

Character Races



Athas is a world of many races, from the gith who wander the deserts, to the tareks, too stupid to know when they have died. Giants terrorise the Silt Sea, while belgoi steal grown men in the night. The desert belches out the New Races; most never see a second generation. Despite the variety of intelligent life, only a few races have the numbers to significantly affect the politics of the Tablelands.

Though the races of the Dark Sun campaign setting resemble those of other campaign worlds, it is frequently in name only. The insular elves roam the Tablelands, trusted by no one but their own tribe-mates. Halflings are feral creatures, possessed of a taste for human flesh. Hairless dwarves work endlessly, their entire perception of the world filtered through the lens of a single, all-consuming task. Unsleeping thri-kreen roam the wastes, always hunting their next meal.

After you've generated your character's basic ability scores, the next step is to select your character's race; in addition to humans, this chapter presents nine different options from which to choose. These comprise the most commonly encountered civilised races on Athas.

The races presented in this chapter have different abilities, personalities, and societies, but all are similar. None deviate too far from humanoid, and their abilities are roughly equal and balanced. Other races exist as well, but these are not available to starting characters.

Each race has ability score modifiers that are applied after you've generated your ability scores, as described in **Chapter One**. These modifiers can raise an ability score above 20 or reduce a score below 5.

Languages: All races start play knowing how to speak common and any native tongue, except for halflings and thri-kreen, who start with only their native tongue.

Aarakocra

Aarakocra are the most commonly encountered bird-people of the Tablelands. Some aarakocra are from Winter Nest in the White Mountains of the far north, while others are from smaller tribes scattered all throughout the Ringing Mountains and elsewhere. Seldom seen in the cities, these freedom-loving creatures rarely leave their homes high in the mountains, but sometimes, either as young wanderers or cautious adventurers, they venture into the inhabited regions of the Tablelands.

Personality: These bird-people can spend hours riding the wind currents of the mountains, soaring in the olive-tinged Athasian sky. While travelling, aarakocra prefer to fly high above to get a good view all around of their location and detect any threats well in advance. When they stop to rest, they tend to perch on high peaks or tall buildings.

Enclosed spaces threaten the aarakocra, who have a racial fear of being anywhere they cannot stretch their wings. This claustrophobia affects their behaviour. Unless it is absolutely necessary, no aarakocra will enter a cave or enclosed building, or even a narrow canyon.

As beings intimately connected to high mountain peaks and the open sky, aarakocra have a great love of freedom. In some ways, this love is even more intense than a similar emotion experienced by elves.

Physical: Aarakocra stand 6 1/2 to 8 feet tall, with a wingspan of about 20 feet. They have black eyes, gray beaks and, from a distance, resemble lanky dishevelled vultures. Aarakocran plumage ranges from silver-white to brown and even pale blue. Male aarakocra weigh around 100 pounds, while females average 85 pounds.

An aarakocra's beak comprises much of its head and can be used in combat. At the centre of their wings, aarakocra have three-fingered hands with an opposable thumb, and the talons of their feet are just as dexterous. While flying, aarakocra can use their feet as hands, but while walking, they use their wing-hands to carry weapons or equipment.

Aarakocra have a solid breastbone which provides protection from blows, however, most of their bones are hollow and brittle and break more easily than most humanoids. The aarakocra's unusual build means they have difficulty finding armour, unless it has been specifically made for aarakocra. Aarakocra usually live between 30 and 40 years.



Relations: Aarakocra zealously defend their homelands from all intruders. They are distrustful of strangers that venture onto their lands, although few are those who are able to scale the lofty heights that the aarakocra call home. Many of the southern tribes exact tolls on all caravans passing through their lands, sometimes kidnapping scouts or lone riders until tribute is paid. Tribute can take the form of livestock or shiny objects, which aarakocra covet. Some evil tribes may attack caravans without provocation. Aarakocra have great confidence and pride in their ability to fly, but have little empathy for land-bound races.

Lands: Most aarakocran communities are nomadic. Some prey on caravans, while others build isolated aeries high in the mountains. The least xenophobic come from Winter Nest, in the White Mountains. Most land-bound creatures are suspicious of strange creatures that fly over their herds or lands unannounced, and templars often have standing orders to attack creatures that fly over the city walls without permission.

Language: Aarakocra speak their own language but have no written language, though some of the more sophisticated tribes have borrowed alphabets from their land-bound neighbours. Regardless of the language spoken, aarakocra do not possess lips and therefore cannot even approximate the 'm', 'b' or 'p' sounds. They have difficulty also with their 'f's and 'v's, and tend to pronounce these as 'th' sounds.

Aarakocra Society: The civilised tribes of Winter Nest form the largest known community of aarakocra in the Tablelands. Though their communities are lead by a chieftain, the aarakocra have a great love of personal freedom. So while the chieftain makes all major decisions for the community, unless she consults with the tribal elders and builds a strong consensus within the tribe first, her decisions may be ignored.

Air and sun shamans play an important role in aarakocra societies. Aarakocra worship the sun because it provides them with the thermals they need to soar. The air shamans of Winter Nest lead their community in daily worship of the air spirits. Aarakocra of Winter Nest have a deep respect for nature and little patience for those who abuse it. They look after their natural resources and punish those who despoil them.

In more primitive societies, female aarakocra rarely travel far from the safety of the nest, and focus solely on raising the young. In Winter Nest, both sexes participate in all aspects of society, with females more often elected by the elders to be chieftains.

Aarakocra believe that their ability to fly makes them superior to all other races. Though they express sympathy for people unable to fly, this often comes across as condescending. Aarakocra are carnivores, but do not eat intelligent prey, considering this type of behaviour to be savage.

Role-playing Suggestions: Loneliness doesn't bother you. You are comfortable riding the thermals high above the land. You loathe the heat and stink of the cities, and long for cold, clean mountain air.

The spectacle and movement of so many beings in a city fascinates you, but watching them from above satisfies your curiosity. The very thought of being caught in a crowd of creatures, pinned so tight that you can't move your own wings, fills you with terror. Your bones are fragile and break easily; protect them.

You are friendly enough with people of other races, provided they respect your physical distance and are willing to be the ones that approach you. You form relationships with individuals but don't involve yourself in the politics of other racial communities - in such matters, you prefer to watch from above and to keep your opinions to yourself unless asked.

You prefer to enter buildings through a window rather than a door. Your instincts are to keep several hidden nests throughout areas you travel regularly: one never knows when one might need a high place to rest. Always remember your love of heights and claustrophobia.

In combat, rely on aarakocran skills and tactics (particularly the technique of dive-bombing). Take advantage of your flying ability to scout out the area and keep a bird's eye view of every situation. View the world in three dimensions, not the simple, lateral movement of other races.

The following game statistics apply to the aarakocra player character:

- **Ability Adjustments:** -1 Strength, +2 Dexterity, -1 Constitution.
- **Movement Rate:** 6, Fly 36 (C).
- **Size:** Medium.
- **Natural Armour:** +3 natural Armour Class bonus.
- **Claws and Beak:** An aarakocra can use his talons to attack twice per round for Id3 damage and strike with his beak once per round for Id2 damage. A beak attack suffers a -1 penalty to hit.
- **Claustrophobic:** When forced to fight in an enclosed area (any area where the aarakocra can't spread his wings and fly), an aarakocra suffers a -2 to all attack rolls. An aarakocra will not enter an enclosed building unless absolutely necessary.
- **Dive Attack:** If proficient with and using a javelin or spear, an aarakocra can make a special dive attack that receives a +4 bonus to hit and causes double damage.
- **Fragile Bones:** Because aarakocra bones are light and fragile, any damage caused by a bludgeoning weapon is increased by Id4 points.

Dwarf

Dwarves form a good part of the people encountered in the Tablelands. These strong and devoted beings live to fulfil their focus, a task they choose to devote their lives to. Stubborn and strong-minded, dwarves make good companions, even though their usual focused nature can be bothersome.

