't know. It feels slightly cold." Tetlachim answered.

Xaltotec walked up to Tetlachim and grabbed his hand. His face twisted in puzzlement. He could feel the cold, although Tetlachim's hand was starting to warm up.

"Did you do anything different? Anything?" Xaltotec demanded. His grasp on Tetlachim's hand increased, and he stared hard at him.

"No! I just imagined the light creating in the room, gathering the energy, and felt a small numbness in my hand. That's all." Tetlachim answered.

"Well, whatever it is, it might not be too important. At least you didn't bring the roof down on our heads." Xaltotec released Tetlachim's hand. He turned around and walked to his table. He reached out and grabbed one of the bone carvings. He removed it from the table, and walked back to Tetlachim.

"Today we'll try something different. Memorize this pattern, and then try to cast the spell. You should be able to decipher what it does, if you've learned anything from me." Xaltotec turned the carving around, and Tetlachim could see small symbols carved on the back of the carving. Xaltotec handed the carving to Tetlachim, who then sat down and tried to memorize the pattern.

Tetlachim looked at the unfamiliar pattern, trying to decipher the spell's purpose and casting mnemonics. He could see that the spell was tied to energy, and that glass was needed for the casting. He stared at it some more, but some symbols he couldn't figure out.

"Well, what does it do? What is required to cast the spell?" Xaltotec asked after fifteen minutes.

"The spell seems to release some sort of energy, and it needs glass to work. But there are a few symbols I don't understand. Symbols that I have never seen before." Tetlachim replied to his teacher.

Xaltotec pointed to a symbol on the carving and said: " There, that is a jankx. The symbol represents fur. You need that for the casting. Remember that!" Xaltotec waved his hand. "The rest you will learn

when you cast the spell. Do you have it memorized?"

"Yes", replied Tetlachim, "I can cast the spell".

"Then get the components. You know where they are." Xaltotec said to Tetlachim.

Tetlachim walked up to the wall that contained the most jars. There he found a small piece of glass, and looking around he found some fur. He had the necessary components for the spell, so Tetlachim prepared to cast it.

Once again, Tetlachim extended his hand towards the ground. He extended his palm and used his will to summon the energy from the plants around him. As the energy was gathering inside him, filling him with warmth, he saw that Xaltotec had called a slave into the room. Tetlachim forced himself to keep concentrating and knew he needed more energy than he had gathered for the light spell. He kept on gathering the energy until he felt he couldn't gather any more. He didn't feel any numbness in his hand though.

Just as he was about to cast the spell, Xaltotec held his hand up high and said: "Hold it for a moment, savor the energy." Xaltotec motioned the slave forward, indicating he had to stand in front of Tetlachim. The slave was trembling, shaking hard. Xaltotec told him to keep still, then he said to Tetlachim: "Cast the spell. Touch the slave."

Tetlachim was relieved that Xaltotec told him to cast the spell. He was sweating, feeling the energy inside him starting to heat him up. He touched the glass to the fur, and spoke the words of the spell. He then touched the slave.

The slave now glowed blue, and tiny electrical discharges could be seen all around him. Tetlachim's jaw dropped. What kind of spell was this? The slave was holding very still, trying very hard not to move. It was clear on his face that he was frightened, and that he feared very much for his life. Xaltotec told the slave he could go now, that the glow would dissipate in a few minutes.

The slave took one step, and then electrical discharges appeared all over the slave's body. The slave was twitching from all the energy, and soon the smell of burned flesh appeared in the air. The slave dropped to the floor, screaming. After about a minute, the slave's trashing stopped.

Tetlachim looked down to see that he was curled up on the floor. His eyes had popped out and what was left of his hair was smoking. Tetlachim shuddered at the sight.

"Now do you understand the effects of the spell?" Xaltotec asked of his student.

Tetlachim was tired but very elated. This was the first time he had been able to gather that much energy, and it was also the first time he had cast a spell on the first try. Tetlachim had figured out the spell. The spell released the kind of energy present in a Tyr-storm. He now understood the symbols he hadn't been able to figure out at first. He looked up at Xaltotec and said: "The spell releases the same energy as the one seen in a Tyr-storm. The energy is only released when the target moves. The spell can be cast fairly easily, but it requires more energy than the light spell."

"Good. I see my teachings have helped you to learn something." Xaltotec answered with a sneer. "A spell that harnesses a small bit of the power of the Storms!"

Tetlachim knew Xaltotec thought him a bit worthless, although Tetlachim had learned magic easily enough. At least he could be good at one thing.

"Now copy the spell on your roll. I have other things to do today."

Tetlachim looked down and rolled his eyes in his head. Xaltotec always had "other things to do". Still, he was learning magic. He was learning something that might be useful later on.

Xaltotec left the room without saying anything more to Tetlachim, without even looking back. A few minutes passed, then the guard appeared. He looked in the room, then his eyes fell on the dead slave. He stared hard at Tetlachim, then picked up the slave and dragged him out of the room without saying a word.

Tetlachim watched the guard leave, then shrugged. He wasn't particularly happy he had killed a slave, but slaves were replaceable. And if he hadn't cast his spell on the slave, it might have been him that would be dead. Xaltotec had made it clear he didn't have the time for any sensibilities that Tetlachim might have. That had been made very clear on the first day.

Tetlachim then bent down and started copying the symbols from the spell onto his roll. He knew it would take him some time, because each symbol had to be exactly like the one on the carving. With a sigh, he bent down and started the long, arduous task.

After Tetlachim finished copying the spell, he wrapped his roll around his waist and put his shirt back on. He took the carving back to the table. He looked longingly at the other carvings, carvings that might be other spells. Alas, he knew that he couldn't learn any spells if he wasn't ready to contain the energy. Xaltotec had warned him severely, and had told him stories of young defilers who had tried to cast spells beyond their power and had ended up as small piles of smoldering bones when their body couldn't contain the energy required for the spells.

Tetlachim took a last look at the carvings and then turned around and left the room. He kept the small piece of glass and the fur, just in case he needed to cast the spell again. One never knew when magic would be needed, although Tetlachim knew magic was outlawed and he had seen the result of those who cast spells in public.

One thing Xaltotec had warned him about was casting spells in public. But Tetlachim already knew that. Once, a few years ago, a wizard had been caught casting a spell in the Jaguar Plaza. When the people realized what that wizard had been doing, he had been very savagely beaten and killed. The templar had hanged the corpse outside Two-Moon City, near the Golden Moon Gate to serve as an example to all.

Tetlachim thought about all that he had learned during the day while he slowly made his way back to his mother's estate. It was getting a bit late, the sun would set in about an hour. He passed many estates on his way home, since Draaj outside of Two-Moon City was mostly made up of clan estates. Estates were mostly fields of hemp or grain with a central compound consisting of three or four buildings. Slaves were housed in one building, the guards in another, and the clan family was housed in the main building. There was no wall or barricade surrounding the clan estates, since Draaj was built on a huge mud flat. The flat was surrounded by silt, and only one road led into Draaj. The only fortifications were the walls of Two-Moon City, or fences surrounding some of the clan estates.

The artisans and merchants resided in their respective districts. The

artisan district surrounded Two-Moon City on the west and north sides, and was located east of the main entryway in Draji. The merchant district was located on the other side of the main entrance.

Tetlachim's house was located in the artisan district, since his mother was a sculptor. They had a fairly large house, since there had to be room to house the huge stones his mother sometimes sculpted. They didn't own many slaves. They only needed a few slaves to clean the house. His mother required the most slaves, though. Slaves were needed to clean up the mess made by sculpting and that were sent to find the stone his mother needed to sculpt. They had a few guards, guards that watched the complex while they were sleeping, guards that protected against the rare thief, and guards that oversaw the slaves who got the sculpting stones.

Tetlachim entered his mother's house. The house was quiet, no noise could be heard from his mother's work place. Tetlachim walked through the house and entered his mother's work place. His mother was there, her back turned to him. She was staring at a huge statue of a warrior, the warrior holding a head in his hand. The warrior's face was hidden behind a mask. The mask depicted a snarling jaguar with long, curved teeth and squinting eyes. Instead of hair, the warrior wore a crown of feathers. The statue was unfinished, the warrior having no legs.

"Mother, I'm back." Tetlachim said.

His mother turned around and smiled. She was relatively short, a bit under five and a half feet. Her skin was deeply tanned yet still retained the usual Draji coppery look. She had brown hair, unusual for the Draji, and black eyes. She wore a sleeveless shirt and a skirt. Her head was uncovered, his mother deciding the headdress was too hot to wear while working.

"Ah, there you are. It's about time you got back." His mother smiled once again, and she walked up to Tetlachim and grasped him by the shoulders.