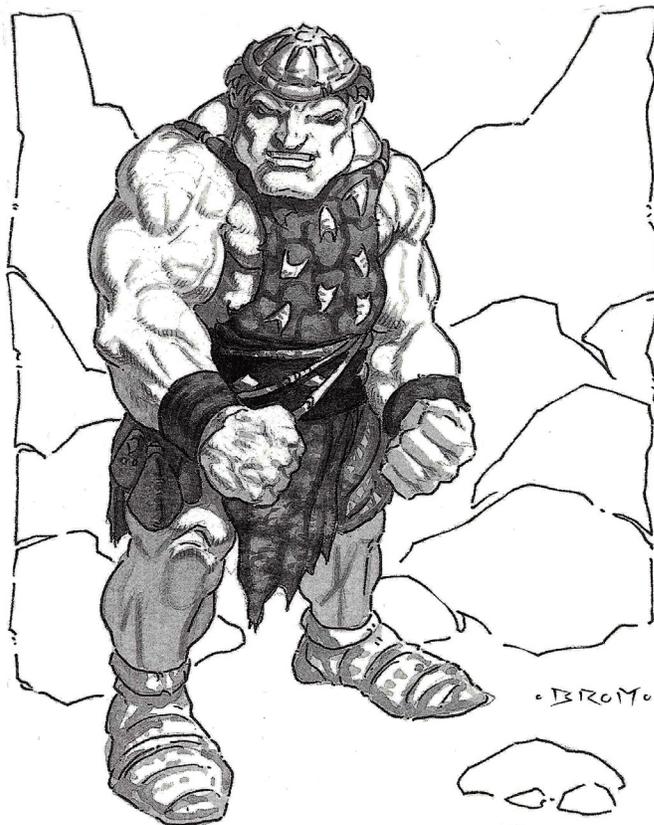
Personality: Dwarves are not frivolous or carefree and are often seen as dour or overly serious. The truth is that dwarves prefer to occupy themselves with meaningful tasks and often approach these tasks with an intensity rarely seen in other races. As such, dwarves make excellent labourers and take great pride in their accomplishments. However, their stubbornness can lead to difficulties. Dwarves will sometimes fail to listen to reason, attempting to accomplish what are impossible tasks.

A dwarf is never happier than when he has a cause to work or fight for – a focus. They devote their very beings to these tasks, labouring for weeks, years, even decades to the exclusion of other endeavours. A dwarf strives for the personal fulfilment he achieves upon completing a lengthy, difficult task. Dwarves live for their focus. Dwarves that die while being unable to complete their focus return from the dead as banshees to haunt their unfinished work. A dwarf also rarely divulges his focus to anyone.

Physical: The dwarves of the Tablelands stand 4 1/2 to 5 feet tall, with big muscular limbs and a strong build. They weigh on average 200 lbs. Dwarves are hairless, and find the very idea of hair repulsive. Lives of hard work in the hot sun leave them with a rich tan and rugged, calloused hands and feet. Dwarves rarely decorate their skin with tattoos. They can live up to 250 years.

Relations: A dwarf's relationship with others is often a function of his focus. People who help the dwarf accomplish his focus or share his goals are treated with respect and considered good companions. There is little room for compromise, though, with those who disagree with the dwarf's focus. If they hinder the dwarf, they are considered obstacles that must be removed.

Community is important to dwarves, and they have a very strong racial affinity. They rarely share their history with non-dwarves; it can take years for a stranger to gain enough trust to be admitted into a dwarven family circle.



Lands: There are three main dwarven settlements in the Tablelands: Kled, located near the city-state of Tyr, and the twin villages of North and South Ledopolus, located in the southwestern edge of the Tablelands. Some dwarven communities have developed in the city-states and in some small villages, while other dwarves have taken up residence with the slave tribes of the wastes.

Language: Athasian dwarves have a long and proud oral history. They have an old written language, but this is mostly used for writing histories. Dwarves will not teach their language to outsiders; they prefer to keep that knowledge to themselves. The dwarven language is deep and throaty, composed of guttural sounds and harsh exclamations. Most non-dwarves get raw throats if they try to speak dwarven for more than a few hours.

Many dwarves claim that they invented writing and that the characters of their alphabet were appropriated by the templarates of the human cities for their own languages. This “theft of sacred script” is a grievance that the dwarves have not forgotten and will likely never forgive.

Dwarf Society: Free dwarves form communities based on clans, and are much focused on family. Ties of blood are honoured and respected above all others, except the focus. Family honour is important to every dwarf, because an act that brings praise or shame in one generation is passed down to the family members of the next generation. There is no concept in the minds of dwarves of not following these family ties.

Dwarven communities are found in many types of terrain, from mountains and deserts to near human cities. Most communities are small, rarely exceeding 300 members, and are usually formed of extended families linked by a common ancestor. Community leaders are called *urhnomus* (over-leader). Each clan is lead by an *uhrnius* (leader).

Most free dwarves earn their money through trade. Those that stand out in this category are dwarven metal smiths and mercenaries. Most Athasians acknowledge dwarven-forged metal to be among the best. Some dwarves even act as metal scavengers, seeking steel scraps wherever they can be found to sell to the smiths.

Dwarven mercenaries are highly prized because, once their loyalty is purchased, it is never changed. Most mercenaries choose their employer as a temporary focus, fighting for them with unshakeable determination and choosing death over defeat.

Role-playing Suggestions: Remember the intensity of your focus. This is the primary, central element of the dwarven psyche. A dwarf without a focus is a creature, filled with yearning. Breaking or ignoring a focus has social, philosophical, and spiritual repercussions. As stated before, dwarves who die with an unfulfilled focus are said to return as banshees – dwarves live in terror of this fate. For someone to stand in the way of your focus is an assault on you. There is no greater satisfaction than fulfilling a difficult focus.

Keep a serious, sober attitude nearly always. The only time you show your festive side is when you have recently fulfilled a focus, during the hours or days until you set a new focus. Only during these brief “days of fulfilment,” and only to other dwarves and your most trusted non-dwarven friends, do you show your full joy and sense of humour. But these days are also a time of vulnerability, for until you set a new focus you lose all of your special focus-related bonuses. For this reason, among others, you will likely always be looking for the next challenge that you can build your focus around.

The following game statistics apply to the dwarf player character:

- **Ability Adjustments:** +I Strength, -I Dexterity, +2 Constitution, -2 Charisma (does not apply to other dwarves).
- **Movement Rate:** 9 (dwarves are never slowed by heavy armour).
- **Size:** Small.
- **Infravision:** Dwarves can see varying degrees of heat in the darkness to a distance of 60’.
- **Dwarven Focus:** Dwarves receive a +I on all attack rolls and saving throws, +2 on all ability or proficiency checks, and +I0% on any percentile roll relating to the character’s current focus.
- **Dwarven Resilience:** Dwarves receive bonuses to saving throws against poison, rods, staves, wands, and spells, based on their Constitution scores:

Constitution Score	Saving Throw Bonus
4-6	+I
7-10	+2
11-14	+3
15-18	+4
19-21	+5
22-24	+6

The Dwarven Focus

A dwarf’s focus is the central point of his existence. Nothing is more rewarding to a dwarf than to complete his focus. A focus must take at least a week to complete; anything less than that is too simple a task to be considered a focus. Dwarves receive the bonuses listed above when working to complete a focus. The task must be directly related to the completion of the focus, however.

For example, Grelak, protector of his dwarven community, makes retrieving a sacred book stolen during a raid his focus. After a week of gathering clues, he sets out to retrieve the artifact from its current possessor, who hides in a trading post two weeks away. En route to the outpost, he encounters a lirr; while battling this foe, he receives his focus bonuses, because he is trying to reach the book.

Later, Grelak stops in Nibenay for some rest, and gets in a brawl. He doesn’t receive any bonuses, because he isn’t actively pursuing his focus.

Elf

Athas' deserts, plains, steppes, and badlands are home to the elves, a long-limbed race of trading, raiding, thieving sprinters. Running is key to acceptance and respect among elves. Elves who are injured and cannot run are often left behind to die.

Personality: Elves are tireless wanderers forged in the endless desert, burned dark by the sun, toughened by the swirling sand, and given strength and speed by the constant wind. There's no racial unity among them. Within a given tribe, all elves are brethren, but outsiders – even other elves – are regarded as potential enemies. Outsiders can be accepted and perhaps even become friends, but trust takes time to develop and is often associated with tests and great sacrifice.

Other races see elves as dishonest and lazy; generally a fair assessment. Elves idle around for days until compelled to exert themselves, but they can run for days without complaint. No self-respecting elf will consent to ride an animal. To do so is dishonourable; elven custom dictates that individuals keep up or be left behind. Elves prefer to lead short, happy lives rather than long, boring ones. Seeing the future as a dark, deadly place, they prefer to live in “the now,” enjoying each fleeting moment. They thrive in open spaces and tend to wither in captivity.