"I trust you had a good day and learned something?" She asked.

"Yes Mother, I learned a lot today." Tetlachim answered. "I saw the sacrifice today too. The King appeared and talked to the crowd."

"I know. A pity I couldn't attend the sacrifice, but I have to finish this sculpture for House Tsalaxa. They pay well but demand their products be ready very quickly." Tetlachim's mother replied. She stared at Tetlachim and smiled once again, "I have arranged a little trip for you."

"A little trip? What do you mean mother?" Tetlachim was puzzled. His mother had never "arranged a little trip for him". What did she have in mind?

"A caravan from House Tsalaxa is leaving tomorrow for Kurn. I've arranged for you to be on it. You will be part of the detachment guarding the cargo."

"Guarding cargo? But what about my study of magic? Xaltotec will be furious if I miss a lesson! And I am no warrior mother, we both know that." Tetlachim answered his mother.

"Yes, I know, you are no warrior. Perhaps it is time you started being one." His mother answered, her smile changing into a cold stare. "It is decided. Be at the gate tomorrow at dawn. Now leave me."

Tetlachim was just getting at the gate. Although it wasn't really a gate, since there were no fortifications, it was the only way into and out of Draaj. Two small towers stood on each side of the road. The templars tending the gate worked from those towers, keeping records of who came and went.

Tetlachim looked around to find the caravan. The sun was almost up, meaning the caravan should arrive at the gate any time. The air was still cool, since the sun wasn't up yet to warm it. His mind wandered to his conversation with his mother. Why in Atzetuk's name was she sending him off to work with a caravan? Tetlachim couldn't really understand it, since he thought his mother had accepted the fact he was learning magic.

Tetlachim had briefly considered the idea of not joining the caravan, but he had quickly discarded that idea. Not only would House Tsalaxa be after him for not showing up, his mother would probably have disowned him. An elder's word was law in Draaj. And since Tetlachim's mother was the eldest of the family, she had absolute authority over its

Draj's families were divided up into clans with long family histories. These clans were descendants of the original members of Draj's founding warriors. Although Tetlachim family didn't have a long, glorious history, his mother had managed to raise the family to a respectable position. And she was the eldest, meaning she was the one in control. Elders were always in control, be they male or female. Gender didn't matter.

Tetlachim thought of their destination, far-off Kurn. He knew that trade with Kurn had been restored a few years earlier. The trade was now necessary since access to the Tablelands was now uncertain because the usual trade route through Raam was closed. It was too risky to pass close to Raam. That lawless state was unsafe for trade. Trade had even been established with the forgotten city-state of Eldaarich. His people had once thought that the city-state of Eldaarich was just a rumor, but when trade had been restored, it was confirmed that the city-state of Eldaarich was no rumor. New routes through the silt from Fort Firstwatch to Cromlin provided access to trade with Nibenay.

Finally, Tetlachim spotted a black flag with a pair glaring bestial eyes in the distance. House Tsalaxa's flag was a symbol of its adherence to Draji customs and its ruthlessness. House Tsalaxa was Draj's main merchant house. Stories abounded of people who had crossed House Tsalaxa and had disappeared. Tetlachim was glad his mother was on good standing with the House.

Tetlachim spotted the caravan arriving. It was a small-sized caravan, consisting of a dozen kanks, and the same number of crodlu riders. All members of the caravan were clothed with House Tsalaxa's colors. The cargo appeared to be hemp, but it was difficult to tell, as it was wrapped up. The caravan was obviously built for speed.

He waited until the caravan got close, then Tetlachim walked up to the lead guard and presented himself. The lead guard looked at Tetlachim's plain headdress and sneered.

"I'm Captain Sorala. So, you're the cub that's joining our expedition. We'll try to keep you out of harm's way, wouldn't want you to ruin that beautiful headdress." The caravan captain said in a mocking tone. She was a tall half-elf, dressed in House Tsalaxa's colors. She wore a loose-fitting tunic and hemp skirt. Around her waist was a leather belt that carried a steel dagger and an obsidian-tipped bone sword. Brown hair showed under her well-decorated feather headdress. Her eyes were

brown and lifeless. She was obviously not a native Draji and had probably been hired by House Tsalaxa in another city of the Tablelands.

Tetlachim's face turned red. He knew he was being mocked, and yet there was nothing he could say. The Draji only respected warriors, and his plain headdress proclaimed to all that he wasn't. Tetlachim clenched his fists, yet he kept his anger in check. It would accomplish nothing to lash out at the captain.