Physical: Elves stand between 6 and 7 feet tall, with lean builds, and angular, deeply etched features. Elves have no facial hair but the locks atop their heads come in shades of lightest blond to darkest black. They dress in garb designed to protect them from the elements.

Relations: Elves tend to keep to their own tribe and proven friends unless they have some sort of an angle: something to sell or some deception to pass off. Strangers are potential enemies waiting to take advantage of them, so elves look for every opportunity to win the advantage.

If an elf believes that a companion might make a worthy friend, the elf devises a series of “tests” of trust that allow the companion to prove that their friendship is “stronger than the bonds of death,” as elves say. Once a stranger has gained an elf's trust, he is forever that elf's friend. If this trust is ever betrayed, it is gone forever.

Lands: Elven tribes make a living either through herding, raiding, or trading; most tribes have at one time or another plied their hand at all three of these occupations. A tribe's current occupation usually determines which lands they currently claim as their own.

Elven herders claim grazing lands, where they tend their herds of kank, erdlu, and other livestock. Elven raiders claim lands crossed by trade routes. Elven traders claim no lands, but wander in search of bargains and loose purses. Some tribes spend different seasons following different pursuits, herding for one season, raiding for another, and trading their spoils another.

Language: Elves of Athas share a common language, although each tribe has its own distinct dialect. The elven language is filled with short, clipped words, runs with a staccato pace, and is difficult to pick up. Disdaining the tedious languages of other races, most elves condescend to learn the common tongue for trade. Elves that learn other tongues often hide their ability.

Elf Society: Elves have a tribal unity that does not extend beyond their own tribe. Elves from other tribes are considered potential enemies as much as any other creature. Within a tribe all elves are considered equal, with one exception – the chief. The chieftain of an elf tribe rules for life and makes all major decisions concerning the tribe. The method of choosing the chief varies from tribe to tribe, with some tribes electing the individual who demonstrates the most qualities of leadership, while the leadership in other elven tribes is a hereditary position.

When in the company of outsiders, elves create tests of trust and friendship for their companions. This continues until the companions fail a test, in which case they will never earn the elf's trust, or they succeed in passing enough tests to convince the elf to accept them.

Elven culture is rich, with elf song and dance being the most captivating in the Tablelands. They have turned celebrating into an art form. When a hunt goes well, a tribe showers the hunt master with praise. When a hunt goes poorly, the hunt master will find himself the target of ribald mockery. To elves, this is part of the tapestry of tribal expression. To celebrate a marriage, elves dance to the tales of long-remembered lovers. The depths of expression are so intense that elves believe that they are truly reliving the events in question.

Despite their reputation as lazy, shiftless liars, elves do work. Though most elves provide for themselves and their tribe through herding, all elves have a propensity for raiding. Others become merchants and some become thieves. In many cases, others find it difficult to see the distinction. Though they detest hard labour, elves will spend hours negotiating with potential customers.



Role-playing Suggestions: In combat, rely on elven combat skills (distance, bows, and fighting by the light of the moons and stars). In other situations, trust to your non-combat skills and philosophies (running, escape from entangling situations). Never cede an advantage to your adversary, in combat or otherwise. Keep the ground shifting and always be the one to move first.

Never ride on beasts of burden. Run everywhere you travel, even when running might prove slower or others in your party take animal or magical transportation.

When someone professes to be your friend, dismiss them at first and then later, offer them a test of trust. Don't tell them that it is a test, of course. Ask them to give you one of their prize possessions, for example, or leave your own valuables out and see if they take advantage of you. Pretend to sleep, and find out what they say about you when they think you are not listening. Some elves go as far as to allow themselves to be captured by enemies to see if the presumed friend will rescue them!

Remember the music that lies within the elven soul. Elves love song and dance and you naturally celebrate your victories in this fashion. Tragedies and defeats are likewise immortalised in song. The more painful the experience, the more beautiful the song.

Live in the now. As the elven saying goes, eat now and pay later. Do not spend overlong on contemplation. Plans that cannot be brought to fruition before the sun rises are not worth considering. Life is short and death comes without warning, so live each moment as if it were your last. It might well be.

The following game statistics apply to the elf player character:

- **Ability Adjustments:** +2 Dexterity, -2 Constitution, +1 Intelligence, -1 Wisdom.
- **Movement Rate:** 12 (elves receive a bonus to their movement for high Dexterity - see below).
- **Size:** Medium.
- **Infravision:** Elves can see varying degrees of heat in the darkness to a distance of 60'.
- **Tribal Weapons:** Elves receive a +1 bonus to attack rolls with tribal long swords and long bows.
- **Desert-Born:** Elves never take Constitution damage from extreme temperatures.
- **Elf Run:** To engage in the elf run, an elf adds his Constitution score to his movement points for overland travel to determine the distance he can cover in a single day before fatigue sets in. If the elf wants to run for more than one day, he must concentrate for one turn and make a Constitution check. Success means he can run for another day until fatigue sets in. For every 3 points below his Constitution on the check, he can run for an additional day, to a maximum of seven days. Once fatigue sets in, he suffers a cumulative -1 on all attack rolls for each day he still runs.
- **Elven Stealth:** In the desert, when elves approach non-elves, the opponents suffer a -4 surprise penalty. Mixed parties cannot gain this advantage.
- **Elven Swifttness:** Elves with high Dexterity receive a bonus to their movement rate:

Dex:	12-13	14-15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
Move:	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5	+6	+7	+8	+9

Half-Elf

The elves of Athas may have an instinctive distrust of outsiders, but they must still deal with them from time to time. As so often happens in the wilds and in the cities, sometimes the two find common ground. In the case of humans, whether through shared passions or less fortunate circumstance, children of mixed heritage are born into the world: the half-elves.

Personality: Half-elves are notorious loners. Many Athasians believe that half-elves combine the worst traits of both races, but the most difficult aspect of half-elves - their lack of self-confidence - comes not from their mixed origins but rather from a life of rejection from both parent races. Half-elves try in vain to gain the respect of humans or elves. This constant quest for meaning defines the half-elf.

Many half-elves learn at an early age to get along with everyone, defusing hostility and finding common ground. As a race, they have elven grace without the elven tribal insularity and human energy without the human need to dominate and control. They often make excellent ambassadors and go-betweens (except between elves and humans, since each side suspects the half-elf of favouring the other).

Half-elves know that character is often less a product of race than of life experience. As such, they are often open to friendships and alliances with other races, and less likely than most to rely on first impressions when forming opinions of new acquaintances.

Physical: To humans, half-elves look like elves, and to elves, they look human. Averaging over six feet tall, half-elves combine elven dexterity with human resilience. Bulkier than elves and not as lean as the desert runners, most half-elves find it easier to pass themselves off as full humans than as full elves, but all have some features that hint at their elven heritage.

Half-elf men can have facial hair and sometimes grow beards to mask their elven ancestry. Half-elfen colouration and features lie somewhere between their human and elf parents, and thus show a variety even more pronounced than that found among either race.

Relations: Elves have no tolerance for mixed children. Elven tradition demands that children born from the union of elf and human be left for lirs and other predators, and some tribes even drive out mothers of such children. A half-elf born in a city has a greater chance to survive; still, life is not easy for half-elves.



Half-elves sometimes find friendship among muls or even thri-kreen and cooperate with companions when necessary, but find it difficult to rely on anyone. Many turn to the animal world for company, training creatures to be servants and friends. The survival skills and animal affinity that half-elves developed to cope with isolation make them valuable beast handlers in human society.

Lands: Despite their unique nature, half-elves don't form communities. The few half-elves that settle down tend to live among humans who, unlike elves, at least find a use for them. Half-elves have no lands of their own, though they are welcome in human cities. They are less welcome in elven tribes, where they struggle to keep up with natural elven speed.

Some half-elves avoid company altogether, visiting civilisation only rarely. Others, in contrast, throw themselves into the thick of society, putting their charisma and social skills to use in diplomatic roles or as swindlers.

Language: Half-elves learn the languages of whatever community they grew up in, which usually includes the common tongue. It is not unusual for half-elves to be unable to speak elven, especially if they were cast out from their parent's tribe.

Half-Elf Society: Unlike other races, half-elves do not consider themselves a separate race, and, with very few exceptions, do not try to form half-elven communities. A half-elf's life is typically harder than either a human's or an elf's. It is difficult for half-elves to find acceptance within either elven or human society. Many half-elves choose the life of a loner or an exile over the inevitable rejection that comes with trying to fit in.

Half-elves are forced to develop a high level of self-reliance. Most half-elves take great pride in their self-reliance, but this pride often makes half-elves seem aloof to others. For many half-elves, the detachment is a defensive mechanism to deal with a desire for acceptance from either human or elven society that will likely never come.

Role-playing Suggestions: Desperate for the approval of either elves or humans, you are even more desperate to appear independent, to cover your desire for approval. As a result, you tend towards a sullen self-reliance, refusing favours. You take every opportunity to show off your skills in front of elves and humans, but if an elf or a human were to actually praise you, you would probably react awkwardly. From your childhood, your closest friendships have been with animals. Other half-elves do not interest you.

As time goes by and you learn from experience, you will find you can also get along with other races that are neither human nor elven. You don't feel the terrible need for their approval, and yet they give it more readily.

The following game statistics apply to the half-elf player character:

- **Ability Adjustments:** +1 Dexterity, -1 Constitution.
- **Movement Rate:** 12.
- **Size:** Medium.
- **Infravision:** Half-elves can see varying degrees of heat in the darkness to a distance of 60'.
- **Survival Expert:** The half-elf receives the survival non-weapon proficiency for free at 3rd level.
- **Animal Companion:** At 5th level, a half-elf can befriend any one animal native to the half-elf's survival terrain type, of Medium or smaller size. The half-elf must find the creature while it is young and spend a week training it. After that time, the creature follows the half-elf everywhere and obeys simple commands. A half-elf can only befriend one creature at a time, and must wait 100 days after the death of one befriended creature before training another. Choice of a half-elf's befriended creature is subject to DM approval.



Half-Giant

Legend has it that, in some lost millennium, a sorceress-queen used wizardry to beget a union of giant and human in order to create a race of powerful slaves, as a bizarre experiment, or perhaps as some sort of curse. Whatever the truth of this legend, the half-giant race has increased in number and is now fairly common, especially in human-controlled lands near the shore of the Sea of Silt. Half-giants gain great strength, but dull wits, from their giant heritage, and are nearly as agile as their human forebears.

Personality: Because of their artificial origins, there is no half-giant culture, tradition, or homeland. Instead, they live in the human cities or in the wilderness tribes, absorbing the culture of those around them. Half-giants readily imitate the customs of their neighbours. Half-giants often display curiosity, a willingness to learn, and a tendency towards kindness.

Physical: Physically, the half-giant is enormous, standing about 11 1/2 feet tall and weighing around 1,200 pounds. Half-giants have thick hair, which is often kept braided (especially among females) or in a single tail that hangs behind the head and down the back. They dress in garb suitable to their occupation or environment. Half-giants mature at about 24 years of age and can live about 170 years.

Their immense size sets them apart from the other races of the Tablelands. For half-giants, questions such as “can I fit through the door?” are real concerns.

Relations: Half-giants tend to be friendly and eager to please, adopting the lifestyles, skills, and values of those they admire. A half-giant character who encounters a new situation looks around him to see what other people are doing. He then models his behaviour on those who impress him.

Although famous for their slow wits, half-giants are not fools when it comes to understanding how others see them. Most half-giants learn from a young age that smarter folk will often try to take advantage of them, pretending friendship in order to benefit from the half-giant’s great size or strength. Half-giants have learned to be wary of those who go to great lengths to win their approval, and do not forget those who abuse their trust.

Lands: Half-giants are most often found in the city-states, serving as gladiators, labourers, soldiers, and guards. A few half-giants collect into wilderness communities, often adopting the culture and customs



of neighbouring beings. The rare half-giant community often attaches itself to a charismatic or successful leader (not necessarily a half-giant) who demonstrates the tendencies they admire.

Language: All half-giants speak the common speech of slaves. Whatever tongue she speaks, the half-giant's voice is pitched so low as to occasionally be difficult to understand.

Half-Giant Society: Half-giants seem to be a fairly young race, perhaps only a few tens of centuries old. There is no common half-giant culture. Having insufficient history and overall intelligence to have their own culture, half-giants readily adopt the cultures of other creatures they admire or associate with. Half-giants are very imitative creatures, eager to fit into new situations as they present themselves.

Half-giants sometimes collect into communities of their own, though they most often adopt the customs of others nearby. When near an elven nation, for instance, half-giants will form their own hunting and raiding parties, adopting the ways of the elven marauders. In most instances, imitative half-giant communities will compete directly with the race that they are likening themselves to. It is their great size and combat prowess that keeps their competitors at a safe distance.

Unlike some other bastard races, half-giants can reproduce. A single offspring is produced from half-giant unions after almost a year of pregnancy.

Half-giants tend to damage objects and buildings around them through accidents of size alone. Some considerate half-giants camp outside city walls to avoid causing too much damage, but the draw of a city's culture and the below-average intellect of most half-giants limits the number of half-giants who do so.

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

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

You can switch your attitudes very quickly, taking on new values to fit new situations. A half-giant whose peaceful farming life is disrupted by marauders may soon adopt the morals of the very renegades who sacked his village. A half-giant character who is presented with a new situation should examine the roles of the people there, determine where he might best fit in, and then start performing the tasks necessary.

This is not to say that you are strictly bound to perform as those you see around you, nor are you restricted from moving on. If the situation is not beneficial or if you would not perform well (living in the trees like the halflings, for instance), you won't imitate it. Also, you are not bound to a piece of work or a lifestyle the way other races are – you seldom have regrets or reminiscences about what has gone before. You simply aren't as emotionally attached to your life or works.

The following game statistics apply to the half-giant player character:

- **Ability Adjustments:** +4 Strength, +2 Constitution, -2 Intelligence, -2 Wisdom, -2 Charisma.
- **Movement Rate:** 15.
- **Size:** Large.
- **Brutish Health:** Half-giants double their Hit Dice rolls no matter what their character class. Add any bonus for a high Constitution score after doubling the roll of the die.
- **Axis Alignment:** One aspect of a half-giant's alignment is fixed and chosen during character creation. The other half must be chosen when they awaken each morning. They are only bound to that alignment until they sleep again.
- **Enormous Pants:** All personal items such as clothes, armour, weapons, food, etc. cost double for half-giant characters. Other considerations, such as transportation or lodging, are also considerably more expensive when they are available at all. In areas not dominated by half-giants, things such as buildings, furniture, wagons, boats, etc. aren't made to support their weight. Even in cities, they tend to camp outside to avoid destroying things.
- **Increased Water:** Half-giants require four gallons of water per day when active.

Halfling

Beyond the Ringing Mountains are jungles that flourish in rains that never reach the Tablelands or the Sea of Silt. There, life is abundant, the foliage thick and untamed. The undisputed rulers of these jungles are the halflings. They are small, quick, and agile creatures steeped in an ancient and rich culture that goes back far into Athas' past. Although they are not common in the Tablelands, some halflings leave their homes in the forests to adventure under the dark sun. As carnivores, halflings prefer to eat flesh raw.

Personality: Halflings are culturally insular and can often have difficulty understanding others' customs or points of view. An innate curiosity, however, helps some halflings overcome their xenophobia. Little concerned with material wealth, halflings are more concerned with how their actions will affect other halflings and the natural world around them.

Physical: Halflings are very short, standing no more than 3 1/2 feet in height. They are muscled and proportioned like humans, but they have the faces of wise and beautiful children. Halflings live to be as much as 120 years old but, once they reach adulthood, their features never succumb to their years, so it's very difficult for an outsider to determine a given halfling's age. A halfling weighs 50 to 60 pounds and is virtually always in peak physical condition.

Halflings dress in loincloths, sometimes with a shirt or vest, and paint their skins with bright reds and greens. Forest halflings rarely tend to their hair, and some let it grow to great lengths, though it can be unkempt.

Relations: Halflings' culture dominates their relations with others. They relate very well to each other, since they all have the same cultural traits and are able to understand each other. Halflings of different tribes still share a tradition of song, art, and poetry, which serves as a basis of communication. Creatures that do not know these cultural expressions are often at a loss to understand the halfling's expressions, analogies, and allusions to well-known halfling stories. Halflings can easily become frustrated with such "uncultured" creatures. They abhor slavery and most halflings will starve themselves rather than accept slavery.

Lands: Halflings villages are rare in the Tablelands. Most live in tribes or clans in the Forest Ridge. Many dwell in treetop villages. Non-halflings typically only see these villages from within a halfling cooking pot.

Language: Halflings rarely teach others their language, but some individuals of the Tablelands have learned the wild speech. Halflings found in the Tablelands may learn to speak common.