"Yes, I will be joining you. Show me where I will be working."

The captain pointed at a crodlu with no rider. "You can ride a crodlu, can't you?" She looked at Tetlachim and sneered again.

"Yes, I can ride a crodlu." Tetlachim answered in a cold voice. Tetlachim took his place on the spare crodlu. The large reptilian creature walked on two very muscled legs and had two arms that ended in claws. A long neck ended with a wickedly sharp beak. Tetlachim's crodlu was dark yellow in color with patches of purple.

Tetlachim looked around at the other riders. None of them looked familiar, except for a rider in the back, whose back was familiar. When the anonymous rider turned around, Tetlachim saw that it was Ayanys!

Ayanys winked at him, then turned back and went to her post. It seemed she had been hired to guard this caravan. Tetlachim knew he shouldn't go talk to her, since it could be bad for her to associate with a featherless man. He also knew House Tsalaxa took its caravans very seriously and guards were required to be of the utmost efficiency. Tetlachim couldn't interfere with Ayanys' duties; she wouldn't have permitted it.

The caravan leader looked around and verified everything was in place. Satisfied, she raised her arm and shouted the command to move forward. All guards were in place and started to move with the caravan.

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The Shadows Thicken... pt 3.

They moved at a swift pace, typical for all Tsalaxa caravans. Tetlachim was relegated to watching the kanks. He didn't have any opportunity to talk to Ayanys, although he did wave once and got a smile in return.

They traveled all during the day, stopping twice to drink water. They ate while riding. The trip was boring, nothing happening at all during the day. They saw almost no animals.

As the sun was starting its descent in the sky, Tetlachim saw the caravan's first stop. An oasis named Bitter Well was the first rest area on a caravan from Draj to Kurn. Scouts were sent ahead to determine if the oasis was unoccupied. It was usually unoccupied, especially now since the route to the rest of the Tablelands was unsafe because of the chaos in Raam. Sometimes the oasis could be occupied by marauding bands of thieves or elves. When that happened, House Tsalaxa usually imposed its own agenda by either simply bumping out the occupying band or attacking them. Either way they would get their water. The caravan stopped while awaiting its scouts.

The scouts reported the oasis was unoccupied. The caravan then resumed its swift pace to the oasis. A half-hour later they arrived at the oasis. The oasis consisted of a small pond surrounded by a few trees and scrubs. The water was slightly brown in color, and a faint acrid smell rose from the pond. Still, it was water, and the guards wasted no time in refilling their water pouches and drinking their fill.

The caravan arranged itself in its usual guarding arrangement, with the cargo kanks near the water and the guards surrounding the cargo. Sentries were posted, but Tetlachim was ignored in the duty assignments. The captain just told him to sit and watch the cargo. They would even deny Tetlachim the opportunity to kill any sort of rogue beast while on sentry duty.

As the sun was setting, the warriors ate their supper. Strips of dried johzal meat were passed around, and bread was also given. Tetlachim was the last to get his supper, and he got the worst parts of meat and his bread was rock hard. Still, it was food and Tetlachim ate his in silence. The others ignored him, except for Ayanys who occasionally gave him a small smile. He envied her position, eating as an equal with the other

warriors. He knew she wouldn't jeopardize her position amongst the caravan crew to go eat with a featherless man like him. They hadn't known each other long enough for that.

The sun had set by the time Tetlachim finished eating his supper. The air was already cooling, and Tetlachim felt a slight chill. Both moons were showing that night, a good omen. Ral and Guthay cast their olive- and yellow-colored light on the sand, providing some illumination.

The warriors had started a fire. Wood was hard to find on Athas, so the warriors made a fire of kank dung. The fire gave off a sulfurous smell, but at least it provided some warmth. Tetlachim tried to get close to the fire, but the warriors gave him a look that meant he had better not come too close.

As Tetlachim curled up in his roll, he felt a hand on his shoulder. Turning around, he saw Ayanys making gestures for him to follow her. She put her hand in front of her mouth, indicating he should make no noise. He got up, quietly, and followed Ayanys. When they were some distance from the camp, Ayanys came up close and whispered in his ear.

"Come, follow me!"

"Where are we going Ayanys?" Tetlachim asked her.

"We're going to enjoy the moonlight."

"But what about the sentries?"