Halfling Society: Most halflings have a common outlook on life that results in considerable unity across tribal and regional ties. Rarely will one halfling draw the blood of another, even during extreme disagreements. Only renegade halflings do not share this racial unity, and are cast out of their tribes because of it.

Halfling society is difficult for other races to understand, as concepts such as conquest and plundering have no place. The most important value in halfling society is the ability of the inner self as it harmonises with the environment and the rest of the halfling race.

Halflings are extremely conscious of their environment. They are sickened by the ruined landscape of the Tyr region and desperately try to avoid having similar devastation occur to their homelands in the Forest Ridge. Most halflings believe that care must be taken to understand and respect nature and what it means to all life on Athas.

Halfling culture is expressed richly through art and song. Storytelling in which oral history is passed on to the next generation is an important part of each halfling community. Halflings rely on this shared culture to express abstract thoughts and complicated concepts. This causes frustration when dealing with non-halflings.

Typically, halflings assume that whomever they are talking to has the same cultural background to draw upon and find it difficult to compensate for a listener who is not intimately familiar with the halfling history and "lacks culture".

Halfling culture is fabulously diverse, but difficult for other races to comprehend. A complete history of their culture, if such a thing existed, would speak volume upon volume of complex social change, inspirational clerical leaders, and in-depth personal studies of the halfling and his duty to his jungle home. Conspicuous in their absence would be references to great wars of conquest or tremendous monetary wealth – the yardsticks by which other races measure cultural success. Halfling culture cares for the individual's inward being, his identity, and spiritual unity with his race and environment. Their culture does not provide for more traditional values, and vices such as greed and avarice are particularly discouraged.



Oddly, the richness of the land may be disturbed and examined, even used for a halfling's own gain. However, those riches belong to the land and, in the mind of the halfling, should never be moved away. For instance, nature intended a spring to bring water only to a certain area. To move the water through irrigation to some other area is not what nature had in mind. Similarly, an archaeological find in the jungle that yields a great pile of gold and metals is an event that shouldn't be tampered with – the gold might be used to raise a spectacular series of clerical buildings on the spot, but it should not be carted off to some other location.

Role-playing Suggestions: You are comfortable when with your own kind. While not afraid to adventure among other races, you have a hard time adjusting to other points of view. You tend to be curious and, at times, utterly confused by the behaviour of others. To quell your own confusion, your curiosity demands you attempt to learn many of the customs of those you meet.

While other races may think less of you because of your small size, you honestly see great bulk as a drawback and are prepared to respond to “short” comments with your views on the virtue of stealth, speed, etc.

You will never cross or lie to your own kind and will help other halflings in need, regardless of danger.

The following game statistics apply to the halfling player character:

- **Ability Adjustments:** -2 Strength, +2 Dexterity, -1 Constitution, +2 Wisdom, -1 Charisma.
- **Movement Rate:** 6.
- **Size:** Small.
- **Expert Aim:** Halflings receive +1 to hit with all missile weapons.
- **Reduced Water:** Halflings require only 1/2 gallon of water per day when active.
- **Stealthy:** When halflings sneak up on non-halflings, their opponents suffer a -4 penalty on surprise rolls.
- **Halfling Resilience:** Halflings receive bonuses to saving throws against poison, rods, staves, wands, and spells, based on their Constitution score:

Constitution Score	Saving Throw Bonus
4-6	+1
7-10	+2
11-14	+3
15-18	+4
19-21	+5
22-24	+6

Human

While not the strongest race, nor the quickest, humans dominate the Tablelands. Humans can be found at all levels of Athasian society. From the highest sorcerering to the lowest slave toiling in the obsidian mines of Urik, humans are everywhere. On average, they aren't as strong as some of the other prominent races, but what they lack in strength, they more than make up for with cunning, persistence, and adaptability.

Personality: More than other races, human personality is shaped by their social caste and background. Humans tend to be impulsive and driven toward great daring, especially when the lure of adventure permeates their souls. This reflects itself in different ways, depending on the individual's place in society. Human slaves are troublesome and prone to escape, human templars ambitious and greedy, human nobles filled with a sense of their own importance, and human traders willing to take risks that other races would shy away from.

Physical: Human males average 6 feet tall and 200 lbs, while smaller females average 5 1/2 feet and 140 pounds. On Athas, centuries of abusive magic have not only scarred the landscape - they've twisted the essence of human appearance, as well. Many Athasian humans look normal, and could pass unnoticed among humans of other worlds. Others, however, have marked alterations to their appearance. Their facial features might be slightly bizarre: a large chin or nose, pointed ears, no facial hair, etc. Their colouration might be subtly different, such as coppery, golden brown, hues of gray, or patchy skin. The differences may be more physical, such as webbed toes or fingers, longer or shorter limbs, etc. A player with a human character should be given broad latitude in making up these alterations to his form, if he so wishes. Ultimately, none of them will give him any benefit nor any hindrance to game play - his appearance is strictly a role-playing asset.

Relations: Humans are generally tolerant of other races. They can easily adapt to situations involving elves or dwarves, and even more exotic races such as half-giants and thri-kreen. Where other, less tolerant races come into contact with one another, humans often serve as diplomatic buffers.

Lands: Humans can be found anywhere, from the great city-states to the barren wastes. Those who call the wastes home are usually members of nomadic, slave, or raiding tribes, or the inhabitants of remote villages.



Language: Most humans speak the common tongue of slaves. Nobles and artisans within a given city-state usually speak the city language, but slaves typically only speak common. Within the merchant families - most of which are ruled by humans - members also speak the dynasty's secret tongue and guard its truths jealously.

Human Society: More humans live in the city-states than they do anywhere else. Although humans are resilient and adaptable, the city-states offer shelter, water, and food - commodities that are rare outside their walls. From Tyr to Draj, humans are the dominant people, dwarfing other populations in the city-states.

They are the most likely to be free citizens, merchants, nobles, slaveholders, and landowners; most templars are human as well. Outside the city-states, human numbers fall off, eclipsed by the other peoples of the deserts, but even in the wastes humans are common. They seem able to scratch out a living no matter where they reside.

Role-playing Suggestions: You are the dominant race on Athas and you know it. But, at the same time, you are bereft of a past, flooded with propaganda and prohibited from keeping written histories by the sorcerers-kings. Many humans chafe against tyranny's chains but hold their tongues, seeing no reason to jeopardise the shelter, water, and food they receive in return for their loyalty. Decide how you will respond to this situation.

The following game statistics apply to the human player character:

- **Ability Adjustments:** +I to any one ability.
- **Movement Rate:** I2.
- **Size:** Medium.
- **Background Traits:** Humans receive two background traits from the following list. These traits should reflect the human's origins or culture.

Human Background Traits

Arcane Affinity: Targets of your spells suffer a -I penalty to their saving throws.

Arcane Heritage: Magic is in your blood. Select one saving throw category and apply a +I bonus to it

Alien Mind: Your thoughts are strange and unpredictable. You have I0% magic resistance against all spells that attempt to read your mind.

Aptitude: Choose one ability score. Whenever you make an ability check with this score, roll two dice and pick the best result.

Artisan: You receive a +2 bonus on all craft non-weapon proficiency checks.

Bareback Rider: You suffer no penalties when riding bareback. You can guide your mount with your knees, keeping both hands free. You gain a +I bonus to hit when using a ranged weapon while riding bareback.

Bullheaded: You receive a +I bonus on saving throws against mind-affecting effects and a +2 bonus on intimidation non-weapon proficiency checks.

Child of the Ringing Mountains: You suffer no movement penalty in mountains or forest.

Cold Resistance: You receive a +I bonus on saving throws against cold-based effects.

Combat Training: You gain a bonus weapon proficiency.

Commander: Your hirelings and henchmen gain +2 to morale.

Cosmopolitan: Select a race other than human. All members of that race are automatically Friendly towards you when you first encounter them.

Desert-Born: You are immune to damage from heat stroke and exposure to the cold.

Elfblood: You gain 30' infravision.

Expert Rider: Choose a mount type. Gain +2 on all non-weapon proficiency checks relating to riding this mount type. All such mounts are Friendly towards you.

Faithful: You may use your Will Bonus instead of your Stamina Bonus to determine your bonus hit points.

Foe Hunter: Select one race and receive a +I bonus on damage against them.

Heat Resistance: You receive a +I bonus on saving throws against heat and fire-based effects.

Lucky: Reroll one failed saving throw per day.

Mental Fortitude: You may use your Insight Bonus instead of your Stamina Bonus to determine bonus hit points.

Mercantile Expertise: Make a successful Charisma check to buy equipment at a I0% discount. You can help others get this discount. When selling, a successful Charisma check grants you I0% more in the sale.

Pathfinder: You are skilled at navigation and never become lost when travelling in the wilderness.

Raider: You gain a +I bonus on saves vs. fear and a +2 on observation non-weapon proficiency checks.

Reduced Water: You need half as much water each day as normal.

Rustic Charm: All urban folk start out as Friendly. You receive a +2 bonus on all reaction checks.

Self-Sufficient: You gain a +2 bonus to survival non-weapon proficiency checks made in one type of terrain.

Silt Diver: You can hold your breath for half your Constitution score in rounds.

Skilled: You gain a bonus non-weapon proficiency.

Spirit Sight: You can see incorporeal or ethereal creatures on a successful Wisdom check.

Tough: You gain +I hp per level.

Well-Trained: You receive a -I bonus on all initiative checks.

Worldly Charm: You receive a +2 reaction bonus when meeting new people and a +I bonus to etiquette non-weapon proficiency checks.

Mul

Born from the unlikely parentage of dwarves and humans, muls combine the height and adaptable nature of humans with the musculature and resilience of dwarves. Muls enjoy traits that are uniquely their own, such as their robust metabolism and almost inexhaustible capacity for work.

The hybrid has disadvantages as well: sterility, and the social repercussions of being created for a life of slavery. Humans and dwarves are not typically attracted to each other. The only reason that muls are so common in the Tablelands is because of their value as labourers and gladiators: slave-sellers force-breed humans and dwarves for profit. While mul-breeding practices are exorbitantly lucrative, they are often lethal to mother and baby. Conception is difficult and impractical, often taking months to achieve. Even once conceived, the mul takes twelve months to carry to term; fatalities during this period are high. As likely as not, anxious overseers cut muls from the dying bodies of their mothers.

Personality: Muls are hard, driven, pragmatic folk with little remorse or sympathy in their hearts. Many grow up under the lash, having been taken from their parents while very young and subjected to brutal training for the arena or grinding toil in fields or quarries. Consequently, muls have a hard time offering friendship and trust to anyone. More than a few muls, scarred by the hardships of their upbringing, spend their days as bitter, violent misanthropes. Others are suspicious, grasping mercenaries who have learned never to lift a finger on behalf of another person without establishing what they will gain from providing aid.

Despite their tendency to be sullen or self-centred, muls can learn to work alongside others. Growing up in the slave pits and the underclass of society taught them how to forge alliances and understandings; their survival demanded nothing less.

All gladiators who perform well in the arenas receive some degree of pampered treatment, but muls receive more pampering than others. Some mul gladiators even see slavery as an acceptable part of their lives. However, those who acquire a taste of freedom will fight for it. Stoic and dull to pain, muls are not easily intimidated by the lash. Masters are loath to slay or maim a mul who tries repeatedly to escape, although those who help the mul's escape will be tormented in order to punish the mul without damaging valuable property.



Once a mul escapes or earns his freedom, slavery remains a dominant part of his life. Most muls are heavily marked with tattoos that mark their ownership, history, capabilities, and disciplinary measures. Even untattooed muls are marked as a potential windfall for slavers: it is clearly cheaper to “retrieve” a mul who slavers can claim had run away than to start from scratch in the breeding pits.

Physical: Second only to the half-giant, the mul is the strongest of the common humanoid races of the Tablelands. Muls grow as high as seven feet, weighing upwards of 250 pounds. Muscular and fit, muls resemble powerfully built humans. Although one might expect muls to average somewhere between dwarf and human stature, they are taller than most humans.

Male muls have truly heroic proportions – broad shoulders, narrow waists, powerful thighs, and thick arms. Females, while not as heavily muscled, are tall, strong, and athletic.

Many muls of both genders are hairless, although some grow topknots of dark hair. Their faces hint at their dwarven ancestry, with strong, stern features and small, swept-back ears that come to subtle points. Mul skin and eye colours are as varied as they are

in humans, but many muls have a copper or deeply bronzed complexion, and a few have eyes of a startling honey-gold or green-gold colour.

Muls have little collective racial identity and adopt the dress and fashion of their homes. However, they are fond of tattoos and favour simple geometric patterns rather than depictions of creatures or objects. In this way, they honour their dwarven heritage with designs reminiscent of dwarven motifs.

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

Lands: As a collective group, muls have no lands to call their own. Occasionally, escaped muls band together as outlaws and fugitives, because of their common ex-slave backgrounds, and because their mul metabolism makes it easier for them to survive as fugitives while other races cannot keep up. Almost without exception, muls are born in the slave pits of the merchants and nobles of the city-states. Most are set to work as labourers, some as gladiators, and fewer yet as soldier-slaves. Very few earn their freedom; a greater number escape to freedom among the tribes of ex-slaves that inhabit the wastes.

Language: Muls speak the common tongue of slaves, but those favoured muls that stay in one city long enough before being sold to the next sometimes pick up the city language. Because of their tireless metabolism, muls have the capacity to integrate with peoples that other races could not dream of living with, such as elves and thri-kreen. Despite their dwarven heritage, few muls learn that tongue, finding memories of their parentage uncomfortable at best.

Mul Society: Muls have no racial history or a separate culture. They are sterile and cannot reproduce, preventing them from forming family groups and clans. The vast majority of muls are born in slavery, through breeding programmes. Often, the parents resent their roles in the

breeding programme and shun the child, leaving the mul to a lonely, hard existence. The taskmaster's whip takes the place of a family. For these reasons, many muls never seek friends or companionship, and often have rough personalities with violent tendencies.

The mul slave trade is very profitable, and thus the breeding programmes continue. As a slave, a mul has his profession selected for him and is given extensive training as he grows. Mul gladiators are often very successful and win a lot of money for their owners. Highly successful gladiators are looked after by their owners, receiving a large retinue of other slaves to tend to their whims and needs. This has led to the expression “pampered like a mul” being used often by the common folk.

Role-playing Suggestions: Born to the slave pens, you never knew love or affection; the taskmaster's whip took the place of loving parents. As far as you have seen, all of life's problems that can be solved are solved by sheer brute force. You know to bow to force when you see it, especially the veiled force of wealth and privilege. The noble and templar may not look strong, but they can kill a man with a word. You are capable of affection, trust, and friendship, but camaraderie is easier for you to understand and express – warriors slap each other on the shoulder after a victory, or give their lives for each other in battle. You don't think of that sort of event as “friendship” – it just happens.

The following game statistics apply to the mul player character:

- **Ability Adjustments:** +2 Strength, +1 Constitution, -1 Intelligence, -2 Charisma.
- **Movement Rate:** 12.
- **Size:** Medium.
- **Mul Exertion:** Muls can work for great lengths of time, depending on the type of labour. Regardless of the type of exertion, eight hours of sleep will let a mul become fully rested, ready to begin work again.

Type of Exertion	Time Before Rest
Heavy labour (stone construction, quarry work, running)	24 + Con hours
Medium labour (light construction, mining, jogging)	36 + Con hours
Light labour (combat training, walking encumbered)	48 + Con hours
Normal activity (walking, conversation)	Con days

Pterrann

Pterrann are a reptilian race. Civilised pterrann are rarely seen in the Tablelands. They live their lives in the Hinterlands that lie beyond the Ringing Mountains, seldom leaving the safety of their villages. Other pterrann are native to the Tablelands, where they dwell in savage tribes. Less civilised than their Hinterland cousins, they are known as raiders and hunters and seldom mingle with the folk of the Seven Cities. Over time, civilised pterrann have made their way from Hinterland to Tableland and more now venture outside their homes, coming to the Tyr region to seek trade and information.

Despite their varying levels of civilisation and sophistication, all pterrann revere the world of Athas as their Earth Mother, believing themselves to be her first, best children. They see the damage to Athas as the worst crimes imaginable, and many of these beings have left their homes to aid Athas in her time of need.

Personality: Among strangers, pterrann seem like subdued, cautious beings but, once others earn a pterrann's trust, they will find an individual that is open, friendly, inquisitive, and optimistic. Pterrann look to a person's deeds before judging their worth.

In other respects, a pterrann's personality is largely shaped by her chosen Life Path. The three greatest Life Paths are those of the Warrior, the Druid, and the Mind.