"I know how to get around them." Ayanys replied. She grabbed his hand and gently pulled him along. They made their way around the sentries, stopping here and there to drop on the ground and let the sentries pass, and slowly made their way around to the other side of the oasis.

They stopped on top of a small hill, where they had a good view of the oasis. Ayanys took out a roll from her small pack, and they settled down on it. As Ayanys removed her leather armor, Tetlachim watched her in the moonlight. The light of the two moons bathed her copper skin in a soft glow. Tetlachim saw could see small goosebumps on her arms, he touched her arm gently. She turned her head to face him, and then gently bent down and kissed him. They embraced, letting their bodies warm themselves in the cool air. Tetlachim ran his fingers through Ayanys' hair. It was soft even though it was dirty from the day's travel.

The dry air of the desert was quiet. Off in the distance, a lone rasclinn howled a long mourning cry. The night was still. A few stars could be seen in the sky, but the twin moons were beautiful and dwarfed the stars. Tetlachim looked up at the twin moons and spoke a small prayer. The light of Ral and Guthay illuminated the desert landscape, bathing it in a soft glow. Ral was nearly full, while Guthay was waning. Tetlachim lay down on the roll, while Ayanys was leaning on her arm.

Tetlachim looked into Ayanys' eyes, two small disks of black, and smiled. This little escapade was all worth the trouble to spend time with Ayanys. He kissed Ayanys' soft moist lips. She returned the kiss with fervor.

Ayanys smiled down at him, and kissed him again. As Ayanys rolled over on top of Tetlachim, the lone rasclinn howled once more.

Tetlachim woke up at the sound of the caravan captain yelling it was time to get up. As he rolled over, memories of the night before flashed in his mind. He smiled as he got up. They'd had no problem returning to camp, Ayanys was very good at avoiding the sentries.

Tetlachim ate his breakfast in silence, keeping away from the others. He did manage to slip a smile to Ayanys, though. As always, he ate last. By the time he was done, all others had eaten and were ready to go. He had to pack his things quickly before hopping on to his crodlu.

The caravan set a swift pace, even quicker than before. The next stop was Ket, and that was 2 days away. House Tsalaxa maintained an outpost in the small village of Ket, where the caravan could restock on supplies.

The day passed by uneventfully for the most part. A floater was observed in the distance, but the sentries kept close watch and it never got close. A small pack of jankx crossed their path, but the small furry creatures were no threat and quickly dispersed from the path of the caravan. The region was mostly stony barrens. Very little vegetation grew, mostly cacti. Some cacti they passed by grew as tall as 3 meters. The temperature rose steadily during the day, reaching a high when the sun was just beginning its descent. Tetlachim was sweating in his robe all day long. The olive-tinged sky had no clouds. The harsh sun beat its rays unimpeded on the caravan.

When night was approaching, the captain called a halt. The kanks were tired from the hard day, and so were the crodlus. They set up camp as usual, the cargo in the center and the guards all around. Just like the previous night, Tetlachim was ignored when the captain assigned the watches. Once again he was relegated to standing by the cargo, but this time he was to feed the kanks. Ayany's was chosen to be a sentry this night, so there would be no contact between them that night.

Tetlachim fed the kanks, then sat down by the cargo. He ate his supper in silence, watching as the remaining warriors gathered around the kank-dung fire. The time passed slowly, as Tetlachim had no one to talk to. He passed the time by reviewing all that Xaltotec had taught him. Tetlachim looked around to see what plant life was available for spell casting, but there was very little growing in the stony barrens. Tetlachim took out his roll and studied all the spells he had learned by the faint light from the moons and the fire. No one paid any notice to what he was doing, since the rest of the warriors always ignored him.

After a while, Tetlachim started to doze off. Most of the remaining warriors had gone to bed. The fire still burned, someone having made sure it burned through the night by adding a large pile of dung. The smell almost made Tetlachim nauseous, but he was getting used to the smell.

A sudden cry woke Tetlachim up. With a start, he realized he had been dreaming. Now what could possibly have woken him up? He looked around, but the others were sleeping. He did see one warrior moving though. That warrior, named Nipotec, turned around and sat up. She looked around and saw Tetlachim watching him. Her eyes furrowed in confusion, then she looked out into the night. Seeing nothing, Nipotec turned around and went back to sleep.

As Nipotec went back to sleep, Tetlachim remembered his dream. He had been dreaming of shadows, shadows that moved by themselves and sported wicked teeth and claws. He remembered being enveloped by the shadows as his body shivered from cold. He couldn't remember if the cold came from the shadows or if he had been cold before. It was all a strange haze. He couldn't remember anything clearly.

Suddenly, a loud yell was heard in the distance. Tetlachim turned his head in the direction of the yell. The sleeping warriors immediately woke up. Tetlachim pointed in the direction the yell had come from, and all the warriors got up and drew their weapons. They all advanced in the

Just then, one of the warriors grunted and fell down, face forward, an arrow shaft sticking out of his back. The warriors turned around but could see nothing.

"Light, we need light!" yelled another warrior.

Three warriors ran for the fire while the others took cover among the rocks. They were mostly open, but at least someone shooting at them would have to get up to fire at the ground. The three warriors returned with a bit of burning kank dung. They splashed some sort of powder on the burning dung, then threw it in the air. The powder caught fire and produced some light, but it quickly burned itself out. The warriors didn't have the time to spot any movement.

Just then, Tetlachim saw the warriors' predicament, so he pointed his palm towards the ground and pulled for energy. It was slow in coming, as Tetlachim visualized the spell he was about to cast. He remembered the symbols and words for the light spell, and as he was pulling he noticed his palm becoming cold. Paying no attention to the discomfort, he continued to pull energy from the surrounding vegetation. Small tendrils of green energy, very faint, could be seen rising from the ground into Tetlachim's palm. When Tetlachim felt ready, he spoke the words of the spell and pointed to a spot where he thought the enemy could be hiding.

A ball of white light formed in the sky, illuminating the ground all around. The archer could be seen crouching on the ground, as well as nearly a dozen other warriors that were crawling their way towards the camp. The caravan guards froze for a moment when they saw the light, but they quickly rose up and charged the enemy.

The two groups engaged fiercely, the sounds of chipping obsidian filling out the night. The two groups were pretty evenly matched, and both sides took casualties. One warrior fell down with a bone sword sticking through his chest, while a raider was instantly slain when an obsidian razor cut his throat.

Just then, a few other raiders could be seen moving in from the edge of Tetlachim's field of vision. Seeing that the warriors would be outnumbered, Tetlachim thought about what to do. His new Tyr-storm spell was only good for one opponent, and Tetlachim would have to get close enough to touch his victim. Tetlachim had already counted six other raiders, and the sentries seemed to have been overwhelmed.

Sentries! What had happened to Ayanys? Tetlachim hoped she was all right, but he didn't have much time before the raiders reached him. He had to think fast before his light spell ended. Suddenly an idea popped into his head.

Tetlachim pointed down towards the ground once more, trying to pull more energy. He focused on the shadows of the warriors, thinking of his next spell. Surprisingly, the energy came to him fairly quickly, but once again he noticed his hand getting cold. Even his wrist seemed cold.

Having the required energy, Tetlachim pointed towards one of the warriors' shadow and spoke a few words. The shadow immediately started to move and followed Tetlachim's directions. Tetlachim spoke again and another shadow started moving, then another one. All three shadows followed Tetlachim's directions. He tried to animate the shadows so they would look menacing. One raider noticed the moving shadow. He stopped to stare in awe at his moving shadow and was quickly struck down by a warrior. Suddenly, one of the warriors gasped and dropped his sword. He was one of those whom Tetlachim had animated the shadow. The sword was made of iron, with a small gem inlaid into the crosspiece. The warrior's shadow elongated, and Tetlachim could no longer control it. The shadow seemed to rise up from the ground and to take on substance. A mouth and eyes formed into the shadow, and it rose up nearly five feet into the air. Suddenly all combatants screamed. The shadow seemed to be attacking all warriors indiscriminately. The raiders screamed and retreated, running as fast as they could from the shadow. The warriors backed off from the shadow, retreating from the combat.

The light from Tetlachim's spell was starting to fizzle. The ball of light was giving off small electrical discharges, and its light was rapidly fading. The shadow-creature turned its face towards Tetlachim and fixed him with its eyes. Tetlachim then felt a presence in his head and suddenly felt excruciating pain inside his head. It seemed as if his brain was slowly freezing over. Just as the last of the light faded, just as he was about to pass out, Tetlachim saw the shadow-creature smile.

Tetlachim woke up when someone slapped him in the head. His head was ringing, pounding pain filling his thoughts. Suddenly he remembered the night before. He sat up suddenly, but lay back down immediately when he nearly swooned. His throat was raw, and he tried to say something, but no sound came out. The remaining warriors were

all gathered around him, and Tetlachim saw that it was dawn. Many warriors were injured, and a few faces that Tetlachim had noticed were missing.