Pterrann who choose the Path of the Warrior are less disturbed by the brutality of the Tablelands than other pterrann; they constantly examine their surroundings and consider how the terrain could be defended. They take greatest satisfaction from a strategy that results in victory without friendly casualties.

Pterrann who choose the Path of the Druid are most interested in plants, animals, and the state of the land; they take greatest satisfaction when they eliminate a threat to nature.

Pterrann that choose the Path of the Mind are most interested in befriending and understanding other individuals and societies; these telepaths take greatest satisfaction from intellectual accomplishments such as solving mysteries, exposing deception, forging alliances, resolving quarrels between individuals, and establishing trade routes between communities.

Lesser Life Paths also exist. They allow pterrann to become scouts, traders, or even follow more than one calling at once.



Physical: Pterrann are 5 to 6 1/2 feet tall with light brown, scaly skin, sharp teeth, and a tail, which can vary considerably in length between pterrann. They wear little clothing, preferring belts and loincloths, or sashes. They walk upright, have opposable thumbs, and three-fingered, clawed hands. Pterrann have two shoulder stumps, remnants of wings they possessed long ago, and a fin-like growth that juts out at the back of their heads. Pterrann weigh between 180 to 220 pounds. There is no visible distinction between male and female pterrann.

Relations: Many pterrann are new to the Tablelands, and unaccustomed to the cultures and practices of the region. They have learned to not judge too quickly. Their faith in the Earth Mother means they undertake their adventures with open minds, but remain subdued and guarded around people they do not trust.

A pterrann's respect for the Earth Mother governs all his behaviour. Creatures that openly destroy the land or show disrespect for the creatures of the wastes are regarded suspiciously. Pterrann understand the natural cycle of life and death, but have difficulty with some aspects of the city life, such as cramped living spaces, piled refuse, and the smells of unwashed humanoid.

Lands: Most adventuring pterrans come from one of two villages in the Hinterlands, southwest of the Tyr regions: Pterrann Vale and Lost Scale. Less-civilised pterrans hail from a number of tribes across the Tablelands. The lack of stability and safety in this environment, however, means that these tribes seldom remain in the same place very long. Forced to turn to raiding in order to survive, they travel wherever opportunity demands.

Language: Pterrann language is difficult for other races to understand. The appendage at the back of their head enables them to create sounds that no other race in the Tablelands can reproduce. The sounds are low and resonate through the pterrann's crest. Pterrans learn the common tongue easily, but speak it with an odd accent.

Pterrann Society: Pterrann society is based largely on ceremony and celebrations. An area is set aside in the centre of each village for ceremonies. Throughout the day, they engage in a number of rituals that give thanks to the Earth Mother. These are led by druids, who play a very important role in pterrann society.

Pterrann devotion to the Earth Mother is deeply rooted in all aspects of their culture, and it defines a pterrann's behaviour. All rituals and religious events are related to their worship of the Earth Mother. Religious events include festivals honouring hunts or protection from storms, with a priest presiding over the celebration. Most pterrann priests are druids – those who are not tend to draw upon the powers of elemental earth in their worship of the Earth Mother.

Pterrans earn their first name just after they hatch, based on the weather and season of their hatching. After a pterrann has decided upon a Life Path and has completed her apprenticeship, she receives a title that becomes the first part of her name. This marks her transition into pterrann society. There are a number of traditional names associated with each Life Path, but names do not always come from these ranks.

A pterrann village is a collection of many smaller family dwellings. Pterrans always bear young in pairs. At age 15, every pterrann chooses a Life Path. More pterrans follow the Path of the Warrior than any of the other paths, and become protectors of their villages as well as the tribe's weapon makers.

Pterrans who choose the Path of the Druid provide an important role in the daily ceremonies to the Earth Mother and enjoy much respect as a consequence.

Fewer pterrans choose the Path of the Mind than the other two major paths, as psionics are viewed as outside of nature. Mindbenders are viewed with suspicion by the rest of the tribe, however, they do provide valuable skills to the tribe and are often the tribe's negotiators when they meet outsiders.

Pterrans are omnivores. Much of their diet comes from hunting animals and raising crops. Kirre, id fiend, and flailer are all considered pterrann delicacies.

Pterrans are known for domesticating and training wild pterrax and a cadre of pterrax riders enjoys an elite position in pterrann society. Becoming a pterrax rider is the aspiration of many young pterrans, but this Life Path is a demanding one and few possess the skills and talents required to walk it.

Role-playing Suggestions: Remember that your character class is your Life Path. You think of yourself, and present yourself first and foremost as a druid, a warrior, or a psionist. Remember your daily celebrations and giving of thanks to the Earth Mother. You can usually find a reason to be grateful.

Disrespect for the land angers you, since the whole land has withered under the disrespect of foolish humans and others. You celebrate with song and with dance. You have a good sense of humour but it does not extend to blasphemies such as defiling.

In initial role-playing situations, you are unfamiliar with the customs and practices of the societies of the Tablelands. However, you are not primitive by any definition of the word. You look upon differences with curiosity and a willingness to learn, as long as the custom doesn't harm the Earth Mother or her works.

The following game statistics apply to the pterrann player character:

- **Ability Adjustments:** +1 Strength, -1 Dexterity, +1 Wisdom, -1 Charisma.
- **Movement Rate:** 12.
- **Size:** Medium.
- **Natural Armour:** +2 natural Armour Class bonus.
- **Claws and Bite:** A pterrann can use his talons to attack twice per round for 4d6 damage and bite once per round for 6d6 damage.
- **Desert Camouflage:** A pterrann's colouration allows him to blend in with desert terrain. In such environments, the pterrann's opponents suffer a -1 penalty on their surprise rolls.

Thri-Kreen

Thri-kreen are the strangest of the intelligent races of the Tablelands. These insectoid beings possess a mindset very different from any humanoid. They roam the wastes in packs, hunting for food day and night, since they require no sleep. Thri-kreen are quick and agile and are feared throughout the wastes. There are actually several sub-species of kreen. Only two of these – the Jeral and the To'ksa – inhabit the Tablelands. The other subspecies dwell far to the west.

Personality: Since thri-kreen do not require sleep, they have difficulty understanding this need in the humanoid races, seeing it as “laziness” in others. Other behaviours of humanoids seem unnecessarily complex. A kreen’s life is simple: hunt prey. Kreen live for the hunt and own only what they can carry.

Physical: Mature kreen stand about 7 feet tall, with a body length of 11 feet, and weigh between 450 and 470 pounds. Their four arms end in claws; their two legs are extremely powerful, capable of incredible leaps (although kreen cannot jump backwards). Their body is covered with a tough chitin exoskeleton that grants protection from blows. Their head is topped with two antennae, and their two eyes are compound and multifaceted. The kreen mouth consists of small pincers. Male and female thri-kreen are physically indistinguishable. Kreen usually do not wear clothing beyond a harness for weapons or food. Many wear leg or armbands or bracelets, or attach rings to different places on their chitin.

While both Jeral and To'ksa thri-kreen have chitin of a sandy yellow colour, their exoskeletons differ. With the Jeral, the chitin is the outermost layer of their body and can be polished to a glossy sheen. To'ksa have a leathery sheath over the exoskeleton and the joints between the chitin plates; this creates a rather dull finish. Neither is noticeably more efficient at retaining moisture than the other, but Jeral tend to favour decorative chitin-working while the To'ksa prefer body painting.

Relations: The pack mentality dominates a kreen’s relations with others. Kreen hunt in packs and will hunt prey in the same region for a while, but move on before their prey has been depleted. A kreen that joins a group of humanoids will often try to establish dominance in the group. This can be disconcerting to those unaware of the kreen’s behaviour, since establishing dominance usually means making threatening gestures. Once the matter is settled, however, they will abide by the outcome.



Thri-kreen view humanoids as sources of food, though they only hunt them in dire need. Many kreen have a particularly fond taste for elves; as such, meetings between these two races are often tense. However, once part of a clutch, thri-kreen will never turn on their humanoid friends, even in the worst of situations.

Lands: No thri-kreen settlements exist in the Tyr region; kreen encountered there are either small packs or adventuring with humanoids. Hunting packs seldom leave their own territory and most recognise some area around each human settlement as the territory of the mammal “pack” that lives there. While thri-kreen hunters respect such territorial divisions, raiders do not; such is the nature of the raider.

To the north and west of the Tablelands, far beyond the Ringing Mountains, lies the Kreen Empire. This region is home to other subspecies of kreen. Known as *tohr-kreen*, these so-called “civilised” kreen rarely visit the Tablelands and few thri-kreen know much about them. See **Campaign Options** for more details.

Language: Thri-kreen language is very different from that of the other intelligent races. They have no lips or tongues, and so cannot make the same sounds humanoids make. Kreen language is made up of clicks, pops, or grinding noises.

Thri-kreen Society: Thri-kreen hatch from eggs. All those who hatch at the same time form what is called a clutch. Each pack consists of several clutches that roam over an area that the pack considers theirs to hunt on. There are no permanent thri-kreen communities.

Clutches and packs are organised along a strict order of dominance. The toughest member is leader; the second most powerful is second in command and so forth. A thri-kreen can challenge a superior for dominance, initiating a contest. The contestants fight until one surrenders or dies. There is nothing personal in such a conflict. It is merely the way of the kreen.

Thri-kreen are obsessed with hunting. They are carnivores, but seldom hunt intelligent life for food. They do have a taste for elf, which gives them a bad reputation amongst elven tribes. When not hunting, they craft weapons, teach their young, and craft sculptures.

The pack mentality is so ingrained that kreen apply it to every situation. They feel compelled to be part of a clutch and will accept members of other races as clutch-mates. Once a kreen has accepted others as members of its clutch, it will defend them to the death.

Role-playing Suggestions: Rely on your natural attacks and kreen weapons. Everything you kill is a potential meal, even enemies felled in battle. You have a need for obedience to a leader. If you seem to be the most capable, then assume leadership. If someone challenges you, test whether they are stronger than you. It is not a question of vanity; you would not fight to the death, but to ascertain who is worthy to lead.

You do not understand the concept of sleep. It disturbs you that your companions lie unconscious for a third of their lifetimes. You may well harangue them to stop lying about on the ground all the time. You own only what you can carry, caring little for items that other races consider as treasure. This philosophy sometimes leads you into conflict with those who think they can own buildings, land, and even whole herds of livestock!

The following game statistics apply to the thri-kreen player character:

- **Ability Adjustments:** +2 Dexterity, +1 Wisdom, -1 Intelligence, -2 Charisma.
- **Movement Rate:** 18.
- **Size:** Large.
- **Natural Armour:** +5 natural Armour Class bonus. Thri-kreen cannot wear armour.
- **Claws and Bite:** A thri-kreen can use his talons to attack four times per round for Id4 damage and bite once per round for Id4+I damage.
- **Antennae:** A thri-kreen’s antennae reduce penalties for darkness by one point.
- **Bulky:** Thri-kreen cannot float or climb surfaces.
- **Reduced Water:** Thri-kreen require only one gallon of water per week when active.
- **Vulnerable to Humidity:** Thri-kreen in humid areas risk suffering lung infections and chitin rot. Consult your DM for more detail on this.
- **Leaping:** From 3rd level, a thri-kreen can leap 20’ upwards or 50’ forwards (but not backwards).
- **Poison:** From 5th level, thri-kreen develop poisonous saliva - any creature bitten must save vs. paralysis or be paralysed; Tiny or Small creatures are paralysed for 2d10 rounds, Medium for 2d8 rounds, and Large for Id8 rounds. Huge or Gargantuan targets are affected for one round.
- **Chatkcha Expert:** At 5th level, thri-kreen become proficient with the chatkcha, if not already.
- **Dodge Missiles:** From 7th level, kreen can dodge missile fire with a roll of 9 or higher on a d20.

Minimum and Maximum Ability Scores

Dark Sun characters use the racial ability requirements given here. If a character's ability scores fit all of these requirements, the character may choose that race. Consult this table before making any racial adjustments to ability scores.

Racial Ability Requirements

Ability	Aarakocra	Dwarf	Elf	Half-Elf	Half-Giant	Halfling	Mul	Pterran	Thri-Kreen
Strength	5/20	10/20	5/20	5/20	17/20	5/20	10/20	8/20	8/20
Dexterity	8/20	5/20	12/20	8/20	5/15	12/20	5/20	5/18	15/20
Constitution	6/18	14/20	8/20	5/20	15/20	5/20	8/20	8/20	5/20
Intelligence	5/20	5/20	8/20	5/20	5/15	5/20	5/20	5/20	5/20
Wisdom	5/19	5/20	5/20	5/20	5/17	7/20	5/20	7/20	5/20
Charisma	6/20	5/20	5/20	5/20	5/17	5/20	5/20	5/17	5/17

Class Restrictions and Level Limits

As an optional rule, your DM may impose restrictions on the classes available to a character, and the level to which he may advance, based on his race.

Humans are always unrestricted in level advancement or class selection. Use the optional rule on Exceeding Level Limits (presented in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*) when applying level limits.

Racial Class and Level Limits

Class	Aarakocra	Dwarf	Elf	Half-Elf	Half-Giant	Halfling	Mul	Pterran	Thri-Kreen
Bard	—	—	—	U	—	—	—	—	—
Cleric	16	12	15	16	12	12	10	—	12
Druid	12	—	—	14	—	12	12	U	16
Fighter	14	16	14	U	16	12	U	16	16
Gladiator	—	U	10	U	14	12	U	14	15
Psionicist	U	U	U	U	U	U	U	U	U
Ranger	12	—	16	14	8	16	—	12	12
Templar	—	10	16	14	—	—	—	—	—
Thief	12	12	16	12	—	16	12	10	—
Trader	14	14	16	12	—	—	—	14	—
Wizard	13	—	16	U	—	16*	—	—	—

* Halflings may only be illusionists.

Racial Ability Adjustments

Race	Adjustment
Aarakocra	-1 Strength, +2 Dexterity, -1 Constitution
Dwarf	+1 Strength, -1 Dexterity, +2 Constitution, -2 Charisma
Elf	+2 Dexterity, -2 Constitution, +1 Intelligence, -1 Wisdom
Half-Elf	+1 Dexterity, -1 Constitution
Half-Giant	+4 Strength, +2 Constitution, -2 Intelligence, -2 Wisdom, -2 Charisma
Halfling	-2 Strength, +2 Dexterity, -1 Constitution, +2 Wisdom, -1 Charisma
Human	+1 to any one ability
Mul	+2 Strength, +1 Constitution, -1 Intelligence, -2 Charisma
Pterran	+1 Strength, -1 Dexterity, +1 Wisdom, -1 Charisma
Thri-Kreen	+2 Dexterity, +1 Wisdom, -1 Intelligence, -2 Charisma

Character Races

Height and Weight

Race	Height in Inches		Weight in Pounds	
	Base	Modifier	Base	Modifier
Aarakocra	78/75	2d8	90/75	2d10
Dwarf	50/48	2d4	180/170	4d10
Elf	78/72	2d8	160/130	3d10
Half-Elf	70/68	2d6	120/95	3d12
Half-Giant	125/125	3d10	1500/1450	3d100
Halfling	36/34	1d8	50/46	5d4
Human	60/59	2d8	140/100	6d10
Mul	66/65	2d6	220/180	5d20
Pterran	60/59	2d8	170/160	4d10+10
Thri-Kreen*	82/82	2d4	450/450	1d20

*Thri-kreen are 48 inches longer than they are tall.

Starting Age

Race	Starting Age		Maximum Age	
	Base	Variable	Base	Variable
Aarakocra	10	+1d4	36	+1d8
Dwarf	25	+4d6	200	+3d20
Elf	15	+3d4	100	+2d20
Half-Elf	15	+1d4	90	+2d20
Half-Giant	20	5d4	120	+1d100
Halfling	14	3d6	90	+4d12
Human	15	1d8	80	+2d20
Mul	15	1d6	80	+1d10
Pterran	12	+1d8	40	+1d10
Thri-Kreen	6	—	25	+1d10

Aging Effects

Race	Middle Age*	Old Age**	Venerable Age***
Aarakocra†	—	—	36
Dwarf	100	133	200
Elf	50	67	100
Half-Elf	45	60	90
Half-Giant	60	80	120
Halfling	45	60	90
Human	40	53	80
Mul	40	53	80
Pterran†	—	—	40
Thri-Kreen†	—	—	25

* -1 Str/Con; +1 Int/Wis upon reaching middle age

** -2 Str/Dex, -1 Con; +1 Wis upon reaching old age

*** -1 Str/Dex/Con; +1 Int/Wis upon reaching venerable age.

† -1 Str/Dex upon reaching venerable age