The captain was there, looking at him with hard, cold eyes. Her face was slightly flushed, but Tetlachim couldn't tell why. Suddenly she pointed at him and spoke.

"Get up!" Her tone was cold, and Tetlachim slowly rose to his feet, as fast as he could with his pounding headache.

"You featherless, spineless cowardly mage-spawn!" The captain spat at Tetlachim's feet. "Did you think to buy yourself our respect with your witchcraft? I should have you killed right now!"

Tetlachim's face sagged. They were going to kill him for using magic. He had known that using magic would bring him trouble, but his magic had probably saved many lives and maybe even the caravan.

"Yet your magic saved many lives. For that, some of us are grateful." She looked around at the warriors while she spoke. "Therefore, instead of killing you now, we will bring you to Ket. There you will remain while we go on to Kurn. And you will not set foot again in Draaj, nor will you find work with House Tsalaxa. Gather your belongings."

Tetlachim's heart sank as he heard the captain's words. He would be left behind, and worse yet, he would be exiled from beautiful Draaj. He thought of arguing, but then realized it would be futile. Then he thought of Ayany's, whom he hadn't seen among the warriors.

"Ayany's? Where is.."

"The girl is dead, boy. Now take one last drink of water. It's your last one with us." The captain cut him off in mid-sentence.

Tetlachim emptied his waterskin, then packed up his belongings. At least he still had his roll. He needed that if he were to survive in Ket. He set his pack on his back and mounted his crodlu.

The guards told him to remain behind, that he was not to get too close to the caravan. And they told him in no uncertain terms that he would be hunted down and killed if he tried to escape with his crodlu.

As the sun was beating down on his head, Tetlachim pondered his fate. He thought of the night before, how he might have made things different, but he couldn't see how else he could have helped. Then he remembered the shadow-creature. He remembered now that it had risen from the warrior's sword. How could that have been possible? Where did the creature come from? He realized that the cold he'd felt while casting the spell was the same as the one he had felt when the creature gazed at him. Was there a relation?

And Ayanys. Her death made him feel strange, but it seemed easier to forget her than he thought. He was less bothered by her death than by his exile from Draaj. But his thoughts kept returning to the shadow creature. Had it been imprisoned inside the sword? Where was the power he felt, the cold, coming from when he cast his spells? Did House Tsalaxa have anything to do with the creature?

As Tetlachim pondered these questions, the sun's fury unleashed upon the barrens. The day was extremely hot, the heat rising up from the rock making the air ripple. As the caravan made its way quickly towards Ket, Tetlachim sighed as he resigned himself to his fate...

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Rays of Life & Death

[Main](#)[Races](#)[Classes](#)[Spells](#)[Monsters](#)[NPCs](#)[Handbook](#)[Community](#)[Fiction](#)[Links](#)[Disclaimer](#)

Visitor #

88888

since nov 1,
1999.

Feature:

[\[Monster Calc\]](#)[\[ECL Calc\]](#)

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Disciples of Xerma

Important NPCs

Gorn'Tar

Male Dwarf Psionist (Psychometabolist), Neutral Good.

Armor Class 7	Str 19
Movement 6	Dex 15
Level 17	Con 20
Hit Points 87	Wis 18
THAC0 9	Int 16
No. Attacks 1	Cha 13

Damage/Attack: by attack technique

Psionics Summary

MAC: 5 (Wis+Int, Mental Armor x1)

MTHAC0: 3

PSPs: 132

Psionic powers:

Defense Modes: All	Attack Modes: All
Clairsentience	Sciences: Detection Devotions: Danger Sense, Know location
Psychometabolism	Sciences: Energy containment, Metamorphosis, Regenerate, Animal affinity Devotions: Ectoplasmic form, Adrenalin control, Flesh armor, Cell adjustment, Spider touch, Reduction, Mind over body, Gird, Prolong, Accelerate, Body equilibrium, Chameleon power
Psychokinesis	Sciences: Telekinesis Devotions: Control sound, Kinetic Control
Psychoportation	Sciences: Teleport Devotions: Dimensional door, Pocket dimension

Telepathy	Sciences: Mindlink, Domination Devotions: ESP, Invisibility, Mind Bar, Convergence
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More later...

Kaelin"Tar

Fiberin

Vertus

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